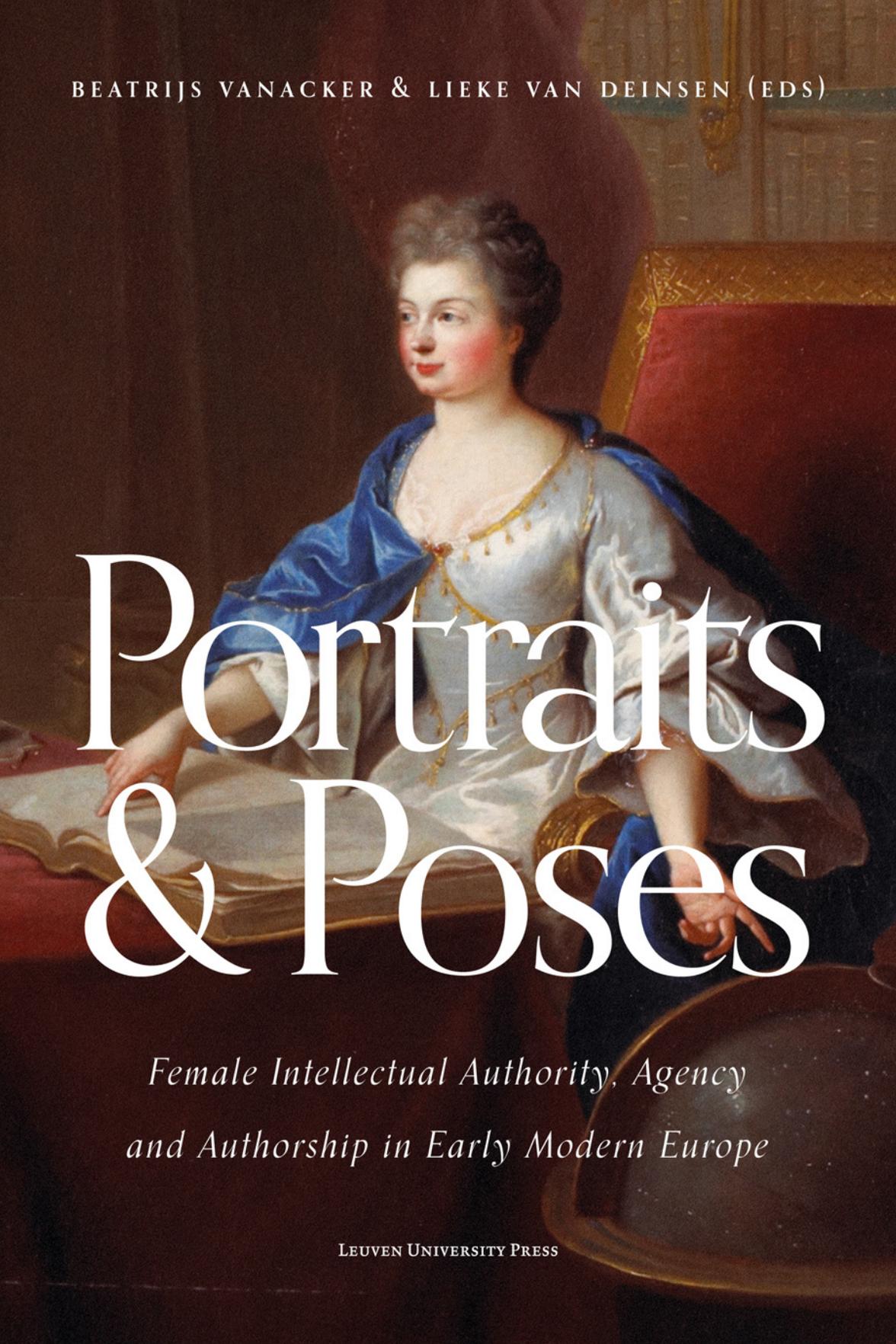


BEATRIJS VANACKER & LIEKE VAN DEINSEN (EDS)



Portraits & Poses

*Female Intellectual Authority, Agency
and Authorship in Early Modern Europe*

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PORTRAITS AND POSES
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Edited by
Beatrijs Vanacker and Lieke van Deinsen

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Table of Contents

- 7 **Portraying Female Intellectual Authority**
An Introduction
Beatrijs Vanacker and Lieke van Deinsen
- PART I: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE PORTRAITS OF FEMALE INTELLECTUAL AUTHORITY**
- 29 Chapter 1
'A woman of supreme goodness, and a singular talent': Anna Morandi Manzolini, Artist and Anatomist of Enlightenment Bologna
Caroline Paganussi
- 55 Chapter 2
Epistolary Relationship and Intellectual Identity in Maria Antonia of Saxony's Correspondence with Frederick the Great, 1763–1779
Kelsey Rubin-Detlev
- 73 Chapter 3
Between Defence and Affirmation: The Discursive Self-Representation of Eighteenth-Century Women Authors in France and Italy
Rotraud von Kulesa (translated by Kristen Gehrman)
- 93 Chapter 4
The Visual and Textual Portraits of Mme de Genlis: The Gouverneur, Educator, and Author of the *Mémoires*
Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval (translated by Kristen Gehrman)
- 113 Chapter 5
(Self-)Portrait of the Woman as (a Reluctant?) Authority
Catriona Seth
- PART II: TYPES AND MODELS OF FEMALE INTELLECTUAL AUTHORITY**
- 137 Chapter 6
Penning the Midwife's Experience: Professional Skills, Publication, and Female Agency in Early Modern Europe
Valerie Worth-Stylianou

- 163 Chapter 7
**Women's Strength Made Perfect in Weakness: Paratextual Authority
 Constructions in Printed Vernacular Religious Literature by Early
 Modern Dutch Women Writers**
Nina Geerdink and Feike Dietz
- 185 Chapter 8
**'Instructing herself by fad or fancy': Depictions and Fictions of
 Connoisseuses and Femmes Savantes in Eighteenth-Century Paris**
Belinda Scerri
- 213 Chapter 9
**Portraits of Female Mentors in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex
 Judaeorum* (1611)**
Aurélie Griffin
- 231 Chapter 10
**Matrona Docta: Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Macaulay in the
 Guise of the Roman Matrona**
Seren Nolan
- PART III: THE DIACHRONIC DYNAMICS OF FEMALE INTELLECTUAL
 AUTHORITY**
- 259 Chapter 11
**Portraits of Mary, Queen of Scots, as an Intellectual in Seventeenth-
 Century Collective Biographies**
Armel Dubois-Nayt
- 281 Chapter 12
**Women Jurists? Representations of Female Intellectual Authority in
 Eighteenth-Century Jurisprudence**
Laura Beck Varela
- 303 Chapter 13
**'Diotime' and 'La Muse Belgique': The Intellectual Mobility and
 Divergent Legacies of Amalia Gallitzin and Marie-Caroline Murray**
Lien Verpoest
- 323 Chapter 14
**'It Wasn't Enough for Me Just to Be a Singer': (Self-)Representations
 of the 'German Prima Donna' Gertrud Elisabeth Mara**
Vera Viehöver
- 347 About the Authors
- 351 Plates

Portraying Female Intellectual Authority

An Introduction

Beatrijs Vanacker and Lieke van Deinsen¹

Both outside and within academia, the issue of gender diversity is fiercely debated. There is a growing understanding that equality is not just a matter of absolute numbers of women participating in the intellectual debate but also of underlying representation mechanisms.² The attentiveness to such issues becomes apparent in recent initiatives taken at numerous European universities to replace – albeit temporarily – the portraits of their renowned male professors in the often age-old academic portrait galleries with their (contemporary) female equivalents. By creating new female pantheons, these initiatives challenge the traditional male image of the intellectual.³ Indeed, recent scholarship on the construction of scholarly *personae* indicates that meeting the prototypical image of the credible scholar with its recognisable characteristics and (physical) features proves particularly difficult for women, now and in the past.⁴

This complex relation between gender and the representation of intellectual authority has deep roots in European history. The present volume adopts a historical approach to shed new light on this topical subject. Presenting a collection of essays that examines the visual and textual portraits of (aspiring) learned women as agents of their own public image in the European male-dominated intellectual field between 1550 and 1800, the book focuses on these women's struggle to embody intellectual authority. In the past decade, the position of the rapidly growing group of learned women participating in the intellectual debate during the early modern period – roughly speaking, the age of the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment – has increasingly received scholarly attention. Large-scale recovery projects such as Project Vox, studies on female authorship and scholarship,⁵ dictionaries of women writers,⁶ anthologies, and editions of female-authored works⁷ have challenged male-dominated historical canons by revealing the presence and activities of learned women in early modern intellectual culture – which, at that time, comprised the study of the sciences as well as the arts.⁸ Not only has it become undeniably apparent that their number was

considerably higher than previously assumed; recent scholarship into the subject has also revealed that they articulated an awareness of their public image as intellectuals. How then did these women and their advocates actively model new images of the female intellectual, both as an individual and more collectively? How did their textual and visual portraits capture the period's changing ideas on female intellectual authority? And how did these portraits challenge the stereotypical (male) image of the intellectual? By addressing these questions, this volume seeks to provide a long-term comparative historical perspective on the current diversity debate.

The Early Modern Period and the Cradle of Female Intellectual Authority

The early modern period has often been described as pivotal in the individual's claim to intellectual authority.⁹ Especially during the seventeenth century, when critical thinking and scientific innovation gradually replaced the long undisputed authority of the classics, the individual could gain authority as a constitutive agent in processes of knowledge production. Only more recently have scholars started to pay attention to the position of women in that larger development. Historians have shown, especially from the 1650s onwards, new emancipatory conceptualisations of the female body¹⁰ and mind¹¹ and even modest claims of intellectual equality.¹² Cartesian thinking, for instance, which rejected a hierarchy of being and implicitly ascribed to both the bodies and minds of women the same capacities and ontological status as those ascribed to men, gave rise to attempts of revising early modern women's subordinate position in society.¹³

Yet the question remains whether this modest change in conceptualising the female mind was also reflected in an increased recognition of these women's intellectual practice. Learned women's possibilities to showcase themselves as knowledgeable, let alone intellectual authorities, were closely linked to the organisation of the European intellectual field, which was predominantly male-oriented throughout the early modern period. Indeed, the reorganisation of intellectual life through the foundation of hierarchically defined academies and learned societies meant that women were still, at least partially, denied active involvement in public debates on the arts and sciences. When they were actually accepted into academies, their representation was decidedly less important than that of their male colleagues. Furthermore, the growing division between private and public spheres during the eighteenth century resulted in (re)confining women to the domestic sphere.¹⁴ At the same time, however, alternative – often semi-public – places of intellectual exchange, such as the salons or other circles of learning, allowed for female presence and agency despite the prevailing binary thinking and concomitant politics of exclusion.¹⁵ This growing female presence was also reflected in the significant rise of women writers' publications throughout the period.¹⁶

Our understanding of early modern female agency becomes even more nuanced when we take into consideration the so-called peripheral European regions and hitherto underexplored groups of women intellectuals and practitioners. Indeed, as, for example, Alicia Montoya and Anke Gilleir have already emphasised,¹⁷ to explore and uncover the manifold yet intricate strategies that women adopted to write and invite themselves into circles of learning, we need to adopt a broader scope and focus on a greater variety of spaces and places of recognition. Their pleas for a wider scope fit into a more general transcultural shift in the historiography of learning and writing, which not only veers away from an exclusive focus on dominant (and well-documented) cultures, such as France or England, to include more peripheral parts of Europe, such as the Low Countries or Italy, but also aims to bring into focus the transcultural and international dimension of what we today define as ‘networks’ of learning. The many large-scale database and network analysis projects that have come to redefine the humanities in recent years¹⁸ have stressed the formative role of the ties learned women developed with other (male and female) intellectuals in the early modern transnational learned community of the Republic of Letters. In a period when intellectual activity and progress was very much the result of exchange through correspondence and other forms of relational networks, women’s pathways often developed in ways that were similar to those of their well-known male thinkers.¹⁹ More often than not, these paths were also intertwined.

In this volume, we aim to chart the intricate pathways early modern women carved towards visibility and recognition, carefully balancing the expectations and predispositions of the male-dominated intellectual domain. As recent studies have come to show, recognising and incorporating learned women’s contributions not only leads to a more inclusive view on the history of knowledge, it also allows for more nuanced and multifaceted accounts of key issues that dominated the early modern public debate, such as self-determination, equality, progress, and liberty.²⁰ This volume contributes to the ongoing re-evaluation of the past by focusing on how these women came to negotiate and legitimise their position as intellectual authorities through word *and* image. Women used a broad array of self-representational strategies to try and make themselves *seen* and *known* as authoritative agents in a wide array of intellectual domains and processes of knowledge production, circulation, and reception. In addition, learned women’s public images could also be (re)shaped by external parties, through complimentary or undermining comments on their intellectual authority.

Portraying Female Intellectual Authority

With its focus on visual and textual representation strategies as vehicles for building female reputations, this volume centres around the concept of ‘authority.’²¹ In its broadest sense, authority is at play in the working of political, but

also social and cultural, power relations, while also pointing at the relevance of specific knowledge or expertise as a means towards external recognition, be it in a particular discipline or in society at large. Philosophers like Alexander Kojève²² and Jean-Pierre Cléro²³ have, moreover, pointed at the ‘interactive’²⁴ and ‘relational’ dynamics at play in authority construction. Pierre Bourdieu, in turn, has argued that authority, in the sense of ‘credibility’, can be seen as a ‘credit contributed by a group of agents whose relational ties are made all the more valuable by the fact that they have more credit themselves.’²⁵ From this perspective, authority is thus designated as a quality, a (symbolic) credit negotiated and achieved through association with different types of connections, ranging from highly positioned peers in literary or social circles to people with important political profiles.

Informed by the search for ‘recognition’ by others, construction of authority implies the use of *relational* ties, and hence turns into a dynamic and dialogical process in which both textual and visual representations of the self and others, the interior and the exterior, or the individual and the collective potentially interact. Although during the early modern period, the creation of a public persona gradually became more acceptable, women writers were often devoid of inherent forms of cultural, but also social, authority, which made the search for fame and recognition through association with other, more renowned writers and intellectuals a common strategy for women. Not all public personae were, however, equally acceptable, and for women, carving out a respectable position as a subject of knowledge was a matter of navigating the often paradoxical nature of social constraints, the most stringent being that of female propriety, and personal accomplishments.

It is this manoeuvring space that will be addressed in the contributions to this volume, each of which explores the *junctions* between different textual and visual portraits and poses that informed these women’s self-affirmation. Their representation strategies, as this collection will vividly illustrate, could follow diachronic as well as synchronic patterns. Diachronically, self-representation could be construed by the (sometimes ironical) imitation of, or reference to, previously established aesthetic models, rhetorical tropes²⁶ and images, or other forms of literary or intellectual lineage. The work and personae of female intellectuals, then, could later on become part of collective portraits, such as dictionaries, collective biographies, or other forms of historiography. Whereas the former implied women’s active shaping of their own image by referencing (previously established) images – in some cases, only to criticise or even reject them – the latter implied external processes of (collective) identity and memory formation of which the potentially distorting effect was beyond these women’s control. Yet in many cases, aspiring female intellectuals could not limit themselves to looking at the past when building their expertise. In a society in which intellectual authority was in an important manner institutionalised in academies and learned societies, women had to come up with more intricate

and inventive ways of addressing the restrictions imposed by these gendered circles of learning in order to claim recognition from peers for their intellectual contributions.

Authority was, of course, also built synchronically, through contemporary – often transcultural – networks, such as via correspondence, where positions were not only negotiated on intellectual grounds, because they also responded to moral, cultural, political, and social motives. Additionally, the collective agency of families – be it their functioning in terms of social promotion or the elite education they provided – played a crucial role in some of these women's access to knowledge in the first place, as well as their introduction into learned societies later on in life.²⁷ This also brings into focus that the formative networks in and through which these women managed to shape their intellectual selves (some more successfully than others) could vary significantly, not in the least because not all these women could benefit from a distinguished social status. While some belonged to the highest rank by birth, others had a more modest background. Difference in rank was undoubtedly one of the influencing factors that could significantly alter the performativity of these women's networks.

At the same time, an authoritative position, for both men and women, was by definition established through different types of connections, ranging from highly positioned peers in literary or social circles to persons with an important political profile. In the past, such networks have mostly been uncovered by means of textual analysis. Discourse analysts such as Ruth Amossy, along with narrative theorists such as Susan Lanser, have previously and convincingly emphasised the discursive nature of authority construction.²⁸ Authorial character and *posture*, they argue, is created in and through the text itself: 'it is not about what the subject *is* [...] but about the image [s]he projects'.²⁹ Yet in line with the period's revival of the popular classical principle *ut pictura poesis* ('as is painting so is poetry'), early modern discursive self-representation was often intertwined with visual forms of self-portraiture as well. The conceptual predominance of this aesthetic analogy has led Caroline Trotot to argue that 'the term self-portrait [wa]s a category with uncertain limits' throughout the early modern period, giving way to 'many reciprocal creative exchanges and a metaphorically unified collective imagination'.³⁰

More generally speaking, portraiture started to play a key role in the construction and dissemination of intellectual authority in the early modern period.³¹ Although portraits of the learned had been circulating since classical antiquity, the genre gained definitive popularity from the sixteenth century onwards. Humanists frequently included portraits of themselves in their letters, with the picture serving as a face-to-face introduction to a colleague whom they were unlikely to ever meet in person.³² Images of the learned also received a prominent place in libraries and study rooms.³³ To be in their midst was supposed to spark one's own intellectual mind. These likenesses, which were often painted in a similar fashion, were used as direct references for new generations

of (aspiring) men of letters who wanted to become part of this visual genealogy of the learned. The popularity of scholarly portraits also gave rise to the production of engraved images of the learned and literate, which were sold, collected, and displayed separately as well as included in books.³⁴ In a sense, these portraits were used to ennoble the author, forcing the reader to recognise the authority conveyed by the author's gaze.³⁵

This increased importance of the author's intellectual *persona* presented early modern learned women with a challenge. If speaking and writing were already considered challenging to the prescribed definition of modest female behaviour, presenting a portrait of one's person as an intellectual authority seemed all the more scandalous.³⁶ Whereas a rapidly growing number of learned women participated in the intellectual debate, the construction of their public personae remained a delicate balancing act. How did aspiring women of letters and their advocates engage with this development? The portraits were not simply a medium to capture intellectual identity, but also to construct it.³⁷ While apparently depicting an existing reality – that is, a somewhat realistic portrait of a human being – they were actually creating a new reality by challenging the archetypal image of the scholar. These portraits thus presented the public with an unprecedented image that negotiated two hitherto seemingly incompatible sociocultural categories: being a *woman* and being *learned*.

This volume seeks to explore different ways in which learned women and their advocates used textual and visual portraits in their often relational search for intellectual authority, thus aiming to contribute to the growing interest in a more nuanced European history of female agency in the early modern period. It prioritises an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing on insights from literary studies, art history, intellectual history, and gender studies. In their effort to highlight the interrelatedness of these authority constructions, many of the following chapters also adopt a comparative approach, either by drawing sometimes unexpected parallels between early modern female intellectuals from different countries (Von Kulessa) or by showing the cross-cultural dynamics of reputation building in the early modern period (Beck Varela, Verpoest, Rubin-Detlev). In doing so, some essays make vividly clear how building a scholarly reputation for these women was never exclusively marked by a singular path towards exceptional brilliance, but often required building on the reputation of others (Nolan, Griffin) or joining forces with them. Other analyses illustrate the particular interest of unveiling the dialectics between text and image or between different source types in order to gain a more multifaceted, and therefore more realistic, insight into how specific authors (Plagnol-Diéval), artists (Seth, Paganussi), or, more generally, female professionals worked towards a consecration of their intellectual expertise (Worth, Scerri, Geerdink and Dietz).

In its persistent focus on how the strategic imagination of intellectual authority yields coherence among the diverse cases, this volume addresses both modes of (self-)representation and reception in the construction of female

intellectual authority. While it covers the period from the early decades of the emergence of the modern knowledge society around the 1600s until the years of disciplinary formation in the arts and sciences in the Enlightenment, the general outline of this volume does not follow a strictly chronological order. Rather, it focuses on different aspects at play in the shaping of one's intellectual authority. In the first part, we bring together essays that, all in their own way, address the inherent tension underlying the affirmation of an individual authority. As the contributions illustrate, these women's portraits, which were often based on the idea of female exceptionality, were in fact shaped in relation to specific contexts and at times also to other intellectuals; they were thus always partially collective. In the second part, this idea of collective identity is further explored in relation to early modern women's tentative paths towards professionalisation or otherwise publicly recognised forms of intellectual authority. Whereas the first three articles all show us how the roles claimed by these women required an active engagement, and visual as well as textual remodelling of contemporary views, the two last essays bring a diachronic perspective by focusing on classical models, such as the *matrona*, which helped women to overcome, to some extent, the often contradictory societal views on the (in)conceivability of female learnedness in their own time. The third and last part addresses the diachronic dynamics of (self-)representation by looking at potential legacies instead of looking backwards. All four articles examine how the reception of individual women as well as the continuation of specific categories of female learnedness were again often constructed as a relational process, one that involved active construction by others as well as one that was shaped through unforeseen yet defining contextual factors.

Part I. Individual and Collective Portraits of Female Intellectual Authority

In the opening chapter, Caroline Paganussi focuses on the fascinating case of Italian sculptor and anatomist Anna Morandi Manzolini (1714–1774), who overcame her humble origins to become one of the most important anatomists of the eighteenth century. At the height of her fame, Morandi created life-size wax portraits of herself and her husband in the process of a human dissection to commemorate their contributions in the burgeoning field of anatomical ceroplastics – a traditionally male-dominated field. Paganussi demonstrates how Morandi's reputation as an authority in the arts and sciences derived not solely from her medical prowess but also from her abilities as an artist to unite the talents of the eye and hand. Furthermore, Morandi's wax (self-)portraits intriguingly convey both her individual authority as an anatomist and artist and her engagement with 'a long-established tradition of excellence in Bolognese naturalistic painting'. Paganussi first explains how Morandi's successful career, in terms of agency and visibility, was also in part related to context: given the

particularly thriving scientific environment in Bologna, women artists and scientists were also – and quite exceptionally – recognised and actively promoted. The Accademia Clementina in Bologna was indeed one among several academies that women could join, even if their title was essentially honorific. Against the backdrop of these contextual features, Paganussi then provides an in-depth analysis of the portraits, signalling, for instance, how their material characteristics – the use of wax, for example – prove highly indicative of Morandi's successful endeavour to 'transgre[ss] the bifurcation of the arts and sciences, and even the *disputa delle arti*'. As this chapter argues, by making these portraits, Morandi navigated between asserting her individual authority and aligning with a gendered tradition of celebrated female Bolognese artists.

In Kelsey Rubin-Detlev's chapter on the correspondence between Maria Antonia, electress of Saxony (1724–1780), and Frederick the Great, king of Prussia (1712–1786), intellectual self-representation is studied as the result of a carefully crafted relational epistolary process. Maria Antonia is best known today as a skilled poet, composer, and musician, who staged fictions of female political leadership in operas such as *Talestri, regina delle amazzoni* ('Thalestris: Queen of the Amazons') (1762). Her correspondence has received little scholarly attention, but as Rubin-Detlev states, her epistolary self-portraits deserve closer study, not in the least because letters pertained both to the private and the public sphere. This meant that correspondents never exclusively navigated their interpersonal connection but also specific social models and power hierarchies. Rubin-Detlev's in-depth analysis of the letters that Maria Antonia and Frederick the Great exchanged between 1763 and 1779 exposes the formative interplay between the correspondents' changing ambitions – from political affinity to an emphasis on intellectual exchange – and the relational dynamics of their letter writing. Whereas Frederick strategically rebuffs Maria Antonia's efforts in claiming political authority, in the course of the exchange, the latter increasingly uses rhetorical tools (such as irony) to counteract Frederick's projected portraits. Her efforts in actively shaping an intellectual identity were nevertheless in line with ideals of 'elite sociability', reflected in her mastery of (literary) letter writing as well. If professional writing was irreconcilable with Maria Antonia's high birth, correspondence offered 'an outlet where she could display her extensive knowledge and exercise her intelligence in dialogue with like-minded people'.

In Rotraud Von Kulesa's contribution, the question of the interplay between individual and collective authority construction unfolds in a comparative analysis of self-representational strategies in eighteenth-century France and Italy. In this chapter, the long-standing *querelle des femmes* serves as the intellectual and argumentative backbone for this double focus, through which Von Kulesa addresses the varying use (both between cultures and by the examined individual authors) of essentially recurring arguments, such as the denial of authority, the right to fame, and the problem of access to knowledge.

She explains how these women's involvement in the transcultural *querelle des femmes* could explain why their texts address partially similar arguments and rhetorical strategies. Additionally, patterns of cultural transfer could also explain these points of convergence, as many French translations and pseudo-memoirs of fictional women authors were published in eighteenth-century Italy. At the same time, Von Kulesa points to significant differences between the auctorial situations of French and Italian women writers, which, so she argues, is later echoed in the historiography of national literatures that developed during the nineteenth century.

Whereas, in Von Kulesa's article, Stéphanie-Félicie de Genlis (1746–1830) is among the prominent women writers who questioned the gendered social constraints women had to tackle in building an intellectual reputation, Marie-Emanuelle Plagnol's chapter sheds new light on the interplay between the abundant series of visual portraits made of Genlis and her famous *Mémoires* as a form of textual self-fashioning. For Genlis, 'who had adroitly exercised the art of promotional self-portraits since her earliest works', these memoirs repeatedly included a retrospective view on the historical circumstances in which the portraits were commissioned or on the particular scene that was presented. The article first addresses the different functions ascribed to portraits in the *Mémoires* and then provides an insightful overview of Genlis's portraits, which illustrate the famous writer's 'thorough knowledge of the weight of the images and the symbolic viewpoints that they transmit to contemporaries and posterity'. As Plagnol demonstrates, it is precisely by adopting a diachronic perspective that one discovers the active role Genlis played in reshaping her own visual representation (much in the same way as in her texts). The author especially highlighted her many talents and unique versatility, 'in accordance with the overall constructed and reconstructed image that she intend[ed] to leave behind as a legacy'.

This first section concludes with a contribution by Catriona Seth, which ties together many of the arguments addressed in the previous chapters. Seth follows the intricate pathways to (reluctant) authority of three eighteenth-century women: artist Katherine Read (1723–1778), actress and writer Mary Robinson (1757–1800), and painter Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun (1755–1842). As Seth argues, both the visual and the textual were important means of (self-)representation in the careers of all three women. Vigée-Lebrun's trajectory, for instance, was evidently associated with the visual, but also with the textual, because she wrote her *Souvenirs* towards the end of her life. As for Mary Robinson, she first capitalised on her beauty during her life in the public eye and only turned to writing later on, in an attempt to shape – or rather perform – a perfected image of herself, which 'she clearly hoped, [would] be closer to what she considered to be her true self'. Finally, Katherine Read's engagement with the rhetorical dynamics of portraits in shaping intellectual authority clearly derives from her work as a woman painter, while the letters she sent to her family give a clear insight into

the many underlying careful considerations and (sometimes daring) choices through which she created a name for herself in what remained a male-dominated field. In Seth's article, the life and career of these three women are skilfully entwined to address, first, how in their path to knowledge, excellence, and recognition, they were often denied access to authority and agency. By analysing an impressive range of textual and visual sources, she then demonstrates these women's often ingenious strategies in tackling these challenges. As a result, Seth illustrates how the shaping of intellectual authority required a skilful navigation of different (and sometimes opposing) strategies, both through individual and collective forms of agency. While in some cases, they adopted 'male' attitudes to further their aims, in others, their empowerment was founded on individual choices as well as on support from or for other women.

Part II. Types and Models of Female Intellectual Authority

The second part of this volume includes five chapters in which the shaping of intellectual authority implies either the hesitant construction of new professional roles for women through (para)text and image or the reimagining of long-standing models whose unquestionable authority provided women artists and writers with a touchstone upon which their self-portraits could be construed. Opening this section, Valerie Worth-Stylianou addresses processes of professional legitimation and intellectual authority formation of early modern European female midwives, whose role became increasingly contested in the early modern period due to the rise of male midwife-surgeons. Midwives were traditionally subservient to male medical practitioners, which included physicians and surgeons; many were relatively or completely unlearned, and all midwives were considered to practise a trade rather than a noble art. Yet some female midwives, by exceptionally publishing textbooks in their vernacular languages, sought to legitimise their skill and their knowledge, as well as to defend the standing of their profession. Comparing the published works of three professional midwives from different parts of Europe – the outstandingly successful *Observations* by Louise Bourgeois (1563–1636) first appeared, in French, in 1609; *The Court Midwife* by Justine Siegemund (1636–1705), in German, in 1690; and Sarah Stone's *A Complete Practice of Midwifery*, in English, in 1737 – Worth-Stylianou highlights how these women used their writings to emphasise the importance of midwives' careful visual and tactile observations and their extensive practical experience, contrasting these with the purely theoretical understanding of childbirth that had long characterised the textbooks written by men. They thus met their male predecessors – or rivals – on their own terrain by arguing their intellectual understanding of the physical processes of childbirth. By using the same rhetorical and visual strategies and arguments that male writers employed, they bolstered their own status through publication.

In their contribution, Nina Geerdink and Feike Dietz focus on the authoritative representation strategies of Protestant women writers in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch Republic. Analysing a wide corpus of paratexts and portraits included in the printed works of these women, they illustrate how this group especially used a strategy of inversion – turning conventional female weaknesses and constraints into advantages – to gain a reputation as a religious authority. Motherhood, for instance, a domestic and primarily private role, is simultaneously represented as a public function, because female writers were considered to ‘mother’ others, beyond and within their own family. By dismantling the traditional dichotomy between the public and private (i.e. domestic) sphere, this chapter highlights how religious women turned the traditional image of the pious housewife and mother submitting to her husband’s authority into a solid basis for their own public religious authority.

Belinda Scerri zooms in on the life and aspirations of Louise-Bénédicte de Bourbon, duchesse du Maine (1676–1753), and Jeanne-Baptiste d’Albert de Luynes, comtesse de Verrue (1670–1736). Despite the strictures and derision that greeted women who sought a life of intellectual engagement, both women established themselves as connoisseurs and patrons of the arts, as well as women of learning, by carefully applying (self-)representation strategies related to their extraordinary collections. Owning one of the finest *cabinets* in Paris, the duchesse du Maine was determined to convey her status and highlight her intellectual capabilities and artistic taste through visual representations. A comparative analysis of the duchesse’s portraits by pre-eminent artist François de Troy indeed shows how the duchesse, as she amassed personal power, constructed a strategic image of herself as connoisseur. Similarly, the comtesse de Verrue negotiated the performance of gender and self-representation in establishing herself as connoisseur and patron of the arts. In this second case, Scerri brings into dialogue textual representations in the form of contemporary commentaries and posthumous sale catalogues to illustrate how these reveal a woman embedded in the culture of collecting, displaying, and commissioning great art of the era. In both cases, the documents and portraits gathered help us to understand the intellectual agency of two exceptional women who operated outside the normal constraints of their time. The imagined and vestigial portraits, both textual and visual, are more than images of attractive women of learning. They represent the artful self-fashioning of noblewomen who eschewed their prescribed roles yet maintained status at the nucleus and nexus of scholarship, taste, and power.

In her chapter on Aemilia Lanyer, née Bassano (1569–1645), Aurélie Griffin presents an in-depth analysis of the religious poem *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (‘Hail, God, King of the Jews’) (1611), with a particular focus on strategies of relational self-representation in the dedicatory poems attached to the volume. Like many other female writers, Lanyer found herself in the necessity to legitimise her writing, all the more given the fact that she was a commoner who

could not benefit from a distinguished social position. For Lanyer, legitimation entailed an active reshaping of the models she drew on to negotiate her own role and authority as a poetess. In the first part of her article, Griffin analyses how Lanyer positioned her own writing in the wake of Mary Sidney Herbert, countess of Pembroke, who had established a sound intellectual reputation as a famous patron, as a translator, and as a poetess. In her close reading, Griffin demonstrates how Lanyer creates a ‘dual logic’ of displaying the social distance that separates her from the countess of Pembroke on the one hand, and, suggesting ‘her right to poetic equality’ with the countess, on the other. While Lanyer adopts well-established strategies, such as the ‘rhetoric of modesty’, her use of these strategies throughout the poems captivates, because it implies a transformation of the role of ‘patron’ into the more fluid role of ‘mentor’, which ‘levels out social difference to promote mental and creative kinship’. In a way similar to the dismantling rhetorical strategies at play in the paratexts of Protestant women analysed by Geerdink and Dietz, in the last poem of the collection, ‘The Description of Cooke-ham’, Lanyer strengthens this reconfiguration of patronage into mentoring by attributing divine knowledge to the poetic persona, whose role becomes that of an intermediary between God and her addressees. Following Christ’s model, the poetic persona establishes her own authority, in becoming a mentor for women as a group, in particular for her dedicatees and for a younger generation.

In the final chapter of this section, Seren Nolan compares the portraits and careers of poet, translator, and *salonnière* Elizabeth Carter (1717–1806) and Britain’s first female historian Catharine Macaulay (1731–1791). These two female scholars, she argues, capitalised on the iconography of antiquity in making a name for themselves as classically educated public intellectuals in eighteenth-century Britain. More specifically, Nolan explores the strategic and effective use of the popular guise of the Roman *matrona* – which cloaked its wearers in a neoclassical mantle of female virtue, civic duty, and erudition – in their visual representations, revealing it as an attire of classical femininity and a strategy through which both sitters negotiated their place in the eighteenth-century public sphere. Frequently cited in discourses on women’s influence, stories of women from Roman antiquity could offer a historical precedent, mitigating femininity to what might otherwise be perceived as masculine acts of public or political intervention. Such associations made *matronae* particularly useful visual aliases for early modern female intellectuals. These figures could mediate contemporary prescriptions and proscriptions of women’s ‘proper place’ while expressing their brilliance – and necessity – as cultural and political subjects.

