CHAPTER «CULTURAL STUDIES»

WOMEN ARTISTS OF THE RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE PERIOD IN ITALY: CULTURAL STUDIES DISCOURSE

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Abstract. *The purpose of the monograph section.* On the basis of anthropocentric approach to the analysis of visual self-presentations of Italian women artists of the Renaissance and Baroque period fill in the gaps that exist in domestic art history regarding the works of Plautilla Nelli, Sofonisba Anguissola, Lavinia Fontana, Marietta Robusti, Artemisia Gentileschi, Arcangela Paladini, Giovanna Garzoni, Elisabetta Sirani and the sculptor Properzia de' Rossi. *Theoretical basis.* The principles and methods of philosophical and anthropological research in combination with biographical, historical, comparative, iconographic and figurative and stylistic methods were used in writing the monograph. *The scientific novelty* lies in the author's method of analyzing works of visual art from the point of view of anthropocentric approach, as well as in considering the creativity of women artists of Renaissance and Baroque period in Italy as their self-objectifications, which give rise to a new cultural reality. *Conclusions*. Creativity by Italian women artists Plautilla Nelli, Sofonisba Anguissola, Lavinia Fontana, Marietta Robusti, Artemisia Gentileschi, Arcangela Paladini, Giovanna Garzoni, Elisabetta Sirani and the sculptor Properzia de' Rossi in diachronic view can be expanded. During 16th–17th centuries, several talented female painters and one female sculptor worked in Italian fine arts. Against the background of the cultural realities of the time, this phenomenon can be

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considered an indicator of paradigmatic changes in the public consciousness in relation to the social significance of talented women.

1. Introduction

The works of women artists of the Renaissance and Baroque period in Italy attracted the attention of art critics only in the late 20th century. The impetus was the article by American art critic Linda Nochlin 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' published in 1971 in the magazine 'Art News'.

Formulating her own answers to the question, L. Nochlin notes that the main factors, in her opinion, were the restriction of women's access to art education to the extent that was common for men, and social stereotypes of the masculine society. Such discrimination, as L. Nochlin notes, limited the prospects for the professional growth of women-artists and did not allow the formation of figures equal to men-artists in skill.

In support of these conclusions, Nochlin cites the names of women artists who have been forgotten, despite their undoubted talent, as evidenced by the numerous works of art that have survived to this day. Among them are the names of Artemisia Gentileschi, Marietta Robusti, Lavinia Fontana – Italian women artists of the Renaissance and Baroque period and one of the earliest names preserved in the history of art [29].

Nochlin's article was a powerful impetus for intense discourse. Historical and art studies began, the results of which were published in articles and monographs, defended in the form of dissertations. Biographies of individual women artists, such as Artemisia Gentileschi, formed the basis of fiction novels and feature films.

Museums, such as the Uffizi, have extracted paintings by the women artists from storage and held exhibitions dedicated to their work. Thus, in 1994 in Cremona, and in 1995 in Vienna and Washington were exhibitions dedicated to the work of Sofonisba Anguissola. The exhibitions opened for the art lovers masterpieces of this little-known Italian woman artist of the late Renaissance. In the 2000s, drawings and paintings by the first famous Italian Renaissance woman artist, Plautilla Nelli (1524–1588), were restored in the Uffizi and the churches of Florence and Perugia. In June 2020, the Uffizi Gallery at the exhibition 'The Greatness of the Universe in the Art of Giovanna Garzoni' presented works by the representative of the Italian Baroque period, which illustrate her skills as an artist and portraitist.

The National Museum of Women in the Arts was founded in 1981 in Washington, USA as a private museum by American collectors and patrons Wilhelmina Cole Holladay and Wallace F. Holladay. NMWA opened the doors of its permanent location with the inaugural exhibition *'American Women Artists, 1830–1930'* [27].

Through the efforts of the philanthropist and art historian Dr. Jane Fortune was established Research program on "Women Artists in the age of Medici". It has focused on women artists active during the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries. In its ten years of activity, the program has been a fertile source of publications, books, articles, lectures, digital resources, and conference papers. Many younger scholars have taken part in this quest by means of internships that provided training in archival research [14].

In recent decades, it has been discovered, according to American art historian Mary D. Garrard, women of the early modern period of the Italian culture owned significant cultural agencies as artists, patrons, and consumers of art. Their achievements and activities now occupy a prominent place alongside men who previously represented culture and art in general [18, p. 7].

A comparative analysis conducted by Liana de Girolami Cheney shows that in the paintings of men and women-artists of the same era: 1) there are no differences between female and male creative mind; 2) in women's paintings there are various themes that are not found in men's paintings, in terms of motherhood, abortion and aspects of pubertal transformation [13, p. 1].

However, according to Elizabeth Cropper, women's art inevitably differs from men's, because the sexes were socialized to different impressions in the world [12, p. 263].

In the dissertation of the Italian art critic Rosa Lena Robinson 'Wonderful Women: Sofonisba Anguissola, Lavinia Fontana and Artemisia Gentileschi. Critical Analysis of Self-Portraits of Women Artists of the Renaissance and Baroque Era', the female ideal characteristic of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, is partly a direct reflection of the ideal developed in the practice of self-portrait painting by beautiful women, the first outstanding artists of these periods [33, p. 17].

As American art historian Louise Arizzoli notes in her article 'Marietta Robusti in Jacopo Tintoretto's Workshop. Her Likeness and her Role as a Model for her Father', 'she had an unconventional uprising: in her youth,

she was not confined to the womanly world. Notably, she used to dress as a boy in order to participate to her father public life, something uncommon since, at that time period, women belonged to the household and their code of conduct was strictly supervised' [5, p. 107].

Italian scientist Sheila Barker in the article 'The First Biography of Artemisia Gentileschi: Self-Fashioning and Proto-Feminist Art History in Cristofano Bronzini's Notes on Women Artists' pays attention to biographers from Vasari to Freud and beyond have treated artists as a natural category marked by exceptionalism, adapting the life stories of male artists to fit rhetorical models and mytho-heroic constructs. Women artists, by comparison, were doubly impacted by this biographical exceptionalism, since their rupture with gender stereotypes led to an additional qualification as marvels among their sex and thus as miracles of nature [6, p. 425].

In the Ukrainian art history these retrospective rediscoverings went almost unnoticed. Meanwhile, for example, the Lviv National Gallery of Art has a painting by Sofonisba Anguissola 'Portrait of a Noble Lady' (1580–1600).

Exceptions can be considered the article by L. Ivanytska 'Life and Work of Properzia de' Rossi in the Cycle of Concepts 'Medieval Woman', 'Art', 'Society' [2] and the article by Yu. Romanenkova '16th Century as the 'Fatherland' of Self-Portrait: Prerequisites, Worldview Principles' [3]. Analyzing self-portraits in European painting of the Renaissance and Mannerism, the author identifies those that were painted by women. Among them are self-portraits of the Italian female painters Marietta Robusti, Sofonisba Anguissola, Lavinia Fontana, Artemisia Gentileschi (note that the life of this woman artist dates back to the 17th century).

In another article 'The Role of Women in Art: Creator, Muse, Evil Genius' Yu. Romanenkova emphasizes that 'women as creators – Rosalba Carriera, Lavinia Fontana, Artemisia Gentileschi and others are certainly talented, but not genius, it is difficult to deny' [4]. Understanding the relativity of the criteria of genius, we note that it is not uncommon for such an artist's status to be determined only over time (sometimes the opposite happens when the artist decreases 'in genius'). This is due to the rediscovery and rethinking of creativity and works of the forgotten artists.

The **purpose** of this study is to fill the gaps that exist in the domestic art history and Cultural studies regarding the work of Italian women artists of

the Renaissance and Baroque period of the 16th and 17th centuries Plautilla Nelli, Sofonisba Anguissola, Lavinia Fontana, Marietta Robusti, Artemisia Gentileschi, Arcangela Paladini, Giovanna Garzoni, Elisabetta Sirani and the sculptor Properzia de' Rossi.

2. The genesis of women's artistic practices in Italian culture

The first artist to be mentioned in the well known 'Biographies of the Most Famous Painters, Sculptors and Architects' by the Italian art historian Giorgio Vasari, the biographer describes the life and work of the Properzia de' Rossi (1490–1530) – 'the first known woman sculptor of the Renaissance, who, not taking into account the existing at that time in the Western European society rules of life and norms of behaviour, due to her iron will and irresistible desire to create in the chosen field of art engaged in what was then considered exclusively male occupation – stone carving, marble finishing, engraving and making unusual miniatures' [2, p. 36].

Thanks to her father, a notary, who had progressive views, Properzia was able to get an education at the University of Bologna, which girls had the right to enter. After education, during which Properzia showed great talent, she decided to do sculpture. However, this type of fine art was considered an exclusively male profession. Therefore, Properzia invented a way out by carving images on cherry and peach pits. This is how the cycle 'The Passion of the Christ' was depicted.

The 'Grassi Family Coat of Arms' (circa 1510–24), a filigreed crest (Figure 1) inlaid with 11 quarter-sized stones with Christ's apostles (Figure 2) engraved on one side, female saints on the other, is now in Medieval Museum (Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna, Italy).

Properzia de' Rossi's carved cherry stone pendant of gold, diamonds, emeralds and pearls, surrounding a cherry stone, which is intricately carved with more than 100 heads, disposed in the Silver Museum (Museo degli Argenti, Pitti Palace, Florence, Italy) (Figure 3).

Also Properzia made several sculptures for the portal of the main facade of the Cathedral of San Petronio in Bologna, including a plaque on a biblical story about Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Figure 4). In addition to it – the figures of two angels, that still adorn this cathedral.

Although the relief and sculptures of angels were considered magnificent, she was paid very little for her work, and after her husband's death, the

Figure 1. Properzia de' Rossi. *Grassi Family Coat of Arms*. c. 1510-24. Medieval Museum (Civico Medievale), Bologna, Italy

Figure 2. Properzia de' Rossi. Detail of St. Peter in Grassi *Family Coat of Arms*. circa 1510-24. Medieval Museum (Civico Medievale), Bologna, Italy

sculptor generally lived in poverty. And she did not receive any more orders, because sculpture was considered an art that only men should do.

The chronicles describe her as a fanciful, fickle and indomitable character, uncaring to transgress the dictates of the official artistic code. Her competitive spirit suggested her bold choices, always precluded to women: the practice of sculpture, in fact, with a predilection for the 'roughness of the marbles' and 'the harshness of the iron', as well as the interest in 'mechanical things'.

The fame of such talent spread throughout Italy and finally reached the ears of Pope Clement VII, who, immediately after his crowning the emperor Charles V in Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna, inquired

Figure 3. Properzia de'Rossi. *Carved cherry stone pendant.* 1520–1530. Silver Museum (Museo degli Argenti), Pitti Palace, Florence, Italy. Inv. No. 00646610

Figure 4. Properzia de' Rossi. *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*. circa 1525. Museum of the Basilica of San Petronio, Bologna, Italy

about her, but found out what happened this day. Unfortunate woman had died 24.02.1530 and was buried at the hospital Morte, as bequeathed in her last will. And therefore, Pope really wanted to see her. Thus, her death made him very sad, and even more her fellow citizens, who considered her the greatest miracle of nature during her lifetime.

