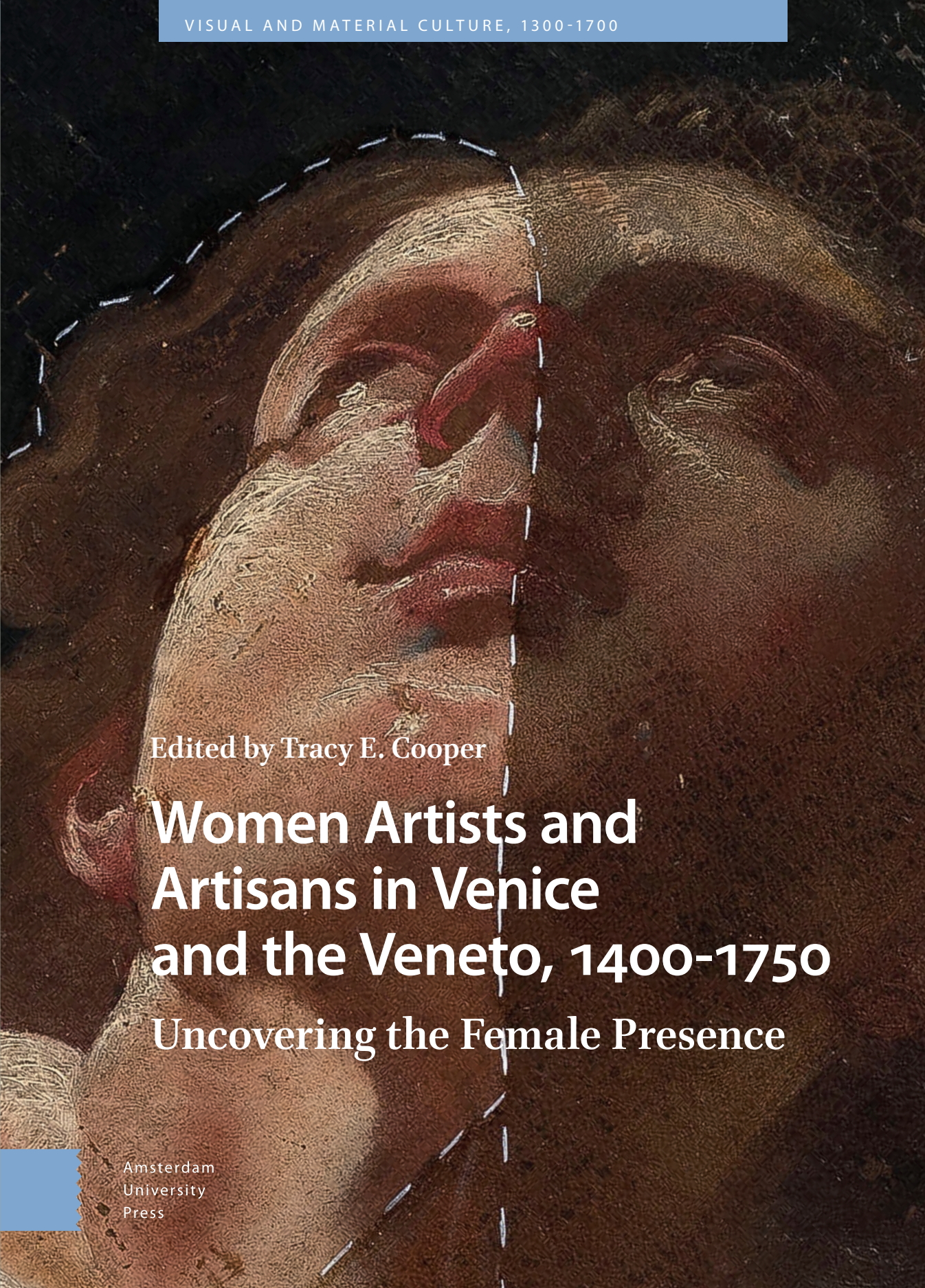
VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1300-1700



Edited by Tracy E. Cooper

Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400-1750

Uncovering the Female Presence

Amsterdam University Press

Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750

Visual and Material Culture, 1300-1700

A forum for innovative research on the role of images and objects in the late medieval and early modern periods, Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700 publishes monographs and essay collections that combine rigorous investigation with critical inquiry to present new narratives on a wide range of topics, from traditional arts to seemingly ordinary things. Recognizing the fluidity of images, objects, and ideas, this series fosters cross-cultural as well as multi-disciplinary exploration. We consider proposals from across the spectrum of analytic approaches and methodologies.

Series editors

Allison Levy is Director of Brown University Digital Publications. She has authored or edited five books on early modern Italian visual and material culture.

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Published with the support of Save Venice and its Women Artists of Venice Program.

SAVE VENICE | CONSERVING ART, CELEBRATING HISTORY.

Cover illustration: Giulia Lama, detail of Saint John spandrel from the *Four Evangelists*, Altar of St. Martial, San Marziale, Venice, ca. 1732–1734. Oil on canvas. During conservation by Enrica Colombini and Elisa Galante, 2022. Treatment sponsored by Save Venice Inc., and Anonymous in Memory of Bernice F. Davidson. Photograph by Matteo De Fina, courtesy of Save Venice.

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Introduction

Tracy E. Cooper

This book of eleven essays documents the lives, careers, and works of art of women artists and artisans in Venice and its territories from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The collection represents the first fruits of a new research program launched by Save Venice Inc., Women Artists of Venice, directed by Professor Tracy Cooper, of Temple University, in conjunction with a conservation program, led by Melissa Conn, Director Venice Office, Save Venice Inc. This partnership between research and conservation fosters a form of collaboration that unites cutting-edge scholarship on women artists with state-of-the art conservation of the objects they created. The productive interaction that results from both investigation of the historical record and the material state of works produced or associated with women artists can be seen in essays throughout this volume. The subtitle, "Uncovering the Female Presence," evokes the potential for raising new awareness of works that have receded from public view, sometimes quite literally. A telling example can be found in an ensemble of monumental works of the *Four Evangelists* by Giulia Lama (1681–1747) in the church of San Marziale, which were foundational in conceiving the Women Artists of Venice program as Save Venice took up their conservation in 2021 (discussed more fully in chapter 10). "Before" and "after" details of the head of Saint Matthew (fig. 0.1a-b) illustrate a dramatic difference in chromatic chiaroscuro and legibility following treatment. The preceding lack of visibility, compounded by the site conditions, corresponded to a general neglect that the Women Artists of Venice program aims to redress more broadly. Results will be disseminated over a variety of platforms, including publications, conferences, exhibitions, and a sustainable digital repository of women's achievements, currently in development under Tracy Cooper and Susan Nalezyty.

Inspired by a growing body of research that has resurrected female artists and artisans notably in Florence and Bologna during the last decade, the Save Venice program seeks to recover the history of women artists and artisans born or active in the Venetian republic in the early modern period. Topics in this volume include their contemporary reception—or historical silence—and earlier and current scholarship on them as individuals and as an underrepresented category in the

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Figure 0.1a-b Giulia Lama, detail of Saint John spandrel from the *Four Evangelists*, Altar of St. Martial, San Marziale, Venice, ca. 1732–1734. Oil on canvas. (a) Before and (b) after conservation by Enrica Colombini and Elisa Galante, 2022. Treatment sponsored by Save Venice, Inc., and Anonymous in Memory of Bernice F. Davidson. Photograph by Matteo De Fina, courtesy of Save Venice.

Figure 0.2a-b Jean-Jacques Flipart, (a) Portrait of Marie Tintoret, unnumbered engraved plate between text pages 288 and 289; (b) Portrait of Rosa Alba Carriera, unnumbered engraved plate between text pages 314 and 315. In Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d' Argenville, *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, Paris, 1762. Vol. 1, 4to (19.5 × 26.2 cm.). Courtesy of the Biblioteca della Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

history of art and cultural heritage. Individuals to be highlighted include Marietta Tintoretta, Chiara Varotari, Artemisia Gentileschi, Giovanna Garzoni, Caterina Tarabotti, Giulia Lama, and Rosalba Carriera.

The volume is bookended by two women artists, Marietta Tintoretta (ca. 1552–ca. 1590) and Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757), who come to symbolize the singularity of that status for Venice. Only a few years after the latter's death, her brief biography was added in the second edition of the French collector and naturalist Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville's *Life of the Most Famous Painters* with their portraits (*Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, Paris, 1762). That of Marietta Tintoretta was also included, with both depicted in copper-plate portraits accompanying their lives (fig. 0.2a-b). Both images and texts contain many of the repeated tropes surrounding the biographical fragments known or surmised of women's lives and the evaluations of their works as women by men. Many of these thematic refrains will be teased out and unentangled in the following essays, and it is to be hoped, inspire further work on the subject and open new lines of inquiry.

The variation in our state of knowledge about these artists is reflected here in essays of varying length. In the first chapter, Babette Bohn situates Venetian

women artists and artisans in the larger context of the revelations of recent scholarship in other centers in Italy—notably contrasting Bologna's pride in female accomplishments in the arts. Bohn highlights the importance of biography as a critical factor for in-depth knowledge of the lives of these women artists and the consequences of its paucity. Louise Bourdua then looks at the earlier range of our chronology and a profession, the *taipiera*, or stone worker, neither of which are well-documented for women artists. As such, Bourdua explores other ways in which agency for women in the profession may be envisioned in chapter 2. The one key early exception to the dearth of biographical treatment is Marietta Tintoretta, uniquely featured in Carlo Ridolfi's lives of Venetian artists, *Le Maraviglie dell'arte* (1648). Marietta's subsequent mythologization is thoroughly deconstructed by Robert Echols and Frederick Ilchman in chapter 3. Taking their expertise in the Tintoretto family workshop, Echols and Ilchman radically revise her oeuvre for consideration. In chapter 4, Antonis Digalakis takes up the search for biographies of women artists in Venice and the Veneto and expands his survey with a useful appendix. In chapter 5 Maria Adank shifts our focus looking for Venetian women artists and artisans in the records of munificent patrons at the turn of the sixteenth century, Doge Marino Grimani and Dogaressa Morosina Morosini. The well-connected figure of Chiara Varotari, daughter and sister of successful painters, receives fuller examination of her life and technique by Diana Gisolfi in chapter 6. Two prominent visitors to Venice make their appearance in the early seventeenth century, and the next two chapters explore the traces of their presence and the impact of its rich visual and intellectual culture in their life and work. In chapter 7 Davide Gasparotto looks at Artemisia Gentileschi's brief but impactful stay and the consequences of her exposure to Venetian art and influential contacts that led to the next stage of her career as an independent woman artist. In chapter 8, Sheila Barker illuminates the eventful formative period of Giovanna Garzoni, usually treated in the context of the Medici court, but here revealing local inspiration for her exquisite attention to Nature. Georgios Markou in chapter 9 recovers the elusive figure of Caterina Tarabotti, overshadowed by the attention paid to her furiously talented sister, author and nun Arcangela Tarabotti. A powerful but still understudied figure to emerge at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries is the above-mentioned Giulia Lama. In chapter 10, Cleo Nisse employs new visual and technical information from recent conservation campaigns (sponsored under the aegis of Save Venice's Women Artists of Venice Program) to foreground anew the artist's mastery of form and scale. The final chapter by Xavier Salomon honors the 350th anniversary of the celebrated and exceptional Rosalba Carriera, unusual both in her prolific documentation and management of a large and successful workshop. Rosalba Carriera's specialization in miniatures and pastels has precluded their wider exposure owing to the fragility

of the medium. The technical examination undertaken here contributes valuable new observations and discoveries.

This volume has its origins in Save Venice Associate Organization sessions presented at the Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting, in Dublin, March 30–April 2, 2022, organized by the editor and members of the Scientific Committee led by Associate Organization representative Sarah Blake McHam with Patricia Fortini Brown and Melissa Conn, and has been enhanced with further invited contributors. Continued thanks to the Scientific Committee for their ongoing advice and support of this publication.

The volume editor would like to express her sincere appreciation to Series Editor Allison Levy for her enthusiastic reception, and especially warmly to Senior Commissioning Editor, Erika Gaffney, a beacon of women's studies, for sharing her wisdom and experience over the course of the development of this publication. A profound thank you is owed to the editorial and publishing expertise of Timothy D. Wardell, who generously contributed his time throughout the process and whose unflagging assistance enabled the completion and production of the volume. Melissa Conn and Gabriele Matino made heroic efforts to ensure the women artists and artisans of Venice would be represented with the highest quality reproductions available.

Grateful acknowledgements are owed to generous supporters of Save Venice Inc., Women Artists of Venice Program Research Track, particularly The Diane Apostolos-Cappadona Trust in Memory of Her Mother, Stacia Apostolos, the Young Friends of Save Venice through the Camalotte Foundation, and the Manitou Fund through Nora McNeely Hurley. A special thanks is in order to the Board of Save Venice Inc., for underwriting the Open Access publication in order to make the volume more accessible to the public and encourage greater awareness of women artists and artisans in Venice and the Veneto.

1. La Serenissima in Context: Women Artists in Venice and Beyond

Babette Bohn

Abstract
Many women artists are recorded in early modern Venice (at least twenty-nine in the Seicento alone), but few before the eighteenth century are known today. This essay will explore their accomplishments, reputations, and number of extant works compared with women artists in other Italian cities, as well as women's public and legal status, artistic training, and artistic specializations. A key factor in this exploration is the approach of early Venetian biographers, who generally provided little information about specific artworks, in contrast to the detailed information provided in some other cities. This inattention to detail has contributed to the paucity of identifiable works, although early documents and inscriptions on drawings sometimes provide significant insights.

Keywords: Art and gender, Early Modern women's studies, drawing, artistic education, biographers, lost works

The Emergence of Women Artists in Early Modern Italy

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a dramatic increase in the number of women artists who are recorded by name throughout the Italian peninsula. Although there continued to be considerably more male artists in every medium, many early modern writers, such as the Florentine Giorgio Vasari in 1550 and the Venetian Carlo Ridolfi in 1648, commented on this interesting development. Both writers began their respective biographies of a woman artist with an acknowledgment of women's emerging excellence, although both also felt compelled to qualify their praise with an apparently contradictory acknowledgement of women's allegedly natural limitations.[1] Venice was among the Italian cities that boasted a significant number

1 Ridolfi, for example, begins his biography of Marietta Robusti with praise for a selection of women artists from antiquity and "modern" times. But then he remarks that although women achieved high

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of women artists, a group that, in Venice as in other Italian cities, was composed primarily of painters, with at least twenty-nine women painters (*pittrici*) recorded by early local writers in the Seicento alone.[2] Nevertheless, few Venetian women artists became famous, and only a handful are still known in extant works, at least until the eighteenth century when this pattern began to change. This essay will examine the situation for women artists in Venice in comparison to other Italian cities in the early modern period, considering their accomplishments, reputations, and surviving oeuvres. I will argue that one key factor in their critical fortunes is the approach of early Venetian biographers, who generally provided little specific information about women's artworks, in contrast to the more detailed information provided in some other cities. This inattention to detail has contributed to the paucity of securely identifiable works, although sometimes early documents and inscriptions (or signatures) on artworks provide helpful insights. Other contributing factors to the critical fortunes of women artists in different Italian cities include local workshop traditions, signing practices, and approaches to artistic education.

Early Biographies

Beginning with the two editions of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives* in 1550 and 1568, Italian writers began paying attention to the growing number of talented women artists. This development in literary biographies and the visual arts coincided chronologically with the emergence of accomplished women writers in several Italian cities.[3] Florence seems to have produced the largest group of female visual artists during the Cinquecento, mostly nuns in the convent of Santa Caterina da Siena. Some women artists in this period were embroiderers (many of whom are no longer known by name),[4] and several were sculptors, including Suor Vincenza Brandolini in the convent of Santa Caterina, whose sculptures have all been lost.[5] Vasari's first biography of a woman artist in 1550 was devoted to a woman sculptor: the Bolognese Properzia de' Rossi (ca. 1590/91–ca. 1530), by whom a few works are still identifiable.

levels when they acquired learning, since they were typically confined to the home, most demonstrated little aptitude for noble pursuits (1914–1924, 2:71).

2 See, however, the essay in this volume by Louise Bourdua on a Venetian woman who was involved in the stone carving, stone masonry and stone selling industry.

3 See Cox, 2008.

4 The names of several Milanese women embroiderers are recorded, however, and some, such as Ludovica Antonia Pellegrini, are still known in extant works. See Binagli Olivari, 1994. In her essay in this volume, Maria Adank reports that Doge Maria Grimani's account book mentions the embroiderer "Maria of San Tomà," to whom no works can still be credited.

5 Jacobs, 1997, 165.

But most recorded Italian women artists, in every city and in every century, were painters, and a majority of them are no longer known in extant works today.

Early Venetian writers recorded only a few women artists who were active during the Cinquecento, but other evidence may indicate a stronger female role in the city than women's position in the visual arts would suggest. Stanley Chojnacki has argued that thanks in part to dowry inflation, which bestowed significant resources on patrician Venetian women in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a growing number of those women wrote wills, ultimately even outstripping the number of men who left wills in some Venetian families.[6] As a result, some elite Venetian women were able to control financial resources to an unusual degree. In addition, Venice can be credited with a significant number of remarkable women writers during the sixteenth century. These included both accomplished poets such as Veronica Franco (1546–1591) and Gaspara Stampa (1523–1554) and writers with a more diverse production such as Lucrezia Marinella (1571–1653), Moderata Fonte (1555–1592), and Isabella Andreini (1562–1604). Both Marinella and Fonte even authored compelling arguments for the equality or superiority of women compared to men, both published in 1600.[7] This proliferation of published women writers in Venice reflects the city's status as a center for publishing in the Italian peninsula, although it may also suggest a certain sympathy for women's voices. But notwithstanding the eloquence of their female compatriots on the printed page, professional training and success for Venetian women artists during the sixteenth century was elusive. Occasionally, Venetian women received artistic training outside of both the convent and the family, two traditional means of access to artistic education for women. The short-lived Irene di Spilimbergo (1538–1559), for example, allegedly trained first with another woman and then with Titian, who was not a family member.

Despite the Venetian tradition of the artist's workshop as a family business that continued for generations,[8] most of the leading Venetian male painters in the sixteenth century did not train their daughters to paint. Titian's daughter Lavinia Vecellio (1530–1561) exemplifies this pattern. In contrast to her brother Orazio, who became a senior assistant in their father's workshop, Lavinia was not trained to paint professionally. Instead, she was given a large dowry of 1,400 scudi to assist her in attracting a respectable husband, and she married Cornelio Sarcinelli in 1555.[9] An exception to this disinclination of Cinquecento Venetian painters to train their

6 Chojnacki, 1974, 196–197.

7 Marinella, 1999; Fonte, 1997.

8 Whistler, 2016, 81.

9 Brown, 1990, 407, 412, 413. Paolo Veronese also had two sons who worked in his workshop, whereas his one daughter (and two other sons) did not.

Figure 1.1 Assistant of Titian, *Portrait of Irene di Spilimbergo*, ca. 1560. Oil on canvas, 122.0 × 106.5 cm. (48 1/16 × 41 15/16 in.). Widener Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. CCO Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

daughters professionally was Jacopo Robusti, il Tintoretto, who taught his daughter Marietta (ca. 1554/60–ca. 1590) to paint.

Local biographies provide a crucial source of information for early modern Italian women artists, and both Marietta Robusti and Irene di Spilimbergo were extolled by early Venetian writers. But the information these local writers provide (and the

information they ignore) had significant consequences for our understanding of both artists. Irene di Spilimbergo was the first woman artist in Italy to be celebrated in an entire book of poetry, after her death in 1559 at the age of twenty-one. These poems chiefly praise her beauty and virtue, rather than celebrating her paintings, which has impeded reliable attributions to the artist. Consequently, despite her fame, no works can be credited to her today, although a portrait of her currently assigned to an assistant of Titian is still known (fig. 1.1).[10]

In 1648, Carlo Ridolfi's compendium of more than 150 biographies included only one full, independent vita dedicated to a woman: Marietta Robusti, Tintoretto's daughter. Although the writer mentions Marietta's skills in portraiture, he notes only two or three specific paintings by her, instead directing most of his attention to her famous father, his love for his daughter, his grief at her premature death, and her virtue.[11] In other words, Ridolfi's biography, like some other women's biographies in the period, focuses more on the artist's life than her work.[12] Ridolfi's limited attention to Marietta's artistic production and the consequent challenges to identifying these works provide major obstacles to understanding her production today. One scholar called her a *pittore senza opera*, a painter without works—a common fate for many early women artists that is due in large part to the absence of specificity in their early biographies.[13] In Marietta's case, early inscriptions on two arguably autograph drawings (fig. 1.2) provide an alternative source of primary information that may assist the process of establishing a convincing oeuvre for the artist.[14] Although one of these drawings copies a head from the antique, the multi-figured narrative illustrated in figure 1.2 sheds light on the artist's capacity for original invention. The drawing cannot be connected to a known painting, but perhaps it prepared a picture that is no longer traceable.[15]

The paucity of specific information provided about these two Cinquecento Venetian women artists and the resulting problems for identifying their works today are not unique to Venice. But there was considerable variation in how artistic biographies

10 The portrait, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, accession no. 1942.9.83, is currently dated ca. 1560 by the Gallery, which assigns it to an assistant of Titian, possibly begun by Gian Paolo Pace. On Spilimbergo, see Atanagi, 1561; Schutte, 1991; Jacobs, 1997, 104–105 and 178–182; and Dabbs, 2009, 65–75. For another discussion of early Venetian biographies of women artists, see the essay by Antonis Digalakis in this volume.

11 Ridolfi, 1914, 2:71–72. Another early biography of Marietta Robusti was written by Raffaello Borghini in 1584. See the essay on the artist by Frederick Ilchman and Robert Echols in this volume.

12 See Jacobs, 1997, and Dabbs, 2009.

13 Mazzucco, 2009, 253.

14 On the candidates for her authorship, see Mazzucco, 2009, 253–279. On her drawings, see Tietze and Tietze-Conrat, 1979, and Tietze-Conrat, 1934.

15 Although her father painted a work of this subject (Museo Civico, Vicenza, ca. 1550), the compositions are distinctly different, as observed by Savage, 2018, 43–44. Museo Civico, Cremona, inv. no. B04, in black chalk on blue paper, 195 × 270 mm.; Tietze and Tietze-Conrat, 1979, 293, no. 1760.

Figure 1.2 Attributed to Marietta Robusti, *A Bishop Saint Healing the Sick (Saint Augustine healing plague victims?),* 16th century. Black chalk on blue paper, 195 × 270 mm. Museo Civico Ala Ponzone (inv. no. B04), Cremona. Archivio Fotografico Musei Civici Cremona.

of women were handled in different Italian cities, and sometimes the information provided by early biographers can be augmented by either documentation or signatures on artworks. For example, more works by Sofonisba Anguissola of Cremona (ca. 1535–1625) are specified by her early biographers, and she often signed her paintings, both factors that have contributed to her relatively sizeable oeuvre today.[16]

The Bolognese Exception

The best example of a city whose culture promoted the appreciation and understanding of its women artists during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth

16 In his recent monograph on Anguissola, Cole, 2019, catalogues fourteen paintings and one drawing as works that are either documented or carrying uncontested signatures, with another nineteen paintings and drawings categorized as "attributions largely accepted by specialists."

centuries, however, is Bologna. Shaped by the intellectual networks of its large university, the oldest in Europe, its status as a religious center during the Counter-Reformation period, and its sizeable and diverse corpus of middle-class and noble families who commissioned and collected artworks, Bologna boasted the largest number of recorded women artists in any early modern Italian city: at least sixty-eight, including one nun from the fifteenth century who was a painter.[17] The Bolognese Properzia de' Rossi was evidently the first Italian woman to obtain a public commission, her marble relief sculptures for the façade of San Petronio, around 1525.

Later in the Cinquecento, Lavinia Fontana of Bologna (1552–1614) was probably the first Italian woman to enjoy a relatively conventional career as a painter, producing portraits and private devotional works as well as public altarpieces. Like Marietta Robusti, Lavinia was the daughter of a painter, Prospero Fontana, and worked in the family *bottega*. But unlike Marietta, Lavinia enjoyed a successful career that was distinct from her father's, with numerous individual commissions that were directed to her alone. Marietta probably also received independent commissions, but if she did, none were specified by the early biographers, apart from a few portraits. Thus, we are left to surmise that most of her work was probably part of the Tintoretto workshop's collective production. Lavinia Fontana's greater autonomy is best signaled by the frequency of her signatures: about half of her paintings that are still known today are signed, confirming her authorship of numerous portraits, private devotional pictures, and altarpieces. This high rate of signatures is particularly striking in Bologna, where male artists signed their paintings infrequently.[18] Moreover, in contrast to Marietta's early biographical treatment, Lavinia's early Bolognese biographers included extensive specific information about her paintings. Above all, Carlo Cesare Malvasia's two-volume compendium of seventy-one artistic biographies on Bolognese artists, the *Felsina pittrice* of 1678, provides detailed information about Fontana's paintings and patrons, facilitating a much fuller appreciation of her works today.[19] Whereas no paintings by Marietta are currently uncontested attributions, Lavinia Fontana is still known in about 150 paintings, in addition to a corpus of over thirty autograph drawings. This discrepancy in current knowledge and extant oeuvres is due equally to the differences in specific information from the early writers and the differences in signing practices between the two women.

During the seventeenth century, the situation for women artists throughout the Italian peninsula became increasingly complex, with a growing number of female

17 Bohn, 2021, 1–3.

18 See Bohn, 2021, 146–147.

19 Malvasia, 1678, 1:219–224; 1841, 1:177–180.

artists, more writers who commented on their works, and greater variety in the means through which women gained access to artistic training. Largely in response to Vasari's patriotic focus on the artists of his native Florence, many writers from around Italy produced biographical compendia that emphasized the artists of their own respective regions, and the inclusion of at least one token woman artist from each city or region became virtually mandatory. Giulio Mancini, Giovanni Baglione, Giovanni Battista Passeri, and Giovan Pietro Bellori all authored biographical collections in Rome during the Seicento; and with the single exception of Bellori, each of them included a full biography of one woman, with brief references to a few others.[20] Carlo Ridolfi, whose biographical collection was published in Venice in 1648, followed this pattern, as did Raffaele Soprani in Genoa in 1674.[21] Two cities offered exceptions to this pattern of limited attention to women artists. The Florentine Filippo Baldinucci, whose vast, seven-volume collection of artistic biographies published in 1681–1728, included more artists of every type in his compendium of 861 artists, a group that included four full biographies of women artists and nine shorter mentions.[22] The Bolognese Malvasia, in 1678, wrote two full biographies of women (Lavinia Fontana and Elisabetta Sirani), both longer and more detailed than any prior women's biographies, and also included sixteen shorter treatments of other women artists.[23] In 1666, Malvasia's Bolognese compatriot Antonio di Paolo Masini included six short biographies of local women artists, expanding to seventeen in 1690.[24] Among the eighteenth-century additions to these biographers, the Neapolitan Bernardo De Dominici, in 1742–1745, included three full biographies of women, with six shorter references. In Bologna, Luigi Crespi's addition to Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice* in 1769 included seventeen full biographies of women and fourteen shorter treatments.[25] All these writers were outstripped by the indefatigable Bolognese writer Marcello Oretti (1714–1787), whose thirteen-volume manuscript collection of over 2,000 biographies, written during the late eighteenth century but never published, included an extraordinary sixty-four biographies of women artists.[26]

As this overview suggests, by the seventeenth-century writers in most cities with any claim to artistic stature felt that it was important to celebrate at least one woman artist as part of the city's cultural legacy. And if they knew of no accomplished practitioners who were native to that city, they claimed the achievements of women

20 Mancini, 1956; Baglione, 1642; Passeri, 1976; Bellori, 1976. See also the discussions in Jacobs, 1997; Dabbs, 2009; and Bohn, 2021, chapter 1.

21 Ridolfi, 1914–1924; Soprani and Ratti, 1768–1769.

22 Baldinucci, 1845–1847.

23 Malvasia, 1678; 1841.

24 Masini, 1666; 1957.

25 Crespi, 1980.

26 Oretti, n.d. (eighteenth century).

who had worked in the city instead. This was the case for Giulio Mancini and Giovanni Baglione, who both featured Lavinia Fontana, the Bolognese painter who worked in Rome during her final decade. Similarly, Raffaele Soprani profiled the Cremonese Sofonisba Anguissola, who worked for some years in Genoa.[27] Only in Bologna, however, were women artists actually characterized as a central feature of the city's distinctive accomplishments in the visual arts, a distinction that is confirmed not only by the number of women artists who were praised but also by the character of writers' language in celebrating those women. Whereas most authors who wrote women's biographies were distracted by personal anecdotes and an emphasis on allegedly feminine virtues that diminished attention to women's artistic accomplishments, in Bologna artistic biographies focused on women's works and celebrated them as distinctive, original creators. Malvasia explicitly claims the achievements of Bologna's women artists as one of the city's three principal claims to artistic distinction; and he concludes his biographical compendium with Elisabetta Sirani (1638–1665), who worked, he claims, "not only beyond any woman, but also beyond any man."[28] Malvasia's biography of the artist included a list of almost 200 of Sirani's paintings, and she signed some 70 percent of her pictures. No wonder that Sirani, like Fontana, is still known today in over one hundred paintings; and uniquely for the Seicento, she is also known in perhaps as many as 150 drawings.[29] Thus, for Sirani, as for Fontana and Anguissola, more detailed biographical treatment, combined with frequent signatures, contributed to a significantly larger extant oeuvre.

Artistic Education for Women

Another important issue to consider comparatively in these early modern Italian cities is the question of how women gained access to artistic education.[30] In the traditional parlance of art history, scholars frequently assume that most women artists were the daughters or at least the close relatives of male artists who provided professional training, or alternatively, that they were nuns who received artistic education within the convent. But although this is true of many Italian women, it turns out to be far less inevitable than we once thought. I turn now to a comparative analysis of the situation in this regard for five Italian cities during the seventeenth

27 Mancini, 1956, 1:233–235; Baglione, 1642, 143–144; Soprani and Ratti, 1768–1769, 1:306–310.

28 Malvasia 1678, 2:478; 1841, 2:402.

29 Bohn, 2021; Modesti, 2014.

30 This new understanding of women's artistic education was first proposed in Bohn, 2021, 95–96. It was further developed in my Sydney J. Freedberg lecture at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, later in 2021: "*More perfect and excellent than men*: The Women Artists of Bologna."

century: Naples, Venice, Rome, Florence, and Bologna. As figure 1.3 demonstrates, all five of these cities recorded varying numbers of women artists during the Seicento (fig. 1.3). The numbers indicated here include only women who are recorded by name, excluding the many anonymous women artists whose names have been lost.[31] One key factor in all five cities that accounts, in part, for the growing number of female practitioners is the growing social flexibility that allowed women artists to study with men who were not family members. Of course, some women continued to come from artistic families, but such family connections were not a prerequisite for their careers. On the other hand, coming from an artistic family probably facilitated access to important patrons and commissions and hence to the greater visibility and fame of these painters' daughters. Of the six earliest recorded women artists in Bologna during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, only Lavinia Fontana verifiably came from an artistic family, a distinction that also applies to Marietta Robusti in Cinquecento Venice and to Barbara Longhi (1552–1638) in sixteenth-century Ravenna. Sometimes women's teachers are unknown, as is true of the sixteenth-century Bolognese sculptor Properzia de' Rossi; but she came from a family of notaries, not artists. Was she self-taught? Or did she receive training from a man who was not a family member? Women artists did not always come from artistic families outside Bologna, either: the first famous woman painter in Italy, the Cinquecento figure Sofonisba Anguissola of Cremona, was the daughter of a nobleman and was trained by men who were not her relatives. Irene di Spilimbergo of Venice enjoyed similar origins and training during the same century. And in the seventeenth century, Giovanna Garzoni (1600–1670), a woman painter from the Marches who worked in several Italian cities, including Venice, Florence, and Rome, also came from a family with no other recorded artists; she too trained with male nonrelatives. Even Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–after 1654), the daughter of a painter, also studied with a man who was not a family member: her notorious rapist Agostino Tassi. As women artists became more numerous, it evidently became acceptable for them to secure artistic training in various ways. Some studied with other women, but many worked with men who were not relatives. The elimination of what we have considered traditional constraints for women artists' training is historically important, because this more open system played a key role in enabling more women to become artists.

During the seventeenth century, women worked with male nonrelatives everywhere, to varying degrees. In Naples, the largest city of seventeenth-century

31 Early modern populations fluctuated significantly due to plague, famine, and other factors, and the numbers in this table represent median figures. My population estimates derive from Marshall, 2010 for Naples; Spear, 2010 for Rome; Sohm, 2010 for Venice; Vieusseux, 1916 and Fumagalli, 2010 for Florence; and Bellettini, 1961 and Morselli, 2010 for Bologna.

City	Median Population (approx.)	Number of Recorded Women Artists	Women Artists per 1000 Inhabitants
Naples	350,000	8	0.02
Venice	145,000	29	0.20
Rome	100,000	24	0.24
Florence	69,000	23	0.33
Bologna	58,000	44	0.76

Figure 1.3 Babette Bohn, Table 1: Demographics of Women Artists in Five Seventeenth-Century Italian Cities. © Author.

Italy, there were comparatively few women artists: only eight who lived during the seventeenth century were recorded in the 1740s by the Neapolitan biographer Bernardo De Dominici.[32] This apparently more conservative climate for women in Naples accords with the fact that all but one came from artistic families, although sometimes they also studied with male nonrelatives. De Dominici's biography of the painter Diana de' Rosa (1602–1643), who was born into an artistic family but also worked with Massimo Stanzione, a nonrelative, is suggestive. Much of the biography recounts Diana's violent murder by her jealous husband, who wrongly suspected her of having an affair with her teacher.[33] Although the veracity of this account has plausibly been questioned, and it fits the popular pattern of reducing a woman's vita to her love life, the story suggests that the practice of women studying with men outside their families was not really accepted in Naples.

In Venice, the second-largest city in Italy during the century, many more women artists are recorded in early documents and biographies—at least twenty-nine, making it second only to Bologna in terms of raw numbers. In proportion to its total population, however, these numbers are less impressive, constituting only about 0.2 women artists per 1,000 inhabitants, a smaller percentage than any of the five cities discussed here, apart from Naples. Since the early Venetian biographers have very little to say about these women or their artworks, however, there were probably many other practitioners whose names are no longer known. As mentioned above, in 1648 Carlo Ridolfi provided a full, separate biography of only Marietta Robusti, although he also briefly mentioned four other Italian women painters: the Venetians Irene di Spilimbergo and Chiara Varotari (1584–1663); the Bolognese Lavinia Fontana, who never visited Venice; and Giovanna Garzoni, who was born in the Marches but worked briefly in Venice.[34] In 1663, Giustiniano Martinioni's edition of Francesco

32 De Dominici, 1971.

33 De Dominici, 1971.

34 Ridolfi, 1914–1924, 71. Other Venetian writers such as Marco Boschini who mention local women artists in passing rather than in proper biographies are not discussed here. For Giovanna Garzoni's relation to

Sansovino's guidebook expanded on the limited information provided by Ridolfi in 1648. The new edition listed eleven Venetian women artists, but provided little information on any of them, discussing no specific works and explaining their training and family origins only for women from artistic families.[35] Six of the women listed were relatives of male artists: three daughters of the painter Nicolò Renieri, named Clorinda, Angelica, and Lucrezia;[36] Chiara Varotari, a portraitist who was the daughter and sister of two male painters;[37] Flaminia Triva (1629–after 1660?), whose brother Antonio was a painter; and the otherwise unknown Regina, daughter of the painter Giuseppe Enzo. The five other women painters are not connected to artistic families, and no explanation of their professional training or artistic production is provided. Perhaps Ridolfi, Sansovino, and Martinioni were more interested in local women's collective existence as a type of cultural capital for Venice rather than in their individual careers. In any case, their limited information makes it impossible to determine conclusively how many Venetian women trained with men who were not family members. Based on currently available information, however, it seems that more Venetian painters during the Seicento trained their female relatives to paint than during the previous century. As the phenomenon of women artists became more widespread and acceptable, perhaps the strong tradition of the family workshop in Venice influenced this situation.

In contrast to Venice, Rome was perhaps the most significant Italian art center with the least established tradition for male artists to train female family members. During the seventeenth century, Rome enjoyed a sizeable presence of local and foreign artists, including some 600 painters, according to Richard Spear.[38] The twenty-four women artists recorded there during the Seicento constitute a meager 4 percent of all painters in the city. Only ten of these women had male relatives who were artists, and only two were the daughters of painters, confirming Patrizia Cavazzini's important observation that most male painters in Rome did not train their daughters to paint.[39] They trained their wives to assist in the family workshop somewhat more often, since four women were artists' spouses. The situation for women in Rome may reflect in some measure the dominance of famous male artists with strong connections to the papal court. But perhaps it also suggests a more flexible attitude toward women's artistic training outside of their families,

Venice see the essay by Sheila Barker in this volume; and on a visitor, Artemisia Gentileschi, see the essay by Davide Gasparotto.

35 On Caterina Tarabotti, whom they listed without specifying her teacher(s), see the essay by Giorgios Markou in this volume.

36 Sansovino, 1663. On these three artists, see Magani, 1996.

37 On Varotari, see Ericani, 1996, and Diana Gisolfi's essay in this volume.

38 Spear, 2010, 40–41.

39 Cavazzini, 2008, 41–42.

since most women in Rome obtained at least some professional training from men who were not relatives.

The smaller city of Florence was more sympathetic in many ways to women artists than Naples, Venice, or Rome. The twenty-three women artists recorded there in the seventeenth century constitute a larger proportion of the Florentine population than in these other, larger cities. It is also striking that only about half of these women came from artistic families, with several of the exceptions coming from the nobility.[40] One distinguishing factor in Florence is that so many women artists were nuns: at least a fifth in the seventeenth century, following an even larger percentage in the prior century, when fifteen were recorded, including the painter Plautilla Nelli (1524–1588).[41] Nun-artists trained in the convent, where they typically studied art with their sisters and by copying available artworks. Overall, Florence evidently provided a more receptive environment for women artists than Naples, Venice, or Rome, as suggested by both their numbers and the origins of so many from nonartistic families. Six women painters worked with male nonrelatives in seventeenth-century Florence, constituting just over a fourth of the women artists recorded by name: Giovanna Marmocchini Cortese Fratellini (1666–1731); Angelica Furini, the sister of Francesco, who according to Baldinucci studied with Cristofano Allori; Arcangela Paladini (1599–1622), who trained with Jacopo Ligozzi; the noble Maria de' Medici (1575–1642), who did also; and the "foreigners" Giovanna Garzoni and Artemisia Gentileschi.[42]

In Bologna, which had the smallest population of any of these five cities, a remarkable forty-four women were recorded as artists during the seventeenth century, constituting some 0.76 women artists per 1,000 inhabitants and including thirty-five painters who constitute about 12 percent of the 300 painters in the city—by far the highest percentage anywhere in both respects. Bolognese women artists were trained by men outside their families with increasing frequency during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, contributing significantly to the large number of women artists in the city by making professional training more readily available. During the early Seicento, only one Bolognese woman is known to have trained with a man who was not a family member: Antonia Pinelli (ca. 1592–1644), who worked with Ludovico Carracci and then married another painter late in life. Carracci provided Pinelli with designs for her paintings, such as an altarpiece of 1614, painted for the Bolognese church of the Santissima Annunziata, which is based on a drawing by Carracci that is still known.[43]

40 These included Maria de' Medici and Marguerite d'Orléans.

41 The nun-artists of seventeenth-century Florence included Maria Maddalena de' Passi (1566–1607), Cecilia Bagnesi, Deodata Buonarroti, and Beatrice Camelli.

42 My thanks to Sheila Barker for her assistance with Florentine women artists.

43 Both the painting and drawing are illustrated in Bohn, 2021, 53–54, figs. 19–20.

The number of women artists in Bologna who received some or all of their professional training outside their families increased dramatically after 1650. Of the thirty-five women painters whose birth and/or death dates fall during the Seicento, fifteen came from families with no other artists, and seven from artistic families also studied with men who were nonrelatives. In all, twenty-two women painters—63 percent of the total—trained with male nonrelatives. Although there were fewer women printmakers, an even higher percentage of them also studied with male nonrelatives. The only Bolognese women artists who invariably came from artistic families were embroiderers. The five Bolognese embroiderers whose names are still known were all the daughters or wives of painters. All five remain obscure figures today, and none of their works are still traceable.

A few women painters from nonartistic families in seventeenth-century Bologna either trained exclusively with male artists who were not relatives or joined those workshops after some initial training with the short-lived Elisabetta Sirani. Camilla Lauteri (1649/59–1681) perhaps worked with Sirani before joining Carlo Cignani's workshop, depending upon her actual birthdate. Lucrezia Scarfaglia (active ca. 1678) may have studied with Sirani before moving to the studio of Domenico Maria Canuti. Both women, whether they studied with Sirani or not, followed her example in painting primarily religious subjects.[44] Many Bolognese women painters who lived too late to have studied with Sirani trained exclusively with male artists. Teresa Muratori (1661–1708), who came from an academic family with no other artists, worked with at least three male nonrelatives: Emilio Taruffi, Lorenzo Pasinelli, and Giovan Gioseffo dal Sole, all leading painters in late Seicento Bologna. Dal Sole's studio offers compelling evidence of women's collaboration with male nonrelatives: he had four female students in his workshop, two of whom were not family members. Dal Sole was a founding member of Bologna's Accademia Clementina, in which he served as Vice Principe in 1712, so the unprecedented presence of two female nonrelatives in his studio confirms the acceptability of this practice in the city.

Thus, although all five cities discussed here had some women artists training with male nonrelatives during the seventeenth century, Bologna enjoyed the most established practice in this regard and Naples the least. Second only to Bologna was Rome, although without yielding the same results in contributing to the proliferation of successful women artists in the city. For Venice, more information is needed to elucidate the actual numbers of women who trained with male professionals outside their families, but it appears that the strong tradition of family workshops in the city encouraged painters to train their female relatives professionally more frequently during the Seicento than in the prior century.

44 On Lauteri and Scarfaglia, see Bohn, 2021, 106–110, 228, and 234.

Conclusion

Although this essay focuses on Italian women artists during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we should note that in eighteenth-century Venice, the situation began to change. Two artists from this period experienced contrasting critical fortunes; both are discussed in essays that appear in this volume.[45] One—Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757)—is better documented than her predecessors in Venice and became quite famous, whereas the other—Giulia Lama (1681–1747)—received far less attention from contemporary local writers. Rosalba, uniquely among the women discussed in the present essay, was a member of three academies, in Rome, Bologna, and Paris; indeed, she became the first female member of Bologna's Accademia Clementina in 1720, a striking testimony to her fame.[46] She was an international celebrity, famous particularly for her extraordinary pastel portraits, which were appreciated in France, Great Britain, Austria, and other locations beyond her native Venice.[47] Finally, although some details of her early training are still unknown, our information on Rosalba relies not only on early biographies but also on her estate inventory, journals, and numerous letters,[48] probably making her the first Italian woman artist who is known from so many diverse primary sources.

In comparison to Rosalba, Giulia Lama was less famous, and the inattention of the early writers to her biography has left many aspects of her career and training unknown. A letter of 1728, from Abbot Luigi Conti to Madame de Caylus, hints that this inattention to her works by local writers may also be linked to her persecution by other local (male) painters.[49] Even so, Lama received commissions for public altarpieces in Venice, suggesting some appreciation for her skills during her own lifetime. In 1733, Zanetti noted five public pictures by Lama in Venetian churches, but most of her painted production was not registered by early Venetian writers, who also completely ignored her evidently prolific creation of drawings.[50] For both women, the uncertainty about their early training and occasional deprecating

45 See the essays by Xavier Salomon and Cleo Nisse in this volume.

46 Giumanini, 1998–1999, 215.

47 And she was friends with prominent intellectuals and connoisseurs such as Pierre Crozat and Anton Maria Zanetti the Elder; see Barcham, 2009.

48 Sani, 1985; Jeffares, 2022, 784.

49 Pallucchini, 1970, 161. Harris (1976, 165–166) thought this might be the first recorded instance of "outright opposition on the part of male artists to the career of a woman," but an earlier example is the enmity of Bolognese male artists such as Amico Aspertini to Properzia de' Rossi in the early sixteenth century.

50 Zanetti, 1733, 76, 171, 189, 258, and 381. Lama's oeuvre today is chiefly based on modern attributions by Pallucchini and Ruggeri. See, for example, Pallucchini, 1933; 1970; and Ruggeri 1967; 1973. On Lama's drawings, see Bohn, 2023.

comments about their physical unattractiveness suggest that even by the eighteenth century, biographies of women artists were rarely produced with the same degree of factual detail that was accorded to their male contemporaries, a pattern that diminished the fame and appreciation of most early modern women artists after their deaths.[51]

Early biographical approaches to recording women artists in different Italian cities, the proclivity of some women to sign their works, local workshop traditions, and varied possibilities for the artistic education of women are among the factors that have shaped what we know today about women artists from early modern Italy. Thanks to groundbreaking archival research, innovative attributions and examinations of artworks, and other methods, as exemplified by the essays in this volume, we can hope to recover a deeper understanding of the women artists who worked in early modern Venice and beyond.

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Archival Abbreviation

BCArchBo = Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna

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51 For a discussion of the alleged ugliness of Rosalba Carriera as she aged, see Dabbs, 2017, 30; on Lama's, see the letter published by Pallucchini, 1970, 161. Such considerations of an artist's physical attractiveness (or its absence) are far more common for women than for men.

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2. The *Taiapiera* in Fourteenth-Century Venice: What's in a Name?

Louise Bourdua

Abstract
The chance discovery in the Venetian state archive of the testament of *Christina taiapiera*, widow of magister Francesco and daughter of magister Lando (dated November 11, 1510) presents us with an opportunity to consider the contribution of women to the stonecarving industry in Venice. This essay will move back from the sixteenth century to the fourteenth where the patronym "tagliapietra" (stonecarver) could be adopted as a "professional attribute" referring to the occupation or to a family name. Although difficult to trace, we can nonetheless find women holding key roles in the business including that of the prominent sculptor Andriolo de' Santi. Such documentary evidence will be placed alongside visual data to exercise our ability to "see" and to identify.

Keywords: Female labor, sculpture industry, stonecarving, artists' wills, artists' families, Andriolo de' Santi

The discovery in the Venetian state archive of the last will and testament of a woman calling herself *Christina taiapiera*, dictated on November 11, 1510,[1] presents us with an opportunity and a challenge to consider the contribution of women to the business of stone carving, stonemasonry, and stone selling in Venice. Cristina, from Santa Margherita in Venice, was the daughter of *magister* Francesco Lando and had been married to another *magister* named Filippo.[2] She was an elderly, childless widow, had a sister named Paula and brother named Simon and through them had at least five

1 ASVe, Procuratori di San Marco (henceforward PSM) de Citra, b. 326, loose papers numbered 1212; authenticated copy dated 10 November 1602; three pages, unpaginated. Notary: Baron de Grigijs. I would like to thank those who have made comments on earlier versions of this essay. In particular, I owe a debt of gratitude to Ines Ivić.

2 ASVe, PSM de Citra, b. 326, loose papers numbered 1212, fol. 1r.

Cooper, T.E. (ed.), *Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750: Uncovering the Female Presence*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
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nephews and nieces, three of whom were chosen as her executors and beneficiaries, while the other two also inherited. Cristina's testament is interesting as an indicator of a good deal of wealth in the hands of a widow, not only monetary but in material goods including silver and pearls, as well as other objects devoted to an image of Mary and the body of St. Lucy.[3] Her will, however, reveals nothing about the stone industry. The surname she acquires from her husband, *taiapiera* (stone cutter) and the fact that she is the daughter of a "magister" who marries a "magister" is the only hint that she may have been related to that industry.[4] In considering what is in a name, this essay attempts to track and trace women's contribution to the Veneto stone industry during the fourteenth century. As is well known, the only securely documented female stone carver remains the Bolognese Properzia de' Rossi who lived from around 1490 to 1530 and carved in marble in the *fabbrica* of San Petronio Bologna. She was famously recorded by Vasari, not only as the only woman sculptor but as "carving peach stones."[5] While Fredrika Jacobs and others have put Vasari and the rest of historiography in their place regarding this sculptor, we still know nothing of her training, except for the fact that she was not the daughter of a sculptor.[6]

In Navarre, Peralta in Tuscany, Seville, Lyon, Paris, Périgueux, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Frankfurt, Basel, London, and Stiffkey in Norfolk during the middle ages and the early modern period, we find women working as masons and day laborers on building projects.[7] In Rome on the slightly later *cantiere* of "new" Saint Peter's, women (often widows) did the heavy lifting or drove carts, while others furnished heavy materials such as iron bars. They were known as the *sanpietrine*.[8] In the literature dealing with the history of Venice's architecture and the building trade we get the impression, however, that women only contributed to the built environment as patrons.[9]

Yet, could women who bore the designation *taiapiera* or *tagliapietra* have contributed to the stone industry? The name, adopted by Venetian women from as early as the thirteenth century,[10] poses all sorts of difficulties. It could be adopted

3 ASVe, PSM de Citra, b. 326, loose papers numbered 1212, fol. 2v.

4 Neither Lando nor Francesco appear in the *Bolla d'oro*, the register of patricians who had reached eighteen years of age. The first witness (Zuan galer) was an apothecary (*spicier*/*aromatarius*) and the second (Vincenzo de Alvise) was a woodworker (*marangonus*); ASVe, PSM de Citra, B. 326, loose papers numbered 1212, fol. 3r.

5 Vasari, 1976, vol. 4, 399–405, esp. 401. See also Quin, 2012, 134–149.

6 Jacobs, 1993, 124–126, 129. Now see Bohn, 2021, 14–15, 31–36, 233–234.

7 For a synthesis see Roff, 2010.

8 Marconi, 2017.

9 Roff, 2010, 109, made a similar observation about medieval and early modern Europe in general.

10 Almengarda, wife of Bono tagliapietra, 1 October 1253; ASVe, San Zaccaria, b. 37, Perg., n. 30; https://asve.arianna4.cloud/patrimonio/7b3123c0-2d55-4a27-b5f7-190a84de8973/b-37-pergg-n-30-rivoalti-%5Bvenezia%5D-01-10-1253, accessed 30 October 2022; Sorelli, 2015, 209–210.

as a "professional attribute," or a noble family suffix as Linda Guzzetti and Antje Ziemann have observed.[11] Documents from the thirteenth century suggest that the *tagliapietra* kin were among the *populare* who attempted to acquire key positions in the management of the state,[12] while later genealogical compendia record that the conduct of at least two of their menfolk during the war with the Genoese (especially in Chioggia in 1378) earned the family a place in the newly expanded list of noble families.[13] By the sixteenth century when Cristina was completing her will, documents sometimes include "cha" (house/clan of) before taiapiera.[14]

Fourteenth-century records such as the lists of members (*matricole*) from the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista further illustrate the complexity of interpreting the use of tagliapietra as an identifier. Some confraternity brothers appear to have been nobles, for instance the guardians and members of the Great Council of the Scuola.[15] Others, simple brethren (*frari dela scuola*), are listed in alphabetical order and their second name must surely denote their profession. For example, on the left column of fol. 21r, we find Andrea "tentor" (dyer) and Andrea "inçignier" (engineer) and so on, while Andrea Lovari "marangun" (woodworker) heads the right column and two "Antuonio taiapiera" are listed on the eighth entry below.[16] Although we know almost nothing else about these two men, "Dardi taiapiera" who heads the membership list beginning with "D" may be the same man who received payments on behalf of three sculptors (Andriolo de'Santi, Alberto son of Ziliberto di Pietro Santo, and Francesco son of Bonaventura) for work on the tomb of the murdered ruler of Padua, Jacopo da Carrara, on February 26, 1351.[17] Dardi (son of Francesco Cavoxio) also imported stone from Istria in 1350–1351, was still running the stone business in 1388 with his son Francesco, and was dead by 1393.[18]

11 Guzzetti and Ziemann, 2002, 1175 n. 9. One example is that of Enrico Tagliapietra, archpriest of the congregation of San Luca, documented in November 1234; ASVe, San Zaccaria, b. 36, perg. 161; https://asve.arianna4.cloud/patrimonio/9b04edc6-3d90-4d8a-8c46-3a7e393245a0/b-36-pergg-n-161-rivoalti-%5Bvenezia%5D-11-1234, accessed 30 October 2022. For other sixteenth-century cases see Grubb, 2000, 346, 359; Schmitter, 2004, 942–943.

12 Sotrelli, 2015, 84.

13 Bettinelli, 1780, 147–148.

14 As in the case of "madona Marina relicta (widow) del quondam miser Hector da cha Taiapiere" dated August 1514, in ASVe, Redecima 1514, b. 43, S. Marcuola 69–70, https://asve.arianna4.cloud/patrimonio/21b01806-cfaa-44fd-92e8-77354ec1abdf/marina-tagliapietra-vedova-di-ettore-22-08-1514, accessed 30 October 2022.

15 ASVe, Scuola grande di S. Giovanni evangelista, Reg. 4. Guardians: Stefano taiapiera 1353 & Stefano taiapiera 1358 (fol. 4r); men on the Great Council (*gran conscio*) included Quintini taiapiera (fol. 11r) and Francesco taiapiera (fol. 11 v).

16 ASVe, Scuola grande di S. Giovanni evangelista, Reg. 4, fol. 21r. Among "frari dela scuola" were several Antonio taiapiera.

17 ASVe, Scuola grande di S. Giovanni evangelista, Reg. 4, fol. 26r. See Bourdua, 2010, 105.

18 Connell, 1988, 27; Bourdua, 2010, 105.

Between 1318 and 1327, the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista included at least 312 sister members, listed in a *matricula* published by Lorenza Pamato.[19] Their names are not recorded in the same manner as the men above, an example of the "many forms of occlusion" faced by the researcher as defined by Shelley E. Roff in a survey of women's participation in construction sites in medieval and early modern Europe.[20] In the Scuola records, women are listed by *sestiere* (districts) rather than alphabetically; their profession is noted rarely (only fourteen times) and they are often defined in relation to their husband or his profession: a maker of floors (*soler*), a goldsmith (*orafo*), and two *marangoni*.[21] Notwithstanding this, among the fourteen occupations we find some artisans (working in textile, shoes, apothecaries), and a woman who cuts or carves: Maria "entaiaressa" from Santa Maria Mater Domini.[22] Even though the material she fashioned eludes us at this stage of research, such an entry highlights the need to look further into the role of women in the business of stone sculpture in Venice. Until now, women have featured only in the context of creating family alliances between workshops through marriage. This is the space they occupied in Susan Connell's pioneering doctoral dissertation of 1976 focusing on Venetian stonemasons and their production, their material conditions of life, salary, residence, place of work and location, permanence in the city, trips to the quarries including those in Istria, materials, contracts and relationships with patrons and other specialist workers. Within this vast corpus, daughters only make fleeting appearances, such as Cristina Baroso who, in 1401, was provided with a dowry of 500 ducats (by her father the stonemason and merchant Geronimo) to marry Andrea Bon, son of the late Jacopo of S. Giovanni Crisostomo, and head of a dynasty of stone sculptors that was to become renowned during the fifteenth century.[23] That this dowry was "one of the highest paid" within this profession during the fifteenth century offers food for thought: what did Andrea Bon gain with this marriage aside from ready funds? Could Cristina Baroso help him manage his trade? Emma Jones' recent doctoral thesis on the business of sculpture in Venice a century or more later concluded that "the usual business model … was that of the family partnership, either between fathers and sons or between brothers, as it had been for their fifteenth-century counterparts."[24] Women occasionally appear in

19 Pamato, 2001, 468–480.

20 Roff, 2010, 110.

21 Pamato, 2001, 473.

22 Pamato, 2001, 473, 497. Boerio, 1867, 347–348, refers "intagiar" to cut/inscribe into stone or other materials.

23 17 February 1401, Connell, 1988, 27. Connell's chapters 7, 8, 11, and part of 12 are published in Italian in Connell, 1993, 31–97, mined extensively in Dal Borgo, 2003. Dorigo, 2003. Without these two published works, finding anything in the archives would be looking for a needle in the haystack.