Part III. The Diachronic Dynamics of Female Intellectual Authority

The contributions included in the last part of this collection continue to explore representations of female intellectual authority from a diachronic perspective. Both the contributions of Armel Dubois-Nayt and Laura Beck highlight the formative role of printed collections of learned women in the negotiation and renegotiation of their public image on an individual as well as on a collective level. By tracing the written portraits of Mary Stuart (1542–1587) in four French collective biographies of famous women – one of the more frequently used genres to defend the female sex ever since the *querelle des femmes* – Dubois-Nayt illustrates how the public image of the Queen of Scots was consciously reshaped from the image of an illustrious monarch to that of a learned woman in order to fit in with the collection's general argument. Within the context of these seventeenth-century collections, the Queen of Scots, who was among the happy few women who received an actual formal education, increasingly became an exemplum to demonstrate female intellectual talent and authority. As such, the life of Mary became part of a broader discussion about the need for a universal humanist education for women.

The debate on women's access to education is also at the heart of Laura Beck's account on representations of women jurists in academic jurisprudence. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century legal scholars, she argues, vividly discussed the existence of women jurists in legal treatises, university dissertations, and orations. Echoing well-known references in popular catalogues of illustrious women and the new genre of *Frauenzimmerlexica*, which were especially abundant in the German territories, jurists deliberated about the political and intellectual authority of both legendary and historical feminine characters who had allegedly excelled in the field of law. Using as a point of departure the taxonomy of women jurists scrutinised by the law professor Carl Ferdinand Hommel in 1761, Beck illustrates how these discussions covered a wide range of questions that were first raised in the *querelle des femmes* about the social position of women and their opportunities to become knowledgeable human beings, let alone legal authorities. The *querelle's* topics offered learned jurists tools to engage in the debate, even if their purpose was, in most cases, to exclude, to correct, or to 'domesticate' the characters that proliferated in the popular galleries of illustrious women. In certain cases, however, these accounts helped to disseminate a more pro-feminine approach to legal solutions and interpretations.

The last two contributions focus on determining factors in the diachronic developments of the individual learned women's public image. Lien Verpoest's chapter provides an unprecedented insight into the lively correspondence between two late eighteenth-century female intellectuals and high-society characters, Amalia Golitsyna (1748–1806), who was a central member and host of the Kreis von Münster, and Marie-Caroline Murray (1741–1831), whose works

received acclaim at the time but soon fell into oblivion. As Verpoest argues, they were more than just connected through friendship; for some time, their lives seemed to follow a similar path, both well surrounded by their intellectual peers. Yet, intriguingly, the reception of their lives and careers diverged considerably: where Amalia Golitsyna has been represented as a female intellectual in her own right, on a par with her academic husband and many other contemporaries, Marie-Caroline Murray was not. In Verpoest's analysis, relational authority proves vital in the diplomatic and intellectual networks through which these women connected and developed their 'legitimising mobility'. It also helps to unearth the 'causal mechanisms behind Gallitzin and Murray's divergent legacies'. Through a systematic comparison between these women's intellectual and social trajectories over several decades, determining which factors (intellectual preferences, life choices, socio-economic position) might have played a role in their divergent paths and different legacies, Verpoest comes to the conclusion 'that legitimising mobility was fostered by social status, male patronage and geographical network rather than by their oeuvre'.

The volume's final chapter takes the reader well into the nineteenth century, even if its starting point echoes Kelsey Rubin-Detlev's chapter on the correspondence between Maria Antonia and Frederick the Great. German prima donna Gertrud Elisabeth Schmeling (1749–1833), also known as Mara, was indeed famously connected to Frederick's court, before she faced the toll of being one of the celebrated stars in the eighteenth-century musical world. In her extensive study of some of the visual and textual (self-)portraits that accompanied Mara's rise to fame and significantly impacted her legacy, Vera Viehöver unfolds the interplay between text and image. In a reading that confronts two painted portraits with biographical accounts and anecdotal narratives (which are read as 'miniature textual portraits') and then focuses on Mara's autobiographical rectification, Viehöver succeeds in addressing some of the central arguments underpinning this volume. Resonant with the dynamics at play in the reception of one of her French contemporaries, Mme de Genlis, Mara saw her reputation constructed by others, and she often personally invested in forging portraits based on stereotypical images ('the natural girl', 'the obstinate diva') that mostly reinforced the double bind faced by exceptional women. In view of these portraits, Mara's autobiography then reads as an expression of female 'reappropriation': in 'writing back', she indeed 'represents her[self] as a competent, powerful woman whose singing expertise is not limited to "the power of feeling" but owes just as much to determined work and comprehensive training'.

The interdisciplinary and comparative perspective adopted in our volume brings into focus recurrent mechanisms and patterns at play in the representation of female intellectual authority during a formative period in European history. By combining a visual and textual approach, this collection of essays demonstrates the often overlooked intermedial and relational dimension of

intellectual (self-)representation. This is especially relevant for women, because the dominant narrative for successful female intellectuals relied heavily on their status of exception (and perhaps does so into the present day?). Highlighting the often similar strategies adopted by these learned women and their advocates, this volume opens a door to a more inclusive historiography with an attentiveness to the interplay between the female individual and the collective.

Notes

1. The editors wish to thank Amélie Jaques for her invaluable contribution to the final version of this book, as well as Alicia Montoya and Anke Gilleir for co-organising the conference this publication resulted from.
2. This focus on representation mechanisms is – often explicitly – associated with social psychology research, conducted since the 1960s under the umbrella of ‘Draw-a-Scientist’, and which focuses on children’s stereotypical image of scientists. For an overview of this research, see David I. Miller et al., ‘The Development of Children’s Gender-Science Stereotypes’, in *Child Development*, 2018, 89(6), 1943–1955.
3. See Lieke van Deinsen, ‘Spiegels van Sophia. Geleerdenportretten en de verbeelding van vrouwen als wetenschappelijke autoriteit: een historische kadering’, in *Nieuwe Tijden*. *Over vroegmoderne geschiedenis*, 2020, 53–59.
4. Studies on the construction of scholarly personae are numerous, see, for example, Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum, ‘Introduction: Scientific Personae and their Histories’, in *Science and Context*, 2003, 16(1–2), 1–8; Herman Paul, ‘Sources of the Self: Scholarly Personae as Repertoires of Scholarly Selfhood’, in *Bijdragen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden (BMGN)*, 2016, 131(4), 135–154; Kirsti Niskanen, Mineke Bosch, and Kaat Wils, ‘Scientific Personas in Theory and Practices – Ways of Creating Scientific, Scholarly and Artistic Identities’, in *Persona Studies*, 2018, 4(1), 1–5. On the struggle of women to meet the ideal image of the (modern) scholar, see Mineke Bosch, ‘Persona and the Performance of Identity: Parallel Developments in the Biographical Historiography of Science and Gender, and the Related Uses of Self Narrative’, in *L’homme. Europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft*, 2013, 24(2), 11–22.
5. See, for instance, Edith Hall and Rosie Wyles (eds.), *Women Classical Scholars: Unsealing the Fountain from the Renaissance to Jacqueline de Romilly*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016; Patricia Pender (ed.), *Gender, Authorship, and Early Modern Women’s Collaboration*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
6. See, for example, Huguette Krief and Valérie André (eds.), *Dictionnaire des Femmes des Lumières*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2015; and the online *Dictionnaire des femmes de l’ancienne France* by the *Société Internationale pour l’Etude des Femmes de l’Ancien Régime (SIEFAR)*.
7. See, for example, the electronic collection of rare and less familiar early women’s writing in English, collected in the *Women Writers* project; James Fitzmaurice et al. (eds.), *Major Women Writers of Seventeenth-Century England*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1997. With regard to Netherlandish women writers, see M. A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans. Schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd 1550–1850*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1997 (English reworked edition: Lia van Gemert et al. (eds.), *Women’s Writing From the Low Countries 1200–1875*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2010).
8. Critical reflections on the position of women in traditional canons are numerous; see, for example, Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993; Eileen O’Neill, ‘Disappearing Ink: Early Modern Women Philosophers and Their Fate in History’, in Janet A. Kourany (ed.), *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice: Critiques and Reconstructions*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997, 17–62.
9. See, for instance, the seminal Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989.

10. See, for example, Helen King, *The One-Sex Body on Trail: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2013. The re-evaluation of the female body was a long process; see, for an elaborate historical account, Katharine Park, *Secrets of Women. Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection*, New York, Zone Books, 2006.
11. See Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, among others.
12. See, for example, Nathalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins. Three Seventeenth-Century Lives*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995; Paula Findlen, 'Becoming a Scientist: Gender and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century Italy', in *Science in Context*, 2003, 16(1–2), 59–87. For the discourse on equality, see, for instance, Derval Conroy, *Towards an Equality of the Sexes in Early Modern France*, London, Routledge, 2021, 1. See also Eliane Viennot (ed.), *Revisiter la « Querelle des Femmes ». Discours sur l'égalité/l'inégalité des sexes, de 1750 aux lendemains de la Révolution*, Saint-Étienne, Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2012; Danniele Haasse-Dubosc and Marie-Elisabeth Henneau, *Revisiter la « Querelle des Femmes ». Discours sur l'égalité/l'inégalité des sexes, de 1600–1750*, vol. 2, Saint-Étienne, Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2013.
13. Erica Harth, *Cartesian Women. Versions and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Regime*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992; Eric Jorink, 'De geest heeft geen sekse, maar het lichaam? Sekse, Descartes en het onderzoek van zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse anatomen naar de fysieke verschillen tussen man en vrouw', in Myriam Everard and Ulla Jansz (eds.), *Sekse. Een begripsgeschiedenis*, Hilversum, Verloren, 2018, 21–39. François Poulain de la Barre (1647–1723), in particular, used Cartesianism to present a new answer to 'the woman question'. See Siep Stuurman, *François Poulain de la Barre and the Invention of Modern Equality*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2004; Conroy, *Towards an Equality of the Sexes*.
14. Geneviève Fraisse, *Muse de la Raison, Démocratie et exclusion des femmes en France*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995 [1989]; Fraisse, *La Suite de l'Histoire, Actrices, créatrices*, Paris, Seuil, 2019.
15. See, for instance, Faith Beasley, *Salons, History, and the Creation of Seventeenth-Century France. Mastering Memory*, London, Routledge, 2006; Maria Rentetzi et al. (eds.), *Beyond the Academy: Histories of Gender and Knowledge*, in a special issue of *Centaurus: An International Journal of the History of Science and Its Cultural Aspects*, 2013, 55.
16. Dena Goodman, *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters*, Cornell, Cornell University Press, 2009; Susan Dalton, *Engendering the Republic of Letters: Reconnecting Public and Private Spheres in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Montreal, McGill University Press, 2003; Elizabeth Eger et al. (eds.), *Women Writing and the Public Sphere 1700–1830*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
17. Anke Gilleir and Alicia Montoya, 'Introduction. Toward a New Conception of Women's Literary History', in Anke Gilleir, Alicia Montoya, and Suzan van Dijk (eds.), *Women Writing Back / Writing Women Back. Transnational Perspectives from the Late Middle Ages to the Dawn of the Modern Era*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2010, 1–20. See also Pamela Cheek, *Heroines and Local Girls. The Transnational Emergence of Women's Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021.
18. An example is the *Women Writers* database (<www.womenwriters.nl>). In addition, the European Research Council advanced grant project *Circulating Gender in the Global Enlightenment: Ideas, Networks, Agencies* is conducting a large-scale analysis of the circulation of gender in Enlightenment Europe.
19. See, for instance, Marc Fumaroli (ed.), *Les premiers siècles de la République européenne des Lettres*, Paris, Alain Baudry Et Cie, 2005; David Norbrook, 'Women, the Republic

- of Letters, and the Public Sphere in the Mid-Seventeenth Century', in *Criticism*, 2004, 46(2), 223–240; Julie D. Cambell and Anne R. Larsen, *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, London, Routledge, 2009; Carol Pal, *Republic of Women: Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014.
20. See, for example, Jacqueline Broad and Karen Detlefsen, *Women and Liberty, 1600–1800. Philosophical Essays*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017; see also several studies by Hilda L. Smith and, more specifically, the essay in which she shows the informative and emancipatory value of studying early modern women intellectuals to challenge gender bias in current intellectual history practices: Hilda L. Smith 'Women Intellectuals and Intellectual History: Their Paradigmatic 'Separation'', in *Women's History Review*, 2007, 16(3), 353–368.
 21. For theoretical sources on authorial (self-)representation, we refer, among others, to Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2005 [1980]; Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Geneva, Slatkine, 2009. In recent years, literary scholars also addressed the historical and conceptual link between authorship and authority: see, for example, Emmanuel Bouju, *L'autorité en littérature. Genèse d'un genre littéraire en Grèce*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2016; Stephen Donovan et al., *Authority Matters. Rethinking the Theory and Practice of Authorship*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2008.
 22. In referring to the 'conditioned' birth of authority ('la genèse conditionnée'), different from its 'spontaneous' birth ('la genèse spontanée'), Kojève emphasizes the transmissive nature of authority construction: 'Authority itself is already here (that is to say, it is already "recognised"), and it is only a question of changing its material (human) "support" by transferring it from one individual (or group) to another, so that here, too, it is a question of a transmission of Authority' (Alexandre Kojève, *The Notion of Authority*, London, Verso, 2013, 33).
 23. In his essay 'Qu'est-ce que l'autorité' ('What is authority?') (2007), Jean-Pierre Cléro builds his theory on authority on two other concepts that are of interest to our analysis: drawing on a long rhetorical tradition, he strongly emphasises the (symbolic) incarnation of authority, albeit in the sense of poses and roles ('des positions supposées'), instead of their physical presence ('l'individualité empirique'). Rather than fully adhering to the 'relational' nature of authority, Cléro also refers to the idea of 'transmission': 'That there is a constant reshuffling of the masks, that the movement of transmission, of delegation, is essential to the process of authority, is obvious' ('Qu'il y ait constamment un remaniement des masques, que le mouvement de transmission, de délégation, soit l'essentiel du processus de l'autorité, est une évidence') (Jean-Pierre Cléro, *Qu'est-ce que l'autorité*, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2007, 39–40).
 24. In *Fictions of Authority*, Susan Lanser's definition foregrounds the interactive construction of authority, in specific reference to the recognition of status and value in literature, stating that '[d]iscursive authority – by which I mean here the intellectual credibility, ideological validity, and aesthetic value claimed by or conferred upon a work, author, narrator, character, or textual practice – is produced interactively' (Susan Lanser, *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice*, Cornell, Cornell University Press, 1992, 6).
 25. 'L'autorité n'est autre chose qu'un 'crédit' auprès d'un ensemble d'agents qui constituent des 'relations' d'autant plus précieuses qu'ils sont eux-mêmes mieux pourvus de crédit' (Pierre Bourdieu, 'La production de la croyance. Contribution à une économie des biens symboliques', in *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 1977, 13, 7).

26. See, for instance, Patricia Pender's study on early modern women's strategic use of the modesty trope in *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
27. On the importance of social hierarchy and its formative role in the promotion of literature and learning more generally, see Neil Kenny's recent work: *Born to Write. Literary Families and Social Hierarchy in Early Modern France*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020.
28. Ruth Amossy, *La présentation de soi: Ethos et identité verbale*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2010; Ruth Amossy, 'La double nature de l'image d'auteur', in *Argumentation et Analyse du Discours*, 2009, 3(3) (digital publication < <http://aad.revues.org/662>>).
29. 'Il ne s'agit pas de ce que le sujet est [...] mais de l'image qu'il projette dans une situation précise' (Amossy, *La Présentation de soi*, 27). On the role of paratextual discourses and (self-)narratives in the authorial self-representation of women writers, see Jean-Philippe de Beaulieu and Diane Descrosiers-Bonin, 'La réflexivité en question', in Beaulieu and Desrosiers-Bonin (eds.), *Les miroirs de l'écriture, la réflexivité chez les femmes écrivains de l'Ancien Régime*, Montreal, Université de Montréal, 1998.
30. Caroline Trotot, 'Introduction', in *Women's Portraits of the Self*, in a special issue of *Arts et Savoirs*, 2016, 6, 1–19.
31. Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus. Man of Letters. The Construction of Charisma in Print*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995, 27–54; Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther. How an Unheralded Monk Turned his Small Town into a Center of Publishing, Made Himself the Most Famous Man in Europe and Started the Protestant Reformation*, New York, Penguin, 2015, esp. 147–163.
32. Françoise Waquet, 'Les savants face à leurs portrait', in *Nouvelles de l'estampe*, 1991, 117, 22–28.
33. Guy Le Thiec, 'Dialoguer avec des hommes illustres. Le rôle des portraits dans les décors de bibliothèques (fin XVe–début XVIIe siècle)', in *Revue Française d'histoire du livre*, 2009, 130, 7–52.
34. Antony Griffiths, *The Print in Stuart Britain, 1603–1689*, London, British Museum Press, 1998, 193. Griffiths's observation has received some justified corrections. Margaret Ezell, for example, has pointed out that this claim only applies to certain genres, such as intellectual and literary publications. See also, Sarah Howe, 'The Authority of Presence. The Development of the English Author Portrait, 1500–1640', in *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 2008, 102(4), 465–499.
35. Karl A. E. Enenkel, *Die Stiftung von Autorschaft in der neulateinischen Literatur (ca. 1350–1650). Zur autorisierenden und wissensvermittelnden Funktion von Widmungen, Vorworttexten, Autorporträts und Dedikationsbildern*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2015; Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books. Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and the Eighteenth Centuries*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1994. See also Peter Burke, 'Reflections on the Frontispiece Portrait in the Renaissance', in Andreas Köstler and Ernst Seidl (eds.), *Bildnis Und Image. Das Portrait Zwischen Intention Und Rezeption*, Cologne, Böhlau, 1998, 150–162; Lieke van Deinsen and Nina Geerdink, 'Cultural Branding in the Early Modern Period. The Literary Author', in Helleke van den Braber et al. (eds.), *Branding Books Across the Ages. Strategies and Key Concepts in Literary Branding*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2021, 31–60.
36. Charlotte Simonin, 'Les portraits de femmes auteurs ou l'impossible représentation', in *Espaces de l'image, Europe XVI-XVIIe siècle*, 2002, 35–57; Margaret Ezell, 'Seventeenth-Century Female Author Portraits, Or, The Company She Keeps', in *Zeitschrift für*

- Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 2021, 60(2), 31–45; Lieke van Deinsen, ‘Visualising Female Authorship. Author Portraits and the Representation of Female Literary Authority in the Eighteenth-Century Dutch Republic’, in *Quaerendo*, 2019, 49(4), 283–314.
37. See, for instance, Melissa Hyde, ‘“Peinte par elle-même?” Women Artists, Teachers and Students from Anguissola to Haudebourt-Lescot’, in *Women’s Portraits of the Self*, special issue of *Arts et Savoirs*, 2016, 6; Melissa Hyde and Mary D. Sheriff, *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Enlightenment: French Art From the Horvitz Collection*, Boston, The Horvitz Collection, 2017.

PART I

**Individual and Collective
Portraits of Female Intellectual
Authority**



Fig. 1. Anna Morandi Manzolini, *Self-Portrait*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 153, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna. © Opificio delle pietre Dure di Firenze. Photo credit: Giacinto Cambini. (Plate 1, p. 353)

CHAPTER 1

‘A woman of supreme goodness, and a singular talent’: Anna Morandi Manzolini, Artist and Anatomist of Enlightenment Bologna

Caroline Paganussi

Proudly resplendent in her elegant, lace-embellished, rose-coloured dress and sumptuous jewels and pearls, Anna Morandi Manzolini (1714/1716–1774) is comfortable with dead flesh (Fig. 1).¹ Her serene expression and delicate hand gestures belie the gruesome task at hand: the dissection of a human cranium. She peels back a layer of hair-covered skin with her forceps and points with a scalpel (now lost) to the meninges, or the three membranes that line the skull and vertebral canal and enclose the brain and spinal cord, without a glance at the manual task she performs. Morandi² gazes confidently at her audience, nonchalantly revealing the locus of human cognition and imagination. Despite her real clothes, human hair, and lifelike appearance, Anna Morandi Manzolini has created herself in wax.

By creating a self-portrait in such an unstable medium, Morandi forced viewers to contend with a truly composite figure of the artist-anatomist. The fluidity of wax, which can shift infinitely between solid and liquid states, parallels the nature of Morandi’s professional identity as an artist and anatomist. Indeed, in her lifetime, Morandi was considered an excellent sculptor *and* anatomist, her perceived professional identity unfixed. The Marchese Angelelli wondered whether Morandi was to be remembered as an ‘excellent sculptor or a learned anatomist’, concluding that she succeeded in both.³ In his 1777 oration *De Manzoliniana supellectili* (‘On Manzolini’s Preparations’), Luigi Galvani attributed Morandi’s authority as an anatomist to her abilities as a sculptor, arguing that her models would never become obsolete because they ‘perfectly imitated nature.’⁴ Despite the accolades she received in her lifetime and shortly after her death, only recently have scholars focused on Morandi and her work, with Lucia Dacome, Miriam Focaccia, and Rebecca Messbarger

cogently reconstructing her biography and assigning Morandi a critical place in Bologna's eighteenth-century intellectual milieu.⁵ Many scholars, however, interpret Morandi's self-portrait as primarily an assertion of her mastery of dissection and anatomical science, often understating the importance of her formal training as a painter, draughtsman, and sculptor.

In this chapter, I situate the artist-anatomist in the tradition of female self-portraiture and the city's celebration of female achievement in the arts and sciences, positing that Morandi's status as a Bolognese woman artist enhanced her prestige in the world of anatomical ceroplastics. Furthermore, I contend that Morandi's wax portraits of herself and her husband⁶ engage Bologna's collective promotion of its native artistic heritage, embodied in the luminous naturalism of the Carracci school and its followers. Bologna's commitment to and pride in expounding naturalism derives from the practice of careful observation and study that developed at the city's ancient university over its centuries-long history, and such context should not be underestimated when considering Morandi's works. Her waxes, I contend, problematise the polemic of anatomical knowledge in the local arts establishment. I argue that Morandi's self-portrait embodies the sculptor's intellectual authority as an anatomist and artist through visual references to Bologna's exemplary holy women and women artists. By signalling her membership to these various social and professional groups, the self-portrait empowers Morandi to transcend the boundaries between them and to fashion a singular identity for herself as a totalising symbol of civic excellence.

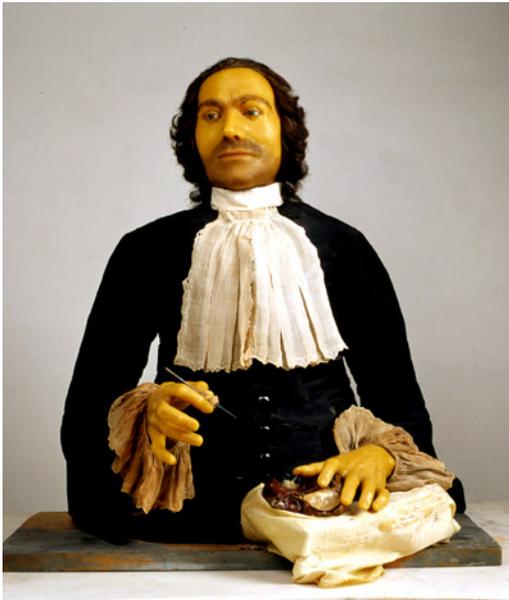


Fig. 2. Anna Morandi Manzolini, *Bust of Giovanni Manzolini*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 154, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna; © Università di Bologna – Sistema Museale di Ateneo. Photo credit: Fulvio Simoni. (Plate 2, p. 354)

Bologna: 'Mistress of Sciences and of Studies'

Born in Bologna in 1714 or 1716, Morandi was raised by her mother in meagre circumstances and supported by one of Bologna's charitable organisations that aided underprivileged women.⁷ She studied drawing and sculpture under local artists Giuseppe Pedretti and Francesco Monti, in whose studio she met Giovanni Manzolini (1700–1755) (Fig. 2).⁸ The couple married in November 1740 and, after Manzolini took a position in the studio of anatomical ceroplastician Ercole Lelli, Morandi began her own foray into anatomical science, deploying her training as a sculptor to assist her husband when he left Lelli's studio in 1746. After Manzolini's untimely death in 1755, the widow and single mother continued to operate their studio and display their preparations in their home. That same year, Pope Benedict XIV granted Morandi an annual stipend of 300 lire to lecture on human anatomy at Bologna's university. Finally, Morandi had assumed her place in Bologna's intellectual elite.

Morandi nurtured her artistic and scientific talents largely due to Bologna's long-standing status as a hub of intellectual pursuits. Home to an ancient university,⁹ Bologna's various academic institutes and arts academies enhanced its status as 'mistress of sciences and of studies'.¹⁰ Such extra-university institutions as Ulisse Aldrovandi's (1522–1605) collection of naturalia and Ferdinando Cospi's (1606–1683) collection of artificialia were designed to supplement the university's curricula, which, by the eighteenth century, were primarily theoretical and taught orally rather than through experimentation and practical teaching.¹¹

Bologna's variety of educational resources fostered a spirit of collaboration between artists and scientists, men and women. Bolognese women artists worked from the collections of Aldrovandi and Cospi: the painter Lavinia Fontana studied Aldrovandi's collection of botanical and zoological specimens, and the engraver Veronica Fontana illustrated the catalogue for the Museo Cospiano, a cabinet of curiosities containing natural specimens (including human-made, fictitious creatures from natural specimens, such as winged fish), archaeological artefacts, and arts and arms from the Ottoman world.¹² While other women engaged in scientific illustration abroad,¹³ Bologna's tradition of supporting women who participated in intellectual pursuits enabled Morandi to fuse her anatomical talents with her artistic abilities in her double portrait.¹⁴

By Morandi's lifetime, the trope of the learned Bolognese woman was a source of pride, an embodiment of the city's cultural vibrancy and robust networks of intellectual exchange.¹⁵ Beginning in the sixteenth century, a number of male Bolognese authors composed *laude*, or verses praising extraordinary female abilities. Giulio Cesare Croce in 1590 claimed that 'illustrious and intelligent women have contributed to Felsina's fame and goodness and as the names of these women are inscribed in history, so is the name of Bologna'.¹⁶ The Tuscan Giorgio Vasari included a *vita* of the sculptor Properzia de' Rossi in his *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori da Cimabue insino a'*

tempi nostril ('Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects') (1550) (Fig. 3). one of just four entries dedicated to women and the only one mentioning a female sculptor. The unflattering nature of much of her *vita* notwithstanding, Properzia's inclusion in a book featuring the most prominent artists of the Renaissance is not to be underestimated, particularly because Bolognese artists enjoy minimal representation in Vasari's text. In 1678, the Bolognese scholar and art historian Carlo Cesare Malvasia commended the accomplishments of Bolognese women artists, who

followed the trail of their progenitors and, as Vasari said [...] were not ashamed [...] to place themselves with tender and palest white hands at tasks of dynamism; and through the roughness of marble and the harshness of iron, to chase after their desires, and bring back with them fame.¹⁷

Thus, positive attitudes towards Bolognese women artists were well established before Morandi's lifetime.

In the eighteenth century, Pope Benedict XIV fostered the interpenetration of university scholarship and independent intellectual inquiry, often driven by the work of individual collectors. Since the medieval physician Mondino de' Liuzzi first performed public dissections in the thirteenth century, Bologna had served as a locus of anatomical study. In 1711, Luigi Ferdinando Marsili (1658–1730) oversaw the merger of the city's fine art academy, the Accademia Clementina, with the nascent Istituto delle Scienze e Arti Liberali to form the



Fig. 3: Cristoforo Chrieger after drawing by Giorgio Vasari, *Properzia de' Rossi*, 1791 [–1795]. Woodcut. From *Le Vite De' Piu Eccellenti Pittori, Scultori, E Architettori* for Niccolò Pagni e Giuseppe Bardi (Florence, 1568), 171. Royal Academy, London.

Accademia delle Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna, a place where artists and scientists could carry out experimental research side by side.

A citizen of Bologna, Cardinal Prospero Lambertini ascended to the papacy in 1740, becoming Pope Benedict XIV, and he enthusiastically nurtured Bologna's intellectual culture before and after taking St. Peter's throne (Fig. 4). Bologna's status as the northern gateway to the Papal States allowed Lambertini to cultivate his identity as enlightened and dominant over all things natural and spiritual.¹⁸ At the fore of this plan was the creation of an anatomy museum at the Institute of Bologna, intended to supplement anatomical instruction for medical students at the university. In 1742, Lambertini hired Ercole Lelli, a professor of figure drawing at the Accademia Clementina, to create the first anatomical wax models (Fig. 5). Lelli initially engaged Manzolini to assist with the commission, but Manzolini left the studio in 1745 due to what he felt was a lack of acknowledgement of his contributions to the project.¹⁹ The couple continued to model and display their anatomical waxes in their home until Manzolini's death.



Fig. 4: Pierre Hubert Subleyras, *Pope Benedict XIV (Prospero Lambertini)*, 1746. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Friends of European Paintings Gifts, Bequest of Joan Whitney Payson, by exchange, Gwynne Andrews Fund, Charles and Jessie Price Gift, and Valerie Delacorte Fund Gift, in memory of George T. Delacorte, 2009. From the Metropolitan Museum of Art, www.metmuseum.org (accessed 12 September 2021). (Plate 3, p. 354)



Fig. 5: Cesare Bettini, *Ercole Lelli*, eighteenth century. Lithograph. Wellcome Collection, London.



Fig. 6: Lavinia Fontana, *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo*, 1579. Oil on canvas. Florence, Uffizi Gallery. Photo: Scala/Art Resource. (Plate 4, p. 355)

Self-Portraiture and the Bolognese Intellectual Woman

Morandi created the double portrait to celebrate her family's shared achievements in the field of anatomical waxworks. While she dissects a brain (Fig. 1), Manzolini, dressed in a sombre black doctoral gown, his gaze elsewhere, reveals a dissected human heart, flayed to show the mitral and tricuspid valves (Fig. 2). These portraits disclose as much about Bolognese anatomical wax making as they do about Morandi's social, professional, and intellectual status.

The portrait's lifelikeness asserts Morandi's skill as an anatomist, but it also affirms her membership to an elite category of Bolognese intellectual: native women artists. From the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, a number of Bolognese women were celebrated for their artistic skill and excellence.²⁰ Important visitors to Bologna frequented the painter Elisabetta Sirani's (1638–1665) studio to watch her work – a precedent to Morandi's regular guests.²¹

Some were the subject of the aforementioned *laude*, and Malvasia cites them as a source of civic pride in his *Felsina pittrice* ('Lives of the Bolognese Painters').²² These women artists were particularly renowned for their self-portraits in which they depicted themselves in the act of painting, itself posited as an intellectual, gentlewomanly activity. In her wax self-portrait, Morandi fashioned herself as a gentlewoman, artist, intellectual, and scientist in a synthesis of Bolognese female self-portraiture.²³

One such precedent is Lavinia Fontana's (1552–1614) *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo* (Fig. 6). Elegantly dressed, Lavinia sits among her books, statues, and paper – the accoutrements of a learned person – and holds a pen in her right hand, poised above a blank page in the moment before writing or drawing.²⁴ Although Morandi created her self-portrait over a century later, viewers can imagine the finely dressed Morandi continuing her demonstration by removing the brain from the skull and revealing its complex structures. Rather than implying her intellectual faculties through the presence of dissection tools, she explicitly references her abilities of uniting the eye, the mind, and the hand in the creation of the portrait itself as well as in her ability to dissect a human skull, interpret her findings, and share them with her audience. Although Morandi received widespread praise for her talent as a ceroplastician, this self-portrait reads as a reincarnation of Malvasia's fearless women artists who took their fame into their own hands.

The intersection of allegory and the woman artist's body was a well-established trope by Morandi's lifetime, even beyond Bologna. Catharina van Hemessen's (Antwerp, 1528–after 1587) *Self-Portrait*,²⁵ Sofonisba Anguissola's (Cremona,



Fig. 7: Catharina van Hemessen, *Self-Portrait at the Easel*, 1548. Oil on oak panel. From Kunstmuseum Basel, Sammlung Online. (Plate 5, p. 356)

1535–1625) *Self-Portrait at the Easel* (Fig. 7), and Fontana's *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo* are early examples of the gentlewoman artist at work, imagery that Artemisia Gentileschi (Rome, 1593–1653) engaged in her *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (1638–1639) (Fig. 8).