Plautilla Nelli (1524–1588) was the first known woman artist of the Italian Renaissance. She was born in Florence to a family of cloth merchants. At age fourteen, Pulsinella Nelli took the veil as Plautilla and entered the convent she would serve three times as prioress. Her sister Kostanza became a nun under the name of Sister Petronilla. She was trained in drawing and painting, probably by nuns. By age thirty-five, she had created several large paintings for Santa Catherina, and was receiving income from paintings sold "outside," perhaps to the Florentine noblemen and women who, Vasari said, owned many of her works. Sister Plautilla did not have access to studio training available to male artists, but since Santa Catherina was not cloistered until 1575, she was free to learn from the exceptional

wealth of art visible in Florence. Her drawings reveal an attentive study of individual figures by other artists, including Michelangelo's Risen Christ, which indicates she traveled as far as Rome. Nelli also inherited a cache of drawings by the artist-friar Fra Bartolommeo, which she drew on for some figures in her own compositions, modified to suit her purposes [19].

Due to the fact that the monastery encouraged the study of fine arts, the nuns had the opportunity to copy frescoes and paintings by prominent artists of Florence: Bronzino, Andrea del Sarto, Alessandro Allori. By working hard, Sister Plautilla Nelli reached such a level of skill that her works adorned not only her own monastery, but also other monasteries in Florence, Pistoia, and private homes.

G. Vasari wrote about her that 'in the homes of noble Florentine citizens there are so many of her paintings that it would be too long to tell about everything'. Some of them, in particular, Madonna dei Doni, Vasari praised extremely highly, but with a reservation about her gender, that 'in some of her works she portrayed in the person of Madonna Constanza dei Doni, who today serves as an example of extraordinary beauty and virtue, and she portrayed her so well that it is impossible **to wish more in painting** from **a woman** who does not have … sufficient experience' (highlighted by me – O.G.) [1, p. 613]. In Florence, Cristofano Bronzini, literary accomplishment, spoke of having seen Sister Plautilla Nelli's paintings on display in private Florentine homes [6, p. 411].

One of Plautilla's best works is 'The Last Supper' (1550) in Santa-Maria-Novella (the only work signed by the artist). Compositionally, the painting repeats similar paintings by the artists who worked before Leonardo da Vinci. But the modeling of male figures and the individuality of their faces testify to an extremely high level of skill, which refutes Vasari's assertion that Plautilla 'could create wonderful things if, like men, she had the opportunity to learn to draw and reproduce living nature' [1, p. 613].

American art historian Mary D. Garrard has noted, the 'Lamentation' by Suor Plautilla Nelli, the first woman artist in Renaissance Florence with an oeuvre to go with her name. This large altar painting was created for the Dominican convent of Saint Catherine of Siena, where it stood, nearly ten feet high, on a prominent altar in the convent's public church. Located in Piazza San Marco, Santa Caterina was founded by a female disciple of Savonarola and became a major center of his spiritual legacy. Today

the painting is in the museum of San Marco, the adjacent monastery from which the reformist friar preached [19].

Vasari said that her best works were those she copied from others; that she could have done marvelous work had she been able, like men, to draw figures from life; and that her women were better than her men because she could study them directly (which contradicts the claim she could not draw from life). Other writers pointed to a set of models for Nelli's painting in Lamentations by Perugino, Fra Bartolommeo and Andrea Sarto. Those few elements of Nelli's Lamentation that echo these works – Christ's pose, the kneeling Saint John, and a male figure with outstretched arms – have been sufficient to persuade some modern scholars that Nelli was an unoriginal and technically deficient copyist, best understood as an artistic dilettante [19].

Detailed research and the list of 50 paintings attributed to Plautilla Nelli were done by Catherine Turrill. Author analyzes Plautilla Nelli's biography, creativity, paintings, career on the basis of archival sources [28, pp. 118–130].

The most famous of Plautilla's paintings are: 'Annunciation' (inv. No. 9739, received from the Academy of Fine Arts of Florence, in the collection of the Uffizi since 1953 and to this day, an external deposit) (Figure 5); 'Lamentation' (inv. No. 3490, in the Museum of the Convent of San Marco, Florence since 1907); 'St. Catherine Receives the Sacred Stigmata' (inv. No. 5677, in the Uffizi collection, deposit, Lambertesca, Florence, now in the Museum of the Last Supper of Andrea del Sarto in the convent of San Michele in San Salvi, deposits); 'Saint Dominic Receives the Rosary' (inv. No. 5686, in the Uffizi collection, now in the Museum of the Last Supper of Andrea del Sarto of the Monastery of San Michele in San Salvi, deposits); 'Our Lady of Sorrows' (inv. No. 5848, in the Uffizi collection, since 1974 in Pitti Palace) [31].

American museologist Jesse Locker, Metropolitan Museum of Art, writes in his review, that the sixteenth-century Florentine painter and Dominican nun Plautilla

Nelli has remained obscure. This fact is not surprising given that Nelli's extant oeuvre comprises only three paintings – a Lamentation (Museo di San Marco, Florence) (Figure 6), a Last Supper (Santa Maria Novella, Florence), and a Pentecost (San Domenico, Perugia) – along with handful of drawings, meaning that opportunities to see her works are extremely rare. Moreover,

Figure 5. Plautilla Nelli. *Annunciation*.
Uffizi, Florence, Italy. Inv. 1890 No. 9739,
came from the Academy of Fine Arts of Florence, in the collection of the Uffizi since 1953 and to this day (external deposits)

given that Nelli was evidently self-taught, the range of her technical abilities was limited, and because she was both a prioress and a painter of strictly of devotional images, her art is by definition less provocative than that of her Mannerist contemporaries and thus less likely to attract the eye of would-be researchers. She was, however, held in high esteem in her own day, as evidenced not only by Giorgio Vasari's praise of her, but also by her inclusion, over a generation later, in an account of notable members of the Dominican order by the chronicler Serafino Razzi [24, p. 532].

According to Mary D. Garrard, the heroic individualism of High Renaissance art would not have served the social interests of the nuns of Santa Caterina. Theirs was a communal society, grounded in a spiritual sisterhood that transcended blood ties, whose goal of communal harmony was supported by the images they placed around them. Suor Plautilla did not work in creative

Figure 6. Plautilla Nelli. *Lamentation*. Museum of the Convent of San Marco, Florence, Italy, Inv. No 3490, in the collection since 1907

isolation, as Vasari described her, but as part of a vital artistic community that she guided. She personally trained a group of artists at Santa Caterina, many of whose names are known to us, and whose prominence is demonstrated in the fact that eleven of the thirty-seven female artists named in sixteenth-century sources were Santa Caterina nuns. It is time to acknowledge the artist nuns' share in the complex mixture that was Renaissance culture, and the power of their art to reify and reinforce alternative values [19].

Much better known was the contemporary of Plautilla Nelli – Sofonisba Anguissola (1532–1625). Sofonisba Anguissola was born in Cremona (Lombardy). She came from an aristocratic family whose parents, Amilcar Anguissola and Bianca Ponzone, provided a varied education for their seven children: six girls and a boy.

Sofonisba's sister, Lucia Anguissola (1536/38–1565/68), also became an artist whose talent was valued by contemporaries even higher than Sofonisba's gift. However, due to her early death, she is less known (Giorgio Vasari, who visited the Anguissola family in Cremona, no longer found her). Because of this, according to some art critics, some of Lucia's works may have been mistakenly attributed to Sofonisba. Lucia's authorship is established only in the painting 'Portrait of the Cremonese doctor Pietro Maria' (1566), which is in the Prado Museum in Madrid.

Sofonisba portrayed her three sisters Lucia (1536/38–1565/68), Minerva (1539–1566), and Europe (1543–?) in the painting 'The Game of Chess'. This picture is considered by some art critics to be so successful that it is from it that they suggest counting the beginning of genre painting. The painting is currently in the National Museum in Poznan (Poland). In 1823, the painting was purchased by Athanasius Rechinsky, the Prussian envoy in Paris, at the sale of Lucien Bonaparte's collection, which it was found during the mass requisitions of works of art carried out by the Napoleon's emissaries in the territories occupied by the French troops.

In Sofonisba Anguissola's three narrative portraits – The Chess Game, The Family Group, and Campi Painting Anguissola – she claims artistic subjectivity through the mask of invisibility. Concealing those female attributes that would subsume her into objectified beauty, and registering her presence on the unseen side of the picture plane, she insures that she cannot be pinned by the viewer's gaze. In this floating position, a looming absence whose real appearance is left to our imaginations, she may be said to carry «not-woman» to the ultimate extreme, yet she escapes confinement in a demeaning conceptual category. In such a situation, perhaps even better than being larger than life is being larger than art [17, p. 619].

All the sisters, like Sofonisba, were gifted in many ways. In addition to painting, they studied languages, music, played musical instruments well and sang, and as the painting shows, they also played chess well. However, Lucia was followed by Minerva, and in 1585 Europe took a vow and went to a monastery, taking the name of her sister Minerva.

Sofonisba, like Lucia and Europe, was a student of the famous artist Giulio Campo (Bernardino Campi 1522–1591). All of Anguissola's sisters were excellent artists who worked in the genre of portraiture. Sofonisba herself is considered the ancestor of the so-called family portrait.

According to legend, the father of Sofonisba facilitated the meeting of his daughter with the famous artist and sculptor Michelangelo. She successfully completed the task of the master, drawing a portrait of a crying child, and received a positive assessment of the artist. Sofonisba's talent made her famous early on. Among her clients was the Duke of Alba, who liked his portrait so much that he recommended Sofonisba to Queen Elisabeth of Valois of Spain. Anguissola met Elisabeth Valois at her wedding in 1559. The new Spanish queen, who became the third wife of King Philip II of Spain, invited the Italian artist to the Spanish court and gave her the title of court painter. This position was not only honourable, but also extremely financially advantageous. The 'Portrait of Elisabeth of Valois, Queen of Spain, holding the portrait of Philip II' (1561–1565), which is now in the Prado Museum in Madrid, is famous (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Sofonisba Anguissola. ***Portrait of Elisabeth Valois, Queen of Spain, Holding a Portrait of Philip II.*** **Approx. 1561–1565. Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain**

At that time, in the field of fine arts, Spain was actively focused on the Italian Renaissance, seeing in its achievements a role model, and Italian masters were considered unsurpassed painters.

During her stay in Spain, Sofonisba's name became widely known. Not only aristocrats but also the top of the Catholic Church addressed her with orders.

Thus, Pope Pius IV, through his nuncio at the Spanish court, gave Sofonisba an order for a portrait of the Spanish queen.

Correspondence on this subject between the artist and Pius IV is quoted by Giorgio Vasari in his

‘Biographies…’: ‘Holy Father! The Reverend Nuncio of Your Holiness has informed me that it is desirable for you to have a portrait of Her Majesty, my Lady Queen, painted by my hand. Although this offer was accepted by me as a sign of the special mercy and devotion of Your Beatitude, whom I am always ready to serve, I still asked for Her Majesty’s permission, which was given very willingly, because your offer was perceived as a manifestation of your Holiness’s paternal attitude.