24 Jones, 2016, vol. 1, 132.

Jones' rich three-volume study, but their role is not investigated. Take for instance the involvement of Alessandro Vittoria's first wife, Paola Venturini. She appears unnamed in an account drawn up on April 10, 1565 by a notary who records that the representative of the church of San Geremia had come to Vittoria's house to reply to a complaint the sculptor had levelled against them regarding a statuette of John the Baptist he had never delivered. The messenger "was told by the garzone that Vittoria was not in the house, but his wife then came down, took the letter, read it and kept it with her so as to give it to her husband."[25] In other words, Paola Venturini took care of business while Alessandro Vittoria was out.

Other wives of sculptors were expected to know what to do with statues to realize their value. Erminia di Martini, the second wife of Francesco Segala, was bequeathed "various pieces of sculpture" in his testament of May 13, 1580, in lieu of returning the dowry.[26] Although I have yet to discover what she did with the sculptures (if she ever received them), it seems to me that women heeded the advice given long before by Christine de Pisan in *The Treasury of the City of Ladies* (1405): "learn all the shop details so that [you] can properly supervise the workers when [your] husband is away or not paying attention."[27] Indeed, Monica Chojnacka has suggested that women "might have learned to assist their father's trade," as revealed by her sixteenth-century survey of 20,000 people.[28]

Returning to the fourteenth century, we find buried amidst fragmentary accounts that the wives of sculptors (called *lapicidi* and/or *tagliapietra* interchangeably during that century) handled both financial and legal affairs of the shop. For example, on November 24, 1345, the wife of a *taiapetra* from San Vitale, Nicoleto Scacco (her own name is not recorded), authorized the better known Andriolo de' Santi to carry money given by the procurators of San Marco to the *cantiere* of San Zeno in Verona where her husband worked. Nearly twenty-six years later, on the eleventh of May 1370, it was the turn of Andriolo de' Santi to rely on his wife Eufemia, the daughter of the Venetian tailor Jerome, to represent him in Venice while he was away working for the Franciscans in Padua: she had power of attorney to act as his messenger, factor, manager, and legal proctor and to appear in front of the doge, judges, procurators of San Marco, civic or ecclesiastical official in order to petition on his behalf or receive what he might be due.[29] One wonders whether Andriolo had learned a lesson from his experience of four years before when he

25 Transcribed by Jones, 2016, vol. 3, 35–36, doc. 3.3.

26 Jones, 2016, vol. 1, 131 n. 13.

27 Cited in Roff, 2010, 117.

28 Chojnacka, 2001, 6.

29 "Portavit Andriolus taiapiera de voluntate uxoris dicti nicoleti," ASVe, PSM, Misti, Commissarie, b. 4, Quaternus aministracioni depositi nobilis militis dominis petri nan de marano de Vincencia civis veneciarum: folio of accounts incipit "MCCCXLV mense julij die sabbati XVI intrante," third entry;

had gotten into trouble in Padua (after disappearing), which lead to the town crier looking for him, standing outside his house there after nones and before vespers over a period of three days, denouncing him publicly and loudly, and threatening confiscation of his goods.[30]

From what I have been able to uncover so far, the most commonly reported way in which a tagliapietra woman was engaged in the workshop during the fourteenth century was as a testamentary executor, acting as part of a familial or co-worker group, or more rarely alone. Finding these records among the probate files kept by the procurators of San Marco now distributed across the thousands of notarial boxes in the Venetian state archives, is not easy. Moreover, some Venetian material is held in archives elsewhere, as is the case for Andriolo de' Santi (Florence and Treviso). In this case, his spouse Eufemia and daughter Lucia were his executors. Interestingly, his son Giovanni, the only one who is still documented in 1375 when his father died and who had worked with him and took over the shop, was not an executor. Andriolo's other, perhaps older daughter Katerucia [Caterina] had been married to another tagliapietra Andrea Catanio (recorded in 1384, 1399).[31] In this way, Andriolo's heirs could grow the networks supporting the business while still relying on his own male progeny to do the skilled labor of carving the stone. The Catanio family was already close to Andriolo in 1365 when Zaninus Catanio from S. Agnese acted as a witness for the master.[32]

The pattern of appointing wife and children can be seen again in the will of Jacobus Taiapetra who was very infirm by November 26, 1376: he chose his wife Lucia and sons Nicoleto and Basileo to carry out his final wishes but not his brother Maffeo, who was also a taiapetra.[33] Were the women chosen in part because of their levels of literacy? In Venice, it was not unusual for women to put down their own wishes in pen on paper. Indeed, there was a notable number of testatrices who wrote down their last wishes in their own hand, as demonstrated by Linda Guzzetti's study of 500 fourteenth-century testaments.[34] At least one example by the spouse of a stone cutter (Franceschino Baroxio) survives: Margarita drafted

published in Gallo, 1949, 21, doc. 3. For Eufemia, see ASPd, Notarile, 404, fol. 8v.; published in Moschetti, 1928, 296 doc. V.

30 ASPd, Archivi Giudiziari Civilii, Sigillo, t. 2, fols 24r, 29v, 31v, 35r; published in part by Moschetti, 1928, 294–296; see Bourdua, 2010, 105.

31 ASPd, Notarile, 273, fols 32v–33r; published by Sartori, 1976, 10. Rodulfis, 1974, 288–290 docs 324–325.

32 Zanino (Çaninus) witnessed the deed on 31 July 1365; in Boateriis, 1973, 332–333 doc. 329. It is worth noting that Andriolo employed two tagliapietre named "Janninus" (from Venice and Ferrara) on the portal of San Lorenzo in Vicenza. Gallo, 1949, 31–37 docs. 9–10.

33 ASVe, b. 913, register 1, loose leaf; cited by Connell, 1988, 22

34 Some 36.6 percent of testatrices wrote in their own hand between 1375 and 1400, an increase on the 3.6 percent who had done so during the first quarter of that century, the first period sampled by Guzzetti, 1998, 32.

her own testament on June 20, 1382 and sent it to the notary who produced an official version.[35]

Nearly a century later, in his will of August 8, 1464, the well-known stone sculptor Bartolomeo Bon appointed Maria, his spouse, and two friends Niccolò d'Agnol and Matteo Nadel to carry out his last wishes.[36] Bartolomeo and Maria had no sons but two daughters whom they had named Soperiana and Castoria after the early Christian sculptors Symphorian and Castorius who were martyred by Diocletian for refusing to carve idols and sacrifice to them.[37] It was evidently a family business. We have no idea whether Soperiana and Castoria were ever encouraged to hold a chisel.

Aside from wives and daughters, were there other women involved in the tagliapietra industry? Who unloaded the boats and carts of their stone cargo? Who carried the sand, water and lime, bricks, and stone blocks on construction sites? Who dug the foundations? The short answer is day laborers and slaves. In some cities including Périgueux and Toulouse during the second half of the fourteenth century, it was mainly women who did this.[38] In the best extant accounts for the Veneto (the portal of San Lorenzo in Vicenza of 1342–1345 by Andriolo de Santi), day labor is logged generically as a record of what was spent and when, and the only individual name is the master (or religious) who carried the money to the workers as follows: "for expenses made in carrying … to load and unload … [on] the cart … [on] the boat."[39] Occasionally, the number of manual laborers and days of employment are mentioned but without ever revealing their gender, for instance "duobus laborantibus" employed for six days.[40] Slaves are equally difficult to identify. We know, however, that Andriolo de' Santi bought and sold slaves: on the thirteenth of May 1373, he sold one forty-year-old Tartar slave christened Bartolomeo along with his twenty-five-year-old wife Clara, two twenty-four-year-old women named Catarina and Agnes and another Catarina aged twenty-three years old.[41] What we do not know is what work they may have carried out in the sculpture workshop. As slaves, and therefore extremely unlikely to receive remuneration, their absence from the weekly accounts of *cantiere* should not surprise. At least two male slaves appear nonetheless working the stone with their masters: Gerardo di Mainardo bequeathed tools, clothing, and freedom to his male slave in his testament of

35 See ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 913. Loose paper dated 20 June 1382. The copy worked up by the notary, Francesco Seraphino, also survives.

36 Connell, 1988, 22.

37 Amore, 1968, cols 1276–1286.

38 Cited in Roff, 2010, 115. Jenny Alexander (pers. com., 9 February 2022) tells me slaves in Compostela performed the labor (twelfth century); she is not sure of their gender.

39 Gallo, 1949, 23.

40 Records from the 31st of January to 23 April 1344 in Gallo, 1949, 33.

41 ASPd, Notarile, t. 24, fols. 142v, 148r; published erroneously as 1374 by Sartori, 1976, 10.

Figure 2.1 Anonymous, *Tartarus discipulus* (*The Tatar Disciple*), 1340s? Istrian stone and porphyry; almond-shaped eyes, flat nose, wearing fur-lined beret. Nineteenth-century copy of capital no. 18 in the portico (counting from the corner by the Bridge of Sighs), Palazzo Ducale, Venice. (CC-By) Giovanni Dall' Orto.

1405; and Giovanni Bon stipulated that his slave Antonio should work in his son Bartolomeo's workshop for ten years and thereafter be released.[42]

The carved figure of a sculptor inscribed *Tartarus Discipulus* (dated between 1340 and 1355) sitting cross-legged and working on a diminutive porphyry column originally on the eighteenth capital of the portico of the Palazzo Ducale Venice (and now in its Museo dell'Opera) is one of a few extant images available to tease our ability to see and identify what is seldom glimpsed in the archives (fig. 2.1). Wearing a fur-lined beret, his almond-shaped eyes and flat nose betray the stereotyped features of "Tartars," a catch-all term that included citizens of the Mongol empire and anyone coming from the far east.[43]

Women are also depicted occasionally on worksites in fourteenth-century paintings in northeast Italy, beginning with the frescoes of the baptistery of Padua, painted by Giusto de' Menabuoi most probably in the late 1370s.[44] The

42 Connell, 2000, 47.

43 Tonzar, 2013–2014, 338.

44 Bourdua, 2022.

Figure 2.2 Giusto de' Menabuoi, *Building of Noah's Ark*, 1370s. Fresco. Baptistery, Padua. © Diocesi di Padova, Archivio fotografico.

building of the ark under Noah's directions high up on the drum focuses on the various stages of woodworking, ranging from sawing beams into planks and splitting logs to the lunch break. A woman appears behind the man sawing the beam in the upper position. Her gender is instantly recognizable by the clothing she wears: a long dress revealing the shape of her bosom with long sleeves gathered at the wrists. She carries a long pole with two hands and leans it against her left shoulder and heads towards the man wielding an axe above his head. This is an area that has been restored, as is evident from photographs published by Sergio Bettini in 1944, so one needs to be careful, but in both old and new photographs one can certainly make out two baskets at the rear and a flask at the front (fig. 2.2).[45] Wine, after all, was a legitimate expense as recorded in the weekly accounts submitted for work on *cantieri*.[46] We can quibble on the contents of this basket and container, but the woman is surely carrying lunch to the workers. This essential assistance within the shop was particularly highlighted by Roff as "not … recognized as part of the economy of the building trades or of any other craft."[47]

Lower down in Menabuoi's image for the Padua Baptistery, at the foot of the tower of Babel, numerous tagliapietra appear at the foot of the tower of Babel alongside a giant man sometimes identified as Nimrod who stands on top of the piles of blocks, building materials intended for the tower.[48] Three stone cutters who hold mallets and chisels and carve a block can be spotted in the fore and middle ground (fig. 2.3). The first on the left sits behind it, the one on the right straddles it, and the middle one can be seen from the back. Two other figures can be made out just right of the giant: each hold a mallet and wears garments with a round neck and sleeves. Both sport a thick mass of blond curls, with one bearded (to the left) and the other with no facial hair. The latter particularly stands out from the youth in the foreground left who has wavy flowing curls and no facial hair and wears a sleeveless garment. Our blond beardless stone carver decidedly looks quite different and is perhaps older. Could this be an apprentice to the older bearded companion? Apprentices are often unnamed but appear in the records alongside their master such as *magister* Maffeo, paid for his work and that of his "famulo" in 1342 on the *cantiere* of San Lorenzo Vicenza names.[49] Could the younger figure without facial hair be a slave, a woman, or both? However provocative this may appear, the point is to look again and again, search and think.

45 Bettini, 1944, figs. 75–76.

46 For example, at San Lorenzo Vicenza from 1 August to 31 October 1342; published in Gallo, 1949, 24–28.

47 Roff, 2010, 110.

48 Derbes, 2020.

49 Gallo, 1949, 29.

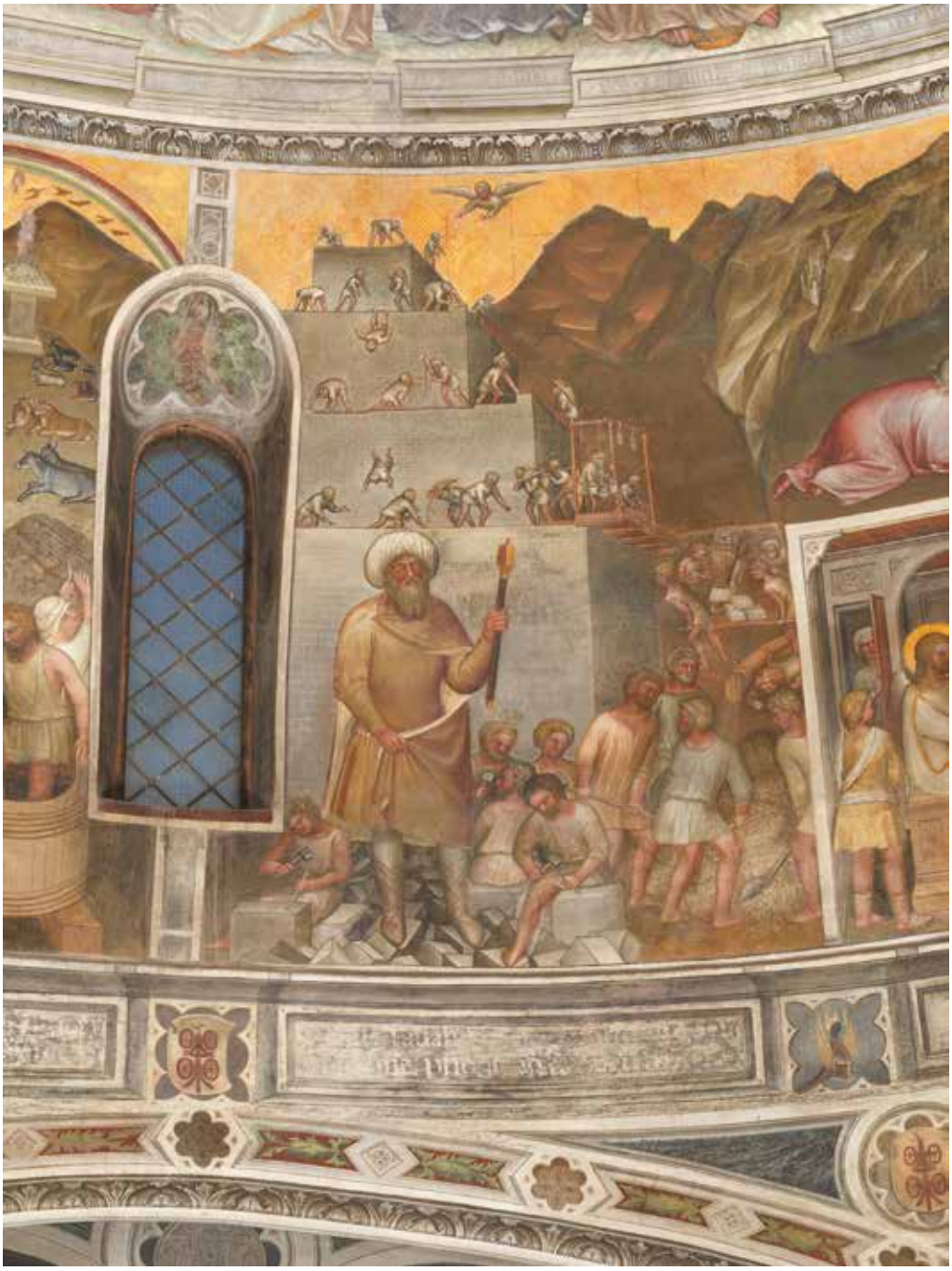

Figure 2.3 Giusto de' Menabuoi, Detail of Stonecarvers at foot of the *Construction of the Tower of Babel*, 1370s. Fresco. Baptistery, Padua. © Diocesi di Padova, Archivio fotografico.

Although this essay poses more questions than answers, I hope to have highlighted the possibilities of researching women in the tagliapietra industry in Venice during the late middle ages. There is potential to find more by synthesizing the published literature and returning to the archives guided by Connell and Wladimir Dorigo's monumental three-volume history of Venice and its appendices.[50] The creation of large open access databases of documents, images, maps, and genealogies of families and workers within the wider stone industry (and related crafts) would not only redress the balance of women in the workshop but only begin to fully understand how the business of stone was conducted.

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Archival Abbreviations

ASPd = Archivio di Stato di Padova, Padua
ASVe = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice

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3. In Search of Marietta Tintoretta

Robert Echols and Frederick Ilchman

Abstract
Marietta Tintoretta (ca. 1552–ca. 1590), daughter of the great Jacopo Tintoretto, was herself a renowned artist, admired by her contemporaries, especially for her portraits, and sought after as court painter by rulers including King Philip II of Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. Despite early acclaim and a biography by Carlo Ridolfi (1648), today not a single painting can be securely identified as by her hand. This chapter addresses this conundrum, reviewing the documentary evidence of Marietta's life (including important documents discovered within the last two decades), revisiting the scholarly literature, and evaluating works that could potentially be attributed to her, based on an ongoing reconsideration of the oeuvre of Jacopo Tintoretto and his circle.

Keywords: Renaissance, Venetian painting, Jacopo Tintoretto, female artists, women musicians, family workshops

Marietta Tintoretta (ca. 1552–ca. 1590) is famous as an early example of a woman artist, yet not a single painting has conclusively been identified as by her hand. Trained by her father Jacopo Tintoretto (1518 or 1519–1594), she was admired by her contemporaries and the subject of an independent biography within sixty years of her death. In the nineteenth century, she became the heroine of novels and plays and the subject of sentimental paintings. Today she is regularly listed in surveys and catalogues, including key texts in feminist art history. Yet for all that is written about her, this artist might as well have lived in ancient Greece. Like the women painters celebrated by Pliny the Elder, Marietta is a name without an oeuvre. Perhaps even worse, most of the pictures that have been attributed to her—especially images found in an internet search—are decidedly second-rate, failing to justify the esteem in which she was held by her contemporaries or the importance she has been accorded in art history.[1]

1 "Marietta Tintoretta" is the name used by her first biographers, Borghini and Ridolfi, and we use it here as the one that best expresses her professional identity. (This is the Italian version; in Venetian the

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This essay explores the conundrum of Marietta Tintoretta from the perspective of Tintoretto specialists, a point of view largely absent from the discussion for many decades.[2] We first set out the biographical evidence, emphasizing documents recently unearthed that provide potentially significant information about her chronology. We review the art-historical literature, which has primarily offered speculation on individual works that might be attributed to her—mostly pale reflections of her father's—without offering a sense of a career as a whole. We conclude by proposing a different methodology, focused on Marietta's place within the Tintoretto studio and her artistic relationship to her younger half-brother Domenico (1560–1635) and grounded in our reconstruction of the oeuvre and chronology of Jacopo Tintoretto and his workshop, which has been the primary topic of our research for the past three decades. Even if speculative and incomplete (we shall present a more comprehensive analysis of potential works by Marietta in a subsequent essay), our approach will offer a richer sense of what La Tintoretta might have achieved than has been presented to date.

Marietta as Seen by Her Contemporaries

The earliest reference to Marietta Tintoretta by name, published during her lifetime, praises her talent but provides limited information about her works, none of it first-hand. Rafaello Borghini, in *Il riposo* (1584), under the heading "Marietta Tintoretta, dipintrice," recounts the following:

> Tintoretto has a daughter named Marietta, called Tintoretta by all, who, besides her beauty and grace and knowledge of playing the harpsichord, lute, and other instruments, paints very well and has done many beautiful works. And she

name would most commonly be spelled "Marieta Tentoreta.") In the few surviving archival documents that name her, discussed below, she is identified in relation to her father and later her husband — that is, some version of "Marietta, daughter of Jacopo Robusti, called Tintoretto, wife of Marco Augusta." This is the formulation she used in referring to herself (see note 26, below). In the interests of clarity, because this essay refers frequently to her father and brother, we generally call all Tintoretto family members by their first names. The authors are deeply grateful to Maria Adank for sharing archival expertise and knowledge of the Venetian historical context. She kindly reviewed the biographical sections of this essay, consulted on the meaning of references, and checked documents on our behalf. We also thank Emma P. Holter for bibliographic and editing assistance.

2 The subject of Marietta's career as a whole (as distinct from occasional individual attributions) has largely been eschewed by Tintoretto specialists. See, for example, the minimal references to her by Tietze, 1948, 60, and Rossi, 1990, 13. In addition to those cited in the following notes, recent work includes Silverstein, 1998; Wasmer, 2001; as well as summary biographies in Nichols, 1996; Grosso, 2017. In Weddigen, 1994, Marietta appears as part of an imaginary dialogue.

> did, among the others, the portrait of Jacopo Strada, Antiquarian of Emperor Maximilian II, and the portrait of she herself that, as a rare thing, His Majesty keeps in his room. And [Maximilian], as also King Philip and Archduke Ferdinand, did everything to have this excellent woman with him and sent to ask her of her father. But [Tintoretto], greatly loving her, did not want her taken from his sight. But, having married, she enjoys its virtue and she does not fail continually to paint, finding herself about twenty-eight years. But, because I have no detailed knowledge of her works, I will not move forward in discussing her.[3]

Il riposo discusses two other women: Lavinia Fontana is mentioned only within the biography of her father, Prospero Fontana, while Properzia de' Rossi receives more attention, with specific works cited.[4] Both Marietta and Properzia are presented in terms of a trope applied to women artists, with their artistic activity being equated with beauty and musical skill.[5]

Most other early discussions of Marietta do not specify her first name, merely linking her to her celebrated father. In a text published in 1577, the blind poet Luigi Groto (1541–1585) refers to the very beautiful and virtuous daughters of Tintoretto.[6] A potentially more sympathetic commentator, the poet Moderata Fonte

3 Borghini, 2007, 265. "Ha il Tintoretto una figliola chiamata Marietta, e detta da tutti Tintoretta, la quale oltre alla bellezza e alla grazia, e al saper suonar il gravicembalo, di liuto e d'altri strumenti, dipigne benissimo, e ha fatto molte bell'opere, e fra l'altre fece il ritratto di Jacopo Strada, antiquario dell'Imperadore Massimiliano II, e il ritratto di lei stessa, i quali come cosa rara, Sua Maestà gli tenne in camera sua, e fece ogni opera di avere appresso a sé questa donna eccellente, la quale fu ancora mandata a chiedere al Padre dal re Filippo, e dall'arciduca Ferdinando; ma egli molto amandola non la si volle tor di vista; ma avendola maritata si gode delle sue virtù, ed ella non lascia continovamente di dipingere, ritrovandosi intorno ai 28 anni; ma perché io non ho particolare notizia delle opere sue, di lei ragionando, non passerò più avanti." Borghini does not mention Domenico Tintoretto, who in 1582 was roughly twenty-two and had played a leading role in his father's workshop for several years.

4 "And, to proclaim his [Prospero's] name he has a daughter named Lavinia, who paints very well and has done many paintings in public and private places. And these have gone to Rome and other cities where they are held of great merit." Borghini, 2007, 275. Borghini extols De' Rossi's beauty and talent as a musician, in terms similar to those in his biography of Marietta, describing her as "very rare of talent and very beautiful of form, beside singing and playing instruments that she did better than the other women of her city." Borghini, 2007, 211–212.

5 See Savage, 2018, 16–17.

6 The reference to Tintoretto as "padre di figlie bellissime, et dotate insieme d'ogni nobil virtù" appears in a comment by Groto to a madrigal included in his *Rime* (1577). The madrigal praises the subject's painted images and his daughters, the images seemingly formed by nature and the daughters by art. The poems in the volume were written over the period 1558–1577, so this one may date from before the period of Marietta's celebrity. See Gallo, 1941; Mazzucco, 2009, 280–281. In addition to Marietta, Jacopo had seven children who survived into maturity: Domenico, Marco, Gierolima [later Sister Perina], Zuan Battista, Lucrezia [later Sister Ottavia], Ottavia, and Laura. Mazzucco, 2009, 212–213; Mason, 2018, 54. Sister Perina and Sister Ottavia were also engaged in the arts, in a more traditional role for women; in

(1555–1592), praises the "amazing talent" ("stupendo valore") of Tintoretto's daughter in the *dialogo*, *Il merito delle donne*, begun around 1588. Yet Fonte neither employs Marietta's name nor cites any specific works.[7] Karel van Mander's *Schilder-boeck* (1604) provides a brief glimpse of the young Marietta, reporting that the Flemish painter Pieter Vlerick worked for a time in Tintoretto's studio and could have married Tintoretto's daughter, "something that would have pleased him very much." Vlerick, who was in Venice ca. 1564–1565, must have himself been the source of this information, as he had been Van Mander's teacher in 1568–1569.[8] In 1636, the humanist Giulio Cornelio Gratiano raised Marietta above the greatest women artists of antiquity. He confidently declared that "the daughter of Tintoretto" was "to be valued more than those ancient women," also placing Irene di Spilimbergo and Sofonisba Anguissola in this rarified echelon.[9]

Ridolfi and the Legend of Marietta

The most detailed narrative of Marietta's story appears almost sixty years after her death in Carlo Ridolfi's *Le maraviglie dell'arte* (1648), alongside biographies of her father and her brother Domenico. Marietta receives a separate biography—the only one dedicated to a woman—entitled *Vita di Marietta Tintoretta Pittrice, Figliuola di Iacopo*. It is dignified by an engraved portrait (fig. 3.1).

Ridolfi's lengthy preamble offers a defense of women's achievement despite the restrictions imposed by men, briefly citing fourteen ancient women of great accomplishment in war, literature, and finally painting. Then he praises four recent Italians: Lavinia Fontana, Irene di Spilimbergo, Chiara Varotari, and Giovanna Garzoni. He asserts that these four prove what women are capable of when granted proper training. Ridolfi apparently considers Marietta, the only recipient of more than a phrase in his book, as the most worthy of all.

> Marietta Tintoretto, then, lived in Venice, the daughter of the famous Tintoretto and the dearest delight of his soul. He trained her in design and color, whence later she painted such works that men were amazed by her lively talent. Being small of stature, she dressed like a boy. Her father took her with him wherever he went.

1609 they embroidered a silk antependium based on their father's *Crucifixion* for the altar of their convent church. Krischel, 2007, 132, fig. 65.

7 "Ho udito, disse Lucrezia, nominar il signor Giacomo Tintoretto e una sua figliola di stupendo valore." *Il merito*, probably written 1588–1592, was published in 1600. Fonte was the pseudonym of Modesta Posso da Zorzi. See Mazzucco, 2009, 409.

8 Mazzucco, 2009, 239–241.

9 Cited by Jacobs, 1997, 175–177.

Figure 3.1 Giacomo Piccini, *Marietta Tintoretta*, in Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte*, 1648, 70–71. Engraving, 4to (23 cm.). Courtesy of the Biblioteca della Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

And everyone thought she was a lad. He also had Giulio Zacchino, a Neapolitan considered excellent in music in those days, instruct her in singing and playing.

Marietta's special gift, however, was knowing how to paint portraits well. One of Marco dei Vescovi [Marco Episcopi, the father of Jacopo's wife Faustina], with a long beard, is still preserved in the houses of the Tintoretto family, along with

> that of his son, Pietro. She also portrayed many noble Venetian men and women, who took pleasure in meeting and associating with her because she was full of many noble traits and entertained them with music and song.
>
> She made a portrait of Jacopo Strada, the antiquarian of the Emperor Maximilian, who presented it to his majesty as a rare work, whence the emperor, charmed by her valor, made enquiries about her of her father. Philip II, the king of Spain, and the Archduke Ferdinand [of Tyrol, Maximilian's brother] also asked him about her. However, Tintoretto was satisfied to see her married to Mario [actually, Marco] Augusta, a jeweler, so that she might always be nearby, rather than be deprived of her, even though she might be favored by princes, as he loved her tenderly.
>
> She also painted other works of her own invention and still others that she derived from her father. She painted many portraits of goldsmiths who were friends of her husband, some of which we have seen. But with the dying out of these families many of them have been lost.
>
> Marietta had a brilliant mind like her father. She played the harpsichord delicately and sang very well. She united in herself many virtuous qualities that singly are seldom found in other women. But in 1590, in the flower of her age when she was thirty years old, envious death cut short her life, depriving the world of such a noble ornament. Her father wept bitterly, taking it as the loss of a part of his own inner being. He mourned her with unceasing tears for a long time and had her buried in Santa Maria dell'Orto in the tomb of his father-in-law. Her husband, too, in his very heart and soul was no less in perpetual mourning.[10]

This, in essence, is the story of Marietta Tintoretta as it was passed down for centuries: painter as paragon and heroine. It is a compelling tale, with the piquant detail of her dressing as a boy, the account of her fame reaching leading courts of Europe, and the sentimental treatment of her father's love and grief at her death. Ridolfi's biographies of Jacopo, Marietta, and Domenico surely reflect information from family members. While he is generally reliable on the facts, we might consider Ridolfi's account of Marietta's career as something of an authorized biography, her life as the family wanted it told.[11]

Later biographers rely almost entirely on Ridolfi. Joachim von Sandrart's entry in his *Academia nobilissimae artis pictoriae* (1683) adds the fact that Marietta's husband was German (evident in his surname in Venice—"Augusta" is Italian for

10 Ridolfi, 1984, 98–99. See also Ridolfi, 1994, 111–113.

11 Ridolfi had known Domenico Tintoretto well (Domenico painted his portrait) and was a former student and friend of the painter l'Aliense, who had worked in Jacopo's studio and would have known Marietta. Several of Jacopo's daughters and his son-in-law Sebastiano Casser, who had inherited the Tintoretto studio, were still alive at the time he was writing, and Ridolfi surely consulted them. See Mazzucco, 2009, 241.

Augsburg) and says he has seen her portraits of Marco's jeweler friends.[12] Other biographers who largely follow Ridolfi include Roger de Piles (Paris, 1699); Damiao de Froes Perym (Lisbon, 1736); Dézallier d'Argenville, (Paris, 1745); and Francesco Moücke (Florence, 1752).[13]

Marietta's fame spread far from Venice. Her story was well enough known in 1733 that a biography of Teresa Muratori of Bologna in Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi's *Abecedario pittorico* could describe her as inclined to music, song, and painting, "a similitudine di Marietta Tentoretta." In the very last years of the Venetian republic, Francesco Maria Tassi's 1793 biography of the painter Chiara Salmeggia of Bergamo placed his subject on the level as celebrated painters of antiquity and of the modern age: "Sofonisba Angusciola, Artemisia Gentilesca, Lavinia Fontana, Elisabetta Sirani, Marietta Tintoretta, la celebratissima Rosalba Carriera"—lofty company indeed.[14] Marietta's place in the pantheon of Renaissance women artists was assured.

By this time, Marietta had evolved into a legend. Travelers to Venice sought out her burial place in Madonna dell'Orto—in 1775 a visitor noted that the church was the location of Marietta's tomb, without mentioning the enormous canvases by her father there, or his resting place.[15] In 1803, Marietta's fame was such that the Massachusetts painter Cephas Thompson named his daughter Marietta Tintoretto.[16] Marietta became a character in a novel by George Sand and subsequently the heroine of other novels, plays, and even operas. This fictional heroine grew younger and younger, becoming a newlywed who dies in childbirth or even a virginal teenager. Her identity as a painter was minimized in favor of "Tintoretto's daughter." Sentimental scenes of Jacopo teaching her to draw or mourning over her body appeared in nineteenth-century painting. The young Degas, still a student, sketched the subject.[17] In the words of novelist and biographer Melania G. Mazzucco, whose important contributions will be discussed below, Marietta did not disappear into anonymity or silence, like so many women throughout history, but into unchallenged myth.[18]

12 Sandrart, 1683, 169; discussed by Mazzucco, 2009, 332

13 Cited by Savage, 2018, 24–25.

14 Orlandi 1733, 413; see Mazzucco 2009, 421. Tassi, 1793, 1:224; see also Jacobs, 1997, 26.

15 Mazzucco, 2009, 417.

16 Mazzucco, 2009, 422. Naming a daughter after Marietta echoes the aspirations of the Peale family of artists from Philadelphia. Among the children of Charles Wilson Peale (1741–1827) and Rachel Brewer (1744–1790) were Angelica Kaufmann Peale (1775–1853) and Sophonisba Angusciola Peale (1786–1859). A granddaughter was Rosalba Carriera Peale (1799–1874).

17 All the material in this paragraph is covered in depth by Mazzucco, 2009, 421–443. See also Lepschy, 1983, 83–84, plates 1–3.

18 Mazzucco, 2009, 421. The first modern attempt to discuss women artists, including Marietta, was by Anna Brownell Jameson (1794–1860), an Anglo-Irish art historian. Her *Visits and Sketches* (London, 1834) contains a pioneering section about women artists, including Marietta. See Straussman-Pflanzer, 2021, 21.

New Biographical Documentation

What we know about Marietta has changed significantly over the last twenty years. In 2004, new information emerged from a "genealogy of the Tintoretto family" owned by the painter Sebastiano Casser, who had inherited the Tintoretto workshop after the death of Jacopo's sons. In 1678, Casser offered the document for sale at an exorbitant price to Antonio Saurer, the Venetian agent of the Spanish Marquis of Carpio, an avid collector seeking pictures by members of the Tintoretto family. The original document is lost, but Saurer provided a detailed summary in a letter to Carpio.[19]

Although Marietta had always been presumed to be the child of Jacopo and his wife Faustina Episcopi (or de' Vescovi), the "genealogy" revealed that she was illegitimate, the daughter of Tintoretto and a German woman. Jacopo was said to have depicted mother and child in the *Presentation of the Virgin* at Madonna dell'Orto (ca. 1556).[20] Although the "genealogy" is fanciful in places and some of its claims are contrary to the documented facts, it includes information that only family members would have known, and the assertion of illegitimacy rings true. Neither Casser nor any Tintoretto family members would have had an incentive to invent the fact that the long-dead Marietta was born out of wedlock. Moreover, the information that her birth had preceded Jacopo's marriage to Faustina by some years resolves the confusion in the earlier Tintoretto literature resulting from the significant gap in age between Marietta and Jacopo's other children.[21]

Marietta's illegitimacy helps to explain the unconventionality of her upbringing. The fact that she was Jacopo's only child for a number of years, born well before his marriage, probably accounts for the special nature of their bond and his decision to

19 Checa Cremades, 2004, 193–212. Saurer, writing in Spanish, calls the document "Geneologia de la Casa Tintoretto." On Carpio's collection and Tintoretto, see Frutos Sastre, 2009, 209–219. On the interactions between Casser and Carpio's agents, as well as the dispersion of the remnants of the Tintoretto estate after Casser's death, see Mazzucco, 2009, 256–257, 818–834; Frutos Sastre, 2009, 213–214. Casser was the widower of Tintoretto's much older daughter Ottavia.

20 "A Marieta Tintoretta famosa en el retratar, la tuvo Jacome de una mujer tudesca, de qien estava enamoradísimo, de manera que estando pintando un cuadro grande en la Iglesia que se llama la Madonna del Orto, ofreciéndosele azer una muger i niña por la mano, pinto a Madre e hixa, de suerte que quando ven la acción no se sazian de alevar la fuerza, i affecto con que la esprime, i naturaliza. Caso Marieta con Marco Agusta tudesco, en que no ubo ijos." Checa Cremades, 2004, 205.

21 Just who wrote the "genealogy" is unclear: the events recounted include the deaths of all Jacopo's children, and Casser is described as being ninety-four years old. (In fact, in 1678 he would have been seventy-nine.) On the authorship and the accuracy of the information, see Mazzucco, 2009, 823–824; see also Mason, 2018, 39, who is more skeptical. Marietta's birthdate had always seemed problematic in relation to the date of the marriage between Jacopo and Faustina, the birthdates of their children, and Faustina's stated age at her death. For example, see Pallucchini and Rossi, 1990, 2-1:126, entries for 1554, 1560, 1561.

train her as a painter. (His younger, legitimate daughters received no such attention; he placed two in a convent and in his will left the future of the other two girls to his wife.)[22]

The next breakthrough in the study of Marietta Tintoretta came with the publication in 2009 of Mazzucco's *Jacomo Tintoretto e i suoi figli: Storia di una famiglia veneziana*, a summation of years of archival research into Jacopo's life and works, and especially his children, a subject that had received only modest attention from previous scholars. We limit our consideration here to Mazzucco's material on Marietta, which constitutes roughly a quarter of her book.[23]

Mazzucco discovered the marriage contract of Marietta and the jeweler Marco Augusta in the "Pubblicazioni di Matrimoni" of the parish of San Marcilian (San Marziale), under the dates of June 29, 1578, and July 6 and August 2 of the same year. The identity of the couple is unmistakable: "Marieta fiola de ms Giacomo di Robusti e ms Marcho August(o) zolier sta sul campo a San Polo." The marriage was also registered in the "Contratti matrimoniali" of the parish of San Polo.[24]

In his will of May 24, 1578, Jacopo's uncle Antonio Comin bequeathed Marietta the modest sum of fifty ducati for her marriage ("Lasso a Marieta fiola del detto m. Giacomo tentoreto Ducati cinquanta in segno d'amor per il suo maridar"). A codicil dated November 27 of the same year revoked a provision leaving most of Comin's estate to Jacopo and his children but left intact the bequest to Marietta.[25]

22 Mason, 2018, 53–54; and in depth, Mazzucco, 2009.

23 The authors applaud Mazzucco's archival diligence and creativity. Although we have reservations about specific attributions, her contributions to scholarship on Marietta as well as other members of the Tintoretto family are not as widely recognized as they should be. To our knowledge her book has not received a review in a scholarly publication. Mazzucco's research began as background for her 2008 novel about Jacopo and Marietta.

24 Mazzucco, 2009, 328, 872, n. 25. The document from San Marziale is APMOVe, Parrocchia di San Marcilian, Pubblicazioni di Matrimoni n. 1 (1567–1583), c. 55v. The document from San Polo is APSMGFVe, Parrocchia di San Polo, Contratti matrimoniali, n. 1 (1564–80), cc. n. n. The marriage was said to have taken place at "San Christofolo." Mazzucco, 2009, 346, argues that this is the church of San Cristoforo della Pace, located on the island that was eventually joined with the nearby island of San Michele as the site of the city cemetery.

25 The document is ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, Atti Ziliol, b. 1256, n. 76. See Mazzucco, 2009, 320, 322, 870, nn. 17, 20. (Mazzucco's quotation is incomplete, leaving out the identification of Marieta as "daughter of messer Giacomo Tentoretto." The will is also partially transcribed in Borean, 2007, 436, but the passages relating to Marietta are not included.) The codicil to the will states: "Lasso a Marieta nominata nel ditto mio testamento li ducati cinquanta che Io li lassava per il suo maridar, et questi li lasso non ostante che la sii maridata et sijno per sua dimissoria." The phrase "per il suo maridar" refers generally to a bequest related to marriage. The use of the word "dimissoria" in the codicil establishes that the funds were to be controlled by Marietta herself, as distinct from being included in her dowry ("dote") provided by her father, which would have been considered her property but administered by her husband during his lifetime. No record has been found of Jacopo's dowry for Marietta. It is worth emphasizing that Antonio Comin's will refers to Jacopo as "messer Giacomo Tentoretto mio nevodo fu figliolo de Messer Battista

Comin died in 1582 and Marietta collected the bequest from the Scuola Grande di San Rocco on March 12, 1583, accompanied by her husband and her brother Marco. Identified in the accounts as "La magnifica Madonna Marieta figliola de messer Giacomo Tentoretto," Marietta wrote out a receipt in her own hand as "Marietta figliola de Messer Jacomo Robusti dito Tentoretto consorte de messer Marcho Agusta zogelier" and signing her name as "Marieta Agusta." This document is of particular interest, demonstrating that Marietta had received an education and was able to write.[26]

Surprisingly, Mazzucco found evidence of the birth of a daughter to Marietta and Marco. The register of baptisms for the church of San Stin lists on April 9, 1580, the baptism of Orsola Benvenuta, daughter of "messer Marco Augusta e madonna Marieta."[27] The birth of a child was not mentioned by Ridolfi, and indeed the "genealogy of the Tintoretto family" specifically states that the couple had no children.[28] Nevertheless, the circumstances—including the names of the parents; the date, nineteen months after Marietta's wedding; the residence in a parish adjacent to Marco's dwelling in San Polo before his marriage—make a convincing case that the mother is indeed Marietta Tintoretta. This document demonstrates that after her marriage Marietta was not living in her father's house but in an entirely different neighborhood, San Stin, on the other side of the Grand Canal. This suggests a potential dividing point in the progress of Marietta's career.[29]

Tentoretto" — thus referring to his nephew with the surname Tintoretto, and applying it retroactively to his own brother as well. This makes it absolutely clear that the name Comin is never appropriately applied to Jacopo and his immediate family.

26 Pittaluga, 1925, 209; Mazzucco, 2009, 391–392, 880, n. 28. The document is ASVe, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, b. 413/2c, Fabbricche e stabili, Erezione scuola e Chiesa, filza n. 413.3, Polize de operarii per l'altare grande di Scola e conto del detto. Dal 1613 fin 1662. At our request, Maria Adank independently examined and verified the text of this document and provided us with a photograph. See below, note 55.

27 Mazzucco, 2009, 381, n. 3. The document is APSMGFVe, Parrocchia di San Stin, Registro dei Battesimi n. 1 (1564–1588), c. 68.

28 Mazzucco reports she found no evidence of other children born to Marietta, with one possible exception: notice of the death at age sixteen of a Vispasiano Agusti in 1602, in San'Aponal, where Marco Augusta was living at the time. Unusually, no father was named, but Mazzucco states that there were no records of an Agusti other than Marco in the parish. This child would have been born ca. 1586, while Marietta was alive. Mazzucco speculates that the boy could have been Marco's illegitimate child. Mazzucco, 2009, 382, 877, n. 6.

29 Because of the particular importance of this document — not merely confirming what was previously reported by Marietta Tintoretta's biographers but providing new and inconsistent information — it is necessary to consider it with special care. Unlike the other documents uncovered by Mazzucco that name Marietta, here there is no mention of her surname and parentage. Could it possibly concern a different Marietta, of childbearing years, married to a different Marco Augusta? This seems unlikely, given the absence of other documentation of such a couple. Moreover, in addition to the arguments already cited, further evidence in support of the conclusion that the document refers to Marietta Tintoretta is provided by the fact that, as will be discussed below, the child Orsola, grown to adulthood, apparently called herself "Tentoreta."

Despite an exhaustive search, Mazzucco reports that she found no documentation of either Marietta's birth or her death.[30] Of course, many Venetian documents have been lost or damaged, and either event could conceivably have occurred outside Venice. The latest known record referring specifically to Marietta is thus the one of 1583 from the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, and Ridolfi's date of 1590 remains the only evidence of the year of her death.[31]

Mazzucco located considerable evidence about Marco Augusta. He first appears in Venetian archives in 1575 as a witness to an earlier will by Antonio Comin.[32] Was he a friend, a neighbor, perhaps a tenant? Although there is no evidence that Marco was established in his trade at the time of the marriage, by August of 1583—just a few months after the couple received the bequest from Comin—he was able to take on an apprentice at a suitable salary.[33] During the marriage, Marco maintained a good relationship with Jacopo, who in 1585 nominated him for membership in the Scuola Grande di San Marco, along with Jacopo's son Gian Battista.[34] Indeed, even after Marietta's death, Domenico seems to have regarded him as a family member, mentioning him in his will of 1592.[35] In 1597, Marco's workshop was located at the sign (*insegna*) of the Virtù on calle della Scimmia, just behind Rialto.[36] He disappears from Venetian records after 1607.[37]

Mazzucco's research confirms key elements of Marietta's legend and at the same time brings it down to earth. Marietta was married for a dozen years to a German artisan. She bore at least one child. After her marriage, she lived not with her father, as tradition recounted, but in a working-class neighborhood some distance away.

30 Mazzucco, 2009, 411–413, 882, n. 53, reports that she found no record of Marietta's birth in the records of San Marziale or the surrounding parishes, nor any record of her death in the Necrologi of the Provvedori alla Sanità from 1583–1594 or the death records of any other parish in Venice.

31 Mazzucco, 2009, 414–416, notes that for a period of several months at the end of 1590, Jacopo failed to participate in his regular activities at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco; she suggests that he may have been ill with the same malady that carried off Marietta, and later grieving her loss.

32 ASVe, Notarile, Testmenti, Atti G.B. Benzon, b. 163, no. 67 (clausula). Cited in Mazzucco, 2009, 341, 874, n. 20.

33 Mazzucco, 2009, 393–395.

34 Mazzucco, 2009, 383, 393–395, 880, n. 29. For Jacopo's agreement to supply paintings including the altarpiece to the scuola in return for admitting gratis Marco Agusta and three others, see Matino, 2018, 121.

35 Domenico named Marco Augusta to succeed him on a commission of the Scuola Grande di San Marco if neither of his brothers was able to take on the role. ASVe, Cedole testamentarie, scatola 480. See Mazzucco, 2009, 479.

36 For the evidence that Marco worked at the Virtù, see Mazzucco, 2009, 385, 395, and 878, nn. 15 and 32.

37 Mazzucco, 2009, 410. Marco Augusta seems to have married again after Marietta's death: in 1606, records show the death of the wife of Marco Augusta in the parish of Sant'Aponal. Strangely, the magistrati dell Sanità give her name as Madalena, but the parish records identify her as Marietta. Both give her age as sixty, older than Marietta Tintoretta would have been. Mazzucco suggests that Jacopo might have broken off relations with Marco because of this liaison.

She was well over thirty, probably close to forty, at the time of her death—by the standards of the day, somewhat beyond "the flower of her youth."

Startlingly, Mazzucco notes the ways in which the young Marietta fits the profile of a Venetian courtesan rather than a respectable woman. As a child, she dressed as a boy, a practice associated with prostitution, while as an adult, she was known for entertaining patrician visitors with music. Mazzucco cites the use of the name "Tintoretta" by prostitutes during the years of Marietta's celebrity, suggesting that they may have sought to evoke her persona.[38] She wonders whether Ridolfi's emphasis on Marietta's virtue might be a case of protesting too much, and whether the marriage might have been arranged to shore up her reputation.[39]

Even more sensational is Mazzucco's material on Marietta's daughter Orsola. In 1602, when Orsola would have been twenty-two, a woman identified as Orsetta, "daughter of the goldsmith Marco," was fined as a "meretrice," a prostitute.[40] In 1607, "Orsetta, called Tentoreta and daughter of Marco, goldsmith at the Virtù," was denounced and imprisoned for blasphemy—a charge frequently made against prostitutes.[41] As noted above, the sign of the Virtù had been, according to Mazzucco, the location of Marco Augusta's workshop in the 1590s. Orsetta lived in calle della Scimmia, where the Virtù was located. The name Orsetta is of course a diminutive of Orsola, and these connections make it almost certain that this Orsetta was indeed the child born in 1580 to Marietta.[42] Perhaps this sad story is why Marietta's child was expunged from her biography. But the link between the Tintoretto family and Orsola may have been broken long before—she is not mentioned in Jacopo's will or in other family documents.[43]

38 Mazzucco, 2009, 517, states that she found no record of any prostitute using the name Tintoretto/Tentoreta before the period of Marietta's renown, but that it subsequently became fashionable among higher class courtesans. She speculates in detail about the identities of an Andriana Tentoreta and a Chiaretta Tentoreta, both of whom lived in the San Marcuola neighborhood and both of whom she identifies as prostitutes. Mazzucco, 2009, 509–538.

39 Even if not a courtesan herself, Marietta's way of life may have seemed too loose as she left her youth behind. Mazzucco, 2009, 251–252, 346, 446. A counterargument to this hypothesis is the fact that Borghini lauds the musical talents of other women artists, as did other biographers of the period.

40 Mazzucco, 2009, 541, 895, n. 49.

41 If she is the woman identified in later records as Orsetta Augusta, she was not only a prostitute but was imprisoned again for blasphemy, operated an inn that doubled as a brothel, suffered from horrific domestic violence, and eventually obtained a rare divorce, before dying in 1630, at fifty — the age that Marietta's daughter would have been in that year. Mazzucco, 2009, 539–549, 894, n. 45. The document is BMCVe, Donà delle Rose 351, Anagrafe Sestiere San Polo 1607, Sant'Appollinar.

42 Mazzucco, 2009, 544–549.

43 Mazzucco, 2009, 383, 411, reports no evidence of any contact between Orsola and her mother's family.

Marietta Tintoretta: A Chronology

To reconstruct Marietta's career, it is essential to determine—or at least estimate—her birthdate. The lack of archival evidence means that scholars are limited to deductions from the hints provided by her biographers. Borghini wrote that Marietta was around twenty-eight. *Il riposo* was published in 1584, but Borghini's information about Venice ends in 1582, suggesting he paid a visit there in that year. Depending on whether the author adjusted Marietta's age in anticipation of the likely publication date, this would indicate that Marietta was born in either 1554 or 1556.[44] By contrast, Ridolfi says that Marietta died in 1590 at age thirty, indicating that she was born about 1560. Ridolfi is not entirely reliable about dates—he is off by two years on the death of Domenico, whom he had known well, and who had died just over a decade before the publication of Ridolfi's biography.[45] Yet if Marietta was born in 1560, her portrait of Marco Episcopi, who died in 1571, would have been painted when she was no older than eleven—clearly impossible.[46] Assuming she was at least sixteen when she painted him, she would have been born no later than 1555.

A further clue is provided by Borghini and Ridolfi's reference to Marietta's portrait of Jacopo Strada, architect and antiquarian to Emperor Maximillian II and a powerful figure at the imperial court who was also painted by Titian. The portrait by Marietta was reportedly admired as a "cosa rara" by the sophisticated collector Maximilian. Presumably Marietta was at least in her mid-teens at the time. There are good reasons for accepting the story as true. Jacopo Strada, among others with first-hand knowledge, was still alive. Strada undoubtedly knew Tintoretto, who was chosen along with Titian's son Orazio to place a value on Gabriele Vendramin's collection, which Strada had come to Venice to acquire for Albert V, duke of Bavaria.[47] Tintoretto may well have organized the sitting with Marietta to promote her reputation, and his own, with Strada's aristocratic patrons.[48] If the story is true, and it occurred during one of Strada's long stays in Venice in 1567 and 1568, and Marietta was at least fifteen at the time, she would have been born no later than 1553.[49] On the other hand, while there is no hard evidence for a

44 On Borghini and Venice, see Borghini, 2007, 34–35.

45 Regarding Ridolfi's reliability, see Carroll, 1980, and Hope, 1993.

46 On Marco Episcopi's life dates, see Mazzucco 2009, 146, 268.

47 Mazzucco, 2009, 196, 335.

48 Jansen, 2019, 603–609. Mazzucco, 2009, 335.

49 Jacopo Strada is documented in Venice from February until the end of August 1567; from February until July 1568; and again briefly in July 1569. He may also have visited in 1574. See Jansen, 2019, 585, n. 22, 750–751, n. 64. That Marietta's portrait of Jacopo Strada was executed in 1567 is suggested by the fact that that date is inscribed on a portrait of Ottavio Strada (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) usually attributed to Jacopo Tintoretto (and ascribed to him on the inscription), but possibly by Marietta, as discussed below.

date before which Marietta could not have been born, it seems unlikely that this occurred before 1550, which would make Borghini off by more than six to eight years and Ridolfi by more than a decade.

In seeking to reconstruct the possible progress of Marietta's career, therefore, we will assume a birthdate between 1550 and 1554, most likely 1552. A birthdate in that year accords well with the various datable events in her life: she would have been thirteen in 1565, when Pieter Vlerick considered her as a possible future wife; fifteen in 1567, when she probably painted Jacopo Strada; in her late teens when she studied with Giovanni Zacchino, whose sojourn in Venice dated to 1570–1572;[50] nineteen in 1571, when Marco Episcopi died; in her early-to-mid twenties when she was mentioned as a possible court painter to the Emperor Maximilian (who died in 1576, when she would have been twenty-four) and Philip II; twenty-six when she married in 1578; twenty-eight when she bore her child in 1580; and about thirty-eight when she died ca. 1590. Her artistic identity would have begun to emerge in the late 1560s. She would have enjoyed a career lasting more than two decades, with a possible change in circumstances around 1578 or 1579, as a result of her marriage, subsequent pregnancy, and move to San Stin.

Marietta Tintoretta's Oeuvre According to the Scholarly Literature

What did Marietta Tintoretta produce during these two-plus decades? This essay began with the assertion that to date not a single painting has been conclusively identified as by Marietta's hand. That is not to say that no attributions have been made to her. Over the centuries, reflecting her fame, many works in private and public collections and on the art market have been assigned to Marietta, mostly based on tradition or wishful thinking.[51] Since the first half of the twentieth century, art historians have attempted to identify works by Marietta on a more reasoned basis, but without achieving consensus or indeed any coherent sense of an oeuvre.[52]

50 Mazzucco 2009, 247.

51 The Getty Provenance Index lists seventeen works attributed to Marietta in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. https://piprod.getty.edu/starweb/pi/servlet.starweb, accessed 2 November 2022.

52 In the early twentieth century, a few scholars sought to identify Marietta's hand in religious and narrative paintings linked to Tintoretto's workshop and followers. They focused on paintings — or passages in large pictures — showing stylistic qualities that they deemed to be feminine, usually featuring female protagonists and emphasizing clothing and hairstyles. Adolfo Venturi, 1929, 9:684–689, speaking of "femminilità affettiva, una grazia mulierbre"; Coletti, 1940, 37–39. These attributions are still occasionally cited but have not received serious consideration. Although all the pictures they propose were probably executed during Marietta's lifetime, and the participation of studio assistants is indeed evident in most of them, thus making them open for consideration as potential works by Marietta, no single personality emerges from the group. Rather, several different hands are identifiable, along with an extreme range of quality. In fact, the criteria of "femininity and grace" provide no meaningful guidance in making attributions. For similar connoisseurship claims based on gendered stereotypes, see Jacobs, 1997, 91–92.