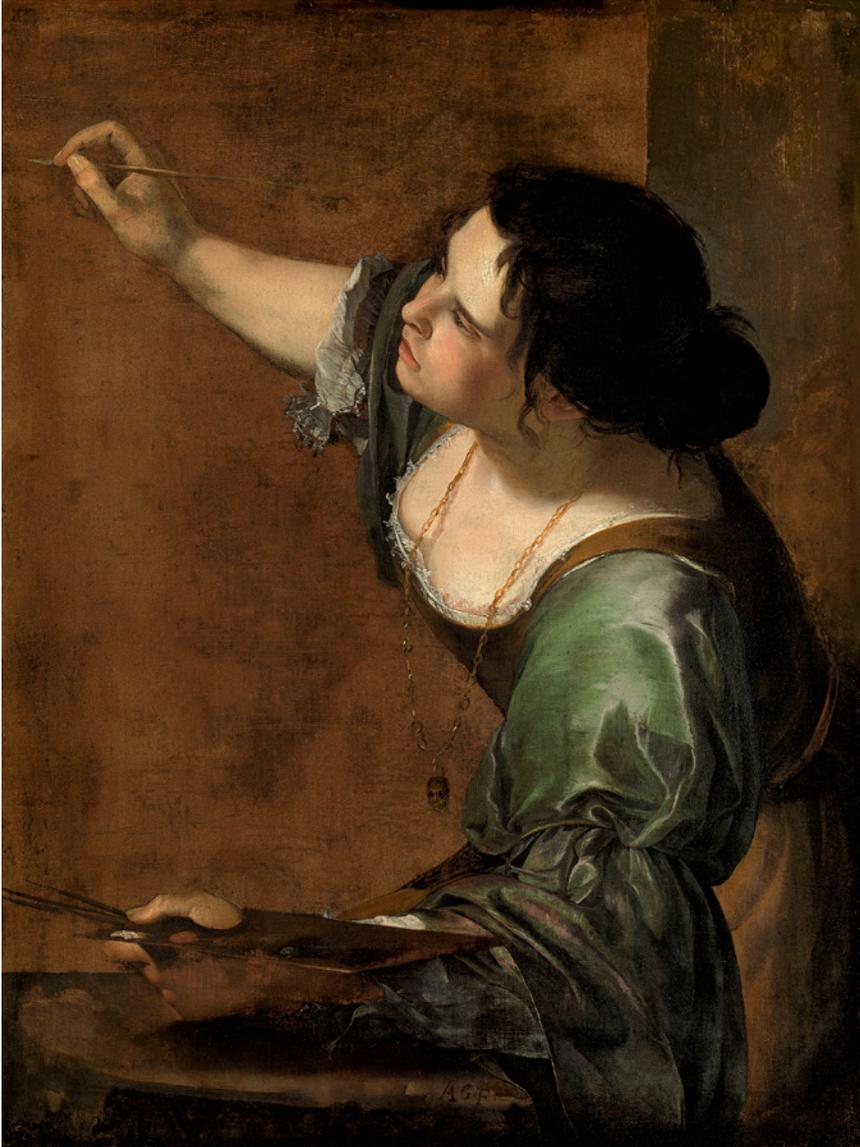


Fig. 8. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, 1638–1639. Oil on canvas. Royal Collection Trust, London. (Plate 6, p. 357)

Leaning towards the edge of the picture plane, the painter raises her brush in her right hand, moments before applying pigment to the canvas behind her. Her left arm supports her palette and the weight of her upper body, propping her up physically and professionally. We anticipate the impending elliptical motion of the artist's right arm to reapply paint to her brush, the trajectory of that gesture interrupted by the prominent gold chain hanging off her breast – a sign of respect given by patrons to male painters. She is poised in a moment of meditative inspiration, a hallmark of the nobility of painting, a fundamentally intellectual exercise.²⁶

Mary Garrard contends that Gentileschi's identification with Cesare Ripa's allegorical figure of Painting asserts a woman artist's unique ability to make herself the embodiment of the art of painting – something no male artist could ever achieve given the exclusively female identity of allegorical figures.²⁷ In this vein, Morandi's self-portrait serves as an allegory of dissection: Morandi is not opening a skull or cutting brain tissue – the motion of her hands is arrested, and her gaze is angled towards her audience. She mediates her audience's understanding of the body,²⁸ affirming the impossibility of her work without engaging the intellect. Morandi's dissection of the brain represents the significance of touch to the world of knowledge.²⁹ As Elizabeth Cropper has argued in the case of Gentileschi, the specificity of Morandi's gesture encapsulates all facets of her being, embodying 'her art, her consubstantiality with it' (Fig. 8).³⁰ Morandi is both an allegory and a material embodiment of her professional identity (Fig. 1).

Morandi's focus on the sensory organs engages a dialogue on the connection of the eye and the hand, which was as central to artistic theory as it was to anatomical practice.³¹ The *disputa delle arti* placed the artist's hand at the centre of the polemic between painters and sculptors: according to painters, the physicality required of the sculptor aligned sculpture more closely with the manual labour of craftspeople than painting. Artemisia's focus on the action of her female figures' 'working hands' is a vehicle for the artist to '[signal] her artistic presence to us through subtle and witty gestures of the hand'.³² Morandi's graceful hands illuminate the polite and refined nature of her work, while the modelled forms themselves embody the artist's physical labour, brought to the viewers' consciousness through the tactility of the wax medium (Fig. 9).

Morandi's artistic training and exposure to the *disputa delle arti* predisposed her to the creation of anatomical preparations of the sensory organs. However, she dedicates only one of her notebooks to a detailed explanation of the connection between the physical structures and their sensations: the hand. Morandi explains that 'whatever object presents itself to the hand for examination of its tangible qualities, nature immediately permits the hand, of all the anatomical members the most capable and sincere judge, to evaluate it'.³³ To illustrate this concept, she created models of the left and right (now lost) hands, with the left hand 'compressing with delight' as it rests upon a soft surface, while the right hand recoils in pain upon touching a thorny branch.³⁴



Fig. 9. Anna Morandi Manzolini, *Pair of Hands*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 126, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna; © Università di Bologna – Sistema Museale di Ateneo. (Plate 7, p. 358)

The right hand's sharp reaction, Morandi explains, derives from the 'opposite nature' of the prickly branch to soft human flesh.

In the context of the *disputa delle arti*, Morandi's sensitivity to these differences, and her assignation of memory to the sense of touch, assumes a new potency. The hand played a crucial role in aiding memory, whether as a mnemonic device or teaching tool. It was the nexus of matter, mind, and spirit – a metaphor for the entirety of a person, itself considered a microcosm of the universe.³⁵ Theorists posited the hand as perfectly designed for *apprehensia* ('grasping'), both in physically taking hold of something and in understanding new concepts.³⁶

Across Art and Science

Morandi emphasised her hands-on experience at the dissection table, telling a visitor to her collection in 1755 that she had dissected one thousand corpses.³⁷ Lucia Dacome and Rebecca Messbarger suggest that this need to prove her scientific credentials indicates a desire to fashion herself as an anatomist rather than an artificer.³⁸ Scholars have drawn these conclusions in part from the opinions of Giampietro Zanotti (1674–1765), the secretary of the Accademia

Clementina and teacher of Ercole Lelli. While Zanotti initially encouraged Lelli to pursue his interests in anatomical sculpture by attending dissections, he felt that anatomical study should serve purely to support the accurate representation of the human form – dissections were ‘useless’ skills for a painter, who needed to master so many other techniques.³⁹ Indeed, in 1747, Lambertini designated Lelli’s anatomical preparations for the Anatomy Museum for teaching anatomy to students of figure drawing and sculpture.⁴⁰ The question whether artists should master anatomical knowledge permeated Morandi’s world, her double portrait challenging this polemic.

The sceptical *accademici* of the Clementina believed that any artist interested in mastering anatomical study debased the nobility of the profession in the pursuit of a manual trade at odds with the intellectual and gentlemanly status that artists had worked for centuries to obtain. Luigi Crespi disparaged the idea that painters be conversant in the body’s internal structures as ‘a grave fraud that in the end brings them nothing but a pact with fools and some self-serving ideas about their own merit [...] to have the mastery of an art comprise those things that contribute nothing to the perfection of the art itself is idiocy and a sham.’⁴¹ Others, such as Francesco Algarotti, suggested that artists learn human locomotion through study of the muscular and skeletal systems.⁴²

Manzolini and Morandi’s expertise in the human body would have placed them in an unfavourable light in the eyes of many *accademici*, particularly given their use of human specimens in their preparations. How do we reconcile their artistic formation with their turn to intensive anatomical study and discovery? Morandi’s compositional references to self-portraiture and the specificity with which she depicted her and her husband’s visages diverge from her anatomical preparations. The portraits evoke the sitters’ immediate presence, rather than stand as a universal model for the male and female human body.

By departing from the faithful recreation of the human body from the inside out, Morandi’s portraits evince her command of the interconnectivity of the muscular, skeletal, and nervous systems to represent rather than recreate her and her husband’s bodies. Operating as ‘doubles’ of their personae as anatomists and teachers, the portraits *persuade* the viewer of their mastery of anatomical study within the traditional visual lexicon of Bolognese naturalism. Therefore, in the context of portraiture, lifelikeness mattered more to Morandi than physiological veracity.

Women and the Academy

For women artists, the full embrace of the art academies was not essential to defining professional success. Morandi joined the Clementina with the title of *Accademica*, which was, effectively, an honorific: women could not attend meetings, nor were they eligible for elected office.⁴³ Zanotti stated in the foreword

to his *Storia dell'Accademia Clementina* that just because one was not elected as an academician did not mean one was not an excellent artist, but rather that there were simply too many talented practitioners in Bologna to include everyone worthy of membership.⁴⁴ Zanotti's history of the Clementina and Crespi's addendum to Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice*, both studded with glowing accounts of Bologna's women artists, indicate that women were recognised by and incorporated into the academy even though they were not elected academicians.

This phenomenon was not unique to Bologna: Rome's Accademia di San Luca similarly supported women artists. An anonymous list of 'Nomi delle SS Accademiche Pittrice' ('Names of the Most Holy Academy's Women Painters') indicate that many were added posthumously to the academy's membership rolls.⁴⁵ This list included the Bolognese Elisabetta Sirani, who never set foot in Rome but was nevertheless an *accademica di merito* – the title given to a professional or learned figure who neither attended meetings nor held elected office. It was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that dates of admission began to accompany the names of the *accademiche di honore*.⁴⁶

While the Clementina marginalised, they were by no means invisible. The Clementina named local saint Caterina Vigri as patron, incorporating one of Bologna's earliest women artists into its spiritual and civic identity.⁴⁷ The academy's formal establishment in 1710 necessarily excluded Bologna's most illustrious women artists from membership in their lifetimes, and rather than explicitly allowing women to join, the statutes of 1706 merely note that women are 'not forbidden' from becoming honorary members as long as they possess 'virtù eccellente', akin to their colleagues of 'noble birth' or those 'in a similar profession'.⁴⁸ As Peter Lukehart has demonstrated, Giovanna Garzoni was similarly marginalised by the Accademia di San Luca, yet her devotion to and impression on it was never diminished⁴⁹ – she was a successful artist at various Italian courts prior to her admission into the academy. Women could not enjoy full membership to the academies, but their lower profiles within them did not hinder their careers.

The relationship between Bologna's artists' guild and art academy in the early modern era was unique in that membership in the guild was not requisite for participation in the Clementina. Bolognese artists vocalised their belief in the nobility of their profession, a lucrative and prestigious one from the seventeenth century,⁵⁰ and they sought to extricate themselves from what they felt was the overly inclusive Compagnia dei Pittori, or painters' guild. The guild allowed artists, artisans, and even merchants to join, keeping the cycle of production and sales in one organisation – the only such configuration in Italy.⁵¹ In their 1706 petition to the Bolognese Senate for the foundation of an academy, the so-called *professori della pittura* articulated a desire to distinguish themselves from the *artisti meccanici*, who practised art forms beyond painting, sculpture, and architecture. The 'professors' felt themselves above the 'more mechanical Companies', and desired freedom from the guild. The key distinction between

the ‘professors’ and the ‘mechanical artists’, they argued, was the former’s desire to obtain ‘high honour for themselves and the Fatherland.’⁵²

In Rome and Florence, members of the artists’ guild were named in the rolls of the cities’ academies. Women in these cities avoided matriculation in artists’ guilds to save money, time, and loneliness from breaking with societal norms.⁵³ Even Artemisia Gentileschi was simply a matriculant in Florence’s artists’ guild (one who avoided paying her membership fee) and not an elected member of the academy. It seems that the academy benefitted from the presence of her name (prestigious due to her connections to important patrons such as the Medici and her success as the master of a workshop) on its rolls.⁵⁴ Morandi joined the Clementina as an *accademica d’onore* in 1758, over a decade after she began her practice as an anatomical ceroplastician. Like Garzoni and Gentileschi, Morandi had already achieved international repute before her association with her city’s academy, which needed her in its ranks for the pride she brought to her native city more than she needed the academy for professional status.

Although Morandi was an *accademica d’onore*, she trained as an artist in the studios of independent practitioners in Bologna – a common practice in the eighteenth century.⁵⁵ While the Clementina offered instruction in drawing, painting, sculpture, and architecture, its most important mission was

the maintenance and transmission [...] of the “inheritance of the great Bolognese painting of the seventeenth century” [...]; the defence of the Bolognese artistic patrimony; and the reinforcement of the figurative arts’ position within the liberal arts, in opposition to their lower status as professional associations or crafts.⁵⁶

The Clementina was interested in preserving and promulgating Bologna’s heritage of great naturalistic painting. In this light, the Clementina’s principles are not ‘backwards’, but rather a complement to the Institute of Science’s commitment to Marsili’s ideal of the *naturalista metodico* (‘methodical natural philosopher’), who uses *esperienza* (‘experience’) to ‘uncover the intrinsic order and underlying operations of the human body.’⁵⁷

Bolognese Naturalism and Working with Wax

Naturalism was a hallmark of Bolognese visual culture for centuries. Bologna’s agricultural identity inspired a rapport with nature, visible in artworks full of clear and dramatic expressions of human emotion.⁵⁸ As the university’s naturalists promoted knowledge of the natural world, Bolognese artists similarly searched for a pictorial language that could clearly communicate art’s messages, using forms found in nature rather than invented ones popularised in

mannerist art. Local artists Annibale, Agostino, and Ludovico Carracci founded the Accademia degli Incamminati around 1582 to instruct artists from both a theoretical and practical standpoint, stressing the study of nature and drawing from life. Bologna's eighteenth-century academicians held the Carracci approach to naturalism as the standard to which all artists should aspire.⁵⁹

Elizabeth Cropper describes the Carracci as 'advocating a return to drawing from nature [...] [for] out of the natural, through the imitation of art, [they] produced painting that was verisimilar, or persuasive, but within the traditions of art and decorum'.⁶⁰ This emphasis on persuasive verisimilitude arose from a renewed interest in the poetic conceit of *enargeia*, first described by Pliny the Younger and later by Isidore of Seville as 'the putting, as it were, of an event before the eyes of an audience'.⁶¹ Baroque art theorist Franciscus Junius described *enargeia* as 'Nature and Art, are so close coupled together, that the one may not be separated from the other'.⁶² This poetic forcefulness, a challenge to the viewer to discern the natural from the artificial, was only possible with the 'mutuall support of Art and Nature; nature is to follow the directions of art, even as art is to follow the prompt readinesse of our forward nature'.⁶³ The sheen of Morandi's skin, the soft texture of her hair, the pearlescent shine of her jewellery – the verisimilitude of the portrait evinces the artist's command of the power of *enargeia*, and, by extension, of contemporary artistic theory.



Fig. 10. Giovanni Manzolini and Anna Morandi Manzolini, *Foetus with Placenta and Umbilical Cord*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 94, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna; © Università di Bologna – Sistema Museale di Ateneo. Photo credit: Fulvio Simoni. (Plate 8, p. 359)

In the context of Bologna's tradition of naturalism, Crespi's description of Morandi's preparations, made in wax and *colorita al natural*, assumes greater valence. Art and nature cannot be separated, evinced in the uncanny similarity of polychrome wax to human flesh. Morandi's portrait continues this theme by presenting herself as an intellectual akin to Bologna's women artists and engaged in advanced scientific study, the hand gestures for both so similar as to challenge the viewer to discern between her artistic and scientific prowess. She is not covered in the filth and stench of dissection, nor is she dishevelled from melting, moulding, and colouring beeswax. Morandi persuades us of her talents as an artist-anatomist.

In his oration on Morandi, electrophysicist Luigi Galvani stated that nature 'is always one, and remains the same and identical', guaranteeing the everlasting truth of Morandi's preparations.⁶⁴ As in the works of the Carracci, the verisimilitude of Morandi's preparations were, continued Galvani, truer to nature than the natural body itself, as their 'solidity, malleability, and reliable colouring [...] enabled them to better express crucial anatomical features, such as shape, position, direction, and development.'⁶⁵ While Galvani hypothesised that other artists could make more beautiful or pleasant models, they could not approximate Morandi's ability to capture the truth of the human form (Fig. 10).⁶⁶

In the workshops of Lelli, Morandi, and Manzolini, anatomical ceroplasticians made their creations from human skeletons by moulding wax directly over natural bones taken from a human skeleton. The use of skeletal bones reinforced by a metal scaffold allowed Lelli to adjust the statues' positions for use by both medical and drawing students. Therefore, while Lelli could argue that his waxworks, focused on the muscular and skeletal systems, were more accurate because they incorporated human specimens, Morandi and Manzolini, with their focus on the sensory organs and the male and female reproductive systems, relied on their powers of imitation and knowledge of the human body to faithfully capture the colours and textures of what they saw and felt during dissections. Not only did their waxes need to be physiologically accurate, but they needed to look as lifelike as possible (Fig. 11).

Anatomical ceroplastics increasingly detached from the inclusion of human specimens over time. Ceroplasticians initially injected wax mixed with mineral oil, turpentine, or quicksilver into the vascular system of dried human specimens to preserve the structure of veins and arteries.⁶⁷ As these specimens decayed, Bologna's anatomical wax makers turned to coating bones in tow and beeswax.⁶⁸ They first whitened their wax, and once applied, coloured it with mixed pigments, coating the surface of the object in the trappings of reality and transforming the specimen into a model.⁶⁹ The identities of the human bodies on which the anatomical figures were modelled were obscured and viewed as a model of the universal human body⁷⁰ – a poetic model of form.

Wax's malleability and multifarious utility lend it an inherent instability and ambiguity. Wax was regarded as potentially absorptive of *mal aria* ('bad air')



Fig. 11. Anna Morandi Manzolini, *The Extraocular Muscles*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 102, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna; © Università di Bologna – Sistema Museale di Ateneo. Photo credit: Fulvio Simoni. (Plate 9, p. 358)

and disease due to its porous nature.⁷¹ Conversely, its association with bees – creatures to which were ascribed the exemplary Christian virtues of wisdom and industry – made wax the ideal medium for the creation of liturgical candles, ex-voto objects for religious devotion, and even death masks.⁷² Furthermore, wax's changes in state were contingent upon human intervention: melted into a liquid, cooled into a solid, and whitened and coloured easily and infinitesimally.⁷³ As God moulded man, man manipulated wax.

Wax serves as a potent material by which Morandi transgressed the bifurcation of the arts and sciences, and even the *disputa delle arti*. When associated with dead flesh, its similarities to skin transform that which is organic or living into something beyond life – that is, dead.⁷⁴ Morandi carefully copied cadaver organs during dissections, keeping structures alive that, in reality, could not survive beyond the protective case of the human body. These organs – especially those of the head and heart in the Morandi double portrait – place Julius von Schlosser's notion of the 'pictorial sympathetic magic' of wax at the fore

of our engagement with them.⁷⁵ Disembodied, the head and the heart nevertheless approximate the living couple, their shared facture in wax transporting them across the borders life and death. Indeed, the ontological slippage of wax mimics Morandi's professional persona: an artist of the fleshy structures of the human body, a master of art and anatomy.

Wax Portraiture in Bologna

Bologna's sculptural tradition of modelling rather than carving supported a thriving industry of portraiture in terracotta and wax, materials that, once coloured, naturally lent themselves to vivid reproductions of human physiognomies. The city housed numerous such portraits of men and women from different social classes and professions.⁷⁶ These portraits wore the personal effects of the sitter, sometimes including such bodily relics as hair and fingernails.⁷⁷ Even the artists and architects of the Clementina participated in this aspect of Bolognese life as subjects and artificers.

A prominent example is Carlo Francesco Dotti, the architect of the shrine San Luca and celebrated member of the Clementina, who commissioned Angelo Gabriello Piò, a former colleague of Manzolini and Lelli, to make his wax portrait (Fig. 12). Dotti holds a document bearing the inscription 'S. Luca', referring to his architectural masterwork, which was home to the miraculous image of the Madonna di San Luca, the symbol of Bolognese Mariology since its



Fig. 12. Angelo Gabriello Piò (attributed), *Architect Carlo Francesco Dotti* (1670-1769), wax bust, eighteenth century. © 2022. DeAgostini Picture Library/Scala, Florence.

arrival in the city in 1160. Believed to have been painted by Saint Luke himself, and the icon has been carried annually, from the sanctuary in the hills through the city's streets, beginning in 1433. With his wax portrait, Dotti associates himself with San Luca, the patron saint of painters (and, by tradition, believed to have been a physician), as well as the Bolognese traditions of wax portraiture and devotion to local holy women.

Archbishop Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597), architect of the Tridentine reforms and Bologna native, placed female education at the heart of his pedagogic agenda, which was established in the late sixteenth century and lasted well into Morandi's lifetime. Paleotti founded schools in Bologna where girls learned to contemplate images and texts detailing the lives of female saints, who served as paragons of moral virtue to which they might aspire.⁷⁸ Unsurprisingly, Crespi ascribes the very values of humility, piety, fidelity, subjugation, and repentance embodied in these saints to his biography of Morandi.⁷⁹ Although widowed (and thus not a virginal figure like Elisabetta Sirani), Morandi's commitment to serving her husband and her supportive temperament placed her squarely within the proscribed accepted behaviours of Bologna's patriarchal society.



Fig. 13. Fratelli Alinari, Chapel of St. Catherine de' Vigri inside the Church of Corpus Domini, Bologna. c. 1920 - 1930, Bologna - Corpus Domini church. Glass plate, N silver gelatin dry negative. ACA-F-037702-0000, Alinari Archives, Florence.



Fig. 14. Elisabetta Sirani, *Self-Portrait as a Nun-Saint*, 1657–1658. Oil on canvas. From Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna. Photo courtesy of the Ministero della Cultura – Archivio Fotografico Direzione regionale Musei dell'Emilia Romagna. (Plate 10, p. 360)

Thus, over the course of the seventeenth century, the cults of local holy women blossomed. Caterina Vigri, a local religious cult figure beatified in 1592, was canonised in 1712, shortly before Morandi's birth. Not only was Saint Caterina the founder of Bologna's convent of the Poor Clares, the Corpus Domini, she was also an amateur artist. On display in the convent since the late fifteenth century, her incorrupt body sits among her manuscripts, which she illustrated herself (Fig. 13). The cult of Saint Caterina of Bologna inspired other incorrupt holy women, such as Elena Duglioli dall'Olio, whom Cardinal Prospero Lambertini, Lelli and Manzolini's patron, first nominated for beatification. By placing her scientifically preserved body in a vitrine, Morandi models herself after the saintly woman artist and her followers.

Unsurprisingly, given the proud heritage of female accomplishment in Bologna, women artists fashioned themselves not only after literary precedents of *laude*, but after these pictorial and saintly models as well. Elisabetta Sirani made this connection explicitly in her *Self-Portrait as a Nun-Saint* (Fig. 14), in which she depicts herself in a habit, deprived of her feminine attributes and resembling Caterina Vigri, patron saint of the Accademia Clementina⁸⁰ – a choice inspired, no doubt, by calls for Vigri's canonisation. The parallels between Sirani and Bologna's holy women persisted after the artist's death. Her family organised a public funeral and commissioned a large catafalque, which featured a life-size portrait of the artist before her easel (Fig. 15). Sirani's body was rendered, according to Malvasia's wrenching eulogy, 'al naturale'. While he does not specify the material used for the sculpture, we know that it was polychromed and meant to be as lifelike as possible.⁸¹

The wax material of Morandi's self-portrait, like Sirani's funerary sculpture, imparts an uncannily convincing vividness consistent with *enargeia*. As Georges Didi-Huberman notes, wax's fundamental material and ontological instability as well as its psychological and phenomenological viscosity both attracts and disturbs the viewer.⁸² The wax, silk, lace, and human hair together create a convincing picture of living flesh and blood, and yet it is Morandi's animated gesture – unveiling what is an unequivocally dead brain – that challenges the viewer to discern whether she is alive. Furthermore, the positive Christian values ascribed to wax tie Morandi's use of the medium to the incorrupt bodies of the city's holy women.

The portrait vacillates between a popular waxwork and an anatomical model, rewarding viewers with delight as they peel back its layers of meaning. According to Beth Kowaleski Wallace, the popular waxwork '[celebrates] an intact physicality that is better than normal for its inability to decay', whereas scientific knowledge embraces the 'anomalous, the extraordinary, or even the simply weird physicality'.⁸³ These works maintain their epistemological connections to the abject body, the wax medium a reminder of anatomical preparations or infirm body parts reproduced in miniature for votive purposes.⁸⁴ The display of Morandi's double portrait in the domestic settings of her familial home and,



Fig. 15. Matteo Borboni, *Funerary Catafalque of Elisabetta Sirani*, 1665. Pen and brown ink; brush and brown wash over graphite on off-white laid paper. Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York.

later, her apartment in the Palazzo Ranuzzi, reifies and challenges those connections. While both locations conform to the traditional viewing settings of celebrity portraits and visits, the Ranuzzi apartment turns Morandi herself into a celebrity portrait, on display in the Bolognese Institute like her anatomical preparations and self-portrait. She is one of Bologna's extraordinary women, whose remarkably intact body will survive as a site of religious, intellectual, and campanilistic ('local patriotic') pilgrimage, as well as artistic inspiration.

In 1749, the anatomist Jacopo Bartolomeo Beccari celebrated Manzolini's choice to take as his wife, 'a woman of supreme goodness, and a singular talent' who helped him make 'some great works.'⁸⁵ While she was exalted in her lifetime for her pleasant disposition and industriousness, recent scholars have rightly

elucidated the ways in which Morandi expressed her intellectual authority in the world of anatomical dissection. Her portrait places Morandi at the nexus of art, science, and local religious devotion – an elegant synthesis of several mimetic traditions that would not have been lost on viewers, regardless of whether they were affiliated with the arts or sciences.⁸⁶

The concomitant inscription of votive waxwork, intact holy women, anatomical specimen, and the tradition of excellence of Bologna's women artists onto Morandi's wax surfaces – indeed, her *own* likeness – challenges visitors to Morandi's collection to determine which figure in the room (including the corporeally present Morandi herself) is the most 'real'. The portraits themselves embody *enargeia*, a conceit that would doubtless enchant visitors well versed in artistic and literary theory. This is not to say that the portraits' verisimilitude would not please viewers accustomed to eighteenth-century modes of celebrity portraiture without a grounding in the theory of *enargeia*, but rather to illuminate the possibility – the invitation, really – for viewers to dive deeper, promising yet another layer of delight for the knowledgeable.

By moulding her body in the same material from which she created her universalised anatomical models, Morandi offers herself as the ideal, eighteenth-century Bolognese woman. She has mastered her scientific craft, and significantly, her skill in portraiture aligns her not only with a long-established tradition of excellence in Bolognese naturalistic painting but also with a deeply engrained culture of celebration of the city's female citizens. Indeed, she signed her letters as a 'Cittadina Bolognese' ('Bolognese citizen') before describing herself as an 'Anatomica e Accademica d'onore dell'Istituto delle Scienze di Bologna' ('Anatomist and Honorary Academician of the Institute of Sciences of Bologna').⁸⁷ With this self-portrait, Morandi displays her femininity not as an obstacle she overcame, but rather as a sign of intellectual authority – a tangible, clear connection to a long line of Bolognese women of extraordinary achievement in the arts and sciences.

Notes

1. This chapter originally took form as a paper presented at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz's Bologna Studienkurs in 2017. Gerhard Wolf, Jessica Richardson, Annette Hoffmann, and Marco Musillo guided me to Anna Morandi Manzolini and inspired me to continue my investigation of her work. I thank Sheila Barker, Elizabeth Cropper, and Peter M. Lukehart, whose questions, comments, and suggestions productively shaped my thinking as this project evolved. I am also very much indebted to Meredith Gill and Anthony Colantuono, whose comments and support throughout all stages of this project were invaluable.
2. Contemporary sources refer to Anna Morandi Manzolini by both her maiden name, Morandi, and her husband's surname, Manzolini. I use Morandi's family name to distinguish her from her husband, to whom I will refer by his surname.
3. Quoted in Lucia Dacome, *Malleable Anatomies: Models, Makers, and Material Culture in Eighteenth-Century Italy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, 213.
4. Luigi Galvani, 'De Manzoliniana Supellectili Oratio Habita in Scientiarum et Artium Instituto Cum Ad Anatomen in Tabulis Ab Anna Manzolina', in Luciana Quadrelli (trans.), *Alma Mater Studiorum: La Presenza Femminile dal XVIII al XX Secolo*, Bologna, CLUEB, 1988, 55–56.
5. For their most recent interventions, see Dacome, *Malleable Anatomies*; Miriam Focaccia (ed.), *Anna Morandi Manzolini una donna fra arte e scienza: immagini, documenti, repertorio anatomico*, Florence, Olschki, 2008; Rebecca Messbarger, *The Lady Anatomist: The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010. Focaccia's text contains a transcription of Morandi's notebooks as well as correspondence related to her life and career. The full inventory of Morandi's library (including her notebooks), the *Catalogo delle preparazioni anatomiche in cera formanti il Gabinetto anatomico prima della Reggia Università*, is located in the University Library of Bologna (BUB ms. 2123–2193).
6. The portraits remained together after Morandi sold the couple's collection of anatomical waxes to Senator Girolamo Ranuzzi in 1769. Ranuzzi later donated it to the Bolognese Institute of Sciences, where it can still be found in the Anatomy Museum of the Palazzo Poggi. The collection, a private museum in the Manzolini residence, comprised anatomical wax models of the sensory organs, the urogenital tract, the male and female reproductive systems, and the muscular system made by the couple and, after Manzolini's death in 1755, by Morandi alone. The significance of the sculptures as a double portrait, and the representation of Giovanni's portrait in particular, warrants further investigation.
7. Dacome, *Malleable Anatomies*, 97–98.
8. Giovanni Fantuzzi, *Notizie degli scrittori bolognesi raccolte da Giovanni Fantuzzi*, vol. 6, Bologna, San Tommaso d'Aquino, 1781, 113. See also Focaccia, *Anna Morandi Manzolini*, 6; and BCABO, ms. B 133, Marcello Oretti, *Notizie de' Professori del Disegno*, vol. 11, 227, cited in Dacome, *Malleable Anatomies*, 98.
9. While 1088 is widely considered the founding date of Bologna's university, rectors in the nineteenth century chose it out of convenience. The university developed from schools of liberal arts, which flourished in Bologna beginning in the early eleventh century. A 'school' of Bologna is first implicitly documented in the *Habita* of 1158 by Frederick Barbarossa.
10. Giovanni Pietro Bellori and Hellmut Wohl, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, new translation and critical ed., New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 72.

11. Messbarger, *The Lady Anatomist*, 4–6. See also Nadir A. Maraldi et al., ‘Anatomical Waxwork Modeling: The History of the Bologna Anatomy Museum’, in *The Anatomical Record*, 2000, 261, 6.
12. Patricia B. Rocco, *The Devout Hand: Women, Virtue, and Visual Culture in Early Modern Italy*, Montreal and Kingston, McGill–Queen’s University Press, 2017, 162–169.
13. Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), a naturalist and scientific illustrator, published illustrated catalogues on caterpillars and travelled to Dutch Suriname to record tropical insects. Giovanna Garzoni (1600–1670) served various patrons throughout Italy thanks to her skill at botanical illustration. For the latest scholarship on Garzoni, see Sheila Barker (ed.), ‘*The Immensity of the Universe*’ in *The Art of Giovanna Garzoni*, Livorno, Gallerie degli Uffizi, distributed by Sillabe, 2020.
14. Babette Bohn has explored this topic in great depth. For her most recent intervention, see Babette Bohn, *Women Artists, Their Patrons, and Their Publics in Early Modern Bologna*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021. See also Caroline Murphy, ‘“In Praise of the Ladies of Bologna”: The Image and Identity of the Sixteenth-Century Bolognese Female Patriciate’, in *Renaissance Studies*, 1999, 13(4), 440–454.
15. Paula Findlen, ‘Translating the New Science: Women and the Circulation of Knowledge in Enlightenment Italy’, in *Configurations*, 1995, 3(2), 167–206; Marta Cavazza, ‘Dottrici e lettrici dell’Università di Bologna nel Settecento’, in *Annali di storia delle università italiane*, 1997, 1, 109–126.
16. Quoted in Murphy, ‘In Praise of the Ladies of Bologna’, 444.
17. ‘Le donne stesse, le fanciulle han qui seguito la scorta de’ loro progenitori, e come disse il Vasari nella vita della nostra Properzia Rossi così eccellente scultrice: *non si sono vergognate, quasi per torre agli uomini il vanto della superiorità, di mettersi con le tenere e bianchissime mani nelle cose meccaniche; e fra la ruvidezza de’ marmi, e l’asprezza del ferro, per conseguire il desiderio loro, e riportarne fama*’. Carlo Cesare Malvasia, Giampietro Zanotti and Vicente Victoria (eds.), *Felsina Pittrice, Vite de’ Pittori Bolognesi del Conte Carlo Cesare Malvasia*, Bologna, Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1967, 385. For more on Malvasia’s place in art history, see Elizabeth Cropper, ‘A Plea for Malvasia’s Felsina Pittrice’, in Malvasia et al., *Felsina Pittrice: Lives of the Bolognese Painters: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, vol. 1: Early Bolognese Painting, London, Harvey Miller, 2012, 1–47.
18. Dacome, *Malleable Anatomies*, 50–55. See also Focaccia, *Anna Morandi Manzolini*, 17.
19. Nadir A. Maraldi et al., ‘Anatomical Waxwork Modeling: The History of the Bologna Anatomy Museum’, in *The Anatomical Record*, 2000, 261, 6. On the conflict between Lelli and Manzolini, see Massimo Ferretti, ‘Il notomista e il canonico: significato della polemica sulle cere anatomiche di Ercole Lelli’, in Renzo Prendi (ed.), *I materiali dell’Istituto delle Scienze*, Bologna, CLUEB, 1979, 100–114.
20. Some recent sources on Bologna’s women artists include Babette Bohn, ‘Collecting Women’s Art in Early Modern Bologna: Myth and Reality’, in Babette Bohn and Raffaella Morselli (eds.), *Reframing Seventeenth-Century Bolognese Art: Archival Discoveries*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2019, 73–93; Patricia B. Rocco, *The Devout Hand*; Vera Fortunati Pietrantonio, ‘Toward a History of Women Artists in Bologna between the Renaissance and the Baroque: Additions and Clarifications’, in Carole Collier Frick et al. (eds.) *Italian Women Artists: From Renaissance to Baroque*, Milan, Skira, 2007, 41–48; and Babette Bohn, ‘Female Self-Portraiture in Early Modern Bologna’, in *Renaissance Studies*, 2004, 18(2), 239–286.
21. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, vol. 2, 386–387; Adalina Modesti, *Elisabetta Sirani ‘Virtuosa’: Women’s Cultural Production in Early Modern Bologna*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; Bohn, ‘Female Self-Portraiture in Early Modern Bologna’.
22. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, vol. 2, 385–387.