I take this opportunity to send you the portrait with the departing gentleman. If I have succeeded in satisfying the desire of Your Holiness, my pleasure will be infinite. It remains to add, however, that if it were possible to convey with the brush to the eyes of Your Beatitude all the beauty of the soul of this brighter queen, you would not be able to see anything more wonderful. However, all that could be depicted in my art, I tried to make every effort that I could, to present the truth to Your Holiness. Concluding this with all the respect and humility, I kiss Your Holiness’s feet. The humble servant of Your Beatitude, Sofonisba Anguissola. Madrid, September 16, 1561’ (my translation – O.G.) [1, p. 958].

A month later, on October 15, 1561, Pope Pius IV, who received the commissioned portrait, replied to the artist: ‘Pius Papa IV. Dilecta in Christo’. We received the portrait of the glorious Queen of Spain, our dearest daughter, which you sent us, and it gave us the greatest pleasure, because the person depicted on it, we, among other things, love like a father for sincere piety and other wonderful spiritual qualities. And also because the image of it is written by your hand diligently and perfectly. We thank you for it and assure you that we include it in the list of things most dear to us, and, approving of your amazing talent, we still believe that this virtue is the least of many inherent in you. Finally, we send you our blessing again. May the Lord God protect you. ‘Dat. Romae, die XV octobris 1561’ (my translation – O.G.) [1, p. 959].

Sofonisba Anguissola’s two marriages do not seem to have interfered with her paintings and other cultural activity; anything, they provide new environments for their practice. After returning from Spain, Sofonisba married and moved to Sicily, which at the time was part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which was actually under Spanish rule. In Palermo, where she resided part time with her first husband between 1571 and 1579, she continued to paint and perhaps to teach painting. And in Genoa, where she

lived with her second husband Orazio Lomellini from 1584 to 1616–20, her household is said to have been the center of salons and artists' gatherings [17, p. 618]. In Palermo, the artist ended her life at the age of ninety.

Describing the work of Sofonisba Anguissola, Yu. Romanenkova writes that 'Sofonisba was considered an excellent portraitist, she painted portraits of nobles to order, and portraits of her parents are also known. G. Vasari mentions all the sisters and writes that it is difficult to determine who of them is the most skilled, although at the time when the biographies of the Florentine appeared, Anna was still very young, and Europe was just a beginner. But Sofonisba is better known. It was she who achieved the greatest recognition, her creative biography is quite rich. She studied painting on an equal footing with men, despite her noble origins. Signorina Sofonisba was one of those masters who were invited to the Spanish court, which was a recognition of her talent. In 1559, thanks to the patronage of the Duke of Alba, she found herself at the court of the Spanish king' [3, p. 112]. According to the author, the first Italian period of the master, who lived for more than ninety years, lasted until that date. Sofonisba was primarily a portraitist, although she sometimes resorted to religious subjects. Among the works dating from her first Italian period there are not much, because in 1559 she left Italy. Sofonisba has not always mastered the anatomy of the human face, the postures of her models were often forced, pictorial, but she also has several significant achievements that can be considered achievements for the art of painting in general: Anguissola quite competently, succinctly built the compositional schemes of her works, over time the psychological characteristics of her models become more complex, which is especially evident in self-portraits, in addition, she resorted to the transfer of different age characteristics of the models, including old – even herself she portrayed at least twice (1610, 1620) at a very old age, without idealizing. She probably created her last self-portrait at the age of over ninety. The main thing is the portraitist's attitude to light, the use of contrasting methods used by Caravaggio, to which G. de la Tour will gravitate.

Anguissola's self-portraits can be traced both to the stages of formation of her manner and to the components of the influence that formed her individual creative handwriting. The dominant method was 'tenebroso', which the artist often resorted to even in the early period (self-portraits of

the mid-1550s). Her works are always concise, characteristic of Mannerist art in characterizing the psychological state of man [3, p. 112].

In the Uffizi in Florence there are 3 paintings and 1 miniature by Sofonisba Anguissola: 'Self-portrait', 1552–1553 (inv. 1890, No. 1420, in the collection from 1682, received from the collection of Cosimo III Medici); 'Portrait of Elisabeth de Valois, Wife of King Philip II of Spain' (inv. 1890 No. 2387); 'Portrait of a Girl With a Flower «(inv. 1890 No. 2398); miniature 'Portrait of a Woman' (inv. 1890 No. 4047, in the collection of Pitti since 1817; in the collection of the Uffizi since 1953) [31].

The nature of her achievement was shaped by the limitations she experienced. But if she had to market her own self-image as an exceptional woman artist, she nevertheless found a position to take on this and a way of imaging it that permitted her to escape to a degree the problematic position of the woman artist [17, p. 619].

3. Women's art of the Renaissance and Baroque period in Italy as the theoretical reflection

The first woman elected to the Roman Academy of Arts, Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614), was born in Bologna to the Bologna artist Prospero Fontana. Like most women artists of the time, Lavinia was a portraitist. Her portraits were very popular among the women aristocrats of the city.

In 1603 she was invited to Rome by the Pope Clement VIII, and the following year, 1604, Lavinia Fontana became the official portrait painter in the court of Pope Paul V. During her life, Lavinia Fontana painted 135 paintings, the largest of which – the altar 'Martyrdom of St. Stephen' died in 1823.

The first recorded Self-Portrait by Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614) is a drawing in red and black chalk now held in the Pierpont Morgan Collection in New York. The drawing is dated to c. 1575. It is representative of the artistic objectives of a young woman oscillating between the student and the professional. The artist represents herself at age 23. The features are solemn and well composed. Order, design and harmony of line are stressed within the drawing. The work conveys a distinct sense of youthfulness. Though fairly little is known regarding the exact history of the artist's early childhood certain elements are established. Lavinia was the sole daughter and heir of Prospero Fontana [33, p. 93].

According to Italian art historian Rosa Lena Reed Robinson, the style of the artist however was certainly also achieved in tandem with her artistic education cultivated within the workshop of her father. There is perhaps evident an influence from the Lombard portraits of the Italian nobility by Sofonisba Anguissola. The dress is quite refined. Lavinia was already capable of excellent drawing at a young age. The Self-Portrait drawing of c. 1575 suggests that Lavinia was fascinated by the minutiae of artistic practice and representation. It is this focus which will be a significant element of her later work and which characterizes her artistic style [33, p. 94].

Characterizing the peculiarities of the individual manner of Lavinia Fontana Yu. Romanenkova notes that ‘she was no exception to the rule and Lavinia Fontana, whose self-portraits of the 1570’s, apparently just as traditional iconographically, the psychological state of the girl is conveyed rather superficially, but, unlike the daughter of the maestro Robusti, Lavinia performs very professionally from a technical point of view – she is a real professional, every detail of the work is perfectly painted. Lavinia resorted to depicting herself with a purely feminine delicacy, in luxurious costumes, with many laces and jewelry, each detail of which is painted with the professionalism of a miniaturist, but she does not lose her sense of wholeness, combines work tone, without falling into trifles’ [3, p. 114]. According to the researcher, Fontana’s works testify to her acquaintance with the French painting of the Fontainebleau school, although we have no information about the master’s travels to the court of the King of France, but the influence of French art is palpable – it was at this time that the masters of the Fontainebleau style had very common scenes of ‘ladies behind the toilet’, which were often referred to by F. Clouet, anonymous Fontainebleau.

The interaction of the French and Italian components of Mannerism was best seen in the painting of the Fontana. The influence of Flemish art is not unfamiliar, because the tendency to excessive detail was inherent in the Flemish artists, who, incidentally, formed the core of the Second School of Fontainebleau. The palette of Lavinia Fontana’s works is also restrained, monochrome, she also turns to traditional iconographic schemes – she depicts herself at a musical instrument (portrait on a harpsichord) or at a table with a letter. Titian’s influence is also noticeable in Fontana’s self-portraits, first of all in compositional solutions [3, p. 114].

This in turn suggests that Lavinia Fontana, though not born into the nobility, was educated with professional female artistic ideal as a point of inspiration. This systematic educational initiative prompted training in musical skill, instruments and song, art, specifically painting and drawing, languages including Latin, reading and writing, literature, history, the sciences and poetry [33, p. 96].

When female artists such as Anguissola and Fontana showed themselves playing the musical instrument identified in popular thought with the female body, they did not merely depart from the sexualizing tradition to connect instead with the virginal Saint Cecilia. In the fully secular and contemporary contexts in which they join their self-images with the musical instruments, Anguissola and Fontana emphasize not the form and shape of the instrument but their own act of playing it, thus conveying the idea of self-possession and self-management. At the same time, they extend the range of the synecdoche so represent not only body but also mind, talent and abilities [17, p. 595].

It is particularly relevant that the self-portrait entitled 'Self-Portrait Making Music with a Maidservant' dated to 1577, has been interpreted as having been painted by Lavinia in anticipation of her engagement and subsequent marriage to Gian Paolo Zappi in 1577. The female artist's ability to contribute to an evolving ideal of feminine beauty, particularly in the interest of romantic love, is a point of empowerment within the genre. Marriage for women and here, specifically, for Lavinia Fontana, secured social position. Identity self-portraiture is arguably here pursued by the artist in the interest of her self-representation as the ideal female professional artist. The idea of the creation of an ideal identity for herself as an element of the practice of the artist merits further critical analysis [33, p. 98].

Caroline Murphy notes in her monograph 'Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-Century Bologna' regarding the marital contract between Lavinia Fontana and Gian Paolo Zappi. It was a revolutionary document, "Prospero Fontana (Lavinia's father – O.G.) would then undertake the necessary expenses to clothe husband and wife during his lifetime, after which, if his wife Antonia was still alive, Gian Paolo would be obliged to keep his mother-in-law in his house in Bologna or wherever he chose to live, and to take care of her food and clothing bills. The earnings that Gian Paolo and Lavinia made from practicing painting were to be transferred to

the benefit of Prospero, who promised to maintain the couple and treat them well for the duration of his natural life. Additionally, the rent on the house in San Benedetto, at present 150 lire a year, was to be transferred to the benefit of Prospero in vivo. If these conditions were not observed, Severo Zappi would pay Prospero compensation of five hundred scudi" [33, p. 102].

According to the researcher, the only other confirmed extant self-portrait painting by Lavinia Fontana is entitled 'Self-Portrait in the Studiolo' (Figure 8) and is dated 1579. It is a mature work though the artist was twenty-six the year the self-portrait was completed. Though the work is a miniature it astutely presented a woman within a man's world. The small work, painted on copper, is only 15 cm in diameter. The features are those of the artist. Lavinia inhabits the most private male space, the Studiolo. The self-portrait miniature was commissioned in 1578 as a self-portrait by the Roman patron Alfonso Ciacon. This patron is noteworthy as he was an associate of Fulvio Orsini, the owner of the aforementioned early drawings by Sofonisba Anguissola. Both men are identified in the context of the Farnese circle at the time the painting was completed. Lavinia presented the self-portrait per his request to Ciacon in 1579 [33, p. 105].

Figure 8. Lavinia Fontana. Miniature. *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo*. 1579. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Inv. 1890 No. 4013.