Figure 3.2 Marietta Tintoretta, *Head of a man, after the antique* (verso), mid-1560s. Black and white chalk on blue paper, 39 × 28 cm. Private collection. Private Collection Photo © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images.

Drawings. The only surviving work that—possibly—bears Marietta's signature is a drawing, once in the Rasini Collection, Milan, and now in a private collection in the United States. Thought lost for decades, this suddenly appeared on the Paris art market in March 2021, astonishing scholars. The verso depicts in black chalk the ancient Roman bust believed to represent the emperor Vitellius (fig. 3.2).[53] Tintoretto owned a cast of the bust and used it in teaching pupils. Many drawings of the bust have come down to us, a few apparently by the master but most by students. Like others of the subject, this shows an extreme angle, here viewed from below, as if the artist had sat on the floor looking up at the sculpture resting on a table.[54] Crucially, this sheet is inscribed "questa testa si è de mā de Madonna Marieta." The inscription has been interpreted as a signature by Marietta herself, perhaps asserting her pride in a youthful effort, or as an attribution by another person, potentially Jacopo retrospectively assigning credit for drawings made in the *bottega*.[55]

This drawing reveals both strengths and weaknesses: the eyes, nose, and mouth are well articulated and respect the sculpture's unusual angle. The edges of the head, however, are much less convincing, with the placement of the ear and the perfunctory treatment of the hair at upper left and the contour of the cheek at right failing to convey a solid volume. The highlights in white chalk, while adding sparkle, seem arbitrarily placed. These flaws are apparent when compared to the drawing on the recto, after Michelangelo's Giuliano de' Medici, which exhibits bolder and more energetic strokes, believable contours, stronger chiaroscuro, and logically placed highlights—all signs of a different workshop hand. As for the verso, there is no reason to doubt the inscription, and the "Vitellius" must have been made by Marietta at the beginning of her teenage years, or slightly earlier. If not particularly distinctive, this drawing offers a useful starting point for her artistic development.[56]

Nor can other drawings be confidently attributed to her, although a sheet in the Museo Civico Ala Ponzone in Cremona was proposed by Hans Tietze and Erica

53 Christie's Paris 25 March 2021, lot 10; then exhibited hors catalogue in Straussman-Pflanzer, 2021. For this drawing, see for example, Morassi, 1937, pl. 29; Rossi, 1975, 50; Krischel 1994b, 60–65; Krischel 2007, 119, 121, fig. 57; Mazzucco, 2009, 259–260; Arizzoli, 2016,113; Savage, 2018, 42–43; Marciari, 2018, 99.

54 Odoardo Fialetti's published drawing manual, *Il vero modo et ordine per dissegnar tutte le parti et membra del corpo humano* (Venice, 1608), contains an illustration showing pupils sketching after sculpture from different viewpoints. Such activities, as well as the division of labor in a busy painter's studio, prompt speculation that this is based on Jacopo's own. See Jacobs, 1997, 150, fig. 30; Ilchman and Saywell, 2007, 392, fig. 200.

55 Tietze and Tietze-Conrat, 1944, 293. Marciari, 2018, 138, suggests that Jacopo provided the inscription. For potentially analogous inscriptions and the attribution of a sheet to Marco Tintoretto, half-brother of Marietta, see Marciari, 2018, 137–139. Mazzucco, 2009, 391–392, states that the handwriting in the document from the Scuola Grande di San Marco acknowledging receipt of the bequest, attested by Marietta and the witnesses to be by her own hand (see note 26, above) is the same as that in the inscription on the drawing. While there are similarities, some differences are also apparent.

56 Although a relatively slight work of art, we would favor illustrating this drawing in any publication rather than the supposed self-portrait painting, discussed below.

Tietze-Conrat in 1944 and has been recently discussed and illustrated by Alicia Savage. While the sheet is Venetian, the handling and composition are closer to Palma Giovane than Tintoretto. The attribution to Marietta seems unwarranted.[57] We can be sure, however, that Marietta, like other members of the Tintoretto shop, made many drawings with black chalk on blue paper, during the years of her training and in preparation for paintings. With practice, the flaws in the "Vitellius" sketch would undoubtedly have been replaced by a stronger depiction of volume through self-assured contours and a bold economy of means, hallmarks of Jacopo's style.

The Supposed Uffizi "Self-Portrait" and Related Attributions. The most frequently cited attribution to Marietta is a supposed self-portrait on canvas, purchased as such by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici in 1675 and now in the Uffizi. It shows a young woman standing before a harpsichord and holding a bound volume of sheet music. The picture is consistently exhibited and published as by and depicting Marietta. Endorsed by its prestigious provenance, the image appears regularly online and in the general press in articles on women artists, as well as in scholarly publications.[58] However, the records of its acquisition make clear that the picture, previously offered to the cardinal as a depiction of a young woman at the spinet by Titian, was labeled a self-portrait of Marietta only after the seller's agents learned that the cardinal was particularly interested in acquiring self-portraits. In short, the picture was deliberately sold with a false attribution.[59]

57 Tietze and Tietze-Conrat, 1944, 293, cat. no. 1760, "A sainted bishop healing the sick." See fig. 1.2 in this volume. A tiny inscription at lower right may be read as Marietta Tintoretta. See also Savage, 2018, 43–44, and fig. 16, whose caption employs "Marietta Robusti?" Savage indicates that Marciari suggested to her that the subject may be "Saint Augustine Healing the Victims of the Plague."

58 The Uffizi web site continues to identify the picture as a self-portrait by Marietta: https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/self-portrait-with-madrigal-marietta-robusti%20, accessed October 24, 2022. Wikipedia calls it, "The only painting that can be conclusively attributed to Marietta Robusti." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marietta_Robusti, accessed October 24, 2022. It is assumed to be authentic by many discussions of the career of women artists, such as Harris and Nochlin, 1976, 28; Cheney, Faxon, and Russo, 2000, 64, no. XII; and others. Among specialists, the attribution to Marietta is maintained by Marinelli, 1996, 60–62; Mazzucco, 2009, 455–468 (who mistakenly states that the painting is "concordemente attribuito a Marietta"); and Grosso, 2017. The picture has been exhibited as Marietta's self-portrait in the exhibitions: *Cinque secoli di stampa musicale in Europa* in Museo di Palazzo Venezia, Rome (12 June–30 July 1985), see Trincheri Camiz, 1985, 262, cat. no. 8.9; *Jacopo Tintoretto 1519–1594: Il grande collezionismo mediceo*, in Palazzo Pitti, Florence (7 December 1994–28 February 1995), see Meloni Trkulja, 1994, 80–81, cat. no. 23; *Con dolce forza: Donne nell'universo musicale del Cinque e Seicento* in Ponte a Ema, Bagno a Ripoli (8 March–13 May 2018), see Donati, 2018, 96, cat. no. 1; *Le signore dell'arte* in Palazzo Reale, Milan (2 March–25 July 2021), see Terribile, 2021, 317–318, cat. no. 3.39 (although she acknowledges some doubt). Popular articles, such as Mosco, 2016, and Hughes, 2021, continue to accept the painting as Marietta's *Self-Portrait*.

59 The picture once belonged to the painter Nicolas Régnier and later Francesco Fontana. The agent for the sale was Marco Boschini. On the sale of the picture, see Procacci and Procacci, 1965; Marinelli, 1996, 60–62; Mazzucco, 2009, 455–469.

Along with most recent art historians, we have rejected the attribution to Marietta. The picture is a weak effort that shows virtually no connection to the Tintoretto portrait style in which Marietta was trained and fails to accord with her fame as a portraitist claimed by Ridolfi. Nor does it appear to be a self-portrait; the amorous first line of the madrigal—"My lady, I burn for love for you, and you do not believe it"— seems incongruous or even inappropriate for Marietta if she is presenting herself to the outside world of potential patrons. Moreover, the keys of the harpsichord are inaccurately rendered, unlikely for a painter regarded as an accomplished musician.[60] The sitter bears only a general resemblance to the depiction of Marietta that accompanied Ridolfi's biography, though the fashion may be appropriate for her presumed age at the time of execution. The Uffizi picture is best catalogued as Venetian School, 1565–1570.[61] The unceasing publication and exhibition of this supposed self-portrait as a key work of Marietta's—while understandable, given the growing interest in her career and the lack of other painted images of her—does no favors for her reputation.

The unfortunate effect of the Uffizi picture in creating a false perception of Marietta's abilities has been compounded by the attribution of a number of similarly weak portraits on the grounds that they show similarities to it. These tend to be portraits of women and children—though her biographers note no such specialization. In our view, a similarity to the supposed self-portrait is not a basis for accepting a painting as the work of Marietta, but rather the opposite.[62]

60 The music on the open pages has been identified as a madrigal by Philippe Verdelot, "Madonna, per voi ardo," included in a volume published in Venice in 1533 and 1537 and many times thereafter. Jacobs, 1997, 153, doubted the attribution because the "provocative text" only makes sense if the portrait had been created for Marietta's husband and because the "proper sequence of black and white keys is interrupted at G and A." See also the discussion of music by Terribile, 2021, 317–318, cat. no. 3.39, who maintains the traditional attribution and identification of the sitter in the heading of the entry but expresses some doubt about the woman depicted. Terribile writes, "Marietta, or whoever the woman was" neither sings nor plays "but is showing the part in her vocal register, and is explicitly urging her beloved to share in the performance." In the catalogue for *Con dolce forza*, Navarro, 2018, 40–43, admits the challenges given to discussing an artist with no documented pictures ("un nome senza opera"), but nevertheless defends Marietta's authorship of the Uffizi picture. She notes that the poor condition of the paint surface has greatly compromised its appearance and judgments of quality. Navarro finds persuasive the comparison of this portrait with the frontispiece in Ridolfi and endorses the idea the painting was a wedding gift to Marco Augusta. See also Zamperini, 2022, 147–150.

61 Others rejecting the attribution include Woods-Marsden, 1998, 218; Bull, 2009, 678; Arrizoli, 2016, 108; Echols and Ilchman, 2018, 240, n. 18; Beir, 2018, 40. Zamperini, 2022, 147, argues that the costume of the sitter is characteristic of the late 1540s or 1550s. Jane Bridgeman in an email to the authors (March 2023) recommends the date of about 1565–1570 based on the costume, which at least is the right time for the portrait to be by Marietta.

62 Colombo, 2006, 221–223, cat. nos. 286 and 287, confirms an old attribution to Marietta for two group portraits of children based on supposed similarities to the Uffizi painting. Arguing for a resemblance to

A portrait in the Galleria Borghese, Rome, of a young woman with a small red flower tucked into her bodice is frequently identified as a self-portrait of Marietta in online publications, non-specialist literature, and exhibitions.[63] In a 2021 exhibition devoted to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century women painters, the Borghese picture appeared side by side with the Uffizi supposed self-portrait, with labels ascribing both to Marietta—although the exhibition catalogue dismissed the attribution of the Borghese picture to Marietta, correctly identifying it as one of a number of copies of a lost portrait by Titian of Elisabetta Querini, who

the Ambrosiana group portraits, a portrait head of a woman in an orange-brown dress and attributed to Marietta, was recently on the New York art market. See Heinreich, 2023.

Rossi, 1990, generally avoids attributions to Marietta. The closest she comes is her cat. no. A12 (106, fig. 233), a portrait of a young woman in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Béziers (on deposit from the Louvre); she notes a certain stylistic similarity to the Uffizi painting, and states that if one accepts that as a work by Marietta, the Béziers picture might be assigned to her as well. In her entry on a portrait of a young girl formerly in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which she accepts as by Jacopo (89, cat. no. 21, fig. 122; see also Marinelli, 1996, 60, n. 13), Rossi notes that MFA curatorial files contain a suggestion that the picture may be by Marietta. MFA files contain only an oral attribution by Federico Zeri recorded on February 26, 1963. Zeri apparently withdrew his opinion by 1972, since Fredericksen and Zeri, 1972, 564, assigned the picture to the Tintoretto shop. The only picture Frederickson and Zeri give specifically to Marietta is the *Portrait of a Young Lady* in the Sarasota's Ringling Museum, now assigned by the museum to Jacopo, ca. 1550. See Brilliant, 2017, 317, cat. no. I 188. The present authors believe that neither the ex-MFA nor the Ringling portrait is by either Jacopo or Marietta.

Mazzucco, 2009, 273, somewhat tentatively raises the possibility that several portraits of children are by Marietta, seeing similarities of expression to the portrait of Ottavio Strada. These include: a double portrait of two boys formerly in the Metropolitan Museum, now in a private collection (Rossi, 1990, 109, cat. no. 162, fig. 210; see also Marinelli, 1996, 60, n. 13); *Sebastiano Venier with a Page* (Rossi, 1990, 104, cat. no. 163, fig. 160); the *Senator with a Child*, formerly Wiberg Collection, Stockholm (Rossi, 1990, 99, cat. no. 120, fig. 174); portrait of a boy, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania (Rossi, 1990, 108, cat. no. A45, fig. 195).

Mazzucco, 2009, 274–275, also suggests that a painting in the Palazzo Ricchieri, Pordenone (now the Museo Civico d'Arte di Pordenone) may be the portrait of Portia Ricchieri by (Jacopo) Tintoretto described in a seventeenth-century will. Portia Ricchieri married in 1575, providing a likely date for the picture. Suggesting that the work is not by Jacopo but by Marietta, Mazzucco sees similarities to the supposed self-portrait in the Uffizi (pose, instrument, expression). We note that the pose of the subject in the Pordenone painting is similar to that of the little girl in the ex-Boston painting. The Pordenone, ex-Boston, and the Louvre boy share an unconvincing relation of figure to setting and an awkward perspective in the depiction of furniture, and may be by the same hand, but the artist is not Marietta.

63 The attribution to Marietta first appeared in a 1955 catalogue of the collection, which pointed out that it was a replica of a painting in the Louvre (on deposit in the Musée des Augustins, Toulouse, since 1958) sometimes thought to be by Tintoretto. Della Pergola, 1955, 128. The Borghese's online catalogue mischaracterizes the 1955 attribution, stating that the Louvre (Toulouse) picture is an "autoritratto ritenuto autografo di Marietta Robusti." https://www.collezionegalleriaborghese.it/en/opere/self-portrait, downloaded 4 March 2023. In fact, della Pergola seems to have been the first to make this attribution, although it had apparently been identified at one time as a portrait of Marietta by Jacopo.

died in 1559.[64] The Borghese's own online catalogue rejects the attribution to Marietta in the text of the entry, although maintaining it (with a question mark) in the heading.[65] In our view, the picture has no connection to Marietta or the Tintoretto workshop.

Paintings Mentioned by Borghini and Ridolfi. Considerable discussion about Marietta's possible oeuvre has focused on efforts to identify the paintings mentioned by Borghini and Ridolfi. To reiterate: both sources refer to a portrait she made of Jacopo Strada owned by Maximilian II. Borghini says that the emperor also owned Marietta's self-portrait. Ridolfi reports that Marietta's portraits of Faustina's father Marco Episcopi (Marco de' Vescovi; 1511–1571) and Faustina's brother Pietro (called in some documents Piero, and born in the early 1540s) were still in Casa Tintoretto at the time that he wrote.[66]

In 1934, in the first article devoted in depth to Marietta's career, Tietze-Conrat argued that Ridolfi's language regarding the portraits of the father and son could possibly be interpreted as describing a double portrait. She proposed that it referred to a painting in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, showing a bearded old man staring into space and a young boy looking at the viewer. Although the attribution of this picture to Marietta is still occasionally asserted, it can be firmly rejected on the basis of external evidence. Pietro Episcopi was roughly a decade older than Marietta and so must have been at least in his mid-to-late twenties when she painted him. By contrast, the boy in this picture is clearly a child.[67] Definitive evidence

64 Bava, Mori, and Tapié, 2021, 317, cat. no. 3.38. On the Toulouse picture, see Szanto, 2005, 226–227, cat. no. 100; and https://www.pop.culture.gouv.fr/notice/joconde/05620001426?base=%5B%22Collections%20des%20mus%C3%A9es%20de%20France%20%28Joconde%29%22%5D&mainSearch=%22querini%22&last_view=%22list%22&idQuery=%22ebddded-8d-d56e-d782-14b17db8bb0e%22, downloaded March 1, 2023. See also Terribile, 2021, 317, cat. no. 3.38, tentatively linking the Borghese picture to Titian's portrait; and Zamperini, 2022, 147, n. 7, dating the Borghese picture before 1560 on the basis of costume. Mazzucco, 2009, 273, 453–454 tentatively accepts the Borghese and Louvre pictures as self-portraits of Marietta. Another version in the Uffizi is dated 1560. Uffizi numero catalogo generale 00294803. https://catalogo.uffizi.it/it/29/ricerca/detailiccd/1118000/, downloaded March 2,2023. Other versions have appeared on the art market, for example, https://www.artnet.com/artists/titian/portrait-dune-v%C3%A9nitienne-elisabetta-querini-8A0_irbG-u97X7vvnKPQAA2, downloaded March 4, 2023. Terribile, 2021, 317, cat. no. 3.38, cites a version in the Musei Civici, Padua.

65 The Borghese's website attributes it to an anonymous Venetian artist of the late sixteenth century, possibly associated with Tintoretto's workshop. https://www.collezionegalleriaborghese.it/en/opere/self-portrait, downloaded March 4, 2023.

66 Mazzucco, 2009, 159, argues that although a document states that Pietro was Faustina's twin, born in 1545, he must have been a bit older, born around 1541, since he was enrolled in the Scuola Grande di San Marco in 1561. The minimum age for members was twenty years old.

67 Tietze-Conrat, 1934, 261–262. The double portrait in Vienna is Rossi, 1990, 102, cat. no. 145, fig. 119. Marco Episcopi's birthdate was established by Mazzucco, 2009, 146. The point that the child in the picture

is provided by the correspondence in 1678 between the Marquis of Carpio and his agent Antonio Saurer regarding the latter's search for paintings by Marietta; Saurer, clearly following up on Ridolfi's mention of Marietta's paintings of Episcopi father and son, reported after visiting Casa Tintoretto that the portrait of Marco with a long beard had gone to a Count Benzi, while a friend of Benzi's had the one of Pietro.[68] This removes any doubt: these were two different paintings, and therefore there is no basis for attributing the Vienna double portrait to Marietta. Nevertheless, as with the Uffizi supposed self-portrait, attributions to Marietta based upon perceived similarities to the Vienna painting persist, even though the original link to her has not held up.[69]

In the same article, Tietze-Conrat also identified a *Portrait of a Woman in Red* in Vienna (Kunsthistoriches Museum), usually attributed to Jacopo, as the self-portrait by Marietta mentioned by Borghini as owned by Emperor Maximilian I. Most successive scholars have assigned the work to Jacopo. Based on costume and style, however, the present authors have come to believe that the picture dates from before 1560, possibly showing a sitter from the Venetian *terraferma*, and more likely painted by a mainland artist, rather than by Jacopo or a workshop assistant.[70] Nor

is too young to be Pietro was earlier made by Marinelli, 1996, 60. Ridolfi wrote: "Fù particolare dote però di Marietta il saper far bene i ritratti, e uno di Marco dei Vescovi, con barba lunga, si conserva ancora nelle casa de' Tintoretti, con quello di Pietro suo figliuolo." Ridolfi, 1914–1924, 2:79. An inscription that Tietze-Conrat perceived as a "MR" became clearer after cleaning and is now read as "65 M 3"; see Rossi, 1994, 130, cat. no. 26.

68 "Marietta ha sido ija natural de Jacome, gran pitora de retratos. El que se hallava en casa de Marco de Vescovi barba lunga, se lo tomé al conde Benzi del de Pedro dicele que le tiene otro amigo suyo." Frutos Sastre, 2009, 218, n. 79. After confirming that in Casa Tintoretto there remained neither any painting by Marietta nor any portrait of her, Saurer goes on to say that he will pursue other leads. Eventually Carpio was able to obtain a pair of portraits of Marietta and her husband, supposedly by Jacopo; Frutos Sastre, 2009, 213. These pictures have not been traced to date. See discussion note 83.

69 As an example of how these old attributions persist, Shapley, 1973, 63–64, assigned the *Head of a Bearded Man* in the University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, to Marietta, comparing it to the double portrait of an old man and a boy and the *Portrait of a Lady in Red*, both in Vienna. The museum still maintains the attribution on its web site: https://artmuseum.arizona.edu/samuel-h-kress-collection/attachment/marietta-tintoretto, downloaded 2 March 2023. Shapley further attributed the *Portrait of a Young Man in Black* in the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, to Marietta on the basis of the soft modeling of the face, which she had identified in the Tucson picture. See also https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/3075, downloaded 4 March 2023. Finally, the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin has in storage an attractive portrait of a seated cardinal (102 × 84 cm., purchased 1860, NGI.1333) assigned to Marietta, but no information or justification in the curatorial files. http://onlinecollection.nationalgallery.ie/people/2601/marietta-tintoretto/objects.

70 Tietze-Conrat, 1934, 259–260. Cheney, Faxon, and Russo, 2000, 64–65, take an expansionist view of Marietta's self-portraits, asserting the Uffizi picture and the Vienna *Woman in Red* as self-portraits, and assigning both (somewhat implausibly) the same date of 1580. On the Vienna portrait, see Echols and Ilchman, eds., 2018, 252, including information from Jane Bridgeman on the sitter's costume, and increased conviction it is not by Jacopo in Echols and Ilchman, 2021, 116, nn. 19, 20.

does the stance possess characteristics of a self-portrait (e.g., evidence of posing before a mirror to create the likeness). The attribution to Marietta can therefore be firmly rejected.

In 1944 Tietze-Conrat and Tietze, following up on a tentative suggestion in Tietze-Conrat's 1934 article, proposed Marietta as the author of a portrait of *Ottavio Strada* (fig. 3.3), the son of Jacopo Strada. The subject is named in an inscription added to the picture much later (it refers to honors accorded to Ottavio only in 1598), which also gives his age (eighteen) and the date (1567) and identifies the artist as Jacopo Tintoretto. There is no reason to doubt the date; Ottavio was present in Venice in 1567 and was seventeen or eighteen at the time.[71] Despite the attribution in the inscription, the Tietzes believed that the portrait was by Marietta, arguing that Borghini and later Ridolfi were mistaken, and that Marietta's portrait depicted the Strada son, not father. They claimed similarities between the sculpture held by Ottavio in the portrait and a drawing of a statue of Venus, which they attributed to Marietta.[72] In 1994, Roland Krischel reasserted the attribution of the Amsterdam painting to Marietta, adding that the statue may be a self-portrait.[73] We have previously regarded the portrait as a puzzle, not the work of Jacopo but of a unique hand that does not seem to appear again.[74] Although not convinced by the Tietzes' arguments, we have now come to believe that the portrait may indeed be the work of the very young Marietta, who would have been no more than fifteen in 1567.

In our view, what has made this picture so hard to place is that the format and pose are very different from those in standard Tintoretto workshop portraits, reflecting a certain ambition and individuality. It depicts an ongoing action; Ottavio Strada turns to accept the cornucopia from a flying female figure, probably Fortune, looking toward her rather than making eye contact with the viewer, as is usually the case in Tintoretto's portraits. The subject's head is tilted and the plump underside of his jaw is revealed. No other portrait from the Tintoretto workshop shares these characteristics—sitters are almost invariably seen from straight-on, their eyes parallel to the horizontal margins. Moreover, the picture's quality is very mixed: some passages are relatively strong (such as the individual facial features), while

71 Rossi, 1990, 87, cat. no. 7; Rossi, 1994, 136, cat. no. 24; Bull, 2009, 678–680; and Bull, Jansen, and Ridder, 2009, 200–213, cat. no. 25.

72 Tietze and Tietze-Conrat, 1944, 293. Rearick, 1995, 62, 68, proposed that the picture was painted by Hans Rottenhammer after 1598. Loisel, 2006, 146–147, accepts the attribution of the Amsterdam portrait to Marietta. See Mazzucco, 2009, 272.

73 Krischel, 1994a; Krischel, 2000, 133.

74 Echols and Ilchman, 2018, 240, n. 43. Aside from Krischel, Tintoretto scholars have continued to assign the Rijksmuseum picture to Jacopo, including Bull, 2009, 678–680; and Bull, Jansen, and Ridder, 2009, 200–213, cat. no. 25. The picture was undoubtedly produced in the Tintoretto studio: the flying figure was based on a drawing for one of the allegorical figures on the ceiling of the Sala del Albergo at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco of 1564. See Pallucchini and Rossi, 1990, 2-2: fig. 358.

Figure 3.3 Attributed to Marietta Tintoretta, *Ottavio Strada*, 1567. Oil on canvas, 128 × 101 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (as Jacopo Tintoretto). CCO 1.0. Purchased with the support of the J.W. Edwin Vom Rath Fonds/ Rijksmuseum Fonds.

others are awkward (the hands, the cornucopia), and the picture does not come together overall. What has led us to consider Marietta's authorship is that these anomalies all make sense if we identify this as the work of a talented and ambitious beginner, not yet trained in portraiture, but used to drawing from sculpture. Indeed, the best analogies to the unusual treatment of Ottavio's head are drawings such as those after the "Vitellius," including Marietta's (see figure 3.2). While the notion that Borghini and Ridolfi mistook the father for the son seems implausible—we believe that it is likely that Marietta did in fact paint Jacopo Strada—this does not mean that she could not have painted the son as well.

In 2009 Duncan Bull hypothesized that Borghini's report of the portrait of Jacopo Strada and the self-portrait given to the emperor refers to a double portrait, which he identifies as a painting in Dresden showing an older man and a youth. He identifies the older man as Jacopo Strada, based on similarities to Titian's portrait in Vienna, and proposes that the youth is none other than Marietta herself, dressed as a boy, with cropped hair.[75] While Bull's proposal is intriguing, and we agree that the Dresden portrait could conceivably depict Jacopo Strada, we nevertheless reject the attribution to Marietta. Borghini's language is unambiguous: he is referring to two separate pictures—one of Jacopo Strada and the other a self-portrait by Marietta—not a double portrait.[76]

The Rediscovery of Marietta. With the exceptions of the proposals by Krischel and Bull, the corpus of attributions to Marietta basically dates from the first half of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1970s, however, Marietta started to be cited, or even used as a case study, in foundational texts in feminist art history. These pioneering syntheses insist on Marietta's place in the canon, repeating the pantheon of worthy women defined in earlier centuries by Ridolfi, Tassi, and Anna Jameson. Marietta makes an appearance in Linda Nochlin's "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (1971) as first in a list of "eminent" early modern women who received training since they were daughters of artists.[77] In 1976, Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris organized the enormous exhibition, *Women Artists,*

75 Bull points out relationships among the Dresden painting, the *Ottavio Strada* in Amsterdam (which he assigns to Jacopo Tintoretto), and Titian's famous likeness of Jacopo Strada; in particular, he notes that the original pose of Ottavio Strada, as visible in x-radiographs, is essentially the same as that of both Titian's Jacopo Strada and the youth in the Dresden double portrait (the latter in reverse). Bull, 2009, 678–680; and Bull, Jansen, and Ridder, 2009, 200–213, cat. no. 25. On *Ottavio Strada* generally, see Rossi, 1990, 87, cat. no. 7; Rossi, 1994, 136, cat. no. 29.

76 For the original Italian text, see note 3.

77 Nochlin, 1971, 480–510. In the wake of Nochlin's article, Tufts, 1974, xvii, called for ambitious research on key women artists, including Marietta. Bachmann and Piland, 1978, 65–66, provided a bibliography. More recently, see Dabbs, 2009, 85–95.

1550–1950, with more than eighty different artists represented. The exhibition's indispensable catalogue discussed another 150 artists not in the checklist. It is telling that Marietta was not present on the walls of the exhibition galleries, but only in the catalogue.[78] Marietta received considerably more attention in Germaine Greer's *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work* (1979), which explored the crippling limitations—including family obligations, social prejudice, and institutional regulations—to women achieving success as artists. Marietta is a key example in the chapter on "Family," where Greer argues that family strictures and chauvinism discouraged originality or an independent career once married. Greer correctly presumes that Marietta's works have been "submerged in the oceanic muddle of Tintoretto attribution."[79] Although providing valuable insights into the condition of women artists, these studies offered no new facts about Marietta or her plausible oeuvre, while often repeating errors or making incorrect assumptions.

Marietta as Sitter and Model. An additional theme in recent scholarship concerns Marietta's physical appearance as recorded in portraits and other paintings. (The supposed Uffizi self-portrait must be removed from consideration, as discussed above.) The engraved likeness that accompanies Ridolfi's biography (see figure 3.1) is generally considered to represent her features accurately, perhaps based on a portrait by her father. Indeed, the corresponding prints in Ridolfi's biographies of Jacopo and Domenico show faithful likenesses of their subjects, as confirmed by other portraits, and we know that at least one painting of Marietta by Jacopo was present in Casa Tintoretto at the time of Ridolfi's publication.[80] By contrast, Sandrart's 1683 biography of Marietta is illustrated with a stylized portrait, with

78 Harris and Nochlin, 1976, 28, n. 84. The exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art with subsequent venues in Austin, Pittsburgh, and Brooklyn.

79 Greer, 1979, 14–15, 252. Basic factual errors mar the analysis; for example, she asserts that Marietta married "Jacopo d'Augusta, head of the silversmith's guild, who accepted the condition imposed by Tintoretto, that Marietta should not leave his household in his lifetime." Mazzucco's research has corrected the name and profession of Marietta's husband and confirms that she moved to his neighborhood once married. The insistence of Nochlin, Greer, and others that women artists required fathers who were also artists is now contradicted by the situation in Bologna, according to Bohn, 2021.

80 Mazzucco, 2009, 446–448, plausibly proposes that the print is based upon a portrait of Marietta obtained from the surviving members of the Tintoretto family. On one portrait of Marietta by Jacopo in the possession of the family at that time, see Frutos Sastre, 2009, 213, discussed below. Less convincing is Mazzucco's suggestion that the low-cut gown is that of a courtesan. Zamperini, 2022, 147, argues that the costume is that of the early seventeenth century, and thus the image is not a realistic portrait of Marietta. In a private communication (March 2023), costume expert Jane Bridgeman suggests that the details of the costume are insufficient to provide a date.

Tietze-Conrat, 1934, 258, identifies a portrait in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, believed to be by Jacopo, as the source for the print. The museum titles the picture *Portrait of a Lady* (*Marietta Robusti?*). In our view, however, the relation of the painting to the print is only generic, and the painting is probably

an extremely long neck and an elaborate hairstyle with the "horns" or half-moon curls fashionable in Venice in the 1580s and 1590s. The facial features, which do not fit comfortably on the head, are clearly based on the Ridolfi print.[81]

Several scholars have proposed that Marietta occasionally served as a studio model, identifying her image in paintings by her father or brother.[82] These efforts may have been distorted by the legend that has grown up around her, and the resulting assumption that in any portrait or self-portrait she would be young and conventionally attractive. But a 1681 letter by the agent of the Marquis of Carpio suggests that this may not have been the case.[83]

Reimagining Marietta Tintoretta's Oeuvre

Having concluded that efforts by art historians to date have failed to identify a convincing nucleus of works by Marietta, and that the pictures most frequently associated with her can be rejected on the basis of external evidence, we propose a different approach, based primarily on exploration of the context in which she would have been trained and developed as a painter—the busy workshop of her father.[84] In particular, we suspect that clues to Marietta's oeuvre may be extrapolated from the early career of her half-brother Domenico, born in 1560 and thus some six or eight years younger.

not by Jacopo. Mazzucco, 2009, 447–448, after speculating that the Budapest painting might be Jacopo's depiction of Marietta's German mother, accepts Tietze-Conrat's proposal that it shows Marietta.

81 Zamperini, 2022, 153, argues that this is the only image of Marietta showing her in the costume of her own day.

82 Echols, in Echols and Ilchman, 2007, 308, suggests that she may appear as the servant boy in the San Trovaso *Last Supper* of ca. 1564. Arizzoli, 2016, 111–112, identifies identified several possibilities, all of which show a young woman with relatively distinctive physiognomies somewhat similar to one another: the teenage saint in *Saint Agnes Cures Licinius* in the Contarini Chapel, Madonna dell'Orto; the serving maid in *Danaë* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon); and Domenico's *Mary Magdalene* (Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome). Marietta has also occasionally been identified, without any consistent rationale, as the subject of one or more of several bust-length paintings of attractive young women in the Prado, sometimes with bare breasts or opening their bodices, usually attributed to Domenico Tintoretto. See Sánchez Cantón, 1963, 681–684; and Pérez Sánchez, 1985, 684, 688. For more recent discussion of this group, now rarely associated with Marietta, see Attardi, 2012, 196, cat. no. 36; Falomir in Loughman, Morris, and Yeager-Crasselt., 2016, 84–87, cat. no. 5; Gazzola, 2021, 78; Ferino-Pagden, 2021, 163, cat. no. 18; King, 2022, 233–258.

83 The agent found a portrait of Marietta by Jacopo and one of Marco Augusta to be unattractive: "esta dama es nada linda; que só tiene de bueno el ser retratada de mano de Jacome Tintoretto; suzediendo lo mesmo a su marido que asseguro tiene desenganada presenzia y que entre marido y mugger no me atrevo a hazer judicio de qual sea mas agradable a la vista." Previously, the Spanish ambassador, who had been holding the painting of Marietta for Carpio, had expressed a higher opinion of the picture: "buelvo a repetir mis amores con el retrato de la señora Marieta Tintoreto y que es major de que otros del autor." Frutos Sastre, 2009, 213. Neither portrait has been traced.

84 For the chronology and attributions we employ, see Echols and Ilchman, 2009.

When Domenico was eighteen, Jacopo Tintoretto delegated to him responsibility for completing a major cycle for the Gonzaga family of Mantua, the first of many such assignments. For the rest of his father's life, Domenico worked as his assistant and associate, occasionally acknowledged as responsible for particular works but more often simply a part of the factory-like Tintoretto studio.

To what extent did Domenico's early career echo that of his sister's six to ten years earlier? It seems reasonable to assume that she too had assisted her father with his paintings. Was it coincidental that Domenico became a key helper in the very year of Marietta's marriage? Did Jacopo arrange the marriage because Domenico was now ready to take Marietta's place? Or was Domenico hurried along to fill a gap?

Whatever Marietta's role in the studio, it must have changed after her marriage in 1578, particularly after 1580, when she had become a mother and was living in the area of San Stin. Although she reportedly continued to paint, how likely is it that she participated regularly in large-scale studio work? Would she have made her way across Venice every day to her father's workshop, or might she have maintained a studio in her home, producing smaller pictures? Would her clientele have changed?

We suggest that a search for Marietta's hand should begin with a focus on works produced by the Tintoretto workshop datable to the period of about 1570 to 1578—that is, from the time when she would have been about eighteen to the date of her marriage, the same year in which Domenico turned eighteen. These are the years in which Marietta would have developed a characteristic style, earned a reputation as a talented artist, and played a significant role in her father's workshop.

Like Marietta, Domenico became something of a specialist in portraiture. Perhaps recognizing that his father's propensity for austerity and understatement in portraits offered him little opportunity to make a name for himself, he developed his own distinctive portrait style, taking pleasure in elaborate outfits and props, flashy brushwork (particularly in drapery folds), and generally aiming for polished and even slick surfaces.[85] Did Marietta's own specialization in this field provide a role model for Domenico? Might her portrait style have been the starting point for his? Could Marietta have been Domenico's teacher, insofar as portraiture? Working backwards from Domenico's portrait style, might we find signs of hers? Are there portraits assigned to the young Domenico that are actually by his sister?

Answering these questions is beyond the scope of this essay and will require a thorough reconsideration of Domenico's early portraiture. Here we offer a single example of a portrait painted when Domenico was still a child of ten that strikingly

85 For example, see the woman in black (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston) or the two large group portraits, ca. 1591–1592, of the members of the Scuola dei Mercanti (Accademia, Venice), with showy fabric folds particularly in the looming green curtains and the robes of the office holders. On Domenico's career generally, see Mason, 2009.

Figure 3.4 Workshop of Jacopo Tintoretto (Marietta Tintoretta?), *Giovanni Soranzo*, ca. 1570. Oil on canvas, 108 × 89 cm. (42.5 × 35.0 in.). Private collection. Photo: Courtesy Sotheby's.

prefigures his style: *Giovanni Soranzo* (fig. 3.4), firmly datable to ca. 1570.[86] The sitter's features are rather generalized, but the format is expansive, with a view of Castel Sant'Angelo (a reference to Soranzo's service as Venetian envoy to Rome in 1570–1571). The sitter's unusually rosy complexion harmonizes with a distinctive overall tonality of pinkish reds and lavender, a palette not found in Jacopo's portraits. We suggest that this may be an early portrait by Marietta, having moved beyond the ambitious but awkward *Ottavio Strada* of three years before, now already bringing a distinctive personal quality to the Tintoretto house style. As such, it represents a possible starting point for a reconstruction of Marietta's oeuvre.

Conclusion

Admittedly speculative, our proposed approach offers avenues of research more promising than previous efforts, which to date have gone nowhere. More importantly, it presents a corrective to the dispiriting impression of Marietta's oeuvre that emerges from the art-historical literature and images in general circulation. By rejecting nearly all of the second-rate paintings commonly discussed as by or potentially by Marietta—above all the seemingly inescapable supposed self-portrait in the Uffizi—we recover a sense of possibility and achievement that accords with the admiration of Ridolfi and other early sources.

In this light, Marietta's premature death prompts speculation about the potential career that never happened. What might La Tintoretta have accomplished had she not died around 1590? Although unlikely to be the heir of Jacopo's workshop (a role for which Domenico appears to have been slated from an early age), could Marietta's involvement have helped prevent the decline in quality that occurred after their father's death? Or might she have enjoyed a successful independent career for several decades following her marriage? Whether remaining in Venice or working far from her hometown, following the example of Sofonisba Anguissola, Marietta could have supplied the enduring market for Tintorettesque paintings.

86 Once in the collection of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.; the sitter was identified by Suida Manning, 1962, 55–57, on the basis of comparisons to other portraits of Giovanni Soranzo (1520–1603). The inscription ANN XLIX is consistent with Soranzo's age at the time of his service in Rome in 1570–1571. Rossi, 1990, 190, cat. no. A59, did not consider it to be by Jacopo. Most recently it was on the art market at Finarte, Rome, 27 November 2018; see https://www.finarte.it/asta/dipinti-antichi-roma-2018-11-27/attribuito-a-jacopo-robusti-detto-il-tintoretto-venezia-1518-1594-ritratto-del-procuratore-giovanni-soranzo-28890, downloaded 15 March 2023.
Other pictures we will explore in a future publication as potential attributions to Marietta include the ceiling painting of the *Prodigal Son* and surrounding allegories (Sala degli Inquisitori, Palazzo Ducale), datable to ca. 1576 or shortly before; the *Assumption of the Virgin* (church of San Polo), ca. 1576; and the pendant portraits of the future doge Marino Grimani (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) and his wife, Morosina Morosini (Minneapolis Institute of Art), datable to 1577–1578 (see figs. 5.2 and 5.1).

As an artist, Domenico benefitted immensely from being Jacopo's son but seems to have stagnated under weighty expectations.[87] Although Ridolfi dwells on Jacopo's devotion to his daughter, might Marietta have truly blossomed if freed from the constraints of working in the same city where her father dominated the art scene?

The long and successful career of Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614), an exact contemporary of Marietta's, provides one possible template for what La Tintoretta might have achieved had she lived longer. Also trained by her father, Fontana went on to achieve fame in Bologna and Rome, operating her own workshop and producing a wide variety of pictures. Today, Fontana and her large oeuvre are regularly celebrated in publications and exhibitions—including, in 2023, a monographic exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland.[88]

For a final word, we return to another contemporary, Moderata Fonte, one of the first writers to mention Marietta's remarkable skill. In 1581, with a metaphor that seems apt when applied to Marietta, the author compared the achievements of talented women to "buried gold," requiring excavation to receive their due: "Gold which stays hidden in the mines / is no less gold, though buried, / and when it is drawn out and worked / it is as rich and beautiful as other gold."[89]

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Archival Abbreviations

APMOVe = Archivio Parocchiale della Chiesa di Madonna dell'Orto, Venice
APSMGFVe = Archivio Parocchiale della Chiesa di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice
ASPd = Archivio di Stato di Padova, Padua
ASVe = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice
BMCVe = Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, Venice

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87 On the burden of being Domenico, see Ilchman, 2014, 121–124.

88 Fontana has received much recent attention in survey exhibitions such as Bava, Mori, and Tapié, 2021 and Straussman-Pflanzer and Tostmann, 2021. For the monographic exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland, *Lavinia Fontana: Trailblazer, Rule Breaker*, 6 May–27 August 2023, see Brady, 2023.

89 Fonte is quoted in Ray, 2015, 1.

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4. The "Vite" of Women Artists in Venice (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century)

Antonis Digalakis

Abstract
Important steps have been taken, especially in recent years, in the research and systematic study of the work of women artists in Italy. However, a lack of extant "Vite" of these artists by their contemporaries hampers our study, especially in the case of Venice. This essay will explore the function of existing "Vite" as a historiographical source for women artists and how they were filtered through the "eyes" of male writers and art critics. The study of the biographies of women artists who lived and worked in Venice during the long period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries is the aim of this research, to identify literary stereotypes and biographical patterns. An appendix of Venetian and Venetan women artists and sources is provided.

Keywords: Venetian painters, art and gender, biographies, Irene di Spilimbergo, Marietta Robusti, Rosalba Carriera

The state of art writing in Venice from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries has had a significant impact on our knowledge—or lack of it—of the lives and works of Venetian women artists. Biographies of women artists in general from the time of Pliny (first century) to Boccaccio (fourteenth century) were few in number and remained largely so in the case of Venice.[1] Here too, as in other centers, these earlier writers laid the foundations of the biographical genre that would continue to affect the formulation of the historiographical identity of women artists.[2]

1 Vons, 2000; Boccaccio, 2001; McLeod, 1991. See Dabbs, 2009, 23–27 for Pliny, 28–35 for Boccaccio. I would also like to thank the anonymous reader for their suggestions.

2 Although the genre of biography has been prevalent since antiquity, it remains a problematic historical source, particularly regarding women (see De Temmerman, 2020, on the formulation of and reception of classical biography). Diane Owen Hughes (1987) argues that in medieval and Renaissance collections of

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The specific biographical genre of the "vite" or lives of artists is a phenomenon that developed in Renaissance Italy, specifically in Tuscany, as a corollary to the elevation of visual arts to an intellectual pursuit and consequently to the evolution of the social status of the artist.[3] Cultivating the rhetorical tools of humanist ideology, these works served in the gradual emancipation of the exceptional craftsman (*artefice*) from the "guild regime" to that of a prominent artist (*artista*) worthy of historical record.[4]

The first systematic biographer of artists and founder of this historiographical phenomenon, which significantly influenced later art writers throughout the early modern period, even beyond Italy, was Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574).[5] He drew on earlier authors and their approaches to biography as well as on the advice of humanist friends, in addition to what he gathered of primary evidence concerning the life and work of an artist.[6] Vasari's collected biographies of artists included that of a single women artist; this was adopted by later writers to the point that almost no biographical series lacked the presence of at least one woman artist. Until recently, apart from analysis of individual cases, women artists' biographies as a whole had not been considered as a literature of critical and historical discourse. Examination of these as a type has revealed distinctive gender characteristics that were derived exclusively from male authors, aimed at defining—or more often at confining—"female creativity" itself.[7]

biographies, women were included because of moral virtues that were considered excellent or exceptional, rather than for the impact their actions had. Their action became memorable only insofar as it proved exemplary moral virtue, therefore of a timeless character removed from history. For this reason, Hughes emphasizes that "great people" have been seen through hagiography and that the tendency to see women through a virtual rather than narrative representation has reduced their visibility. Gianna Pomata (1993, 12–14) does not fully agree. For her, Plutarch does not present the typical picture of spiritual modesty observed in hagiography, although I would say Boccaccio and later biographers do. The story of "great women," Pomata says, may have limited their historical significance, presenting them as exceptional, although it paved the way for writers to justify women's right to remove barriers and display their abilities. Zanin (2020) notes the model of Plutarch succeeded that of Suetonius in seventeenth-century biography (leading to the nineteenth-century "great men" tradition).

3 Early artistic biographical efforts include Manetti (1955) on the life and work of Filippo Brunelleschi and the incomplete treatise by Lorenzo Ghiberti (1998), the second book of which contains the sculptor's autobiography. See Visioli, 2015, 8–9; Pommier, 2007, 61–66. On the emergence of the subset of artistic biography in history writing, see Cochrane, 1981, 400–404 and 421; and Hendrickson, 2020, 563–574.

4 Pommier, 2007, 122–125. Jacobs, 1997, 2–3, 16–17. More on the concept in Barker, Webb, and Woods, eds., 1999.

5 Vasari, 1550; 1568. For Vasari as author, see Boase, 1979; Rubin, 1995.

6 According to Sarah Blake McHam (2011), Paolo Giovio was the one who directed Vasari to adopt the model of Pliny's *Natural History* in his *Lives*. For the influence of Pliny and Boccaccio on Vasari, see Cheney, 2007.

7 Judith Kathleen Dabbs's biographical anthology (2009) was influential in initiating this project for Digalakis (2019). Also fundamental, Jacobs (1997) on art writing and women artists in the sixteenth century.

The Vite in Venice

Julius von Schlosser, in his chapter on the local schools of Italian historiography in the seventeenth and eighteenth century influenced by Giorgio Vasari's *Vite*, wrote: "It is strange that Venice, so important for the development of all painting, was left a little behind the wealth of the wise Bologna."[8] Indeed, as far as its art historical production is concerned, Venice did not produce quantitatively or qualitatively the texts found in cities such as Florence, Bologna, and Rome. In Venice, the first early modern collection of biographies of artists was published only in 1648 by writer and artist Carlo Ridolfi (1594–1658)—nearly a century after Vasari.[9] Only in the eighteenth century would expanded coverage of women artists appear in the *Notizie di pittori e altri scritti* (1720–1727) by Natale Melchiori, although it remained in manuscript form until published in 1964.[10] Other collected biographies lacked representation of women, notably Tommaso Temanza's 1778 lives of sculptors and architects,[11] and the short biographies of twenty-four admired Venetian artists published by Alessandro Longhi in 1762, with its elaborate engraved portraits.[12]

All the above authors followed a standard type of collection of artistic biographies. Closely following the model of Vasari, Ridolfi featured the life of one women artist, while later, as did his contemporaries in other centers, Melchiori increased this number of lives to fourteen. In Temanza and Longhi, however, there are none. The reasons are apparent. Temanza's focus was on biographies of architects (a profession that all but excluded women) and sculptors (for which few examples are known during the early modern period). Longhi's criteria was "distinguished" artists; according to the selections he made, apparently there was no place for a woman in such a category (not even the then-famous Rosalba Carriera).

Could the biographies of Ridolfi and Melchiori really constitute the entirety of material available on the subject of the lives of women artists in Venice? The situation is more fragmented and complex as references to women artists are to be found sporadically in various types of texts beyond biographical collections (see the Appendix below). An early case is the 1561 short vita of Irene di Spilimbergo that precedes a collection of poems honoring her memory, edited by Dionigi Atanagi (writer and editor who spent the latter part of his career in Venice), belonging to the literary genre of laudatory posthumous poetry.[13] Names of other female artists

8 "E strano che Venezia, cosi importante per lo sviluppo di tutta la pittura, rimanga un po' addietro alla ricchezza della dota Bologna." Schlosser, 1964, 531. For a comparative study, see Bohn's contribution in this volume.

9 Ridolfi, 1648.

10 Melchiori, 1964.

11 Temanza, 1778.

12 Longhi, 1762.

13 Atanagi, 1561. See Schutte, 1991; 1992. Dabbs, 2009, 65–75.

are found in diverse art historical and literary sources such as the monument to Venetian painting, the poetic dialogue *La carta del navegar pitoresco* (1660) by Marco Boschini, as well as in his guidebooks (which were continued in Anton Maria Zanetti's revised version of 1773). His predecessor in the genre of city guidebooks to Venice had also included women artists; this was *Venetia, città nobilissima, et singolare* (1581) by Francesco Sansovino, expanded in 1663 by Giustiniano Martinioni.[14]

Elsewhere, the inclusion of several biographies of Venetian women artists in treatises by Bolognese authors was important for increasing the number of those represented. Most notable were Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi (1704, 1st edition),[15] from which Melchiori often drew information, and Marcello Oretti, whose undated late eighteenth-century manuscripts are located in the library of the Archiginnasio of Bologna.[16]

Questions of Identity in Artistic Biography: From the "famose donne" of Antiquity to Early Modern Women Artists

In the vita of the Bolognese sculptor Properzia de' Rossi, Giorgio Vasari includes the introduction of "worthy" women of antiquity, who distinguished themselves by warfare and by poetry to philosophy, grammar, astrology, and magic, thus justifying de' Rossi's inclusion through such classical references.[17] Biographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century filtered these ancient exemplars through Boccaccio's *Famous Women* (*De Mulieribus Claris*), thereby continuing to rely on Pliny's roster of women artists to define "female creativity."[18] In the Renaissance, as Ernst Gombrich states, all cultured Italians had access to the chapters on art in Pliny.[19] Pliny, however, was not the only ancient source. In the biographical texts of early modern authors, we find a range of historical and literary references from the late Roman and early Christian period to medieval and local sources. Many of these authors incorporated these using Vasari's biographical form for women

14 Boschini, 1660; Zanetti, 1733. Sansovino, 1581; 1663.

15 Orlandi, 1704.

16 Oretti, n.d. (eighteenth century). For information on Marcello Oretti (1714–1787), see Perini Folesani, 2013.

17 Vasari, 1998, 339–340. Vasari in the second edition of 1568 (171–174) uses the same structure as in the first edition but to the life of Properzia de 'Rossi adds the nun Plautilla Nelli, Lucrezia Quistelli della Mirandola, and Sofonisba Anguissola, whose sisters Lucia, Europa, and Anna, however, were added to that of a male artist, as was the case with others. Dabbs, 2009, 46, considers them treated as a "corporate entity" rather than being given the same treatment accorded to male artists. See more on some of these artists in Barker, 2016.

18 Jacobs, 1997, 19; Fortunati, 2007, 33.

19 Gombrich, 1966, 112.

Figure 4.1 Giacomo Piccini, *Marietta Tintoretta*, in Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte*, 1648, 70. Engraving, 4to (23 cm.). Courtesy of the Biblioteca della Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

artists as a template to praise women from their city, region, or country.[20] A prime early example for Venice is Ridolfi's life of the Venetian painter Marietta Robusti (fig. 4.1), daughter of Tintoretto.[21]

The opening spread of her vita boasts a portrait on the facing page and the text page leads with a heading in the margin: "Famose donne." References to ancient women generally characterized Vasari's conception of the qualities of women artists. Ridolfi then combined Pliny's ancient women artists with contemporaries from various Italian regions. By the time Ridolfi wrote his treatise, acknowledgment of women artists

20 Especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, biographers would boast about the existence of women artists in their city, confirming competition between biographers for the promotion of their painting school via their presence. For example, Baglione, 1642, in the vita of Ippolita Parmigiano (within the vita of her husband Fabrizio Parmigiano); Pascoli, 1732, in the vita of Teodora Danti (ca. 1498–ca. 1573); De Domenici, 1742–1745, in the vita of Mariangiola Criscuolo (ca. 1548–1630); Füssli, 1769, in the vita of Anna Wasser (Waser, 1678–1714), compares the Zurich painter with Marietta Tintoretta, Rosalba Carriera, and others.

21 Ridolfi, 1648, 70–71. See further Robert Echols and Frederick Ilchman in this volume.

Figure 4.2 Nadal Melchiori, *Portrait of Carla Catterina, et Gabbriella Carla Sorelle Patine Parigine, et Accademiche nella città di Padova*, in *Notizie di pittori e altri scritti*, [1720–1727]. MS 1/67, 283. Biblioteca Capitolare di Treviso, Treviso. Courtesy of the Biblioteca del Duomo, Treviso.

had taken an important step, a reflection of Vasari's increased number of acclaimed modern women artists from the 1550 to 1568 editions, challenging that of the ancients.

In the biographies of women, a common topos was repeated in an evolving pattern. Initially, in the sixteenth century, Vasari justified women artists of his time within a range of known ancient and mythical women validated for reasons which men were usually praised. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, specific examples of ancient Greek and Roman counterparts were paired with early modern women artists forming a continuation. Still, the introduction of "worthy" women expressed a geographical and chronological indeterminacy for the female subject and, consequently, for the role of women artists.[22] Male artists, at the time, were typically categorized according to their geographical activity, their apprenticeship, or the generation to which they belonged, while women artists remained grouped in the general pantheon of "worthy" women.[23]

The move away from this literary cliché was eventually accomplished for Venetian women artists by writers in the eighteenth century such as the Bolognese Luigi Crespi and Marcello Oretti,[24] and Parisian writer and collector Antoine Joseph Dezellier d'Argenville (1680–1765) whose life of Rosalba Carriera was included in the supplement to his collection of the lives of famous painters with their portraits.[25] Another example was Nadal Melchiori, whose manuscript treatise also has portraits that provide a rare glimpse of lesser-known figures, such as the erudite academic sisters Carla Caterina and Gabriella Carla Patine (fig. 4.2), although it remained unpublished in this period. The treatises mentioned mark a break as regards the expansion of independent lives of women artists in biographies, leaving behind the fabricated prehistory that treated women generically as being "worthy."

Writing Stereotypes

Among other stereotypes encountered in biographies, one applied to both male and female artists, recounts how the talent was demonstrable from a young age. The innate talent given directly by nature without the guidance of an instructor was a key element in the heroization of the artist.[26] This could then be used to

22 Davis, 1976, 83. I would like to thank the anonymous reader for their observation on "indeterminacy" and the rhetorical tradition of comparing "like with like" confining women to their sphere; see Sohm, 2001, 185–200, on the term in art writing. On biography, Vasari's model, and women artists, see ffolliott, 2013, 424–425; Bohn, 2013, 244.

23 For the geographical parameters by biographers, see Kaufmann, 2004, 29–30.

24 Oretti, n.d. (eighteenth century); Crespi, 1769.

25 Dezallier d'Argenville, 1762, 314–317.

26 Kris and Kurz, 1979, 13–15. Dabbs, 2009, 344, the choice of anecdotes revealed how women artists were perceived; 2005, on the types and damaging effects of stereotypes.

justify the ability of women artists as exceptional, existing outside the norm of their gender. As an example, Irene di Spilimbergo's natural inclination for drawing gave her the credentials to practice painting alongside a male painter.[27] "Vitality of intelligence," "natural instinct," and "natural talent" were key characteristics in praising woman artists that had bypassed professional training.