23. Between the circulation of prints of these images and the possibility of seeing them in person, we can conclude that Morandi would have been familiar with these women and at least some of their works. See Ann Sutherland Harris, 'Artemisia Gentileschi and Elisabetta Sirani: Rivals or Strangers?', in *Women's Art Journal*, 2010, 31(1), 3–12.
24. Both Joanna Woods-Marsden and Caroline Murphy note the significance of Lavinia's choice to depict a blank page. See Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998, 200 and Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-Century Bologna*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003, 73–76.
25. Céline Talon's recent scholarship has shed light on Van Hemessen's innovative use of flesh tones and her engagement with sixteenth-century Netherlandish artistic theory. A comparison of Morandi and Van Hemessen's treatment of the skin warrants further consideration. See Céline Talon, 'Catharina Van Hemessen's *Self-Portrait*: The Woman Who Took Saint Luke's Palette', in Elizabeth A. Sutton (ed.), *Women Artists and Patrons in the Netherlands, 1500–1700*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2019, 27–54.
26. Elizabeth Cropper, 'Life on the Edge: Artemisia Gentileschi, Famous Woman Painter', in Keith Christiansen and Judith W. Mann (eds.), *Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi*, New York and New Haven, Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press, 2001, 278. I thank Elizabeth Cropper for her comments on the similarities between Gentileschi and Morandi.
27. Mary D. Garrard, 'Artemisia Gentileschi's Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting', in *The Art Bulletin*, 1980, 62(1), 97–112.
28. Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 179.
29. Rose Marie San Juan, 'The Horror of Touch: Anna Morandi's Wax Models of Hands', in *Oxford Art Journal*, 2011, 34(3), 441.
30. Cropper, 'Life on the Edge', 278.
31. See San Juan, 'The Horror of Touch'; Andrew Cunningham, *The Anatomical Renaissance: The Resurrection of the Anatomical Projects of the Ancients*, London, Scholar Press, 1997; and Luke Wilson, 'William Harvey's Prelectiones: The Performance of the Body in the Renaissance Theatre of Anatomy', in *Representations*, 1987, 17, 62–95.
32. Mary D. Garrard, 'Artemisia's Hand', in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (eds.), *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History after Postmodernism*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005, 5.
33. For the original text, see Focaccia, *Anna Morandi Manzolini una donna fra arte e scienza*, 140; for a translation, see Messbarger, 'Waxing Poetic: Anna Morandi Manzolini's Anatomical Sculptures', in *Configurations*, 2001, 9(1), 90.
34. Messbarger, *Ibid.*
35. On the significance of the hand in the early modern world, see Claire Richter Sherman (ed.), *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, 2000.
36. Martin Kemp, 'The Handy Worke of the Incomprehensible Creator', in Claire Sherman (ed.), *Writing on Hands*, Washington, University of Washington Press, 2001, 21.
37. Lucia Dacome, 'Waxworks and the performance of anatomy in the mid-18th century Italy', in *Endeavour*, 2006, 30(1), 31; Messbarger, 'Waxing Poetic', 92–96.
38. *Ibid.*
39. See Giampietro Zanotti, 'Al Sig. Ercole Lelli da Giampietro Zanotti', in Giovanni Gaetano Bottari, in *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura scritte da' più celebri personaggi dei secoli XV, XVI, e XVII, pubblicata da M. Gio. Bottari, e continuata fino ai nostril giorni da Stefano Ticozzi [1757]*, Milan, G. Silvestri, 1822–1825, (2), 193. See also Massimo Ferretti, 'Il Notomista e il canonico', 100–114.
40. Messbarger, *The Lady Anatomist*, 40–41.

41. Luigi Crespi, *Felsina Pittrice Vite de' Pittori Bolognesi*, vol. 3, 159–160, translated in Messbarger, *The Lady Anatomist*, 48–49.
42. Francesco Algarotti, *An Essay on Painting Written in Italian by Count Algarotti*, London, L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1763, 15.
43. This was the case in other Italian academies, including the Accademia di San Luca in Rome and the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Florence. See Peter M. Lukehart, 'Giovanna Garzoni, "Accademica"', in Sheila Barker (ed.), *"The Immensity of the Universe" in the Art of Giovanna Garzoni*, Livorno, Gallerie degli Uffizi, distributed by Sillabe, 2020, 96. Morandi was admitted to Bologna's Accademia dei Gelati, a literary academy, as a regular member for her achievements in art. Furthermore, the Florentine Accademia delle Arti del Disegno included Morandi in its ranks on 11 February 1761. See Messbarger, *The Lady Anatomist*, 112–115.
44. Giampietro Zanotti, *Storia dell'Accademia Clementina di Bologna aggregata all'Institutio delle Scienze e dell'Arti*, vol. 1, Bologna, Lelio dalla Volpe, 1739, iii–iv.
45. Lukehart, 'Giovanna Garzoni, Accademica', 98.
46. *Ibid.*, 99. The Clementina could only have forty active *accademici* at a given time, while *accademici d'onore* could be added at any time. See Lipparini, *L'accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna*, Argelato, Minerva, 2003, 7.
47. The invocation of Caterina Vigri as patron can be found in the first statute. See Lipparini, *L'accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna*, 85.
48. The Clementina's founding statutes of 1706 are published in Lipparini, *L'accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna*. See Lipparini, *L'accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna*, 85.
49. Lukehart, 'Giovanna Garzoni, Accademica'.
50. Raffaella Morselli, 'Bologna', in Richard E. Spear and Philip Sohm (eds.), *Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-Century Italian Painters*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2010, 153.
51. Morselli, 'Bologna', 152.
52. 'A gl' Illustrissimi Signori Confaloniere e Senatori delle Assonterie di Milizia e di Magistrato, Per gli Professori della Pittura', Bologna, Costantino Pisarri, 1706, reprinted in Anton Boschloo, *L'Accademia Clementina e la preoccupazione del passato*, Bologna, Nuovo Alfa, 1989, 169.
53. Early modern women seem to have worked in similar numbers despite their declining ranks in the guilds over time, suggesting that working unregulated was financially more lucrative and efficient. See Sheila Barker, 'Art as Women's Work: The Professionalization of Women Artists in Italy, 1350–1800', unpublished manuscript, 2020, 7–8 in current pagination. For Artemisia's possible reluctance to join the Accademia del Disegno, see Sheila Barker, 'Artemisia's Money: The Entrepreneurship of a Woman Artist in Seventeenth-Century Florence', in Sheila Barker (ed.), *Artemisia Gentileschi in a Changing Light*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2017, 86 n. 101.
54. Professional affiliation with academies and guilds did not determine women artists' professional success. Records from Florence's painters' guild dating to the fourteenth century evince the admission of women into its ranks, and the 1427 *catasto* ('census') confirms that women were working as painters without matriculating in guilds. Barker, 'Art as Women's Work', 7.
55. Although we know little about Morandi's training, we do know that Manzolini participated in the Clementina's competition in figure drawing as part of the 'second class' of young artists in 1727. He also attended the Scuola del Nudo, the Clementina's life drawing institute that was open to members of the public. See Focaccia, *Anna Morandi Manzolini*, 40; Crespi, *Felsina Pittrice*, vol. 3, 301; and Lipparini, *L'accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna*, 86–87.

56. Boschloo, *L'Accademia Clementina e la preoccupazione del passato*, 14. See also Messbarger, *The Lady Anatomist*, 6; Lipparini, *L'Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna*, 65; and Charles Dempsey, 'Disegno and Logos, Paragone and Academy', in Peter M. Lukehart (ed.), *The Accademia Seminars*, Washington, DC and New Haven, National Gallery of Art, distributed by Yale University Press, 50.
57. Messbarger, *The Lady Anatomist*, 6.
58. Francesco Arcangeli, *Natura ed espressione nell'arte Bolognese-Emiliana*, Bologna, Edizioni ALFA, 1970.
59. Boschloo, *L'Accademia Clementina e la preoccupazione del passato*, 9, 27–34, 57–58, 95–99.
60. Cropper, 'Life on the Edge', 273.
61. Franciscus Junius, *The Literature of Classical Art*, eds. Keith Aldrich, Philipp P. Fehl, Rainia Fehl, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, 376.
62. Junius, *The Literature of Classical Art*, vol. 1, 287.
63. *Ibid.*, 295.
64. Galvani, 'De Manzoliniana Supellectili', 55–56.
65. *Ibid.*, 48–50.
66. *Ibid.*, 55–56.
67. Maraldi et al., 'Anatomical Waxwork Modeling: The History of the Bologna Anatomy Museum', 9.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Dacome, *Malleable Anatomies*, 7.
70. Todd P. Olson, 'Caravaggio's Coroner: Forensic Medicine in Giulio Mancini's Art Criticism', in *Oxford Art Journal*, 2005, 28(1), 91–92.
71. Dacome, *Malleable Anatomies*, 6–7.
72. Joanna Ebenstein, *The Anatomical Venus: Wax, God, Death, & the Ecstatic*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2016, 70.
73. Georges Didi-Huberman, 'The Order of Material: Plasticities, *malaises*, survivals', in Brandon Taylor, *Sculpture and Psychoanalysis*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, 201.
74. Roberta Panzanelli, 'The Body in Wax, the Body of Wax', in Roberta Panzanelli (ed.), *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2008, 2.
75. Julius von Schlosser and James Michael Loughridge (trans.), 'History of Portraiture in Wax', in Panzanelli, *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, 247.
76. Dacome, 'Waxworks and the Performance of Anatomy in Mid-18th-Century Italy', 33.
77. *Ibid.*
78. Modesti, *Elisabetta Sirani "Virtuosa"*, 59–62.
79. Crespi, *Felsina Pittrice*, vol. 3, 308–312.
80. Bohn, 'Female Self-Portraiture in Early Modern Bologna', 284.
81. Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, 393.
82. Didi-Huberman, 'The Order of Material: Plasticities, *malaises*, survivals'.
83. Beth Kowaleski Wallace, 'Representing Corporeal "Truth" in the Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini and Madame Tussaud', in Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (eds.), *Women and the Material Culture of Death*, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2016, 293–294.
84. *Ibid.*
85. 'la moglie sua, donna di somma bontà, e d'un talento singolare, che formò particolarmente alcune eccellenti opere coll'aiuto della med:a sua moglie'. Letter from Iacopo Bartolomeo Beccari to Flaminio Scarselli, 18 September 1749, reproduced in Focaccia, *Anna Morandi Manzolini*, 249.
86. *Ibid.*
87. Focaccia, *Anna Morandi Manzolini*, 6.

CHAPTER 2

Epistolary Relationship and Intellectual Identity in Maria Antonia of Saxony's Correspondence with Frederick the Great, 1763–1779

Kelsey Rubin-Detlev

Unlike a painted portrait, a letter is never a portrayal of just one individual: it depicts, and often constitutes, the relationship between two or more individuals. Since, as Janet Gurkin Altman puts it, a letter is 'the result of a union of writer and reader', epistolary self-representation cannot simply reproduce a ready-made self-image of the letter writer.¹ Rather, as sociologist and epistolary theorist Liz Stanley has argued, '[e]pistolary exchanges symbolise and are themselves exemplars of the social and relational bonds between people.'² While the letter writer's self-depiction can reveal a carefully crafted identity, that identity often reflects, above all, the letter writer's image of the addressee(s) and the (desired) relationship between the interlocutors.³ As a form of social interaction that teeters precariously on the border between life and art, letter writing calls our attention to the complex interactions between cultural models and interpersonal relationships in the creation of any individual's self-representation.⁴ Just as feminist scholarship has encouraged us to view the self as existing only in and through relationships with other selves, epistolary writing helps us to see all human identities as continually formed and renegotiated in the course of social relationships.⁵

To argue for the importance of studying early modern women's identity as relational, especially when working with epistolary sources, I propose to re-examine as a case study the correspondence between Maria Antonia Walpurgis Symphorosa, electress of Saxony (1724–1780), and Frederick the Great, king of Prussia (1712–1786). Scholarly interest in Frederick the Great as a writer has been growing in recent years, and his correspondence with Voltaire has received magisterial treatment by Christiane Mervaud, who explores precisely the inextricability of their elaborate epistolary self-fashioning

from their constant reimagining of their relationship.⁶ The relatively limited scholarship on Maria Antonia focuses largely on her biography and her accomplishments as a poet and composer, most notably as the creator of both the librettos and the music for two operas, *Il trionfo della fedeltà* ('The Triumph of Fidelity') (1754) and *Talestri, regina delle amazzoni* ('Thalestris, Queen of the Amazons') (1762).⁷ The majority of Maria Antonia's extensive epistolary corpus remains unpublished, but the 226 French-language letters she exchanged with Frederick between 1763 and 1779 appeared in his complete works and have garnered some scholarly attention.⁸ Anne Fleig and Christine Fischer have read the exchange as part of Maria Antonia's intensive effort to claim political power despite her gender; they link her performance in her letters to her self-presentation in her operas, in which she fashioned herself using the standard tropes and mythology of court culture, such as Minerva and the Amazons.⁹ However, especially in the early modern period, letters pertained to a sphere that was neither fully private nor fully identifiable with the public sphere of print or the representational sphere of the court.¹⁰ Instead, individual correspondents negotiated with one another and with norms that often assumed letters to be written collectively and circulated beyond the named addressee, but generally excluded immediate print publication.¹¹ Interpreting Maria Antonia's self-fashioning in the letters to Frederick requires an approach that focuses on the evolving relationship between the two correspondents and the cultural concepts that guided their interactions.

In what follows, I shift the focus away from the relatively static picture of Maria Antonia's self-fashioning as a constant argument for female power; instead, I probe the ways in which the identity of an elite female intellectual that we perceive in the correspondence with Frederick emerged out of ongoing negotiations between the two interlocutors. The first five years of the exchange witnessed a struggle between the two letter writers over the nature and relative value of Maria Antonia's political and intellectual identities. Both eager to preserve their relationship, the correspondents resolved these tensions by allowing Maria Antonia's intellectual identity to dominate the rhetorical space of the correspondence. This intellectual identity reflected a specific cultural model governing relationships among elites during the Enlightenment: the practices of worldly (*mondain*) sociability, which eschewed pedantry and professional cultural activity but embraced letter writing and intellectual conversation as leisured pursuits and marks of distinction. Flaunting her identity as a sociable woman of intellect allowed Maria Antonia to smooth out her relationship with the Prussian king, to claim an alternative form of equality with him, and even to comment on and shape his identity in the exchange; it also helped her to remain a possible political interlocutor despite the seemingly insurmountable power imbalance between the two correspondents. This evolution in the correspondence shows not only that elite women like Maria Antonia could, under certain conditions, emphasise their intellectual status to accomplish a variety of ends.

More fundamentally, it makes the methodological point that epistolary texts must be read in terms of relational rather than fixed identities: we can grasp the real meaning of the letters only through a close reading of the shifting relations between Frederick and Maria Antonia and the ways in which each letter writer's identity took shape in response to the other's manipulations and projections.

Relationship, Political Identity, and the Emergence of an Intellectual Exchange

The very choice to correspond with Frederick marked a significant shift in Maria Antonia's identity and in the role that different types of relationship played in her political choices. Born a Bavarian princess, Maria Antonia initially sought to use letter writing to carve out a political position for herself through female familial networks. At the age of twenty-two, before leaving her native Bavaria to marry her Saxon husband, she wrote to her mother's cousin, Empress Maria Theresa, to propose a secret correspondence in favour of Austria.¹² From then on, the two women maintained a secret exchange in parallel with their correspondence through ordinary diplomatic channels, transmitting crucial political information by both means.¹³ While early modern queens consort regularly drew on their dynastic networks to build their own and their husbands' political clout, Maria Antonia showed extraordinary daring in suggesting such a correspondence before she even arrived at the Saxon court and then concealing it from her parents-in-law (though not her husband); the exchange illustrates her determination to capitalise on the political significance that her Habsburg familial ties lent her.¹⁴ However, Maria Antonia grew increasingly disillusioned with her imperial relative: not only did Maria Theresa neglect to prioritise defending Saxony during the Seven Years War (1756–1763), but she also made it increasingly clear that she would not support Maria Antonia's primary political objective of securing the elective Polish crown for her husband, Friedrich Christian. The correspondence faltered following the permanent loss of Poland due to Friedrich Christian's sudden death in December 1763 – only a few months after his accession to the electorate of Saxony – and the election of the Russian-backed Stanislas Poniatowski to the Polish throne in September 1764; it broke off completely in 1772 due to a number of political disagreements between Austria and Saxony. Since the correspondence lacked any interest beyond the political – the expressions of family affection being largely conventional – it could not survive such differences, unlike the exchange with Frederick.

As the cracks began to show in her relationship with Maria Theresa, Maria Antonia began corresponding with the Prussian king; in so doing, she sprang from a diplomatic connection based on familial and gender ties to a relationship based on a combination of intellectual affinity and political utility. Despite

Prussia's humiliating occupation of Saxony during the Seven Years War, a personal meeting at the Saxon palace of Moritzburg in March 1763 gave Maria Antonia the opportunity to interact with Frederick on less belligerent terms.¹⁵ As the less powerful party, she again had to take the initiative in starting a correspondence, which she duly did by sending the scores of her two operas to the Prussian king in April 1763. Cultural and intellectual conversation were largely absent from the essentially political and familial exchange with Maria Theresa, other than a bit of praise for *Talestri*.¹⁶ By contrast, the gift of the opera scores, discussion of other Enlightenment topics like smallpox inoculation, and exchanges of witticisms formed the primary bonds facilitating the introduction of political themes in the correspondence with Frederick.¹⁷ Only a few months later, Maria Antonia wrote on the day of her father-in-law Augustus III's death, October 5, 1763, demanding that Frederick fulfil his 'promise' (*promesse*) to help secure the succession in Poland; she thus strongly asserted her political identity by attempting to transform his vague assurances of sympathy into a political reality.¹⁸ Even once her own hopes of becoming queen of Poland had been dashed, she continued to fight to win Poland for her brother-in-law Xaver or her son Friedrich August, writing to Frederick to that effect only a month after her husband's death.¹⁹ More interested in securing peace in Europe and pursuing an alliance with Russia, Frederick politely demurred.

Nevertheless, it was not only Maria Antonia's indefatigable ambition that kept the correspondence going: interest in the exchange was mutual. Throughout the year 1764, an intriguing pattern emerged: as Frederick's refusals to help in Poland grew increasingly unequivocal, Maria Antonia's replies repeatedly seemed to break off the relationship. She answered his elaborate rhetorical letters with short, blunt notes that drew attention to the delay of a month or more before she even bothered to respond, writing that his 'last letter left me no room for reply' or that 'I understand, Sire, and shall be silent.'²⁰ By contrast, Frederick responded within a week to each of these cold missives with significantly longer, cajoling epistles: the speed alone of his replies signalled his eagerness to repair the relationship.²¹ It may well be, of course, that Maria Antonia expected such a response and that her seeming ruptures were only a strategy to prod him. Both correspondents evidently wished to find terms on which they could pursue the relationship: the key was now to negotiate those terms.

Maria Antonia's efforts to affirm her political authority directly proved untenable because her claims to power conflicted too obviously with the actual state of affairs. Until October 5, 1763, she was merely the wife of the heir to the electorate of Saxony, an officially powerless position. Her influence peaked during her husband's brief reign, when she was the elector's consort and a candidate for queen of Poland: Friedrich Christian not only treated her as a trusted adviser, but even transferred control of Saxon finances to her. But his premature death rapidly diminished her status: her brother-in-law Prince Xaver was named regent for her son, Friedrich August, until the latter's majority in

1768. During the regency, Maria Antonia retained control of Saxon finances and participated in major government decisions, but, afterwards, she was officially powerless for the rest of her life.²² The loss of the Polish crown led to a further diminishment in status relative to Frederick: as a mere electorate without a royal title, Saxony ranked significantly lower than a kingdom like Prussia. The power discrepancy can be seen in the etiquette of address used in the correspondence: from the time of Friedrich Christian's accession onwards, Frederick's salutation, 'Madame ma Sœur', seems to signal the correspondents' equality as current or former participants in sovereignty. But Maria Antonia's invariable use of 'Sire' indicates, on the contrary, her inferior rank, even during her husband's brief reign. Accordingly, when, in 1766, Maria Antonia boldly asserted that 'every sovereign has the same task to accomplish, and it is mine, Sire, as much as it is yours', her claim was patently false: she was neither a sovereign like Frederick nor a representative of a power equivalent to Prussia.²³

From the beginning of the correspondence, Frederick rebuffed Maria Antonia's direct claims to political authority in ways that also put into play her intellectual and gender identities. Even in cases in which her political inferiority had nothing to do with her gender, Frederick used it as a rhetorical tool and symbol of her powerlessness. Early in the exchange, when Frederick wrote to explain why a Saxon candidate was unlikely to become the next king of Poland, he assumed the seemingly subordinate persona of Russian empress Catherine the Great's 'lawyer' (*avocat*). Yet, by playing the intermediary between two women and elucidating for them a complex state of affairs, he in reality showed off his professional knowledge of statecraft and legal rhetoric, skills that were presumably inaccessible to Maria Antonia as a woman. His seemingly polite assurances, 'I will nevertheless spare you, madame, all the lengthiness of a legal defence and will inform you only of the essence', merely underscored the implied discrepancy between his masculine knowledge of jurisprudence and her feminine intolerance for tedious jargon.²⁴ Adding insult to injury, he declared repeatedly that Maria Antonia had asked him to advocate for Catherine, completely ignoring her protestation that, on the contrary, she had requested that he intervene on her behalf *vis-à-vis* Catherine.²⁵ In Frederick's early letters, Maria Antonia's political powerlessness was encoded as a gendered exclusion from male forms of intellectual and political activity.

This was a frequent pattern in the first years of the correspondence: Frederick used his literary wit as a weapon, employing it to disguise such mansplaining (so to speak) as elegant literary jokes. In 1765, for example, a dispute arose between Saxony and Prussia over the precedence accorded at the Saxon court to royal envoys: after Saxony lost the Polish royal title, diplomats from royal courts like Prussia's expected to be given precedence over Saxon government ministers, whose sovereign was a mere elector. The Saxons refused to yield, and Prussia recalled its representative. When Maria Antonia sent Frederick a vehement letter of protest, he ostensibly tried to soften his rebuttal by framing it

as a dialogue of the dead. He pretended to address his rather pointed comments about Saxony's loss of privileges to the late Saxon field marshal and cabinet minister under Augustus the Strong, August Christoph von Wackerbarth: 'I shall push from my mind the image of a princess whom I esteem and respect, and I shall imagine that I have to deal, for example, with old Marshal Wackerbarth.'²⁶ While substituting a dead male interlocutor of lesser rank for the dowager electress may have freed Frederick's tongue, it did not really lessen the blow: it added to the diplomatic insult the implication that Maria Antonia, as a woman, was not an appropriate interlocutor in such matters. In these years, Maria Antonia consistently saw her gender used against her to reinforce her lack of political power and to insinuate a lack of intellectual clout as well: Frederick threw down the gauntlet, challenging her to recode her identity to reclaim at least some of that authority.

In her effort to match Frederick's wit and regain control of her identity, Maria Antonia's first tool was irony, a technique that illustrated her rhetorical mastery and intellectual equality. In her first short note apparently breaking off the exchange in 1764, Maria Antonia punctured Frederick's pose as a lawyer by calling attention to its gendered implications:

I finally understood, Sire, how you were planning to plead the cause of the empress of Russia, and I sensed that you would prefer her in every way. But, then again, I may not always have such a dangerous rival in your eyes.²⁷

Reimagining the competition for power in Poland between herself and Catherine the Great as a feminine rivalry for Frederick's affections, Maria Antonia caricatured Frederick's insulting use of gender and antiphrastically showed that she saw through Frederick's claims to be a mere intermediary. Her apparently self-deprecating display of femininity denounced Frederick's disingenuousness: by siding with Russia, he played a much more active role in deciding Poland's fate than he let on. He might invent elaborate literary role-plays to make his points, but she could see straight through his tricks and match his wit like an equal.

In the years 1765–1767, as the end of Maria Antonia's official political role grew near, she increasingly argued with Frederick about politics in terms of theory rather than practice. This further rhetorical strategy enabled her to claim authority in intellectual terms regardless of gender and thereby remain a worthy interlocutor on political matters as well. The struggle to achieve an equilibrium between her intellectual and political identities during these years occurred through a debate about the relationship between theory and practice in Enlightenment monarchy. Just as scholars today wrestle with how to evaluate enlightened absolutism's balancing act between power and ideas, Maria Antonia and Frederick staked out their positions in the correspondence by espousing different views of how Enlightenment ideals should relate to political realities.²⁸

Frederick cast himself as a realist whose philosophical mastery helped him to perceive the self-interest driving all things; he thereby flaunted his superiority as a disillusioned practitioner of Enlightenment sovereignty, a position to which his correspondent more and more obviously could not aspire. Maria Antonia, by contrast, emphasised the importance of ideals, accordingly positioning herself as the truer voice of Enlightenment monarchy in theory if not in practice. She cleverly trapped her opponent with his own words: when Frederick asserted that Plato's *Republic* was merely the 'dream of a virtuous man', she quoted Plato back at him and pointed out the contradiction between Frederick's cynical attitude and his own well-publicised image as a philosopher-king: 'Remember this aphorism, Sire: *How happy people will be when philosophers become kings, or when kings are philosophers!* You are a king and a philosopher.'²⁹

This was not the only moment in these years when Maria Antonia pointedly matched Frederick's classical references, responding, for instance, to an anecdote about Demosthenes with a paraphrase of Horace; she even quoted Virgil in Latin.³⁰ Her mentions of Voltaire not only offered further proof that she possessed the same intellectual background as Frederick: they also aligned her with the *philosophe* and held Frederick to account by evoking Voltaire's well-publicised expectation that the king would enact Enlightenment principles as policy.³¹ In the course of this debate, Maria Antonia demonstrated that she could be Frederick's equal in cultured conversation if not in the public arena and that, nonetheless, she still had a voice in matters of political significance. She was not simply the passive object of his manipulations of her identity; she claimed her own identity and sought to define his as a philosopher-king. This debate laid the foundation for a new relationship that both participants enacted as a meeting of minds, without entirely relinquishing the political significance of their bond.

Elite Intellectual Identity and Epistolary Relationship Building

After 1767, the correspondence between Maria Antonia and Frederick no longer witnessed the explosions of political tensions that Maria Antonia's direct assertions of political power sparked in earlier years. But this pacified relationship was not founded on a relinquishment of all authority by Maria Antonia or on a complete purging of her political identity. Rather, she successfully projected an intellectual identity that suited the epistolary mode of communication and the character and position of her interlocutor. This identity developed in keeping with the type of relationship upon which Frederick and Maria Antonia agreed: that of elite Enlightenment sociability. Having emerged in the salons of seventeenth-century France and spread across Europe in the eighteenth century, this set of social practices envisioned intellectual activity as a leisured pursuit and a mark of distinction in refined, mixed-gender company.³² Conducted in French

and peppered with exhibitions of wit, the correspondence between Frederick and Maria Antonia fit perfectly into this culture. By choosing this intellectual identity over other personae available to her as dowager electress, Maria Antonia found an ideal means of affirming her dignity, intellectual authority, and enduring political relevance in her letters.

Although far from unique in the eighteenth century, Maria Antonia's choice of an intellectual identity broke with the traditional image of the good royal widow as a pious mentor to her children.³³ While Maria Theresa of Austria embodied the traditional model in her voluminous correspondences with her children, Maria Antonia's prioritisation of her intellectual identity ironically resembles the epistolary self-fashioning of her arch-rival in the struggle for Poland, Catherine the Great.³⁴ Yet the relative absence of the traditional image of the dowager in the correspondence with Frederick is shaped as much by his identity as by Maria Antonia's. Piety would not have impressed a king well known for his dismissive attitude towards religion. While her femininity and genuine Catholic faith restrained her from emulating his frequent irreverent jokes, she never took offence and even played along with his string of jests about his decision not to abolish the Jesuits in his territories, despite the official suppression of the order. The very woman who, in her earlier years, had written the text for a religious oratorio, *La conversione di Sant'Agostino* ('The Conversion of Saint Augustine') (1750), added to one letter in a postscript, 'My most reverend, quite stupid, but most excellent confessor, the Reverend Father Kreitl, has begged me to convey his most humble bow to Your Majesty, the sole protector of his late society.'³⁵ Such an escapade illustrates beautifully the importance of relationship to the expression of identity: in other contexts, it would have been utterly unthinkable for Maria Antonia to write such a thing. Her role as the mother of six surviving children fit somewhat better into the exchange because both correspondents regularly traded family news to reinforce the simultaneously conceptual and real family bonds between European ruling houses.³⁶ Accordingly, Maria Antonia's references to motherhood regularly recall her political identity. For example, in 1774, she asked Frederick 'not to forget' (*n'oubliez pas*) her daughter Maria Amalia, who had just married Charles II August of Zweibrücken; the occasion for remembering arose only a few years later, when Prussia allied with Saxony in the War of the Bavarian Succession (1778–1779) to defend Bavaria from the Austrians, thus protecting Charles II August's claim to inherit the electorate.³⁷ Maria Antonia was thus perfectly aware of the palette of rhetorical personae available to her as an eighteenth-century dowager electress. Her choice to employ one identity over another depended to a great extent on the general shape and even on the momentary exigencies of her epistolary relationship with Frederick.

Contrary to Christine Fischer's suggestion that Maria Antonia fashioned herself as a learned lady, or *femme savante*, in the correspondence with Frederick, she did everything in her power to avoid being labelled with that pejorative

term.³⁸ Although the term *femme savante* had a brief heyday as a positive term in the 1660s in France, in the second half of the seventeenth century its pejorative connotation, signifying either a pedant or a woman with false pretences to learning, came to predominate.³⁹ Crucially, although Frederick packed his letters with copious accolades for his correspondent, he never once called her a *femme savante*: if this had been her model, surely he would have perceived and lauded it. Instead, from beginning to end of the correspondence, he favoured apophatic praise of her intellectual activity: mentions of her 'extreme modesty' abound, celebrating her accomplishments as a poet and composer with phrases like 'But Your Royal Highness does not like it when people talk about your talents; so, only due to your extreme modesty, madame, I shall suppress what I think of your rare qualities.'⁴⁰ These phrases enhanced the praise because they congratulated Maria Antonia on successfully being learned without seeking to appear so. Stemming ultimately from the *mondain* culture of seventeenth-century aristocratic salons and found in the works of writers as different as Mlle de Scudéry and Molière, this ideal was perpetuated in the elite sociability of the eighteenth century.⁴¹ Maria Antonia sought to affirm her intellectual equality with Frederick while eschewing any posturing that would smack of the pedant or *savante*: instead, she presented her intellectual practices as thoroughly embedded in the practices of *le monde*, or the world of elite sociability.

In keeping with such norms, Maria Antonia situated her intellectual activity within a leisured retreat from the affairs of the world. While this choice expressed her real removal from an official position of power, it also lent dignity to her continuing political interests by subsuming them within her intellectual identity. Already in 1767, the last year of the regency, she embedded a reminder of her close proximity to power in a Horatian image of a country retreat from public life, writing,

Here I am in the country with the Regent and my son; I go for walks, I breathe fresh air, I try to forget my woes, and, enjoying the spectacle of nature, I focus on pleasant and agreeable things.⁴²

A few years later, in 1773, she declared herself a mere 'dilettante in political matters.'⁴³ However, the term *dilettante* is to be understood not in its modern pejorative sense, but rather in its eighteenth-century connotation of possessing 'energetic, enjoyable, wide-ranging curiosity.'⁴⁴ Such curiosity was part of a broader practice of leisured intellectual activity, which Maria Antonia depicted in a letter a few months later:

I try to let my days pass quietly; the arts and letters take up part of the day, socialising and my duties demand another; more precious moments are devoted to meditation, for which the vicissitudes of my life provide ample subject matter.⁴⁵

The bucolic and elegiac modes of these self-portraits evoke Maria Antonia's persona as Ermelinda Talea, the name bestowed at her 1747 induction into the Accademia dell'Arcadia, an elite Italian literary society, and the pseudonym she used in her published works. The image of retreat foregrounded Maria Antonia's intellectual identity while helping to make sense of her evolving political identity.

The two correspondents together lent the ideal of philosophical retreat an additional signification: it opened up an imaginary epistolary space in which Frederick and Maria Antonia were equal interlocutors freely discussing topics from philosophy to politics. In developing this self-image as a leisured dilettante, Maria Antonia was in fact responding to motifs first introduced by Frederick during their debate about Enlightenment monarchy in 1765–1767. The motif of dilettantism first appeared in Frederick's reaction to Maria Antonia's challenge that he live up to his image as a philosopher-king: the king asserted that, compared to Marcus Aurelius, the paragon of philosopher-kingship, he was 'a mere dilettante. I love philosophy and work to become wise, if possible; but my presumption does not blind me to the point of believing myself to be such.'⁴⁶ Therefore, Maria Antonia's self-designation as a 'dilettante in political matters' does not indicate unambiguously her lack of power relative to Frederick: as a reference to his own usage of the term, it equalises the two as individuals who enjoy philosophy as a leisured pursuit but who know how to assess lucidly their own intellectual and political positions. Likewise, Maria Antonia's self-depiction as living in Horatian retreat unites rather than divides the two correspondents: it, too, stems from that debate, in the course of which Frederick declared himself an Epicurean who would love nothing better than to live in philosophical retreat from politics.⁴⁷ Maria Antonia took him at his word and invited him to join her in savouring country life; she added that this choice would in fact reinforce his image as a philosopher-king because the true Enlightenment monarch prefers peaceable cultivation of the arts and nature to excessive love of glory and conquest.⁴⁸ Despite Frederick's attempts to separate philosophising from real politics, the struggle opened a neutral space of leisured intellectual enjoyment in which a wide range of topics, including diplomacy, could be discussed.