The Uffizi collection in Florence contains 2 paintings and 5 miniatures by the artist Lavinia Fontana: 'Portrait of Francesco Panigarola', 1585 (inv. 1890 No. 807, in the Uffizi collection from 1771, now in the Palazzo Pitti); 'Do Not Touch Me', 1581 (inv. 1890 No. 1383, in the collection from 1632); miniature 'Self-portrait of Lavinia Fontana', 1579 (inv. 1890 No. 4013, received from the villa of the Medici Poggio a Caiano, 1713; in the collection of miniatures of the Uffizi since 1948); miniature 'Portrait of a Young Man', approx. 1575–1599 (inv. 1890 No. 4101, in the collection since 1948); miniature 'Portrait of a Young Woman' (inv. 1890 No. 8840, in the collection since 1948); miniature 'Portrait of a Woman' (inv. 1890 No. 8842; in the Uffizi collection since 1948); miniature 'Portrait of a Woman', middle of the 16th century, (inv. 1890 No. 8844; in the collection of the Uffizi since 1948) [31].

After the death of Prospero Fontana in 1597 Lavinia Fontana, her children and her husband relocated to Rome in 1603 at the invitation of Pope Clement VIII (1592–1605). There continued to be patronized by the Bolognese Buoncompagni family, the family of the deceased Pope Gregory XIII. The artist as well continued to paint private portrait commissions for the aristocracy and was awarded public commissions in Rome for religious altarpieces. Lavinia excelled in Rome and Pope Paul V (1605–1621) was likely among her sitters. In 1611 Lavinia Fontana, directly due to her professional success, was awarded commemoration in a portrait medallion. This is the first simultaneous representation of the image of a female artist and the image of La Pittura, the allegory of painting according to L'Iconologia of Cesare Ripa. The medallion is dated 1611 and is by Felice Maria Casoni. The obverse features the exact image of the artist, shown in profile. It is not an idealized image. The fortitude within the facial features is evident. The artist has a certain fullness around her face, it is likely that Lavinia ate well. She was certainly a success in 1611 and could afford to eat meat, a true mark of financial prosperity in the period. The artist was further distinguished by her election into the Accademia di San Luca of Rome.

Lavinia Fontana died in Rome on August 11th, 1614. Her final painting is acknowledged to be Minerva Dressing [33, pp. 125–126].

Another talented Italian woman artist of the 16th century – Marietta Robusti (1560–1590) – the daughter of the famous artist of the Venetian Renaissance Jacopo Tintoretto (Robusti). Sometimes Marietta Robusti is

also called Marietta Tintoretto or simply la Tintoretta. The talented artist lived only 30 years, and from her legacy came very few paintings, which, moreover, not all belong to her unquestionably.

Raffaello Borghini's 'Il Riposo' (1584) and Carlo Ridolfi's 'Le Maraviglie dell'Arte' (1648) praise Marietta Robusti's talents: she was well educated, a good musician and an excellent portraitist. Ridolfi and Borghini insist on Tintoretto's predilection for his older daughter; according to them, she was his favorite child [5, p.105].

Borghini asserts that she was born in 1556; whereas, Ridolfi claims that she was born four years later in 1560 [Ibid, p. 106]. The seventeenth century document "Genealogia di Casa Tintoretto" discusses Marietta's date of birth [25].

Jacopo Tintoretto and his wife Faustina dei Vescovi had three children whose names are known to us, if not others. Marco, named for his grandfather, was presumably the eldest; Marietta, the gifted daughter, was born in 1560; and Domenico, who inherited his father's talent without his genius, perhaps even later than that time [35, p. 123].

American writer Frank Preston Stearns in his monograph 'Life and genius of Jacopo Robusti, called Tintoretto' draws attention to Marietta was a child according to her father's desire, and grew ultimately to be one of the most noted portrait painters of the sixteenth century. She seems to have lacked inventive genius, but there is more spiritual life in her faces than in those painted by Domenico. Her skill must have been a great satisfaction to her father, because he could have her company so much of the time in his old age. It was one of his characteristic freaks to take her to his studio dressed as a boy; but why he did so is not very clear [35, p. 124].

Marietta also received a good education, one reserved for upper-classes; even if unmarried, she was allowed to participate in her father's circle of friends that she entertained by playing music and by singing. But most of all, she was her father's apprentice, and he trained her personally. Perhaps because he needed her in his workshop.

In 1578 Marietta married the goldsmith and jeweler Marco Augusta, most likely a German man coming from Augsburg, as wrote German Baroque art historian and painter Joachim von Sandrart in 'Academia nobilissimae artis pictoriae' (Nuremberg, 1683). After the wedding, the spouses went to live in the district of S. Stin (S. Stefano), in the district of S. Polo. And on April 9, 1580 their daughter Orsola Benvenuta was baptized [25]. Therefore, the

later myth that Marietta died in childbirth has to be reconsidered. Since she stayed in Venice after her wedding, she most likely continued to work in her father's workshop. We then have few biographical elements and no painting that have been irrevocably attributed to her since she stayed in the shadow of her famous and protective father [5, p.105].

We could find her portrait also in Carlo Ridolfi's 'Le Maraviglie dell'Arte', 1648 (Figure 9) [32, p. 70].

To discuss the supposed likeness of Marietta Robusti, it is first indispensable to look at a portrait now preserved at the Uffizi, Florence, Italy, dated 1578 ca., which is traditionally recognized as her self-portrait. The history of its attribution is fairly complex and has been uncovered by Lucia and Ugo Procacci through a study of the letters exchanged by Marco Boschini and the cardinal Leopoldo de Medici, who acquired the canvas in 1675. The painting belonged first to Nicolas Régnier, a Flemish painter established in Venice, who attempted to sell it as a Tintoretto in 1665; it then passed to a certain cavalier Francesco Fontana, who believed the canvas was by Titian and proposed it to the Cardinal de Medici as such. The transaction failed the first time but was secured by Boschini, who served as an intermediary between the cardinal and the cavalier Fontana, through his attribution to Marietta Robusti [5, p. 108].

Figure 9. Portrait of Marietta Robusti in the book of Carlo Ridolfi *'Le marauiglie dell'Arte, ouero, Le vite de gl'illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato'*, 1648, part II, p. 70

From 'Self-portrait with a Madrigal' (Figure 10) the face of the Venetian beauty of the late Renaissance looks at us: golden hair is dressed in a typical hairstyle for that time, the woman is dressed in a dress of Venetian fashion of

Figure 10. Marietta Robusti. S*elf-portrait with a Madrigal*. Approx. 1578. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Inv. 1890 No. 1898

that time, and a pearl necklace adorns a full neck (the corporeality of the model corresponds to the then ideas of anthropological aesthetics).

As Louise Arizzoli notes, it presents the image of a beautiful, blond-haired woman with porcelain-white skin, dressed elegantly and with no individualized features. Moreover, she invites the viewer to look at her and at the book of madrigals she is holding. The musical text has been identified as a madrigal by Philippe Verdelot, titled Madonna per voi ardo – my lady I burn with love for you – which looks rather like a declaration from a man, the painter, to his beloved, the sitter [5, p. 108].

The Ukrainian art critic Yu. Romanenkova does not evaluate Tintoretta's paintings very well: 'her self-portraits are quite superficially purely psychological, although they may arouse interest in the technical level of performance…, the compositional solutions are typical – the same scheme with a musical instrument or with a book in hand, i.e. iconographic works are also classic for that time. But there are also more successful works, which due to the skill of painting are sometimes even

attributed to the brush of the artist's father, they are so different in the manner of painting…

In general, a woman's self-portrait, Romanenkova notes, is becoming widespread at this time, although a woman-artist was not yet a typical phenomenon in those years. For a woman the reasons for frequent appeals to the genre of self-portrait were slightly more, and they differed from the traditional ones. It was harder for a woman to find a nature with which she could and was allowed to work, and the image of herself was always at hand. But it also provokes one of the main features of a woman's self-portrait – a much higher percentage of idealization than in a man's portrait, even considering that images of male artists at that time are not devoid of idealization, they will become realistic later' [3, p. 111].

A painting such as that of Marietta Robusti, as Mary D. Garrard writes, whose expressive tone is more conventional than those of Anguissola and Fontana, might appeal to many men as the image of a beautiful woman whose juxtaposition with the musical instrument recalls the admirable purity of Saint Cecilia pleasantly mingling in the imagination with the erotic accessibility of another kind of woman altogether (two tropes that are in fact deeply connected). Simultaneously, it might be understood by many women as a representing female who manages her sexuality as competently as she performs upon the musical instrument that symbolizes her total creative potential [17, pp. 595–596].

Recently, however, some scholars began to doubt this attribution. Woods Marsden suggests that the quality of this painting is mediocre, and would not fit Ridolfi's praise of the young woman's talent. Duncan Bull notes that the work could belong more easily to the Verona area rather than to Venice, a characteristic which would discount it from Tintoretto's workshop [5, p. 108]. Also Duncan Bull claims that the so-called self-portrait in the Uffizi may be discounted from her œuvr [10, p. 678].

Unfortunately, Tintoretta very rarely signed her works, which was a typical phenomenon at that time, so Robusti only owns the already mentioned self-portrait. And some of her paintings have long been considered the work of her father Jacopo Tintoretto. A few more paintings most likely belong to her brush. The most probable authorship of Marietta is considered to be the painting 'Portrait of Ottavio Strada' (1567–1568) by the Rijksmuseum, 'The Old Man and the Boy' (1585) by the Art History Museum in Vienna

(this painting was generally attributed to her father, Jacopo Tintoretto) [5, p. 112]. Marietta was active in her father's workshop, where three of her brothers worked as well; therefore, attributions remain very problematic [Ibid, p.105].

She received invitations from the kings of both France and Spain to come to their capitals as court painter, but she could not be induced to leave Venice and her father; nor is it easy to imagine that anyone who was well situated in that enchanted city could be tempted to seek fortune elsewhere [35, p. 124]. As mentioned above, the invitation of the Spanish king Philip II was not only honourable, but also financially attractive. Madrid paid well for the work of guest artists. Thus, the title of court artist of Charles I had one of the 'Renaissance titans' Titian Vecellio, for many years at the Spanish court worked the Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens, and the German artist of the Classicist era Anton Raphael Mengs.

The invitation of the Spanish king proves that Marietta Robusti was well known as an artist, otherwise she simply would not have received such an invitation.

Italian art historian Raffaello Borghini in the famous collection of biographies and works of artists and sculptors 'Il Riposo' (1584) glorifies Marietta Robusti's talents: 'Ha il Tintoretto una figliuola, chiamata Marietta, e detta da tutti Tintoretta, la quale oltre alla bellezza, & alla gratia, & al saper sonare di Grauicembolo, di liuto, e d'altri strumenti, dipigne benissimo, & ha fatto molte bell'opere, e fra l'altre fece il ritratto di Iacopo Strada Antiquario dell'Imperador Massimiliano secondo, il ritratto di lei stessa, i quali, come cosa rara, sua Maestà gli tenne in camera sua, e fece ogni opera di havere appresso di se questa donna eccellente, la quale fu ancora mandata à chiedere al padre dal Re Filippo, e dall'Arciduca Ferdinando; ma egli molto amandola non la si volle tor di vista; ma hauendola maritata sì gode delle sue virtù, & ella no lascia continouamente di dipignere ritro uandosi intorno à 28 anni; ma perche io non ho particolar notitia delle opere sue, di lei in ragionando non passero piu auanti' [9, pp. 558–559]. 'Tintoretto has a daughter, called Marietta, and known by all as Tintoretta, who in addition to beauty, gratia, and the ability to play Grauicembolo, lute, and other instruments, paints very well, and has made many beautiful works, and among others she painted the portrait of Jacopo Strada Antiquario dell'Imperador Maximilian the second, the portrait of herself, which, as a

rare thing, his Majesty kept him in his room, and made every work to have near him this excellent woman, who was again sent to ask her father by King Philip, and by Archduke Ferdinand; but he loved her very much and did not want her to be seen; but when she is married, she enjoys her virtues, and she does not continually give up painting, finding herself around 28 years old; but because I have no particular news of her works, I will no longer pass on her in reasoning' (my translation – O.G.).