Another confining stereotype was an identification with specific genres of art. Since drawing from live models was generally inaccessible to women, genres such as history painting were considered beyond their capability. Among genres that were acceptable was portrait painting, a genre not highly regarded by some sixteenth-century theorists. Giovanni Battista Armenini in 1586 stated that "even a mediocre talent can dominate this art, as long as he is experienced in colors," that "we have seen more than once that as the more successful an artist is in drawing, the less he knows how to make portraits."[28] Such a view is clearly related to the controversy between design (*disegno*) and color (*colore*), a major dialogue among art theorists of the century, one that also delineated the professional practice of women portrait painters. As long as women artists were limited to the portrait, they were not considered to be a threat to the male-dominated art world, remaining confined in—according to some authors—the "mediocrity" of this genre.

Even so, the depiction of clothes and luxurious materials by a portrait painter was appreciated by commissioners among the upper bourgeoisie and elites, as a result of which women artists of the city competed for these services.[29] The life of Lavinia Fontana, as presented by the Bolognese author Carlo Cesare Malvasia, has features in common with Marietta Robusti in their ability in portraiture and success in competition for commissions among the Venetian aristocracy, as emphasized by Ridolfi.[30]

Theorists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in treatises that define female nature and its virtues, place beauty among them, another pervasive stereotype.[31] Hercole Marescotti in his treatise *Dell'eccellenza della donna*, published in Bologna in 1589, argued that a beautiful body could be considered the mirror of a beautiful soul.[32] Other treatises, by figures as different as the Bolognese popular

27 Atanagi, 1561, 11–15. This is just one example, many more are discussed in Jacobs, 1997, esp. 39 on *ars* (learned) and *ingenium* (innate); also Sohm, 2001, 64.

28 Armenini, 1823, 212. See Jacobs, 1997, 40–46 (esp. 44, limited to the ability to copy, or *ritrarre*). On the gendering of color and style, Sohm, 1995.

29 Malvasia, 1678, 219.

30 Ridolfi, 1648, 2:72. See Jacobs, 1997, 42. Chiara Varotari is another Veneto artist who found success in portraiture through the rendering of luxurious materials; see the essay by Diana Gisolfi in this volume.

31 Murphy, 1996, 192–193; Sohm, 1995, 761. On Beauty, see Cropper, 1976; 1998; Brown, 2001.

32 "E forse non mai ritrovarsi bellezza esteriore del corpo, senza la bellezza interniore dell'animo." Marescotti, 1589, 214.

writer, Giulio Cesare Croce (1590), and the Piedmontese bishop, Agostino della Chiesa (1620), present female virtues in a similar vein.[33] These treatises imitated Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortigiano*, published in 1528,[34] and his vision of the ideal Renaissance courtly lady, which emphasized natural beauty and the virtue of purity. Vasari, for example, wrote about the beauty of Properzia de' Rossi and compared it to her "skillful intelligence."[35] Exemplary among Venetian women artists were the virtues of the soul and physical beauty embodied by Irene di Spilimbergo, as extolled by Dionigi Atanagi.[36] A similar analogy by Florentine Raffaelo Borghini in his dialogue, *Il riposo* (1584), praised the external appearance of Marietta Robusti as proof of her beautiful soul, her virtues, and her capabilities.[37]

Biographers and critics were fully in accordance with the idea of "bel animo / bel corpo." During the eighteenth century, this perspective of beauty and virtue as incumbent in the woman artist would change. Dezallier d'Argenville in the life of Rosalba Carriera praises her charismatic abilities, however remarking that the price the artist paid for her talent can be seen in her unattractive appearance (fig. 4.3). Dezallier d'Argenville comments that "the beauty that was common to many women was not at all in Mrs. Rosalba Carriera" and that "a woman under the roof of ugliness is safe from lovers."[38] The Neoplatonic theory of beauty and inner virtue was replaced by another equation that posited ugliness as an external sign of intelligence. Another example concerning a Venice artist, outside that of biography, can be found in a letter written in March 1728 by the Venetian nobleman Abate Conti to Madame de Caylus about Giulia Lama: "to her ugliness, she unites a vivid spirit; speaking with such grace and refinery that one forgives her face."[39] As is written in the *Encyclopedia* of Diderot in 1751: "praise for a woman's character or mind is almost always a proof of her ugliness."[40]

Such generalizations regarding women artists in the early modern biographies and the anecdotes that structure them are a product of each author's historical and geographical context. Venetian writers, unfortunately, produced a limited number of artists biographies so that we have much less information about women artists than is found from other Italian cities. Even those few examples are loaded with patterns and stereotypes, reflecting the dominant patriarchal narrative concerning the limitations of women due to their gender. This brief survey of

33 Croce, 1590; Della Chiesa, 1620. See Modesti, 2014, 32.
34 Castiglione, 1528. Jacobs, 1997, 134–135.
35 Vasari, 1568, 172.
36 Atanagi, 1561, 24–25. See Dabbs, 2005, 24–26.
37 Borghini, 1584, 558.
38 Dezallier d'Argenville, 1762, 314. See Dabbs, 2012.
39 Cheney, 2007, 2.
40 Desmahis, 1751, 472. See Dabbs, 2012, 5; 2001, 39–40.

Figure 4.3 Jean-Jacques Flipart, *Portrait of Rosa Alba Carriera*, in Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, Paris, 1762. Vol. 1, 4to (19.5 × 26.2 cm.), unnumbered engraved plate between text pages 314 and 315. Courtesy of the Biblioteca della Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

Venetian writers highlights the ideological barriers faced by women artists—as well as the accompanying difficulties of researching their lives and work. The same situation is reflected in the written materials utilized for research into the individual figures discussed in other essays in this volume. Below, an overview of the Venetian women artists found in the abovementioned sources has been gathered to provide a sense of their presence in the lagoon city and as a resource for further investigation.

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Archival Abbreviation

BCArchBo = Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna

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About the Author

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Appendix

A Preliminary Catalogue of Women Artists in Venice

This catalogue brings together women artists who were born in or worked in Venice and the Veneto, mentioned in biographical series and art texts from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The names are given in alphabetical order. In some cases, limited information about their artistic profession, training, and birthplace is included. Multiple sources are given in chronological order (see the Bibliography below for original dates of publication in case of a modern edition being cited). It is intended to serve as a point of departure for study of women artists in Venice and the Veneto. (This Appendix is indebted to and extends the examples of Dabbs, 2009, Appendix, 455–466; and Jacobs, 1997, Appendix One, 165–168.)

Aromatari, Dorotea (seventeenth century), Embroiderer, Venice (or Milan). Boschini, 1660; Lanzi, 1809, vol. 4

Carlevarijs, Marianna (1703–1750), Pastelist, Venice, daughter of Luca, pupil of Rosalba Carriera. No early citations

Carriera, Rosalba (1675–1757), Painter, Miniaturist, Pastelist, Venice, sister-in-law to Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini (Angela, married 1704). Melchiori, 1964; Perym, 1736, vol. 2; Dezalier d'Argenville, 1762, vol. 1; Moücke, 1762, vol. 4; Mariette, 1851–1853, vol. 1

Cassana, Maria Vittoria (d. 1711), Painter, Venice, daughter of Giovanni Francesco and sister of Giovani Agostino Cassana. Soprani and Ratti, 1768–1769, vol. 2; Lanzi, 1795

Ceroni Suppioti, Maria, (1730–ca. 1773), Painter, Vicenza and Verona. Orlandi, 1704; Perini, 1997; Pozzobon, 1832; Zannandreis and Biadego, 1891

Damini, Damina (?–ca. 1669), Painter, Castelfranco Veneto, sister of Pietro Damini. Ridolfi, 1648; Orlandi, 1704; Melchiori, 1964; Orlandi and Guarienti, 1753; Füssli, 1763

Ebrea, Gratia (n.d.), Painter, Padua?, sister of Mariam. Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663
Ebrea, Mariam (Mariana) (n.d.), Painter, Padua?, daughter of Salvatore, pupil of Pietro Ricchi (1606–1675). Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663
Enzo (Ainz), Regina (n.d.), daughter of Giuseppe Enzo (or Ainz). Sansovino, 1663
Garzoni, Giovanna (1600–1670), Painter, in Venice from 1620 to 1630. Ridolfi, 1648; Pascoli, 1732; Baldinucci, 1845–1847, vol. 5
Giancarli, Campaspe (n.d.), Painter, Venice, daughter of the poet Gigio Artemio Giancarli (d. before 1561). Atanagi, 1561; Gratiano, 1639
Grandi, Paulina (n.d.), Painter, Venice. Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663
Lama, Giulia (1681–1747), Painter, Draftswoman, Poet, Mathematician, Venice, daughter of painter Agostino Lama. Albrizzi, 1724; Bergalli, 1726; Zanetti, 1733; Orlandi and Guarienti, 1753; Zanetti, 1797
Le Gru Perotti, Angelica (1719–1776), Painter, Verona–Venice–London, daughter of Stefano Le Gru, pupil of Rosalba Carriera. Zannandreis and Biadego, 1891
Letterini, Caterina (1675–1727), Painter, Minaturist, Venice, daughter of Agostino Letterini and sister of Bartolomeo. Melchiori, 1964
Osti, Catterina (n.d.), Painter, Treviso. Melchiori, 1964
Osti, Elisabetta (n.d.), Painter, Treviso, sister of Catterina. Melchiori, 1964
Pakman, Angiola Agnese (n.d.), Flanders–Venice, daughter of Andrea and third wife of painter Antonio Calza (married in 1708). Oretti, n.d. (eighteenth century); Crespi, 1769
Patine (Patina), Carla Caterina (ca. 1672?–1744?), Painter?, Engraver?, Author, Paris–Padua, daughter of physician and Padua University professor, Charles Patin, and philosopher, Madeleine Patin, member of the Accademia dei Ricovrati in Padua. Orlandi, 1704; Melchiori, 1964
Patine (Patina), Gabriella Carla (1666–?), Painter?, Engraver?, Author, Paris–Padua–Venice?, daughter of physician and Padua University professor, Charles Patin, and philosopher, Madeleine Patin, member of the Accademia dei Ricovrati in Padua. Sandrart, 1683; Orlandi, 1704; Melchiori, 1964
Piccini, Isabella (Suor) (1644–1734), Print maker, Venice, daughter of engraver Guglielmo Piccini, Franciscan nun in Santa Croce in Venice. Gimma, 1723, vol. 1; Zanetti, 1771; Schetelig, 1800
Renieri, Angelica (n.d.), Painter, Venice, daughter of painter and dealer Nicolò Renieri. Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663; Melchiori, 1964; Zanetti, 1771
Renieri, Anna (n.d.), Painter, Venice, daughter of painter and dealer Nicolò Renieri. Boschini, 1660; Melchiori, 1964; Zanetti, 1771
Renieri, Clorinda (della Vecchia) (n.d.), Painter, Venice, daughter of painter and dealer Nicolò Renieri, wife of Pietro della Vecchia. Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663; Melchiori, 1964; Zanetti, 1771

Renieri, Lugrecia (Lugretia) (Vandich [Vendich]) (n.d.), daughter of painter and dealer Nicolò Renieri, wife of Daniel Vendich. Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663; Melchiori, 1964; Zanetti, 1771

Robusti, Marietta (ca. 1552 or 1560–1590), Painter, Venice, daughter of Tintoretto. Borghini, 1584; Gratiano, 1639; Ridolfi, 1648; Melchiori, 1964 (1724)

Sartori, Felicità (von Hoffmann) (ca. 1714–1760), Painter, Miniaturist, Pastelist, Pordenone–Gorizia–Venice–Dresden, trained with engraver Antonio dall'Agata, pupil and assistant of Rosalba Carriera, married Frans Joseph von Hoffmann. Orlandi and Guarienti, 1753; Sastres, 1789

Scaligeri, Lucia (1637–1700), Painter, Venice. Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663; Orlandi, 1704; Melchiori, 1964

Scaligeri, Maria Teodora (Suor) (n.d.), Painter, Venice, daughter of Lucia Scaligeri, nun in Santa Maria Maggiore. Orlandi, 1704

Spilimbergo, Irene di (1541–1559), Painter, Spilimbergo–Venice, studied under Titian. Atanagi, 1561; Gratiano, 1639; Baglione, 1642; Ridolfi, 1648; Fontanini, 1706

Tarabotti, Caterina (1615–1693), Painter, Venice, sister of nun and writer Arcangela, pupil of Alessandro Varotari (1588–1649). Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663; Tarabotti, 1654; Melchiori, 1964

Triva, Flaminia (1629–1660), Painter, Reggio Emilia–Venice–Bavaria, sister of Antonio Triva. Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663; Orlandi, 1704; Oretti, n.d. (eighteenth century); Tiraboschi, 1786

Varotari, Chiara (1584–1663), Painter, Padua–Venice, daughter of painter Dario Varotari and Samaritana Ponchino, sister of Alessandro ("Il Padovanino"). Ridolfi, 1648; Boschini, 1660; Sansovino, 1663; Melchiori, 1964

5. Artists and Artisans in the Account Books of Marino Grimani, Patrician and Doge of Venice (Late Sixteenth–Early Seventeenth Centuries)

Maria Adank

Abstract
The detailed account books of Doge Marino Grimani (1595–1605) reveal a wide network of contacts with artists and craftsmen, both men and women. The analysis of two of the volumes indicates continuous relationships based on mutual trust and on the doge's refined material expertise. This essay will focus on the purchases of this wealthy Venetian patrician, before and after his dogeship (1589–1605), highlighting his prominent position as a client of the city's most renowned artists and artisans. A significant difference in the numbers between male and female professionals is indicated, as well as gender placement by professional category. Marino Grimani demonstrated particular preferences for the work of certain female artisans and luxury crafts, including needlework.

Keywords: Venetian patrons, women's history, account books, material culture, embroidery

In an attempt to highlight the role and presence of women artists and artisans in the republic of Venice, my focus will be on a client rather than an artist: the Grimani of San Luca—a leading family of the Venetian patrician elite in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—their choices, purchases and expenditures, and the artists, artisans, and workers who revolved around them and their palazzo. The point of view of the client will help place the female presence within the broader Venetian working context, especially in the fields of crafts and the arts.[1]

1 This contribution arises from my previous research, focused on the Grimani family of San Luca in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A broader perspective can be found in Adank, forthcoming.

Cooper, T.E. (ed.), *Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750: Uncovering the Female Presence*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
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The Grimani of San Luca: Expenses, Ambitions, and Artistic Patronage

The Grimani family of San Luca offers a privileged setting for several reasons. Firstly because of documentation that has been preserved. Indeed, over the period from 1589 to 1604 Marino Grimani and his *quadernieri* (bookkeepers) recorded income and expenditures. These entries average about ten per day, sometimes many more. Entries range from the collection of rents for houses in the city, tithes and pecuniary penalties collected from the Istrian fief, the purchase of agricultural products for the estates on the mainland, to textiles, carpets, paintings, and furniture for the new palazzo, from transportation to the sale of a used gondola to a servant. This practice of noting down all financial dealings allows us to follow Marino day-to-day, through the phases of his family life and throughout his political career. A second book of expenses starting from the 1570s, albeit less detailed, allows a longer view.[2] Secondly, the choices and purchases made by the Grimani of San Luca are significant because they shed light on a crucial moment in the family life. Girolamo Grimani, the father of Marino and Almorò, had in fact commissioned the palazzo to be built on the Grand Canal with the intention that it would be the tallest private building in the city, with the precise aim of consolidating the prestigious status of the new line of the Grimani family that he himself had established.[3] At the same time, with astonishing determination, he attempted to take his political career to the highest level. In fact, Girolamo tried to become Doge two times but failed.

Sansovino himself, when mentioning the Palazzo Grimani, dwells on the "extremely rich workmanship, carvings, foliage and other decorations almost as far down as the foundations," also pointing out the "excessive expenditure" incurred by the Grimani.[4] Expenditure on furnishings for the palazzo, documented from the 1580s, confirms a marked propensity for luxury and magnificence. From the inside to the outside of the prestigious family palazzo, textiles, tapestries, chairs, tables, beds, tableware, as well as clothes and accessories for adults and children, confirm an attention to quality and considerable material expertise. Looking at the long-term expenditure, a demonstration of luxury and pomp is evident. Girolamo's sons, in

2 ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 20, "Notatorio di Marino Grimani (1589–1604)," b. 33, "Libro delle spese e Salariadi del Dogado (1575–1605)." I will refer in particular to these two account books: the first is more detailed and contains the daily entries; the second is more concise and presents expenses over a longer term.

3 On Palazzo Grimani of San Luca, see Boschieri, 1931; Gallo, 1960; Puppi, 1971, 136–142; Davies and Hemsoll, 2004, 210–218, 275–344.

4 "Il [palazzo] Grimano, che l'eccede [palazzo Loredan] di gran lunga di stanze reali et d'ogni altra cosa, è ricchissimo di fatture, perciò che gli intagli, i fogliami et l'altre dilicature quasi fatte per fino alle fondamenta, sono con spesa eccessiva." Sansovino, 1581, 148v–149r.

the second half of the century, could boast of a considerable and well-diversified patrimony, further confirmed due to the rich dowry that the two Morosini sisters, the only heiresses of their father's property, had brought to the Grimani brothers in 1560. During the following years, the two families, both residing in the family palazzo, were strongly united, sharing and pursuing a well-contemplated family strategy. To the eldest son, Marino, the task of investing in a political career, and to the second, Almorò, the task of ensuring male descendants to the Grimani of San Luca. Marino's accounts confirm the strategy: the affirmation of family prestige being translated into a refined material culture, a constant desire for luxury objects, displayed on the *piano nobile* of the palazzo, with the purchase of silks and valuable draperies, furnishings of excellent workmanship, expensive clothes for the sons, without neglect of the rich dowries for the young brides of the house and the lavish wedding banquets organized for the occasion in the family palazzo.[5]

The artistic patronage of the Grimani of San Luca fits this wider ambition, as Michel Hochmann has reconstructed in an essay in 1992. In the Palazzo Grimani di San Luca, as in the Chiesa di San Giuseppe di Castello, and in the family villas in Padua and Oriago, can be found the names of Paolo Veronese, Alessandro Vittoria, Sante Peranda, Jacopo Palma il Giovane, Jacopo Bassano, Jacopo and Domenico Tintoretto, to name only the most well-known.[6] While the artistic patronage demonstrates the preferences of the two generations of the Grimani of San Luca, various unpublished inventories indicate the subjects of the many paintings that enrich the spaces, bearing witness to individual tastes but also to the desire to perpetuate the memory of a highly successful political career, one that brought Doge Marino Grimani and Dogaressa Morosina Morosini to the forefront of the Venetian and international scene at the end of the century.[7]

It is important to state from the outset that, although most of the Grimani's accounts for the period between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been preserved, no names of female artists appear in the *libri* (account books). This is not an insignificant detail: precisely because we have this vast documentation at our disposal, the absence of women's names in the conspicuous list of artists revolving around the Grimani family confirms their rarity. As Babette Bohn has shown, "the Bolognese phenomenon" in fact reminds us that the norm in the historical period under consideration was a context in which artistic work and expression was primarily a male prerogative. Venice was no exception. For Venice, when

5 On domestic furnishings in Venetian palazzi see Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 2006; Brown, 2004, 53–90.

6 Hochmann, 1992.

7 An interesting inventory with item estimations dated 1619 is in ASVe, Notarile, Atti, b. 605, notaio Fabricio Beacian, cc. 401r–426v.

compared to other cities investigated by Bohn, the number of female artists per 1,000 inhabitants was decidedly low.[8]

Among the names of artisans found in the Grimani accounts, however, interesting elements emerge with respect to gender. In the second half of this essay, I will focus on some female names found in the libri, but first two clarifications are required.

Revealing Female Identities: The Issue with the Sources

The first issue is the particular attention to female protagonists that characterized the couple, Marino Grimani and Morosina Morosini, at the turn of the century. The documents under investigation confirm what other studies have hypothesized: his wife's considerable wealth contributed significantly to his political advancement. As evidence, Morosina experienced rare visibility as dogaressa of Venice once Marino reached the pinnacle of his career. During the years in which the doge and dogaressa lived in the Palazzo Ducale, accounts confirm that special attention was paid to artistic talent, notably including female talent. Doge Marino Grimani individually paid for singing lessons for his wife's maids and, for one of them, Zannetta, even instrument lessons. During his dogeship, the doge bought the girl a lute, harp, and theorbo and continued to pay for private lessons.[9] From other sources we know that the writer Lucrezia Marinelli also had a privileged relationship with the doge and dogaressa, particularly with the latter.[10] In the early seventeenth century, Marinelli had already published several successful works, including her most famous, *Le nobilità, et eccellenze delle donne: et i diffetti, e mancamenti de gli huomini*. This was a strong and original position within the *querelle des femmes*, a response to the publication of a series of clearly misogynist works since the 1580s. Not only did Marinelli highlight the nobility and excellence of women, but also discussed the faults of men in contrast to Giuseppe Passi's idea of women's limitations.[11]

However, despite such liberality by the doge and dogaressa and their marked attention to the arts, accounts confirm that during the *dogato*, the artists that the doge turned to for paintings, portraits, and sculptures were all men.[12]

8 Bohn, 2021, 3–8 and table 1.

9 AVSe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 20, "Notatorio 1589–1604," to the dates 7 May, 19 November, 26 December 1598; 24 Febraury 1603 *more veneto*; 29 April 1604. Zanetta probably inherited her musical talent from her father, as the Doge once sent him some strings for a lute.

10 Lalli, 2018, 411–412.

11 For a biographical profile of Lucrezia Marinelli see Zaja, 2008. On women's writing in Counter-Reformation Italy, see Cox, 2011. For a European perspective, Plebani, 2019.

12 Morosina kept her own account books and, starting in 1597, she collected an income of ninety ducati every six months, which Marino gave her in payment of half of the dowry of her mother Chiara. Therefore,

A second clarification concerns the nature of the source. If account books can be extraordinary tools for investigating quantitative history, for collecting prices, wages, and rents, and to reconstruct the standard of living, they can also be useful to study specific professions and better understand gender inequality and the agency of women.[13] When kept by women, as recent studies have shown, these writings, in the form of memoirs or record-keeping, constitute a valuable testimony to reconstruct agency.[14] Thanks to a small account book, we discover details about the mother of the future dogaressa, the widow Chiara Morosini. The accounts and receipts show her resourcefulness, her preoccupation with managing the family fortune before her two daughters' marriages, and also say something about her artistic patronage, for example about the connections the widow had with the Venetian painter Paolo Pino.[15] On the other hand, however, if these sources shed valuable light on women as clients, they are less helpful in shining a light on women artisans and artists who often worked in the shadows in the workshops of their fathers, brothers, or husbands.[16] In the attempt to highlight women's work and give them visibility, we encounter limits typical of women's history in general, in addition to those arising from the scarcity of existing sources for the lower class, to which any female worker belonged. A class that rarely expressed itself by leaving direct evidence.[17]

Let us take the year 1578 as an example. When Jacopo Tintoretto went to Palazzo Grimani on the Grand Canal in the summer to deliver a large painting of a Magdalene and the two portraits of Marino Grimani and his wife Morosina for their *portego*, everyone involved was at a particularly important moment in their lives and careers. Marino was not yet *procuratore di San Marco* but was investing substantial sums to launch his political career, now that his father Girolamo had died. In that year, he had also spent many ducats on the purchase of paintings and

Morosina had considerable freedom to manage sums of money autonomously: those books, however, have been lost.

13 On account books as a source for quantitative history see Palma, 2020.

14 Casella, 2013, 2021; Galasso, 2019. For an updated focus on the category of female agency, see Howell, 2019.

15 ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 3. The handwritten note is found in the Grimani archive among some loose papers and receipts, most dating from the early seventeenth century. Two other notes by the painter are in Chiara's account book, b. 29. On the painter Paolo Pin (or Pino), information is scarce: best known as an art theorist for his *Dialogo*, he also distinguished himself for several portraits and altarpieces. Biffis, 2015.

16 On the role of the family in the management of Venetian workshops, see Erboso, 2017. Beatrice Zucca Micheletto's studies have shown for Turin how women were able to organize their own sums of money to create individual or couple economic strategies, in support of or as an alternative to their husband's business. Similar examples of entrepreneurship have been found for early modern England. Zucca Micheletto, 2011; Whittle, 2014.

17 Martelli, 2011, 350–351.

furniture to embellish the main floor of the family palazzo. It was also a special time for his wife Morosina: the portrait shows her at thirty-two years of age, at which time she already had three daughters and a single son, Andrea, who would not survive. The following year, in that *portego* where Tintoretto's three works were exhibited, a wedding banquet was held for their daughter Donata. Morosina, at the time of her portrait, was pregnant and would give birth to her last daughter within the year.

As for Tintoretto, in those years his fame was well established. These were lively years, which saw the artist engaged in religious and state commissions but also in the production of works for the Italian and European courts. A considerable amount of work increasingly led him to delegate the material execution of works to collaborators and family members. Indeed, unlike Marino's portrait, Morosina's portrait is usually attributed to Tintoretto's workshop (figs. 5.1 and 5.2). The year 1578 also saw the artist give his beloved daughter Marietta in marriage to the jeweler Marco Augusta, one of the few certain facts in her biography.[18] However, when Marino Grimani settled the painter's account at the end of July, it was to Tintoretto's son that the wealthy client left a three lire gratuity.[19] While Monica Chojnacka's studies have shown that women working in early modern Venice were much more mobile than previously thought, it is also worth bearing in mind that the presence of brothers, husbands, and fathers kept wives, sisters, and daughters more in the shadows of the workshops. Anna Bellavitis' studies on Venetian craftsmanship remind us how crucial the problem of sources is when historians attempt to uncover women's work. Women's activities, she writes, were often defined not by being, but by doing.[20] Particularly in tax sources, women are hidden more than men belonging to the same social class. In fact, in early modern Europe, women's employment was usually not recorded when they worked in the family workshop, while it was more frequently recorded when they exercised a salaried activity with a master craftsman, such as in the textile industry.[21] The Grimanis' accounts reveals evidence to this effect: it was mostly *lavoranti* and *garzoni*—male apprentices and workers—who delivered the goods, returned to the customer for the settlement, and obtained a gratuity, both when the Grimani were still in the family palazzo and later in Palazzo Ducale.[22]

18 Mazzucco, 2009, 390–393; Mazzucco, 2014, 83–89. On apprenticeships in painters' workshops, Sapienza, 2013; Hochmann, 2017. For a European perspective, Bellavitis, 2016, 61–64, 88–143.

19 ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 33, "Libro delle spese e Salariadi del Dogado di M. Grimani," c. 248. Hochmann 1992, 44.

20 Chojnacka, 2001, 103–120. Bellavitis 2016, 21–24.

21 Bellavitis, 2016, 24–26; Erboso, 2017, 285–300.

22 Some examples in ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 20, "Notatorio 1589–1604," 9 August 1595, 25 December 1595, 8 March 1596, 9 May 1596.

Figure 5.1 Workshop of Jacopo Tintoretto (Robusti), *Portrait of Dogaressa Morosina Morosini,* 1570–1580 (dated 1578 by Michel Hochmann). Oil on canvas, 72 1/2 × 61 × 3 1/4 in. (184.15 × 154.94 × 8.26 cm.). Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, William Hood Dunwoody Fund. CC PDM. Wholly owned or licensed by the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

Figure 5.2 Jacopo Tintoretto (Robusti), *Portrait of Marino Grimani*, 1578. Oil on canvas, 57 1/2 × 46 1/2 in. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. PD. www.lacma.org.

It is useful to remember that, in the face of gender inequality and an unquestioned patriarchal culture, on which there is a rich up-to-date historiography, bearing in mind well-documented particularities of gender roles in specific Venetian contexts, the issue of sources becomes significant when looking at extremes of the social scale. Sufficient documentation is preserved for Chiara Morosini and her daughters Morosina and Angela to reconstruct the crucial moments of their lives. We know the value of their dowries, of the clothes and shoes of their trousseau, the names of trusted tailors and haberdashers, the names of a number of wet nurses and confessors. We also have evidence of artistic patronage and numerous portraits of Morosina are preserved. Moreover, we know in part how these women managed their property and took over from their husbands the administration of their estates; we can read their last wills, those of their mothers, their daughters, and so on. All these elements make it possible, albeit with gaps and limitations, to reconstruct their biographical profile, to outline their actions within complex family strategies, to identify evidence as to how they understood identity, self-promotion, and agency in the patriarchal culture of their time. How much of this is missing for women such as Marietta Tintoretto and working-class women at the other end of the social scale, which emerges clearly from Echols and Ilchman's contribution in this volume.

A Vibrant World of Workers and Professionals

Where are the women working around the Grimani of San Luca to be found? Female names are primarily found in domestic spaces. In the palazzo on the Grand Canal, Anna, the *massara* (housemaid), holds the keys to the pantry and organizes the complex work of domestic servants. We gradually meet the maids, especially the personal maids of Morosina Morosini, and the nannies. It is their names, and the expense of building a bed for one of them, that allow us to discover a new baby in the Grimani household, clues that allow us to trace children who died shortly after birth. But the world of women's work is not reduced to the usual "women's jobs."[23]

In 1594, a key event in the family's history, the wedding of Maria, the last daughter of Alvise Grimani of San Polo, paints an interesting picture. Before the festivities, Iseppo *balotin* (errand boy) was paid thirty-one lire to invite noble men and women from Venice for the three days of feasting and banquets. Meanwhile, Marino noted the expenses for the two chimney sweeps who cleaned the chimney pipes and that of the glazier to *conzar* (mend) the glass in the house at San Luca. The *proto* Zuanne came with masons, lime, sand, and other things for a small restoration of the first floor of the palazzo in San Luca.

23 Bellavitis, 2016, 144–187.

During the three days of festivities, it was the tailor Bortolo who dressed Maria, a man who had known and dressed her since childhood. *Mistro* Pecin styled the women's gowns and coronets for twenty lire a day. The *conzateste* (hairdresser) Paula returned to do the bride's hairstyle on the three days of the festivities, and was paid the same as the tailor and *mistro* Pecin. Another five lire were for the woman who sold the braids of real or artificial hair that enriched women's elaborate hairstyles in the sixteenth century. Battista the dancer was named together with a partner, Callegarin. In addition to the two dancers, two women who sang are also named—and it is interesting that they were paid as much as the male dancers—and some jesters who entertained the guests. But Marino also spent more than forty ducati to host a company of talented violinists from Brescia, the "virtuosi Paganini."

In total, for Maria's wedding celebrations alone, the expenditure came to 1,809 ducati and twenty-three lire, an enormous sum. The people involved for the occasion—including the parish priest, tailor, goldsmith, the dancers, jesters, and male and female musicians, the hairdressers, haberdashers, hat makers, drapers, the *feraruol* (the craftsman who makes the cloaks), shoemakers, glassmakers, porters, chimney sweepers, bakers, confectioners, charcutiers, cooks, footmen, waiters, fruit vendors, the *bottai* (coopers)—there are more than sixty, not counting the undefined number of porters and other men and women who collaborated in various capacities.[24]

Whether it is the realization of longer-lasting jobs, such as the stone and masonry work in the prestigious palazzo on the Grand Canal, or a momentary task such as an elaborate hairstyle on the bride's head or a performance by female singers whose names are not even recorded, highly specialized men and women with a broad range of manual and artistic skills revolve around this rich and important Venetian family. This wedding represents a crucial moment in the family's history, socially, politically. and emotionally. A large number of artists and craftsmen contributed to its success.

Only a year later—in 1595—Marino Grimani was elected Doge of Venice. From this point, his account books are filled with details and expenses demonstrating unparalleled opulence. Many of the artisans in this new phase of family and political life are well-known: they have been accompanying the Grimani family since the 1580s, points of reference in terms of reliability and quality, luxury and art, manual skill, and the latest in market offerings.

All this abundance might indicate an excessive accumulation of goods, of uncontrolled spending. Yet this was not extravagant luxury. Marino Grimani

24 ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 20, "Notatorio 1589–1604," from 20 January to 28 February 1594, a total of six papers. The total account is found in ASVe, G&B, b. 33, "Libro delle spese e Salariadi del Dogado di M. Grimani," c. 342.

indeed had control over his possessions: at the end of his daughter's wedding, not only did he note down the expenses for cleaning the dirty laundry and for the women who washed the draperies in the house, but also the cost of three knives that were "stolen" and the expense of repairing a fork that had been ruined. In the hustle and bustle of people in the house, a wooden stool also disappeared, and Marino noted in the books seven lire for the loss. Although the Grimani spent thousands of ducati every year to maintain a standard of living worthy of one of the most prominent families of the Venetian patriciate, such luxury was not unassailable. Keeping servants away from the master's rooms, preventing them from associating with their children, avoiding the *popolani*, choosing a building isolated from surrounding residential and commercial spaces: signs that the father of a noble family must present his superior status, according to the standards of the time. Yet, as Daniela Frigo has noted, when put to the test, the boundaries are not so clear-cut.[25] The common ground between the rich Grimani of San Luca and the working class is found in the local *botteghe*, the constant bustle inside the palazzo, the passage of gondolas full of draperies and delicacies, and in the expert hands of the professionals who shaped the family luxury and helped preserve it. A space marked by a shared material expertise. And Marino Grimani had a concrete and tangible way of recognizing the quality of the work done.

The Art of Embroidery: The *Ricamatrici* in the Account Books

Among the predominantly male artisans mentioned in the libri, we find some interesting female names. These are an important testimony to the vitality of the art of embroidery, in which the resourcefulness and prominence of female artisans deserve more attention.

In 1585, Tommaso Garzoni in *La Piazza universale de' tutte le professioni del mondo*, after listing the many tools that embroidery work requires and after showing various types of stitches "and a thousand other forms that express in them the art of painting," defines the art of embroidery as "more ornamental than comfortable, and more for women than men."

As has been noted for some time, an impressive number of embroidery and lace pattern books, which addressed women on the title page with the intention of guiding them in needlework, became widespread in Italy from 1527 onwards. Lotz estimated as many as 165 Italian editions during the sixteenth century, but the number is probably much higher.[26] Ludovico Dolce insisted on the "work of the

25 Frigo, 1985, 106–107.

26 Garzoni, 1585, 500. See Plebani, 2012.

hand," convenient for noblewomen as a demonstration of virtue and acceptance of the traditional female role, of which this occupation became a symbol. If spinning was considered a poor woman's job, sewing and embroidery was an occupation suited to the virtuous noblewomen. Francesco Tommasi in 1580 also recalls that spinning, warping, weaving, spinning silk, sewing, embroidery and the like are exercises common to all women, "but with differences and distinctions of person."[27] Historiography has rightly insisted on the art of embroidery as a means of "escaping idleness" and practicing female virtues, but Tiziana Plebani has shown a much more complex picture.[28] In the fifteenth century, the needle was by no means alone in the hands of women: the embroiderer's craft is attested and documented in many Italian cities and was often practiced by male professionals. It is therefore good to be cautious when making a gender division within certain professions, as the reality was more fluid than what literature proposed.[29] The transition of the needle between male to female hands and the reverse is to be understood within the broader framework of the transformations that took place in the field of fashion and home furnishings, in a dynamic context that increasingly differentiated fabrics and applications, proposing ever more refined and varied ornaments. A luxury market, especially in Venice, produced a growing demand that pushed the sector to reorganize, involving female labor.[30]

In Venice in the early sixteenth century, new trends in sewing and especially embroidery developed to satisfy the practical demands and taste of a growing number of consumers. Instead of heavy needlework in gold and color, integrated into the fabric, white, detachable and reusable embroidery was increasingly preferred, although the different techniques continued to coexist, as the sumptuary laws confirm. Embroideries are found as ornamentation on sheets, pillowcases, towels, curtains, and tablecloths; they adorn cuffs, shoulder straps, collars, ruffs, as much on men's lightly padded jackets as on women's corsets. They are even found in the smocks and surplices used by prelates in the vestments and ecclesiastical

27 "Et certo i lavori di mano sono necessarii non solo alle donne private, ma anchora alle principesse et alle reine: et tanto più a queste, quanto manco esse senton la gravezza delle cure famigliari … Tornando alla mia fanciulla, sappia almeno ella cucire et reccamare bastevolmente. DOR. Lascisi pure, signor Flaminio, il lavoro della lana et del filo alle povere femine; et alle donne ricche et nobili rimangano questi due, et seguitiamo il proverbio: il quale è, che all'huomo la penna, et alla donna s'acconviene l'aco." Dolce, 1545, 14r–v. Martelli, 2011, 315–317; Plebani, 2016, 305–308; Tommasi, 1580, 188–189.

28 Plebani, 2015. As part of private life, Brown, 2004, 112–118. See also Plebani, 2016, on the effects of the Counter-Reformation on domestic female work, especially embroidery. Plebani, 2022, 85–99, focuses in more detail on the role of embroidery books in the process of female literacy during the Renaissance. On the definition of "reading for action" and women as "pragmatic readers," see also Richards and Schurink, 2010, 350–352.

29 Plebani, 2015, 207–209.

30 Plebani, 2015, 212. See also Ago, 2001.

supplies. The Venetian custom of adorning the room of the *puerpera* on the visits to congratulate a successful delivery is documented by a 1562 sumptuary law that, among other expenses considered to be excessive luxury, banned the exhibiting of sheets, pillowcases, *tornoletti*, "and every other item of cloth worked with gold and silver on silk."[31]

Ann Rosalind Jones focused on the effects of the popularity of embroidery, and lace in particular, with the implications on social distinction, showing the contradictions between the presence of lace in Giacomo Franco's engravings and the absence of references in the text.[32] As embroidery grew into an indispensable and versatile fashion accessory over time, the ways in which the art spread during the sixteenth century became varied.[33]

In the mid-eighteenth century, in his famous work on the clothes of the Venetians, Giovanni Grevembroch wrote that in the past, particularly in the art of the *punto in aria*, the Venetian noblewomen knew no rivals; he recalled that embroidery was for noble and virtuous ladies, also mentioning Cesare Vecellio's embroidery book with its "beautiful ideas and exhibitions of cut stitches." An accompanying watercolor shows us a noblewoman, with a small dog beside her, intent on embroidery in a domestic setting.[34] However, Grevembroch explains, also "the nuns with excellence of hand were imitating it all."[35] (fig. 5.3) In monasteries, the need for funds led nuns to produce goods to put on the market, secular activities that—at least in theory—were subject to strict control.[36] Among these activities was embroidery. The nuns were supposed to work in a common space, not in their individual cells, and while they were doing their work they were required to listen to an edifying reading or practice singing together. In addition, embroidery work was only to be performed "for honest people" and the work itself had to be approved first by the mother superior.[37]

This was in theory. The nuns actually engaged in precious sewing, producing lace and embroidery that they sometimes used for themselves—thus contravening the rule on poverty of clothing—or that they donated to visitors such as religious and civil authorities who patronized the monastery. The expertise of some of these nuns, ironically, is conveyed to us thanks to the complaints of the prioresses.[38]

31 Bistort, 1969, 239–241. On the richness of Venetian household furnishings, see also Palumbo Fossati Casa, 2013.

32 Jones, 2014.

33 Davanzo Poli and Colussi, 1991, 10. Plebani, 2022.

34 Grevembroch, 1981, 3:147.

35 Grevembroch, 1981, 3:147.

36 Bellavitis 2016, 18.

37 Campagnol, 2012, 118–122.

38 Campagnol, 2012, 118–122.

Figure 5.3 Giovanni Grevembroch, "Lavoratrici di punto in aria," in "Gli abiti de' Veneziani di quasi ogni età con diligenza raccolti e dipinti nel secolo xviii," mid-18th century. MS Gradenigo-Dolfin 49.3 c. 147, Biblioteca del Museo Correr di Venezia, Venice. Courtesy of Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia—Archivio Fotografico.

Marino Grimani's accounts also give us important evidence of embroidery in the monasteries. Among the payment entries in the libri, we frequently find nuns of the monastery of Santi Rocco e Margarita embroidering *fazzuoli* (silk handkerchiefs) and underwear for the Grimani family. The nuns of Santa Chiara a Padova provided the Grimani with linen, which is not surprising since the

Grimani's eldest daughter, *suor* Beatrice, was in the monastery, which bordered one of their properties.[39]

It is evident, however, that the family preferred the expertise of Augustinian nuns, confirming that some of these women—at some monasteries in this order—were distinguished by the refined embroidery they produced. In 1585 when Marino Grimani began shopping months before leaving for his prestigious ambassadorship in Rome, he turned to the best of the suppliers. Over 180 different items make up the specific section of the 1585 ambassadorship, with a total bill exceeding 2,900 ducati. With the evident intention of impressing onlookers with the luxury of his travel outfit, Marino carefully selected each single item of clothing and accessory. Again, it was the nuns of the monastery of Santi Rocco e Margherita who embroidered for him, confirming that competence in production at the monastery was evident to the eye of a discerning customer who could distinguish between embroidery for everyday garments and embroidery to adorn fine ceremonial robes.[40]

Work executed by nuns is also found in Morosina Morosini's lengthy post-mortem inventory of 1614. Some devotional objects in fabric are noted, namely a rosary made of silk and ormesin in a painted wooden box with silk animals; a rather complex object made of fabric, depicting a cloth San Carlo kneeling before an altar with a Christ and gold and silver ornaments is also listed. Of the many objects in the inventory, these are the only ones for which the notary recognized the hand that had made them, specifying that they had been "made by nuns." From the same inventory we also have confirmation that the noblewomen of the Grimani house embroidered and sewed at home, as was expected of virtuous women of their rank.[41]

Yet, places for embroidery are not only the home and monastery. In the list of expenses for the embassy in 1585, for example, an embroiderer appears in the accounts from the well-known Bartolomeo Bontempelli dal Calice. His workshop, in late sixteenth-century Venice, was recognized for luxury fabrics and garments. In the account a female *ricamatrice* (embroiderer) is clearly mentioned, though unnamed, to whom Marino Grimani paid forty lire for the embroidery on his *dogaline* purchased for the trip to Rome. If in Bontempelli's workshop Marino Grimani had bought fine fabrics, such as green *tabì*, black velvets, and gold and silver threads, the embroideries—not specified for which garments—were carried out by a *ricamatrice* to whom Bontempelli commissioned the work and who was paid separately. To put this sum into context, fifty lire was the salary Grimani paid monthly to his gondolier and personal servant, the highest pay among his domestic

39 Some examples in ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 33, "Libro delle spese e Salariadi del Dogado di M. Grimani," c. 96; b. 20, "Notatorio 1589–1604," 19 June 1589, 7 July 1589, 10 July 1592, 27 March 1593, 23 May 1598.
40 ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 33, "Libro delle spese e Salariadi del Dogado di M. Grimani," cc. 339–341.
41 ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 1251, Notaio Giulio Ziliol, protocollo di atti, cc. 46v–47v, 52v–61v.

Figure 5.4 Italian manufacture, Ecclesiastical ornament (possibly for dalmatic), late 16th–early 17th century. Single-body velvet embroidered in gold and silver thread stitch, 55 × 55 cm. Centro Studi di Storia del Tessuto, del Costume e del Profumo, Inv. 327, Palazzo Mocenigo, Venice. Courtesy of Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia—Archivio Fotografico.

staff. Given the reputation for excellence of Bontempelli's workshop, we can imagine the skill and refinement of the work carried out by this unnamed female artisan.[42]

Another mention, this time named, was Maria *recamadora* of San Tomà. The artisan appears several times in Marino's books, although it has not yet been possible to trace further biographical elements. Accounts show that she was in charge of other embroiderers and that Marino Grimani, shortly after his election to the *dogato*, commissioned her to make a "velvet curtain embroidered in gold" for furnishings in

42 Some biographical information on Bontempelli in Tucci, 1971. See for example, ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 33, "Notatorio 1589–1604," 9 June 1591.

Figure 5.5 Detail of Figure 5.4.

the Palazzo Ducale.[43] This was an elaborate door curtain, a popular piece of furnishing in early modern Europe, which was intended to magnify the effect of an entrance; it was often embellished with coats of arms and decorations in gold and silver. The visual effect of such embroidery with gold and silver threads on fine velvets can be seen in paintings and fragments that are still preserved in museums (figs. 5.4 and 5.5).

Marino Grimani, recently appointed Doge, while resident in the ducal palace invested a considerable sum in furnishings. He was so pleased with the velvet door curtain the artisan Maria created that he added four lire of *beverazo* as a gratuity to the female artisans who worked with Maria. While the precarious nature of textiles and the rarity of their preservation prevent us today from fully grasping

43 ASVe, Grimani e Barbarigo, b. 33, "Libro delle spese e Salariadi del Dogado di M. Grimani," cc. 248, 339, 348.

the overall effect, we can only imagine the effect of grandeur that the door curtain in the room in Palazzo Ducale presented to contemporaries.

The practice of giving a gratuity, moreover, is found infrequently in Marino Grimani's books. Despite the fact that the Venetian patrician regularly paid the professionals he called on, and that he had a close relationship of trust with some of them for years, there were only a few artisans who were rewarded with a gratuity, a concrete sign of his recognizing the excellence of their work.

In the libri of the patrician and later Doge Marino Grimani, there are hundreds of names of workers and artisans who contributed to giving shape to the luxury displayed by the family and the State, and to maintaining it over time. What emerges is a map of excellence showing the vitality of the world of Venetian craftsmanship, a rich market with varied skills where wealthy clients with a refined taste for beauty obtained works of the highest quality. For their own self-promotion, to consolidate family prestige, and to distinguish themselves within their peer group, the luxury of the Grimani created a shared language, a constant and lasting dialogue between members of this elite family and the best Venetian artisans.

The rare female names that are found outside domestic walls stand out all the more if they collected the money themselves, as in the case of Maria, the embroiderer from San Tomà. In many other cases, the name *ricamatrice* is noted but the account is in the name of a man, and he collects the rich client's money and pays the embroiderer. In contrast to a trend that generally concealed women's work, the art of embroidery brings some of these women out of the shadows. It is true that noblewomen embroidered at home, a virtuous pastime appropriate to their status, but valuable embroideries were commissioned from monasteries on the occasion of an important business trip. The ambitious Grimani left nothing to chance when determined to impress onlookers with every detail of his appearance. Finally, a valuable and visible piece of furnishing in Palazzo Ducale had been entirely embroidered by women: Maria had interacted directly with the client, her work had been paid for directly, and the Doge had recognized the exceptional quality of the work with a gratuity for the female coworkers.

A visual indication of a direct relationship between client and female artisans can also be recognized on the frontispiece of one of the many sixteenth-century embroidery books. In one of the four illustrations in Giovanni Tagliente's book, an embroiderer is seated, absorbed in her work, while another woman, probably the manager of the business, talks to a man, a merchant or a client. While in other illustrations the protagonists are all women, the embroidery work that the woman depicted is holding is at the center of the conversation, and the two interlocutors, a female artisan and a man, converse as equals. These books are working tools, in which women emerge as "pragmatic readers," even if the possible gain was cautiously concealed on the cover page, instead emphasizing female virtues. (figs. 5.6 and 5.7)

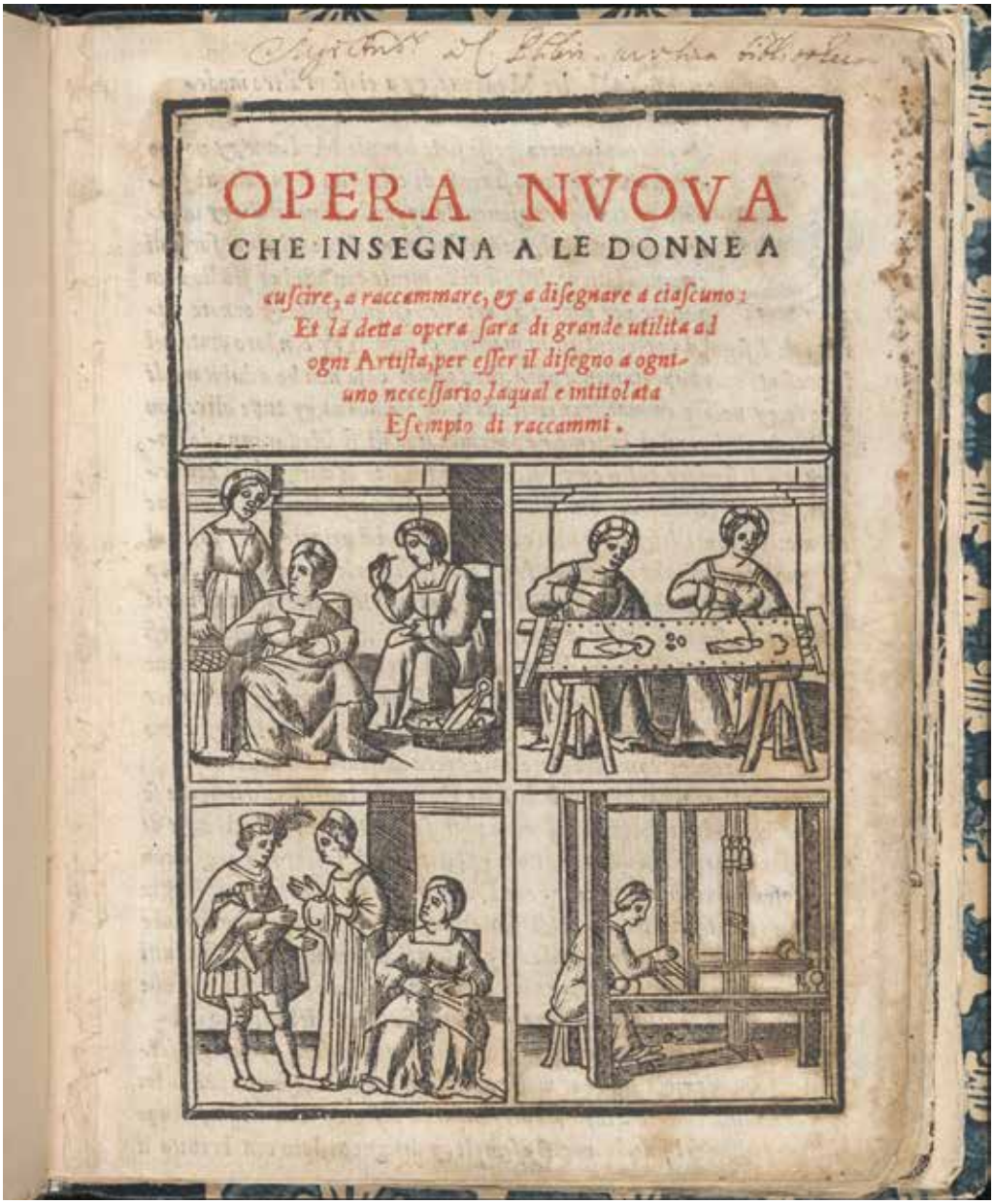

Figure 5.6 Giovanni Antonio Tagliente, Front cover, *Opera nuova che insegna alle donne a cusire, a racammare & a disegnar a ciascuno, et la ditta opera sara di molta utilita ad ogni artista, per esser il disegno ad ognuno necessario, la qual e intitolata esempio di recammi,* Venice, 1530. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1935 [35.75.3 (1-55)]. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1935 [35.75.3(1-55)], New York, OA-PD CCO 1.0 Universal.

Figure 5.7 Detail of Figure 5.6.

In conclusion, Marino Grimani's account books show that outside the domestic environment, the names of women—whether artisans or artists—are few. Not a single painter, not even a seamstress. The artisans who collect orders, deliver the finished works, and receive the money are practically all men. This type of source hides the many female hands that we know moved behind the scenes, in the workshops and home laboratories. Nevertheless, the trusted embroiderers who emerge here shed light on the varied and vibrant world of embroidery and give visibility to enterprising women, craftswomen of great skill.

A final word goes to Morosina Morosini, wife and later widow of Doge Grimani. A local tradition, repeated by several scholars, posits that the art of embroidery was spread in schools opened and protected by a number of dogaresse, including Morosina Morosini Grimani herself. According to Giuseppe Marino Urbani de

Gheltof, who wrote on Venetian lace in 1876, Dogaressa Morosini Grimani set up a workshop in contrada S. Fosca with as many as 130 lacemakers, headed by *maestra* Catterina Gardin. According to Urbani de Gheltof, the dogaressa would provide the lacemakers with a workshop and the necessary tools, keeping some of the products for her own use and offering others to ladies and princesses. Upon the death of the dogaressa, the laboratory would have closed down; however, according to the author, her activity would have favored the development of the art of lacemaking on the island of Burano over time.[44] In her numerous and precise contributions, Doretta Davanzo Poli cited Urbani de Gheltof's information, clarifying, however, that there was a lack of archival proof for such a claim to be taken seriously, although it was presented as being precise. Several scholars have since quoted Davanzo Poli, reporting facts sometimes as certain and sometimes with doubt.[45] However, the in-depth study of the Grimani, especially the documentation of accounts and expenses, points in an opposite direction. It has already been proven that Urbani de Gheltof was a falsifier of documents, not a historian, who submitted completely invented facts and details to gain credibility and popularity.[46] In fact, according to the archival documentation, what Morosina did during her widowhood was to manage complex accounts, take care of extensive landed estates, and exercise jurisdiction in her fiefdom in Istria. Confirmation can be found in the purchase of *armari* (cupboards) by the widow Morosina for the benefit of her heirs. She bought three of them, made of fir wood. A detailed inventory compiled separately gives evidence of the precision with which, assisted by her trusted bookkeeper, Morosina managed the Istrian castle, the lands in Ravenna and in Polesine, correspondence, her own accounts, and everything related to her deceased consort's estate. Family activities leave an administrative trace among the papers in these cupboards. Evidence to any activities relating to a lace-making laboratory founded by the dogaressa should be included, but nothing of the kind exists.[47]

The idea that emerges is that it was rather part of nineteenth-century taste to attribute to a rich and influential dogaressa the patronage of an art, that of embroidery, which in the late sixteenth century was steeped in feminine virtues. Grimani's accounts, on the contrary, do confirm how varied and vibrant the art of embroidery was in Venice. If noblewomen, young and old, embroidered at home as was expected of them, the art of embroidery was the means by which reclusive nuns succeeded in

44 Urbani de Gheltof, 1876, 20–21.

45 Davanzo Poli and Colussi, 1991, 10.

46 Gava, 2001. Urbani de Gheltof, 1896, 20–21. Despite the fact that it is now confirmed that Urbani de Gheltof was a falsifier, this statement about Morosina has been taken up again and again, sometimes with doubt, sometimes as a fact. Pallucchini, 1994, 987; Davanzo Poli, 1998, 10–11; Jones, 2014, 403.

47 ASVe, Grimani di San Luca ora San Tomà, GSL, b. 11, f. 1, "Successione di Morosina Morosini moglie di Marino Grimani Doge, testamento 16 giugno 1612," cc. 17r–24r.

creating items of the highest quality that they then sold to demanding and refined clients such as Marino Grimani. And finally, the libri bring to light several Venetian female artisans who made a profession of the art of embroidery, allowing them to come out of the shadows and to interact with men as equals with competence and skill.

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Archival Abbreviation

ASVe = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice

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6. Chiara Varotari (1584/1585–after 1663)

Diana Gisolfi

Abstract

Paolo Veronese, unlike his colleague Jacopo Tintoretto, did not himself produce a painter daughter. Among Paolo's pupils, however, we do find female artistic progeny. One of Paolo's well-known pupils is Dario Varotari (1542–1596), whose daughter and pupil, Chiara Varotari (1584/1585–post 1663), had a long, successful career as a portraitist. She was praised by Carlo Ridolfi and two of her female pupils received praise from Marco Boschini. Her fame is based on elegant portraits, often of women with skillfully depicted luxurious costumes. This essay considers Chiara Varotari as a female painter in the republic of Venice in the context of Paolo's technical legacy and of the considerable presence of women in the *arti* in the republic.