The two correspondents then enacted this epistolary invention in real life, a decision that entailed major changes in their relationship. Shortly before Maria Antonia's son reached his majority, Frederick took advantage of her impending leisure to invite her to visit him, to which she responded that, if they managed to meet, 'we will talk about politics, finance, the arts, and literature.'⁴⁹ Such visits occurred in 1769 and 1770, during which music making and cultured conversation likely alternated with political discussions; the subsequent refusal by Maria Antonia's son to allow further visits in 1776 and 1777 demonstrates their political significance.⁵⁰ Paradoxically, these voyages that Maria Antonia undertook in her private, leisured capacity rendered her relationship

with Frederick public: they informed all of Europe about a relationship that hitherto had been known only to the correspondents and those close to them. Consequently, Maria Antonia was recognised publicly as someone who might have the king's ear: as she put it, 'ever since I went to Potsdam [...] no one leaves here without wanting to take with them a letter from me; people think I am worth something.'⁵¹ Although phrased as flattery, this statement expresses clearly the relational nature of Maria Antonia's identity: a sociable and intellectual association with Frederick had implications also for her political identity. Over the subsequent years, Maria Antonia wrote numerous recommendation letters and passed on several petitions for other people. Perhaps most notably, in 1774, she wrote in favour of her sister-in-law Maria Kunigunde of Saxony's candidature for coadjutor of Essen and Thorn, a request that Frederick answered immediately and positively; although the real degree of influence that Maria Antonia had on Frederick's decision is hard to assess, it is nonetheless significant that she was actively involved in seeking sovereignty for another woman even after she herself had none.⁵² Employing sociability and letter writing to act as an intermediary was a fairly typical form of diplomatic activity for women in the early modern period.⁵³ Although it accentuated Maria Antonia's inferior rank and power relative to Frederick, this activity furnished another means by which she could use an intellectual relationship to retain a political identity as well.

To make sense of the changes that her visits wrought in their relationship, Frederick and Maria Antonia turned to the language of friendship, which allowed them to sustain a semblance of equality and to situate their relationship within the practices of sociability and the related Enlightenment culture of sentiment. Although the term 'friendship' (*amitié*) appeared early in the exchange to designate political affinity, it became prominent in its interpersonal sense in the immediate aftermath of Maria Antonia's first visit to Potsdam in 1769.⁵⁴ In her thank-you letter for his hospitality, the dowager electress exulted at her new relationship with Frederick, exclaiming, 'this sublime prince honours me with his friendship.'⁵⁵ The motif developed from there, with Frederick jocularly promising to build a temple dedicated to the mineral waters at Spa if they restored Maria Antonia's failing health: he promised to adorn the imaginary edifice with the busts of Orestes and Pylades and of Theseus and Pirithous.⁵⁶ Maria Antonia immediately likened this fictional temple to the real Temple of Friendship that Frederick built at Sanssouci, dedicated to his late beloved sister Wilhelmine and decorated with medallions representing precisely those classical pairs of friends.⁵⁷ In future years, Frederick repeatedly portrayed Maria Antonia as a paragon of friendship, while she entreated him to remain her 'genius of friendship.'⁵⁸ Both correspondents had a long-standing interest in the eighteenth-century cult of friendship, as attested by Frederick's temple and Maria Antonia's creation in her youth of a Society of the Incas or the Order of Friendship (*Gesellschaft der Inkas oder der Orden der Freundschaft*).⁵⁹ Participants in elite sociability generally sought to establish a semblance of

friendly equality among themselves; relationships of 'protection' between salon hosts or hostesses and writers, for example, were presented as exchanges of 'attentions' between friends.⁶⁰ Maria Antonia and Frederick similarly cast their unequal relationship as an equal friendship to make possible the exchange of ideas and, occasionally, political favours.

In the 1770s, the correspondents took on weighty intellectual topics, including the nature of causation and the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns; their witty sparring on each topic blended genuine intellectual enjoyment with image-making and political allusions.⁶¹ These exchanges were predicated on a playful relationship in which each correspondent designated him- or herself as the other's student. In 1769, Maria Antonia introduced a flattering passage with the words, '[i]f I were permitted to lecture my teacher [...]', and in 1777, she dubbed herself his 'disciple.'⁶² Frederick called her 'the most educated princess in Europe, who could teach me some good lessons if she wanted to take the trouble' and several years later affirmed that, in his epistolary disquisitions, 'it is rather so that I can repeat to you my lesson, accepting all the corrections, madame, that you deign to make to your pupil's essay.'⁶³ In the vein of such inversions, the two correspondents consistently assumed diametrically opposed positions in their debates. Frederick presented himself as a proponent of determinism vis-à-vis Maria Antonia as the advocate of free will – poses that accorded well not only with their respective faiths, Frederick as a (nominal) Calvinist and Maria Antonia a Catholic, but also with their political personae, with Frederick continuing to resist Maria Antonia's hopes for his support on issues like the fate of Poland.⁶⁴ Likewise, while Frederick spoke as a relatively moderate Ancient, Maria Antonia advocated strongly for the Moderns. For Maria Antonia, the quarrel offered an ideal frame of reference for shaping her own and her correspondent's identities in her letters. Sending good wishes for Frederick's health, she painted a self-portrait of herself as a modern intellectual using her knowledge to predict his recovery after a bout of illness, 'tranquil in a good armchair in my library, where, instead of the Greek idlers who hung about at Delphi, I see around me the history of heroes and the works of scholars, none of whom can defeat Frederick.'⁶⁵ While Maria Antonia did not claim to equal Frederick as a military hero, she celebrated modernity for allowing her to set up a mirrored portrait of herself and her addressee as triumphant modern scholars.

Beyond such overt self-depictions, Maria Antonia's mastery of epistolary form provided the essential means by which she expressed her intellectual identity in relation to Frederick. From the beginning, the correspondence had a highly literary dimension: the two correspondents spun out variations on literary motifs over multiple letters, engaging with genres from fairy tales to dialogues of the dead and rivalling one another in artful praises. Nevertheless, the styles of the two writers differ markedly, especially in the later, more concentratedly intellectual letters. Frederick readily slipped into an earnest, didactic tone when he engaged with ideas, lecturing his correspondent on whatever serious

topic was at hand. Entirely focused on expounding his opinion, he tended to pay relatively little attention to the identity of his interlocutor. In a long letter about the Ancients and the Moderns, for instance, Frederick mentioned Maria Antonia only four times: in the first sentence, in the closing two sentences, and, in between, to agree explicitly with two points she had made in her preceding letter.⁶⁶ By contrast, throughout her letters, Maria Antonia cleverly interwove serious philosophical points with admiration for her interlocutor. When Frederick, disillusioned as ever, argued that the memory of human deeds would inevitably be lost, Maria Antonia used him as an example to test each of her rebuttals. Unlike those who just wanted to be remembered at all costs, 'benefactors of humanity' ('les bienfaiteurs de l'humanité') like him would live on in human memory; likewise, not everyone could be like Frederick and undertake great deeds without hope of a reward, so the masses, at least, should be led to believe in the possibility of immortal memory.⁶⁷ As Antoine Lilti has shown, conversation in the world of elite sociability was, above all, an art of praise: each participant proved their own refinement by aptly recognising and expressing others' merits.⁶⁸ Maria Antonia thus demonstrated very effectively her intellectual identity: phrasing her ideas as acclaim for Frederick, she exhibited the extent of her knowledge and skill even as she distanced herself from the *femme savante* by flaunting her social know-how.

Born into the highest echelons of European society, Maria Antonia was fortunate enough to meet relatively little resistance to her intellectual ambitions. While professional paths were unthinkable for a royal individual, elite sociability offered an outlet where she could display her extensive knowledge and exercise her intelligence in dialogue with like-minded people. More strikingly, her ability to carry on an intellectually stimulating conversation with the king of Prussia helped her to retain a certain political role even when officially excluded from power. To read Maria Antonia's correspondence with Frederick is to follow an evolving and at times tense relationship in which the two correspondents wrestled with diplomatic and intellectual problems by grappling with their own and their interlocutor's identities. The exchange thus stands as a methodological reminder to scholars that our analyses of both epistolary and non-epistolary materials must reflect the dynamic and culturally specific relationships that constantly shape and reshape human identities.

Notes

1. Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1982, 88.
2. Liz Stanley, 'The Epistolary Gift, the Editorial Third-Party, Counter-Epistolaria: Rethinking the Epistolarium', in *Life Writing*, 2011, 8(2), 149.
3. Frances Ferguson, 'Interpreting the Self through Letters', in *Centrum*, 1981, new series, 1(2), 107–112.
4. Claudio Guillén, 'On the Edge of Literariness: The Writing of Letters', in *Comparative Literature Studies*, 1994, 31(1), 1–24; Charles Bazerman, 'Letters and the Social Grounding of Differentiated Genres', in David Barton and Nigel Hall (eds.), *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*, Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 2000, 15–29; Margaretta Jolly and Liz Stanley, 'Letters as/not a genre', in *Life Writing*, 2005, 2(2), 91–118; Bernard Bray, 'Les correspondances: une littérature du moi entre modes, modèles et mentalités', in *Épistoliers de l'âge classique: l'art de la correspondance chez Madame de Sévigné et quelques prédécesseurs, contemporains et héritiers*, Tübingen, Gunter Narr, 2007, 21–35.
5. For an overview of feminist scholarship on relational identity, see Susan J. Brison, 'Personal Identity and Relational Selves', in Ann Garry, Serene J. Khader, and Alison Stone (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, New York, Routledge, 2017, 218–230.
6. Christiane Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II: une dramaturgie des Lumières, 1736–1778*, SVEC, vol. 234, Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 1985; Andreas Pečar, *Die Masken des Königs. Friedrich II. von Preußen als Schriftsteller*, Frankfurt, Campus, 2016; Avi Lifschitz (ed.) and Angela Scholar (trans.), *Frederick the Great's Philosophical Writings*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2021.
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8. 'Correspondance de Frédéric avec l'électrice Marie-Antonie de Saxe (24 avril 1763–28 décembre 1779)', in Johann D. E. Preuss (ed.), *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, vol. 24, Berlin, Decker, 1846–1856, 41–366 (henceforth abbreviated as 'Correspondance').

9. Fleig, “Entre souverains ce n’est pas le sexe qui décide”, 54–62; Fischer, *Instrumentierte Visionen weiblicher Macht*, 144–146, 339–346.
10. Jürgen Habermas and Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (trans.), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge, Polity, 1989; T. C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660–1789*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.
11. Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 5; Roger Chartier and Jean Hébrard, ‘Conclusion: Entre public et privé: la correspondance, une écriture ordinaire’, in Roger Chartier (ed.), *La Correspondance: les usages de la lettre au XIXe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1991, 451–458; Antoine Lilti and Lydia G. Cochrane (trans.), *The World of the Salons: Sociability and Worldliness in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 151–155; Nicole Pohl, “‘Perfect Reciprocity’: Salon Culture and Epistolary Conversations’, in *Women’s Writing*, 2006, 13(1), 139–159.
12. Maria Antonia to Maria Theresa, May 30, 1747, in Woldemar Lippert (ed.), *Kaiserin Maria Theresia und Kurfürstin Maria Antonia von Sachsen: Briefwechsel 1747–1772*, Leipzig, B. G. Teubner, 1908, 2–3.
13. Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Hausarchiv, Familienkorrespondenz A, Karton 37–1-12. Maria Antonia’s surviving secret letters span the years 1748–1756 and are signed with the initials ‘AB’.
14. Adam Morton, ‘Introduction: Politics, Culture and Queens Consort’, in Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly and Adam Morton (eds.), *Queens Consort, Cultural Transfer and European Politics, c. 1500–1800*, London and New York, Routledge, 2017, 5, and Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, ‘The Consort in the Theatre of Power: Maria Amalia of Saxony, Queen of the Two Sicilies, Queen of Spain’, in Watanabe-O’Kelly and Morton, *Queens Consort*, 52–53. See also Clarissa Campbell Orr (ed.), *Queenship in Europe, 1660–1815: The Role of the Consort*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004. For a parallel to Maria Antonia’s secret correspondence with a foreign power during her time as an officially powerless consort to the heir, see the future Catherine the Great’s exchange with the British ambassador to Russia, Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams: S. M. Goriainov, *Correspondance de Catherine Alexéievna, grande-duchesse de Russie, et de Sir Charles H. Williams, ambassadeur d’Angleterre, 1756 et 1757*, Moscow, Imperatorskoe obshchestvo istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh, 1909.
15. On this meeting, see Maria Antonia’s letter to Maria Theresa of March 18, 1763, in Lippert, *Kaiserin Maria Theresia und Kurfürstin Maria Antonia von Sachsen*, 159–160, and Fischer, *Instrumentierte Visionen weiblicher Macht*, 340.
16. Maria Theresa to Maria Antonia, September 1, 1763, in Lippert, *Kaiserin Maria Theresia und Kurfürstin Maria Antonia von Sachsen*, 173–175.
17. ‘Correspondance’, 43–48.
18. *Ibid.*, 52.
19. January 23, 1764. *Ibid.*, 63–64.
20. ‘[S]a dernière lettre ne me laissait rien à répliquer’; ‘j’entends, Sire, et me tais’ (March 2 and June 18, 1764. See also her letter of August 3, 1764. *Ibid.*, 67, 74, 76. All English translations are my own).
21. Frederick to Maria Antonia, March 8, June 26, and August 8, 1764. *Ibid.*, 68–69, 75, 76–78.
22. Fleig, “Entre souverains ce n’est pas le sexe qui décide”, 44–45.
23. ‘Chaque souverain a la même tâche à remplir, et c’est la mienne, Sire, autant que la vôtre’ (April 7, 1766. ‘Correspondance’, 121).
24. ‘Je vous épargnerai cependant, madame, toute la diffusion d’un plaidoyer, et je ne vous en rapporterai que la substance’ (January 29, 1764. *Ibid.*, 65).
25. Frederick to Maria Antonia, December 2, 1763, January 29 and March 8, 1764; Maria Antonia to Frederick, January 23, 1764. *Ibid.*, 61–62, 63, 65, 68.

26. 'J'écarte de mon esprit l'image d'une princesse que j'estime et que je respecte, et je me représente que j'ai à traiter, par exemple, avec le vieux maréchal de Wackerbarth' (Maria Antonia to Frederick, February 1, 1765; Frederick to Maria Antonia, February 7, 1765. *Ibid.*, 86–90).
27. 'J'ai compris enfin, Sire, de quelle manière vous entendiez plaider la cause de l'impératrice de Russie, et j'ai senti qu'à tous égards vous lui donneriez la préférence. Mais enfin je n'aurai peut-être pas toujours auprès de vous une rivale aussi dangereuse' (March 2, 1764. *Ibid.*, 67).
28. H. M. Scott (ed.), *Enlightened Absolutism: Reform and Reformers in Later Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990; Derek Beales, 'Philosophical Kingship and Enlightened Despotism', in Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, 497–524.
29. '[L]a chimère d'un homme vertueux'; 'Rappelez-vous ce mot, Sire: *Heureux les hommes quand les philosophes deviendront rois, ou quand les rois seront philosophes!* Vous êtes roi et philosophe' (Frederick to Maria Antonia, April 16, 1766; Maria Antonia to Frederick, May 12, 1766. 'Correspondance', 123–124).
30. Frederick mistakenly substitutes Isocrates for Demosthenes. Frederick to Maria Antonia, August 18, 1765; Maria Antonia to Frederick, September 16, 1765 and July 8, 1766. *Ibid.*, 101, 103, 126.
31. Maria Antonia to Frederick, January 25 and July 12, 1765, March 1, 1766. *Ibid.*, 84, 97, 119.
32. Lilti, *The World of the Salons*; Anthony J. La Vopa, *The Labor of the Mind: Intellect and Gender in Enlightenment Cultures*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. For accounts emphasising the seriousness of women's intellectual role in salon culture, see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994, and Faith E. Beasley, *Salons, History, and the Creation of Seventeenth-Century France: Mastering Memory*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006.
33. Carey Fleiner, 'Introduction', in Carey Fleiner and Elena Woodacre (eds.), *Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 3–4; Diana Pelaz Flores, 'The Figure of the Queen Mother in the European and African Monarchies, 1400–1800', in Elena Woodacre (ed.), *A Companion to Global Queenship*, Leeds, Arc Humanities Press, 2018, 299–308.
34. Kelsey Rubin-Detlev, *The Epistolary Art of Catherine the Great*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2019, 80–82.
35. 'Mon très-révérénd, bien sot, mais très-excellent confesseur, le R. P. Kreitl, m'a priée de le mettre très-humblement aux pieds de V. M., l'unique protecteur de sa défunte société' (May 27, 1775. 'Correspondance', 309–310). On Maria Antonia and religion, see Fischer, *Instrumentierte Visionen weiblicher Macht*, 46–48, 401.
36. Lucien Bély, *La Société des princes: XVIe-XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1999, 18.
37. February 18, 1774. 'Correspondance', 293.
38. Fischer, *Instrumentierte Visionen weiblicher Macht*, 34–40.
39. Linda Timmermans, *L'Accès des femmes à la culture (1598–1715). Un débat d'idées de saint François de Sales à la marquise de Lambert*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1993, 324, 331.
40. 'Mais V. A. R. n'aime pas qu'on parle de ses talents; ainsi je supprime, uniquement à cause de votre extrême modestie, madame, ce que je pense de vos rares qualités' (August 18, 1765. 'Correspondance', 101).
41. Timmermans, *L'Accès des femmes à la culture*, 319–352; La Vopa, *The Labor of the Mind*, 43, 231–233.
42. 'Me voici à la campagne avec l'Administrateur et mon fils; je me promène, je respire le grand air, je cherche à oublier mes peines, et, jouissant du spectacle de la nature, je m'attache aux objets doux et agréables' (June 22, 1767. 'Correspondance', 150).

43. '[U]ne *dilettante* en fait de politique' (February 21, 1773. Ibid., 276).
44. Bruce Redford, *Dilettanti: The Antic and the Antique in Eighteenth-Century England*, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum and Getty Research Institute, 2008, 1.
45. 'Je tâche de couler doucement mes jours; les arts et les lettres en prennent une partie, la société et les devoirs en revendiquent une autre; des moments plus précieux sont consacrés à la méditation, pour laquelle les vicissitudes de ma vie me fournissent une assez ample matière' (August 16, 1773. 'Correspondance', 284).
46. '[J]e ne suis qu'un dilettante. J'aime la philosophie, je travaille à devenir sage, s'il est possible; mais ma présomption ne m'aveugle pas au point de me croire tel' (May 30, 1766. Ibid., 125). See also his letter of September 10, 1767. Ibid., 157.
47. February 12, 1767. Ibid., 143.
48. July 31, 1767. Ibid., 153.
49. '[N]ous parlerons politique, finances, arts, littérature' (Frederick to Maria Antonia, November 1, 1767; Maria Antonia to Frederick, January 26, 1768. Ibid., 159, 163).
50. Fischer, *Instrumentierte Visionen weiblicher Macht*, 343–344; Weber, *Maria Antonia Walpurgis*, vol. 2, 205–207.
51. '[D]epuis que j'ai été à Potsdam [...] on ne part plus sans vouloir emporter une lettre de ma part; on croit que je vau quelque chose' (January 2, 1770. 'Correspondance', 205–206).
52. Maria Antonia to Frederick, February 18 and April 4, 1774; Frederick to Maria Antonia, February 25, 1774. Ibid., 294–295.
53. James Daybell and Svante Norrhem, 'Introduction: Rethinking Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe', in Daybell and Norrhem (eds.), *Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1400–1800*, London and New York, Routledge, 2017, 4–5, 9–10.
54. For political uses, see Maria Antonia to Frederick, October 5 and November 11, 1763. 'Correspondance', 52, 58.
55. '[C]e prince sublime m'honore de son amitié' (November 3, 1769. Ibid., 200).
56. May 24, 1771. Ibid., 243.
57. May 30, 1771. Ibid., 244.
58. '[G]énie [...] de l'amitié' (Frederick to Maria Antonia, December 24, 1771 and October 22, 1777; Maria Antonia to Frederick, July 30, 1772. Ibid., 255, 270, 339).
59. Fischer, *Instrumentierte Visionen weiblicher Macht*, 61–62. On letter writing and the cult of friendship in Enlightenment Germany, see Tobias Heinrich, "'O You Little Lovable Best Friend": Writing Friendship in the Age of Enlightenment', in *De musica disserenda*, 2020, 16(1), 121–137, and Tobias Heinrich, 'Communicative Identity in the Eighteenth Century. Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim's Epistolary Network and the Cult of Friendship', in *The European Journal of Life Writing*, 2014, 3, VC100–VC122.
60. Daniel Gordon, *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670–1789*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994; Lilti, *The World of the Salons*, 105–108.
61. Although the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns played out most visibly in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it framed later Enlightenment debates: see Paddy Bullard and Alexis Tadié, 'Introduction', in Bullard and Tadié (eds.), *Ancients and Moderns in Europe: Comparative Perspectives*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 2016, 5; Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010, 116. On causation in Enlightenment thought, see Marian Hobson, '*Jacques le fataliste*: The Art of the Probable', in Kate E. Tunstall and Caroline Warman (eds.), *Diderot and Rousseau: Networks of Enlightenment*, *SVEC*, 2011:04, Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 2011, 143–163, and Ruggero Sciuto, 'Diderot and d'Holbach: A Theory of Determinism', PhD dissertation, University of Oxford, 2018.

62. 'S'il m'était permis de faire des leçons à mon maître [...]' (April 15, 1769 and June 24, 1777. 'Correspondance', 184, 332).
63. '[L]a princesse la plus instruite de l'Europe, et qui pourrait me donner de bonnes leçons, si elle voulait s'en donner la peine'; 'c'est plutôt pour que je lui dise ma leçon, me soumettant à toutes les corrections, madame, que vous voudrez faire au thème de votre écolier' (July 20, 1770 and August 5, 1777. Ibid., 222, 336).
64. See, for example, Frederick to Maria Antonia, May 1, 1778; Maria Antonia to Frederick, December 21, 1778. Ibid., 348, 350. For their earliest banter about Calvinist determinism as a metaphorical means of discussing Frederick's unwillingness to act on Saxony's behalf in Poland, see Maria Antonia to Frederick, August 3, 1764. Ibid., 76.
65. '[T]ranquille dans un bon fauteuil de ma bibliothèque, où, au lieu des badauds de la Grèce qui se rendaient à Delphes, je vois autour de moi l'histoire des héros et les ouvrages des savants, dont aucun ne vainc Frédéric' (January 4, 1777. Ibid., 323).
66. March 5, 1777. Ibid., 326–328.
67. December 1, 1777. Ibid., 341–342.
68. Lilti, *The World of the Salons*, 145–148.

CHAPTER 3

Between Defence and Affirmation: The Discursive Self-Representation of Eighteenth-Century Women Authors in France and Italy

Rotraud von Kulesa
(translated by Kristen Gehrman)

In a letter dated August 15, 1751, Françoise de Graffigny wrote to her friend Antoine-François Devaux, known as Panpan: '[...] it is more honest for a woman to write in prose than in verse. Verse reveals the author, the scholar; prose only shows the witty woman of the world.'¹ The words of the author of one of the bestsellers of the eighteenth century, *Les lettres d'une Péruvienne* ('Letters from a Peruvian Woman') (1747/1752), seem in many ways emblematic of the self-representation of many women writers of the time. The denial of authority and the problem of the right to glory are recurrent issues in this discursive format, which is also part of the long-standing *querelle des femmes*.² Long considered a rhetorical game, the debate about the superiority of men, the inferiority of women, or even the equality of the sexes is omnipresent in the cultural history of Europe. As a rule, the texts belonging to the *querelle des femmes* are constructed on the model of attack-counterattack and can have a polemical dimension. The most recurrent thematic nodes of the *querelle* are the problem of marriage and thus of women's virtue, access to knowledge, and glory. In this regard, Eliane Viennot has pointed out: 'Finally, from the seventeenth century onwards, the dispute [*querelle des femmes*] would be focused on the question of education and women's access to knowledge [...].'³

The self-representation of women writers throughout this literary history can be situated in this context. The woman writer has to justify herself in relation to the dominant (i.e. male) discourse that generally excludes women from writing and cultural production. This discourse is in turn part of the complex apparatus of the respective literary field, in which the laws of the publishing market have reigned since the invention of the book in the Renaissance. Following Michel Foucault's example, the concept of the author can be understood as a

discursive construction that is specific to a particular socio-historical context that varies from country to country and period to period.⁴ When it comes to the question of female authorship, as one of the dominant subjects throughout the *querelle des femmes*, we can observe a certain continuity of arguments and apply to the eighteenth century what we could also observe at the end of the nineteenth century in our study *Entre la reconnaissance et l'exclusion* ('Between Reconnaissance and Exclusion'):

The positions taken by women writers regarding their position in the literary field, as expressed in their literary works, clearly reflect their position in society, which is, after all, marginal. They thus speak 'in two voices', employing a strategy of implicit subversion, a diplomatic rather than combative discourse.⁵

The woman who speaks, and worse still, who articulates herself in writing, has to justify herself, defend herself, and fight prejudices about the woman who writes.

France and Italy both have a long tradition of women's literature, the importance of which varies depending on the period. Italy, for example, saw a considerable presence of women poets during the Renaissance, while France witnessed the clear emergence of women writers from the seventeenth century onwards.⁶ The ongoing exchanges and the close relationship between these two literatures, whose actors were part of the (European) Republic of Letters, fully justify a study of emblematic contributions by French and Italian women authors of the eighteenth century, a pivotal period for this debate. These contributions can illustrate the functioning of this discourse, which teeters between defence and affirmation. For France, we will focus on the best-known authors, namely Françoise de Graffigny, Émilie du Châtelet, Anne-Marie du Boccage, Félicité de Genlis, and Germaine de Staël. For Italy, we have chosen Luisa Bergalli Gozzi and Giustiniana Wynne Orsini v. Rosenberg because of their links with the French-speaking world. We will show, through these specific cases, that the discourse of self-representation of women authors is essentially based on three strong points – the denial of authority, the right to fame, and the problem of access to knowledge – none of which are treated the same way by the above-mentioned women authors.

Françoise de Graffigny and the Denial of Authority

Françoise de Graffigny (1695–1758),⁷ originally from Lorraine, succeeded in making a name for herself in the world of Parisian letters with her epistolary novel *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*,⁸ which became a bestseller during the Enlightenment. Her tear-jerking comedy *Cénie* (1750) is one of the few plays

by a woman playwright to be staged at the Comédie-Française. She also wrote a vast private correspondence, including letters to her friend François-Antoine Devaux,⁹ also from Lorraine, from which the quotation that opens this contribution is taken:

Ah, my God, how wrongly you understand the motive of my work! Do you want to test it? Send someone to tell me what I hope to get out of my two works. I throw them into the fire with all my heart without the slightest regret, and I vow never to write.¹⁰

The novelist's private correspondence allows us to trace the main stages of the creation of her novel and reveals that, in fact, she wrote more for material reasons than for glory. At the same time, however, she did not want to lose face before her contemporaries and was cautious when it came to possible criticism:

Get this into your head. And that I will never write for my own pleasure or for glory, that I try to do the best I can because at worst, if it is known that I wrote it, I shall have the same self-respect as to not to go out in a stained dress. It does not go any further.¹¹

Françoise de Graffigny refuses the idea that a woman can be an author and claim any authority. The quotation inserted as an introduction – '[...] and another thing that will revolt you, is that it is more honourable for a woman to write in prose than in verse. Verse reveals the author, the scholar; prose only shows the witty woman of the world'¹² – is thus well in line with the discourse of sociability of the time, which prescribes (women's) behaviour in terms of honest sociability and which puts the scholarly woman on trial, something that had taken place since the seventeenth century.¹³ To claim authority and knowledge, the two being closely linked, thus represents an overcoming of social conventions. Françoise de Graffigny seems aware of this and tries to avoid the pitfalls of the world around her and not to violate the rules of good conduct.

The Right to Fame

Authority, glory, and fame in the feminine form were thus problematic in eighteenth-century France. However, not all of Françoise de Graffigny's colleagues were so reticent about the question of female glory.

For Émilie du Châtelet (1706–1749), physicist, philosopher, and companion of Voltaire, study (understood in the broadest sense) was the only way for women to achieve fame, which in turn was one of the conditions for women's access to happiness, as she emphasised in her *Discours sur le bonheur* ('Discourse on Happiness') (1779, posthumous):

By this reason of independence, the love of study is of all the passions the one that contributes most to our happiness. In the love of study is a passion from which an elevated soul is never entirely free, that of glory; still, only half of the world can acquire it this way, and it is this very half to whom education deprives the means of it, and renders the taste for it impossible.¹⁴

Here, the scholar underlines the problem of women's access to knowledge, which was later taken up by Félicité de Genlis and many others. Indeed, the question of women's education became particularly virulent during the eighteenth century and was therefore the subject of a number of works devoted to this issue, beginning with Fénélon's *Traité de l'éducation des filles* ('Treaty on the Education of Girls') (1678) and the Marquise de Lambert's *Avis d'une mère à sa fille* ('Advice of a Mother to Her Daughter') (1728).¹⁵

The boldness of the physicist's words, which openly demanded women's right to glory, was contrasted, many years later, by a certain pessimism on the part of Germaine de Staël (1766–1817), author of the novels *Delphine* (1802) and *Corinne* (1807) and the treatises *De la littérature* ('On Literature') (1800) and *De l'Allemagne* ('On Germany') (1810/1813):

Even glory can be reproached to a woman, because there is a contrast between glory and her natural destiny. Austere virtue condemns even the fame of what is good in itself, as a kind of attack on the perfection of modesty. Men of spirit, astonished to find rivals among women, do not know how to judge them, either with the generosity of an adversary, or with the indulgence of a protector; and in this new combat, they follow neither the laws of honour, nor those of kindness.¹⁶

By evoking the risk of feminine glory, which causes the death of Corinne, the protagonist of de Staël's eponymous novel, and which, according to the author, could provoke rivalries and even jealousy among the opposite sex, she in turn inscribes the question of female authorship in the *querelle des femmes*, which then becomes a real power struggle. In this, she joined Olympe de Gouges (1748–1793), a proto-feminist, author of the *Droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* ('Rights of the Woman and the Citizen') (1791) and of the play *Zamor et Mirza* (1785), in which she expressed her criticism of slavery. Her political engagement led to her execution by guillotine. In the preface to her novel *Mémoires de Madame de Valmont* (1788), she explains the gendered division of roles in society as a result of men's fear of possible female competition:

My dearest sisters, It is to you to whom I recommend all the faults that abound in my productions. May I flatter myself that you will have the generosity or the prudence to justify them; or should I not have to fear more rigour from you, more truth than the most austere criticism of our scholars,

who want to invade everything and grant us no right to please. Men maintain that we are fit only to run a household; and that women who tend to the spirit and pretentiously resign themselves to literature are unbearable beings to society: not fulfilling the utilities there, they become a bore. I find that there is some foundation in these different systems, but my feeling is that women can unite the advantages of the mind with the care of the household, even with the virtues of the soul, and the qualities of the heart; to add beauty, the sweetness of character, would be a rare model, I agree: but who can claim perfection?¹⁷

The quotation shows that the topos of the learned woman who seeks to please through her knowledge and is immediately considered pedantic was still virulent at the end of the eighteenth century. In addition, there was the concern for the care of the household, which, in an increasingly bourgeois world, fell to the woman. Thus, Olympe de Gouges appealed to female solidarity and generosity when it came to dealing with male networks and overcoming eternal presuppositions:

If I imitate you in this circumstance by revealing our defects, it is to try to correct them. We each have our own faults and qualities. Men are well organised in much the same way, but they are more consistent; they do not have this rivalry of figure, spirit, character, demeanour, costume, which divides us, and which is their amusement, their instruction on our own account. [...] O women, o women of every kind, of every state and rank, become simpler, more modest, and more generous towards one another.¹⁸

The proto-feminist denounces here a flaw that still seems to be at stake in debates on gender issues today: the lack of solidarity among women and the lack of women's networks.

Access to Knowledge

The question of the right to fame is therefore linked to that of access to knowledge. With her work *De l'influence des femmes sur la littérature française* ('The Influence of Women on French Literature'),¹⁹ the pedagogue and polygraph author Félicité de Genlis (1746–1830)²⁰ joined the long tradition of catalogues by famous women and authors who enjoyed a certain popularity in the eighteenth century:

By publishing collections that bring together, in the manner of Plutarch, a more or less large number of illustrious lives, the 'philosophers' and their epigones of the Enlightenment are, however, part of a much earlier tradition

that goes back to Antiquity and whose purpose is not to contradict the dominant sexist ideology, but on the contrary to reinforce it by the exemplification of the exception.²¹

What applies to most male authors of this kind of work,²² such as Joseph Delaporte's *Histoire littéraire des femmes françaises* ('Literary History of French Women') (1769), is not necessarily the same for the women who exploited this genre. For example, Félicité de Genlis tries to explain the apparent superiority of men in literary creation by the lack of education of women:

Men of letters have a de facto superiority over women authors that is certainly impossible to ignore or dispute: all the works of women put together are not worth a few beautiful pages by Bossuet, Pascal, a few scenes by Corneille, Racine, Molière, etc.; but it must not be concluded that the organisation of women is inferior to that of men. Genius is composed of all the qualities that are not contested in them, and which women can possess in the highest degree; imagination, sensibility, elevation of the soul. Lack of study and education having at all times kept women away from the literary career [...].²³

As an author of society theatre and books on education, her reasoning is partly explained by her interest in educational matters, having been a *gouverneur* of the children of Orléans. While Genlis noted the 'de facto superiority' of men of letters, she emphasised the qualities of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women novelists and epistolary writers, and even their superiority over their male counterparts, thus affirming the topos of the novel as a 'gendered genre' that has reigned since:

But if too few women (for lack of study and boldness) have written tragedies and poems to equal those of men, they have often surpassed them in several works of another kind. No man has left a collection of familiar letters that can be compared to the Letters of Madame de Sévigné, and those of Madame de Maintenon; the Princess of Cleves, the Peruvian Letters, the Letters of Madame Riccoboni, the last two novels of Madame Cottin are infinitely superior to all those of the French novelists, without excepting those of Marivaux, and even less so to the dull and voluminous works of the Abbé Prévôt [...].²⁴

Self-Affirmation

Among our examples, only Anne-Marie du Boccage (1710–1802) seems to be free of any apprehension about her status as an author,²⁵ and she thus

disavows Félicité de Genlis's conclusions. Originally from Rouen, Anne-Marie du Boccage made a name for herself as a translator of Pope and John Milton and as a playwright, with a tragedy (*Les Amazones* ['The Amazons'], 1749) that was performed eleven times at the Comédie-Française. She also wrote an epic poem (*La Colombiade ou la foi portée au Nouveau Monde* ['The Columbiad, or the Discovery of America'], 1756). She thus owes her fame to works that were both considered noble and virile in her time. Her letters about the journeys she undertook with her husband – to England and Holland in 1750 and to Italy from 1756 to 1758 – constitute one of the most important texts of the viaticum genre written by a woman in the eighteenth century.