According to another Italian art historian Carlo Ridolfi's 'Vita di Marietta Tintoretta. Pittrice, Figlivola di Iacopo' in *'Le marauiglie dell'arte, ouero, Le vite de gl'illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato'* (1648), 'Fù particolare dote però di Marietta il saper farbene i ritratti, & uno di Marco dei Vescoui, con barba lunga, si conserua ancora nelle cafe de' Tintoretti, con quello di Pietro fuo figliuolo. Ritratte in oltre molti gentilhuomini, e Dame Venetiane, quali incontrauano volontieri il praticar seco, essendo ripiena di tratti gentili, e trattenendole col canto, e col suono. Fece di più il ritratto di Iacopo Strada antiquario di Masimiliano Imperadore, di cui fece egli dono à quella Maestà, come di opera rara: onde inuaghitosi Cesare del di lei valore la fece ricercare al Padre, e la stessa iftanza glie ne fece Filippo II. Rè di Spagna, e l'Arciduca Ferdinando: Ma il Tintoretto più tosto si compiacque di vederla maritata in Mario Augusta Gioiliere, per vedersela sempre appresso, amandola teneramente, che di rimanerne priuo, benche fauorita da Prencipi' [32, p. 72]. 'But it was Marietta's particular gift to know how to make portraits well, and one of Marco dei Vescoui (her grandfather – O.G.), with a long beard, is still preserved in the cafe de 'Tintoretti, with his son Pietro. In addition, she portrayed many gentlemen, and Venetian ladies, who willingly encounter practicing with them, being filled with gentle features, and holding them back with song and sound. She painted even more the portrait of Jacopo Strada antiquarian by Masimiliano Emperor, of which she made a gift to that Majesty, as a rare work: wherefore Caesar, inuaghitating her value, made her look for the Father, and Philip II made her the same interest. King of Spain, and Archduke Ferdinand: but Tintoretto was soon pleased to see her married in jeweler Mario Augusta, to always see her close to him, loving her tenderly, rather than being deprived of her, although favored by Prencipi' (my translation – O.G.).

Therefore Carlo Ridolfi described only three works that she could draw, namely such a self-portrait that she sent to Maximilian II, a portrait

of Maximilian II's antiquarian Jacopo Strada, and a portrait of Marco dei Vescovi, her grandfather with his son Pietro [32, p. 72].

There is ample evidence that a talented young woman artist was a curiosity worthy to excite the interest of sixteenth-century princes. Strada, Tintoretto – and probably also Maximilian – would have been aware of the example of Sofonisba Anguissola whose skills as a painter and musician had led to an appointment at Philip II's court in 1559. Sofonisba had advertised her talents chiefly through the medium of self-portraits. The self-portrait by Marietta that Maximilian reportedly kept in his room is likely to have reached the emperor as part of a similar strategy.

Duncan Bull draws attention in his article 'A Double-Portrait Attributable to Marietta Tintoretto' to there could have been no better channel through which to bring her to the emperor's attention than Jacopo Strada. A former pupil of Giulio Romano, Strada was instrumental in introducing Italian principles of architectural and artistic design to the transalpine courts; and in addition to being imperial antiquary he was Maximilian's acknowledged favourite and principal adviser on artistic matters. A portrait of Strada by a female prodigy would in itself have pricked imperial curiosity. One combined with a self-portrait would have done so even more, especially with so piquant a detail as the cross-dressing. A double-portrait, in which Marietta portrayed herself in deferential conversation with Strada, may also have been perceived as flattering to Strada's status as a leading art expert, and thus also to the emperor whose adviser he was. It should be added that the Dresden picture reached Saxony from the imperial collection at Prague, where it was described in the 1718 and 1737 inventories as 'Tintoretto. Orig. Eine contrafée eines meisters und eines disápels'. Resting as it does on such circumstantial evidence, any attribution of the Dresden double-portrait to Marietta must remain tentative. But should it prove true it might help solve the vexed question of her birthdate [10, p. 681].

Due to historiographical, technical-technological, art studies, the attribution of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie of old masters 'A double-portrait with Jacopo Strada' was changed to the authorship of Marietta Robusti (Figure 11).

Marietta Robusti, also called Marietta Tintoretto, died in 1590, when she was only thirty years of age. Of all her father's family she was the one with whom he could have the most sympathy, and his tenderness for her

was everywhere known [35, p. 305–306]. Then, according to Carlo Ridolfi as an authority: “In the tomb at Santa Maria dell’ Orto was buried Marietta Robusti, who died in 1590 at the age of thirty” [32, p. 72]. Her corpse was interred in the tomb of her grandfather Marco dei Vescovi at Santa Maria dell’ Orto, a most appropriate place, containing four great monuments of her genius. It was only the families of noblemen who were permitted to be buried in Venetian churches; but if Tintoretta had not possessed this right through her farther’s and mother’s descent [35, p. 312].

Marietta Robusti was certainly a recognized artist during her own time, and her portraits were appreciated not only in Venice but also throughout Europe, as some kings and emperors enquired about her. Her work, however, never received extensive attention in modern times because she spent all of her short life in the workshop of her father, as one of his main assistants. The question of the attribution of her work is thus still problematic. Through a small group of images that record her likeness, it is possible to affirm that she played a role that was diverse and more complex than what has usually been believed. As a talented assistant, she most likely covered important responsibilities in Tintoretto’s atelier [5, p. 112].

Figure 11. Tintoretto, Marietta (1550–1590) attribution, painter / Tintoretto, Domenico (1560–1635) historical attribution, painter. *A double-portrait with Jacopo Strada*. Circa 1567/68. Dresden Gemäldegalerie of old masters, Dresden, Germany, Inv. No. Gal.-Nr. 270

4. Visual self-objectification of the artist as a new cultural reality

The most famous of the early Italian women artists is Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653/ or 1654), who was born in Rome in the family of the artist Orazio Gentileschi, a friend and follower of one of the most famous representatives of the Italian Baroque, Michelangelo Merisi di Caravaggio (1573–1610).

Artemisia Gentileschi's work in foreign art history and cultural history has been the subject of considerable research in recent decades. Monographs, articles, dissertations dedicated to this extraordinary woman, the history of her life and work were studied. The intensity of publications on Artemisia allowed us to talk about a kind of renaissance of the artist's work in almost four centuries.

Cristofano di Ottaviano Bronzini's (1580–1633) most noteworthy literary accomplishment is his dialogue "Della dignità et della nobiltà delle donne", a thirty-two-tome manuscript at the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze composed in Florence largely between 1615 and 1622 and to which he added corrections and marginal notations in subsequent years. A defence of women that was partially published during his lifetime with the patronage of Medici women [6, p. 405]. Spanning three pages, Artemisia's biography is one of Bronzini's longer profiles of a woman artist.

The greatest attention to the life and work of A. Gentileschi in foreign science was paid from the standpoint of feminist analysis, which is explained by the peculiarities of the artist's biography. On May 6, 1611, when Artemisia was 17 years old, she was raped by Agostino Tassi, a colleague and friend of Orazio Gentileschi, Artemisia's father. From March 2 to November 28, 1612, the trial of Tassi continued.

Archival data on the course of the trial of Tassi was studied and partially published by Mary D. Garrard, who translated them into English [16]. Also, the archival court documents collected by Patricia Cavazzini were researched and published by the Metropolitan Museum in collaboration with Yale University as early as 2001 [11, p. 432–445].

As C. Bronzini notes, Tuzia Medaglia, who lived with the Gentileschi family, was under oath when she reported how Orazio would have preferred for Artemisia to become a nun rather than to marry: "Even when I moved into [Orazio's] house, he warned me not to speak to his daughter about husbands, rather, that I should persuade her to become a nun, which I tried to do several times" [6, p. 418].

It is known that Tassi was one of the artists who worked with Artemisia's father – Orazio Gentileschi. He set out to teach the daughter of his colleague and friend the linear perspective. (Why Orazio himself did not teach her this – the question remains open). Under this pretext, A. Tassi had the opportunity to visit the house of Gentileschi. However, according to the court documents, in the absence of the father, it was impossible to enter the house: it was closed and it was possible to get to it if the household members opened the door. Artemisia, apparently, strictly followed her father's orders.

It was recorded in the transcript of the court hearing that in the absence of Artemisia's father, the rapist Tassi was let into the house by some Tuzia Medaglia, who also lived there with her two small children and was either Artemisia's friend or servant. Tuzia opened the door for Tassi and led him to Artemisia, who was just painting one of Tuzia's sons. Agostino Tassi told Tuzia to get out, and told Artemisia that she did not paint well, took her brushes and offered to show her how to paint on the example of a painting hanging on the wall near the bedroom, went to the bedroom door.

As the investigation revealed, Tuzia's role in this story was not limited to this episode. Earlier, she had invited Artemisia for a walk, during which Tassi 'unexpectedly' appeared and joined them. At the trial, Tuzia said that Tassi tortured (?) her until with her help he could get to the part of the house where Artemisia lived. Trying to get rid of the uninvited guest, Artemisia said that she felt sick and had a fever. To which Tassi replied that his fever is even greater…

The rape itself took place as follows. When he told Artemisia that he wanted to look at the painting next to the bedroom, Tassi pushed her into the bedroom, locked the door from the inside, threw her on the bed, closed the girl's mouth so that she wouldn't scream, and raped her. Artemisia tried to defend herself, she scratched Agostino's face and head. After the rape, Artemisia freed herself and ran to the table where the knife lay, and with the words 'I will kill you for dishonoring me', stabbed Tassi in the chest. Although the blow bled, Artemisia did not cause serious damage to him. Seeing that Artemisia was chaste, Tassi promised to marry her. But Tassi was already married, which Artemisia learned only during the trial.

It turned out that A. Tassi had already served two prison sentences before the trial. One for raping his wife, the other for raping her sister. Tassi's wife soon disappeared. It was alleged that Tassi himself had hired bandits to kill her.

Tassi's promise to marry her kept Artemisia from reporting the rape to her father for some time (Artemisia's mother died when her daughter was only 12 years old) [30, p. XIV]. However, Tassi was in no hurry to keep his promise. Without marrying himself, Tassi at the same time prevented Artemisia's marriage to some Modenese. He hired men to spy on Artemisia almost around the clock. All this indicates that he was terribly jealous of her, without having any rights to her. Tassi's passion took such wild forms that he told many that he had poisoned Artemisia (more details about this episode are unknown).