Keywords: Venetian republic, patrons, Veronese, portraits, women's history

Chiara Varotari was born in Padua in 1584 or early 1585 to the artist Dario Varotari and his wife Samaritana Ponchino and died in Venice after 1663. Chiara was well known during her lifetime as a portraitist and was never forgotten in the Veneto. Her mother, Samaritana, was a daughter of the painter Giambattista Ponchino (also called Bozzacco) of Castelfranco. Her father Dario (Verona 1539–Padua 1596) was a pupil and assistant of Paolo Veronese. Veronese and Ponchino had collaborated, together with Battista Zelotti, on the ceiling paintings in the Consiglio dei Dieci in the Doge's Palace in Venice in 1553–1554. Patrician and humanist Daniele Barbaro had prescribed the program for this important council room.[1] Even these biographical notes indicate that Chiara was born into a sophisticated artistic circle in the Veneto.[2] At the close of his lengthy life of Dario Varotari, Chiara's contemporary, writer and artist Carlo Ridolfi, includes a brief account of Chiara and her younger

1 Sansovino, 1663, 1:325.

2 Crosato, 1962, 3–38, 61–65; Gisolfi, 2014; Gisolfi, 2017, 83–85.

Cooper, T.E. (ed.), *Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750: Uncovering the Female Presence*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
DOI 10.5117/9789048559718_CH06

brother Alessandro. Ridolfi's text of 1648 is the main foundation for later accounts.[3] Within Ridolfi's "Life of Marietta Tintoretto," Chiara is honored by placement in a line of female artists ancient and modern: Timarete, Irene, Marsia, Aristarete, and Lavinia Fontana, Irene di Spilimbergo, Chiara Varotari, and Giovanna Garzoni.[4] La Varotari is praised extravagantly by another contemporary writer, Marco Boschini. In his *Carta del Navigar Pitoresco*, published in 1660 when Chiara was in her 70s, Boschini lauds her as a "great woman and very pure … Gentile and virtuous in all ways … even exquisite" and more.[5]

In his 1663 additions to Francesco Sansovino's *Città nobilissima* of 1581, Martinioni lists Chiara among the "known painters that presently live in Venice" and "Chiara Varottari, sister of the deceased Alessandro Varottari, Padoana, most worthy in painting."[6] In the same list are the names of Chiara's pupils/followers according to Boschini, Catterina Tarabotta and Lucia Scaligiera, as well as Dario Varotari, the younger, son of Alessandro, noted as "great imitator of his father."[7] Yet no specific works by Chiara are cited in these sources. Two examples of her work are included in Giambatista Rossetti's *Descrizione delle pitture, sculture ed architetture di Padova* of 1780, both privately owned. These are an *Annunciation* owned by Conte Obizzi in Camposanpiero and a *Bacchus* belonging to a Cavaliere of San Biaggio. These two specific mentions are preceded by a general statement of "many pictures" by Chiara's younger brother Alessandro, in the same locations; at least her work is identified specifically, more of a rarity.[8]

Despite the clear evidence of recognition in Varotari's lifetime, our current knowledge of her life and work is limited. This may be due to the apparent lack of public commissions. Her work has only recently gained exposure beyond the Veneto. In the ground-breaking 1976 exhibition curated by Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris, *Women Artists 1550–1950*, at the height of the women's movement in the United States, Varotari was not included; in 2007, however, two of her paintings were shown in the important Washington National Museum of Women in the Arts exhibition, *Italian Women Artists from Renaissance to Baroque*.[9] Her portraits have since been shown in exhibitions in Italy: *Lo spirito e il corpo* (Padua, 2009) and *Le*

3 Ridolfi, 1914–1924, 2: 87–92.

4 Ridolfi, 1914–1924, 2:78.

5 "Gran matrona e molto Chiara … Zeltil e virtuosa in tuti I trati … Ecelente Pitrice, anzi esquisita." Boschini, 1660, 526, 563.

6 "Pittori di nome che al presente vivono in Venetia" and "Chiara Varottari, sorella del già Alessandro Varottari, Padoana, valorosa nel dipingere." Sansovino, 1663, 1:23.

7 "Grande imitator del Padre." Sansovino, 1663, 1:21.

8 Rossetti, 1780, 333, 351.

9 Harris and Nochlin, 1976. The catalogue includes an additional index of women artists mentioned but not exhibited (367), which again omits Chiara Varotari, while the names of Irene of Spilimbergo and Marietta Robusti do appear. Nicholson et al., 2007, 188–193.

Figure 6.1 Chiara Varotari, *Portrait of a Noble Matron*, 1620s. Oil on canvas, 205 × 138 cm. Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno (Inv. 138), Padua. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

signore dell'Arte (Milan, 2021).[10] Of the dozen or so paintings known today, *Portrait of a Lady* or *Portrait of a Noble Matron* is most frequently reproduced (fig. 6.1). It is usually presented as typical of Chiara's work in its meticulous depiction of luxury fabrics, its representation of aristocratic wealth, and relative lack of psychological insight.[11]

Before considering more fully the characteristics of paintings by Chiara currently known, it is useful to consider the context of her family. According to Ridolfi, Chiara's father Dario learned math from his father, learned to draw and paint from Paolo Veronese, and practiced both architecture and painting.[12] Ridolfi's account of Dario's works includes frescoes in Venetian patricians' Veneto villas: Pisani, Mocenigo, and Priuli (Pozzoserato). For the Emo, Ridolfi says he designed their *palagio* at Montecchia in the Colle Euganei, where he also frescoed, taking on Antonio Vassilacchi, called Aliense, as a junior partner.[13] Luciana Crosato dates the extensive fresco cycle to ca. 1579.[14] In that same area and also in the 1570s, he was called upon to work at the Benedictine Abbey at Praglia.[15] His oeuvre includes portraits as well. So, Dario is one in a group of Veneto artists active in the late Cinquecento in Verona, Venice, Padua, and the Veneto countryside in fresco and oil, and in a manner related to that of Veronese. Ridolfi attributes Dario's having settled in Padua to the artist's ill health (finding after his marriage that the air of Venice was not good for him) and reports that Dario consulted many *medici* in Padua, designing a home for one named Aquapendente. Dario's activity continued until the time of his death in 1596. Of importance to his children, he was well connected with fellow artists, with patricians, and with the citizen class.

At the time of Chiara's birth in 1584 or early 1585 in Padua, Dario would have been about forty-five. Her brother Alessandro was also born in Padua, in 1588. Chiara would have been about twelve and Alessandro eight when Dario died around age fifty-seven. Therefore, Dario may well have given his artist children the beginnings of their training in drawing as Ridolfi states, as well as many connections with patrons and artists.

Alessandro Varotari moved from Padua to Venice in 1614, when he would have been twenty-six, and it is assumed that Chiara, then around thirty, accompanied him. That she remained in Venice to support Alessandro, who became known as Il Padovanino, seems to be based on Ridolfi's account at the end of his life of Dario.

10 Banzato and Pellegrini, 2009, 99–100; Gastaldi, 2021.

11 Padua, Museo Civico, Inv. 138, oil on canvas, 205 × 128 cm. See Woodall, 1997, esp. 11.

12 Ridolfi, 1914–1924, 2: 87. This life begins with the family claim of Germanic noble descent, but as Catholic loyalists they were constrained to leave due to Lutheranism and moved to Verona in 1520. This matter is debated in the literature. Ridolfi stresses Dario's piety, 2:87–92. For more on Dario see Castellan, 1997.

13 Castellan, 1997, 89.

14 Crosato, 1962, 156–160.

15 His remaining work at Praglia includes paintings of *St. Anthony Abbot*, *The Nativity of the Virgin,* and the *Martyrdom of St. Steven*, *St. Sebastian*. See Ceschi Sandon, 1985, 135–149.

> His loss was nevertheless restored by his most virtuous children, signori Alessandro and Chiara, in whom Dario also saw some beginnings in disegno (drawing/design). Of that valorous woman many beautiful and accurate portraits are admired, and other praiseworthy works, so that in her we have seen renewed the memory of illustrious women related by the ancient writers, she has always wanted to live with her brother, refusing every honorable offer of a home, employing her work in the service of the paternal house.[16]

Alessandro apparently moved quickly to an active career as a painter, fostered by his copies of Titian's work, as well as his own paintings in a smoother, less bold, more academic version of Titian's style. Ugo Ruggieri's catalogue (1988) of accepted works by Alessandro number 173, all oil on canvas.[17] Patronage came from church, state, confraternities, and private citizens; subject matter was religious, historical, allegorical, and portraiture. Two examples might suggest the range of commissions: a *Judith* in Dresden ca. 1620s, of which there are other versions; a ceiling painting of the *Assumption* in the Scuola dei Carmini, Venice, dated 1634–1638 (later moved from the Sala del Capitolare to the Albergo).[18] During this period, the records of the Arte dei Pittori in Venice, as published by Elena Favaro in 1975, show "Alessandro Varotari, detto Padoanin 1614–1639" as enrolled for twenty-five years, but Chiara is not listed.[19] Normally, it was the head of a shop that would be listed, so this does not preclude her participation in commissions nominally his.

When Alessandro died at sixty-one in 1649, Chiara would live on for some fifteen years until about age eighty. Martinioni's 1663 edition of Sansovino suggests that she remained active as a painter in Venice. Boschini's high praise and his crediting Chiara with fostering two younger female artists indicates that she took on students. What is clear is that Chiara was known and respected as a skillful portraitist; the majority of her works currently known, though not all, portray the elite.

One connection that derives from her father is clear. Dario's large canvas of the *Triumph of the Holy League* of 1573, one of his earliest known dated paintings, was for the Palazzo del Podestà in Padua and was commissioned by Giacomo

16 "La cui Perdita ci fu nondimeno ristorata da gli Signori Alessandro e Chiara, suoi virtuosissimi figliuoli, ne' quali Dario vide pure alcun principio nel disegno. Di quella valorosa Donna si ammirano molti belli e somiglianti ritratti, & alter lodevole fatiche; onde in lei abbiamo veduto renovate le memorie delle donne illustri decantate da gli antichi Scrittori, laquale sempre mai hà volute vivere col fratello, rifiutando ogni honorevole accasamento, impiegando l'opera sua nel serviglio della casa paterna." Ridolfi, 1914–1924, 2:91–92.

17 Ruggieri, 1988.

18 *Judith with the head of Holofernes*, ca. 1620–1622, oil on canvas, 132 × 96 cm., Dresden, Gemäldegalerie; *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1634–1638, oil on canvas, 364 × 555 cm., moved from the Capitolare to the Albergo in 1740.

19 Favaro, 1975, 143.

Figure 6.2 Dario Varotari, *The Holy League Pius V, Philip II, Doge Alvise Mocenigo*, signed and dated 1573. Oil on canvas, 260 × 683 cm. Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno (Inv. 681), Padua. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

Emo, then serving as one of the rectors of the city of Padua; although in very poor condition, the large painting on canvas was conserved in 1981 (fig. 6.2).[20] That the Emo connection to the Varotari was of long standing helps us to understand later events. The Emo and Capodilista families were united by the marriage in 1783 of Leonardo Emo of Venice and Beatrice Capodilista of Padua. The union of the two prestigious houses led to the joining of their collections, and in 1864 Count Leonardo Emo Capodilista bequeathed the entire painting collection to the city of Padua, that is the Musei Civici, now specifically the Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno.[21] The bequest comprised 543 paintings, at least a half dozen by Chiara Varotari. We can thank Count Leonardo for the fact that this nucleus of Chiara's work offers some idea of the abilities and methods of the painter Chiara Varotari.

From examples known today, extant in the Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno of Padua and in private collections nearby, Chiara's oeuvre consists chiefly of portrayals of members of the elite, notably three-quarter views of ladies depicted in a manner that stresses their wealth and rank, with jewels and splendid fabrics, skillfully and meticulously depicted. While these skills are praised, Chiara is criticized for depicting personage more than the individual. When the Emo-Capidolista bequest was made to the city of Padua in 1864 five of her portraits were included, along with a more informal portrayal, and an attributed half-length *Mary Magdalen*. Of these, some have recently been conserved, and have been shown in the exhibitions mentioned above.

20 Dario Varotari, *The Holy League Pius V, Philip II, Doge Alvise Mocenigo*, signed and dated 1573, 260 × 683 cm. from the Palazzo del Podestà, Padua, now Musei Civici di Padova, Inv. 681, conserved by Fratelli Volpin in 1981.

21 Banzato, 1988, 1–49.

Figure 6.3 Chiara Varotari, *Portrait of a Young Noble Woman*, 1620s. Oil on canvas, 205 × 120 cm. Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno (Inv. 136), Padua. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

Elisabetta Gastaldi, curator at the Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderna of the Musei Civici di Padova, has written the entries on Varotari in recent exhibitions and was very helpful in providing materials on Chiara that I am sharing here.[22] The example of Varotari's work with which I began (see fig. 6.1) is from the Emo-Capodilista bequest and is very similar to another painting from the same bequest (fig. 6.3), possibly commissioned at the same time. Both are estimated to date from the 1620s, partly on the basis of the elements of fashion.[23] Both canvases are 205 centimeters in height, with a modest variation in width. It is hypothesized that they are noble women of the Capodilista family, perhaps mother and daughter.[24] In both portraits, Chiara's great skill is evident in the depiction of embroidered draperies, shimmering silk with gold threads. In the same mold is a portrait of a lady of the aristocratic Buzzacarini family, so identified and dated 1621, in a private collection.[25] The size is precisely the same as that of the younger of the presumed Capodilista ladies.

Chiara also depicted children of the aristocracy: a very young lady and an even younger man are both from the Emo-Capodilista bequest and have been conserved in Padua (figs. 6.4a and 6.5a). They are evidently pendants (each is 122 × 70 cm.) with the subjects posed turning toward each other.[26] Looking more closely at the young signorina (fig. 6.4a), the brief conservation report of 2006 informs us that the painting had been very dirty with heavy retouching from a previous restoration. The blue decorations on the dress were revealed after removing a heavy patina.[27] The conservation report on the young boy (fig. 6.5a), who looks as if he must be the girl's younger brother, is useful; the report notes Chiara's use of a thin canvas (*sottile*) and describes the preparatory layer as made of brownish-red earth colors, that is a darkish priming typical of the period. The conservator noted that the decorative pattern on the boy's costume had been impoverished due to past cleaning, and that the painted surface is flattened.

Chiara Varotari's skill in representing the various textures of fabrics and ornaments fashionable in the early seventeenth century is celebrated. Based on the surviving known work by Chiara her commissions were chiefly from the patricians and nobility of Venice and Padua. Her skills nicely served the wish of such clients

22 I am grateful for her help and for the help of my colleague Architetto Antonio Stevan of the Musei Civici Eremitani di Padova for establishing this important contact.

23 Inv. 138 (the matronly lady) measures 205 × 128 cm.; Inv. 136 (the younger lady) measures (presently) 205 × 120 cm.

24 Gastaldi, 2021, 319.

25 Illustrated in Banzato and Pellegrini, 2009, no. 36.

26 Inv. 134 (*Ritratto di Fanciulla*) and Inv. 140 (*Ritratto di Fanciullo*).

27 "Dipinto molto sporco con pesante ritocchi … La pulitura ha asportato una spessa patina, mettendo in luce le decorazioni in blu della veste." Maria Beatrice Giroto, *Relazione di fine restauro del dipinto olio su tela raff. "Ritratto di Fanciulla" di C. Varotari, del Museo Civico di Padova Inv. 134*, Padua, 13 October 2006.

Figure 6.4a-b (a) Chiara Varotari, *Portrait of a Young Girl*, ca. 1620s. Oil on canvas, 122 × 70 cm. Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno (Inv. 134), Padua; (b) Detail. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

Figure 6.5a-b (a) Chiara Varotari, *Portrait of a Young Boy*, ca. 1620s. Oil on canvas, 122 × 70 cm. Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno (Inv. 140), Padua; (b) Detail. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

Figure 6.6 Chiara Varotari, *Portrait of Anzola Muneghina age 40*, ca. 1530s. Oil on canvas, 65 × 53 cm. Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno (Inv. 92), Padua. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

to be represented in the finery that denoted their status. In the details of the sympathetic portraits of the very young lady (see fig. 6.4b) and very young gentleman (see fig. 6.5b), the gold thread embroidery on the rich blue fabric, the white lace cuffs, and the golden bracelets enhance the soft skin of the children's hands. As

Chiara's father, Dario Varotari, had learned from Paolo Veronese, one wonders if Chiara's skill in depicting fabrics owes something to that legacy.

Chiara's portrait of Schinella de' Conti, distinguished as a philosopher and theologian as inscribed, is dated 1624 and is signed on the back. The three-quarter length portrait of a male scholar illustrates some variety in Chiara's portrait commissions. The portrait was included in the 2009 show of portraiture in Padua.[28]

The bust portrayal of Anzola Muneghina at age forty (fig. 6.6), also part of the Emo-Capodilista bequest, is less about richness of fabrics and more about character. The sympathetic and penetrating portrayal serves to contradict the idea that La Varotari painted only surface appearances. Perhaps for this apparent maturity of vision, this painting is thought to be from the 1530s, somewhat later than the elegant portraits of the 1520s.[29]

Two half-length pictures of modest scale associated with Chiara also formed part of the bequest, *Girl with the Lemon* and *Saint Mary Magdalen* (figs. 6.7 and 6.8a); the condition of one invited study by conservators. The painting, for which we have a more complete conservation report, is the attributed *Magdalen*; as it is small and on wood, we cannot assume that it is typical. The *Girl with the Lemon* (a more securely accepted attribution to Chiara from the same bequest) is similar in format and close enough in size to compare morphologically and in Morellian details such as the handling of the eyes and nose and the gray shadows on the temple.[30] *Girl with a Lemon* is half-length and not a formal portrait, perhaps a type more than a portrait. The *Mary Magdalen* was questioned as to both attribution and subject, and the recent cleaning seems to have settled both matters.[31] The panel was prepared with gesso and animal glue, as was normal. The conservator's diagram next to a photo in raking light shows that there was considerable abrasion and flaking, and the incision line, which continues on the left to complete a halo that was abraded, confirms, together with the revealed oil container, the identity of the saint (fig. 6.8b). An ultraviolet image shows a flaking area due to nails from the back of the panel and the salvage of the flaking pigment demonstrates the poor condition prior to conservation.[32] The cleaning restored the quality, as well as clarifying the identity of Mary Magdalen, to compare closely with the *Girl with a Lemon*. Both illustrate variety in Chiara Varotari's oeuvre.

28 Schinella de' Conti, age 52, 1624, oil on canvas signed on the back "CHIARA VAROTARI FECE," 116 × 96 cm. Banzato and Pellegrini, 2009, 100, no. 39.

29 Inv. 92, oil on canvas, 65 × 52 cm.

30 *Magdalen* Inv. 1030, oil on wood, 40.5 × 33.3; *Girl with Lemon* Inv. 325, oil on canvas, 64 × 56 cm.

31 Fantelli, 1973.

32 Antonella Daola, *Relazione Tecnica, "Santa Maria Maddalena" Scuola veneta/Chiara Varotari, Inv. 1030*, Laboratorio di Restauro, Musei Civici agli Eremitani, 2020.

Figure 6.7 Chiara Varotari, *Girl with a Lemon*, ca. 1630s. Oil on canvas, 64 × 56 cm. Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno (Inv. 325), Padua. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

The clarification of the status of the *Magdalen* also serves to revive an earlier attribution to Chiara Varotari of a copy after Paolo Veronese's *Suzanna and the Elders*, also belonging to the Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderno (fig. 6.9). In this painting the face of Suzanna bears a close resemblance to those of Chiara Varotari's

Figure 6.8a-b (a) Chiara Varotari, *Saint Mary Magdalen*, ca. 1630s. Oil on panel, 40.8 × 33.5 cm, after 2020 conservation. Museo d'Arte Mediovale e Moderno (Inv. 1030), Padua; (b) Detail in raking light. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

Magdalen and *Girl with a Lemon* in the angle of the pose, the nose, eyebrows, and pink tone on the cheek. In 1938 Andrea Moschetti had suggested that the copy is a collaboration of Alessandro Varotari and Chiara.[33] Pier Luigi Fantelli reconsidered this in 1973, tentatively proposing the collaboration of Chiara with Dario instead (an idea perhaps inspired by Dario's training with Veronese, but difficult to fit with the death of Dario when Chiara was twelve).[34] Ugo Ruggieri catalogued the picture as anonymous.[35] The resemblance of Suzanna's face to securely attributed female types by Chiara is indeed striking; the embroidered drapery of the elder on the left is deftly executed. Could Chiara have taken on a commission for a copy such as this herself, or would this have been in the context of Alessandro's shop, well known for producing copies of Titian's paintings?

It is clear that Chiara's father and her brother had distinguished careers: a substantial body of work survives for both. Alessandro's oeuvre most likely includes work by Chiara. Yet Chiara lived a good deal longer than either her father or her

33 Moschetti, 1938, 152–153.
34 Fantelli, 1973, 3 and n. 43.
35 Ruggieri, 1988, 144.

Figure 6.9 Attributed to Chiara Varotari, possibly with Alessandro Varotari, *Suzanna and the Elders*, late 1630s–ca. 1640, copy after Paolo Veronese (ca. 1570). Oil on canvas, 182 × 350 cm. Museo d'Arte Medioevale e Moderno (Inv. 137), Padua. Su concessione del Comune di Padova—tutti i diritti di legge riservati.

brother; she clearly had independent commissions from established families and reportedly trained younger female artists. The private nature of her commissions must have allowed much of her work to be hidden, lost, or misattributed. One suspects that there are more extant works by her hand in private collections. It would be especially interesting to discover paintings datable to the period 1647 to 1663/1664 when she was working with full independence and no longer providing support for her brother's business.

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7. Artemisia Gentileschi in Venice: Facts and Suppositions

Davide Gasparotto

Abstract
In the last twenty years our knowledge of the life and work of Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–ca. 1654), the most celebrated woman painter of the seventeenth century, has been considerably enhanced by new archival research and the discovery of new paintings. The Venetian period of the artist (about 1627–1630), however, remains one of the least known segments of her extraordinary career. The recent acquisition by the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles of a painting depicting Lucretia, the legendary Roman heroine, may help shed new light on Artemisia's sojourn in Venice. This essay will explore evidence of Artemisia's life, work, and reputation in the Serenissima, including her association with the renowned Accademia degli Incogniti.

Keywords: Venetian painting, Baroque painters, female travelers, Lucretia, Academies, literary patronage

Artemisia Gentileschi's fame in the mid-1620s is documented by a drawing of her hand by Pierre Dumonstier and by a portrait medal. In the drawing, dated December 31, 1625, her hand is elegantly poised with a fine-tipped paintbrush held between her fingers; in the handwritten inscription she is labeled as "excellent and learned Artemisia, gentlewoman of Rome."[1] A poetic inscription on the reverse of the sheet, by the same hand as the one on the recto, compares Artemisia to the goddess Aurora. In the extremely rare medal—only two extant examples are known today (fig. 7.1)—Artemisia is shown in profile, elegantly dressed, with a pearl necklace, her long hair tied up with a ribbon. The inscription labels her as "Arthemisia Gentilesca pictrix celebris" ("celebrated painter"), significantly using

1 See, most recently, Treves, 2020, 160–161, cat. no. 17.

Cooper, T.E. (ed.), *Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750: Uncovering the Female Presence*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
DOI 10.5117/9789048559718_CH07

Figure 7.1 Unknown medalist active in Rome in the 1620s, *Portrait of Artemisia Gentileschi*, ca. 1625. Bronze with traces of gilding, 5.35 cm. Munzkabinett Berlin Medaillen Barock und Rokoko 1600 bis 1770 (5555851), Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. Onlinesammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin: 2382054; This file is made available by its copyright holder under CC-PDM 1.0.

the female form of the Latin for "pictor."[2] The portrait in the medal is remarkably close to an engraved portrait of Artemisia (fig. 7.2), executed by the French artist Jérôme David and based on a painted self-portrait by Artemisia.[3] The inscription running around the oval frame labels her as "Artemisia Gentileschi from Rome, very famous painter, academician in the Desiosi." The Accademia de' Desiosi was an academy in Venice, which included musicians, composers, and poets.[4] "The most illustrious and excellent signor Giuseppe Marini"—to whom the engraving is dedicated—was most likely the notable choirmaster and composer working in the Venetian Republic who published two books of madrigals in Venice in 1617 and in 1618.[5] Another engraving by David, after Artemisia's painted portrait of the French military architect Antoine de Ville (1596–1656), adorns de Ville's book on fortifications, published in Lyon in 1629 (*Les fortifications du chevalier Antoine de Ville tolosain, contenans la manière de fortifier toute sort de places*):[6] the inscription around the portrait specifies that the sitter, a knight of the Turin-based Order of

2 See, most recently, Treves, 2020, 162–163, cat. no. 18.

3 For this engraving see Bissell, 1999, 227–228, cat. no. 20; Treves, 2020, 164–165, cat. no.19.

4 On this short-lived academy see Cicogna, 1847; Maylender, 1927, 178–179; Bissell, 1999, 38–39; Locker, 2015, 56–57.

5 This identification has been suggested by Elizabeth Cropper (see Treves, 2020, 164, cat. no. 19); on Marini see Colussi, 2008.

6 Bissell, 1999, 226–227, cat. no. 19. The frontispiece of the book bears the date 1629, while the title page bears the date 1628.

Figure 7.2 Jerôme David, *Portrait of Artemisia Gentileschi (after her Self Portrait)*, ca. 1627–1628. Engraving, 14.1 × 8.0 cm. The British Museum (1913,0331.91), London. © The Trustees of the British Museum, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

SS. Maurizio e Lazzaro, was at the time thirty-one years old, and includes the date 1627, establishing a firm *terminus ante quem* for the painted portrait by Artemisia. It seems likely that the two engravings were made by David at the same time.[7]

So, where was Artemisia in 1627? There is firm documentary evidence that she was in Venice at the time.[8] A volume of letters published in Venice in 1628 by Antonino Colluraffi, a Sicilian polygrapher resident in the Serenissima, contains two letters referring to Artemisia as living in Venice:[9] the first is addressed to one of Colluraffi's pupils, Alvise da Mosto, supplying him with inscriptions and madrigals in Artemisia's honor. In one of the poems Colluraffi draws a parallel between the painter and the ancient Queen with the same name, stating that Artemisia has painted marvels and wonders that have brought her even greater glory than the ancient Queen who built the famous Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. Colluraffi was not the first to draw an analogy between the ancient and modern Artemisia. Discovered a few years ago, Artemisia's portrait by her friend, the French painter Simon Vouet, speaks eloquently about her ambitions: Vouet depicts her holding a palette and brushes, but she is also elegantly dressed, and she wears a medal with the reproduction of the Mausoleum, built by her namesake.[10] In the second letter Colluraffi asks Artemisia for a drawing of a "female bear licking her newborn cub." This strange request can be explained by the fact that Colluraffi founded a new Academy in Venice, the Accademia degli Informi, whose emblem was "l'orsa che lambisce il proprio parto" ("a female bear licking her newborn cub").[11] Evidently, Artemisia was requested to design the emblem for the new Academy and this work shows how well connected she was with intellectual circles in Venice at the time. Another pupil of Colluraffi, the young patrician Giovan Francesco Loredan (1607–1661), who in 1630 helped to establish another influential Academy, the Accademia degli Incogniti, wrote two letters to her full of praise and admiration, which can be dated at the same time. One was addressed to Artemisia in Padua and the other in Venice, where she apparently resided in the parish of San Fantin.[12]

7 Roberto Contini has proposed Artemisia's portrait of de Ville with a full-length portrait today in a private collection (Contini, 2011, 186–187, cat. no. 24).

8 Summaries on Artemisia's Venetian sojourn are offered by Bissell, 1999, 35–54; Spear, 2001; Nicolaci, 2011, 263–264; Locker, 2015, 44–67; Locker, 2016; Treves, 2020, 186; Barker, 2021, 79–83.

9 Colluraffi, 1628, 5–7, 137; the letters and poems by Colluraffi were discovered by Lapierre, 2000, 414; see also Costa, 2000; Locker, 2015, 51–53; on Colluraffi see Benzoni, 1982.

10 For the portrait of Artemisia by Simon Vouet, once in the collection of her Roman friend and patron Cassiano dal Pozzo, see Solinas, 2019, and, most recently, Cropper, 2020, 158–159, cat. no. 16.

11 Da Mosto, 1627; on Colluraffi and the Accademia degli Informi see Locker, 2015, 51–52.

12 On Loredan and his letters see Ivanoff, 1965; Bissell, 1999, 165–166. In the first letter Loredan seems to make an allusion to Artemisia's design for the emblem of the Accademia degli Informi: "Le cose, che si fanno in fretta, riescono di rado con lode. I parti dell'ingegno si rassomigliano a quelli dell'Orsa: bisogna lambirli ben bene, chi vuole, che non riescano aborti."

Another important piece of evidence for Artemisia's stay in Venice are seven anonymous poems which were discovered by Ilaria Toesca in 1971 in a manuscript in the Barberini archives in the Vatican library: the manuscript bears the date of 1627 and the poems refer to Artemisia as "pittrice Romana in Venetia" ("Roman paintress in Venice").[13] The author is most probably the young Giovan Francesco Loredan, the founder of the Accademia degli Incogniti, and the poems are elaborate ekphraseis or literary descriptions of three paintings by Artemisia: a "Amoretto in paragone"—that is a *Sleeping Cupid* painted on stone, which was then in possession of Jacopo Pighetti, a lawyer, poet, and collector from Bergamo at the time resident in Venice—and two other paintings, one depicting Susanna and one Lucretia, whose owners are unfortunately not mentioned.[14] The *Sleeping Cupid* owned by Pighetti may have shared some resemblance with a *Sleeping Child near a Skull*, possibly on copper, that is recorded in three prints, in one of which it is stated that it was painted in Naples (fig. 7.3).[15] We will come back to the painting with Lucretia. The final two poems do not address specific works of art but instead turn to the praise of the artist herself, her beauty, and contain a request for a self-portrait of Artemisia.

Further evidence of the presence of paintings by Artemisia in Venice is provided by the mention of a sketch with a *Head of Athena* by her ("Pallade abbozzo di Artemisia Gentilesca romana"), owned by Giacomo Correr, procurator of San Marco, who was also closely associated with the Accademia degli Incogniti and whose art collection was inventoried and appraised by the painter Nicolas Régnier at the death of the collector in 1661.[16] Moreover, it has recently come to light that a large painting of *Judith and her Maidservant* by Artemisia was also in Venice at an early date. The painting is recorded as "One with Judith who has cut the head of Holofernes and given it to the old woman who dries it, larger than life size, by signora Artemisia Gentileschi" in the 1677 inventory of Lucrezia Bonamin, widow of Giovanni Andrea Lumaga, head of a wealthy Venetian merchant family with strong ties to Naples[17] (in the same inventory it is possible to recognize the *Judith and the Head of Holofernes* by Massimo Stanzione today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art).[18] Among the several versions that Artemisia painted of this subject, it has

13 Toesca, 1971.

14 On Pighetti as a collector see Savini Branca, 1965, 259–260. The *Sleeping Cupid* in possession of Pighetti is also mentioned in some later poems by another writer, Guidubaldo Benamati, who also became a member of the Accademia degli Incogniti (see Locker, 2015, 54).

15 Cf. Bissell, 1999, 231–233, cat. no. 23. A *Sleeping Child* on copper, signed "Artemisia Gentilesca / fecit Napo" has been recently acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (2022.102).

16 See Borean, 2003, 338, 345.

17 In Italian the description reads as: "Uno con Giudita che hà tagliato il capo ad Holloferne, e datolo alla vechia quale lo assiuga, figura più grande del naturale della signora Artemisia Gentileschi"; on the Lumaga collection see Borean and Cecchini, 2002, 210–211, 222; Cecchini, 2007, 286–287.

18 Borean and Cecchini, 2002, 212, 222.

Figure 7.3 Pieter de Jode II, *Child Sleeping near a Skull (Allegory of Death)*, ca. 1630–1640. Engraving and etching, 159 × 221 mm. Rijksmuseum (RP-P-OB-7829), Amsterdam. Rijksmuseum (RP-P-OB-7829), Amsterdam, http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.129586, Open Access CCO 1.0 Deed.

recently been proposed to associate the painting from the Lumaga collection with the very large one today in the Capodimonte Museum in Naples (fig. 7.4), because the back of the canvas is inscribed with an "L" (for Lumaga) and the word "anticamera" ("antechamber"), suggesting a link with a reference found in a later inventory of the Lumaga collection dating 1743, when the collection was moved to Naples and the picture hung in the antechamber of the family's residence.[19] It is possible, as suggested by Jesse Locker, that this large painting inspired an elaborate literary description included in the book by Francesco Pona, *Della eccellenza et perfettione*

19 Locker, 2015, 94–96; the 1743 inventory of the collection of Antonio Maria Lumaga, with the registration of the painting by Artemisia, can be consulted online from the Getty Provenance Index (Archival Inventory I-102, Page 2, Item 0024); regarding the *Judith* today at the Capodimonte Museum a provenance from the Farnese collection is usually assumed, since a painting with the same subject is listed in a 1680 inventory of the Palazzo del Giardino in Parma (cfr. Bertini, 1987, 252, n. 343); on the painting in Capodimonte see, most recently, the entry by Terzaghi 2022, 150–153, cat. no. 16, who considers that the painting is the same one documented in the Farnese collection but does not discuss the alternative evidence provided by Jesse Locker.

Figure 7.4 Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith and her servant Abra with the Head of Holofernes*, ca. 1645. Oil on canvas, 272 × 221 cm. Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte (inv. Q377), Naples. Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte (inv. Q377), Naples, CC0 1.0 Universal.

ammirabile della donna, published in Verona in 1653, where the author offers a vivid and grim description of Judith's servant Abra who rips off a strip of the tent and wraps the head of the Assyrian general in it.[20] In any case, if the painting today in

20 Locker, 2015, 92–94.

Capodimonte is really the one documented in Venice in the Lumaga collection, it was certainly executed in the 1640s when Artemisia was already in Naples, evidently through the Neapolitan connections of the family.

Why had Artemisia moved from Rome to Venice? As mentioned above, by the mid-1620s Artemisia's reputation as a painter of portraits and narrative paintings often featuring strong women was solid. Although none of her works was exhibited in public (she was never commissioned to paint an altarpiece while in Rome), works such as the *Susanna and the Elders* today in Burghley House (dated 1622) or the *Judith* in Detroit are unanimously considered among her masterpieces. There is no doubt that Artemisia, after her return to the Eternal City, managed to establish an extensive network of friends, admirers, and patrons, including the painter Simon Vouet and the scholar Cassiano dal Pozzo, who commissioned the portrait of Artemisia from Vouet that we've mentioned. In 1625 Artemisia met Fernando Afán de Ribera, third Duke of Alcalà, a sophisticated art lover, who had been appointed by Philip IV as ambassador to the papal court on the occasion of the *Anno Santo*.[21] Between 1625 and 1626 Artemisia executed at least three works for him, documented in the inventory of the Duke's possessions drawn up in Seville in 1637: a *Penitent Magdalen* (of which numerous versions of controversial autography are preserved), a *David Playing the Harp* (untraced), and a *Sinite Parvulos*, which was recently recognized in the work now in the church of San Carlo al Corso in Rome, where it arrived by donation in 1985.[22] The *Sinite Parvulos* was the centerpiece of an ambitious *Apostolado*, a cycle of paintings commissioned by the duke from some of the most prestigious artists active between Rome and Naples at the time, including Guido Reni, Jusepe de Ribera, Battistello Caracciolo, Giovanni Baglione, and Lanfranco.[23] It cannot be excluded that the Duke of Alcalà, who before returning to Spain paid a visit to Venice in the spring of 1626, may have favored Artemisia's transfer to the lagoon with the promise of important commissions from the Spanish crown. At the same time, the French painter Nicolas Régnier, whom Artemisia had met in Rome, decided to move to Venice, where he enjoyed a successful career as a painter and art dealer; in 1626 another friend of hers, Simon Vouet, stopped in Venice on his way back to Paris.[24] It is also possible that in Rome Artemisia became acquainted with Nicolas Lanier, the cultivated musician at the court of Charles I, who had visited the papal city in January 1626 and who in the following years frequented Venice as agent of the King of England for the purchase of paintings, especially from the

21 Cf. Mallén Herráiz, 2020, for the Roman embassy of the Duke of Alcalà.

22 On the patronage of the Duke of Alcalà and his relationship with Artemisia see, most recently, García Cueto and Japón, 2022.

23 On this commission see especially Forgione and Saracino, 2019; Japón, 2022.

24 Vouet stayed in Venice from July to October 1627: for his relationship with Jérôme David and the Accademia degli Incogniti see Brejon de Lavergnée, 2018, 64–65.

famous Gonzaga collection.[25] Alexandra Lapierre has drawn attention to the fact that an English traveler in Italy, Richard Symonds, refers to Lanier in his *Journal* as "inamorato di Artemisia Gentileschi che pingeva bene" ("in love with Artemisia Gentileschi who painted well") and to the fact that Charles I's physician, Theodor Turquet de Mayerne, reported in his manuscript on artistic technique that Artemisia herself would have revealed to Lanier some details on the use of amber varnish by her and by her father Orazio.[26] In Venice, moreover, Artemisia could have reconnected with her brothers Giulio and Francesco, since they joined Lanier in the lagoon on three occasions between 1627 and 1628, always in connection with the purchase of pictures on behalf of the King of England.[27] It is also possible, as Sheila Barker has suggested, that Artemisia's move to Venice was in some way preliminary to a potential transfer to London, where she could have reunited with her father Orazio, who from 1626 was appointed as court painter to Charles I.[28]

While in Venice, Artemisia received an important commission, for which she was well remunerated: through Iñigo Vélez de Guevara, Conde de Oñate, the Spanish ambassador in Rome (and successor of Alcalà), she was commissioned to execute a painting for the King of Spain, Philip IV, with the story of Hercules and Omphale, destined for the Alcázar in Madrid, where it was inventoried in 1636 in the Salón Nuevo, described as the "story of Hercules, who is spinning between some women, and there is a Cupid who signals what Hercules is doing, by the hand of Gentilezca, Roman painter."[29] The painting with Hercules and Omphale was apparently intended as a pendant to *Achilles Discovered by Ulisses* by Rubens and his pupil Van Dyck, in which Achilles, dressed as a woman while hiding among the daughters of Lycomedes, is recognized by Ulysses and Diomedes. The subject was evidently a fitting allegory for the passage from youth to manhood, while the theme of *Hercules and Omphale* might be seen as a warning that no man is immune to the dangers of love and lust. But the subject of the painting seems also to reflect the

25 For Lanier's Italian sojourns see Spink, 1959; Adinolfi, 1994.

26 Lapierre, 2000, 415–416; for Turquet de Mayerne and the question of the "amber varnish" see Holmes, 1999, 169–182, especially 174 for the mention of Artemisia; cf. also Leonard, Khandekar, and Carr, 2001.

27 Cf. Lapierre, 2000, 416; Noël Sainsbury, 1859.

28 Cf. Barker, 2021, 79–82.

29 "Otro del mismo tamano y moldura de la Ystoria de Hercules que esta ylando entre unas mujeras, ay un Cupido que senala lo que esta haçiendo Hercules, es de mano de la Gentilezca, Pintora Romana"; cf. Gerard, 1982, 11–13; Bissell, 1999, 370, cat. no. L-40. For this picture Artemisia received a payment of 147 scudi romani, which, as Richard Spear has noted (2001, 340–341), was a reasonable sum, although not comparable with the 1,000 scudi that Domenichino received at the same time from the King of Spain for two pictures; on the other hand, Poussin was paid sixty scudi in 1628 by Cardinal Francesco Barberini for his *Death of Germanicus* (Minneapolis Institute of Arts) and Valentin de Boulogne received 113 scudi between 1628 and 1629 for his large *Allegory of Italy* (Rome, Villa Lante al Gianicolo, Institutum Romanum Finlandiae).

Figure 7.5 Artemisia Gentileschi, *Hercules and Omphale*, ca. 1635. Oil on canvas, 200 × 250 cm. Sursock Palace, Beirut. On loan to the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, PD-A.

peculiarly Venetian fascination with transvestitism and gender reversal for comic ends, characteristic of the literature of the Accademia degli Incogniti and later of Venice's operatic stage, as was keenly remarked by Jesse Locker.[30] The painting for the King of Spain is unfortunately lost, but another recently rediscovered work by Artemisia, painted in Naples in the mid-1630s and likely documented in 1699 in the collection of Carlo de Cárdenas, Count of Acerra and Marques of Laino, can give us an idea of the ambition of the composition of the lost canvas destined for the King of Spain.[31] The picture resurfaced in Lebanon in the collection of Sursock Palace, an important nineteenth-century residence which was severely damaged after the

30 Locker, 2015, 83–84.

31 The 1699 inventory is published by Labrot, 1992, 206, n. 75: "Un Quadro di palmi 8 e 9 con cornice intagliata e indorata entrovi Erchole che fila, mano d'Artemisia Gentilesca"; cf. also Bissell, 1999, 370–371, cat. no. L-41.

devastating blast at the port of Beirut in August 2019, and was first attributed to Artemisia by the Lebanese art historian Gregory Buchakjian (fig. 7.5). A notable addition to Artemisia's body of work, the painting is currently undergoing a complex conservation treatment at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

But let's go back to 1627. As mentioned, in that year a number of poems were dedicated to four of Artemisia's paintings executed in Venice, among them two depicting women heroes, the biblical Susanna and the Roman Lucretia.[32] As it is well known, over the course of her career, Artemisia painted many "donne forti" (strong women) known for their strength, passion, and vulnerability. The nature and status of women were prominent themes discussed in cultural circles in Italy at the time, and particularly in Venice. Among the Venetian women who contributed to the discussion on the "questione della donna," it is worth mentioning Artemisia's contemporaries Lucrezia Marinella and Arcangela Tarabotti.[33] Marinella's *La nobiltà e l'eccellenza delle donne, co' difetti e mancamenti degli uomini* (*The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men*), published in 1600, was a powerful rebuttal of the book *I donneschi difetti* (*On the Defects of Women*), published by Giuseppe Passi in 1599: in her book, Marinella rejected misogynistic prejudices, invoking exemplary women from ancient history to argue that women possessed wisdom, the ability to rule, and a natural inclination toward virtue. The writings of the nun Arcangela Tarabotti, on the other hand, had a more personal character: in books such as *L'inferno monacale* (*The Monastic Hell*, 1643) and *La tirannia paterna* (*Paternal Tyranny*, 1654), combining personal experience with examples taken from history, she forcefully denounced a society that allowed the forced cloistering of Venetian women. The strong fascination for powerful women of the past is also evident from books like the *Galleria delle donne celebri* (*Gallery of Celebrated Women*) by the Veronese writer Francesco Pona, published in 1633, where the author imagines a literary picture gallery with famous women of antiquity sorted into three typological categories: lascivious, chaste, and saintly.[34]

An exemplary case for the depiction of "donne forti" is the figure of Lucretia. According to the legend Lucretia lived in the sixth century before Christ and was the beautiful and virtuous wife of a Roman nobleman. The King's son, Sextus Tarquinius, fell in love with her. During a stay in her house, Sextus threatened to kill her and shame her honor if she did not surrender to him. After the rape Lucretia had her father and husband vow vengeance and then she stabbed herself, refusing to live as an unchaste woman. Anger and grief over Lucretia's death led to a rebellion that brought down the corrupt monarchy and made her a martyr for freedom.

32 Cf. Toesca, 1971.

33 Cf. Locker, 2015, 67–99; Garrard, 2020, 44–52.

34 Cf. again Locker, 2015, 71.

Audiences in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe mainly viewed the figure of Lucretia as the epitome of female virtue, chastity, fidelity, and honor. The words of the fourteenth-century writer Giovanni Boccaccio summarize well the early modern view of Lucretia: "Hers was an unfortunate beauty. Her purity, which can never be sufficiently commended, should be extolled all the more highly as she expiated with such severity the ignominy thrust violently upon her. Her action not only restored the reputation that a dissolute young man had destroyed with his filthy crime, but led ultimately to freedom for Rome."[35] Starting from the early Cinquecento, north and south of the Alps, Lucretia became a popular subject in paintings, usually represented alone at the peak of the story's action, about to plunge the dagger into her chest.

The *Lucretia* today in the collection of Girolamo Etro in Milan was probably painted by Artemisia at the beginning of the 1620s, when she was in Rome.[36] It is a powerful, disturbing work. Lucretia's parted lips and furrowed brow convey her sense of anguish and determination as she clasps the dagger in one hand and squeezes her breast with the other. As was observed by Griselda Pollock, our proximity to Lucretia's body produces an "almost intrusive intimacy" between viewer and subject.[37] Keith Christiansen has appropriately characterized the picture as "a vivid allegory of violation and vindication," and suggested the possibility that Artemisia may have posed for the figure: the dagger held in the left hand might in fact indicate a "mirror-image reversal."[38] Patrizia Cavazzini has further speculated that Lucretia's generous proportions might reflect Artemisia's weight gain, documented in a letter addressed to her lover Maringhi at this time.[39] Although we do not want to overplay the card of art as an extension of biography, we cannot help but recall Artemisia's own account of her rape: how, snatching a knife from a drawer, she threatened Agostino Tassi, crying, "Ti voglio ammazzare con questo cortello che tu m'hai vituperata" ("I want to kill you with this knife, since you have dishonored me").[40] In the aforementioned poems written in Venice in 1627 about a painting of *Lucretia* by the hand of Artemisia, the poet celebrates her skill in bringing back to life the ancient woman hero, only to again cause her death through the power of her brush: "Artemisia paints the event and brings it back to life / Rome had already seen you bathe your knife in blood / now more than the knife, it is her brush that kills you." The poems do not describe the painting in detail, but it has been plausibly suggested that it might be the same work recently acquired by the Getty Museum (fig. 7.6).[41] In

35 Boccaccio, 2001, 195–199 (chapter 48).
36 Mann 2001, 361–364, cat. no. 67; Treves, 2020, 170–173, cat. no. 21.
37 Pollock, 1999, 161.
38 Christiansen, 2004, 111.
39 Cavazzini, 2014, 133, 143, n. 13.
40 On Artemisia's approach to Lucretia see also Garrard, 2020, 86–94.
41 Cf. Locker, 2020 for a full study on the Getty painting.

Figure 7.6 Artemisia Gentileschi, *Lucretia*, ca. 1627–1629. Oil on canvas, 92.9 × 72.7 cm. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Open Access CC0 1.0 Universal.

comparison to the picture that we have just examined, the painting in Los Angeles shows the artist moving in a different direction. Here Lucretia is standing as she emerges from a dark background, grasping the dagger and aiming it at her chest. While the painting in Milan is raw and austere, the painting in Los Angeles—with the woman's upward gaze, effusive gestures, and twisting drapery—is lyrical and sophisticated. It is a much more idealized and elegant depiction, where the emphasis is on the contrast between horror and beauty, the beauty of Lucretia's translucent skin, the pearls in her hair, the luxurious fabrics, in opposition to the resolute gesture of the hand holding the dagger. This transformation has been persuasively associated with Artemisia's awareness of the work of Simon Vouet, especially of his monumental *Lucretia* of ca. 1625–1626 (Prague, Národní Galerie).[42] It is worth noticing that, as in the painting by Vouet, Artemisia originally included a curtain behind her figure, as revealed in the x-rays of the Getty painting, before ultimately rejecting this feature and focusing exclusively on Lucretia's inner drama.

A date in the second half of the 1620s for the Getty picture is also suggested by the comparison with another painting by Artemisia, the large canvas depicting *Esther before Ahasuerus*, today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 7.7).[43] The painting in New York was for a long time believed to date from the beginning of Artemisia's Neapolitan period in 1630, but Jesse Locker has more recently convincingly argued that it must be placed during her stay in Venice between 1627 and 1630.[44] The picture depicts the biblical Queen Esther before her husband, the Persian King Ahasuerus. Artemisia has selected the decisive moment of the story's action, when Esther enters the king's chamber to warn him of his minister Haman's plot against the Jews. Since she is uninvited—a crime then punishable by death—and therefore afraid of the king's wrath, she faints as she enters the throne room (she is at the same time revealing that she too is Jewish). But Ahasuerus is not angry; on the contrary, he appears deeply concerned and leaps from his throne to comfort her. The impact of Venetian art on Artemisia's painting is evident in the picture's compositional strategy, the luxurious costumes of the protagonists, and also in its subject matter, which reflects contemporary debates about the nature

42 Cf. Locker, 2020, 48–49.

43 Mann 2001, 377, cat. no. 71; Treves, 2020, 194–195, cat. no. 25.

44 Locker, 2015, 73–83. The dating of the painting at the Metropolitan Museum has been an object of considerable debate among scholars: Mary Garrard (1989, 72–74) proposed a date during the second Roman period (ca. 1622–1623); Raymond Ward Bissell (1999, 241–244, cat. no. 24) and Roberto Contini (1991, 165–169, cat. no. 24; 2011, 102) agreed on the early Neapolitan period (ca. 1630–1635); Judy Mann (2001, 373–377, cat. no. 71) thought an overlap between the sojourn in Venice and the beginning of Artemisia's stay in Naples (ca. 1628–1635); Letizia Treves (2020, 194–195, cat. no. 25) supported Locker's proposal (ca. 1628–1630), as well as Gianni Papi, who wrote in passing about the "recent reasonable proposal to date the Esther to Artemisia's Venetian sojourn from late 1626 to 1629" (Papi, 2012, 831); a later date (ca. 1639) instead was recently proposed by Sheila Barker (2021, 106–107).

Figure 7.7 Artemisia Gentileschi, *Esther before Ahsuerus*, ca. 1628–1630. Oil on canvas, 208.3 × 273.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Elinor Dorrance Ingersoll, 1969 (69.281), New York. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Elinor Dorrance Ingersoll, 1969 (69.281), New York, Open Access CC0 1.0 Universal.

of men, women, and power dynamics. Artemisia's work seems to be inspired by a painting with the same subject by the workshop of Veronese, which Carlo Ridolfi described in 1648 as in the residence of the Bonaldi family in Venice (today in Paris, Louvre).[45] It is worth noticing that, in a first version of the composition revealed by x-rays, Artemisia had placed an African page restraining a snarling dog beside the king's throne, a detail that indicates how much Veronese was on the artist's mind in the early stages of the painting.[46] The sheen of the exquisitely rendered fabrics and the sumptuous costumes are also indebted to Venetian tradition (the green of Ahasuerus' sleeves closely echo the green of Lucretia's skirt). The head and neck of

45 Bissell, 1999, 243; Jesse Locker (2020, 54–55) has recently given attention to a painting by Padovanino with the depiction of Esther and Ahasuerus (private collection), which reinforces the idea of the Venetian genesis of Artemisia's Esther.

46 Cf. Christiansen and Mann, 2001, 374, fig. 131.

Lucretia and Esther are so similar that it is possible they were based on the same drawing (a practice that Artemisia could have learned in her father's workshop) and even on the same model (we know from later Neapolitan documents that she hired and employed female models for her paintings).

Other aspects of the Getty *Lucretia* indicate a profound engagement with Venetian art. Like some of her contemporaries who moved to Venice, Artemisia found inspiration in the artistic legacy of the sixteenth century. Her elegant and sophisticated heroine, with a string of pearls in her hair and surrounded by an abundance of fabrics, recall several female protagonists in paintings by Titian and Veronese.[47] The dynamic and exuberant drapery of Lucretia's sleeve, painted with a creamy impasto and free brushstrokes, has little parallel in Artemisia's previous oeuvre. Its novel appearance suggests the influence of Venetian painting and her close contact with other expatriates active in Venice at the same time, such as Johann Lyss, Domenico Fetti, and Bernardo Strozzi. This recently rediscovered work is therefore particularly significant since it sheds a new light on a crucial moment of Artemisia's career, when the painter is transitioning from the combined influence of Caravaggio and her father Orazio that had been the hallmark of her formative years to a more graceful and idealized manner which will continue to evolve in her mature years in Naples, where she will spend the rest of her life.[48]

Although the plague that was ravaging Northern Italy has often been considered the main reason for Artemisia's hasty departure from Venice, she was certainly encouraged to move to Naples by the Duke of Alcalà, who in November 1628 was appointed as the Spanish Viceroy in Naples, arriving there at the end of July 1629. It has been proposed that a series of briefs exchanged between the Spanish ambassador in Venice, don Cristóbal de Benavente y Benavides, and the newly appointed Viceroy of Naples, referring to the arrival from Venice of a "pintora" ("paintress") in March 1630, might refer to Artemisia, although it cannot be completely ruled out that they actually relate to Giovanna Garzoni, another woman artist of great talent that Alcalà met in Venice and persuaded to move to Naples.[49] It is worth noticing that the two artists were sometimes confused even by their contemporaries: it has been persuasively demonstrated, for example, that a collector from Vicenza, Girolamo Gualdo the Younger, in describing paintings of rosebuds, grape leaves, pansies, and painstaking depictions of tiny animals and insects rendered on paper

47 Locker, 2020, 55–57.

48 Another possible picture that Artemisia could have executed in Venice is the *St. Catherine of Alexandria* recently acquired by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm: see Fryklund, 2022, 164–165, cat. no. 21.

49 See, most recently, D'Alessandro and Porzio, 2022 for a reliable transcription of the documents; see also García Cueto and Japón, 2022. The last document that firmly establishes Artemisia's presence in Venice is dated 19 January 1629 (cf., Lapierre, 2005, 169–170, n. 5).

with vivid colors as works by a certain "Artemisia Ingegnieri," is clearly confusing Artemisia Gentileschi with Giovanna Garzoni.[50]

By the summer of 1630 both artists were settled in Naples: on June 15th Giovanna wrote to Cassiano dal Pozzo that she had arrived in good health, while on August 24th Artemisia also wrote to Cassiano that she was recently entrusted to execute some paintings for the empress Eleonora Gonzaga.[51] In the very same year Artemisia signed and dated her first altarpiece, the *Annunciation* today in Capodimonte, which is also her first ambitious public work in Naples, thus opening an entire new chapter of her life and art.[52]

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50 Cf. Bissell, 2013; Locker, 2015, 62–64.

51 For Giovanna's letter cf. Bottari and Ticozzi, 1822, 342–343, n. 133; for Artemisia's cf. Solinas, 2021, 107; details about the Imperial commission to Artemisia have been recently discussed by Denunzio, 2022, 61–62.

52 On this painting see, most recently, Terzaghi, 2022, 138–139, cat. no. 11; unfortunately, we don't know the original destination or the patron of this work.

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8. Giovanna Garzoni and Venetian Witchcraft: Still Lifes as Natural Enchantments

Sheila Barker

Abstract
One of the greatest seventeenth-century innovators in the still-life genre was a woman artist with important ties to Venice: Giovanna Garzoni (Ascoli Piceno [?] ca. 1600–Rome 1670). This essay focuses on Garzoni's conections to Venice, where she lived from about 1610 until 1630. It will be argued that the city not only furnished her with artistic, musical, and calligraphic training, but also exposed her to notions of natural magic such as the animistic beliefs behind *stregamenti*, charmed objects composed of ordinary natural material. These influences, as much as her artistic training in Venice, had a lasting impact on her approach to the representation of natural subject matter, which she made appear not only true to life, but also imbued with an *anima* (soul).