In her travel letters, the author speaks little about her husband, but she likes to present herself at official receptions, when she is received by the Pope or in Italian academies. In this way, Anne-Marie du Boccage puts herself on the same scale as her male counterparts who travel and are officially received. Her choice of literary genres and her position as a woman author attest to her desire to secure a place in the European Republic of Letters. In her account of her trip to Italy, the evocation of the cultural heritage of antiquity and Italy thus serves to insert herself into the cultural memory of her time and to claim the status of an immortal author. In her detailed description of her admission to the Academy of Bologna, however, Du Boccage refers to the filiation of her predecessors and thus does not fail to live up to the female solidarity invoked by Olympe de Gouges:

In the afternoon we saw the institute where I have been graciously admitted. My glory is great, there are only three women there, the studious Laura Bassi who teaches physics and gives public lectures in Latin, the famous geometrician Agnesi, retired in a convent in Milan, and the illustrious Neapolitan princess Colombrano. The Marquise du Châtelet, as worthy of being a member as I am not, was a member of this Academy of Sciences, founded by Theodore the Younger, the oldest and richest in Europe.²⁶

The practice of inserting either translations from Greek or poems written by herself into her letters makes her travelogue a literary work that goes beyond a travel guide or chronicle. At all times, Du Boccage asserts her authority as a woman of learning who, unlike most women of her time, had a command of Greek and who spoke of her desire to achieve fame and thus immortality as an author. Implicitly, she even sought to equal the poets of antiquity, portraying herself as a genius when she writes:

The useful desire to live in memory, the most beautiful of all, is best suited to virtuous souls. The greatest men of antiquity, far from concealing their love of glory, said enthusiastically: 'Let us do something for posterity, if we want it to do something for us.' Providence allows mediocre minds to

have only moderate desires for immortality, but in distinguished geniuses the hope of success begets heroic deeds, and great deeds in turn give rise to high hopes.²⁷

With regard to Anne-Marie du Boccage's position as an author, María Isabel Corbí Saéz rightly states: '[Du Boccage] is going to compose her own self-portrait, that of a woman of letters fully entitled to her status as an author.'²⁸ Unlike many of her colleagues, Du Boccage felt no need to legitimise herself; instead, she fully displayed her status as a woman scholar.

The Woman of Letters in Italy

As Félicité de Genlis did for French women authors, Luisa Bergalli Gozzi,²⁹ a Venetian translator and author, sought to immortalise the glory of Italian women authors and poets in her anthology of women poets entitled *Componimenti poetici delle piu illustri rimatrici di ogni secolo* ('Poetical Compositions of the Most Illustrious Rhymers of All Centuries') (1726). The work is in line with the feminine Petrarchanism and the anthologies of women poets of the Renaissance, which were very successful at the time.³⁰ Luisa Bergalli Gozzi's project is partly explained by material necessities. We know that she wrote and translated primarily to earn money and to support her large family.³¹

The first volume of her anthology contains texts by 112 women poets from antiquity to 1575, while the second, divided into two parts, contains eighty-two women poets who were dead by the time the book was published and fifty-five women poets who were alive. In her preface, Bergalli Gozzi refers to the tradition of this kind of work in Italy when she mentions the Recanati anthology,³² which she, however, wished to complete:

To the reader: As known, to date only two collections of female poets have been published: one of fifty ancient female poets with the exposition by the valuable Domenichi, the other of thirty-five modern female poets, edited by our erudite Teleste Ciparissiano. We thought there was space for a third collection, which would include the authors from both collections and more famous female poets, as well as others worthy of being acknowledged; I do not know what misfortunes have made them almost unknown to the literary Republic. I wanted to take up this honourable endeavour for my double pleasure: first, because I wanted to lead the way in restoring glory and honour to the less famous; second, because I wanted to acquire some compassion for myself. It is indeed true that the name of literate is rarely attributed to us women, because of an old tradition for which women are engaged in every kind of activity except studying; consequently, if by chance some women get to stand out among the others, I believe most men

only acknowledge them out of politeness. But I do not talk with such men, because they are the majority and I do not hope to obtain anything from them, neither applause for women nor compassion for myself. Instead, I want to talk to those few men, those born to think well, as other wise men did; and do not refuse to really value and honour us women, leaving appropriate space to the first stanzas of the fourth canto of *Floridoro*, Poem by our Moderata Fonte, whom I am happy to include here.³³

She indeed expresses her concern to do justice to the great number of Italian women poets who have fallen into oblivion and to give them a rightful place in the collective memory of the Republic of Letters.

Bergalli Gozzi then quotes lines from one of the best-known poetesses of the Italian Renaissance, the Venetian Moderata Fonte (1555–1592), who was part of the *querelle des femmes* with her dialogue *Il merito delle donne* ('The Merit of Women') (1600), but who also wrote an epic poem entitled *Floridoro* ('Floridoro: A Chivalric Romance') (1581):

Women of all times were given by Nature
 Good judgement and sensibility,
 And they are not born to show less wisdom and value,
 With their study and occupation, than men.
 Why, if they have the same shape,
 If their substance is the same,
 If women and men receive similar food and talk,
 Should they differ in courage or wit?

Also, it is known and has been known for ever that
 If any woman put her mind to it,
 More than one would have excelled in battles,
 And [would have stolen] primacy and fame [of] many men.
 And so [it] happens in literature,
 And in each enterprise that men practice or debate:
 Women have had and [still] have so much success
 That there is no point in being jealous of men [...].³⁴

The verses quoted from this epic poem, in which Moderata Fonte sings of women's literary merits and their intellectual equality with the male sex, serve to support Bergalli Gozzi's claim to the glory of women poets and the existence of a female literary genealogy. Recourse to a tradition of female poetry in the past thus serves to legitimise her own activity as a woman of letters in a time and place in which female poets were becoming increasingly rare.

Moderata Fonte's verses refer to the *querelle des femmes*³⁵ as it is declared in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, which is also echoed by Laura Terracina in her

commentary on Ariosto's masterpiece.³⁶ In a way similar to the texts in the *querelle*, Bergalli Gozzi then lists examples of literate women to support her argument in favour of a feminine Italian literary tradition. However, she also refers to the modesty of her fellow women, which would have made her undertaking very difficult:

And indeed, we need not leave our Venice to find examples of valiant women who have excelled in the most rigorous studies: Cassandra Fedele, Collaltina Collalta, Lucietta Soranzo, Elena Cornaro Piscopia, and so many more that it would make too long a list: in fact, it is always by accident that the number of famous women does not correspond to that of [famous] men. But, although there are very few female poets, I cannot brag about having collected them all; because the rarity of the books in which the poems of many ancient female poets are published and the invincible modesty of many modern female poets have made this task very difficult.³⁷

Modesty, however, is not a characteristic of the Anglo-Venetian Giustinina Wynne (1737–1791). Her work, written entirely in French, includes an occasional poem written for the wedding of the daughter of her ex-lover Andrea Memmo³⁸ and a report on the stay of the Northern Princes (i.e. the sons of Catherine II of Russia) in Venice.³⁹ She also gives an original description of Angelo Quirini's Villa, the Alticchiero.⁴⁰ In her *Pièces morales et sentimentales* ('Moral and Sentimental Essays'),⁴¹ she brings together a diverse ensemble of personal reflections. She particularly develops her ideas on the position of women in society and on the relationship between the sexes. She owes her literary fame above all to her novel of manners, *Les Morlaques* ('The Morlaques'),⁴² which is one of the first anthropological novels. Inspired by Alberto Fortis (*Voyage en Dalmatie* ['Trip to Dalmatia'], 1774) and a true story, she recounts the tale of Jella and Jervaz. This story serves as the basis for a detailed description of the morals of the Morlaques, a people from the Dalmatian hinterland, to which she adds Rousseauesque reflections on the advantages of a society in the state of nature. The novel's originality derives from the author's combination of Enlightenment ideas as well as ideas that can be considered proto-feminist in the Balkans, a cultural area that received little attention from eighteenth-century thinkers.

In her *Pièces morales et sentimentales*, the author explains her vision of the female author to her niece by way of introduction. In contrast to her French counterparts, Wynne considers the activity of women authors to be in some ways 'outside of the competition'. Because of their small numbers, women authors did not need to worry about rivalry or competition and would be looked upon kindly by their colleagues. Thus, Wynne expresses her surprise that women do not take more advantage of this to attract more attention:

‘Do you write, Aunt?’ – ‘No doubt, my dear.’ – ‘Dare I ask you what you are writing about?’ – ‘I am beginning a preface.’ – ‘A preface! So you have written a book?’ – ‘No: but don’t let that surprise you.’ – ‘You will at least have a subject ready.’ ‘A subject? That is emphatic, my dear, and moreover unnecessary. Show me an author who sticks to the subject he proposes, or who fulfils it? I have none, and that is what pleases me most. The freedom of ideas is a gift of nature, in which all men participate, but which few of them know how to make the most of: even in this our sex can act more freely than the other. There is a libertinism of the mind, as well as of the heart: and a woman is permitted to indulge in the former with complete safety, because she does not excite jealousy, and thereby produces no disorder in society. A woman with a beautiful mind is regarded in the world as a will of the wisp, which shines without burning, and which can stop at any point without damaging anything. It is the competition of opinions that causes rivalries: there will never be as many women as there are men competing for a reputation. If a woman manages to write, all prejudices are in her favour: the bad is passable; the good is sublime. I am astonished by how women entirely neglect this happy kind of fame, from which their self-esteem would derive great help.’⁴³

The positions taken by the two Venetian authors require more precise contextualisation. The Venetian literary landscape of the second half of the eighteenth century was marked by a certain feeling of rivalry with the predominance of literary and philosophical productions from beyond the Alps. The novel genre was far from dominant in Italy, where, until the beginning of the twentieth century, works of poetry dominated the literary market. Women who published and actively participated in the Venetian literary market, which was still of great importance in the eighteenth century, were rare. The tendency to glorify the past, particularly Petrarchan poetry, as Bergalli Gozzi did, was a common strategy to remedy a feeling of inferiority to France felt by many Italian intellectuals of the time. Wynne’s literary production, on the contrary, is situated halfway between these two cultures. On the one hand, she was part of that Venetian intellectual space where female activity in the field of literature was rather limited to journalism or translation, as the examples of Elisabetta Caminer Turra, director of the *Giornale Enciclopedico* (‘Encyclopaedic Journal’), or Luisa Bergalli Gozzi demonstrate. On the other hand, through the choice of literary genres, namely the novel, and the language, Wynne is part of the French context. Halfway between two cultures, a figure like Giustiniana Wynne is an exception and therefore enjoys a certain amount of freedom.

The discursive formation of women’s authorship in France and Italy during the Enlightenment is thus embedded in a specific context of literary and intellectual history. As women’s participation in the literary field in the two countries did not evolve in the same way, the dominant discourse about the woman

of letters varies according to the context. However, the self-representations of women writers are always part of the *querelle des femmes*, which is about women's access to knowledge, and access to knowledge is, in turn, intrinsically linked to access to fame and power. In general, women, who were well aware of their position within the literary field, played with the topos of modesty and implemented strategies of legitimisation. Their self-representations are thus linked to questions of behavioural patterns and sociability. The recourse to a feminine literary tradition, which both Félicité de Genlis and Luisa Bergalli Gozzi claim, thus serves to reinforce authority and to justify their own literary activities. Moreover, the Venetian literary market had recognised since the Renaissance the impact of female readership and the literary production of women. In the eighteenth century, in the absence of Italian women authors, French translations and pseudo-memoirs of fictional women authors were published. A quotation from a preface to a novel by Pietro Chiari, a polygraph author of this genre of novels, is emblematic in this respect:

Today's booksellers only sell novels, and I must therefore only write novels if I want to write books that sell – write, Madame, the memoirs of your life yourself if you want to enrich the printing presses with a book that makes your fortune.⁴⁴

The self-portrait of the woman author in the eighteenth century, at least in France and Italy, was therefore not only ideological and sociological but also economic. Women, like Françoise de Graffigny and Luisa Bergalli Gozzi, were not only 'witty women of the world', as Graffigny claims, but often also professional writers who chose to become writers to earn a living.

Moreover, the difference between the auctorial situations of French and Italian women writers, namely the prudence of eighteenth-century women writers, which was particularly evident in France and which was contrasted by a certain recklessness on the part of Italian women, was in fact echoed in the historiography of national literatures that developed in the nineteenth century.

Thus, at the time of the unification of Italy (Risorgimento) around 1860, Italian critics liked to recall the tradition of women poets and authors as a sign of the modernity of the young nation:

However, Italian criticism at the end of the century shows a certain acceptance of women's writing. In fact, the discourse about female authors is now considered a part of the process of forming Italy's national identity, affirming the modernity and progress that this young nation has made in education and culture.⁴⁵

In France, on the contrary, during the same period, the opposite evolution can be observed, as Joan DeJean has pointed out:

It was at the end of the eighteenth century that a great oblivion began. A few decades were enough to erase a long cultural tradition. With a few exceptions, women who had once been considered equal to male authors ceased to exist. They did not fall into oblivion, as is often said: literary history decided to erase their names from its lists, declaring their oblivion.⁴⁶

The self-representation of women writers as a response to a dominant discourse conditioned by the marginalisation of women in the respective literary fields thus staggers between the claim to fame and its rejection, which is no doubt often strategic. Although the authors' situations were affected by their individual conditions, they all seem to have been aware of their exceptional status, which is reflected in the collective discourse and in literary historiography.

Notes

1. '[...] c'est qu'il est plus honnête à une femme d'écrire en prose qu'en vers. Les vers affichent l'auteur, la savante; la prose ne dit que la femme du monde qui a de l'esprit' (quoted in Rotraud von Kulesa, 'Françoise de Graffigny, et la genèse des Lettres d'une Péruvienne: l'écriture comme auto-réflexion', in Jonathan Mallinson (ed.), *Françoise de Graffigny, femme de lettres. Écriture et réception*, Oxford, SVEC, 2004, 12, 68).
2. For the *querelle des femmes*, see Gisela Bock and Margarete Zimmermann, 'Die Querelle des femmes in Europa. Eine begriffs- und forschungsgeschichtliche Einführung', in Bock and Zimmermann (eds.), *Die europäische Querelle des femmes. Geschlechterdebatten seit dem 15. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart and Weimar, Metzler, 1997, 9–38; Gisela Bock, *Frauen in der europäischen Geschichte vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich, Beck, 2000; Eliane Viennot, 'Revisiter la Querelle des femmes: mais de quoi parle-t-on?', in Viennot (ed.), *Revisiter la Querelle des femmes. Discours sur l'égalité/inégalité des sexes de 1750 aux lendemains à la Révolution*, Saint-Étienne, Publications de l'Université Saint-Etienne, 2012, 7–29 [online], <<http://www.elianeviennot.fr/Articles/Viennot-Querelle1-intro.pdf>>.
3. 'Enfin à partir du XVIIe siècle, la dispute [*querelle des femmes*] se concentrerait sur la question de l'éducation et de l'accès des femmes au savoir, [...]' (Viennot, 'Revisiter la Querelle', 7).
4. 'Selon le concept du "discours" de Michel Foucault, le concept de "l'auteur" peut être compris comme une construction discursive qui varie selon les époques et les groupes sociaux régnants. Le discours au sujet de la femme auteur s'inscrit ainsi dans la longue Querelle des femmes, qui repose sur "l'ordre du discours" réglant le rapport entre les sexes' ('According to Michel Foucault's concept of "discourse", the concept of the "author" can be understood as a discursive construction that varies according to the times and the social groups in power. The discourse about the woman author is thus part of the long Querelle des femmes, which is based on the "order of discourse" regulating the relationship between the sexes') (Rotraud von Kulesa, *Entre la reconnaissance et l'exclusion. La position de l'autrice dans le champ littéraire en France et en Italie à l'époque 1900*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2011, 157).
5. 'Les prises de positions des femmes de lettres au sujet de leur position dans le champ littéraire, telles qu'elles se manifestent dans leurs ouvrages littéraires, reflètent clairement de leur position dans la société qui est, somme toute, marginale. Elles parlent alors "à double voix", employant une stratégie de subversion implicite, un discours plutôt diplomatique que combatif' (Ibid., 211).
6. For a European history of women writers, see Tiziana Plebani, *Le scritte delle donne in Europa. Pratiche quotidiane e ambizioni letterarie (secoli XIII-XX)*, Rome, Carocci Editore, 2019.
7. For Françoise de Graffigny, see the entry in SIEFAR [online], <http://siefar.org/dictionnaire/fr/Fran%C3%A7oise_d%27Issembourg_d%27Happencourt>.
8. Françoise de Graffigny and Rotraud von Kulesa (ed.), *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2016.
9. Françoise de Graffigny, Alain Dainard (ed. of vol. 1–14), and English Showalter (ed. of vol. 15), *Correspondance*, Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 1985–2016.
10. 'Ah, mon Dieu, comme tu raisones faux sur le motif de mon travail ! Veux-tu l'éprouver ? Fais-moi donner par quelqu'un ce que j'espère tirer de mes deux ouvrages. Je les jete au feu de tout mon cœur sans le plus petit regret, et je fais voeu de n'écrire jamais' (Graffigny to Devaux, July 29, 1745, quoted in von Kulesa, 'Françoise de Graffigny, et la genèse', 64).

11. 'Mets-toi donc bien cela dans la tête. Et que je n'écrirai jamais pour mon plaisir ny pour la gloire, que je tâche de faire le mieux qu'il m'est possible parce qu'au pis-aller, si on sait que c'est de moi, j'ai l'amour-propre là-dessus pareil à ne pas aller dans le monde avec une robe tachée. Il ne va pas plus loin' (Graffigny to Devaux, August 13, 1745, in von Kulesa, 'Françoise de Graffigny, et la genèse', 65).
12. '[...] et une autre chose qui va te révolter, c'est qu'il est plus honnête à une femme d'écrire en prose qu'en vers. Les vers affichent l'auteur, la savante; la prose ne dit que la femme du monde qui a de l'esprit' (Graffigny to Devaux, August 15, 1751, in von Kulesa, 'Françoise de Graffigny, et la genèse', 68).
13. See also Myriam Dufour-Maître, *Les Précieuses. Naissance des femmes de lettres en France au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2008.
14. 'Par cette raison d'indépendance, l'amour de l'étude est de toutes les passions celle qui contribue le plus à notre bonheur. Dans l'amour de l'étude se trouve renfermée une passion dont une âme élevée n'est jamais entièrement exempte, celle de la gloire; il n'y a même que cette manière d'en acquérir pour la moitié du monde, et c'est cette moitié justement à qui l'éducation en ôte les moyens, et en rend le goût impossible' (Émilie du Châtelet and Robert Mauzi (ed.), *Discours sur le bonheur*, Paris, Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', 1961, 20).
15. Rotraud von Kulesa (ed.), *Démocratisation et diversification: les littératures d'éducation à l'époque des Lumières*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2015.
16. 'La gloire même peut être reprochée à une femme, parce qu'il y a contraste entre la gloire et sa destinée naturelle. L'austère vertu condamne jusqu'à la célébrité de ce qui est bien en soi, comme portant une sorte d'atteinte à la perfection de la modestie. Les hommes d'esprit, étonnés de rencontrer des rivaux parmi les femmes, ne savent les juger, ni avec la générosité d'un adversaire, ni avec l'indulgence d'un protecteur; et dans ce combat nouveau, ils ne suivent ni les lois de l'honneur, ni celles de la bonté' (Germaine de Staël, Gengembre and Goldzink (eds.), *De la littérature*, Paris, Garnier Flammarion, 1991, 339).
17. 'Mes très chères sœurs, C'est à vous à qui je recommande tous les défauts qui fourmillent mes productions. Puis-je me flatter que vous voudrez bien avoir la générosité ou la prudence de les justifier; ou n'aurais-je point à craindre de votre part plus de rigueur, plus de vérité que la critique la plus austère de nos savants, qui veulent tout envahir, et ne nous accordent le droit de plaire. Les hommes soutiennent que nous ne sommes propres exactement qu'à conduire un ménage; et que les femmes qui tendent à l'esprit, et se livrent avec prétention à la littérature, sont des êtres insupportables à la société: n'y remplissant pas les utilités elles en deviennent l'ennui. Je trouve qu'il y a quelque fondement dans ces différents systèmes, mais mon sentiment est que les femmes peuvent réunir les avantages de l'esprit avec les soins du ménage, même avec les vertus de l'âme, et les qualités du cœur; y joindre la beauté, la douceur du caractère, serait un modèle rare, j'en conviens: mais qui peut prétendre à la perfection?' (Olympe de Gouges, 'Mémoires de Madame de Valmont (1788), Préface pour les dames ou le portrait des femmes', in Raymond Trousson (ed.), *Romans de femmes*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1996, 489).
18. 'Si je vous imite dans cette circonstance, en dévoilant nos défauts, c'est pour essayer de les corriger. Chacune avons les nôtres, nos travers, et nos qualités. Les hommes sont bien organisés à peu près de même, mais ils sont plus conséquents; ils n'ont pas cette rivalité de figure, d'esprit, de caractère, de maintien, de costume, qui nous divise, et qui fait leur amusement, leur instruction sur notre propre compte. [...] O femmes, o femmes de quelque espèce, de quelque état de quelque rang que vous soyez, devenez plus simples, plus modestes, et plus généreuses les unes vers les autres' (Ibid., 490-491).
19. The full title of *De l'influence des femmes sur la littérature française* is as follows: *De l'influence des femmes sur la littérature française, comme protectrices des lettres et comme auteurs*,

ou précis de l'histoire des femmes françaises les plus célèbres ('The influence of women on French literature, as protectors of letters and as authors, or on the history of the most famous French women').

20. For Félicité de Genlis, see the entry in SIEFAR [online], <http://siefar.org/dictionnaire/fr/St%C3%A9phanie-F%C3%A9licit%C3%A9_Ducrest_de_Saint-Aubin>.
21. 'En éditant des recueils qui rassemblent, à la manière de Plutarque, un nombre plus ou moins grand de vies (d')illustres, les "philosophes" et leurs épigones du temps des Lumières d'inscrivent cependant dans une tradition bien antérieure qui remonte à l'Antiquité et qui n'a pas pour vocation de contredire l'idéologie sexiste dominante, mais bien au contraire de la conforter par l'exemplification de l'exception' (see Nicole Pellegrin, 'Le polygraphe philogyne. A propos des dictionnaires de femmes célèbres au XVIIIe siècle', in Rotraud von Kulesa (ed.), *Etudes féminines/gender studies en littérature en France et en Allemagne*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Frankreich-Zentrum, 2004, 65).
22. See the list following the article by Nicole Pellegrin, 'Le polygraphe philogyne', 76–79.
23. 'Les hommes de lettres ont sur les femmes auteurs une supériorité de fait qu'il est assurément impossible de méconnaître et de contester: tous les ouvrages de femmes rassemblés ne valent pas quelques belles pages de Bossuet, de Pascal, quelques scènes de Corneille, de Racine, de Molière, etc.; mais il n'en faut pas conclure que l'organisation des femmes soit inférieure à celle des hommes. Le génie se compose de toutes les qualités qu'on ne leur conteste pas, et qu'elles peuvent posséder au plus haut degré; l'imagination, la sensibilité, l'élévation de l'âme. Le manque d'étude et l'éducation ayant dans tous les temps écarté les femmes de la carrière littéraire, [...] (Félicité de Genlis, *De l'influence des femmes sur la littérature française, comme protectrices des lettres et comme auteurs, ou précis de l'histoire des femmes françaises les plus célèbres*, Paris, Maradan, 1811, iii).
24. 'Mais si trop peu de femmes (faute d'études et d'hardiesse) ont fait des tragédies et des poèmes pour avoir pu s'égalier aux hommes à cet égard, elles les ont souvent surpassés dans plusieurs ouvrages d'un autre genre. Aucun homme n'a laissé un recueil de lettres familières que l'on puisse comparer aux Lettres de madame de Sévigné, et à celles de Madame de Maintenon; la Princesse de Clèves, les Lettres Péruviennes, les Lettres de madame Riccoboni, les deux derniers romans de madame Cottin sont infiniment supérieurs à tous ceux des romanciers français, sans en excepter ceux de Marivaux, et moins encore les ennuyeux et volumineux ouvrages de l'abbé Prévôt [...] (Ibid., vii).
25. See Rotraud von Kulesa, 'L'expérience du temps dans les lettres de voyage du Mme du Bocage', in Anne Coudeuse and Catriona Seth (eds.), *Le temps des Mémoires de femmes*, Paris, Garnier classiques, 2014, 153–164.
26. 'L'après-midi nous vîmes l'institut où l'on m'a fait la grâce de m'admettre. Ma gloire est grande, il n'y a que trois femmes, la studieuse Laura Bassi qui y professe la physique dont elle donne des cours publics en latin, la fameuse géomètre Agnesi, retirée dans un couvent à Milan et l'illustre princesse Colombrano, napolitaine. La marquise du Châtelet, aussi digne d'en être que je le suis peu, était de cette Académie des Sciences, fondée par Théodore le Jeune, la plus ancienne, la plus riche de l'Europe' (Anne-Marie Du Bocage, *Lettres sur l'Italie, Recueil des œuvres complètes de Mme du Bocage*, vol. 3, Lyon, Périsse, 1770, 127).
27. 'Le désir utile de vivre dans la mémoire, le plus beau de tous, convient surtout aux âmes vertueuses. Les plus grands hommes de l'antiquité, loin de dissimuler leur amour pour la gloire, disaient avec enthousiasme: "Faisons quelque chose pour la postérité, si nous voulons qu'elle fasse quelque chose pour nous." La providence permet que les esprits médiocres n'aient que des désirs modérés de l'immortalité, mais dans les génies distingués, l'espoir du succès engendre les faits héroïques, et les grandes actions font naître à leur tour les hautes espérances' (Ibid., 213).

28. '[Du Boccage] va composer son autoportrait, celui d'une femme de lettres revendiquant de plein-droit son statut d'auteur' (María Isabel Corbí Saéz, 'Genre épistolaire et auto-portrait chez Anne-Marie Di Boccage: Plaidoyer pour le statut de femme auteur', in Àngeles Sirvent Ramos et al. (eds.), *Femmes auteurs du 18e siècle*, Paris, Champion, 2016, 153). See also *ibid.*, 155: 'Par ailleurs, consciente de la portée de ses lettres et désireuse de les placer aux côtés de celles de ses amis philosophes, ainsi que nous le verrons plus loin, elle insiste sur le fait que ce n'est qu'à un certain âge que l'individu a suffisamment de connaissances et d'expériences pour pouvoir faire des réflexions intéressantes sur les pays visités' ('Furthermore, aware of the significance of her letters and wishing to place them alongside those of her philosopher friends, as we shall see later, she insists that it is only at a certain age that the individual has sufficient knowledge and experience to be able to make interesting reflections on the countries visited').
29. For Luisa Bergalli Gozzi, see Rotraud von Kulesa, 'Between patronage and professional writing. The situation of Eighteenth century Women of Letters in Venice. The example of Luisa Bergalli Gozzi', in Carmen Font Paz and Nina Geerdink (eds.), *Economic Imperatives for Women's Writing in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden, Rodopi, 2018, 147–166; Rotraud von Kulesa, 'Généalogies féminines dans la poésie italienne du XVIIIe siècle. Luisa Bergalli Gozzi: *Componimenti poetici delle più illustri rimatrici di ogni secolo* (1726)', in Carolin Fischer and Brunhilde Wehinger (eds.), *Un siècle sans poésie? Le lyrisme des Lumières entre sociabilité, galanterie et savoir*, Paris, Champion, 2016, 173–184; Rotraud von Kulesa, 'Anthologies of Female Italian Authors and the Emergence of a National Identity in 19th Century Italy', in Amalia Sanz et al. (eds.), *Women Telling Nations*, Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2014, 293–310.
30. See Maria Luisa Cerrón Puga, 'Le voci delle donne e la voce al femminile. Vie del Petrarchismo in Italia e in Spagna', in Tatiana Crivelli, Giovanni Nicoli, and Maria Santi (eds.), *L'une e l'altra chiave. Figure e momenti del Petrarchismo femminile europeo*, Rome, Salerno Editrice, 2005, 103–131.
31. See von Kulesa, 'Between patronage and professional writing.'
32. Giovanni Battista Recanati, *Poesie italiane di rimatrici viventi raccolte da Teleste Ciparissiano*, Venice, per Sebastiano Coleti, 1716.
33. 'A chi legge: Due sole, siccome è noto, state fin' ora, essendo le Raccolte di Rimatrici una di Antiche al num. di 50. dal buon Domenichi esposta, l'altra di Moderne al num. di 35. data in luce, per attenzione del nostro Eruditissimo Teleste Ciparissiano, e veggendo esserci campo per una terza, che in unire le Autrici, e della prima, e della seconda, ne abbracciasse ancora tant' altre di famose, e tant' altre degne di esserlo, nè so per qual loro mala sorte poco meno, che incognite alla Repubblica letteraria; desiderio mi prese di voler io tale onorata fatica intraprendere: per due cagioni in questo appagando me stessa, l' una perchè così apro la strada, onde ritornar possa gloria, ed onore alle men conosciute, l'altra perchè mi lusingo di acquistare a me ancora un qualche compatimento. Vero è, che a motivo di vecchia costumanza, per la quale a tutt' altro, che agli studj vengono le Donne applicate, questo nome di letterata così poco ad esse noi si conforma, che se anche per avventura molte giungono a distinguersi dalle altre, il più degli Uomini, a mio credere s'intende di confessarlo per solo tratto di gentilezza; ma con questi io non parlo; che come sono la maggior parte così appunto sono quelli dai quali ne applauso per esse, nè compatimento per me non mi curo di riscuotere; ma bensì con quei pochi io parlo, che nati per pensar bene, fanno, siccome fecero tant' altri savj; e non isdegnano all'occasione di veramente pregiare, ed onorare noi altre Donne; degno loco lasciando alle prime stanze del 4. canto del Floridoro Poema della nostra Moderata Fonte, che mi piace di qui rapportare' (Luisa Bergalli Gozzi, *Componimenti poetici delle più illustri rimatrici di ogni secolo*, part 1, Venice, Antonio Mora, 1726, n.p.).

34. 'Le Donne in ogni età fur da Natura / Di gran giudizio e d'animo dotate, / Nè men atte a mostrar con studio e cura / Senno e valor degli Uomini son nate. / E perchè, se comune è la figura, / Se non son le sostanze variate, / S'hanno simile un cibo e un parlar, denno / Differente aver poi l'ardire e il senno? / Sempre s'è visto e vede, pur che alcuna / Donna v'abbia voluto il pensier porre, / Nella milizi riuscir più d'una, / E il pregio, e il grido a molti uomini torre. / E così nelle lettere, e in ciascuna / Impresa, che l'uom pratica, e discorre / Le Donne sì buon frutto han fatto e fanno, / Che gli uomini a invidiar punto non hanno [...] (ibid., n.p.).
35. The Venetian author Moderata Fonte was also part of the *querelle des femmes* with her dialogue *Il merito delle donne* ('The Merit of Women') (1600).
36. See Rotraud von Kulesa and Daria Perocco (eds.), *Laura Terracina. Discorso sopra il principio di tutti i canti d'Orlando Furioso*, Florence, Francesco Cesati Editore, 2017.
37. 'Ed in fatti senza partirci dalla nostra Venezia per esempj di valorose Donne, anche negli studj più gravi riuscite, abbiamo una Cassandra Fedele, una Collaltina Collalta, una Lucietta Soranzo, un' Elena Cornaro Piscopia, e tant' altre ancora delle quali troppo lungo sarebbe il farne racconto, essendo sempre accidente, se il numero delle Donne famose a quello degli Uomini non corrisponde. Ma quantunque nella Poesia ancora moltissime non sieno state, io però non mi vanto di tutte, tutte averle raccolte; poichè la rarità degli esemplari ne' quali vanno impresse le Rime di qualche antica, e la modestia invincibile di molte moderne questo tanto mi ha reso difficile' (Bergalli Gozzi, *Componimenti poetici*, n.p.).
38. Giustiniana Wynne, À André Memmo Chevalier de l'Étoile d'or et procureur de St Marc, à l'occasion du mariage de sa fille aînée avec Louis Mocenigo, Venice, Stamperia Giuseppe Rosa, 1787.
39. Giustiniana Wynne, *Du séjour des comtes du Nord à Venise en janvier MDCCLXXXII. Lettre de Mme la comtesse douairière des Ursins, et Rosenberg à Mr Richard Wynne, son frère à Londres*, Venice, 1782.
40. Giustiniana Wynne, *Alticchiero. Par Made J. W. C. D. R.*, Padua, Nicolò Bettinelli, 1787.
41. Giustiniana Wynne, *Pièces morales et sentimentales. Écrites à une campagne, sur les Rivages de la Brenta, dans l'État Vénitien*, London, J. Robson, New Bond Street, 1785.
42. Giustiniana Wynne, *Les Morlaques, roman historique, descriptif et poétique en prose*, Modène, Société typographique, 1788.
43. "Vous écrivez, ma tante ?" – "Sans doute, ma chère petite." – "Oserois-je vous demander le sujet qui vous occupe ?" – "Je commence une préface." – "Une préface ! vous avez donc écrit un livre ?" – "Non: mais que cela ne vous étonne point." – "Vous aurez du moins un sujet tout prêt." – "Un sujet ? C'est emphatique, ma chère, et d'ailleurs inutile. Quel est l'auteur qui se tienne à la rigueur au sujet qu'il se propose, ou qui le remplisse ? Je n'en ai aucun, et c'est ce qui me plaît le plus. La liberté des idées est un don de la nature, auquel tous les hommes participent, mais que peu parmi eux savent mettre à profit: même en cela notre sexe peut agir plus librement que l'autre. Il y a un libertinage d'esprit, comme de cœur: et il est permis à une femme de se livrer en toute sûreté au premier, parce qu'elle n'excite point de jalousie, et ne produit par là aucun désordre dans la société. Une femme bel esprit est regardé dans le monde comme un feu follet, qui brille sans brûler, et qui peut s'arrêter à tout sans rien endommager. C'est le concours des opinions qui cause les rivalités: il n'y aura jamais autant de femmes qu'il se trouve d'hommes en concurrence d'une réputation. Une femme s'arrange-t-elle pour écrire, toutes les préventions sont en sa faveur: le mauvais est passable; le bon est sublime. Je métonne comment elles négligent entièrement cet heureux genre de renommée, dont leur amour propre tirerait de grands secours" (Wynne, *Pièces morales et sentimentales*, 2-3).
44. 'I libraj oggidì vendono che romanzi, ed io non devo pertanto scrivere che soli romanzi, se scriver voglio de' libri, che sieno venduti, [...] Scrivete adunque, madama, voi stessa

scrivete la memoria della vostra vita, se volete arricchire le stampe d'un libro che vi faccia qualche fortuna' (Pietro Chiari, *La Francese in Italia o sia Memorie critiche di Madama N.N. scritte da lei medesima* (1760), Venice, Da Antonio Rosa, 1806, 15). See also Rotraud von Kulesa, 'Il gioco con l'illuminismo nel contesto veneziano: I romanzi di Pietro Chiari come esempio di polemica e gioco in letteratura', in Rotraud von Kulesa, Daria Perocco, and Sabine Meine (eds.), *Conflitti culturali a Venezia dalla prima età moderna ad oggi*, Florence, Franco Cesati, 2014, 59–74.