Eventually, Orazio learned of his daughter's rape and urged him to sue. In early 1612 he petitioned the Pope about the rape of Artemisia. Not only Tassi was charged, but also Cosimo Cuorli, who also tried to woo Artemisia. Cuorli was also accused of stealing paintings from Artemisia's father, as well as aiding Tassi in breaking into Gentileschi's house.

The trial was widely publicized. Tassi, trying to divert another prison sentence, initially denied not only the fact of Artemisia's rape, but also the fact that he had been to Gentileschi's house in general. When, under pressure from evidence and testimony, he was forced to admit that this was untrue, he began to say that he had visited the house and followed Artemisia in order to 'protect her honour'. When this was denied, Tassi changed tactics. He began to slander Artemisia, her dead mother, calling them whores. Tassi said that Artemisia slept with five different men at the same time, that she had incest with her father, that he allegedly sold her for a loaf of bread, that there was a real brothel in the house.

As a witness, Tassi also brought in six men, his friends, who testified falsely against Artemisia. These false witnesses were like Tassi herself, they 'testified' that Artemisia's father sold her to men, that she served as a naked model to male-artists, that she wrote erotic letters to different men and was a prostitute in general.

It was such a shameful slander that it outraged even the judge who intervened and exposed their lies.

The servant Tuzia also testified in favour of Tassi, although her testimony was only that Artemisia behaved too seductively. Tassi's slander and lies were so horrific that, according to the transcript of the trial, the judge interrupted Tassi several times, outraged by his slander, which the rapist had publicly expressed.

Testimony was also given against Tassi. For example, a friend of Tassi and Cosimo Cuorli showed that Cosimo was very angry with Artemisia, who rejected his courtship, and that he personally helped Tassi plan his entry into Gentileschi's house when Orazio was not there [11, p. 432–445].

Evidence of the virtue of Artemisia and the whole Gentileschi family was given by many people.

The testimony of Artemisia herself about the violent defloration by Tassi was given under torture. In order to prove that she was telling the truth, she was tortured with the help of the so-called sibyl – a screw with ropes attached to it, which were tied to the fingers of Artemisia. During the torture, the ropes were wound on the screw more and more, pulling and breaking the fingers. Artemisia endured all the torture, during which she repeatedly said: 'It's true', when asked if Tassi had raped her. It is difficult to imagine what the pain of these tortures was, it is known that they significantly damaged her hands. But the moral pain of public humiliation from her abuser and the trial itself was incomparably greater [11, p. 432].

On May 14, 1612, when A. Tassi had been imprisoned for more than a month, the judge heard Artemisia, who reiterated that she trusted Tassi and would never believe that Tassi, being a friend of her father, would have raped her.

The trial ended in October 1612. Tassi was sentenced to exile from Rome. Although the court proposed an alternative to 5 years of hard labour. However, Tassi chose exile from Rome [11, p. 444]. The practice of punishment in the form of expulsion from the city was quite common at that time. But whether Tassi left Rome and for how long is not known for sure. It is known that he was soon in Rome again.

Artemisia's father, Orazio, also filed lawsuits against six people for perjury, but the outcome of these lawsuits is unknown.

Despite a court ruling in favour of Artemisia, in order to save her reputation in the eyes of the society of the time, Artemisia Gentileschi married and moved with her husband to Florence. There she gave birth to two sons and two daughters, but only her daughter Prudentia (who was called Palmira at home – O.G.) lived to old age [30, pp. XV–XVII].

And her career as an artist went uphill. Artemisia was patronized by the family of the Grand Tuscan Dukes of the Medici, which contributed to her work. As Bronzini writes, the paintings and portraits she made here were as

admired no less than the ones, and they adorned and still adorn the rooms of the most prominent and respected gentlemen, and the halls of the most illustrious and exalted princes living in Florence [6, p. 416]. Moreover, as Mary D. Garrard has noted, Artemisia fused her own likeness with this imagery representing Michelangelo's predestination for artistic glory, thereby assimilating herself to the ideal of artistic genius as defined in Buonarroti the Younger's early seventeenth-century iconographic program [6, p. 423].

Artemisia soon became so famous that in 1616 she was elected to the Florentine Academy of Arts – the oldest art academy in the world. Thus, *Artemisia Gentileschi became the first woman-academician of this famous academy*.

Italian scientist Sheila Barker, director of Medici Archive Project, draws attention to Artemisia's claim that she was placed in a convent in the period between her mother's death and her marriage to Pierantonio Stiattesi reveals that she was anxious to counter any gossip about the rape that had occurred precisely in that time-frame, a conclusion that dispels the recent claim that Artemisia willfully brandished her identity as a rape victim (in a sort of branding tactic) for the sake of expanding the market for her art. Besides furnishing her with an alibi, the story of her enclosure in a convent may have also served to alleviate any lingering dishonor due to various allegations made during the rape trial, including the claims that Artemisia had been the subject of men's conversations and that she sometimes looked out at the world from her window "molto sfacciatamente" ("very impudently") [6, p. 419]. By means of her idealized biography, Artemisia succeeded in assimilating herself to the socially constructed ideals of both female virtue and artistic genius [Ibid, p. 424].

In 1621, Artemisia returned to Rome on via del Corso with her daughter Prudentia and her husband [30, pp. XVI–XVII]. In 1623 Artemisia's husband has departed, and sometime thereafter she loses track of him [30, p. XVII]. According to some sources, there she met Sofonisba Anguissola and the prominent representative of Flemish Baroque painting, Anthonis van Dyck.

Artemisia corresponded with famous people of that time, in particular with Galileo Galilei (1635). Poets dedicated poems to her, in which her virtue was glorified. At the same time, the suffered trauma left its traces for the whole life of Artemisia. So the vast majority of her paintings are painted on mythological or historical subjects, in which women suffered from men: Judith, Lucretia, Susanna.

Traditionally, the plot of 'Susanna and the Elders' is the theme of the elders' courtship of a virtuous woman, whom they, having stipulated, led to the threat of execution. It is interpreted as a woman's shyness and weakness in front of men, and her rescue, which depends not on herself but on another man, 'remains behind the scenes'.

Australian-American art historian Patricia Simons has noted, 'whereas Artemisia's sexual history has been associated with the painting, and the subject is frequently regarded as no more than an excuse for voyeuristic viewing for a male audience, this study has demonstrated that the painting sprang from a different context, both religious and artistic, in Counter-Reformation Rome. Yet there may be one particular historical impetus for the city's interest in Susanna that does have a sexual tenor. An overlooked sexual scandal may have influenced Artemisia, along with many other artists and patrons taking on the subject of Susanna in the early seventeenth century' [34, p. 52].

By contrast with the wolfish and infidel Elders, Susanna was the *sponsa* or faithful bride, the Church that will always be united with Christ [34, p. 45]. Susanna allegorized female virtue and bravery, a common patristic theme that was paid new attention during the Counter Reformation revival of interest in the Church Fathers. St Augustine had imagined Susanna as one of 'God's athletes', noting that she 'had a lesson to teach religious married women. She taught them to resist the tempter, taught them to fight, taught them to struggle, taught them to implore God's help' [34, p. 46].

The analysis of Artemisia's 'susannas' in chronological order reveals the evolution of the artist's personality in the direction of increasing her self-esteem.

In the painting 'Susanna and the Elders' (1610) (Schönborn Castle Weisenstein, Pommersfelden, Germany) Susanna is full of shame (Figure 12).

Her posture testifies to the attempt to cover nudity from the eyes of impudent old men as much as possible: the figure is bent almost in a circle, and the face expresses torment, which is caused by feelings of shame and fear. Susanna in 'Susanna and the Elders' of 1622 (Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom) is also closed, but the circle is open: her head is raised, although her face retains an expression of anguish. Susanna in 'Susanna and the Elders' of 1649 (Moravian Gallery in Brno, Czech Republic) is already active: she pushes away the impudent old man.

Figure 12. Artemisia Gentileschi. *Susanna and the Elders*. 1610. Schonborn Castle Weisenstein, Pommersfelden, Germany

Her figure is three-quarters turned to the offenders and she does not burden herself with hiding her nakedness. The face expresses disgust and anger rather than shyness and fear. Susanna in the painting ‘Susanna and the Elders’ of 1652 (National Pinacotheca in Bologna, Italy) is fully deployed to the elders, and her left hand is raised to the level of their faces as if she was ready to push them away. There is no pain of shame on her face, but rather anger and indignation. This Susanna is no longer ashamed and is ready to physically defend herself.

In these paintings not only the semantics of the image of Susanna herself is evolving, the semantics of the composition as a whole are changing. If in the first picture men hang over Susanna, which is a spatial sign of dominance, in the last – the figure of Susanna is almost on a par with them, reducing their dominance.

Artemisia Gentileschi often portrayed herself as a Christian martyr or martyr for the faith of Catherine of Alexandria, Mary Magdalene.

In addition to the four paintings ‘Susanna and the Elders’, the «sacrificial» should include ‘Self-Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria’ (1615–1617) at the National Gallery in London, UK (the painting was purchased for 2 million 360 thousand euros from the French auction house ‘Drouot’ December 19, 2017 by antiquaries Marco Voena and Fabrizio Moretti) [15] (Figure 13); ‘Self-portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria’ (1618–1619) in the Uffizi; and ‘Self-portrait as the Martyr’ (1615) in private collection, New York.

Only on the biblical story of Judith (the woman who cut off the head of Holofernes, the conqueror of her Jewish people), the artist painted five paintings.

Figure 13. Artemisia Gentileschi.
***Self-Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria*. 1615–1617.**
The National Gallery in London, UK

This plot was repeated throughout the life of Artemisia. Probably, in such a virtual way the artist took revenge on her abuser, and possibly on all such men.

‘Judith Slaying Holofernes’ (1612) in Neapolitan Capodimonte and ‘Judith Slaying Holofernes’ (1620) in the Florentine Uffizi – depict the very process of beheading Holofernes (Figure 14), three others: ‘Judith and Her Maid” (1613–1614), located in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, ‘Judith and Her Maid with the Head of Holofernes’ (1625) at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, USA, ‘Judith and Her Maid Abra with the Head of Holofernes’ (1650) in the Neapolitan Capodimonte Museum – a moment immediately after this bloody event. Her paintings on this subject are among the most outstanding in the world art, and the first three have the status of a masterpiece.

This variant – when the moment of cutting of Holofernes’ head is engraved – is rare in painting. The forerunner can be considered a painting by Caravaggio with the same name and a similar compositional solution

Figure 14. Artemisia Gentileschi. *Judith Slaying Holofernes.* 1620. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Inv. 1890 No. 1567, in the collection since 1744

(1598–1599, National Gallery of Ancient Art in Rome). Undoubtedly, she was acquainted with this masterpiece of her favorite master, who visited her father while Artemisia was still studying. R. L. Robinson draws attention to the inexperience of the artist, which is manifested even in the elements of the narrative, visible in the genre scene. The composition reveals a significant physical inexperience of the woman in handling weapons [33, p. 151].