Keywords: Tiberio Tinelli, Palma il Giovane, female musicians, court artists, Animism, genre

Introduction

Venice was never a major hub for the early development of still-life painting, a genre that began to gain currency in Italy around 1600. It is therefore even more remarkable that one of the greatest seventeenth-century innovators in the still-life genre got her professional start in Venice: Giovanna Garzoni (Ascoli Piceno ca. 1600–Rome 1670).

The ties between Giovanna Garzoni and Venice extend far beyond the artistic, musical, and calligraphic training she received in that city. They also include experiences outside the bottega that shaped her *forma mentis*. This essay will outline how those experiences laid the foundation for Garzoni's investment of her

Cooper, T.E. (ed.), *Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750: Uncovering the Female Presence*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
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subjects from the vegetal world with a quasi-human status, thereby giving a new creative impulse to the still-life genre. It will be argued that in Venice, Garzoni was exposed to notions of natural magic such as the animistic beliefs surrounding "stregamenti," charmed objects created from ordinary *naturalia* such as fruit, beans, herbs, flowers, or bones. No less than her Venetian artistic training, these magical and animistic beliefs prevalent in Venice would have had a lasting impact on her approach to the representation of natural subject matter.

The Animation of the Still Life

Grafted onto a tradition of portraiture, Garzoni's still lifes invited their audiences to look at the non-human world with the same rapt attention and emotional engagement formerly reserved for the portraiture of human beings. Not only are the flowers, fruits, and vegetables in her miniatures shown with exacting specificity, but they also appear to have an inner soul and thus it would not be an exaggeration to refer to Garzoni's depictions of vegetal subjects as portraits.[1]

The startling veracity of Garzoni's still lifes begins with her ability to give foodstuffs a life-like, illusionistic presence as they project from their vellum support in a simulacral scale. Yet while Garzoni's trompe-l'oeil skills are fundamental to her art, her signature hallmarks are instead found in her thoughtful attention to, and virtuosic rendition of, seemingly irregular aspects that give a specimen its individuality, including breakages, structural anomalies, and diseases caused by its "personal" history and transient circumstances. This interest in the specificity of her vegetal subjects far superseded what was desirable, or even acceptable, in the scientific natural imagery of her times. As David Freedberg reminds us, for seventeenth-century naturalists, artistic "pictures showed too much. They could convey texture and color in meticulous detail; but it was precisely this that detracted from their ability to show what was essential and regular about things."[2]

Beyond giving the viewer an exacting record of the shapes, colors, and textures of fruits, vegetables, and flowers, Garzoni heightened their intrinsic interest by showcasing the qualities that induced viewers to imagine a pleasant bodily interaction with vegetal subjects. (In a sense, her strategy paralleled the way Titian had heightened the intrinsic interest of his painted goddesses by evoking the tactile appeal of female flesh in a way that efficaciously titillated his male viewership.) In Garzoni's era, audiences carefully noted these and other psychosomatic effects of

1 For a full discussion of this point, see Barker, 2022.

2 Freedberg, 2003, 349.

images and incorporated them into their viewing practices with an eye to improving their physical health.[3]

Ersatz but evergreen, Garzoni's beneficent fruits, vegetables, and flowers were believed to transmit the same beneficent powers as their real referents, season after season, as Mary Garrard has recently argued.[4] Looking at the flowers, the viewer intuits the presence of their wafting, seductive fragrances when noticing the itinerant bees, wasps, butterflies, and ants that have been lured into the picture frame. This would have been a trigger for memories of those fragrances, the very same ones that physicians and pharmacists recommended as a means of rendering indoor air more salubrious. Placed in a bowl, seen from the angle of a person seated at a table, and matured to the ideal point for pleasurable consumption, the vegetal foodstuffs in her compositions are expressly designed to incite the viewer's senses and natural appetites. As they make the viewer's mouth water with thoughts of real produce, they evoke the nourishing powers of the vegetal world.

Once the viewer perceives Garzoni's vegetal portraits as agents with the capacity to stimulate the memory, the senses, and the appetites, it is a short leap to imagine Garzoni's subjects as sentient beings and to indulge in a game of attributing to them individual personalities, characters, and willful thoughts.[5] Such viewing practices would have been second nature for early modern audiences adroit in the practice of inventing emblems to symbolize individual human character traits from elements of the natural world, typical among circles such as the Accademia della Crusca, with its famous shovels (*pale*) emblazoned with emblems often featuring alimental subject matter (fig. 8.1). For example, in the painted miniature of *A Chinese Plate with Artichokes, a Rose, and Strawberries* (fig. 8.2), the two artichokes with their lanky limbs flung across the dish appear to be in the throes of a sultry, drunken languor, unable to lift their heavy heads. By contrast, in *A Plate of Cherries with Carnations* (fig. 8.3), the cherries appear gregarious and chatty, jostling against each other with giddy excitement.

When appreciated in this anthropomorphic vein, Garzoni's vegetal images vie with portraiture's most difficult achievement: revealing the invisible soul of the sitter. In several cases, Garzoni constructed her images to show the inner, hidden essence of the fruit—much as portraits of humans were designed to suggest the qualities of the soul and personality of an individual. She did this by exposing the fruits to show their inner parts. Placed next to bean pods in one miniature are the beans that have been extracted from them; a pea pod has been split open to

3 For the connections between viewing practices and medical theories, see Barker, 2004; Barker, 2007; and Gage, 2016, chapter 2.

4 Garrard, 2020, 62.

5 See Garrard, 2022, 73–74. Garrard, 2022, 69, compares Garzoni to Caravaggio, whom she aptly calls the first artist to "theatricize the natural."

Figure 8.1 Lorenzo Lippi, *Rifiorito, the* Pala *of Francesco Ridolfi*, 1653. Oil on panel, 69 × 39 cm. Accademia della Crusca, Villa di Castello. Foto: Nicolò Orsi Battaglini, Accademia della Crusca.

Figure 8.2 Giovanna Garzoni, *A Chinese Plate with Artichokes, a Rose, and Strawberries*, ca. 1655–1662 Tempera on parchment, 240 × 320 mm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Galleria Palatina (inv. 1890 n. 4760), Florence. Gabinetto Fotografico delle Gallerie degli Uffizi.

Figure 8.3 Giovanna Garzoni, *A Plate of Cherries with Carnations*, ca. 1655–1662. Tempera on parchment, 245 × 345 mm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Galleria Palatina (inv. 1890 n. 4764), Florence. Gabinetto Fotografico delle Gallerie degli Uffizi.

show its little round treasures; an almond drupe has been cut in half to show the edible seed; as with the pits of cherries, the moist and tender flesh of a fig, and the multitudinous seeds of a pomegranate.

What sets Garzoni's still lifes apart from those of equally playful predecessors such as Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526–1593) is that Garzoni's vegetables do not require a morphological similarity to human forms in order to mirror human traits and to provoke human emotions. They are able to emote sentient lifeforms because they possess intrinsic powers of their own. It will be argued here that the expressive vitality of Garzoni's flowers, fruits, and vegetables stems in part from the artist's belief in their occult, magical powers—a belief that can be traced back ultimately to her experiences in Venice as a youth.

Garzoni's *Patria*

It is uncertain where Giovanna was born since her birth record has not been located. Tentatively, art historians have placed her birth in the Marchegian town of Ascoli Piceno around 1600, based on documents from her early childhood as well as a declaration that Giovanna made in her will, which she drew up in Rome on June 3, 1666, a few years before her death in 1670.[6] Subsequently, Ascoli Piceno was designated as her birthplace in the posthumous funerary memorial that was called for by the provisions of her testamentary gift to the Accademia di San Luca. The emphasis given to Garzoni's Marchegian birth by that funerary monument might also have something to do with the fact that its design and execution were overseen by the painter Giuseppe Ghezzi, a fellow Marchegian artist who met her in Rome and who surely took pride in their shared origins.

It should be kept in mind when considering Garzoni's *patria* that, in her era, birthplace was not the sole factor in determining a person's subjecthood.[7] In the case of an unmarried woman, her subjecthood was often a patrilineal inheritance determined by her father's subjecthood or citizenship, although there were many exceptions to the general practice. Because Giovanna's father, a perfume maker named Gian Giacomo Garzoni, was from Venice, by this standard she was Venetian. Moreover, Garzoni's mother, Isabetta (Elisabetta) Gaia, was also the daughter of a Venetian father, and so she, too, was most likely considered Venetian by her contemporaries. Nevertheless, confusion reigned over the question of Garzoni's

6 For the archival evidence regarding her birth, see Casale, 1999.
For Garzoni's will, see Casale, 1991, 220–221. The original will is in the ASRm, Trenta Notai Capitolini, Uff. 22, Testamenti, vol. 543, notary Franciscus Marchettti, fols. 742–743v, 776–776v.

7 Muller, 2017, https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199730414-0143, accessed 26 July 2017.

nationality during much of her life. Contemporary documents never refer to her as being Venetian. They instead erroneously describe her as being from Genoa, Lucca, L'Aquila, Flanders, and even France.[8] The frequent association of Giovanna with incorrect origins –– only one of which, France, is a location where Giovanna is known to have set foot –– leads one to wonder whether Garzoni herself might have actively fostered these false impressions, either with misstatements or with an affected accent. The larger question regards the reasons why she didn't present herself as a Venetian, given her parents' lineages and her own formation in that city. A possible explanation, which is supported by the events to be recounted, is that Garzoni made vague or false claims about her origins in order to prevent people from discovering her turbulent personal history in Venice.

No matter what Garzoni's motivation may have been for encouraging false beliefs about her origins, there was a kernel of truth behind her affected exoticism: she may in fact have had an aristocratic French ancestor. According to a family tree (which was probably made by the artist herself around the period when she designated the Accademia di San Luca in Rome as heir to her estate), Garzoni's mother, Isabetta Gaia, was the daughter of Nicolo Gaia, a Venetian goldsmith who moved first to Ferrara and then to Ascoli Piceno.[9] Nicolo Gaia, in turn, was the son of Piero Gaia, called a "baron of Montpellier" in her family tree.[10]

A Venetian Training in Oil Painting

Giovanna Garzoni as well as Mattio Garzoni, her older brother by three years, studied painting from a young age.[11] Giovanna's apprenticeship probably began while she was still in Ascoli under the guidance of her maternal uncle, the minor Venetian painter Pietro Gaia. Gaia was himself a former student of the highly successful Venetian master Iacopo Negretti, better known as Palma il Giovane, the leading proponent of Tintoretto's style at the beginning of the seventeenth century. After this initiation in the art of oil painting, Garzoni's family moved to Venice in the parish of Santi Apostoli. Here, Garzoni continued her study almost certainly under Palma directly.

It should not come as a surprise that Giovanna, as a female, would have been accepted into such a prestigious workshop as that of Palma il Giovane. Although

8 Barker, 2020, 18.

9 Casale, 1991, 6.

10 AASLRm, Miscellanea Garzoni, family tree, unnumbered folio.

11 Mattio may have later entered the military profession, but in 1620 he was still identified in official documents as a "pictor." ASVe, Santo Uffizio, busta 75, deposition of Mattio Garzoni, 11 February 1620, unnumbered folios.

Figure 8.4 Giovanna Garzoni, *St Andrew*, signed *GIOVANNA GARZONI F[ECIT]*, 1616. Oil on canvas, 158 × 115 cm. Galleria dell' Accademia (inv. 662), Venice. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura.

the Adriatic capital had no tradition of female court artists (as opposed to Florence or London or Madrid), the city nonetheless had nurtured the careers of many late sixteenth-century female painters, both professionals and amateurs. Examples of Venice's impressive numbers of women artists include Marietta Robusti, Irene di Spilimbergo, Gasparina Pittoni, Bernardina di Zuan Mathio, Campaspe Giancarli, and Chiara Varotari. Their numbers were, in fact, greater than those women artists of Bologna at that time, and just about as many as those in Florence.[12]

While a teenager in Venice, Giovanna closely emulated the style of her teacher, Palma il Giovane. This can be seen in her earliest surviving artwork, which is also her first known commission: a large oil painting of *St. Andrew* measuring 158 × 115 cm. signed prominently *GIOVANNA GARZONI F*[*ECIT*] (fig. 8.4).[13] Now in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice, it was originally displayed among a series of twelve similarly sized paintings depicting the Apostles, which used to decorate the upper tier of Venice's no-longer-extant church of the Santissimo Salvatore, built within a hospital complex for syphilis patients, known as the Ospedale degli Incurabili and now the site of Venice's Accademia di Belle Arti. They were commissioned in 1616, when Giovanna was sixteen years old. The rest of the paintings in this series of the Apostles were made by some of the most highly regarded Venetian painters of that era, including Domenico Tintoretto, Andrea Vicentino, Maffeo Verona, and Palma the Younger himself—all of whom were much older than Giovanna when they received their commissions. The fact that at her tender age she was commissioned to carry out one of these twelve works as an independent master is compelling evidence that in the highly competitive Venetian art market Giovanna's talent was well regarded.

A Polymathic Preparation for a Future Court Painter

At the same time that Garzoni was studying oil painting in Venice, the young prodigy was also seriously studying music. In fact, it is in the guise of a musician that she carried out her only known self-portrait (fig. 8.5), perhaps made around 1617. Just two years before the dating of this portrait, when Garzoni was fifteen, she visited the Medici court in Florence, not only as a painter but as a musician, having been invited by the Grand Duchess of Tuscany Maria Magdalena von Habsburg.[14] We do not yet know the string of introductions and intermediaries that prompted

12 For a comparison of the numbers of women artists active in Bologna from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, see Bohn, 2021, 1–4.

13 For this commission, see Casale, 1991, 50–51.

14 On this visit, see Barker, 2018.

Figure 8.5 Giovanna Garzoni, *Self-Portrait as Apollo*, signed: *GIOVANNA GARZONI F[ECIT]*, ca. 1617. Tempera on parchment, laid down on linen, 42 × 33 cm. Palazzo del Quirinale, Rome. Segretariato Generale della Presidenza della Repubblica.

this invitation, but while there Giovanna may have been introduced to the two women artists then working at the Medici court: Arcangela Paladini and Artemisia Gentileschi, who, a decade later, would cross paths again with Giovanna in Venice.

When Garzoni appeared before Grand Duchess Maria Magdalena, the young girl not only played stringed instruments, but also sang and gave live demonstrations

of calligraphic writing. Additionally, she revealed her skill in the artform that would later be her *métier*: painted miniatures, carried out with pigments such as watercolor, gouache, or tempera on a support of parchment or vellum. Her gift to the Grand Duchess of a painted miniature representing Mary Magdalene is yet untraced, but documentation of her presentation of this work indicates that she was already well versed in this artform years before her marriage.

While it is not known who taught Garzoni the art of miniature painting, it is certain from her timeline that she learned this technique in Venice. In addition, she may have seen works left behind in that city by the witty and skillful sixteenth-century Flemish miniaturist Joris Hoefnagel (1554–1600), who spent some time in Venice in 1577–1578 completing his illustrated catalogue of known animals.[15]

We know from Garzoni's calligraphic writings that she also learned this art while in Venice. Her earliest calligraphic work from her adolescence survives because she apparently kept her book of juvenile samples with her throughout her life. Upon her death she left this sampler, entitled the *Libro de' carattere cancellereschi corsivi*, along with the rest of her estate, to the Accademia di San Luca, where it remains today in the Biblioteca Accademia di San Luca (inv. n. 1117). Notably, the content of these samples she made in her childhood demonstrates that she composed each one for a specific recipient. Moreover, these texts reveal a remarkably sophisticated *concettismo* and literary wit. In other words, our teenaged artist was more than just literate, she was a competent wordsmith.

Garzoni's teacher in the art of calligraphy was an otherwise unknown figure named Giacomo Rogni.[16] As Aoife Cosgrove has discovered, Garzoni also made progress in this skill by studying from books on calligraphy such as the *Spieghel der Schrijfkonste* by Jan Van de Velde.[17] Published in Rotterdam in 1605, the *Spieghel der Schrijfkonste* contains Simon Frisuis' engravings after Van de Velde's designs, which serve as models for penwork of astonishing complexity and skill of the highest order. Proof of Garzoni's direct knowledge of Van de Velde's handbook of samples is the image of a ship, the so-called *Galleon at Sea* on folio 44r of her *Libro de' carattere cancellereschi corsivi*, which was based on Van de Velde's Figure IV in the *Spieghel der Schrijfkonste*.

Through the practice of calligraphy, Garzoni attained unparalleled coordination and control over the graphic instrument, as is evident from her juvenile calligraphy sampler. This virtuosic handling of the quill and ink no doubt was an adjuvant skill for her microscopic scale miniatures. Both arts, in fact, required impeccable

15 A comparison of Givoanna's juvenile works to the work of Hoefnagel was first proposed by Casale, 1991, 123.

16 Casale, 1991, 6, 16.

17 Cosgrove, 2020, 30.

precision with no margin for error because neither erasing nor overpainting are possible. It also is worth noting that calligraphy, like Garzoni's musical skills, had a performative aspect. One can easily imagine the building excitement among seventeenth-century viewers as Giovanna drew her calligraphic design of the *Galleon at Sea*, beginning with a simple spiral on a blank page, and never lifting the quill from the paper until she had completely finished her one continuous, sinuous line.

The fact that Giovanna studied a diverse range of arts and skills not only points to her astonishing natural aptitude, but also to the probable motivation for her parents' decision to expose her to many of the skills pertaining to the Humanist education of the noble class. Perhaps her parents, after realizing her extraordinary potential early on, had hoped she would enter the court of a grand noblewoman. In courtly environments, not only were multiple arts practiced—particularly needle arts, music, poetry, and the theatrical recital of religious plays—but there was also special enthusiasm for the performative arts due to the continuous need for lively and wholesome entertainments.

By the time Garzoni reached the age of twenty, she had become a charming woman and a darling of Venetian society. It was said of her by Carlo Ridolfi that she enjoyed "regular social gatherings, accustomed to the pleasure of entertaining her admirers and dear ones by making little portrait miniatures, and by playing her musical instruments and singing."[18] As the beloved star of Venice's cultural salons, Garzoni would have participated in refined parlor games, some of which involved the art of portraiture. One made famous in late sixteenth-century Siena, called the Game of Reverses, involved the circulation of designs made in advance representing imaginary emblematic medals with *imprese* corresponding to each of the male and female guests; during the party, everyone took turns at inventing witty verbal devices for the reverses of the medals, showcasing the salient aspects of each person as indicated by the emblem.[19]

The Powers of a Flower, a Fruit, a Skull, and a Ring

Although Ridolfi's testimony implies that Giovanna enjoyed prominence in Venetian society for her amiable personality and talents, her family must have been simultaneously concerned about raising their daughter in compliance with the strict guidelines for wellborn women. Garzoni's goal of a position at court required perfect chastity since noblewomen typically chose their female entourage with concern

18 Ridolfi, 1648, 290 (as Tiberio's wife, without naming Garzoni, who he could have known); see also Bottacin, 2004b.

19 McClure, 2013, 86–104.

Figure 8.6 Anonymous, *Portrait of Tiberio Tinelli* (1586–1639), 18th century. Wax and paint, 15 × 12 cm. Musée Carnavalet, Paris. CC0 Paris Musées / Musée Carnavalet—Histoire de Paris.

for morality. To keep Giovanna's virginity intact, her parents had taken pains to steer her away from liaisons. This included engaging a local soothsayer to issue her a terrifying warning about sexual intercourse with men, in the form of a prophesy that if Giovanna were to become pregnant, she would die. As it will emerge in the following account of her later years in Venice, Garzoni and her family believed very much in the supernatural powers of soothsayers, magicians, and witches.

The careful guardianship over Garzoni's virginity was thwarted by an unplanned romance between Garzoni and another Venetian artist. In 1621, Giovanna fell under the spell of the portrait painter Tiberio Tinelli (fig. 8.6), thirteen years her senior. He fell under her spell, as well, and the two were married. Complications resulted when Garzoni's parents realized her productivity was hampered by the relationship. Their attempts to extricate her from the union have been brought to light by Francesca Bottacin's discovery of Venetian trial records.[20] From these we gain not only precious insight into the close management of Garzoni's artistic career by her father, but also a fascinating account of how entirely credible it was among the artist's community that inanimate objects such as rings and skulls, as well as fruits and flowers, could hold the power to control the minds and bodies of the humans around them.

One version of the breakup of the doomed marriage was recorded in the biography of Tinelli written by the previously mentioned Ridolfi. According to Ridolfi, Tinelli "was enchanted by a young girl of a pure and chaste nature, and while visiting her he proposed marriage to her, in expectation of all the pleasures of Paradise, and the girl, wishing to escape her father's tyranny, was inclined to consider marriage, and even had her mother's sympathy." The trial records indicate that, during his suit of the young artist, Tinelli sent Garzoni a sweet-smelling citron flower. Garzoni reciprocated the gesture by sending Tinelli a citron fruit with the witty and encouraging message, "Our flower has produced a citron."[21]

Ridolfi's account explains that the courtship came to a standstill when Tinelli learned that she had taken "a vow of perpetual virginity, as she had complete trust in a soothsayer who had predicted she would die in childbirth."[22] Yet even this detail did not dissuade Tinelli, and the couple married on July 17 of 1622 in the church of San Canziano in Cannaregio, near the Garzoni home.[23] Fiorella Pagotto recently discovered the record of the dowry Garzoni brought to the marriage, revealing that it was not cash but that it consisted rather in her valuable possessions, including her personal collection of musical instruments: a theorbo, a lute, a harpsichord,

20 Bottacin, 1998; and Bottacin, 2004a, 15–24.

21 From the trial documents cited in Bottacin, 2004a, 191.

22 Ridolfi, 1648, 278–280.

23 Bottacin, 1998, 143.

and an organ, as well as many miniatures presumably by her own hand.[24] The dowry of 1622 confirms not only how seriously devoted Garzoni was to her musical pursuits, but also that she had conquered the art of miniature painting well before marriage to Tiberio.

According to Ridolfi,

> The marriage was arranged in accordance with this vow of chastity, and [Garzoni] went to live with Tiberio [in the corte di Ca' Zen], and everything was peaceful as long as [Garzoni]'s father was sharing in the household profits [from Garzoni's artistic practice] and running his son-in-law's affairs. It was under these circumstances that [Tinelli and his father-in-law] began fighting all the time over who held authority in these business matters. Perhaps it all could have been solved simply by dividing the assets up. In any case, the father-in-law, unwilling to give up his daughter and feeling quite bold and clever as was his wont, assailed Tiberio with threats and weapons. Tiberio, who could have defended himself easily, did not fight back out of respect for the woman he was so enamoured of.[25]

Ridolfi's account tells us that Garzoni herself felt aggrieved in the new marriage after her jealous husband impeded her from her mingling with her circle of friends in Venice's cultural salons. There were additional complaints as well. According to Giovanna's father, upon moving in with Tiberio, the young wife had "suffered from a lack of food and clothing, and she had to endure vile behavior, threats, exhausting labor demands, sleepless nights, and slavery [*schiavitù*]."[26] She had mentioned such things to a priest of the Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo during her Confession, saying she planned to flee to her father's house. However, the priest betrayed her trust and told Tiberio of his wife's intentions; from then on Giovanna stopped going to Confession out of fear of being entrapped by her husband's allies among the local priesthood. She instead began to seek advice from her brother Mattio, who persuaded her to leave Tinelli by telling Garzoni that her marriage to him was eternal enslavement and the end of her freedom ("la libertà perduta").[27] Convinced by such arguments, Garzoni secretly returned to her father's house one day when her husband was away. Eight months later, in the spring of 1623, they were all called before the Inquisitors of the Holy Office for a trial labeled "Tinelli Tiberio For having seduced a girl by means of witchcraft" ("Tinelli Tibero per aver sedotta una ragazza col mezzo di strigarie").[28]

24 Pagotto, 2019.

25 Ridolfi, 1648, 278–280.

26 From the trial documents. ASVe, Santo Uffizio, Processi, b. 78, cited in Bottacin, 1998, 188.

27 See Ridolfi, 1648, 278–280.

28 From the trial documents cited in Bottacin, 1998, 187.

This was not an ordinary divorce trial, but a trial about heretical use of witchcraft to illicitly seduce a woman into a marriage and then to trap her there. Garzoni's father Gian Giacomo had asked prosecutors to instigate the trial so that "his unhappy daughter could be freed from such a horrendous and diabolical martyrdom." In his testimony, he charged that his son-in-law had used "diabolical mind control [*diabolica immaginatione*] and that, by means of spells and witchcraft, he had convinced the girl to break the vow of chastity she had made to God."[29]

Several bewitched objects used to control Garzoni's life are introduced in the trial. The judges themselves were convinced of this, ordering that it be entered into the record that "this marriage was achieved by means of some kind of witchcraft, involving a flower, a citron, and the aforesaid ring" ("il detto matrimonio è stato fatto con certe strigarie, intervenendovi un fiore, un cedro, et il detto annello").[30] According to her father's testimony, Garzoni and others close to her feared that the citron flower and the citron fruit had been deployed by Tiberio in spells to control her will and to make her desire to marry him. Tinelli had told her following their marriage to take special care of the citron fruit she had once given him because it was the reason she was his wife. Giovanna's father had attempted to steal the citron from Tinelli's house in order to have the spell removed from it, but he was foiled in the process.

In addition to the citron bringing the couple together in the first place, a second spell was cast on Garzoni to control her behavior with the help of a skull and a disreputable local priest who was also a confidant of Tiberio. The priest brought a human skull to Tinelli's house and convinced Garzoni to kiss it by telling her it was the skull of a female virgin saint and should be venerated. The priest also pointed out to Garzoni that she should not look at Tiberio's prohibited books on sorcery and necromancy that were kept in their house because these writings could be dangerous to anyone who had no experience with witchcraft ("a chi non era pratici di spiritarsi").[31]

The trial testimonies refer to yet a third magical object: a ring that prevented her from being an artist. Tinelli was said to have put an additional spell on Giovanna by giving her a diamond engagement ring that, even though it was the correct size, had the effect of paralyzing Giovanna's whole arm and causing her intense pain and tremors, such that she could no longer make her art. According to witnesses, Tiberio promised to have someone remove the spell from the ring, so that Giovanna's father would stop complaining about the cursed ring.

Although the Garzoni family had petitioned the Inquisitors to grant Giovanna a divorce, which would have entitled her to financial support from Tiberio for

29 Bottacin, 1998, 187.
30 Bottacin, 1998, 190.
31 Bottacin, 1998, 189.

the rest of her life, what they obtained instead was a simple annulment, sparing Tiberio of onerous costs.[32] Tiberio did nonetheless suffer because of this ordeal. He ceased to paint for the entire year of 1623, and ever after, he remained single. He would spend the next sixteen years of his life living with his mother, unable or unwilling to pursue such important career opportunities as an invitation to work at the court of the king of France. He died at age 52 in 1639.[33]

The Liberated Woman Artist

Giovanna was more resilient professionally, although she never remarried either. By 1625 she had a presence in the growing Venetian market for portrait miniatures. Made in Venice in that year is her signed and dated *Portrait of a Gentleman* now at the Stichting Historische Verzamelingen van het Huis Oranje-Nassau in the Hague. The man shows the secret of his burning heart, inscribed with his lover's initials. He appears to be Dutch or British; perhaps he was Daniel Nys, Charles I's art agent in Venice. What is clear is that Giovanna was in touch again with her cherished cultural salon, meeting foreigners and others with a passion for the arts. One of those foreigners was surely Artemisia Gentileschi, with whom she likely traveled to Rome in 1630 before finally arriving in Naples that same year to work for Fernando Afán Enríquez de Ribera, the Duke of Alcalá and Viceroy of Naples. This invitation from the Spanish Viceroy was the answer to her long quest to find employment at a court. It also was Garzoni's definitive departure from Venice, marking an end to a difficult period of her life as well as putting distance between her and unseemly associations with magicians and necromancy.

From Naples, Garzoni went to Turin as the miniaturist to the Duchess of Savoy, Christine of France, beginning in 1632. At the Duchess' death in 1637, Garzoni accepted a position at the court of King Charles I of England.[34] Two years later, she was working in Paris for the Cardinal de Richelieu, when she accepted a position at the Medici court, more than thirty years after her first visit to Florence. The Medici engaged her to make portrait miniatures, a wide range of still-life imagery, genre scenes, miniature copies of full-size masterpieces, designs for stone inlay tables, designs for fans, and liturgical textiles. The latter form of art was her primary occupation during her final years, carried out in Rome in the shadow of the Accademia di San Luca.[35]

32 Petrini, 1991, 1.

33 Bottacin, 1998, 13–14.

34 For these court appointments, see now ffolliott, 2020.

35 Barker, 2020, cat. no. 38, 188–189.

Stregarie and the Magic of Venice

Against this biographical backdrop, we can now revisit the initial question about Giovanna's Venetian heritage and her ability to make the vegetal subjects of her still lifes so lively and captivating. The images that best exemplify this skill were made in the heyday of her still-life production, between 1642 and 1651. In this period, she made twenty portrait-like representations of fruits and vegetables placed in dishes, all for Grand Duke Ferdinando II de' Medici. Based on the study of real objects and living exemplars, these images seem to have more of the spirit of animate life than the real objects themselves.[36]

The records of the divorce trial show that Garzoni accepted the principles of animism, as did her family members, her husband, and even the Inquisitors. This is apparent from such testimony as Madona Fiore's recollection of how Garzoni "could not wear [the ring] on her finger, since it made her hand shake as well as her arm, all the way to her shoulder, leaving her astonished at this object, as well as the flower and the citron" ("non poteva tenerlo in ditto, facendoli tremare la mano et il bracio fina alla spalla, restando con molta maraviglia di tal cosa, et dil fiore, et dil cedro").[37] Although the complaints lodged during the court trial may have been exaggerated, there is no doubt that Giovanna Garzoni's family believed that Tinelli's witchcraft harnessed powers that emanated from material objects (flowers, fruits, bones, and metallic objects) that possessed their own agency. Such beliefs regarding charmed objects known as 'bagatelle' and 'stregamenti' were particularly widespread among Venetian women. According to historian Anna Bennett,

> Scattered beans were thought to portend the future; wax figures could be cursed or enchanted as proxy for a bothersome neighbor or a cruel lover; and herbs from kitchen gardens were believed to add strength to family recipes and illicit rituals alike. Based on their composition, location, and use, objects otherwise dismissed as *bagatelle*, mere trifles, could blur into *stregamenti*, witchcraft things.[38]

Further evidence of the family's beliefs in natural magic are found in the records of the Holy Office's investigation of their contacts with a sorceress. The case, which had been opened a couple years before Giovanna Garzoni's marriage to Tinelli in 1619, centered on Giovanna's mother's employment of a magical healer named Serena the Greek in order to treat her brother Mattio's illness after two physicians

36 On Garzoni's use of fresh foodstuffs for her art, see Meloni Trkulja and Fumagalli, 2000, 6; Fumagalli, 2020, 55–56.

37 From the trial documents cited in Bottacin, 1998, 189.

38 Bennett, 2020, 116.

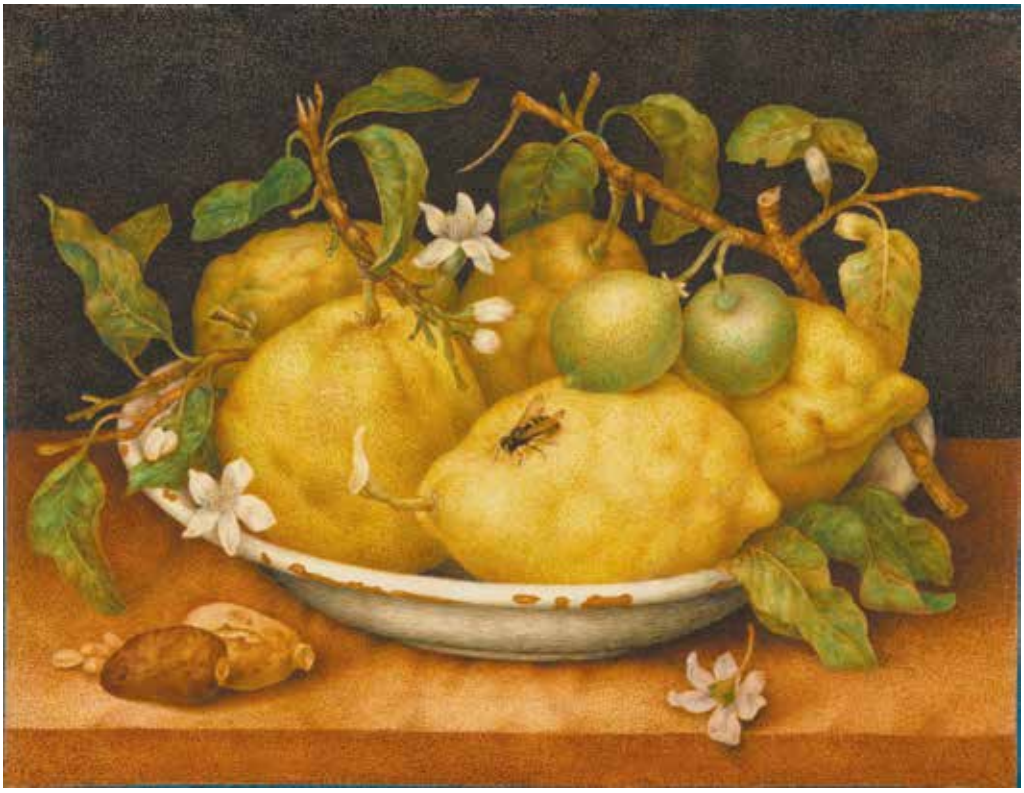

Figure 8.7 Giovanna Garzoni, *Still Life with Bowl of Citrons*, late 1640s. Tempera on vellum, 276 × 356 mm. Getty Museum, Los Angeles. CC0—courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program.

and two priests had failed to cure him. One witness, a certain Francesco Malipiero, claimed that "the above mentioned wife of Giacomo and his daughter Giovanna told me that the aforementioned Serena had cured the spell on her son Mr. Mattio, who had been cursed, and they also told me that the same Serena has commerce with the Devil" ("la sudetta moglie de messer Giacomo et sua figliola Signora Giovanna mi hanno detto che la sudetta Serena a guarito dale strighareie suo figliolo Signore Mattio, il quale era stato strighatto, et anco mi hanno detto che la detta Serena a comercio co' il Diavolo").[39] Mattio himself testified that what had occurred was the result of a hexed cake that he ate, and that while not even the priests of Santo Stefano or San Francesco could cure him of the hex, Serena's incantations and her paste made of the mashed leaves of an apricot tree seemed to have broken the spell.

39 ASVe, Santo Uffizio, busta 75, Trial of Serena (greca), deposition of Francesco Malipiero, 10 January 1619, unnumbered folios; and deposition of Mattio Garzoni, 11 February 1620, unnumbered folios. Mattio's deposition is referred to in Seitz, 2011, 101–102. See also Seitz, 2006, 135.

The magic that Tinelli, Serena, and other Venetians practiced had as its fundamental logic the idea that certain inanimate objects, particularly stones, plants, and animal substances, had inner powers, and those objects could also be infused with spirits through incantations, this way exercising power over things around them. As Garzoni drew the citron flowers and citron fruits that appear in so many of her still lifes (fig. 8.7), laboriously giving them form with veils of microscopic dots and fields of granular hatch marks, she must have contemplated the power they once had over her heart. However, this time, as the artist, she was the magician casting the spell. Using her acute vision and her invisible brushwork, she transposed their vegetable souls onto the parchment, and bound them there with line and color. Like a young girl under the spell of her first romance, viewers even today cannot help but fall in love with this enchanted natural world.

By means of intricate craftsmanship and sensual veracity, Garzoni's life-like imagery offered her seventeenth-century viewers visual analogs not only to vegetal subjects but also to the many powers that plants were believed to have, whether as medicinal cures, as occult magical forces, as poisons, as nourishing sustenance, as delicious tastes, as fascinating forms, and as intoxicating perfumes.[40] The potency, charm, and efficacy of Garzoni's still lifes explain why, in the years after Garzoni's death, the Medici Grand Duchess Vittoria della Rovere gathered thirty-eight of Garzoni's miniatures and hung them on the walls of the room she had constructed for her most precious treasures: the Stanza dell'Aurora at the Villa del Poggio Imperiale in Florence.[41] Here, Garzoni's artworks were displayed in this special room together with many other objects, all representing the pinnacle of what could be achieved, whether by humankind or by nature: rare pieces of Chinese porcelain, small bronzes representing heroic male nudes, portrait miniatures. In this room there were also treasures fashioned from materials believed to have magical or alexipharmic properties, such as ivory, rhinoceros horn, moose hoof, nautilus shells, semi-precious stones, and coconuts. Thus, amidst some of the most wondrous and magically powerful objects on the planet, Garzoni's miniatures took their rightful place of honor.

Reminders of a Venetian Past

Such intricately observed and meticulously detailed works were no longer within Garzoni's physical capacity due to the vision problems that began to afflict her in

40 On the blurred line between supernatural and natural qualities of plants in the natural history treatises that circulated in early modern Europe, see Margolin, 2007.

41 See Focarile, 2020; and Barker, 2020a, cat. nos. 41–60, 197–199.

Figure 8.8 Agostino Carracci after a painting by Jacopo Tintoretto (Robusti), *The Crucifixion of Christ (The Great Crucifixion*, 1565*)*, 1589. Engraving, 520 × 1160 mm. The Wellcome Collection (no. 24605i), London. Public Domain Mark—courtesy of The Wellcome Collection.

1659.[42] Thus, in her later years, the aging artist, by then living in Rome, worked solely in textile art using decoupage techniques. When she died in Rome in 1670, an inventory of her possessions was made showing that she owned three works of art by other artists.[43] Two of those prints in her possession were by Albrecht Dürer, an artist whose drawing technique she admired exceedingly. The third was an engraving by Agostino Carracci after an original painting by Tintoretto; known as the *Great Crucifixion* (fig. 8.8), it is considered to be one of the most important Venetian prints ever made. Thus, even though Garzoni left Venice as soon as she could and never returned, she kept the magic of Venice, and the magic of Venetian art, close to her till the end of her days.

Bibliography

Archival Abbreviations

AASLRm = Archivio dell' Accademia di San Luca, Rome
ASRm = Archivio di Stato di Roma, Rome
ASVe = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice

42 Casale, 1991, 11

43 The inventory is published in Casale, 1991, 239–245.

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9. Caterina Tarabotti Unveiled

Georgios E. Markou

Abstract
In her book *La semplicità ingannata* (1654), the nun Arcangela Tarabotti recorded the many talents of her sister Caterina. Arcangela was not alone in admiring her sister's artistic abilities. Marco Boschini also praised Caterina's skills and noted her training with Chiara Varotari. However celebrated by contemporary critics and peers, Caterina was nevertheless condemned to oblivion. Through the study of archival sources and published documentation, this essay proposes to retrieve Caterina Tarabotti's life and career from historical obscurity in order to give a window onto the experience of female artists in seventeenth-century Venice.

Keywords: Venetian Baroque, female artists, archival sources, attributed works, Arcangela Tarabotti, convents

Caterina Tarabotti (1615–1693) never identified herself as a painter in contemporary documents or claimed authorship of any picture with her signature. She would have surely joined the ranks of the many anonymous women painters of her time, were it not for the art critic and historian Marco Boschini (1602–1681). In his *La Carta del Navegar Pitoresco* (1660), Boschini was the first to notice Caterina's talents and provide information about her life.[1] Alluding to her namesake saint and surname, Boschini infused the painter's biography with lyric flair. A light coming out of the Varotari workshop, Caterina was, according to Boschini, a virgin very gifted in painting. She herself honored art with her achievements, which came effortlessly. Comparing her to a silver lamp that never burns out, the author, with a sense of optimism, concluded that Caterina would live forever and her name would bear eternal light and splendor.

1 I would like to express my gratitude to the Leverhulme Trust for supporting my research and the Biblioteca del Duomo di Treviso for their help with the material. I am also grateful to Save Venice and to Tracy Cooper for her insightful comments that greatly improved this essay. Boschini, 1660, 527.

Cooper, T.E. (ed.), *Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750: Uncovering the Female Presence*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
DOI 10.5117/9789048559718_CH09

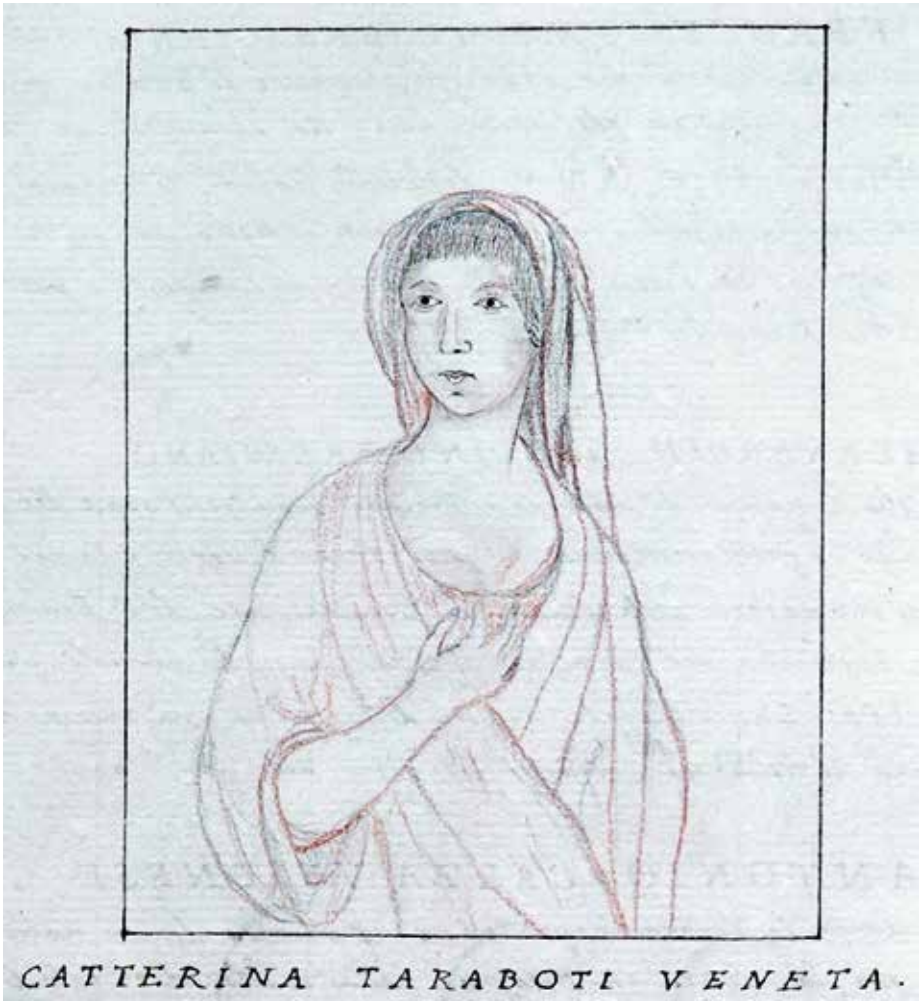

Figure 9.1 Nadal Melchiori, *Portrait of Caterina Tarabotti*, in *Notizie di pittori e altri scritti*, [1720–1727]. MS 1/67, 218. Biblioteca Capitolare di Treviso, Treviso. Courtesy of the Biblioteca del Duomo, Treviso.

Albeit short, Boschini's passage introduced Tarabotti to a wide audience and shaped later discussions of her life. Giustiniano Martinioni, in his revised and expanded edition of Francesco Sansovino's *Venetia citta nobilissima, et singolare* (1663), included Caterina's name in his list of women painters active in the lagoon city.[2] Similarly, the painter and antiquarian Nadal Melchiori (1671–1735) found room for Caterina in his unpublished manuscript entitled *Notizie di pittori e altri*

2 Sansovino, 1663, 23.

scritti.[3] Under the heading "Caterina Taraboti Veneta," Melchiori collected all of the information that he could find on the painter. His source was Boschini, as he admitted, providing the exact number of the folio in the *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco* where his readers could find Caterina's biography.[4] As for works by her, Boschini found only one reference: her painting in the convent of San Silvestro in Vicenza. Disappointed, Melchiori confessed that he "could not find another work."[5] As compensation, the author decided to share an impression of the painter's visage (fig. 9.1). It is unlikely that Nadal relied on an actual source for Caterina's portrait drawing. This probably explains why he abandoned it unfinished.[6] Similar to this crudely sketched portrait, every discussion on Caterina's life and artistic career was destined, already from her own times, to remain fragmented.

Not only did she have to overcome the challenges posed by male-centric historiography, Caterina had also to escape the shadow of her sister, nun Arcangela Tarabotti (born Elena Cassandra, 1604–1652). One of the most celebrated female authors of seventeenth-century Venice, Arcangela Tarabotti narrated, both eloquently and furiously, the problem of coerced monachization. By fighting patriarchy and misogyny from her cell in the Venetian convent of Sant' Anna, Arcangela attracted the attention and support of illustrious individuals from Venice and abroad.[7] Yet, in the numerous scholarly publications that now focus on Arcangela, Caterina's life is, almost always, reduced to a single footnote. The nun herself contributed to her sister's marginalization. While Arcangela admired a close relative, who "in no time she reached the point of competing with Apollo in music and poetry, with Apelles in painting, with Minerva in learning, and with Nature herself in sculpting small animals so realistically that, but the fact they do not move or fly away, you would think they were alive," she did not disclose her identity.[8] Although it is likely that Caterina hid behind the praise, Arcangela's decision to omit the name further veiled her sister's already obscure legacy.

Emilio Zanette was the first to offer useful information for reconstructing Caterina's biography.[9] This evidence, however, was circumstantial. By studying Arcangela's life and output, Zanette discussed some documents that traced

3 Nadal Melchiori's undated (eighteenth-century) manuscript is in the Biblioteca Capitolare di Treviso (BCTv, MS 1/67). For the critical edition, see Melchiori, 1968.

4 "Come fa fede Marco Boschini nella sua Carta dell Navegar Pittoresco al fol:527." Melchiori, 1968, 92.

5 "Et delle sue virtuose opera altro non mi e sortito ritrovare, che un Quadro nel soffitto della Chiesa di S. Silvestro in Vicenza delle monache di S. Benedetto, che contiene un Pontefice, S. Elena, e diverse altre figure. Boschini." Melchiori, [1720–1727], 218.

6 Compared to the other portraits that he produced in the same manuscript.

7 Among the many publications that focus on Arcangela, see the essays in Weaver, 2006.

8 Tarabotti, 2004, 101.

9 Zanette, 1960, 11.

Caterina in the Tarabotti history and untangled their family relations. It was Francesca Medioli's exhaustive archival research, however, that brought to light a number of significant findings on Caterina.[10] By focusing on the relational dynamics between the women of the Tarabotti family, Medioli illuminated different periods of Caterina's life and masterfully reconstructed the biography of her relatives. Nevertheless, Caterina's artistic endeavors received little attention. The primary purpose of this essay is not just to retrieve Caterina's lost talent through a close examination of known and new documentary sources. Her example also offers new insights into the shifting mechanisms of privilege and exclusion between men and women painters in seventeenth-century Venice, as well as revealing some of their shared challenges, posed primarily by mobility and social standing.

Penultimate of eleven children, and seventh out of eight daughters, the painter was born in Venice in early June 1615 (fig. 9.2). Her father Stefano Tarabotti and her mother Maria Cadena baptized her Caterina Agnese on the 10th of June 1615 in the parish church of San Pietro di Castello.[11] The choice of her godfather, the Florentine merchant Nicolo Signorini, indicates something of her father's world view.[12] When Caterina was born, Stefano was directing a profitable mercantile business that stretched across Italy and the Mediterranean.[13] Unable to break the hierarchical structures of society, Stefano's daughters were destined to promote the Tarabotti interests through marriages. When he thought that reinforcing existing social ties or securing new family relationships were unattainable, Stefano looked for a different solution. The eleven-year-old Elena Cassandra, for instance, was forced into the convent of Sant' Anna in 1615, where she spent her life as Arcangela.[14] She herself admitted that her physical disability made her an unsuitable match for marriage. It was probably Caterina's birth in 1615 that had led to Arcangela's removal from the family's marriage roster in that same year. Cast in the role of the tyrant of his household, Stefano's artistic interests have long passed unnoticed by the scholarship.

An unpublished inventory, composed in July 1651, reveals the family's impressive visual arsenal.[15] The walls of Palazzo Tarabotti were decorated with pictures of

10 Medioli, 2013.

11 "10 ditto. Catterina Agnesina del signor Stefano Tarabotto et Marieta, giugali, io Domenego sagrestan. Compare il signor Nicolò Signorini, fiorentino, mercante Fiorenza." ASPVe, San Pietro, Registri Battesimi, f. 8, c. 62v. Medioli, 2013, 110–111, n. 20.

12 For the importance placed on the choice of godfathers, see Zanette, 1960, 8–9, and Medioli, 2013, 108–109.

13 For the beginnings of the family business, see Gluzman, 2021, 462–463, 472–473.

14 Tarabotti, 2004, 3.

15 ASVe, Notarile, Atti, b. 8554, ff. 35v–51r.

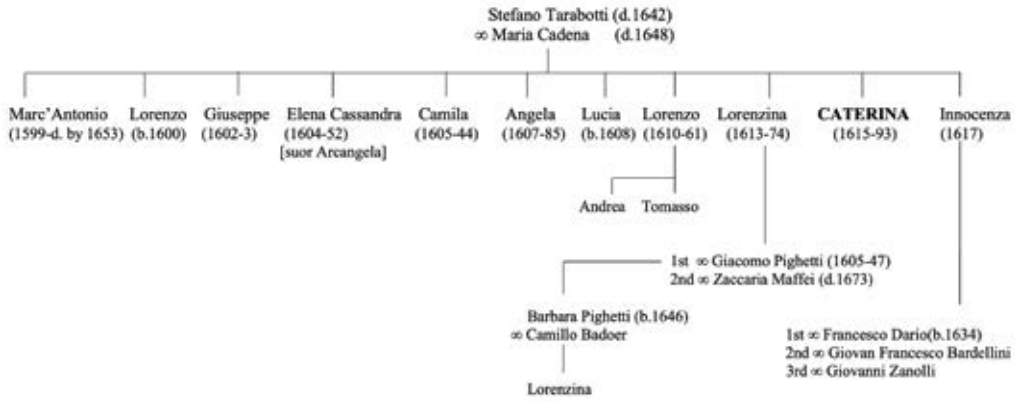

Figure 9.2 Family Tree of the Tarabotti lineage. Author.

mythological and religious subjects, as well as portraits of family members. The notary included some attributions of the pictures. He saw, for example, copies of celebrated paintings, one of which was of Titian's *Saint John the Baptist*, the original displayed in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.[16] Amongst the painters that produced original works for members of the Tarabotti family were the cavalier Tiberio Tinelli (1586–1639) and Alessandro Varotari, called Padovanino (1588–1649). The Tarabotti collection, however, did not include works only by male artists. Marcantonio, the eldest son of the family, decorated his bedchamber with four Sybils and Prophets in chiaroscuro by one Andriana Schiavon.[17] Probably from Dalmatia, as her surname suggests, and possibly active in Venice in the first half of the seventeenth century, Andriana is another woman painter whose position in the Venetian artistic scene has been previously unremarked.

The rich Tarabotti inventory, which reveals the patronage of a woman painter, might explain the family's support of Caterina's artistic pursuits. Women's access to artistic training, to the time and means to make art, and to the possibility of recognition was assuredly indication of a greater enlargement of women's possibilities. At the same time, painting was considered an important part of a girl's cultural polish. Possibly around 1630, when she would have been fifteen years old, Stefano guided Caterina to the Venetian workshop of Alessandro Varotari, "il Padovanino" and his sister, Chiara (1584–1663).[18] The only source on Caterina's apprenticeship

16 "Un San Zuane Coppia di Titian di Santa Maria Maggiore"; ASVe, Notarile, Atti, b. 8554, f. 47v.

17 The same set by Andriana Schiavon, which must have been fixed on the corners of the room, was given to his brother Lorenzo Tarabotti "Quatro quadri di Andriana Schiavon chiaroscuro, cioe doi Sibille et doi Profetti"; ASVe, Notarile, Atti, b. 8554, f. 47r.

18 For Chiara Varotari, see the essay by Diana Gisolfi in this volume.

is Marco Boschini's *La Carta del Navegar Pitoresco*.[19] Her biography follows that of Lucia Scaligero, another woman painter associated with the Varotari workshop.[20]

Although informative, Boschini's poetic recollections lack substantial facts about the apprenticeship itself. Caterina must have experienced a gender division in the workshop. Unpublished contracts drafted for the Varotari family witness Alessandro's leading role in both private and business affairs.[21] Chiara is, frustratingly, absent from all of them. While the number of women artists associated with Padovanino's workshop suggests the importance of Chiara's presence, any assumption of a shared motive, agenda, or style is both reductive and overly simplistic. Moreover, to assume that Caterina consulted only Chiara in her artistic pursuits would be a mistake. It is probable that Alessandro himself disclosed some of the trade secrets of painting to Caterina, as well as to other women painters who frequented his workshop.

Caterina would have exercised her visual vocabulary by looking at public works and pictures that she saw in her house and Padovanino's workshop. She also had unique access to the collection of the lawyer Giacomo Pighetti (1605–1647), her brother-in-law. Pighetti was a prominent member of the Academia degli Incogniti, who secured contacts for the Tarabotti family with his marriage to Lorenzina, Caterina's sister, in February 1640. By that time, the Accademia degli Incogniti had dominated the intellectual scene of the lagoon for a decade.[22] Among its members was every Venetian intellectual of note, while the Academy sponsored theatrical entertainment and supported publications. Arcangela Tarabotti, Caterina's sister, was one of the individuals that maintained close links with members of the Academy.[23] Her correspondence with Giacomo Pighetti confirms his central role in the Accademia, a position witnessed by the inclusion of his portrait (fig. 9.3) in *Le glorie degli Incogniti* (1647).[24]

The engraved portrait reveals a close-knit network of individuals, all of whom were associated directly, or circumstantially, with Caterina Tarabotti. Pighetti's likeness for *Le glorie degli Incogniti* was produced by Marco Boschini, who in 1660 described Caterina's talents in verse. Boschini copied Pighetti's portrait by Tiberio Tinelli, as he states in the inscription of the engraving. The work is most likely the one mentioned in Pighetti's inventory composed on the 4th of January 1648, after his death.[25] The document was commissioned by Marcantonio Tarabotti, who served as

19 Boschini, 1660, 527.

20 Lucia was the niece of the painter Bartolomeo Scaligero. Boschini, 1660, 526.

21 ASVe, Notarile, Atti, b. 10972, ff. 473r–v.

22 For the Accademia, see Miato, 1998.

23 Zanette, 1960, 387–406.

24 Bottacin, 2004, 134–135; Loredano, 1647.

25 ASVe, Giudici di Petizion, Inventari, b. 360, n. 105. Savini Branca, 1965, 122–123.

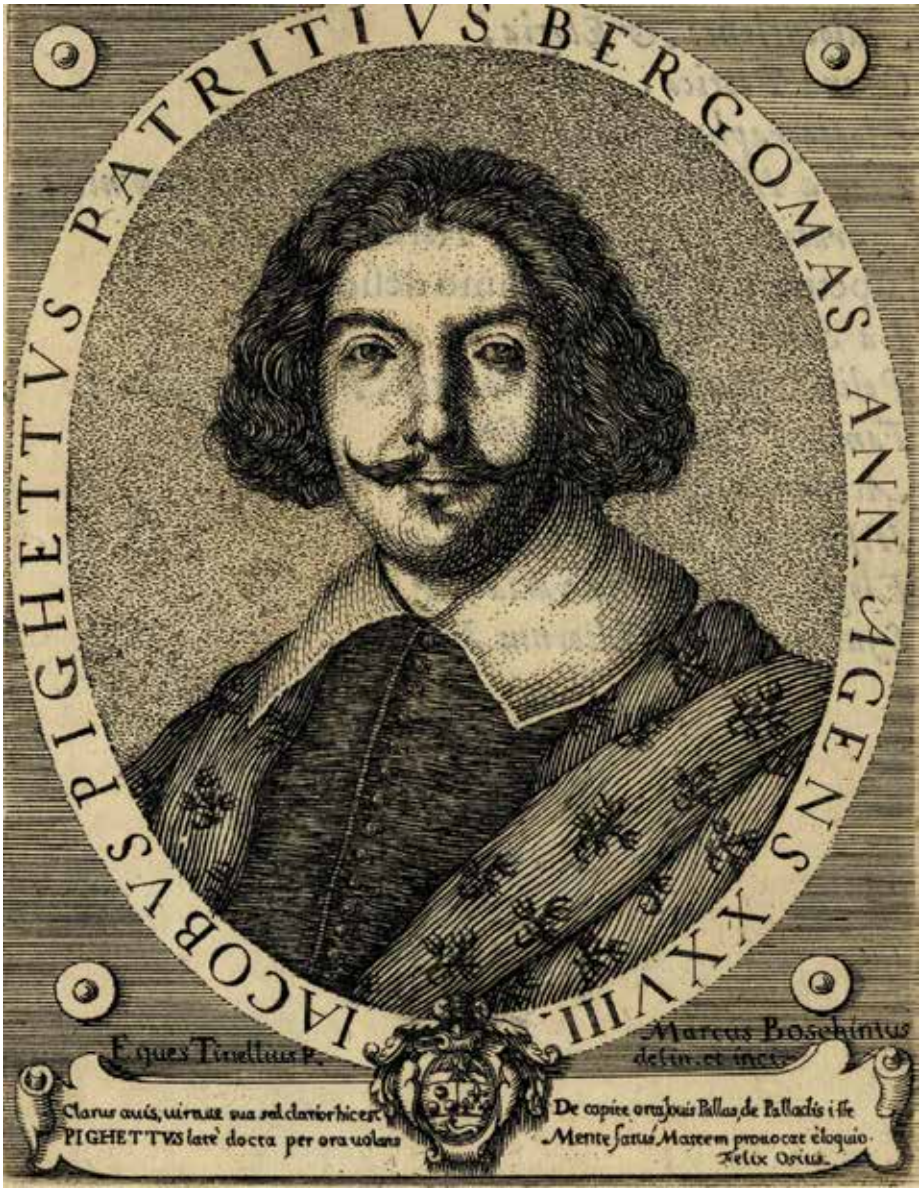

Figure 9.3 Marco Boschini after Tiberio Tinelli, *Portrait of Giacomo Pighetti*, from Giovanni Francesco Loredano, *Le glorie degli Incogniti*, 1647, 184. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Lorenzina's agent, and was tasked with securing the interests of the couple's infant daughter, Barbara. The inventory records a number of paintings, both original and copies, as well as sculptures and precious gemstones. Among the pictures are works by Pietro della Vecchia and Padovanino, whose studio Caterina was apprenticed

to.[26] Padovanino actually stood as one of the best men at the wedding of Giacomo Pighetti with Lorenzina Tarabotti in 1640, further highlighting the close contact between the master and Caterina's family.[27]

The detailed inventory composed in 1648 lacks a reference to one of Pighetti's most intriguing known possessions: "a sleeping cupid on stone" by Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–ca.1656). Pighetti is Artemisia's only recorded patron in Venice.[28] Verses in Artemisia's honor, composed most probably by Giovanni Francesco Loredan (1607–1661) the founder of the Accademia dei Incogniti, suggest her association with the circle of *literati*.[29] When Artemisia established herself in the lagoon city from 1627 to 1630, Caterina Tarabotti, a teenage girl of twelve to fifteen years old, was an apprentice at Padovanino's workshop. She may well have heard of the Roman painter who was visiting her city. It is also probable that Caterina knew of the painter Giovanna Garzoni (1600–1670), who between 1620 and 1630 was also based in Venice.[30] Giovanna's brief marriage to Tiberio Tinelli, a painter who worked for the Tarabotti household and for Giacomo Pighetti might have offered the opportunity for an introduction. Caterina's contact with these celebrated women painters cannot be established with certainty. It is, nevertheless, attractive to assume that she reflected on the works of Artemisia and Giovanna, as well as those by Chiara Varotari and Andriana Schiavon, and understood the possibilities open to women artists in Seicento Venice.

Restrictions of gender, as well as mobility explain Caterina's absence from the public forum. Firstly, Caterina lacked the support system of a family workshop. This would have facilitated access to important patrons and commissions and hence to greater visibility. Moreover, no groom ever appeared for her, depriving Caterina of the stability of married life. From her mother's testament, drafted in 1648, it can be seen that Caterina received a yearly income of sixty ducats.[31] This was the amount required to enter a Venetian convent as a nun. Thirty-three-year-old Caterina, however, rejected a life as a bride of Christ. She, instead, shared a roof with her

26 "Un Quadro d'una Vergine Bergamesca del Padoanin"; ASVe, Giudici di Petizion, Inventari, b. 360, n. 105.

27 "Adì 21 febrarro 1639. Fu contratto matrimomio per verba de presenti in casa della novizza, alla presenza dellà Ill. Andrea Gritti, cappellano, presenti il signor Alessandro pittor q. D. Varotari, della contrà di San Pantalon, e Francesco Cavona de' Solimidi, q. Alberto Sibilla, dalla nostra contrà. La signora Lorenzina fia del M. Ill. mo. s. Steffano Tarrabotto della nosta contrà fon l'Ecc. mo. Giacomo Pighetti, avvocato, del q. Gio. Batta, nobile di Bergamo, habita in contrà San Fantin"; ASPVe, San Nicolò, Registri, Matrimoni, b. 9 (1638-509), cc. 21v–22r. Valone, 1982, 163. Medioli, 2013, 116 n. 41.

28 Toesca, 1971. For Artemisia Gentileschi in Venice, see the essay by Davide Gasparotto in this volume.

29 Discussed in Locker, 2015, 70–72.

30 For Giovanna Garzoni in Venice, see the essay by Sheila Barker in this volume.

31 ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 620, n. 233, cc. 1–6v. Zanette, 1960, 8, and Medioli, 2013, 123, 125 n. 67.

other unmarried sister, Angela. No source has surfaced that indicates whether and what she was painting at this time.

After the death of their mother, Caterina and Angela moved to Vicenza and the Benedictine convent of Corpus Domini. They did not take the veil, but instead were recorded as lodgers between August 1648 and November 1650.[32] It was in that same convent that the two sisters reconnected with their older sister Arcangela, who by that time was enjoying success in the literary circles of *La Serenissima*. Arcangela's two letters to her sisters, published in her *Lettere familiari e di complimento* in 1650, reveal tension in their relationship.[33] In the first, Arcangela wrote: "It is madness to write to those who do not deign to respond … It is not for me to imitate you if you do not live up to the debt of kinship and affection that, as sisters, we ought to all share with one another."[34]

Similarly undated, the second letter was composed shortly after the wedding of their other sister, Lorenzina. It is much more informative, as it was drafted as a response to a now lost letter that Angela and Caterina sent from the convent of Corpus Domini in Vicenza. Arcangela writes, "your letter came to comfort me, I say, because in it I found nothing but strokes of esteem and love without the snarky comments that you always tend to make … I do not respond to the gossip you report because you, too, know that this is men's usual rumour mongering. I cannot tell you anything about Lady Lorenzina since she has moved house, and to tell you the truth, it seems that we siblings love each other as cats and mice. At this time, we know that whoever has good luck should enjoy it."[35]

It is telling how Arcangela advised her unmarried sisters to be happy for Lorenzina, who, three years after the death of her first husband, found a new companion in Zaccaria Maffei. Unfortunately, the contents of Angela and Caterina's letter to her sister have not survived. Caterina may have mentioned, however, her recent artistic accomplishment in Vicenza. As a matter of fact, this is the only surviving record of a commission that survives for Caterina. Between 1649 and 1650, the Benedictine nuns of San Silvestro in Vicenza commissioned the decoration of the church's ceiling. The works were destroyed by aerial bombings by the allies during World War II (fig. 9.4). Luckily, Marco Boschini secured a description for posterity. The author, we must remember, showered Caterina with compliments in his *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco* in 1660. In his *I gioielli pittoreschi*, published in 1676, Boschini

32 Medioli, 2013, 125.

33 There is a confusion as to the recipient of the letters, as Arcangela directed them to A. C. T. Zanette, 1960, 19, suggests Caterina and Angela. It is clear that "A" should be identified as Angela and "C" as Caterina, who were sharing a roof and would explain a letter addressed to both of them. See also the discussion in Medioli, 2013, 124–125. Tarabotti, 2012, 158–159, 231.

34 Tarabotti, 2012, 158–159.

35 Tarabotti, 2012, 231.

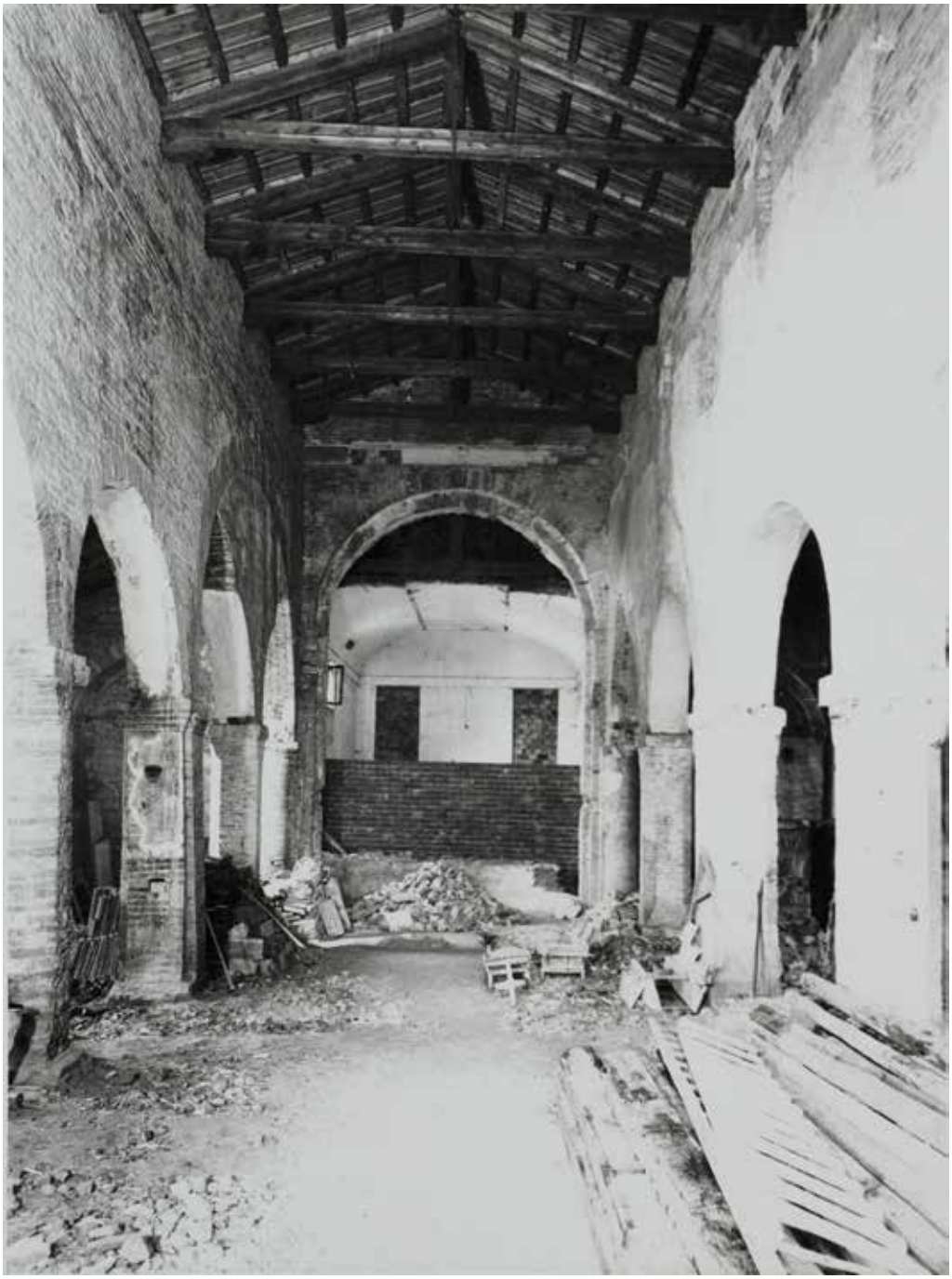

Figure 9.4 *San Silvestro during the 1954 restoration*. Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice. Courtesy of the Biblioteca della Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

described how "another painting of the said ceiling, with a Pope, and Saint Helen, and various other figures is a work by Caterina Tarabotti."[36]

Boschini did not recognize the subject of Caterina's painting. His brief note, however, helps to identify the work as the debate between Christians and Jews held by Empress Helen, Constantine's mother. This was an important moment in the life of Saint Sylvester, identifiable as the pope in Boschini's description, who was the titular saint of the church. The event, narrated at length in the *Actus Silvestri*, includes the miraculous resurrection of a bull by Pope Sylvester, which resulted in the conversion of Empress Helen to Christianity, as well as his Jewish opponents.[37] While Caterina's conceptualization of the episode has not survived, the subject reveals something of her aspirations. While women artists were primarily engaged in portraiture, still lives, and devotional pictures, Caterina appears to have labored over an *istoria*, the most ambitious artistic category.

Caterina's painting in the convent of San Silvestro complemented the ceiling's central piece, an apothesosis of Saint Silvester and four evangelists in the corners, all works by Giulio Caprioni.[38] Caprioni met Caterina in Padovanino's workshop, where they were both apprenticed at around the same time.[39] It is, therefore, evident that upon Caterina's arrival in Vicenza in 1648 she reconnected with Caprioni. Their example allows us to revisit the related model of male mentorship. While containing some important truths, this pattern also tends to imply a hierarchical, unidirectional relationship of artistic influence, whereas the relational dynamics between Tarabotti and Caprioni would have been much more collegial. Caterina was not assisting Caprioni with his pictures, but worked alongside him as an independent artist. Another point that needs to be raised is Boschini's confidence in the attribution of the painting. Was he informed by someone who was aware of the history of the work—perhaps the convent's abbess or Caterina herself—or did Boschini recognize the painter's individual style?

Caterina would not stay in Vicenza for long. In 1650, she abandoned her sister Angela, who eventually took the habit at Corpus Domini, and returned to Venice. Caterina found refuge, once again, in a convent. Sant' Anna was the foundation where her sister Arcangela spent her life. Arcangela may not have been active in painting, but she was involved in a business that required close contact with women proficient in artistic endeavors. As her correspondence reveals, Arcangela acted as an agent mediating between lacemaking nuns and their clients.[40] It is probable that among her contacts were Gerolima (ca. 1564–1646) and Lucrezia Robusti (1571–1637),

36 Boschini, 1676, 64–65.
37 See Drijvers, 1992, 36–37.
38 Boschini, 1676, 64–65.
39 For the painter, see Fabbri et al., 2019.
40 Ray, 2009.

Jacopo Tintoretto's daughters, who took the habit at Sant' Anna. Both of Tintoretto's daughters were experienced lacemakers and labored over a tapestry of the Crucifixion, which they based on their father's majestic picture of the same subject for the Scuola di San Rocco.[41] Caterina may not have had the chance to meet Tintoretto's cloistered daughters, as they both died before 1650, but she would have had the opportunity to study, appreciate, and, perhaps, even pray in front of their tapestry.

At this point we do not know whether Caterina was still painting. She was, however, in a very difficult financial situation. Her residency in Sant' Anna was tainted by an accusation of theft. In an undated letter, Caterina informed the abbess that some *bulletini di lotto*, which had been claimed by another female lodger, were actually hers and she was willing to testify in the tribunal of the nuns.[42] The incident is veiled in mystery—Caterina does not even mention the name of her accused—but reveals the financial hardship that she experienced in the second half of her life. Shortly after the death of her sister Arcangela in 1652, Caterina abandoned Sant' Anna forever. In the following years, she became embroiled in a series of legal battles against her brother Lorenzo and his heirs.[43] Caterina fought for the rights of her maternal inheritance and spent the remainder of her days alongside her trusted servant, Caterina.

The last act of her life took place in the hospital of San Giobbe, where unfortunate women and former prostitutes depended on the generosity of the state to end their lives with dignity. On the 20th of December 1690, Caterina Tarabotti asked a person of trust to help her compose her last will. The testament is a rather depressing document.[44] Caterina prayed for the intercession of a number of saints that had helped her, as she remarked, in the last difficult years of her life. She distributed her few ducats to close friends, but left her possessions to her servant. Caterina singled out two paintings that she presented to members of her family: "To Lorenzina my sister I leave as a sign of affection a painting with the image of the Blessed Virgin with a white veil on her head."[45] Lorenzina would never receive the work, as she died before Caterina. For this reason, Tarabotti altered her will, writing out in her own hand: "this bequest I leave to her daughter because Signora Lorenzina died."[46] This was her sister's only daughter, Barbara Pighetti. Caterina left the other work

41 For Tintoretto's cloistered daughters, see Mazzucco, 2009, 729–747. For Tintoretto's daughter Marietta, see the essay by Robert Echols and Frederick Ilchman in this volume.

42 ASVe, Corporazione religione soppresse, Sant'Anna, b. 17, fasc. 17, ff. 25r–v. See Zanette, 1960, 460–461, and Medioli, 2013, 126 n. 72.

43 See the discussion in Medioli, 2013, 126–128.

44 ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 627, no. 131. First discussed in Medioli, 2013, 128 n. 81.

45 "Alla Signora Lorenzina Mia sorella lascio per segno d'affetto un Quadro con L'Imagine Della Beata Vergine con Vello Bianco in Testa"; ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 627, no. 131, 1v.

46 "Questo legato lascio a sua figliola per esser morta La Signora Lorenzina"; ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 627, no. 131, 1v.

to her grandniece and sister's namesake, Lorenzina Badoer: "a small painting—a *quadretto*—with the image of Sant'Agnese as a sign of affection."[47] We must remember that Caterina was baptized Caterina Agnese. It was to this Virgin martyr that Caterina, the "virgin painter," as Boschini once described her, turned for support in the difficult times of her life. Unfortunately, Caterina failed to mention the author of these works. The artist may have been someone that Tarabotti admired, but it is as likely that Caterina herself painted the works that she so treasured.

When Caterina died, on the 8th of February 1693, she was interred by her servant in the Tarabotti tomb in the church of San Domenico in Castello.[48] Family relations and experiences had shaped Caterina's life. Her career, however, still remains a mystery. Although celebrated by Marco Boschini, nothing in her death notice or indeed in any archival sources, records that she was once a practicing painter. The effort to reconstruct Caterina's artistic endeavors has thus raised further questions. Why did she never identify herself as a painter? Did she share Caprioni's workspace to produce her work in Vicenza or did she have her own arrangements? Did she engage in the practice of painting as a pastime or did she anticipate recognition for her talent?

As a conclusion, this essay turns to Lorenzina Badoer, the designated recipient of one of Caterina's two paintings, the image of Sant'Agnese. Her mother, Barbara Pighetti Badoer, Caterina's niece, had been left the other painting of the Blessed Virgin with a white veil, but since she died before Caterina, the piece passed to her only daughter. Barbara's husband and Lorenzina's father, Camillo Badoer, was a rather colorful character. A lyricist of modest repute, a spy for the Kingdom of Savoy, and an informant on the Venetian inquisition, Camilo spent his time, and money, drinking in Venetian brothels.[49] Zaccaria Maffei, Lorenzina Tarabotti's second husband and stepfather to Barbara, did not approve of such behavior. When he composed his testament, he remembered Camillo's prodigal living and instructed Lorenzina Badoer to stay away from her father.[50] He advised her to enter a convent. Indeed, the prudent Lorenzina took the veil, almost definitely at the Venetian convent of Santa Lucia.[51] Did she take Caterina's paintings with her? References to images of the Virgin are numerous, but a painting of Sant' Agnese does not appear in early descriptions of the convent.[52] Moreover, in an unpublished list of works

47 "E di piu lascio à Lorenzina Badoera mia Nezza un Quadreto del Imagine di San Agniese per segno d'affetto"; ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 627, no. 131, 1v.

48 "Adì detto [8 febbraio 1693]. Madonna Caterina Tarabotta, d'anni 76 in circa, da valvolo e febre in mesi tre. La far sepelir la sua compagna. Medico Bonanin. Nel Ospedal delle Vecchie," ASPVe, Parrocchia S. Geremia, Libri dei Morti, fasc. 25 (1691–1695), c. 43r; first discussed in Medioli, 2013, 128 n. 82.

49 Medioli, 2013, 126–127.

50 Medioli, 2013, 118 n. 48.

51 A Lorenzina Badoer appears in ASVe, Santa Lucia, b. 20, instrumenti e frammenti di indici.

52 Sansovino, 1663, bk. 3, 140–144. Boschini, 1674, 68–70.

Figure 9.5 Follower of Alessandro Padovanino, *Sant'Agnese* (*La Mansuetudine*), 17th century (before 1693?). Oil on canvas, 48 × 39.2 cm. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura.

compiled by Anton Maria Zanetti in 1773 there is no mention of a picture with the Virgin martyr.[53] Yet, a small painting, a *quadretto*, of Sant' Agnese (fig. 9.5) was found in the convent at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[54] The painting's

53 ASVe, Santa Lucia, b. 13, no. 9.

54 The picture's provenance (Santa Lucia until 1832, Deposit of the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista until 1838, Vienna until 1919, and then Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia until today) is reconstructed in

contemplative mood, quiet intensity, and intimate size, only 48 by 39 cm., suggest that it was once fixed on the wall of a nun's cell, where a bride of Christ could share with Sant' Agnese her thoughts and prayers. Sometimes attributed to Padovanino, sometimes to a follower, the picture is now forgotten in the deposit of the Accademia Gallery.[55] Could this be the work mentioned in Caterina's last testament? Then it is possibly the first painting that we may attribute to Marco Boschini's enigmatic "virgin painter," Caterina Tarabotti.

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Archival Abbreviations

ASPVe = Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia, Venice
ASVe = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice
BCTv = Biblioteca Capitolare di Treviso, Treviso

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Fiocco, 1919, 50 n. 24. The painting was not exhibited in the show organized at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice to celebrate the restitution of the works from Vienna.

55 For the painting's history of attributions, see Moschini Marconi, 1955, 72 n. 155.

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10. Shining a Light on Giulia Lama's Painting Practice in the San Marziale *Four Evangelists*

Cleo Nisse

Abstract
The remarkable artistic career of Giulia Lama (1681–1747) produced independent works for Venetian churches as well as *istorie* (history paintings). Atypically, she drew after both the male and female nude model, yet her lack of historiographic visibility, compounded by the difficulty in viewing her work, has impeded the study of her oeuvre. Four spandrel paintings of the Evangelists attributed to Lama hang high above two altars in the Venetian church of San Marziale. The opportunity for an intimate view of the Evangelists due to their current conservation sponsored by Save Venice Inc. has allowed an enquiry into Lama's technique in these canvas paintings.

Keywords: Venetian Baroque, women's life drawings, art and gender, conservation, materials and techniques, artistic practice

Introducing Giulia Lama in a poetry anthology in 1726, the Venetian writer Luisa Bergalli (1703–1779)[1] praised the valiant painter, highlighting her artistic contributions to important churches and her style of painting: "in her manner of painting she acquired great honor."[2] Another contemporary, Abbot Antonio Conti, extolled her ability to work at scale, writing, "I have discovered here a woman who paints better than Rosalba [Carriera] with regard to large compositions."[3]

1 Mutini, 1967, 9.

2 Bergalli, 1726, 283, "nella cui maniera di dipingere acquistossi ella grandissimo onore"; see Mariuz, 1996, 141.

3 Pallucchini, 1970, 161, "Je viens de découvrir ici une femme qui paint mieux que Rosalba pour ce qui regarde les grands compositions."

Cooper, T.E. (ed.), *Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750: Uncovering the Female Presence*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
DOI 10.5117/9789048559718_CH10

Figure 10.1 Giulia Lama, *St. Luke*, oil on canvas, 223 × 237 cm. and *St. John*, oil on canvas, 220 × 237 cm. Before 2022 conservation, in-situ above the altar of St. Martial, San Marziale, Venice, ca. 1732–1734. Photograph by Matteo De Fina, courtesy of Save Venice.

This essay analyzes Lama's painting practice in a bold group of large canvases for the Venetian church of San Marziale, her *Four Evangelists* currently undergoing conservation sponsored by Save Venice (figs. 10.1 and 10.2). In these works, Lama communicates through the human form in the grand tradition of sacred art and history painting. This achievement is founded on her sophisticated manipulation of chiaroscuro and figurative composition, the latter informed by her drawing practice which appears to have included sketching after the nude male model. Attributed to Giulia Lama (1681–1747) by the major scholars of Venetian Seicento and settecento art Rodolfo Pallucchini and Egidio Martini,[4] the works have since attracted only limited attention, despite their impressive power of expression.[5] This lack of consideration may be related to three intertwined factors: the physical position of the *Four Evangelists* as spandrel paintings six meters above their altars;

4 Pallucchini, 1933a, 404–405; Martini, 1964, 201. In 1970 Pallucchini accepted Martini's extension of his initial attribution. Pallucchini, 1970, 172. Michelangelo Muraro attributed the San Marziale Evangelists to the young Tiepolo, but wrote that his first thought had been of Giulia Lama: Muraro, 1970, 19.

5 In addition to the above sources, see Ruggeri, 1973, 21. The San Marziale Evangelists were more recently mentioned in Aikema, 1982, 374.

Figure 10.2 Giulia Lama, *St. Mark*, oil on canvas, 223 × 237 cm. and *St. Matthew*, oil on canvas, 237 × 220 cm. Before 2022 conservation, in-situ above the altar of the Beata Virgine delle Grazie, San Marziale, Venice, ca. 1732–1734. Photograph by Matteo De Fina, courtesy of Save Venice.

condition issues that until now have somewhat obscured the works; and Giulia Lama's relative neglect by art history. The conservation of the paintings has created a rare opportunity to view the works up close and has inspired this enquiry into Lama's methods. As the conservation treatment was, however, in its incipient stages at the time this essay was written, it is only possible to offer preliminary observations.

Lama Giulia Viniziana

Lama's work remains underappreciated outside her native city of Venice, and certainly outside Italy.[6] Giulia Lama was baptized in 1681 in the parish of Santa Maria Formosa, the daughter of Valentina dell'Avese (d. 1723) and Agostino Lama (d. 1714).[7] Her father was also a painter who was recorded in the *fraglia dei pittori* (corporation, or guild of painters) of Venice from 1686, and described as creating history paintings, battle scenes, and landscapes in the manner of Matteo Stom (Matthias Stomer, ca. 1600–after 1650).[8] There is no sign of Giulia Lama's name in the lists of the *fraglia dei pittori*,[9] but her position as a painter on the Venetian scene is attested to by Antonio Maria Zanetti, who included "Lama Giulia Viniziana" in his 1733 updated edition of Marco Boschini's compendium *Le Ricche Minere* and identified a number of her paintings within the city.[10]

The letters of Abbot Conti (1677–1749) to Madame de Caylus (Marthe-Marguerite Le Valois, Comtesse de Caylus, 1673–1729) offer an evocative depiction and one of the few testimonies to Lama's working life. Conti explains that she is particularly gifted at large compositions and contrasts her ability in working in this scale with Rosalba Carriera's – typical in comparing women to women and not to men. He notes that she is working on a depiction of the Abduction of Europa, which he finds fitting since Lama is a poet as well as a painter. According to his account, Lama had also studied mathematics in her youth, made lace, and, fascinatingly, reflected on ideas for a lace-making machine.[11] These letters give the impression of a complex individual with diverse interests. Luisa Bergalli's anthology *Componimenti poetici delle più illustri rimatrici d'ogni secolo*, published in 1726, among the very few printed sources that mention her, recognizes some success in the field of poetry.[12]

Conti's emphasis on Lama's talent for composing large paintings and her choice to represent a mythological scene both point to a significant aspect of Lama's career—she was a painter of monumental canvases and of *istorie.* According to our current understanding of women's art in early modern Venice, female painters

6 Among the few publications on Giulia Lama in English are Cheney, 2017; Knox, 1997; briefly mentioned in Barcham, 1989; and Whistler, 2004.

7 Bortolan, 1973, 187.

8 Mariuz, 1996, 145; Craievich, 2018, 10.

9 Mariuz, 1996, 145.

10 Zanetti, 1733, 76. Zanetti mentions her altarpieces in the Chiesa dei Miracoli, 380–381, in the Chiesa di Santa Maria Formosa, 224, in the Chiesa di San Vidal, 171, and a painting in the Chiesa del Cristo Miracoloso, Povegio Isola, 258. On Giulia Lama's *Saint Anthony of Padua Holding the Infant Christ,* see Howard, 1989, 686.

11 Conti, 2003, 183, letter 43, 1 March 1728. See Pallucchini's citation of the text in Pallucchini, 1970, 161–162.

12 Mariuz, 1996, 141.

are thought to have most frequently made independent careers as miniaturists, portraitists, or with still-lifes.[13] Lama therefore emerges as belonging to the once small but now growing group of historically recognized early modern women artists who stepped beyond the confines of genres into which they had traditionally been restrained.[14]

Although Giulia Lama enjoyed nothing like the success of her acclaimed contemporary, Rosalba Carriera, the fact that she worked as a professional painter is evident from the major works she produced for public view in churches across the city, despite her absence from the guild register. Examples still in-situ today, aside from San Marziale, include a monumental altarpiece for the Church of San Vidal, a striking, forceful image of the Trinity with apostles below that is perhaps her best known work,[15] a Virgin and Child with Saints and the Personification of Venice for her parish church of Santa Maria Formosa, and an enigmatic painting depicting either the Assumption of the Virgin or a female saint in glory for the Church of the Assumption at Malamocco on the Lido.[16] Conti's juxtaposition of Lama with Carriera may sound a strange note, not only because their careers had such different trajectories, but also because their pictorial languages appear so utterly dissimilar; in fact in a later letter to the same countess he adopts a justificatory tone, explaining that he did not intend to put them in parallel.[17] Nonetheless, while linking them presumably because of their gender, Conti's comparison serves to emphasize their differences and to draw attention to Lama's capacity to work in a grand, figurative manner, which is apparent in the San Marziale Evangelists.[18]

13 Mariuz, 1996, 145.

14 The most celebrated of such women is of course Artemisia Gentileschi. For Gentileschi's period in Venice, see in particular Locker, 2015, 44–67; Babette Bohn has uncovered sixty-eight women artists working from the fifteenth through the eighteenth century in Bologna. This is much higher than the twenty-nine women artists she has identified in Venice for the same period, though we may anticipate more women artists coming to light thanks to projects such as Save Venice's WAV. Importantly, a number of the Bolognese artists Bohn has studied painted public pictures. She explains the significance of women working on altarpieces and public works: "Another significant breakthrough was that many more women painted altarpieces and other public pictures. This crucial accomplishment, which admitted women to a more esteemed and lucrative art form than the genre of portraiture to which they had traditionally been confined, began with Fontana and climaxed with Sirani. Although none of Sirani's successors painted as many public works, the remarkable fact that twenty-two of them painted public pictures represents a sea change in the history of women artists." Bohn, 2021, 122.

15 Massini, 2004, has re-interpreted this altarpiece as the Trinity.

16 Knox considers this an Assumption which is the most convincing interpretation. Knox, 1997, 175. The work is now undergoing conservation sponsored by Save Venice Inc., which will reveal more information.

17 Conti, 2003, 192, letter 49, 5 April 1728.

18 It is interesting however that Conti describes Lama as having made miniatures. Lama left her goods to her sister Cecilia, whose testament on her own death included "due quadri fatti in miniatura per mano

Conti also claimed that Giulia Lama lived an intensely retired life and suffered persecution by her fellow painters. While this may have been true, she had at least one friendship with another painter—none other than Giambattista Piazzetta (1682–1754). His portrait of Lama shows her as a working artist, holding her palette, her twisted pose conjuring the impression that Piazzetta interrupted her in the very act of painting (Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, ca. 1715–1720). Giulia Lama also represented herself in a self-portrait as a painter at work, with a compass and book alluding additionally to her literary talents and skill at geometry.[19] The stylistic affinity between these two pictures attests to the artistic relationship between the two painters, the contours of which remain to be fully defined.[20]

After her death in 1747, Giulia Lama all but disappeared from view, until she was rediscovered in the twentieth century principally by Giuseppe Fiocco, Max Goering, Pallucchini, and Ugo Ruggeri.[21] They established her corpus by building out from a group of her paintings recorded by Zanetti in 1733.[22] No commission documents for the San Marziale *Four Evangelists* have yet been found, but Zanetti published "two angels with two figures above the altar of the miraculous image."[23] This gives a *terminus ante quem* of 1732 for two of the works, while the fact that he does not mention the second pair of Evangelists suggests they were painted subsequently, likely soon after.[24] Zanetti did not attribute the paintings he observed to Giulia Lama, but rather to the "scuola del Piazzetta," although he was aware of her work.[25] The *Four Evangelists* are part of a group of twelve spandrel paintings above six altars in the church that depict four Prophets, four Evangelists, and four Doctors of the Church. The series is organized in pairs that relate to one another across the transept, proceeding chronologically, such that upon entering the edifice the first four works represent the Prophets, and the final paintings before the altar are of the Fathers. Such a decorative program was relatively common: at least four Venetian churches have a program of spandrel paintings from the late seventeenth or early

della signora Giulia mia sorella." Moretti, 1984, 388. We have so much still to discover about Giulia Lama's artistic output.

19 Fiocco, 1929, 113–117.

20 Scholars used to describe Lama as simply a student of Piazzetta but are increasingly recognizing the independence of her initial development and the weight of her contribution. Barcham, 1989, 18; Whistler, 2004, 388; Pallucchini's gradual change of heart on her independence is significant, contrast Pallucchini, 1933a, 399–412, especially 412, with Pallucchini, 1995, 308–314.

21 Fiocco, 1929; Pallucchini, 1933a; Goering, 1935; Martini, 1964; Ruggeri, 1967b; Pallucchini, 1970; Ruggeri, 1973.

22 Zanetti, 1733.

23 Zanetti 1733, 411, "due angoli con due figure sopra l'Altare della immagine miracolosa."

24 Pallucchini, 1970, 162.

25 Zanetti, 1733, 411.

eighteenth century.[26] The Evangelists are in the middle, above two carved altars, one dedicated to the church's titular saint, Martial, the other to a sculpted figure of the Madonna that was still the center of an active cult in the eighteenth century. Pallucchini first published his attribution of two of the Evangelists to Giulia Lama in 1933, and Martini published an extension to cover all four in 1964, which has since been largely accepted.[27]

Looking Up from Below

The *Four Evangelists* still hang today in their original site in the Church of San Marziale in Cannaregio. They are positioned above two important marble altars, the one dedicated to a miraculous statue of the Virgin Mary, while the other is graced with an altarpiece by Jacopo Tintoretto. Their lofty location, combined with a cumulative veiling of time, dust, and dirt has made it difficult to fully appreciate the paintings. In the cool light of a cold day in March I was present for the beginning of their de-installation for the purposes of conservation treatment, sponsored by Save Venice Inc. Saints Luke and John were the first to be lowered to earth. Expert art handlers climbed specially constructed scaffolding, carefully detached the works from their settings above the altar beneath the cornice and lowered them gently from their lofty perches (figs. 10.3 and 10.4). If the position of these paintings created such logistical difficulties for their de-installation today, it must also have posed quite a challenge for their creator. While a church on this site dedicated to Saint Martial, bishop of Limoges, is thought to date to the medieval period, it was rebuilt at the turn of the eighteenth century. Work started in 1693 and the church was consecrated by the patriarch Pietro Barbarigo in 1721.[28] Once the edifice itself was complete—or at least largely so—the series of twelve spandrel paintings to which Giulia Lama's *Four Evangelists* belong were installed.

The erection of scaffolding was a major endeavor with significance for the outcome of art projects in the early modern period.[29] The case of Michelangelo's scaffold for the paradigm-setting ceiling paintings for the Sistine Chapel is well-known: when Pope Julius came to see the work-in-progress the scaffolding had to be partially disassembled, resulting in a view from below that provoked Michelangelo to increase

26 Aikema, 1982, 341.

27 An exception is Michelangelo Muraro, 1970, 19, who attributed them to the young Tiepolo, although his first thought had been of Giulia Lama. Martini, 1964, 201.

28 Pavon, 1992, 36. The church was the seat of the surrounding parish until 1876 when that role passed to the Madonna dell'Orto (San Cristoforo).

29 See Scott, 1993, 327–337.

Figure 10.3 Scaffolding set up for the 2022 de-installation of the *St Luke* and *St John* spandrels above the altar of St Martial with its altarpiece by Jacopo Tintoretto (1549), San Marziale, Venice. Photograph by Matteo De Fina, courtesy of Save Venice.

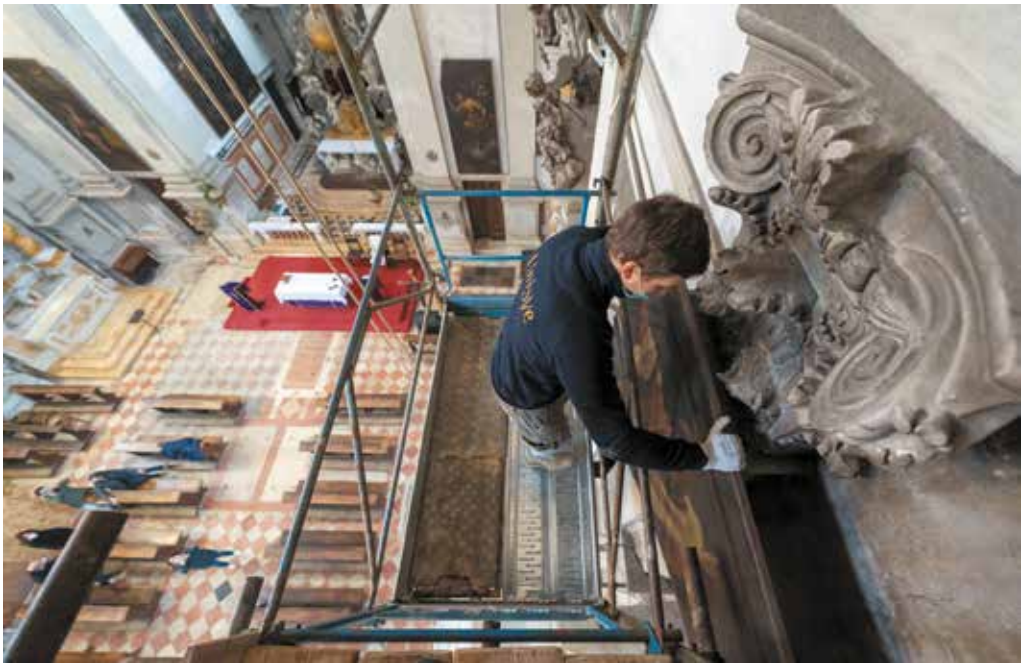

Figure 10.4 Lowering *St. Luke* to ground during 2022 de-installation of Giulia Lama's St. Luke by UnisVe Art Handlers. Photograph by Matteo De Fina, courtesy of Save Venice.

the scale of his figures for the ensuing bays.[30] Either Giulia Lama executed these paintings in-situ, in which case she would have had to work with all the discomfort, risk, and practical issues entailed, or, more likely, she produced them in her studio and would have had to exercise a great act of imagination to project their impact on the eventual location. The spatial position of the paintings determined the main visual obstacle that Lama had to overcome. From aloft, they had to communicate effectively with a viewer far below, such a problem that caused Michelangelo to enlarge the Sistine figures. Lama needed both to capture the viewer's attention and convey meaning—the world-altering significance of the Evangelists writing their True Gospels. Lama confronted this challenge through attentive study of the human form in dynamic compositions, and through the manipulation of strongly contrasting light and dark, the full impact of which will be revealed by conservation.

The Evangelists perch on the carved marble architecture below the spandrels, their vigorous forms portrayed in a variety of seated positions, seemingly squeezed into the frames of their respective canvases as though they might burst dynamically from their niches. Lama has embraced the sharp-angled view from below with the use of a strong *da sotto in su* compositional device that relies on a discerning

30 Scott, 1993, 334.

Figure 10.5 Giulia Lama, *St. Luke*, oil on canvas, 223 × 237 cm. Before 2022 conservation, in-situ above the altar of St. Martial, San Marziale, Venice, ca. 1732–1734. Photograph by Matteo De Fina, courtesy of Save Venice.

understanding of perspective. Such complex illusionistic figuration was typically the province of ceiling painters, a specialty in which women rarely participated. Lama may have drawn upon her mathematical education to develop her astute perspectival comprehension; across her oeuvre she often demonstrates particular interest in a view from below.[31]

Giulia Lama's Saint Luke (fig. 10.5) is expansive and energetic, his arms in a wide-open gesture, his foot placed in an unstable position on a fictive ledge conveying both precarity and movement, his face showing concentration in reading. John is absorbed as he gazes up and off to the right for inspiration, his upturned face mimicking the gesture of his hand delicately gripping his pen, while the stretched right arm is mirrored by the wings of his identifying eagle, the deep black shadow

31 A good example is the very powerful foreshortening she aims for in the San Vidal altarpiece, where the features of the upturned faces of two of the Apostles are particularly striking in their compressed brevity. The face of the San Marziale San Matteo is particularly close to some of those upturned faces.

of the bird emphasizing the pale skin of his chest. Matthew is equally in thrall to the divine, his facial features even more compressed in foreshortening as he stares above, while a winged assistant aides him in the act of writing. Unlike Luke, however, Matthew's pose is tense and contracted as he twists, closing off his body with his arm. Mark, with his lion at his back, is the only one who gazes down at the viewer, interacting directly with the spectator while keeping a watchful eye on the city of Venice of which he is the patron saint.

Drawing the Body

Lama's achievement in the dynamic, highly articulated, and individualized depiction of the *Four Evangelists* is indebted to her thoughtful investigation of the human form through drawing. This allowed her to play with positions of the body and gave her the freedom to experiment and exaggerate, sometimes extending an arm or a leg in search of a more expressive composition. As was common practice for monumental painters, Lama's process involved numerous stages of sketching and drawing as she developed a composition for painting. Drawings attributed to Giulia Lama include numerous studies in red chalk and black charcoal of contorted seated figures in divergent twists and from different angles, demonstrating her enthusiastic and thorough study of the body, though no specific figure studies for the poses of the Evangelists have yet been conclusively identified.[32] She also made studies of parts of the body and of heads in chalk and in charcoal.[33] A folio of hands published by Ugo Ruggeri may be associated with her thinking through the unusual gestures of our four saints in sketches that captivatingly evoke the manifestation of thought through dexterity, one seems to be holding a pen while in others an attempt to grip a book can be seen.[34] It was common practice to make studies of expressive gestures, and Lama was extremely sensitive to the capacity for hands to transmit wordless messages, as can be seen in the gestures of the Apostles in the San Vidal altarpiece where much of the emotion is conveyed through clutching, praying, or open hands.

Giulia Lama drew posed nude males in an atelier context—suggested by the academic style figure studies attributed to her.[35] Some of these sketches include

32 For Lama's drawings see Ruggeri, 1967b, 1973; Mariuz, 1996. Fenwick, Phillipps, and Popham, 1935, 147, identify a drawing with Giulia Lama's name in a contemporary hand.

33 On the strong tradition of drawing heads and making studies of hands and limbs in Venice, see in particular Whistler, 2004, 370.

34 Ruggeri attributed this folio (location unconfirmed) to Giulia Lama, see 1967; 1973.

35 On drawing from the posed model in Venice, see Whistler, 2004, 370–396. It is admittedly very difficult to know whether a drawing of a figure is made from life or from a sculptural model, copied after another drawing or painting, or indeed imagined.

Figure 10.6 Attributed to Giulia Lama, *Study of the model with studio props*, eighteenth century. Charcoal and white chalk on paper, 440 × 620 mm. Correr Collection (Cl. III n. 6997), Ca' Rezzonico, Venice. Courtesy of Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia—Archivio Fotografico.

artifacts of the studio such as ropes or props which models used to support themselves. In one such drawing, today in the Correr collection now held at Ca' Rezzonico, a young man is seated on cushions or mattresses, turning away from the observer

with his left leg extended. His long right arm holds onto the soft furnishings on which he rests, while he leans his left arm on his bent right knee and clutches a rope in his hand. In another, the standing model viewed sharply from beneath leans backward onto two ropes at right angles that prop him up in what must have been a fatiguing position (fig. 10.6). Surely this kind of observation formed part of Lama's research into the *da sotto in su* viewpoint described above. Lama also copied sculptures or casts, but these drawings make no pretense to be anything other than cast-studies.[36] One such work portrays the muscular torso of a statue and delineates the planes where the sculpture has been cut such that the head, arms, and legs are missing.[37]

Although a formal state-sponsored academy—for which Lama's colleague Piazzetta would serve as director—was not instituted in Venice until 1750, opportunities to draw communally from life models in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Venice were plentiful. In the 1660s the visiting Philip Skippon wrote: "There is in Venice sometimes a naked man or woman, hired for the painters to draw the muscles of the body by; the naked person being expos'd in a publick room provided by the master of the academy, every painter giving somewhat."[38] In 1688, Maximilien Misson described life drawing classes that were open to all and in the 1690s the Collegio dei Pittori considered renting rooms from Francesco Capello to hold classes for artists to study the nude male and female body.[39] This is the kind of environment surely depicted in Tiepolo's well-known *Life Drawing Class*.[40] Tiepolo's drawing shows a determinedly masculine-dominated space, and is as far as we know historically accurate—women are thought not to have had regular access to nude male models in such contexts.

If Lama drew directly from the nude model, one imagines she did so in a less structured environment, perhaps finding opportunity in the relative informality of the Venetian situation before a state-sponsored academy was officially founded. Since her father was an artist, she might have had the opportunity to draw from models at home.[41] Although her early artistic development appears to have been independent of Piazzetta,[42] her friendship with one of the most important figures

36 On the long-standing practice of drawing from sculptures or casts in Venice see in particular Whistler, 2016.

37 The drawing was published by Ruggeri as in a private collection in Bergamo. Ruggeri, 1973, 43 Tav. 91.

38 Whistler, 2004, 384; See Sohm, 2010, 214.

39 Whistler, 2016, 151.

40 Whistler, 2004, 151.

41 The question of women artists' access to training outside the home is an important one, addressed in depth by Bohn, 2021.

42 Whistler, 2004, 388.

for the development of Venetian life drawing, as both draftsman and teacher, may have provided further opportunities. In the catalogue of the 2018 exhibition *Giulia Lama: Painter and Poetess 168–1747*, held at the Ca' Rezzonico museum, director Alberto Craievich hypothesized that Lama learned to draw from life in an informal academy organized by Piazzetta.[43] This is based on more than the evidence of their friendship and the clear relationship between their approaches to drawing. It is concretely indicated by the fact that groups of drawings attributed to Lama have been discovered in collections of folios produced in Piazzetta's atelier.[44] If Lama did draw directly from the nude, and nude male, model, and especially if this occurred in communal spaces, it raises questions about whether women had more occasions to study the male life model than has been understood hitherto, or whether, instead, she was a pioneer or outlier.[45]

Lama elaborated the figure in multiple stages as she moved from life-study and the analysis of parts of the body to the design of compositions for paintings, as evident in preparatory work for an altarpiece in the church of Santa Maria Assunta at Malamocco. This also has been an obscure painting, little-known probably partly due to the remote location of the church in a small village on the island of the Lido, and partly due to condition issues. The work is now also under conservation sponsored by Save Venice Inc. and there is hope that this effort will help to increase the attention paid to this intriguing painting.[46] A study for the reaching angel in the Malamocco work has been identified, though he lacks robes and wings.[47] A more polished drawing, with white highlights and careful drapery, prepares the female saint at the center of the work.[48] Lama almost certainly made multiple drawings of this kind for the San Marziale Evangelists as well.[49]

43 Craievich, 2018, 23.

44 Craievich, 2018, 23.

45 Artemisia Gentileschi is documented as working from models. For example, in a letter to Don Antonio Ruffo in 1650 she justified the expense of her Diana and Actaeon with reference to the cost of paying female models to disrobe, Barker, 2022, 123; on the other hand, there are documented proscriptions on women drawing from the nude male model, and in the seventeenth century Pope Urban VIII commented to Gianlorenzo Bernini that women would never be able to equal men in drawing because they were not permitted to study the nude male. Bohn has identified no studies of the nude male by Sirani, despite her sophisticated preparatory drawing process and the fact that she did draw from male life models, Bohn, 2021, 186.

46 The work is discussed by Knox, 1997, 175–177.

47 Ruggeri, 1967a, 160; Ruggeri, 1973, 45 Tav. 64 (location unconfirmed). While identifying the drawing as preparatory for the Malamocco angel, Ruggeri suggested the possible name of Silvestro Manaigo as well as that of Giulia Lama.

48 Ruggeri, 1973, 45 Tav. 62 (location unconfirmed); Ruggeri, 1967, 52.

49 Bohn, 2021, 178, observes that "[t]he whole issue of preparatory drawings is a fraught one for early modern women artists in Italy."

From Dark into Light

To transmute her drawn bodies into paint, Giulia Lama operated a bold game of light and dark which throws figures into forceful relief. The yellowed varnish and dust layers on the San Marziale *Four Evangelists* homogenize the tonal range and color spectrum, with an overall flattening result, but nevertheless the sharp contrast between the dark background and pale flesh tones of St. John is plainly visible. Lama participated in the neo-tenebrist movement in early eighteenth-century Venice, led by Piazzetta, and some of her works reach a shocking level of chiaroscuro, although its intensity varied across her career.

Lama painted the Evangelists on a dark, brown colored, preparatory layer.[50] Careful visual examination suggests the painter worked over this layer with a rapid brushstroke, sometimes leaving the ground color exposed for the half-tones.[51] Such an approach, typical among the so-called tenebrist painters, means that the preparatory tone does considerable visual work in the final appearance of the painting. Technical analysis will reveal its pigment composition, but it is likely a variation on the so-called *bolo veneziano.* This common preparation in eighteenth-century Venice consisted of pigments combined with an oil medium to create a shade between orange-red and reddish brown, typically of a granular texture, usually including earth and iron-based pigments as well as some lead white and minium.[52] Pigments consistent with such a preparation were identified during an analysis of Lama's *Judith and Holofernes* at the Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia: red earth, a little yellow ochre, a very small amount of lead white, and trace quantities of carbon black pigments.[53] Colored preparatory layers became increasingly widespread in Italy over the course of the sixteenth century, with both Vasari and Giovan Battista Armenini already mentioning the use of a colored *imprimatura*.[54] Among the earliest examples of Venetian paintings with *bolo veneziano* are from the Bassano workshop, such as the *Good Samaritan* by Jacopo Bassano (London, National Gallery) and *The Resurrection of Lazarus* (Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia),[55] and by the early eighteenth century it was widely used, and has been identified in paintings by Giambattista Piazzetta,

50 This was detemined by studying the paintings up close but has since been confirmed by the conservation report, Colombini and Galante, 2022, 1.

51 The extent to which she has exposed the ground for the half tones awaits full confirmation after cleaning. Rodolfo Pallucchini already commented on Giulia Lama's use of Armenian bole to warm the chromatic structure of her paintings in a discussion of works he attributed to her at Monte Rua. Pallucchini, 1970, 173, n. 26.

52 Bensi, 2000, 82.

53 Fiorin, 2018, 1–19.

54 Stoner and Rushfield, 2012, 167. Vasari mentions using siccative pigments including an earth pigment that would presumably tone the imprimatura, Vasari, 1875–1885, 1:186. Armenini discusses a pale skin-colored imprimatura, Armenini, 1988, 143. On colored preparatory layers, see Dunkerton, 199, 271–274.

55 Bensi, 2000, 82.

Sebastiano Ricci, Francesco Guardi, and Giambattista Tiepolo, to name a few. Giovanni Battista Volpato's "Modo da Tener nel Dipingere," written in Bassano at the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century (included in Mrs. Merrifield's *Treatises on the Arts of Painting*), recommends a ground layer made with "terra da bocali, terra rossa, et un poca di terra d'ombra" mixed with linseed oil.[56]

Giulia Lama may very well have purchased her canvases pre-prepared with warm or dark grounds. Volpato's "Modo da Tener nel Dipingere" is structured around a dialogue between two apprentice painters, who carry out the tasks appropriate to their position, such as obtaining and preparing canvases for their master. The senior of the two explains how he goes about such tasks, making it clear that apprentices still carried out such traditional workshop duties by the late seventeenth century. But he also discusses shops selling pre-prepared canvases ("certe bottege ove si imprimisce tele"), making it evident that this was a common practice.[57] In Volpato's "La Verita svelata,"[58] the author explains that while the preparation of canvases is not work suitable for an artist, they must nonetheless know whether such work has been done well or ill, and he gives advice against certain types of pre-prepared canvases, indicating that painters often bought their canvases ready primed.[59] Interestingly, Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697–1768) favored warm red-brown grounds while in Venice, but changed to using cool gray grounds during his period in England, the simplest explanation being the commercial availability of pale, cool grounds in London.[60] We currently know little of Giulia Lama's studio space or whether she employed assistants, but the option to buy ready prepared canvases may have been of great utility to her if she worked alone or with more limited assistance than her male colleagues.[61]

56 Merrifield, 1999, 730–733. Merrifield noted that Baldinucci termed "terra da bocali" terra di cava or terretta, a type of clay used for earthenware, used for making grounds, and dug at Rome, near St. Peter's, as well as at Monte Speroli in Tuscany.

57 "Certain shops where they prime canvases," Merrifield, 1999, 728–729.

58 "La Verità svelata" remains unpublished but is accessible in a nineteenth-century manuscript copy. Volpato, n.d. (d. 1827), consulted in microfilm, at Biblioteca Civica di Bassano del Grappa (hereafter BCBdG), ms. 31 A 25.