In the article 'Anthropology of visual self-objectification of the painter (based on works by Artemisia Gentileschi)' I pay attention to the fact that most often, the moment after the cutting of Holofernes' head was chosen for the image. This is how Judith is represented in Giorgione, Botticelli, Mantegna, Cristofano Allori, Rubens, Klimt. Or until the moment of cutting – 'Judith' and 'Judith and Holofernes' by Franz von Stuck [21, p. 150].

Artemisia works in Genoa, Venice, Naples. Her fame extends beyond Italy. Already in 1625 she became well known in France. In 1638 the artist

was invited to England, where she worked at the court of English King Charles I until 1641. According to some sources, Artemisia's father, Orazio Gentileschi, also worked there from 1626. In England she wrote several works, including the most famous of the artist's self-portraits – 'Self-portrait as the Allegory of Painting' (1638/9), which is now in the Royal Collection of Great Britain (Figure 15).

Yu. Romanenkova writes about this self-portrait that it is 'not interesting with a palette (there is nothing unusual in this respect – all the same gloomy conciseness of Caravaggio's influence, the dominance of 'colors of the earth'). Iconographically it is also typical – again we see the artist with a palette and brushes in front of the canvas. But not quite the usual compositional solution attracts attention. The female figure is presented in a rather complex perspective, as was later found in J. Tintoretto or P. Veronese. This feature is inherent in the paintings of Mannerism, in the spirit of which A. Gentileschi was brought up, and the psychological richness of this work is also close to Mannerist works' [3, p. 114–115].

According to Yu. Romanenkova, only Artemisia Gentileschi was able to 'make a self-portrait, … Mannerist in all respects, not even pure Mannerist, but proto-Baroque, because it is also difficult to classify her work as 'pure' Baroque, despite the fact that all her work is usually chronologically attributed to the Baroque. Self-portraits are the most important work of Artemisia, it is in them that she undergoes a noticeable evolution in the interpretation of psychological characteristics. Unlike S. Anguissola, Gentileschi's self-portraits were much deeper in the level of psychologism, which was also explained by her own experiences. The autobiography of many of her works bore a tragic imprint, the most typical example of which is 'Self-Portrait as a Female Martyr' (1615) [3, p. 114].

Artemisia Gentileschi's paintings adorn the halls of the world's leading museums and are the pride of private collections. In the collection of the Uffizi in Florence there are 4 paintings: 'Judith Slaying Holofernes' (1620, inv. 1890 No 1567, in the collection since 1744); 'Madonna and Child' (inv. 1890 No. 2129, in a collection since 1773, now in the Pitti Palace); 'St. Catherine of Alexandria' (inv. 1890, No. 8032, was in the Church of the Monastery of San Nicolo di Cafaggio, in the gallery of the Academy, Florence, in the Uffizi collection since 1973); 'Minerva' (inv. 1890 No. 8557, in the collection since 1926, 1951–1954, 1976, since 2012, now –

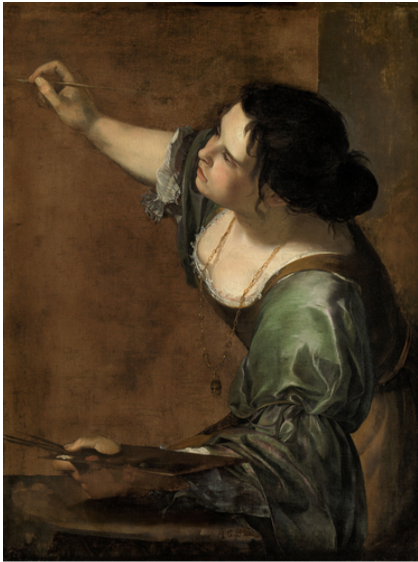

Figure 15. Artemisia Gentileschi. ***Self-portrait as an Allegory of Painting*. 1638–1639. Royal Collection of Great Britain, London**

in the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic) [31].

As Sheila Barker notes, in her lifetime, Artemisia Gentileschi's paintings revealed a power to fascinate viewers not only in Italy but also across Europe, as demonstrated by her commissions from the Duke of Alcalá, Manuel de Acevedo y Zúñiga, Count of Monterrey (d. 1637), Prince Karl Eusebius von Liechtenstein (1611–1684), Charles of Lorraine, the 4th Duke of Guise (1571–1640), and Charles I of England. Since first achieving success 400 years ago, Artemisia's name has been extolled in print almost continually [7, p. 62]. In 1681, when the Florentine artist and biographer Filippo Baldinucci (1625–1697) advised Grand Duke Cosimo III (1642–1723) to display male artists' self portraits according to their geographic school in the planned 'Chamber of the Self Portraits', he also recommended exhibiting the self portraits of an elite coterie of famous women artists that included Artemisia: "I'd be in favour of not omitting, if possible, some celebrated female painters, that is: Sofonisba Angosciola, Cremonese Europa Angosciola, her sister Lucia, another sister, Elisabetta Sirani, Bolognese Artemisia Lomi, who was active in Florence and Rome" [7, p. 66].

Regarding the artist Artemisia Gentileschi, it is important perhaps to mention that the artist's name was also included within G. Boccaccio's compendium publication Famous Women. The passage is particularly appropriate to an understanding of the artistic legacy of the artist. Artemisia manipulated the very definition of gender during her lifetime [33, p. 188].

Artemisia lived and worked for a long time in Naples, where she died in 1653 or 1654. She was buried in the cemetery of the Church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini (St. John the Baptist, built in 1461) near the chapel of the Riccio family in Naples. On the marble tombstone of the artist was written «Heic Artemisia» – «I'm here – Artemisia». The tomb of Artemisia Gentileski, unfortunately, has not survived, and church has since been completely destroyed.

According to Jesse Locker, the Florentine patrician Averardo de' Medici (died 1808) was indeed a writer and owned a painting by Artemisia – a Susanna and the Elders, mentioned in several eighteenth century sources-none of his writings appear under such a title... Medici's essay is interesting on a number of fronts. First, it provides first hand descriptions of several lost but formerly highly regarded works by Artemisia. Second, it casts new light on the mystery of her reputed burial in the church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Naples. Finally, it provides a glimpse into a long-forgotten period, comprising much of the eighteenth century, when Artemisia's fame reached unexpected heights [23, p. 27]. Medici is more hesitant, however, is in assuming that this tomb belonged to Artemisia Gentileschi. He recognized that the brevity of the inscription-simply «Here lies Artemisia» – could be grounds for skepticism about the fame of the person buried there (as has been expressed by some modern scholars) ... Because archival sources have so far re-vealed nothing on the question of Artemisia's burial, Medici's account is the unique source on the subject [23, p. 34].

Artemisia Gentileschi was one of the more active, shrewd, and resourceful figures in this regard. Liberally cloaking herself in myth, she was one of many women artists who negotiated a viable professional identity in the gap between her society's cultural lexicon of female stereotypes and the complexity of her reality [6, p. 425].

The talent of Arcangela Paladini, an Italian artist, poet and musician, was unique. Born in Pisa, died in Florence. She lived very little, but in her 20s she was a well-known artist. It is believed that Arcangela worked at the court of Magdalena of Austria.

The early discovery of talent was facilitated by studying with her own father – portrait painter Filippo Paladini. She later took lessons from the famous artist Alessandro Allori.

On particular historiographic value is C. Bronzini's account of Arcangela Paladini. Not only is it the earliest biography of Paladini, but it also adds many important details to what is currently known about this scantily documented artist, such as the trills that marked her vocal performances; her specialization in embroidering portraits, flowers, foliage, birds, mammals, and fish; Maria Magdalena's dispersal of Paladini's art throughout Europe; and descriptions of Paladini's portraits of Cosimo II that are confirmed by Medici inventories [6, pp. 411–412].

To date, only a few works by Arcangela have survived, among them her self-portrait, which is now in the Uffizi, 'Self-portrait of Arcangela Paladini' (1621, inv. 1890, No. 2019, in the collection since 1880) [31]. In this painting the face of a young beautiful girl emerges from the darkness, as if anticipating her imminent demise. Big sad eyes look with longing at the viewer. It is impossible to pass this painting without noticing it, just as it is impossible to forget this face (Figure 16).

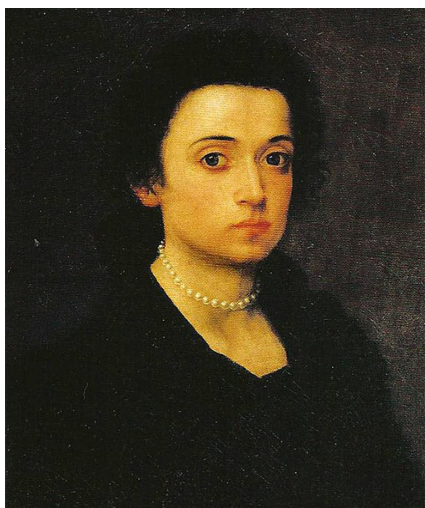

Figure 16. Arcangela Paladini. *Self-portrait*. 1621. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Inv. 1890 No. 2019, in the collection since 1880

Another talented Italian, Giovanna Garzoni (1600–1670), was born in the small town of Arcole Piccino (Marche district) to a family of Venetians. As a teenager, she and her brother moved to Venice, where she studied drawing. In 1630 she moved again with her brother to Naples, but the following year she moved to Rome. A year later – to Turin.

In 1631, in the wake of the plague, Giovanna Garzoni went to Turin to join the court of Charles Emanuel II and Christine de France, the duke and duchess of Savoy, where she remained until 1637, painting religious pictures, portraits, and some of the many still life pictures for which she is best known: her lemons and fruit,

prawns and snails, are named in documents [20, p. 63]. One of her works ‘Still Life with Bowl of Citrons’ (1640) is now in the Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, USA (Figure 17).

In addition to portraits, the artist writes her first still life. Still lifes, which Garzoni also wrote on parchment, will glorify the artist’s name the most in the future. She became one of the first women-artists to work in this genre.

The drawings were produced by Garzoni for Federico Cesi (1585–1630), the “prince of the Linceans”, proposing 1624–1625 as the timeframe for their execution. The earlier date of 1616 suggested by Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi relies on a passage (1761) in Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti’s eighteenth-century Selva di notizie, which, however, is based on the naturalist’s misreading of the chronology of botanical manuscripts belonging to Monsignor Leone Strozzi (1657–1722) as recorded by the Vallombrosan botanist Bruno Tozzi (1656–1743) [8, p. 32].

Sheila Barker pays attention to Garzoni’s using of color as well as her combination of brush-work and pen-and-ink drawing technique also afforded her greater possibilities of shading and hatching to convey the varied structure and texture of plant tissues. Owing to her accurate use of color and attention to detail – both of which seem to be the result of direct

Figure 17. Giovanna Garzoni. *Still Life with Bowl of Citrons*. 1640. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, USA

and close observation of living specimens – Garzoni was able to surpass her artistic predecessors by imbuing vegetal forms with nuance and vigor, as evidenced by the gentle corrugating undulations along the curled lip of Colocasia antiquorum or the prominent, knobby thickness of the veins that run through its leaves [8, p. 38].

After the death of the Duke of Savoy in 1637, Giovanna left Turin. It is believed that until 1642 the artist visited France and England. These relocations contributed to her acquaintance with French, English and Flemish painting, which enriched the artist's palette and technique.