59 Volpato, n.d. (d. 1827), 206.

60 Already by the 1730s in Venice Canaletto began applying cool gray or beige imprimatura over his commercially prepared ground layers. Thus his transition to a light gray ground in England was an extension of his prior artistic research, but likely facilitated by the ready availability of canvases pre-prepared with a light colored ground. During the period 1750–1751 when he returned to Venice, he painted English subjects using red-brown grounds and then applied a cool gray imprimatura over them, at least in the cases of London: The Thames from Somerset House, RCIN 400504 and London: The Thames from Somerset House Terrace towards Westminster, 1750–1751, RCIN 400506. Sperber and Stenger, 2016, https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-2/canaletto-colour, accessed 14 October 2022.

61 Discussing the Bolognese example, Bohn, 2021, 97, explains that women artists seem to have fewer assistants than men: "Established Bolognese painters normally had students and assistants, but such an arrangement was more unusual, as far as we know, for women."

Paintings with *bolo veneziano* grounds can face long-term conservation challenges.[62] The earth pigments contained in the ground layer of *Judith and Holofernes* rendered that painting particularly vulnerable to moisture, and it has suffered deterioration.[63] This complicates comprehension of exactly how much its appearance is due to Lama's original pictorial language or whether the impression of planar construction with little softening or modeling, which strikes viewers as a remarkably modern pictorial language, is partly due to condition issues. Further conservation of Lama's paintings will help clarify this, but in the meantime it is notable that this approach is also present in her drawings. For example, in the study of the standing model on the ropes mentioned above, there is almost no softening between the shaded part of the back of the figure's leg and the front in bright light, and the muscles of the front of his torso are built up with neat shapes of untouched pale paper meeting delineated blocks of shadow with almost no gradation in the transitions between the two. This leads one to suspect that at least something of the sharp, planar, mode of representation without gradual modeling reflects Lama's personal mode of visual expression and cannot be attributed entirely to degradation issues.

In the San Marziale *Four Evangelists*, the powerful contrast between dark and light, and Lama's loose paint handling, serve in combination as a striking strategy for propelling the saints into the viewer's space and conveying the drama of the moment of divine inspiration depicted. We could also read a theological message into this painter's device: the Gospels brought people out of the darkness and into the light of the knowledge of Christ, and it is thus appropriate that their figures should be so conspicuously drawn out of the dark into the light. A full analysis of the facture of the paintings will be facilitated by their cleaning, but the rich materiality of Lama's paint and freedom of her touch are already apparent on close examination. As seen in a gentle raking light, in the curls of Saint Luke, for instance, unctuous strokes record the trace of the artist's brush through ridges in the thick paint (fig. 10.7), and in the upturned face of Saint John the dense paint application in the light areas of flesh tone contrast with the thinner paint passages in the shadows.

Both in their positioning within this church and their figurative power, Giulia Lama's artworks could be profitably considered in dialogue not only with one of the most important Venetian painters during her time—Piazzetta—but with one of the major Venetian figurative artists of all time, Jacopo Tintoretto. Two of Lama's Evangelists, Luke and John, hang above Jacopo Tintoretto's *St. Martial in Glory* (see fig. 10.3). Once on the main altar, Tintoretto's altarpiece was moved to its current location when the church was rebuilt.[64] This positioning simultaneously

62 Bensi, 2000, 82.

63 Vittori, 2018/2019, 2.

64 Ustyzhaninova, 2018, 24–25.

Figure 10.7 Giulia Lama, *St. Luke*, detail photo of figure 10.5, taken with a gentle raking light before conservation in 2022. Author.

set a challenge for Lama—an inevitable comparison with Tintoretto—and posed potential solutions. She would certainly have looked at his altarpiece for inspiration, particularly the seated writing figure of Paul. But for her representations of the body in contorted poses, surprising foreshortenings, and bold chiaroscuro against a dark ground, another Tintoretto work of the very same subject—his *Four Evangelists* painted for the organ shutters at Santa Maria del Giglio—could have offered inspiration. While Lama likely looked to other depictions of the Evangelists in the near contemporary renditions in the four Venetian churches mentioned above, as well as possibly to spandrel paintings in the Ospedaletto (Santa Maria dei Derelitti),[65] the proximity of an altarpiece by Tintoretto and the fact that he had executed his own rendition of these very saints must have been provocative, prompting Lama to both pay homage to and, in a sense, compete with the sixteenth-century master, in a tradition of emulation with deep roots in Renaissance Italian art.

65 See Aikema, 1982, 339–382. Comparative groups of Evangelists are found in the Venetian churches of San Moisè, San Samuele, San Beneto, and San Stae.

The issue of visibility that has run as a leitmotif in this discussion of Giulia Lama's approach to representing the body in the San Marziale *Four Evangelists* has been a problem not only for the comprehension of these spandrel paintings, but indeed one that troubles any comprehensive evaluation of her work. Lama's art not only suffers from a lack of historiographical visibility, but also from a literal lack of visibility, both as the result of the frequently disadvantageous placement of and poor condition of her work. One exacerbates the other. Three altarpieces by Lama remain in-situ in Venice, the San Vidal *pala* can be seen easily and is greatly appreciated, but the latter two are barely known. The altarpiece in the church of Santa Maria Formosa, where Lama was baptized, is hidden in an apse and largely obscured behind the elaborate architecture of the altar, while the Malamocco painting is, as referred to, difficult to reach and in problematic condition.

The *Four Evangelists* demonstrates Giulia Lama's command of large-scale, figurative painting in the grand tradition of Venetian art. Despite barriers to women's study of the nude, she appears to have grounded her bold compositions on a practice of drawing after the life model in the academic mode, using this foundation to participate in a field largely dominated during her lifetime by male artists. Condition issues have contributed to the unfair obscurity of these works, and it is greatly to be hoped that their conservation will contribute to bringing these powerful paintings, with their expressive bodies leaping off a dark ground in dramatic chiaroscuro, into the light of public appreciation and wider scholarly interest. Attention to Lama's apparently boundary-pushing artistic practice has the potential to continue the endeavor of challenging preconceptions about the opportunities available to female painters in the early modern era. This paper is offered as a set of preliminary observations about the San Marziale *Four Evangelists*, a first encounter at what is intended as the initiation of a larger research project on Lama's painting practice.

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Archival Abbreviation

BCBdG = Biblioteca Civica di Bassano del Grappa

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11. Rosalba Carriera Unframed

Xavier F. Salomon

Abstract

Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757) was the most celebrated woman artist in eighteenth-century Europe. Working in the inherently fragile medium of pastel she was always concerned for the well-being of her creations. The 350th anniversary of her birth (2023) created an opportunity to celebrate her life and work. Together with the substantial documentation of her career, the study of many of her pastels unframed has allowed a focus on Rosalba's technique and enabled new conclusions about her working practice. This essay will follow Rosalba's footsteps, from her Venetian residence to the European courts for which her pastels were destined.

Keywords: Venetian Rococo, women court artists, pastels, Grand Tour, materials and techniques, academies

Internationally recognized from a young age, Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757) was the most successful female artist active in Venice in the early modern period. Her fame was such that she was known throughout Europe by her first name: Rosalba. While relatively unknown during the nineteenth century, in the last century—and especially in recent years—she has been the focus of a number of monographic studies.[1] And in the last two decades, exhibition catalogues and international conferences have been dedicated to her.[2] Remarkably for an Italian painter of the eighteenth century, a substantial amount of documentation—in the form of almost seven hundred of her letters and fragments of diaries—makes it possible to trace Rosalba's career over more than five decades.[3] Two editions of a catalogue raisonné of her work have been published, in 1988 and 2007, by Bernardina Sani.[4] While

1 For the most significant monographic studies on Rosalba, see Hoerschelmann, 1908; Julien, 2019; Malamani, 1910; Oberer, 2014; 2020.

2 Pavanello, 2007; 2009.

3 The most complete edition of these documents is Sani, 1985.

4 Sani, 1988; 2007.

Cooper, T.E. (ed.), *Women Artists and Artisans in Venice and the Veneto, 1400–1750: Uncovering the Female Presence*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
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these are useful, they are also problematic in a number of ways: the attributions and the dating of the works of art are not always reliable; provenance information is not provided for each work; and while some of the entries in the catalogue are quite complete, others are very short. The most complete and up-to-date catalogue of Rosalba's pastels—though not of her miniatures and drawings—can be found in Neil Jeffares' online reference of the 2006 *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800*.[5] The study of Rosalba is not hindered by a paucity of documentary sources, but the interpretation of so great a quantity of material is challenging.

Since Alexis Gregory's generous 2020 bequest to The Frick Collection of two pastel portraits by Rosalba, I have focused my research on her work, examining more than one hundred pastels, across the United States and Europe—eighty by Rosalba herself and thirty-one by her close followers—and a large number of her miniatures. Studying all of these pastels unframed, I have been able to focus on Rosalba's technique and working practice and have drawn a number of conclusions about her work. My research is ongoing, and a number of questions remain, but the plan is to publish more articles and a book on Rosalba in the future.

Rosalba's life and career are closely linked to Venice, where she lived all of her life, most of it—from 1700 on—in the same house on the Grand Canal, between Ca' da Mula and Ca' Venier dei Leoni, in the parish of San Vio.[6] The daughter of a *cancelliere* of the Venetian Republic—Andrea Carriera (1645–1719)—often on the *terraferma* on business, and of Alba Foresti (1655–1738), known for her work as an embroiderer, Rosalba was the eldest of three daughters, followed by Giovanna (b. 1675) and Angela (b. 1677). The most reliable source for Rosalba's training as a painter seems to be a short biography, probably penned in 1752, and included in a letter from Jean-François Séguier to Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville.[7] According to this text, Rosalba copied popular woodcuts as a young girl and later trained with an unknown German painter and then with Giuseppe Diamantini and Antonio Balestra. According to tradition, she began by painting lids of small tobacco boxes and moved on to paint small miniatures on ivory (*fondelli*). She quickly became known for miniatures that depicted pretty young peasant women holding fruit and flowers, but she also produced portraits of her patrons. When she was admitted to the Accademia di San Luca in September 1705, she entered as a miniature painter. By the early 1700s, Rosalba had begun to paint in pastels.[8] Her production of miniatures seems to have

5 Jeffares, 2006. The online version begun in 2008 was renamed *Pastels & Pastellists* in 2010, and continues to be updated (Jeffares, 2010–).

6 For the house, see Moretti, 2011; Oberer, 2020, 259–273.

7 Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/Carriera.pdf, updated 28 July 2022.

8 For her first known pastel, a portrait of her friend Anton Maria Zanetti, see Sani, 1988, 275, no. 1; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.1089; Sani, 2007, 59, no. 1.

slowed down around 1727, focusing primarily instead on pastels. She was active in Venice for almost fifty years.

Rosalba's career came to a tragic end in the mid-1740s. Suffering from poor eyesight, she underwent a series of painful cataract operations between 1746 and 1750.[9] On January 2, 1751, Rosalba wrote to the French connoisseur Pierre-Jean Mariette: "God would like that I were in that state of sight that you believe me in. I am entirely without it, and I can no longer see anything, as if I were in the darkness of night."[10] The last ten years of Rosalba's life were spent in darkness in the house at San Vio. She died on April 15, 1757, and was buried in her parish church of San Vio.[11]

Rosalba began to work for international patrons early in her career.[12] She refused a number of invitations to move abroad, traveling only on three occasions. Between March 1720 and May 1721, Rosalba—together with her mother and sisters—was based in Paris, as a guest of the financier and collector Pierre Crozat. While there, she produced work for Louis XV and for the Regent, Philippe II Duc d'Orléans, as well as for other members of the French aristocracy. A diary from these two years gives a flavorful account of her time in France, which included constant sittings for portraits and evenings at the opera, theater, and ballet in between occasional spells of depression.[13] In October 1720, Rosalba entered the Académie Royale de Peinture.[14] Almost two years earlier, on January 14, 1720, she had also become a member of the Accademia of Bologna.[15] Two subsequent trips outside Venice followed. Between July and December 1723, she visited Modena to create a series of portraits of the daughters of Duke Rinaldo d'Este.[16] And between April and November 1730, Rosalba visited Vienna—again with her sisters—where she portrayed Wilhelmine Amalie, the widow of Joseph I, Holy Roman Emperor.[17] Despite such limited foreign travel, the rulers and aristocrats of the day flocked to her studio to be portrayed and to acquire works by Rosalba. In 1708, Frederick IV of Denmark visited Rosalba and

9 For Rosalba's blindness, see Zava Boccazzi, 1981, 219–220; Sani, 1985, 2:715–718, doc. 617; Sani 2007, 27–28; Oberer 2020, 256–258.

10 "Piacesse al Signore ch'io fossi in quello stato di vista che mi crede. Io ne sono intieramente priva, e niente più vedo come s'io fossi del bugio della notte"; Sani, 1985, 2:725, letter 625.

11 For Rosalba's death and tomb, see Zava Boccazzi, 1981, 221, 223; Sani, 2007, 56; Oberer, 2020, 258. The church of San Vio was destroyed in 1813 and no trace of Rosalba's grave exists.

12 Sani, 1985, 1:13–30; Oberer, 2020, 104, 115–133.

13 For a transcription of the French diary, see Sani, 1985, 2:761–779. The most accurate and best transcription, with an English translation, is in Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Essays/Carriera_journal.pdf, updated 15 April 2022.

14 Sani, 2007, 22, 53; Oberer, 2020, 148–163.

15 Sani, 2007, 53.

16 Sani, 2007, 125, 154; Oberer, 2020, 249–250.

17 Sani, 2007, 26, 55; Oberer, 2020, 251–256.

was portrayed by her.[18] In 1713, Frederick Augustus II of Saxony (the future King Augustus III of Poland) also visited; he would become the most important collector of Rosalba's work.[19] In Venice, Rosalba worked for British, French, German, and Italian patrons.[20]

The analysis of Rosalba's work, together with the many documents that survive, allow us to follow her in her studio and understand much about her practice. A manuscript with technical information that is often published as being compiled by Rosalba has, in fact, nothing to do with the artist and has led to a number of misunderstandings until recent times.[21] Thea Burns' brilliant study on Rosalba's technique remains the best foundation for the subject.[22] It is possible, however, to glean more about her practice from a first-hand study of her works. The majority of Rosalba's pastels are painted on blue paper.[23] The support for them was created before Rosalba started painting; it would be challenging to stretch a piece of paper after it had been painted with pastels. All evidence points to Rosalba painting on sheets already stretched on a strainer. Her small pastels—usually of heads—tend to be painted on paper stretched and glued on a simple wooden strainer. With larger sheets, Rosalba used a secondary support to strengthen the paper.[24] The sheet of blue paper was glued on a strainer, on which a finely woven canvas had been nailed. The strainers are simple and light, usually constructed with pine wood, with bars four to seven centimeters wide. They are beveled on the surface facing the canvas and paper and flat at the back. This was meant to limit the marks left by sharp edges on the paper surface. On one occasion, however—in the portrait of the singer Lucia Panichi, known as "La Moscovita," as an allegory of Music—the strainer on which canvas and paper have been attached is mistakenly backward, allowing us to see the beveled part of a strainer (usually covered by canvas and/or paper) (fig. 11.1).[25] It is unclear if Rosalba produced these strainers with paper and canvas or, as is more likely, she acquired them already prepared from a local

18 Sani, 1988, 280, no. 35; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.0523; Sani, 2007, 52, 78, no. 36.

19 Henning and Marx, 2007; Henning, 2009.

20 Sani, 2007, 17; Whistler, 2009; Oberer, 2020, 115–124.

21 The manuscript — not in Rosalba's handwriting — was published as being by her in Brusatin and Mandelli, 2005. For an accurate analysis of the manuscript, see Moretti, 2010 and Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/Carriera.pdf, updated 15 October 2022. The manuscript is actually a version of Francesco Agricola's *Trattenimenti sulle vernici ed altre materie utili* of 1784.

22 Burns, 2007, 77–129; see, in particular, 77–80, 111–113, for the physical structure of the pastels.

23 For Rosalba's paper, see Burns, 2007, 101–111.

24 There are exceptions to this rule. The *Madonna* at Ca' Rezzonico (Sani, 1988, 299–300, no. 175; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.2119; Sani, 2007, 197–198, no. 195), for example, is painted on a large sheet of blue paper glued onto a strainer, with no secondary canvas support. No other pastels by Rosalba of this size seem to have been painted on paper alone. It is unclear why an exception like this exists.

25 For the portrait, see Sani, 1988, 309–310, no. 256; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.1661; Sani, 2007, 263, no. 286.

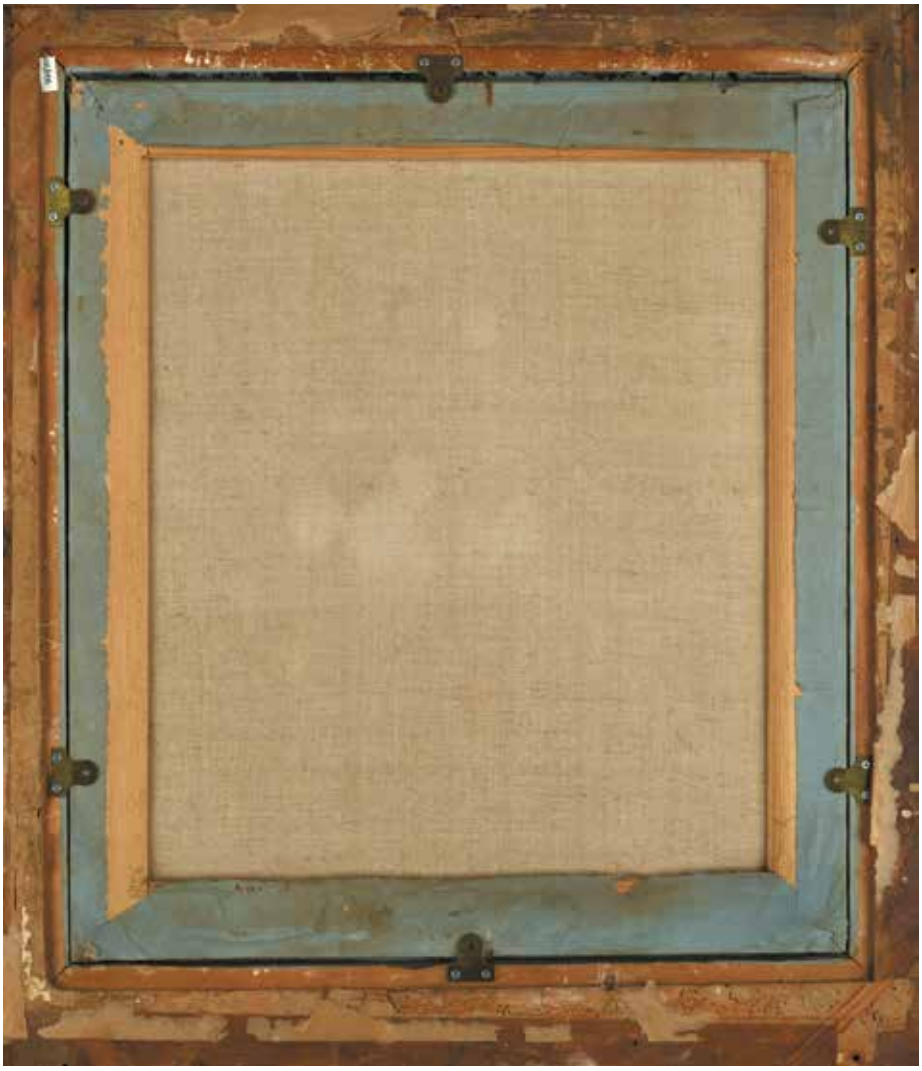

Figure 11.1 Rosalba Carriera, *Lucia Panichi "La Moscovita" as Music*—reverse showing the structure of the pastel's supports and the strainer mounted backwards, 1730s. Pastel on paper, laid down on canvas, 56.5 × 50.0 cm. Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent. Matthew Hollow Photography.

artisan. On occasion, however, she seems to have altered ready-made strainers, to slightly adjust the dimensions of a pastel painting. For the portrait of Margaret Lethieullier, now at the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Montreal, Rosalba used a sheet of blue paper glued to a strained canvas.[26] Needing to add about three centimeters to

26 For the portrait, see Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.0687. The portrait is not included in Sani, 1988 nor Sani, 2007.

the top, she unglued the paper from the top of the strainer, added two thin pieces of wood glued together at the top of the strainer, and glued the paper again on this extended strainer.[27] In another case, the portrait of a man identified, unconvincingly, as Louis-Armand de Bourbon Conti, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, she again nailed a small piece of wood, about one centimeter high, at the top of the strainer and glued a thin strip of paper over it.[28] She then painted over this adjusted support.

A technical detail like a strainer can provide significant information for some of Rosalba pastels. For example, the portrait of Louise-Anne de Bourbon Condé, Mlle de Charolais, at the Musée Condé in Chantilly has a different type of strainer, one with a horizontal crossbar.[29] This type of strainer is more commonly associated with French pastels, and as this pastel is documented as having been painted in Paris, between 1720–1721, it indicates that Rosalba relied on ready materials while in France. The portrait, instead, said by Sani to represent the Prince de Conti and to have been made in Paris in 1720–1721, is clearly painted on a Venetian strainer and must have been created in Venice in the later 1720s or 1730s.[30] In the future, this could help identify other pastels that Rosalba painted in France as opposed to those painted in Venice.

Rosalba occasionally painted her pastels on a different support. At least two—and possibly three—of them were painted directly on a strained rough canvas, with no paper.[31] Her early self-portrait of 1709 (fig. 11.2), sent to join the collection of artists' self-portraits gathered by the Medici family at the Uffizi, is painted on canvas, although all sources describe it as being painted on paper.[32] She depicted herself at work, with a porte-crayon with red and white chalk and other pastel sticks on the table. She is stylishly dressed and has a white rose in her hair, a reference to her name. She holds a tablet with a sheet of paper on which she has just completed the portrait of a woman—possibly her sister Giovanna. Interestingly, Rosalba shows herself working on a paper surface not attached to a strainer. Another large pastel—the *Bacchante* in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich—was also painted directly on canvas, albeit a finer one.[33] It was made for Johann Wilhelm,

27 I would like to thank Johanne Perron in Montreal, with whom I examined the pastel in October 2022. This change was certainly done by Rosalba as the original backboard of the pastel covers the full size of the strainer, including the addition at the top.

28 For the portrait, see Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.0433; Sani, 2007, 150–153, no. 144.

29 For the portrait, see Sani, 1988, 292, no. 124; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.0382; Sani, 2007, 142–143, no. 134. The portrait is often confused with the one of Mlle de Clermont.

30 Sani, 2007, 150–153, no. 144.

31 Sani (1985, 1:19) described the Bacchante in Munich as "l'unico pastello di Rosalba Carriera, dipinto con tecnica mista di pastello e di tempera, direttamente su di una tela e non sulla carta." In fact, more than one pastel by her was painted with this technique.

32 For the *Self-Portrait*, see Sani, 1988, 281–282, no. 52; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.0106; Pasian, 2007; Sani, 2007, 16, 89, no. 53; Oberer, 2014, 17, 11–23; Oberer, 2020, 274–286.

33 For the *Bacchante*, see Sani, 1988, 283, no. 59; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.1675; Sani, 2007, 92–93, no. 60.

Figure 11.2 Rosalba Carriera, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1709. Pastel on canvas, 73.0 × 58.9 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Gabinetto Fotografico delle Gallerie degli Uffizi.

Elector Palatine, in 1712 and sent to Düsseldorf. The prominent patronage, the chronological closeness of the two paintings, and the unusual technique, suggest that Rosalba, in her early career, sought to vie with her male counterparts by painting on canvas, albeit in pastel rather than oil. The technique in both works implies a direct competition with oil painting, the status of which was considered superior to that of pastels. A portrait in Dresden also seems to have been painted directly on canvas, but I cannot be certain of this as I have not been able to examine it unframed.[34]

Rosalba's use of pastel sticks—their composition, origin, and the ways she painted with them—has been expertly studied by Thea Burns, and the examination of many more pastels has served to confirm her findings and observations.[35] A small painting by Pietro Longhi shows what a sitting in Rosalba's house at San Vio may have looked like (fig. 11.3). Rosalba would have sat at an easel, but maybe—like the priest in the painting—she would have taken the strainer and placed it on her knees to paint. Longhi shows the sitter on the opposite side of the easel, with a box of pastels, arranged by color, on a small table to the side. Unfortunately, no direct descriptions of a sitter posing for Rosalba survive. But it is clear that she produced portraits quickly, often not even knowing the names of those sitting for her.[36]

Rosalba's pastels can be divided generally into three categories: portraits, allegorical figures, and religious subjects. According to the second edition of the Sani catalogue raisonné, Rosalba painted about one hundred and six male and ninety-five female pastel portraits. She painted eight self-portraits.[37] She also painted ninety-one allegorical or mythological subjects and thirteen religious ones. There is often confusion between the portraits and the allegories in the publications about Rosalba. Pastels, especially of female figures, are often described as "Portrait of a Lady as an Allegory," even though they are clearly straightforward allegories

34 For the portrait, see Sani, 1988, 320, no. 333; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.2187; Henning and Marx, 2007, 92; Sani, 2007, 339, no. 386.

35 Burns, 2007, 113–129.

36 The diary between 1723 and 1728 is best transcribed (but is not translated) in Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Essays/Carriera_journal.pdf, updated 15 April 2022. It is also in Sani, 1985, 2:779–795. Among the entries recording anonymous sitters are the following: October 15, 1720 "began the portrait of an English lady"; January 28, 1721 "I undertook to do a portrait of an unknown lady"; March 29, 1723 "Portrait of an unknown lady"; October 3, 1724 "began another Englishman"; November 20, 1724 "began a pastel portrait of a Frenchman"; December 2, 1724 "began an English gentleman"; June 3, 1726 "began in pastel another Englishman"; February 14, 1727 "began … a blond Englishman"; February 19, 1727 "another … dark-haired Englishman"; September 4, 1727 "began two Englishmen"; August 6, 1728 "began a young knight, who suffered from an illness in his legs"; August 16, 1728 "began the brother of the abovesaid."

37 In fact, probably only four. Sani, 2007, nos. 313, 314, 317, and 318 do not seem to be by Rosalba's hand.

Figure 11.3 Pietro Longhi, *The Painter*, ca. 1750s. Oil on canvas, 24 × 20 in. (61.0 × 50.8 cm.). Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, Palo Alto, Gift of Mortimer C. Leventritt, 1941.274.

Figure 11.4 Rosalba Carriera, *Young Woman with a Parrot*, ca. 1730s. Pastel on paper, mounted on board, 23 5/8 × 19 11/16 in. (60 × 50 cm.). The Art Institute, Chicago. The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY.

or just portraits.[38] On occasion, specific women seem to have posed for allegorical images, but this seems to be limited to celebrated singers—such as Lucia Panichi and Faustina Bordoni—depicted as allegories of music.[39] In some cases, such as the celebrated *Young Woman with a Parrot* in Chicago (fig. 11.4), the figure often described as an aristocrat—possibly English—seems more likely to be a woman from the world of stage and music, considering her revealing outfit.[40]

Rosalba seems to have seldom created pendant portraits of couples. According to the Sani catalogue raisonné, only two portraits are considered pendants: those of Giambattista Sartori and his wife Lucietta, at Ca' Rezzonico in Venice, who are identified by the inscriptions on the original backboards of the portraits.[41] The sitters in the paintings, however, do not seem to compositionally relate directly to each another in the way pendant portraits usually do. Moreover, the heads are slightly different in size, and the portrait of Lucietta is painted on blue paper laid down on canvas, while the support of Giambattista's portrait is paper glued directly to a strainer, without canvas. This seems to suggest that even here, the two portraits were not necessarily intended to be seen next to each other. It is possible that no pendant portraits by Rosalba survive.[42] It seems that some patrons wanted an allegory to go with their portrait, as a sort of pendant. Robert Dingley, for example, on June 18, 1735, wrote from London to Rosalba: "I beg you to paint for me a half-length figure of a beautiful peasant girl, to accompany my portrait, and in the taste of the painting of *Winter* in the cabinet of Signor Smith."[43]

When it came to allegorical figures, Rosalba often produced sets of canvases, most of these representing the seasons, the elements, the continents, and figures such as the various virtues. Very few of these sets are intact. Most were separated and dispersed. When a set does survive, it is always in a group of four—appropriate for the seasons, the elements, and, at that time, the continents. At least four autograph sets of *Elements* and *Seasons* seem to survive in Dresden, Rome, Dublin, and an unknown location.[44] The only intact group of this kind in the United States is a set of four religious allegorical figures in a private collection in Connecticut.[45] Oliver

38 For example, Sani, 2007, nos. 147, 184, 185, 356, and 398 are allegorical figures and not portraits.

39 Sani, 2007, 184–185, 263, nos. 183 and 286.

40 For the portrait, see Sani, 1988, 287, no. 92; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.232; Sani, 2007, 115–116, no. 101.

41 For the portraits, see Sani, 1988, 317, nos. 309–310; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.0974 and J.21.0977; Sani, 2007, 317, 357–358.

42 Another couple, published by Sani (2007, 66–67, 204, nos. 12, 205) is problematic in terms of attribution.

43 "Suplico V.S. di pingermi qualche mezza figura d'una bella giovinetta contadina, per accompagnare il mio Ritratto e nel gusto del Quadro dell'Inverno nella cabinetta del Sig. Smith"; Sani, 1985, 2:603, letter 508.

44 Sani, 2007, 156–157, 360–364, 368–371, nos. 149, 416–417, 421, 422.

45 Sani, 1988, 299, no. 174; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.1783, J.21.1803, J.21.1809, J.21.1813; Sani, 2007, 194, 196–197.

Tostmann has astutely suggested that these figures may have been created as a set of sybils.[46] Even though no other Rosalba pastels showing sybils seem to survive, she does seem to have made a set. On August 23, 1738, the Abbot Giuseppe Pollaroli wrote from Rome to Rosalba about the desire of an unnamed Duchess "to have two others now, that is the Eritrean and the Cumaean," suggesting that she was already in possession of two other sybils.[47]

Often couples of *Seasons* are waiting to be linked to other couples.[48] Much work remains to be done to match individual allegories by Rosalba to re-assemble full sets. The examination of these paintings can often shed some light. The two female allegories at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, for example, have the numbers 2 and 4 inscribed at the top of the back of their strainers, suggesting that numbers 1 and 3 of the set remain to be identified.[49] It is possible that the so-called *Poetry* in Karlsruhe, which is of the same dimensions, may be part of the set.[50] Another "muse," which last appeared on the market in 2008, is comparable in style and size and may also have been part of this same set.[51] Not having been able to examine the backs of these other two paintings yet, I cannot determine whether or not they have matching numbers. Another numbered allegorical painting is the *Flora* in the Pinacoteca Egidio Martini at Ca' Rezzonico in Venice, which has a number 3 inscribed both on the strainer and on the canvas.[52] It is evidently a *Spring* in search of its other three seasons. Thanks to these numbers and inscriptions, a systematic examination of more pastels may make it possible to reunite a number of original sets.

Documents, however, make clear that the situation around Rosalba's sets is sometimes more complex. Collectors often had couples of *Seasons* or *Elements* and only later completed the sets. Maria Manini Bragadin wrote from Vienna on March 11, 1731, about "your self-portrait in the guise of Winter" for the empress and asked for another "head" that would "complete the four seasons."[53] Cardinal Alessandro

46 Tostmann, 2021.

47 "Desidererebbe pertanto ch'averne altre due pur adesso, cioè l'Eritrea e la Cumana"; Sani, 1985, 2:636, letter 540.

48 For example, *Spring* and *Summer* in a New York private collection (Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.121 and J.21.1238) are clearly part of a set of four, but *Autumn* and *Winter* have not yet been identified. *Spring* and *Autumn* (Jeffares, 2010–, nos J.21.1259 and J.21.135) were together until the sale at Christie's, London, July 27, 2020 (lots 37–38), when they were split. They are now in two different private collections. Again, it is unclear if *Summer* and *Winter* went with them.

49 Sani, 1988, 298, no. 164a–b; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.158, J.21.1583; Sani 2007, 185, no. 184a–b.

50 Sani, 1988, 319, no. 323; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.1644; Sani, 2007, 330–331, no. 374.

51 Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.1656; last sold at Sotheby's, London, July 9, 2008, lot 84.

52 Sani, 1988, 298, no. 167; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.1178; Sani, 2007, 188–189, no. 189.

53 "Il di Lei ritratto fatto in forma del Inverno, alla Maestà del Imperatrice et averlo accompagniatto da un altra testa che termini le quattro Stagioni"; Sani, 1985, 2:545, letter 456. For the *Self-Portrait as Winter*,

Albani in Rome relayed the following request to Rosalba: "Your painting has finally happily reached me … I beg you to paint and send me another as soon as possible, because having only three at present, it would be useful to have a fourth to create two pairs."[54] On April 18 of that year, the cardinal wrote again: "About the fourth painting that you will have the kindness to make for me I leave the choice of the figure entirely to your judgment. I remember a most beautiful *Philosophy*, which you made for Cardinal Polignac; so, either this or a muse, or anything else that you would have the idea to paint, everything will be pleasing to me."[55] It is known that the set of *Elements* painted for Augustus III was painted over a period of two years and in two installments.[56] On August 26, 1744, Antonio dall'Agata wrote to Rosalba about the "two elements that you are painting for Dresden."[57] Two years later, on April 18, 1746, Francesco Algarotti informed Rosalba that "His Majesty wishes for two half figures in pastel, one of which representing Air, and the other Water," no doubt to complete the set.[58]

Many of Rosalba's pastels still have their original wooden backboards.[59] These are usually plain planks of pine, beveled around the sides and placed to seal the pastels at the back. Rosalba sent her pastels enclosed between these backboards and glass, and the backboards were reused once the paintings were reframed after they arrived at their destination. Contemporary inscriptions identifying sitters often appear on the back of these backboards.[60] On one occasion, an interesting find has been discovered on the inner side of one of these boards. On the original backboard of the *Portrait of a Man* at the Harvard Art Museums is a small drawing that was sketched directly with ink on the plank of wood (fig. 11.5).[61] This shows a veiled woman with her head tilted to the right. Comparing this rough drawing—essentially a scribble—with other, more finished, known drawings in ink by Rosalba,

see Sani, 1988, 312, no. 276; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.012; Sani, 2007, 285, no. 315.

54 "Mi è alla fine pervenuto felicemente il suo quadro … la prego a farne e spedirmene almeno un altro piú presto le sia permesso, quanto che avendone presentemente tre soli, mi fa d'uopo d'avere il quarto per farne le due pariglie"; Sani, 1985, 2:692, letter 596.

55 "Circa il quarto pezzo di Quadro ch'Ella vuol compiacerci di farmi rimetto intieramente al di lei arbitrio la Figura. Mi ricordo d'una Bellissima Filosofia, ch'Ella fece per il Sig. Cardinale di Polignac; onde o questa, o una Musa, o altro che a lei verrà in idea di dipingere, tutto mi sarà gradito"; Sani, 1985, 2:694, letter 600.

56 Sani, 1988, 323–324, nos. 355–356; Jeffares, 2006, 2010–, nos J.21.1455, J.21.1465, J.21.1474, J.21.1481; Sani, 2007, 360–364, nos. 416–417.

57 "I due elementi che va facendo per Dresda"; Sani, 1985, 2:696, letter 603.

58 "S.M. desidera due mezze figure in pastella una delle quali rappresenti L'aria, e l'altra L'acqua"; Sani, 1985, 2:707, letter 612.

59 Burns, 2007, 80–81.

60 Contemporary inscriptions, for example, appear on the back of Sani, 1988, 317, nos. 309–310; also Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.0974, J.21.0977, J.21.0687; Sani, 2007, 317, nos. 357–358.

61 For the portrait, see Sani, 1988, 302, no. 201; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.2259; Sani, 2007, 218, no. 220.

Figure 11.5 Rosalba Carriera, *Veiled Woman*, ca. 1730s–1740s. Pen and ink on wood. On the inner part of the backboard of Rosalba Carriera's *Portrait of a Man*. Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA. Photo: President and Fellows of Harvard College.

it is reasonable to propose that this is a sketch by her.[62] The same hatched signs and flowing lines for the hair appear in her drawings. It is easy to imagine Rosalba, in her studio, swiftly sketching this head to show a possible composition—for a Madonna, or an allegorical figure, or the portrait of a veiled woman?—to a potential patron. No one would have ever seen this scribble on the back of the backboard, so there would have been no reason to cover it up.

On several occasions, for both portraits and allegories, Rosalba painted more than one version of the same image, with slight variations. Pairs of autograph portraits exist, for example, of Ambrose Phillips (in a private collection and in Hanover), of Henry Fiennes Pelham-Clinton, 9th Earl of Lincoln and 2nd Duke of Newcastle (at Yale and in Nottingham), and of an unknown woman (in Turin and in St. Petersburg).[63] And

62 For similar drawings by Rosalba, see Lucchese, 2005; Sani, 2007, 276, 298–301, nos. 304, 331, 333, 334.
63 For the Phillips portraits, see Sani, 1988, 317–318, no. 314; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.0854 and J.21.0856; Sani, 2007, 322–323, nos. 364–365. For the Lincoln portraits, see Sani, 1988, 322, no. 341; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.0807 and J.21.0811; Sani, 2007, 346–347, nos. 396–397. For the portraits of the unknown woman, see Sani, 1988, 294, no. 137; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.00351 and J.21.0353; Sani, 2007, 158–159, nos. 153–154.

there are three portraits, again with slight variations in the costume, of the portrait of Gustavus Hamilton, 2nd Viscount Boyne (in New York, in a private collection and in Birmingham).[64] This is more commonly the case for portraits of important sitters, from royal or princely families, as with the various versions of the portraits of Louis XV of France and the Este princesses of Modena.[65] This can be explained by more than one request from a single patron, or other patrons asking for versions of the same portrait. In the case of the portrait of Empress Wilhelmine Amalie, painted by Rosalba in 1730, we know that at least two versions were painted, one for each of the empress's two daughters: Maria Amalia of Bavaria in Munich and Maria Josepha of Saxony in Dresden. On December 20, 1730, Elisabetta Sorgo wrote to Rosalba from Vienna: "Her Majesty has sent the famous portraits to Saxony as well as to Bavaria. They arrived in perfect condition and were most praised."[66] These two portraits are usually identified as the two autograph ones still in Dresden (at the Gemäldegalerie) and in Munich (later cut into an oval and displayed at the Residenz).[67] However, a third autograph portrait of the empress (fig. 11.6) also survives. Usually described as being also in the Residenz in Munich, it is generally illustrated in black and white and considered lost by the staff of the Residenz.[68] I recently located the portrait, in storage and overlooked, at the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich. Which of the two versions in Munich is the one that the empress sent from Vienna is unknown. It seems likely, however, that the newly located portrait was sent to Munich directly by Rosalba from Venice. The pastel has a typical Venetian strainer.[69] Furthermore, we know that when Rosalba sent pastels abroad, she entrusted them to the religious protection of the Three Kings. Writing on December 3, 1729, to Anton Francesco Marmi in Florence, the Somascan father Pier Caterino Zeno noted that Rosalba

> is particularly devout, and charitable, and has a distinct devotion to the Three Saint Magi, who brought themselves to the adoration of the baby Jesus at the

64 For portraits, see Sani, 1988, 311, nos. 267–268; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.0326, J.21.0329 and J.21.0331; Sani, 2007, 272, 275, nos. 301–303.

65 For the portrait of Louis XV, see Sani, 1988, 291–292, nos. 122–123; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.0697 and J.21.0702; Sani, 2007, 139–141, nos. 132–133. For the portraits of the Este princesses, see Sani, 1988, 296–297, 304, nos. 211–213; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.0195, J.21.0197, J.21.02, J.21.0205, J.21.0266, J.21.0268, J.21.0271, J.21.0486, J.21.0488, and J.21.0499; Sani, 2007, 174–180, 228–229, nos. 170–177, 232–234.

66 "S.M. ha mandato li famosi ritrati tanto in Sassonia, tanto in Baviera. Sono arrivati in buonissimo stato e sono stati molto lodati dale Serenissime"; Sani, 1985, 2:535, letter 447.

67 For portraits, see Sani, 1988, 310, nos. 259, 261; Jeffares, 2010–, nos. J.21.0208, J.21.0212, and J.21.0331; Sani, 2007, 264–265, 289, 291.

68 For portrait, see Sani, 1988, 310, no. 260; Jeffares, 2010–, no. J.21.021; Sani, 2007, 266, no. 290.

69 It has been so far impossible to examine the Dresden version. As painted in Vienna, in theory, its strainer should be different from the typical Venetian ones. The Residenz oval was cut down and re-framed in the Puille Kabinett and therefore does not have the original strainer.

> grotto of Bethlehem. Once she gave me a certain portrait to send to my brother in Vienna, and she gave me a little card of the three aforementioned adoring Magi; and said that to these she entrusted the safe outward journey of the portrait; adding, that whenever such little images had accompanied her pictures, they always arrived safely.[70]

These *cartucce* were small, printed tokens—known in German as a *Dreikönigenzettel* and in Italian, more generally, as a *santino*—each bearing an image of the Three Kings along with a prayer. The tradition of such objects originated in Cologne, where the cathedral was said to hold the relics of the Three Kings, brought in 1164 from Milan by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and housed in a spectacular casket.[71] Images of the kings and prayers were printed on pieces of paper—and sometimes silk—and rubbed against the shrine; pilgrims would carry these small objects to protect themselves on their travels. Rosalba used these prints on a number of occasions and relied on them for protection of her pastels in transit.[72] Some were found glued to backboards in Dresden.[73] Others were folded and hidden behind the strainers of pastels she was sending abroad. Two were found in pastels in the British Royal Collection and at the Louvre.[74] I have discovered more in pastels at The Frick Collection and at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and in a number of other locations.[75] One of these prints of the Three Kings was also found behind the strainer of the portrait of the empress at the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, suggesting that it was sent by Rosalba herself to Bavaria or to Vienna.

In many of the letters to Rosalba, patrons ask her for versions of some of her portraits or allegories.[76] In a letter from before 1735, Consul Joseph Smith wrote to Rosalba about a copy she was painting for a friend of his of the *Allegory of Winter*: "since you intend to want to finish also the other *Winter*, if this could be finished by Monday, I would very gladly see it in comparison with the other, in order to be

70 "È particolarmente divota, e data all'opere di pietà; e a divozione distinta ai tre Santi Magi, che portaronsi all'adorazione del bambino Gesù nella grotto di Betlemme. Una volta mi raccomandò certo ritratto da spedire a mio fratello a Vienna; e diedemi una cartuccia de' tre sudetti Magi adoratori; e disse che a quelli raccomanda l'andata felice di quel ritratto; soggiungendo, che ogni qualvolta aveva con tali immaginette accompagnate le sue pitture, sempr'erano giunte a salvamento"; Sani, 1985, 2:804–805.

71 Becks, Deml, and Hardering, 2014.

72 For these prints and Rosalba, see Razzall, 2021.

73 Henning and Marx, 2007, 56–57; Henning, 2009, 290–292.

74 Salmon, 2018, 93; Razzall, 2021.

75 I am in the process of writing a full account of this phenomenon in Rosalba's work and plan to publish it at a future date.

76 See, for example, Sani, 1985, 1:120, 130, 189, 2:752, letters 82, 92, 154, 651.

Figure 11.6 Rosalba Carriera, *Empress Wilhelmine Amalie*, ca. 1730. Pastel on paper, laid down on canvas, 67 × 52.5 cm. Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich. Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Bastian Krack.

able to resolve with more knowledge which of the two to send to my friend."[77] A remarkable situation developed in 1741 between Princess Trivulzio and Rosalba. The Milanese princess, based in Lyon, wrote Rosalba, on March 31 of that year with a request: "I would like you to do me the pleasure of having one [portrait] made of similar size to the other; but I would like to copy it from yours in a larger size, with black hair, and a little thinner, as I lost a lot of weight since I arrived in France."[78] This suggests that when producing portraits of important sitters Rosalba often made two, giving one to the patron and keeping one for reference; from these prototypes (of both portraits and allegories), she could then produce replicas if asked for them.[79] Princess Trivulzio was clearly not an easy patron. After receiving the copy of her portrait, she wrote back to Rosalba, on April 28, 1741:

> I promptly received your gracious letter with enclosed the portrait of me in good condition; but to speak to you with all sincerity and confidence, it was not found to be too resembling, because it is a little too serious and the physiognomy is melancholic, the eyes too small and the face too large and fat, so I took the liberty of sending it back, because if it were possible you should correct it by diminishing the whole contour of the face, give a little more liveliness to the eyes, and if you can make them larger, and not so fat in the face. In short, dear Signora Rosalba, I would like you to fix it in a way that it should resemble me, if not so much as the one you worked on, which was enchanting, but at least a little more than this one. I recommend to you to greatly diminish the thickness and size of the head, being absolutely too caricatured, especially now that I have become very thin, everyone finds me better and with fresher air than in the portrait. I understand well the great difficulty there is in having to make a portrait without seeing the original, but I hoped that with the one that you have you could do it easily.[80]

77 "Giacché Ella intende di voler finire anche l'altro *Inverno*, quando ciò si potesse terminare per lunedì, desiderei molto volentieri vederlo a confronto dell'altro, per poter allora con più fondamento risolvere quale de' due inviare all'amico"; Sani, 1985, 2:605, letter 511.

78 "Vorrei, dunque, mi facesse il piacere di farmene far uno della grandezza simile all'altro; ma lo vorrei copiato dal suo in grande, in capelli neri, e un pocco più magra, esendomi estremamente amegrita dopo che sono in Francia"; Sani, 1985, 2:666–667, letter 568.

79 This was proposed, reasonably, by Burns, 2007, 85.

80 "Ricevetti con ogni pontualità la di lei gratiosa lettera con ingionto il ritratto ben condizionato me per parlarli con ogni sincerità e confidenza, non lo ano trovato troppo assomigliante, per esser un pocco troppo serio e fisonomia malinconica li occhi troppo picoli e il viso troppo grande e grasso, onde mi sono presa la libertà di rimandarlo, perché se fusse possibile di correggerlo con sminuire tutto il contorno del viso darli un pocco più di vivacità alli occhi, e se si puole farli più grandi e non tanto grassa nella faccia. In somma, cara Sig.ra Rosalba, vorrei che si potesse accomodare in modo che mi asomigliase, se non tanto come quello da lei travagliato che era un incanto, ma almeno un pocco più di questo. Li raccomando fargli sminuire molto la grossezza e grandezza della testa, esendo asolutamente troppo caricato, masime che ora sono divenuta assai magra, tutti mi trovano meglio e con aria più fresca del ritratto. Comprendo

Rosalba must have refused to re-work the portrait, as the princess wrote again, on June 26:

> My dear Signora Rosalba, I cannot help but tell you that I am not too happy that you do not want to oblige me to make one [portrait] by your excellent hand, similar to the last one of the past year which was also done without seeing me but purely based on the original that you have with you, made in those few moments that I remained in Venice, and it was such a marvel that it was judged to be the most beautiful portrait that the most worthy Signora Rosalba has ever made.[81]

Rosalba blamed the impossibility of completing the portrait on her health and proposed to only copy a head of the princess.[82] She claimed she could not do more "for many reasons." Other patrons must have made similar, exhausting requests. An anonymous correspondent wrote to her, at an unknown date, begging her to "to accommodate the wig, so that the curl is less affected."[83]

The matter of copies and versions of Rosalba's pastels raises another question that has yet to be properly examined. Rosalba did not have a proper workshop in her studio. Zeno, in his 1729 letter to Marmi, writes that "she has never wanted to raise pupils; either because she wanted to escape the inconvenience; or because, as she said perhaps out of modesty, her knowledge was of little matter, not extending to painting anything larger than a head."[84] She was, however, very generous in her advice to other pastel painters. Giambattista Casotti from Florence wrote to her, on March 29, 1718, to ask for instructions on how to paint in pastels on behalf of "a knight among the first in this city."[85] Less than a month later, Rosalba answered

bene la difficoltà grande che vi è nel dover fare un ritratto senza veder l'originale ma ho sperato che con quello che lei ha potesse farlo con facilità"; Sani, 1985, 2:670, letter 572.

81 "Mia cara signora Rosalba, non posso però a meno di non dirli che non sono troppo contenta di che non mi voglia far il piacere di farmene uno della sua eccellente mano, simile a quello ultimo dell'anno pasato che pure fu fatto senza vedermi ma puramente preso dall'originale che tiene appresso di lei, fatto in quei pochi momenti che restai a Venetia, et è riuscito sì a maraviglia, che è stato giudicato il più bel ritratto che la degnissima Sig.ra Rosalba abbi fatto"; Sani, 1985, 2:671, letter 573.

82 "È tale il rispetto mio ben dovuto a ste commissioni di V. Ecc., che, se bene rissento sempre più i pregiudizi del tempo, che mi rendono con minor abilità e più sicurezza di mal riuscire, tutta via non saprei sotrarmi all'onore d'ubidirli, pur che permetti ch'io mi ristringa nel solo copiare la testa del ritrato, essendomi impossibile il rimanente per molte ragioni"; Sani, 1985, 2:672, letter 574.

83 "La prego però di accomodare la perucca con fare che il riccio sia meno afettato"; Sani, 1985, 2:758, letter 662.

84 "Non à mai volute allevare Scolari; o sia perché abbiane volute fuggir l'incomodo; o perchè, come diceva forse per modestia, il suo sapere sia di poca cosa, non estendendosi a far cosa Maggiore di una testa"; Sani, 1985, 2:804.

85 Sani, 1985, 1:325–26, letter 272.

with a letter full of details.[86] She was also asked, at times, to retouch pastels painted by artists less talented than she.[87]

Although she seems not to have had a cohort of pupils and assistants, Rosalba did not paint alone. A number of patrons wrote to her, between 1706 and 1719, asking for copies of her pastels by her sister Giovanna.[88] Giovanna Carriera (1675–1737)—who died, aged sixty-two, twenty years before Rosalba—was two years younger than Rosalba. She was a painter and worked for almost four decades alongside Rosalba. However, not a single work has been securely attributed to her. Among the many versions of Rosalba's pastels, or among the pastels of lesser quality from her orbit, surely it should be possible to eventually identify some by the hand of Giovanna. Other women are said to have worked with Rosalba at different points in her career. Marianna Carlevarijs (1703–1750), daughter of the *vedute* painter Luca, is the author of four pastel portraits of the Balbi family, now at Ca' Rezzonico.[89] Felicita Sartori (ca. 1714–1760)—later Countess Hoffmann, after her marriage in Dresden in 1742—also worked with Rosalba.[90] Miniatures by her (some signed and many copying Rosalba's compositions) are now in the collection of the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden. It is, however, unclear if she also painted in pastels. The English pastellist Katherine Read (1723–1778) was in contact with Rosalba in the years of her blindness, between August 1753 and July 1756, with numerous letters.[91] Giovanna Tacconi Messini (1717–1742), Angelica Le Gru Perotti (1719–1776), and Rosanna Pozzola are all documented as having worked with Rosalba, but none of their pastels can be identified.[92] Five copies of Rosalba's *Elements* in Dresden and her *Poetry* in Karlsruhe are in the Bayersiches Nationalmuseum in Munich, where they are attributed to a certain Maria Molin of whom very little is known.[93]

86 Sani, 1985, 1:329, letter 275.

87 Sani, 1985, 2:602, letter 507.

88 Sani, 1985, 1:103, 138–139, 357, letters 58, 102, 300. Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/CarrieraG.pdf, updated 29 June 2020.

89 Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/Carlevarijs.pdf updated, 5 October 2022. While the portraits of the Balbi mother and two children in the group are stylistically consistent, the portrait of the father — Girolamo Maria Balbi — seems to be of better quality and by another hand, closer to Rosalba. A letter from Giovanna Carriera to her mother Alba, on August 19, 1730, from Vienna refers to "la virtú della Sig.ra Mariana," possibly to be identified with Carlevarijs: "Mi spiacque intender ch'in Venezia, ove capitano tanti foresti, si lasci ozziosa la virtú della Sig.ra Mariana; non sarebbe così se cantasse. Questo è il secolo della musica e non della pittura"; Sani, 1985, 2:530, letter 442.

90 Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/SARTORI.pdf, updated 4 July 2022.

91 Sani, 1985, 2:729–730, 732–734, letters 627, 629, 630.

92 Sani, 1985, 1:40, 2:599–600, 628, 648, 686–687, 715, letters 505, 531, 548, 591, 616, 648; Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/MessiniG.pdf, updated 13 August 2016 and http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/LEGRU.pdf, updated 2 July 2022.

93 Jeffares, 2010–, http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/MOLIN.pdf, updated 20 July 2022. A portrait of a woman at the Museo di Palazzo Mocenigo in Venice, attributed to Molin, seems to be by a different hand than the Munich copies.

A full study of the female artists who worked with and around Rosalba in Venice remains to be undertaken.

The systematic examination of Rosalba's work has revealed valuable information as to her artistic practice and technique. It has also raised a number of questions. Her work remains among the most extraordinary of the contributions of female artists to Venetian art history. Praising her work, in 1703, Ferdinando Maria Nicoli compared her artistic gifts to the act of divine creation: "you undertake omnipotence, which is the most distinctive virtue of God, and instead of imitating men, you create them. But that you, with the colors of the earth, form faces in the natural, I understand it possible because this was once done by God with Adam. But that with earthy colors you also paint the spiritual and unintelligible soul, this is an extravagant heresy."[94]

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94 "Voi vi assumete l'onnipotenza, che è il più riserbato pregio di Dio ed in vece d'imitar gli uomini, li create. Ma che Voi co' colori di terra formiate volti al naturale, l'intendo possibile, perché così fu fatto una volta da Dio con Adamo. Ma che co' terreni colori dipingiate anche l'anima spirituale ed insensibile, questa è un'eresia stravagante"; Sani, 1985, 1:67–68, letter 23.

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General Bibliography

Archival Abbreviations

AASLRm = Archivio dell'Accademia di San Luca, Rome
APMOVe = Archivio Parocchiale della Chiesa di Madonna dell'Orto, Venice
APSMGFVe = Archivio Parocchiale della Chiesa di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice
ASPd = Archivio di Stato di Padova, Padua
ASPVe = Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia, Venice
ASRm = Archivio di Stato di Roma, Rome
ASVe = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice
BCArchBo = Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna
BCBdG = Biblioteca Civica di Bassano del Grappa
BCTv = Biblioteca Capitolare di Treviso, Treviso
BMCVe = Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, Venice

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Locations are in Venice unless otherwise specified.

This book of essays highlights the lives, careers, and works of art of women artists and artisans in Venice and its territories from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The collection represents the first fruits of an ongoing research program launched by Save Venice Inc. Inspired by a growing body of research that has resurrected female artists and artisans in Florence and Bologna during the last decade, the program seeks to recover the history of women artists and artisans born or active in the Venetian republic in the early modern period. Topics include their contemporary reception — or historical silence — new insights on training, roles within the family workshop, and current scholarship positioning them as individuals and as an underrepresented category in the history of art and cultural heritage. Artists to be highlighted include Marietta Tintoretta, Irene di Spilimbergo, Chiara Varotari, Artemisia Gentileschi, Giovanna Garzoni, Caterina Tarabotti, Giulia Lama, and Rosalba Carriera.

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