In the 1640s the artist moved to Florence, where she remained until 1651. In Florence she began to engage in botanical sketches.

While working in Florence, she was patronized by the Medici family, and local aristocrats ordered their portraits from the artist. When the adolescent Giovanna Garzoni visited the Medici court there, C. Bronzini took account of her musical skills as well as the talent she displayed in both her painted miniature for Maria Magdalena of Austria and her calligraphy samples [6, p. 411].

In 1660, at the request of Ferdinand II of the Medici, Giovanna Garzoni made a series of floral still lifes, as well as 20 miniatures depicting dishes with fruits and vegetables. Her botanical sketching classes allowed her to portray flowers and plants in a naturalistic way, in which the accuracy of the image was combined with picturesqueness.

On viewing Giovanna Garzoni's 'A Plate of Figs', the figs seem to have just been set in front of you. One splits open, exposing the grainy pink flesh. Their saturated purple color evokes the fruit's juices, triggering your saliva and taste buds. You eat with your eyes, as if you could not get enough of the luscious fruit. You might dismiss your alimentary response as irrelevant, for this is art, after all, not food. But a sensory exchange between a picture of fruit and the real thing is embedded in the early history of still-life painting. Listen to the third-century AD writer Philostratus on the xenia, or 'still-life' paintings, in an art-lover's collection.

The power of images to stimulate sensual appetites was well known in the early modern period, and to some degree valued. The art theorist Gian Paolo Lomazzo noted that a painting will cause a viewer to desire a beautiful young girl for his wife when he sees her painted naked, or to want to eat when he sees an image of fine food being eaten [20, p. 62].

According to Mary D. Garrard, if Garzoni's oeuvre does not show a clear stylistic development, there are astonishing sub-currents in her art, especially in her depictions of fruit. For example, as if to underscore its connection with human health, she endows her fruit with bodily associations. The plump organic vitality of peaches in a bowl brings to mind the traditional connection of round fruit with female breasts, and in this example they also suggest human buttocks. Male genitalia too are evoked – not only by the phallic cucumber here, but also in Garzoni's figs, which hint of testicles or penises. She frequently depicted melons cut open to display their seeded interiors, creating an analogue of internal female anatomy that is also suggested in a pomegranate that has burst apart to disgorge its juicy seeds, accompanied by a spiral snail. This kind of woman-and-fruit association is not about human sexuality and erotic desire; rather, it seems to concern the magic of sexual reproduction in nature, and the mysterious birth, growth and regeneration that is common to plants, animals and humans, for which the recurrent snail's spiral is an apt metaphor [20, p. 65].

Garzoni brings us into her world by stimulating our imaginations, leading us to picture ourselves within the painting. Her mischievous deviations from fact invite us to engage with the image, ask it questions, wonder about its oddities, or laugh when we are tricked by expectations. Such game-playing is not uncommon in the world of art; Picasso's cubism is a case in point. But in early modern Europe, the engaged imagination had a social responsibility, for it was thought to be a necessary component of an image's power to guide the body to health, or protect it from danger. If still-life paintings of fruit or flowers served a therapeutic function to promote a sense of well-being, as did landscapes paintings hung in country villas, then those images were conceived not simply to be aesthetically pleasing, but also as sensory triggers for the mental imaging of health and pleasure, as an indissoluble package. Depending on the human imagination to complete their work, Giovanna Garzoni's still lifes enter and support the human life cycle and, in both humility and pride, art helps nature carry out her ends [20, p. 75].

Being already well-known, the artist moved to Rome.

It has been suggested that she was elected to the Roman Academy of Arts of St. Luke. At least it is known that she attended classes at the Academy, and in her will transferred all her property to this institution.

5. Transformation of the social status of woman artist

In the first half of the 17th century became famous the Italian artist from Bologna Elisabetta Sirani (1638–1665).

After Rome, Bologna was the most important center of the Papal States. The specificity of the university city was reflected in the artistic activity of the local artistic intelligentsia: portraits of scientists, doctors and professors, were ordered en masse to decorate public places and their own homes. The spirit of the university contributed to the liberalization of views, which enabled Elisabetta Sirani to receive an art education and make a career in her short life.

Elisabetta was one of the daughters (the other two Barbara and Anna-Maria) of the Bologna artist and art dealer Giovanni Andrea Sirani (1610–1670). Giovanni Sirani was a student of Guido Reni – the most famous representative of the Bologna school of painting.

Despite the fact that Elisabetta Sirani lived very little, died at the age of 27 from a puncture ulcer (according to some other versions – was poisoned by her maid, which led to a judicial inquiry), she left a considerable artistic legacy: about 200 paintings and drawings, which are now in various museums in Europe and the United States, as well as in private collections. In 2018, the Uffizi Gallery hosted an exhibition of works by E. Sirani, including from the private collection of L. Zanasi.

This was facilitated by the incredible efficiency of the artist, on average she created more than 20 paintings a year. Elisabetta kept records of all her paintings: from paintings to drawings and engravings. She recorded the names of all her customers and gave a detailed description of each work. These records allow you to accurately attribute the work, set the date of painting, as well as determine the number of paintings, which impresses with the productivity of her work. Elisabetta left a significant artistic legacy: more than 200 paintings, fifteen prints, countless drawings and sketches during her career, which lasted just over a decade (1654–1665) [26, p. 87].

According to Australian art critic Adelina Modesti, the 'brush virtuoso' E. Sirani could have finished the painting in one session. This happened with the order of the Tuscan Duke Cosimo III Medici. After visiting Bologna in 1664, he ordered an image of the Madonna Maria. The painting was made so quickly that the duke managed to take it with him, returning

home soon. One of her Madonnas, 'The Madonna and Child' (1663), now adorns the National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington, USA) (Figure 18).

Sirani's technique was so virtuoso that it aroused great interest, which the artist skillfully used to her advantage. Thus, she allowed her clients to watch her work in her studio. This contributed to her popularity and increased the number of orders. Perhaps Elisabetta's father's occupation also contributed to this 'marketing' approach.

The artist was inventive and innovative, experimented with new materials, developed unique content. However, her paintings are traditional iconographically, the narrative depicts the heroines of biblical and classical history – strong and courageous women: Judith, Delilah, Portia, Timoclea, Cleopatra, Circe, Pamphylia. A. Modesti notes that in her paintings Elisabetta paints heroines with positive virtues, independent active personalities, intelligent, courageous and worthy [26, p. 90].

Figure 18. Elisabetta Sirani.
***The Madonna with Child*. 1663.**
National Museum of Women
in the Arts, Washington, USA.
Gift from Wallace F.
and Wilhelmina Holladay

Elisabetta was also famous for creating allegorical portraits of the society, the Bologna nobility under the guise of some mythical, religious or abstract image. The artist depicted, for example, Countess Anna Maria Ranuzzi Marseille in the image of charity (Bologna, Fondazione Ca.ris. bo, 1665); Vincenzo Ferdinando Ranuzzi as

Cupid (Warsaw, National Museum, 1663); Ortenzia Leoni Cordini as St. Dorothea (Madison, Chazen Art Museum, 1661). She also painted allegorical self-portraits as image of Music (Fort-Worth, private collection,

Figure 19. Elisabetta Sirani. *Self-portrait*. 1658. Museum named after A. S. Pushkin, Moscow, Russia. Inv. No. J-70. In the State Museum of Fine Arts since 1925 from the collection of M. B. Yusupov

1659) and in the form of Painting (Moscow, A. S. Pushkin Museum, 1658) (Figure 19). A recent addition to her catalog is a Self-portrait of the artist with her father (St. Petersburg, Hermitage, approx. 1665) [26, p. 91].

After her father was forced to retire due to ill health, Elisabetta Sirani headed the art studio and family business. Among her customers and patrons were the princes of the Medici, della Rovere and others.

In 1660 Elisabetta Sirani was elected full professor at the Academy of St. Luke in Rome. This status of professor and maestro gave her the opportunity to teach, to have students. Elisabetta founded a school for girls in Bologna.

6. Conclusions

As a result, the social status of women artists rises and approaches the social status of the humanistic intelligentsia than the status of a craftsman. The samples of women's art, discussed in the monograph, can serve as a vivid example of a woman's ability as an artist in the broadest sense of the word. She is subject to any direction in art, graphics, painting or sculpture. In just one and a half centuries of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries, several talented women artists and one woman sculptor worked in Italian fine arts. Against the background of the cultural realities of that time, this phenomenon can be considered an indicator of paradigmatic changes in the public consciousness in relation to the social significance of gifted women artists.

Illustration list

Figure 1. Properzia de' Rossi. *Grassi Family Coat of Arms.* circa 1510–24. Medieval Museum (Civico Medievale), Bologna, Italy.

Figure 2. Properzia de' Rossi. Detail of St. Peter in *Grassi Family Coat of Arms.* circa 1510–24. Medieval Museum (Civico Medievale), Bologna, Italy.

Figure 3. Properzia de'Rossi. *Carved cherry stone pendant.* 1520–1530. Silver Museum (Museo degli Argenti), Pitti Palace, Florence, Italy. Inv. No. 00646610.

Figure 4. Properzia de' Rossi. *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*. circa 1525. Museum of the Basilica of San Petronio, Bologna, Italy.

Figure 5. Plautilla Nelli. *Annunciation*. Uffizi, Florence, Italy. Inv. 1890 No. 9739, came from the Academy of Fine Arts of Florence, in the collection of the Uffizi since 1953 and to this day (external deposits).

Figure 6. Plautilla Nelli. *Lamentation.* Museum of the Convent of San Marco, Florence, Italy. Inv. No 3490, in the collection since 1907.

Figure 7. Sofonisba Anguissola. *Portrait of Elisabeth Valois, Queen of Spain, Holding a Portrait of Philip II*. Approx. 1561–1565. National Museum Prado, Madrid, Spain.

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Figure 9. Portrait of Marietta Robusti in the book of Carlo Ridolfi '*Le marauiglie dell'Arte, ouero, Le vite de gl'illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato'*, 1648, part II, p. 70.

Figure 10. Marietta Robusti. *Self-portrait with a Madrigal*. Approx. 1578. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Inv. 1890 No. 1898.

Figure 11. Marietta Tintoretto (1550–1590), attribution, painter / Domenico Tintoretto (1560–1635), historical attribution, painter. *A double-portrait with Jacopo Strada.* Circa 1567/68. Dresden Gemäldegalerie of old masters, Dresden, Germany, Inv. No. Gal.-Nr. 270.

Figure 12. Artemisia Gentileschi. *Susanna and the Elders*. 1610. Schonborn Castle Weisenstein, Pommersfelden, Germany.

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Figure 17. Giovanna Garzoni. *Still Life with Bowl of Citrons*. 1640. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, USA.

Figure 18. Elisabetta Sirani. *The Madonna with Child*. 1663. National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, USA. Gift from Wallace F. and Wilhelmina Holladay.

Figure 19. Elisabetta Sirani. *Self-portrait*. 1658. Museum named after A. S. Pushkin, Moscow, Russia. Inv. No. J-70. In the State Museum of Fine Arts since 1925 from the collection of M. B. Yusupov.

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