45. Von Kulesa, 'Anthologies of Female Italian Authors', 307.

46. 'C'est à la fin du XVIIIe siècle qu'un grand oubli a commencé. Quelques décennies ont suffi pour effacer une longue tradition culturelle. A quelques exceptions près, les femmes considérées jusqu'alors comme auteurs à part égale ont cessé d'exister. Elles ne sont pas tombées dans l'oubli, comme on le dit très souvent: l'histoire littéraire a décidé d'effacer leurs noms de ses listes, a décrété leur oubli' (Joan Dejean, 'Le grand oubli: comment les dictionnaires et l'histoire littéraire modernes ont fait disparaître le statut littéraire féminin', in Martine Reid (ed.), *Les femmes dans la critique et l'histoire littéraire*, Paris, Champion, 2011, 75).

CHAPTER 4

The Visual and Textual Portraits of Mme de Genlis: The Gouverneur, Educator, and Author of the *Mémoires*

Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval
(translated by Kristen Gehrman)

The length and diversity of not only the literary but also the educational and political career of Mme de Genlis (1786–1830) – which spanned the second half of the eighteenth century, the French Revolution, and the no less turbulent first three decades of the nineteenth century – explains the large number of images and self-portraits of the countess produced in a wide variety of contexts. Let us recall a few indispensable elements of Mme de Genlis's life.

Stéphanie Félicité Du Crest, countess of Genlis,¹ was born on January 25, 1746 in Burgundy to parents – both Nobles of the Sword, the oldest class of nobility in France – who settled in Saint-Aubin, in the Loire region of France. She received a whimsical, if somewhat neglected education, as recounted in her *Mémoires*,² that encouraged her to later develop her own self-taught culture and a tendency towards an exhaustive pedagogical and literary approach. Her father, taken prisoner by the English on his return from Santo Domingo, where he had hoped to recuperate his fortune, met the count of Genlis, who married Félicité without a dowry in 1763. Mme de Genlis was thus promoted socially and won the favour of her in-laws and the aristocracy thanks to her social, musical, and theatrical talents. Supported by her aunt (her mother's half sister), Mme de Montesson, with whom the countess would later have a falling out, she entered the Palais Royal as a companion to the duchess of Chartres in 1772. She became the mistress of the duke, the future Philippe Égalité, over whom she exerted considerable influence. She began her writing career with three comedies inspired by the works of Pierre de Marivaux, which were published anonymously in 1773 in the *Parnasse des dames* by Billardon de Sauvigny,³ under the title *Pièces d'une jeune dame* ('Plays by a Young Woman'). On the strength of this first literary essay, Mme de Genlis began, in 1776, to write her *Théâtre d'éducation*,⁴ educational plays, for her daughters, Caroline and Pulchérie, who were ten and eight years old at the time. The first plays were composed during

a stay in Spa, and shortly after her return home, she wrote *Agar dans le desert* ('Hagar in the Desert'), *Les Flacons* ('The Bottles'), and *La Colombe* ('The Dove'). The *Mémoires* provide information on the creation, the performances, and the publication of the plays, all of which represent significant steps in the theatre for women's education, born in a half-familial, half-worldly context. Following this success, she wrote other pieces in the same vein, and although she initially did not intend to publish them, she resolved to do so in 1779 to help three noble brothers.⁵ In 1779–1780, the *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes* ('Theatre for the Use of Young People') was published in four volumes.⁶ The publication was met with an immense critical response. The children's plays were praised for their simple plots, prose dialogues, and an atmosphere of *realia*, which – according to the volumes – offered a moral message adapted to the childhood world of boys and girls of all social groups. Numerous translations of *Théâtre* and other plays – into German, English, Italian, Dutch, and Polish – followed almost immediately, testifying to their tremendous popularity. The success was substantial, as evidenced by the expressions of admiration, as well as the many reprints and translations in most European languages that emerged until the middle of the following century.⁷ In 1785, Mme de Genlis published a seven-volume edition that consisted of one volume of religious plays, four volumes of educational theatre in an order slightly different from the volumes of 1779, and two volumes featuring older characters and less childlike plots with themes that were closer to the kind of moral comedy that was in vogue in the second half of the century. This success made Mme de Genlis 'the author of educational theatre', as she liked to repeat in the titles and subtitles of the works that she later composed and promoted.

In 1782, she was appointed *gouverneur*⁸ of the children of Orléans (three boys, including the future Louis-Philippe), although traditionally this role was reserved for men. She educated the three boys and their sister, Adélaïde, with passion for eight years and wrote numerous pedagogical works idealising her methods. Mme de Genlis advocated a rigorous, but gradual, intellectual education that is both lively and moral: a mixture of encyclopaedic teaching; artistic, practical, and playful learning; an openness to foreign languages; and physical exercise – all under constant supervision. Two pseudo-novels explain this programme and these practices: *Adèle et Théodore* ('Adèle and Théodore'),⁹ an epistolary novel featuring an ideal mother, Mme d'Almane, and her two children (including Adèle, a transparent first name for Adélaïde) and *Les Veillées du château* ('Evenings at the Château'), with a story based on Mme de Clémire and her three children, named Caroline, Pulchérie (after her own daughters), and César (after her nephew). The text that she composed for Louis-Philippe's first communion, *La Religion considérée comme l'unique base du bonheur et de la vraie philosophie* ('Religion as the Unique Foundation of Happiness and the True Philosophy'), published in 1787, created hostilities with philosophers (including Voltaire, d'Alembert, Fontenelle, Marmontel, La Harpe,

and Condorcet). Mme de Genlis became part of an apologetic struggle as she claimed to rationally demonstrate the existence of God and compared philosophical precepts with those of the Old and New Testament, ultimately concluding that philosophers could be eliminated from the intellectual landscape.¹⁰

Her various educational, religious, and Orleanist viewpoints quickly placed her in an untenable situation during the French Revolution. Close to Orleanist circles at the beginning of the Revolution, she advocated a certain number of reforms, as shown in her various *Discours* from 1790 to 1791.¹¹ In 1791, still at Onfroy, she presented and justified her mission to the Orléans children in the *Leçons d'une gouvernante* ('Lessons of a Governess').¹² During this period, she pushed the young Louis-Philippe towards political action, which she later denied.¹³ She was subsequently forced to leave the country, and during this period, she composed novels inspired by current events (*Les Petits émigrés ou Correspondance de quelques enfants*),¹⁴ works that were historical but also linked to the present (*Les Chevaliers du cygnet*),¹⁵ works that mixed morals and Gothic influence (*Les Mères rivales ou la calomnie cygne*),¹⁶ texts related to her own situation,¹⁷ and practical manuals,¹⁸ some of which were based on food.

When she returned to France in 1800, her literary activity intensified further, because, in addition to her propensity for polygraphy, Mme de Genlis relied on her writing to earn a living, and she sought after and obtained various pensions. Rather than quoting all her works,¹⁹ I will mention only the most outstanding ones here. For four years, Mme de Genlis worked for the *Mercur*e and the *Bibliothèque des romans* ('Library of Novels'), for which she wrote short stories, including *Mademoiselle de Clermont* ('Miss de Clermont'),²⁰ a historical short story that was a tremendous success. She continued in an educational vein and cultivated other literary genres, mixing fiction, history, and moralism. In 1802, the First Consul offered her a pension and a flat at the Arsenal in Paris, where she reopened a salon. The historical novel allowed her to combine fiction, history, and nostalgia for the Ancien Régime, as she did in one of her great successes, *La Duchesse de La Vallière* ('The Duchess of La Vallière'),²¹ followed by other novels that were received with varying degrees of critical acclaim.²² In 1804, she began dabbling in the autobiographical genre with two texts, *Les Souvenirs de Félicie L****²³ and *Suite des souvenirs de Félicie L**** ('Continuation of the Memories of Félicie L***').²⁴

Rallying in favour of the Restoration, she pursued a literary career marked by moral and religious conservatism. She also began publishing ephemeral newspapers for young people,²⁵ following the development of a children's press at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In addition, she became the editor of authors she loved and also of those she distrusted. After La Bruyère,²⁶ she edited, abridged, annotated, and criticised Rousseau's *L'Émile*²⁷ and Voltaire's *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* ('The Century of Louis XIV').²⁸ In 1825, she published her *Mémoires inédits* ('Unpublished Memoirs'), which are not only full of

information, biographical and autobiographical details, and reflections on the various political regimes she lived through, they also provide explanations and illuminating reconstructions of her life.

This is undoubtedly why Mme de Genlis, who had adroitly exercised the art of promotional self-portraits since her earliest works, allowed herself to be painted or commissioned portraits and scenes that embody her multiple activities and facets as an aristocrat, *gouverneur*, intimate member of the Orléans family, writer, and witness of her time, all in accordance with the overall constructed and reconstructed image that she intended to leave behind through her works and particularly through her *Mémoires*.

My aim is thus to compare the portraits of Mme de Genlis, which were certainly painted by others but were also generally controlled and sometimes commissioned and commented on in the *Mémoires*. How do these images relate to the successive viewpoints expressed in the *Mémoires*? Although it would be ideal to compare and contrast the images with the memorial texts, prefaces, and responses to critics, I will limit myself here to the possible interactions between the painted portraits and the *Mémoires*. This typology is based on a survey of the references to real portraits, engravings and miniatures that can be found in the *Mémoires*. Like the widely circulated photos of today, they demonstrate a complex circuit of sociability and publicity. Consider, for example, the prints taken from portraits (sometimes with new framing) that serve as simple likenesses or to illustrate an edition. This is evidenced by publisher Ladvocat's warning at the beginning of volume 1:

The two portraits, one of which was to adorn the first and the other the eighth volume of the *Mémoires*, will be published with the last issue. It was impossible to publish them in the desired order, being executed by our first artists.²⁹

After considering the various contexts in which the painted portrait appears in the *Mémoires* in a general sense, I will focus on the pictorial and engraved representations of Mme de Genlis.

Some Functions of the Portraits in the *Mémoires* of Mme de Genlis

The primary function of the portrait is to offer a kind of substitution that triggers the memory: a remedy for a transitory absence and, of course, death. In the context of travel or emigration, it is a sign of friendship and continuity of the bond. Thus, Mme de Genlis confided that, when she was at the home of her son-in-law, M. de Valence, she often received visitors from abroad – including two Englishwomen, Clorinde and Georgina Byrne, who told her about their friends from Langolen, Eléonore Buttler and Miss Ponsonby:

I learned with pleasure that they had not forgotten me; they had always had in their salon a small portrait in miniature of mademoiselle d'Orléans, which I gave them, as well as my profile in miniature, which my niece Henriette sacrificed to them [...].³⁰

At the time of her son's death, Mme de Genlis had a twelve-hour-long vision of the dead child, which she described to her relatives. Based on this description, her husband had a painting made to announce the boy's death: 'According to a very similar portrait that M. de Genlis had of him, this miniature had been made on the account of my vision. I have always carried this painting with me, and I still have it.'³¹

The portrait is also a sign of friendship and gallantry, even social recognition. Receiving the portrait of a personality (e.g. a prince, princess, sovereign, or ruler) or, even better, exchanging portraits (i.e. the most famous personality sends a portrait and asks for one in return) is a form of homage and a sign of limited equivalence when power is interested in talent. The *Mémoires* of Mme de Genlis offer an example of this through the Order of Perseverance, a sort of society founded by the countess herself. Between chivalry, academic customs, and social receptions, this society consisted of a small group of members admitted by vote, only after 'spiritual' tests, with rules, a uniform, medals, and mottos. Created by the young woman who was not yet known as an author but who received Polish ladies visiting France, the Order gave rise to exchanges between the king of Poland and Mme de Genlis. First, the king sent her his portrait, and then Mme de Genlis sent him hers in return.³² This example illustrates that the exchange of portraits was based on relational, friendly, or intellectual proximity, as in another episode of friendly homage in which Mme de Genlis said that, after she published work on Mme de Maintenon,³³ she received a portrait of the latter from an admirer, Mr Crawford, 'who had a superb collection of original portraits of famous people.' She would later have this portrait to sell to the duchess of Orléans during the Restoration for financial reasons.³⁴

But the portrait can also have a more playful, sometimes even parodic function in the context of these mystifications and parties among aristocrats that seem, in the eyes of Didier Masseau, to characterise a certain sociability of the nobility in the second half of the eighteenth century.³⁵ The episode of the ridiculous portrait is part of a series of jokes conceived by Mme de Genlis and her husband about a house painter from Saint-Quentin, Tirmane, who had originally come to the Genlis castle to build sets for a *théâtre de société* (amateur theatre).³⁶ The unfortunate man was asked to create a painting 'which represented the most ridiculous figure of a woman playing the harp backwards, that is, with the harp resting on her left shoulder.'³⁷ M. de Genlis mischievously declared that it was a portrait of his wife, and after that, Tirmane wanted to paint Mme de Genlis 'regularly', with 'dishevelled hair', because he was struck by its 'chestnut' colour. The joke continues during the pose:

I promised to pose for him the next day and prepared myself for the session as best I could; I put on a lot of rouge, I divided my hair into several smooth, powderless strands, which I twisted around my neck, my arms, my waist, and I covered my head with pearls, sequins and flowers, and dressed in all this paraphernalia I offered myself to M. Tirmane's brushes. He was dazzled and enraptured by my beauty, all the more so as I made an imperceptible mouth by tightening my lips, and I opened my eyes with all my strength to make them wider. This is how he painted my portrait, that is to say like a Gorgon, because those long strands of brown hair looked exactly like snakes.³⁸

In Mme de Genlis's memoirs, the portrait's functional diversity and the way it is described in material terms informs about the portrait's place and the extent to which an image can be as psychological as it is social or intellectual. This observation leads me to examine the portraits of Mme de Genlis to identify the types of representations that were valued and to cross-reference their functionalities. Two main periods stand out: before and after the Revolution. On the whole, the portraits are quite numerous, and they are generally authenticated, though two are *presumed* to depict Mme de Genlis (the clues being the youthful beauty and the presence of a harp). Finally, some are commented on in the *Mémoires*.



Fig. 1. Marie-Victoire Lemoine, *Portrait Identified as Mme de Genlis* (1781). Oil on canvas. © Wikimedia Commons. (Plate 11, p. 361)

Portraits of a Young Woman, Portrait of a Close Friend of the Orléans Family

The first portraits depict a young woman from the eighteenth century, a representative of the Ancien Régime, as in the two presumed portraits of Mme de Genlis: one painted by Marie-Victoire Lemoine³⁹ in 1781, *Portrait présumé de Madame de Genlis* ('Portrait presumed to be Madame de Genlis') (Fig. 1), and the other attributed to François Guérin⁴⁰ of which the only evidence is the presence of the harp.

This is also the case for the two contemporary youth portraits, both kept at the Château de Chantilly, which were inherited from Queen Marie-Amélie (wife of Louis-Philippe) in 1866 upon her death, and, in the case of the second one, appear in the Twickenham inventory.⁴¹ The first is an oval pastel by an unknown painter, depicting the young woman in a *robe de gaulle* decorated with a garland of flowers (Fig. 2). The second is an anonymous ivory miniature showing her wearing a Marie-Antoinette-style headdress and playing the harp (Fig. 3).

In addition to these portraits, both of which were painted around the same time, there are those that were produced later but still depict Mme de Genlis as a young woman. These portraits are an assault on historicism in that they perpetuate, in the mid nineteenth century, a form of permanence of the image and signs of identification found in the engraving with a facsimile of her



Fig. 2. Anonymous, *Portrait de Stéphanie Félicité Ducrest, Comtesse de Genlis* (eighteenth century). Pastel. © Chantilly, Musée Condé. (Plate 12, p. 361)



Fig. 3. Anonymous, *Portrait of Stéphanie Félicité Ducrest de Saint-Aubin, Comtesse de Genlis Playing the Harp*. Ivory. © Chantilly, Musée Condé. (Plate 13, p. 361)

signature and the harp. Another engraved portrait, after Achille Devéria, is by Marie-Gabrielle Coignet, an engraver of portraits, vignettes, and natural history scenes, who, according to the Joconde database, was born in Paris in 1793 and was a pupil of Nageon and Massard Sr.⁴² Another engraving, a variation of the second, is a typical example of diffusion via publishing channels, because it illustrates volume eight of the *Mémoires*, published in 1826. It is by Henry Meyer (1780–1847), an English portrait painter, more known as a stipple and mezzotint engraver, and demonstrates, once again, just how famous Mme de Genlis was and how she was read throughout Europe and especially across the English Channel.



Fig. 4. Amédée Faure, after an anonymous painting of 1787, *The Duchess of Orléans with Her Children at Spa* (1848). Oil on canvas. © Chantilly, Musée Condé. (Plate 14, p. 362)

A larger series depicts Mme de Genlis in the Orléans family and attests to a carefully constructed image centred around three axes (all of which were chronologically simultaneous): as a family friend, as a *gouverneur*, and as an author. *Madame la duchesse d'Orléans aux eaux de Spa* ('Madame the Duchess of Orléans in the Waters of Spa') is the best known: it is a copy by Amédée Faure, painter at the court of the July Monarchy,⁴³ of the painting created in 1787 by a painter and friend of Mme de Genlis, David-Sylvestre Mirys (1742–1810) (Fig. 4). The journey and the stay are well known, mostly thanks to the scientific edition by Isabelle Havelange on the *Journals on Travel and Education: Spa, Summer 1787 / Louis-Philippe d'Orléans and Charles Gardeur-Lebrun*,⁴⁴ which considers the two manuscripts of the travel diaries written during the summer of 1787 by Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, who was fourteen years old at the time, and one of his deputy governors, Charles Gardeur-Lebrun. Both texts relate the journey and the stay in Spa, combining the medical pretext (the health of the duchess of Orléans) and the political ambitions of the duke of Orléans to eventually obtain a 'crown of Brabant'. The aim was to put the Orléans family in the limelight both politically and socially, as demonstrated on the way to Lille and on the return journey to Givy, where the duke of Chartres made his first military commands. The trip was crowned by a festive stay in Sillery, a property inherited by M. de Genlis, which underscores the favour the couple enjoyed at the time. During these journeys and this stay, which were mostly incognito, everything was a pretext for dramatisation and promotion, as seen in the Sauvenière celebration, a bucolic *rousseauiste* tribute to the waters that healed the duchess of Orléans, immortalised by a monument and a painting by Mirys, which was later reproduced many times. These portraits in action ensured the promotion of both the Orléans family and Mme de Genlis. The celebration (reported in the journals of Louis-Philippe d'Orléans and Charles-Louis Gardeur) is the subject of a long passage in the *Mémoires*.⁴⁵ After the idea ('Together with my pupils, I gave a very nice party to the duchess of Orléans in Spa'),⁴⁶ there follows a long passage on the preparations and the boys' manual labour (linked to Mme de Genlis's educational principles on physical activity). The *Mémoires* detail the scenography of the celebration: a clear path, the surroundings entirely decorated with 'garlands of heather',⁴⁷ 'the altar of Recognition in white marble, the shape of which was designed by M. de Myris [*sic*]'⁴⁸ with this inscription:

The waters of the Sauvenière having restored the health of the duchess of Orléans, her children wanted to embellish the fountain's surroundings, and they traced the roads and cleared this wood themselves with more ardour and assiduity than the workers under their command.⁴⁹

As the painting shows and as the *Mémoires* recount, 'the loveliest people in Spa'⁵⁰ were invited at one o'clock in the afternoon with a 'dress code' (white clothes, white feathers, bouquets, heather flower scarves, and purple ribbons)

and staging (the men at the entrance, the women strolling or sitting to the music of the Wauxhall, the four children still holding rakes at the start of the promenade). The apotheosis takes place in front of the altar, a quarter of an hour later, with the children, Henriette the niece, and Paméla, an adopted daughter of Mme de Genlis, whose attitudes are so precisely described in the memoirs (notably that of the duke of Chartres, who seems to be finishing the engraving of the inscription on the altar) that one wonders if the written memory is not based on the painting...

Mme de Genlis was not the only one to reconstruct an image. This engraving of the Orléans family shows the family (children, parents, and *gouverneur*) posing together, eliminating the amorous rivalry between the two women (Mme de Genlis having been the mistress of the duke of Orléans), as well as their maternal rivalry (they had been arguing about the children's education), as reflected in writings such as *Leçons d'une gouvernante à ses élèves* ('Lessons of a Governess to her Pupils')⁵¹ or a certain number of passages from the *Mémoires* (Fig. 5).

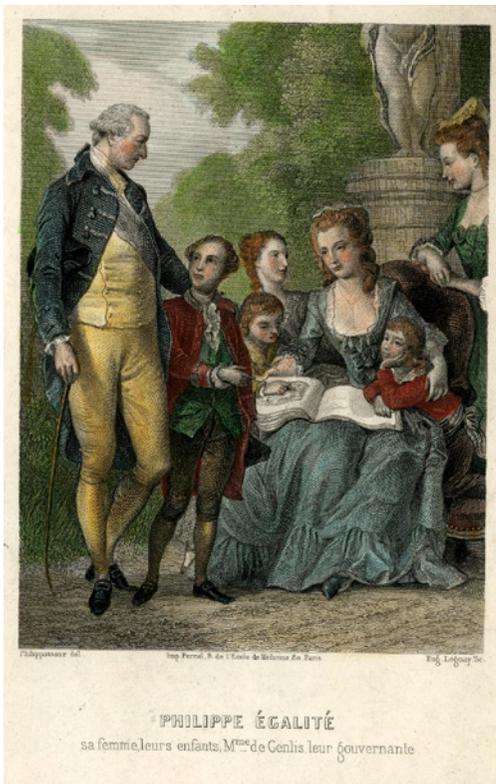


Fig. 5. E. Leguay, after Henri Félix Philippoteaux, *Philippe Égalité, His Wife and Their Children*. Engraving. Musée Louis-Philippe, château d'Eu. (Plate 15, p. 363)



Fig. 6. Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse, after Jean Antoine Théodore Giroust, *The Harp Lesson* (1743). Oil on canvas. © Collections des musées de France, Joconde. (Plate 16, p. 364)

The function of *gouverneur* is illustrated by the famous harp lesson by Jean Antoine Théodore Giroust, known as Antoine Giroust,⁵² a familiar face in the salon of Bellechasse, the official painter of the Orléans (along with Mirys and David), including during the Revolution of 1791. Giroust depicts Mme de Genlis, Adélaïde, and Paméla in front of a statue of Minerva (now in Dallas) in the Château de Saint-Leu. According to Gabriel de Broglie,⁵³ the painting was exhibited in the Salon of the Louvre in 1791, and the three women, in red hats, went there to see it.⁵⁴ The painting was copied by Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse (1784–1844), who received state commissions from Louis XVIII for his apartments, then from Louis-Philippe for the Museum of French History at Versailles, and who also decorated several ceilings in the Louvre Palace in 1822 (Fig. 6). The painting *Madame de Genlis et les enfants du duc d'Orléans* ('Madame de Genlis and the Children of the Duke of Orléans')⁵⁵ is currently in storage at the Musée de la Musique de la Philharmonie de Paris.

It was not until the period when the *Théâtre d'éducation* was published for the benefit of the Queissat brothers in 1779–1780⁵⁶ that Mme de Genlis was presented as an author, as explained in the *Mémoires*, which emphasised that her entry into literature was initially limited to nursery education in accordance with common views at the time on women's auctorial modesty:

It is true that there were quite a number of copies in vellum paper, and there was in this volume a very lovely vignette, perfectly engraved, representing my motto to my children, because I only wrote for their education during the night from midnight until three or four in the morning. This motto had as its body a lamp placed on a desk next to a writing desk, and as its soul these words: ‘To illuminate, I consume myself.’⁵⁷

The motto is not exactly as described, and the openly gallant and laudatory quatrain composed by Edme-Louis Billardon de Sauvigny is not mentioned at this point in the memoirs, no doubt due to its too encomiastic and dated character (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Jacques-Louis Copia, after Silvestre David Mirys, *Portrait of Stéphanie Félicité, Comtesse de Genlis at Her Desk* (1789). Engraving. © Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

Portraits of the Revolutionary Period and Portraits of the Memorialist

Two phases are to be distinguished in this last period: the revolutionary period with three portraits, some of which will be used to illustrate the *Mémoires*, and a last period, with a portrait commissioned and commented on by Mme de Genlis, also distributed in various media. The portrait by Adélaïde Labille-Guiard⁵⁸ dates from 1790. The painter exhibited for the first time in 1774 at the

Salon of the *Académie* or 'guild' of Saint-Luc (which closed its doors in 1777) (Fig. 8). Labille-Guiard was a renowned pastellist and painter and a member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, received at the same time as Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun in 1783. She painted Mesdames and, during the Revolution, she passed through the Orléans family circle, which perhaps explains this portrait of Mme de Genlis, though not a word is said about it in the *Mémoires*. The next portrait is by George Romney, a contemporary of Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough, and who made his third trip to France in 1791 (Fig. 9). He was then accompanied by William Hayley and both were received by Mme de Genlis, who took them to the convent of Bellechasse and to Le Raincy. Romney visited the Galerie d'Orléans again, under the guidance of Louis-Philippe, who was eighteen years old at the time, and painted Mme de Genlis during her trip to England: 'He was very pleased with the salon of Mme de Genlis, where so many beautiful women gathered, and he did not fail to paint the portrait of the famous Frenchwoman when she came to London a little later';⁵⁹ probably in the autumn of 1791. The last portrait with the unravelled turban was engraved several times, though, at the present stage of research, it is not possible to explain why this is the case.

It was Sophie Chéradame (née Bertaud, 1793–1824),⁶⁰ a history and genre painter, portrait painter, pupil of David, and a painter in the Russian court after the Revolution, who provided the example of a close correlation (as in the scene in Spa) between painting and *Mémoires* (Fig. 10). Let us recall the



Fig. 8. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, *Portrait of Madame de Genlis* (1790). Oil on canvas. © Los Angeles County Museum. (Plate 17, p. 365)



Fig. 9. George Romney, *Portrait of Madame de Genlis* (ca. 1792). Oil on canvas. © Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. (Plate 18, p. 366)



Fig. 10. Sophie Chéradame, née Bertaud, *Portrait of Mme de Genlis* (1821). Oil on canvas. © Musée de l'Histoire de France (Versailles). (Plate 19, p. 367)

context: Mme de Genlis, in the 1810s, was living and holding a salon in the home of her son-in-law, M. de Valence, who was ill. Her literary activity did not waver: she criticised Suard, planned to rewrite the *Encyclopédie*, and was working on a book countering the ideas set out in the *Considérations sur les mœurs* ('Considerations on Mores') by Duclos and on a work on Raynal, according to her memoirs. Nor did her social activity wane: she saw M. and Mme de Chastenay and their daughter Victorine again, as well as Paméla, with whom she was in conflict. The portrait is a synthesis of the first portraits (with the harp) and the vignette of the first published writings, with the significant addition of the Gospel.

The *Mémoires* present it as follows:

I had my portrait painted in oil and in large format by madame Chéradame, who has a very fine talent; I am depicted up to the knees writing during the night, with a light about to go out beside me, and stopping, seeing the day appear; this was an idea of Paméla's; I had a vase of flowers placed on the table, beside the light, and finally a single book, on the back of which this word is written: *Gospel*; because indeed the morality of all my works has always been based on the sacred precepts of this divine book. Behind me

there is a harp in the shadows. I was very reluctant to be painted at my age, but M. de Valence wanted my portrait, and I had it made for him, with all the more pleasure, because I wanted to give him something pleasing before leaving his house.⁶¹

At the end of an investigation that has yet to be enriched by other paintings, miniatures, engravings, and medals,⁶² we can see that Mme de Genlis has a thorough knowledge of the weight of the images and the symbolic viewpoints that they transmit to contemporaries and posterity. From her earliest works, through a gallery of self-portraits marked by thinly disguised self-praise, she allowed herself to be painted and commissioned portraits and scenes that embody her multiple activities and facets as an aristocrat, *gouverneur*, intimate member of the Orléans family, writer, and witness of her time, in accordance with the overall constructed and reconstructed image that she intends to leave behind as a legacy.⁶³ These images, occasionally commented on in the *Mémoires* of 1825, with portraits or genre scenes and accompanying texts, like the engravings used in the editions and re-editions of her works, sketch a significant network uniting authors, women and men painters, engravers, and miniaturists in a period that saw the emotional, social, and commercial uses of images multiply.

Notes

1. According to the international form of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
2. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Mémoires inédits de madame la comtesse de Genlis sur le dix-huitième siècle et la Révolution française depuis 1756 jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris, Ladvocat, 1825.
3. The full title of the *Parnasse des dames* by Billardon de Sauvigny, Edme-Louis (1736?–1812), is as follows: *Parnasse des dames ou choix de pièces uniques de quelques femmes célèbres en littérature* ('Parnassus or Selected Literature by Famous Women Writers') (Paris, Ruault, 1773).
4. Without getting into problems of terminology, which are beyond the scope of this paper, let us consider that the *théâtre d'éducation* functions as a sort of ancestor to today's 'young audience' theatre, a moral theatre whose target audience and heroes are the children of the eighteenth century who were passionate about education.
5. The money from publication helped the Queissat brothers to pay a fine to a trader whom one of them had injured after an altercation; see Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 73–80.
6. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes*, Paris, M. Lambert et F.-J. Baudouin, 1779–1780.
7. On translations and praise, see, among others, Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval, *Bibliographie des Écrivains français: Madame de Genlis*, Paris-Rome, collection Bibliothèque bibliographique, édition Memini, diffusion CNRS, 1996.
8. *Gouverneur* is the French masculine form for governess; the feminine form would be *gouvernante*.
9. The full title of *Adèle et Théodore* is as follows: *Adèle et Théodore ou Lettres sur l'éducation contenant tous les principes relatifs aux trois plans d'éducation des princes, des jeunes personnes et des hommes* ('Adèle and Théodore, or Letters on Education Containing All Principles Relative to Three Plans of Education for Princes, Young People, and Men') (Paris, M. Lambert et F.-J. Baudouin, 1782).
10. Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval, 'Mme de Genlis ou le basculement: *La Religion considérée comme l'unique base du bonheur et de la véritable philosophie* (1787)', forthcoming.
11. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Discours sur l'éducation de M. le Dauphin et sur l'adoption par Mme de Brulart, ci-devant Mme de Sillery*, Paris, Onfroy, 1790; *Discours sur la suppression des couvents de religieuses et sur l'éducation publique des femmes*, Paris, Onfroy, 1790; *Discours sur l'éducation publique du peuple*, Paris, Onfroy, 1791; *Discours sur le luxe et l'hospitalité, considérés sous leur rapport avec les mœurs et l'éducation nationale*, Paris, Onfroy, 1791.
12. The full title of *Leçons d'une gouvernante* is as follows: *Leçons d'une gouvernante à ses élèves ou fragments d'un journal qui a été fait pour l'éducation des enfants de monsieur d'Orléans par madame de Sillery-Brulart* ('Lessons of a Governess to Her Students or Extracts from a Journal That Was Made for the Education of the Children of the Monsieur d'Orléans by Madame de Sillery-Brulart') (Paris, Onfroy, 1791).
13. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Précis sur la conduite de Mme de Genlis, depuis la Révolution, suivi d'une lettre à M. de Chartres et de réflexions sur la critique*, Hamburg, B. G. Hoffman, 1796 (republished in 1828 under the title *Etrennes politiques pour 1828; Lettre au duc d'Orléans par Mme la comtesse de Genlis, son institutrice, ou Profession de foi politique en harmonie avec ses actions depuis plus de trente ans en réponse aux pamphlets passés, présents et futurs*, Paris, E. Babeuf).

14. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Les Petits émigrés ou Correspondance de quelques enfants* ('The Little Emigrants or Correspondence of a Few Children'), Paris, Onfroy, 1798.
15. The full title of *Les Chevaliers du cygne* is as follows: *Les Chevaliers du cygne ou la cour de Charlemagne, contes pour servir de suite aux Veillées du château et dont tous les traits qui peuvent faire allusion à la Révolution française sont tirés de l'histoire* ('The Swan Knights or Charlemagne's Court, Tales to Follow Evenings at the Chateau, in Which All the Features That Might Allude to the French Revolution Are Taken from the Story') (Paris, Lemierre, 1795).
16. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Les Mères rivales ou la calomnie* ('The Rival Mothers or Slander'), Berlin, F. T. de La Garde, 1800.
17. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Epître à l'asile que j'aurai, suivie de deux fables, du Chant d'une jeune sauvage, de l'Epître à Henriette Sercey et des réflexions d'un ami des talents et des arts*, Hamburg, P. F. Fauche, 1796.
18. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Manuel du voyageur ou Recueil de dialogues, de lettres, etc. suivi d'un itinéraire raisonné à l'usage des Français en Allemagne et des Allemands en France avec la traduction allemande par S.H. Catel*, Berlin, F. T. de Lagarde, 1799, and Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Le Voyageur par Mme de Genlis, ouvrage utile à la jeunesse et aux étrangers*, Berlin, J. F. de La Garde, 1800.
19. The SIEFAR leaflet lists them in chronological order. See <http://siefar.org/dictionnaire/fr/Stéphanie-Félicité_Ducrest_de_Saint-Aubin>.
20. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Mademoiselle de Clermont*, Paris, Maradan 1802.
21. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *La Duchesse de La Vallière*, Paris, Maradan, 1804. The novel is amplified by the *Réflexions sur la miséricorde de Dieu par Mme de La Vallière, suivies de quelques lettres de la même et précédées de sa vie pénitente écrite par Mme de Genlis*, Paris, Maradan, 1804.
22. Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval, 'La presse contemporaine et l'œuvre romanesque de madame de Genlis', in Malcolm Cook and Annie Jourdan (eds), *Journalisme et fiction au 18e siècle*, Bern and New York, Peter Lang, 1999, 197–212.
23. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Les Souvenirs de Félicie L****, Paris, Maradan, 1804.
24. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Suite des souvenirs de Félicie L****, Paris, Maradan, 1807.
25. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *La Feuille du monde ou le Journal imaginaire*, Paris, Alexis Aymery, 1813; *Les Dimanches, petit journal récréatif à l'usage de la jeunesse des deux sexes*, Paris, Alexis Aymery, 1815; *Les Dimanches, Journal de la jeunesse*, Paris, Alexis Aymery, 1816; *Journal de la jeunesse ci-devant Des Dimanches rédigé par la comtesse de Genlis*, Paris, Au bureau rue de l'Université, 1816.
26. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Les Caractères de La Bruyère, avec de nouvelles notes critiques, précédées d'une notice historique sur La Bruyère, pour servir à l'éducation de la jeunesse*, Paris, Impr. d'Imbert et A. Eymery, 1812.
27. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Emile ou de l'Education par J.-J. Rousseau. Nouvelle édition à l'usage de la jeunesse avec des retranchements, des notes et une préface*, Paris, chez l'éditeur des œuvres de madame de Genlis, 1820.
28. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV par Voltaire, nouvelle édition avec des retranchements, des notes et une préface [...]*, Paris, chez l'éditeur des œuvres de madame de Genlis, 1820.
29. 'Les deux portraits, dont l'un devait orner le premier et l'autre le huitième volume des *Mémoires*, paraîtront avec la dernière livraison. Il était impossible de les faire paraître dans l'ordre désiré, étant exécutés par nos premiers artistes' (Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, n.p.).

30. 'J'appris avec plaisir qu'elles ne m'avaient point oubliée; elles avaient toujours dans leur salon un petit portrait en miniature de mademoiselle d'Orléans, que je leur donnai, et mon profil en miniature aussi, dont ma nièce Henriette leur fit le sacrifice [...]' (Ibid., vol. 5, 215).
31. 'D'après un portrait fort ressemblant que M. de Genlis avait de lui, on avait fait faire cette miniature sur le récit de ma vision. J'ai toujours porté sur moi ce tableau, et je l'ai encore' (Ibid., vol. 2, 295). A note states that Mme de Genlis gave it to her daughter.
32. Ibid., vol. 2, 362.
33. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Madame de Maintenon pour servir de suite à l'histoire de Mlle de La Vallière*, Paris, Maradan, 1806.
34. 'qui avait une superbe collection de portraits originaux de personnages célèbres' (Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. 7, 212–213).
35. Didier Masseau, *Fêtes et folies en France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, CNRS éditions, 2018.
36. Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 190 sq.
37. 'qui représentait la plus ridicule figure de femme jouant de la harpe à rebours, c'est-à-dire ayant la harpe posée sur l'épaule gauche'.
38. 'régulièrement, cheveux épars, châtaine, 'Je promis de lui donner une séance le lendemain, et m'y préparai de mon mieux; je mis un pied de rouge très foncé, je fis partager mes cheveux en plusieurs mèches lisses, sans poudre, j'en entortillai autour de mon cou, de mes bras, de ma taille, j'établis sur ma tête une profusion de perles, de clinquant et de fleurs et, dans cet attirail je m'offris aux pinceaux de M. Tirmane, qui fut ébloui et saisi de ma beauté, d'autant plus que je faisais une bouche imperceptible en la resserrant, et que j'ouvrais les yeux de toute ma force pour les faire plus grands. C'est ainsi qu'il fit mon portrait, c'est-à-dire, une figure de Gorgone, car ces longues mèches de cheveux bruns ressemblaient parfaitement à des serpents' (ibid., vol. 1, 191).
39. Marie-Victoire Lemoine (1754–1820), according to the SIEFAR records, probably studied with the academician François Ménageot, most likely in the early 1770s, when he lived and worked in a house owned by the art dealer J.-B. Lebrun, husband of Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, whose studio was also in the house. An association with Vigée-Lebrun would explain one of Lemoine's best-known paintings, his *Atelier d'une femme peintre* ('Studio of a Female Painter') (Salon 1796). Most of his identified works are portraits of women and children, including one of *Marie Thérèse Louise de Savoie-Carignan, princesse de Lamballe* (oil on canvas, oval, env. 57 x 45 cm, signed and dated), current location unknown; and, in 1783, *Portrait présumé de Mademoiselle de Chartres et sa compagne anglaise, Pamela* ('Portrait Presumed to Be Mademoiselle de Chartres and Her English Companion Pamela') (oil on canvas, 115,5 x 89,5 cm, signed and dated), current location unknown.
40. François Guérin (1731?–1811?), according to his BnF entry, is less well known. A painter of the French school, he was admitted to the Academy in 1765 and was active in Paris and Versailles until 1791. He worked for Mme de Pompadour and should not be confused with the engraver of the same name, François Guérin (1763–1791).
41. Twickenham Inventory (1853–1872), n° 181, 35. It is worth remembering that Louis-Philippe, the duke of Orléans, rented a house in this place when he was in exile, which is now a gallery called Orleans House.
42. Marie-Gabrielle Coignet engraved after works by Devéria (such as the *Portrait de M. Philibert bishop of Grenoble*), plates by Buffon and Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, among others, and worked for the publishing houses Dabos, Ladvoat and Dufey, Demancy.
43. A. Faure, who received commissions from Louis-Philippe for the historical museum of Versailles in the 1840s, painted a portrait of the duke of Beaujolais. Some of his paintings are in the Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

44. Isabelle Havelange, *Journaux de voyage et d'éducation: Spa, été 1787 / Louis-Philippe d'Orléans et Charles Gardeur-Lebrun*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2015.
45. Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 207–211.
46. 'Je fis donner à Spa, par mes élèves, une fort belle fête à madame la duchesse d'Orléans' (Ibid., vol. 3, 207).
47. 'guirlandes de bruyères' (Ibid., vol. 3, 210).
48. 'autel à la Reconnaissance en marbre blanc, et dont la forme fut dessinée par M. de Myris' (Ibid., vol. 3, 208).
49. 'Les eaux de la Sauvenière ayant rétabli la santé de madame la duchesse d'Orléans, ses enfants ont voulu embellir les environs de la fontaine, et ont eux-mêmes tracé les routes et défriché ce bois avec plus d'ardeur et d'assiduité que les ouvriers qui ont travaillé sous leurs ordres' (ibid).
50. 'les plus jolies personnes de Spa' (Ibid., vol. 3, 209).
51. Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis, *Leçons d'une gouvernante à ses élèves ou fragments d'un journal qui a été fait pour l'éducation des enfants de monsieur d'Orléans*, Paris, Onfroy, 1791.
52. Giroust (1753–1817) is also credited with a pastel of Mme de Genlis (Chantilly, musée Condé, inv. PD 538).
53. Gabriel de Broglie, *Madame de Genlis*, Paris, Perrin, 1985, 220.
54. There is nothing in the *Mémoires* to confirm this.
55. The full title of *Madame de Genlis et les enfants du duc d'Orléans* is as follows: *Madame de Genlis et les enfants du duc d'Orléans: la leçon de harpe donnée au château de Saint-Leu en présence de Mademoiselle Paméla* ('Madame de Genlis and the Children of the Duke of Orléans: The Harp Lesson Given at the Château de Saint-Leu in the Presence of Mademoiselle Paméla').
56. Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 343, and vol. 3, 73–80.
57. 'Il est vrai qu'il y eut un assez grand nombre d'exemplaires en papier vélin et qu'il y avait à ce volume une fort jolie vignette, parfaitement gravée, représentant ma devise, qui se rapportait à mes enfants, parce que je n'écrivais pour leur éducation que durant la nuit depuis minuit jusqu'à trois ou quatre heures du matin. Cette devise offrait pour corps une lampe posée sur un bureau à côté d'une écritoire, elle avait pour âme ces mots: "Pour éclairer, je me consumes"' (Ibid., vol. 3, 80).
58. Also known as Adélaïde Labille des Vertus (1749–1803). See, among others, Laura Auricchio, *Portraits of Impropriety: Adélaïde Labille-Guiard and the Careers of Professional Women Artists in Late Eighteenth-Century Paris*, PhD dissertation Columbia University, 2000; Anne-Marie Passez, *Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, 1749–1803: biographie et catalogue raisonné de son œuvre*, Paris, Arts et métiers graphiques, 1973.
59. 'Le salon de Mme de Genlis, où se réunissaient tant de jolies femmes, lui plut beaucoup, et il ne manqua pas de peindre le portrait de la célèbre Française lorsqu'elle vint à Londres un peu après' (J. B. Giralton, *La Chronique universelle illustrée*, Paris, Giralton, 1862, section 'École anglaise', note 'George Romney', 6).
60. She produced, among others, a portrait of Pope Pius VII and one of Jean-Jacques Desvoux de Saint-Maurice.
61. 'Je fis faire mon portrait à l'huile et en grand par madame Chéradame, qui a un fort beau talent; je suis représentée jusqu'aux genoux écrivant pendant la nuit, ayant à côté de moi une lumière prête à s'éteindre, et m'arrêtant, en voyant paraître le jour; cette idée est de Paméla; je fis mettre sur la table, à côté de la lumière un vase de fleurs, et enfin un seul livre, sur le revers duquel ce mot est écrit: Évangile; parce qu'en effet la morale de tous mes ouvrages a toujours eu pour base les préceptes sacrés de ce livre divin. Il y a derrière moi une harpe dans l'ombre. J'avais beaucoup de répugnance à me faire

peindre à mon âge, mais M. de Valence désirait mon portrait, et je le fis faire pour lui, avec d'autant plus de plaisir, que je voulais, avant de quitter sa maison, lui offrir quelque chose qui lui fût agréable' (Genlis, *Mémoires*, vol. 5, 222–223).

62. Ibid., vol. 7, 324–330 about a medal made by M. Peuvrier, who came to Mantes at the request of M. Maigne, to whom Mme de Genlis finally gave two sessions at her home. No trace of this medal has yet been found.
63. This is undoubtedly the reason why she refused to have her portrait situated with those set in the place where, according to a project by the marquis Charles de Villette, Voltaire's heart is kept. See *ibid.*, vol. 3, 300.

CHAPTER 5

(Self-)Portrait of the Woman as (a Reluctant?) Authority

Catriona Seth

To look at ways in which women represent themselves or are represented, voluntarily or not, as authorities, I will centre my analysis on Katherine Read, Mary Robinson, and Louise-Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun. They are three women for whom both pictures and the written word were important. Their cases give us three different angles on the question. I will cast further light on them by alluding to several other early modern women creators.

Katherine Read (1723–1778) was an artist, who became famous in London, having trained in France and Italy. There are documents pertaining in particular to her earlier years, when she wrote from Rome to her relatives in Scotland, and letters were sent to her family by Peter Grant, her ecclesiastical chaperone. Mary Robinson (1757–1800) attracted public attention on the stage and then, briefly, as the prince of Wales's first mistress. She was also an author who penned bestselling poems and novels, and she was one of the most frequently represented women of her time, both in paintings celebrating her beauty and in caricatures mocking her attitudes. Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun (1755–1842), the best known of the three, gained celebrity as a fashionable portrait painter, particularly of Marie-Antoinette, but she also wrote memoirs in the latter part of her life (*Souvenirs*, 1835–1837). All three women knew times of great success as well as periods of misfortune. Vigée-Lebrun left Paris and was in exile during the Revolution; Mary Robinson spent time with her husband in prison as a young mother, resided in France for part of her declining years, and finished her life in a small cottage very different from some of the princely dwellings she had frequented. Having been one of the most renowned portrait painters in London, Katherine Read saw her celebrity wane and she went to India. Her attempt to give her career new impetus did not pay off, and the climate did not suit her. She died on a ship between Nagapattinam and the Cape.

I am going to look at impossibilities – cases in which women are denied access to authority or agency –, at the adoption of male attitudes as a means to stand out, but also at the ways in which women by making specific choices attained forms of empowerment, for instance, by creating their own networks.

What Women Could Not Do

Many strategies for female authority are based on respecting a form of glass ceiling. They are the result of renouncing what is impossible. To give a literary example, Aimée Steck-Guichelin (1776–1821), who published several translations anonymously, refused her friends' suggestion that she should publish her poetry, seeing that as a form of indecent exposure, saying that it would be like walking down the street in her underwear.¹ The public gaze afforded on her intimacy, which would result from publishing her verse, led her to such a conclusion and the consequent refusal to publish.

Scottish artist Katherine Read at once managed to negotiate with constraints and found some she could not overcome. Born into a well-connected family with Jacobite sympathies, she took the opportunity, when the Stuarts were defeated in the middle of the eighteenth century, to leave Scotland. Though a single woman, she went first, in 1746, to Paris, where she studied painting with La Tour, and then, when Charles Edward Stuart was expelled from France after the treaty of Utrecht, she followed the Jacobite diaspora to Italy, thereby realising what she describes as every artist's dream, with 'the necessity there is for staying a time in Italy'.²

In Rome, Read describes what she undergoes because she is a woman:

I cannot help looking on myself as a creature in a very odd situation; 'tis true we are all but strangers and pilgrims in this world, and I ought not to think myself more so than others, but my unlucky sex leys me under inconveniences which cause these reflections.³

A letter to her brother, dated June 16, 1751, complains of budgetary constraints: 'I am obliged to board, otherwise I could live at a third of the expense; this you may believe is no small vexation.'⁴ The artist cannot have a snack in the street or frequent taverns, because that would be unseemly. The consequences were financial for her but also resulted in the loss of a certain camaraderie.

There are places other than hostelries where women could not go. In Naples, in April 1753, Read was unable to see the Carthusians' collections⁵: 'as these superstitious Biggotts won't allow a female creature to enter their doors, I am deprived of the pleasure I should have had.'⁶ For someone like Read, looking at paintings constituted an integral aspect of her development, part of training one's eye as an artist. Indeed, many serious professional consequences resulted

from her not being a man. While she was in Italy, Lord Charlemont, one of her clients, pushed for the opening of a British Academy in Rome. It was inaugurated on May 11, 1752 but the young woman could, of course, not attend the classes, because they were taken in common. She could not work as an apprentice to a leading painter: it would have been considered improper for her to spend her time in the workshop. She could not even set up an easel outdoors where anyone might come up to her. Peter Grant, her chaperone, comments on the limitations placed upon her in a letter to her family:

was it not for the restrictions her sex obliges her to be under, I dare safely say, she would shine wonderfully in history painting too, but [...] it is impossible for her to attend publick academies or even design or draw from Nature.⁷

This is a clear indication of the way in which, to gain any kind of visibility, women often had to renounce certain areas of learning or professional practice – like the prestigious genre of allegorical history painting – to be given some form of access to publicity.⁸

Many women who were to become famous as intellectuals or artists had to take lessons on the sly and received much less in the way of formal education than their brothers or were self-taught. Victoire Babois (1760–1839), the author of *Élégies maternelles* ('Maternal Elegies') (1805) on the death of her only daughter, explains in her preface that she started to write for herself – a typical posture to avoid looking like a bluestocking, though there is no particular reason to doubt her sincerity – and that she only discovered by chance that she was composing verse.⁹ A similar thing could not have happened to a boy, who would have been taught to write poetry at school.

Another concern that had different implications according to one's gender is that of signing works of art or literature. Naming was always a problem for women in the early modern era – and beyond. I can think of authors whom I spent a long time reading, for instance for their poems scattered in almanacs, before realising that they were one and the same person publishing before and after marriage. Many major writers did not sign their works – Françoise de Graffigny (1695–1758) even sent a male friend to negotiate the sale of her first manuscript, *Les Lettres d'une Péruvienne* ('Peruvian Letters') (1747), because she knew he would get a better price than she would. Paradoxically, female agency in cases like this meant avoiding admitting one's sex. Katherine Read was having none of this. She wanted to succeed as an artist and was clear that she needed a reputation: 'I have staid one year in Rome for Improvement, I must certainly stay in it another for Name, and then you'll see I'll top it with the best of them.'¹⁰ There is a visible strategy at work here, as there was with her relying on orders from prince Viana or cardinal Albani, two eminent Romans.¹¹ She clearly saw herself as an artist first, not as a woman.

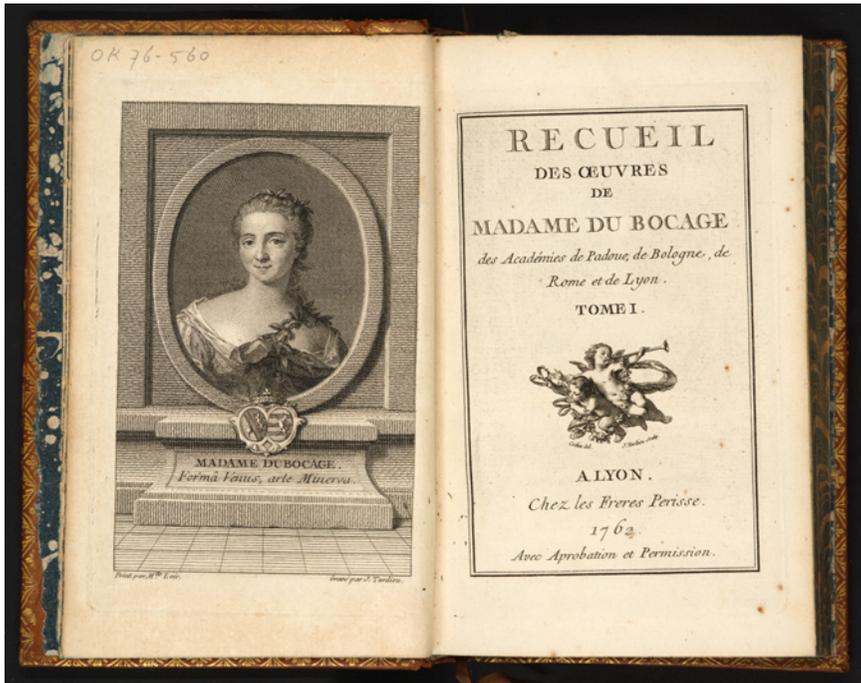


Fig. 1. Title Page for Anne-Marie Du Bocage's *Recueil des oeuvres* (Lyon, les frères Perisse, 1764).
© Museum Allard Pierson Amsterdam.

Connections and Networks

Though she could not train like a man or paint certain things, Read created a world for herself from within, using her connections – private rather than public networks. In the same way as the artistic trainees of the Académie de France in Rome, she copied masterpieces like the Stuarts' Van Dycks, cardinal Albani's Carlo Dolces and Rosalba Carrieras, which she was allowed to borrow.¹² She was serious about succeeding, as she writes, from Rome, to her brother Alexander: 'I apply so constantly and take every decent method of improvement that I think it must be impossible I can miss.'¹³

Read used the scattering of the Jacobites as a means to her personal end of training as an artist, going first to Paris, then to Rome, which was unheard of for an unmarried woman born, as she was, into a well-connected family – she even managed a trip to Venice to meet Rosalba Carriera, whose pastels had been mentioned admiringly to her.¹⁴ Not being able to train in an academy or workshop did not mean not having good masters – and the Jacobite diaspora and sympathisers seem to have played a part. Read apparently had lessons with La Tour in Paris¹⁵ and subsequently, in Rome, with another Frenchman,

Louis-Gabriel Blanchet, who was then a famous artist too.¹⁶ Both La Tour and Blanchet portrayed the Stuart princes. She also used her genteel upbringing and connections as a means to acquire patrons and clients. Part of this reliance on a network was completely independent of her gender and typical of what a male artist would have done.

Public exhibitions and being a member of academies were ways in which women painters and writers sought to show that they could be judged on the same terms as any other artist. Anne-Marie Du Bocage (1710–1802) indicates on the title page of her books that she is a member of the French Academies at Padua, Rome, Bologna, and Lyon. This constitutes a form of guarantee for the reader, particularly as the multiple names have a cumulative effect (Fig. 1).¹⁷ Of course, many learned societies would not let women in or would only let them in on unequal terms.

Among painters, Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757) was exceptional in many ways: her talents were sufficient to earn a living for herself and to maintain the rest of her family – including her brother-in-law, himself no mean artist. She also gained professional recognition by being appointed a member of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. The minutes of the Académie reveal that this was not the sign of a new norm, but rather a case that was clearly intended to remain exceptional: the decision was not to constitute a precedent according to the minutes.¹⁸



Fig. 2. Johan Joseph Zoffany, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy* (1771–1772). Oil on canvas. © Royal Collections Trust. Public domain. (Plate 20, p. 368)

Whilst Vigée-Lebrun was made one of the four women fellows (the maximum number at the time) of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, Read was not one of the two exceptional women, Mary Moser (a renowned painter of flowers) and Angelica Kauffman, who in 1768 became members of the Royal Academy. Instead, with Mary Black and Mary Benwell, in 1769, Read became an honorary member of the Society of Artists. In the same way as in the portrait of the founding members of the Royal Academy, Moser and Kauffman are only present as pictures (Fig. 2), Read was just an ‘honorary’ member: both are clear indications that institutional equality did not extend beyond certain gestures. Women sought legitimacy by competing in areas in which they were not defined by their gender – for instance in academic competitions where one’s identity was initially hidden – and attempted to overcome boundaries, sometimes unsuccessfully, as when Marie Leprince de Beaumont (1711–1776) wrote to the Academy in her birthplace, Rouen, to ask to be admitted on the strength of her pedagogical works. These were apparently not sufficient for the learned gentlemen who made up the association to bend the rules for her, and she was to remain outside whilst less distinguished members of the male sex were welcomed. In writing her request to be admitted, Leprince de Beaumont was seeking recognition in a male arena. Society was clearly not ready for true equality and often, to succeed, women had to adopt masculine references.



Fig. 3. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Self-Portrait with a Straw Hat* (1782, signed copy after a popular self-portrait she painted the same year). Oil on canvas. © National Gallery, London. Public domain. (Plate 21, p. 369)

Use of masculine references is habitual and can be seen as a way of giving weight and legitimacy to the productions of female artists and authors. When Read represented herself, for a painting currently in a private collection, she chose the mocking Democritus-like posture of La Tour in his self-portrait – which another woman painter, Suzanne Roslin (1734–1772), later referenced. Read has her finger in evidence, the one she uses for her art, and is pointing beyond what we can see. Roslin painted La Tour's picture and her picture of La Tour's self-portrait, as well as herself. Both artists are using a recognisable model for their own ends.¹⁹

Vigée-Lebrun went one step further when she took a different male painter as her inspiration for a 1782 self-portrait: Rubens (Fig. 3). She used his portrait of a woman and, in a sense, subverted it by transforming it into the self-portrait of a woman artist. She is thus rivalling a renowned master. She speaks of having discovered the picture on a trip to Flanders with her husband and having been bowled over by Rubens's use of light.

This painting enchanted me and inspired me to the extent that I painted my portrait in Brussels and sought the same effect. I painted myself wearing a straw hat, a feather and a garland of wild flowers on my head and holding my palette in my hand. When the portrait was exhibited at the Salon I can fairly say that it did a lot for my reputation. The celebrated Muller engraved it [...]. Shortly after my return from Flanders, in 1783, the portrait of which I have just spoken and several other works convinced Joseph Vernet to put me forward as a member of the Académie royale de peinture.²⁰

The picture led another male artist, Joseph Vernet, to offer Vigée-Lebrun academic legitimacy, or so we are led to believe. This affirmation was no doubt intended to counter the rumour that she had only been accepted by the Académie Royale at Marie-Antoinette's indirect request. Using the traditions of the male specialist, women artists often depicted themselves with the tools of their trade. An obvious example is that of pastelist Rosalba Carriera (Fig. 4). She painted herself because that was the cheapest way to get a model and to showcase one's talents for potential clients. She also depicted herself as an artist, in particular, when young, holding a portrait of her sister that she had painted and on which she appears to be putting the finishing touches. A customer who saw the picture thus got to see the artist and her art all in one – an ideal advertisement.²¹

Many other painters did this throughout the early modern period, but Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun is possibly the most interesting case because of the number of self-portraits she painted of herself *as an artist*. Beyond the one in which she is staring out at the viewer, palette in hand (Fig. 3), as though interrupted during a working session, others show her at her easel, depicting the queen of France – an excellent piece of publicity, because it serves to say that



Fig. 4. Rosalba Carriera, *Self-portrait Holding a Portrait of Her Sister* (1709). Pastel. © Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Public domain. (Plate 22, p. 370)



Fig. 5. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Self-Portrait* (1790). Oil on canvas. © Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Public domain. (Plate 23, p. 371)

she is a court painter and that, by using her, one can hope to access some of the glory and panache of the French monarchy. She subsequently kept the same pose but represented herself portraying a Russian aristocrat during her stay in Russia. Vigée-Lebrun often offered a self-portrait, when required to donate a sample of her work. This clearly served as a double advertisement, one which promoted her image and her talent in one simple action.

One of the risks incurred by women using masculine references or accomplishing actions seen as male is their condemnation by male authorities as indecent. Let me just take one example to stand for all. Writer Constance Pipelet (1767–1845) read one of her works in public at the Lycée in Paris in 1801. Conservative journalist Peltier commented in his periodical *Paris*:

May we be allowed to say, for there is some parity between these deviations: women who dare to say all, to reveal all in their novels, to expose all in their verse, seem to us to have reached the same limit as those who, having removed all their clothes one by one only retain the slightest piece of cloth. One can then without a doubt be permitted to scream out loud.²²

One of the failures of women positioning themselves as experts is that, too often, they were seen as being assisted by men. ‘*Elle a son teinturier*’, or she has someone who actually writes for her (a ‘ghostwriter’ to use contemporary

vocabulary), Constance Pipelet reminds us, is too often an accusation levelled at successful literary women.²³ Unsigned texts or pictures were directly attributed to men. For example, Katherine Read's art is sometimes ascribed to other male artists – in particular Reynolds²⁴ – or even imaginary painters as in the catalogue drawn up by Frenzel, curator of the king of Saxony's engravings and drawings. Frenzel, reading the initial 'C' in '*C. Read, pinxit*', preferred to invent a Charles Read without an oeuvre rather than rendering unto Caesar, or rather Catherine (or Katherine, both spellings are used) Read, what is rightfully hers.²⁵

Women's Choices

Forms of emancipation are sometimes created through specific choices that show women respecting strictures but also using them to their own advantage. To avoid criticism, many of them chose the genres in which they wrote or painted in order not to shock their contemporaries, for instance, by keeping diaries rather than submitting their literary works for publication. In many ways, women's attempts at empowerment can be seen as a case of *damned if you do, damned if you don't*. When they stuck to more 'feminine' genres, they were complimented dismissively, as when, in 1772, a short piece in the *Letters concerning the Present State of England* stresses how pleasant Read's art is:

This lady's crayons are filled with grace and elegance; her expression of mildness; youthful cheerfulness; smiles and natural ease; is uncommonly beautiful; and renders her work truly pleasing. Her attitudes have great merit; and the general effect of all her pieces [is] agreeable.²⁶

It is clear that she is natural and full of grace but would be condemned were she to try and break out and do anything else. That is probably why Read chose to concentrate on women and children. She created a niche for herself. From Rome, abbé Grant, who saluted her potential talent in a wide field, added this:

she is determined to confine herself to portraits and one branch of history painting which consists of single figures, and for this she seems to have a very happy turn [...] the strong byass of genius she has for this sort of painting in doing of Angels, Saints, Magdalens, Cleopatras, etc., would fain make her continue here at least till the end of next summer.²⁷

Other women, too, chose to shape existing genres to their ends, often by stressing the female side of their approach.

Not only did she have a knack for portraits, Katherine Read was particularly good at one technique, the crayon or pastel:

I have lately painted several heads in crayons merely to try experiments and occupy fancy. I have succeeded beyond my expectation, and do not despair of doing something yet before I die that may bear a comparison with Rosalba or rather La Tour, who I must own is my model among all the Portrait Painters I have yet seen.²⁸

She subsequently took part in specialist discussions about how to fix pastels.²⁹ Her gifts were obvious, as Peter Grant wrote to Alexander Read:

I am truly hopeful she'll equal at least if not excel the most celebrated of her profession in Great Britain, particularly in Crayons, for which she seems to have a very great talent, having done already several portraits of that kind with incomparable success.³⁰

Shortly after arriving in London, Read painted Queen Charlotte and was said to have produced the first portrait of her as monarch: the 1761 *Portrait of a Lady* shown at the *Spring Gardens Exhibition*.³¹ She subsequently portrayed other members of the royal family and two of the children of the French royal household. She was awarded the title of court paintress to the queen, which indicated this special tie. As a humorous piece published in the press in 1766 and signed 'Jacobina Henriques' indicates, there would be true equality between the sexes if Elizabeth Carter became poet laureate, Catharine Macaulay historiographer, and Katherine Read painter (and not paintress) to the king (rather than the queen).³²

Vigée-Lebrun, as already mentioned, owed much of her fame to her portraits of Marie-Antoinette, and royal patronage was the key to her being made a member of the Académie Royale. Robinson, from early on, used women as patrons, relying in particular for her first work, a collection of poems, on support from the renowned society hostess and defender of the arts, Georgiana, duchess of Devonshire.

In artistic and literary terms, one of the ways in which many women struck out was in fact by creating female networks and setting out to train others, in particular other women. I noted that Read had visited Rosalba Carriera. The two artists wrote to each other, and Katherine Read expressed her surprise, in 1756, at a letter from the Italian pastellist, whom she believed to be dead. She answered – in French, then the lingua franca of cultivated society:

I regretted you as friend and as a peerless artist who had honoured her sex more than it ever had been as I know no works comparable to yours. As far as I am concerned, I consider you as a person filled with truly beautiful and angelic inspirations and ideas.³³

Carriera is seen as setting a new standard for all art, not just art by women, but by that very fact, rendering a particularly important service to her sex.

Read acted as a substitute mother to her niece, Helena Beatson,³⁴ of whom she painted several portraits and whom she encouraged in her artistic endeavours. Apparently, young Helena, a 'very wonderful girl' according to Frances Burney,³⁵ was particularly gifted, because there are records of her exhibiting pictures at the age of eight in 1771 and provoking the admiration of Walpole and also of Beattie.³⁶ At eleven, in 1775, she showed six works at the Society of Artists: *A Card Party*, *A Fortune-Teller*, *Blindman's Buff*, *Gipsies*, and two pictures of *Dancers*.

Among Read's pupils, apart from her niece, are thought to be Agneta Johnson Yorke and Mary Benwell.³⁷ It would have been far easier for them to be trained by another woman painter. The artist who did most to further this particular aspect of the professionalisation of women painters later in the century was no doubt Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749–1803). She pictured herself in a striking painting of herself at her easel with two young students looking on, which turns us into the passive model and her into the magisterial artist (Fig. 6). She also encouraged a school of young women who, once exhibiting publicly had become easier after the Revolution, showed off their self-portraits in different artistic salons.³⁸



Fig. 6. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* (1785). Oil on canvas. © Metropolitan Museum of Art. Public domain. (Plate 24, p. 372)

Another way of showcasing the importance of women was to choose female models. Multiple references to Sappho as an artistic or literary model have been studied.³⁹ The idea was that if you could show a female model in the area in which you wanted to excel, you could, to a certain extent, overcome the idea of exceptionality that marginalised you.

Independence

One of the ways to acquire agency also lay in distancing oneself from any dependency on a male figure, whether a father, a brother, or a husband. This was important to Vigée-Lebrun, who was initially in the shadow of her male relatives, but became famous under her double name, which referenced her father and her husband but was hers alone.⁴⁰ Like Carriera, Read never married. She was orphaned before she undertook most of her travelling. She did all she could to be financially independent from her obviously supportive brother Alexander. Robinson makes great efforts, in her autobiography, to portray herself as the youthful victim of an unscrupulous husband. Like Vigée-Lebrun, she spent much of her life away from her spouse, leading a separate existence in which she was the more important of the two.

I have used the adjective 'professional' several times. There are different ways to understand this, but in dealing with female agency, I would like to understand it in the way we do in sports nowadays, where amateurs are not paid, however talented they are, whereas professionals are. Money was a hugely important concern for early modern women. Legal dispositions meant that they often had no real access to patrimony. For a woman artist or intellectual, to use broad-ranging terms, getting paid was often an issue. It was no doubt easier for someone like Rosalba Carriera, born into a family of craftspeople, to demand payment, than for Katherine Read. The latter, however, was freer, because there were fewer financial worries in her family, yet she cared deeply about her own independence. She clearly saw earning her own income as a means of enfranchisement. She was always anxious to write to her brother about her early orders when she was in Italy: 'I have the honour to be the first from our Island that ever painted an Italian above the rank of a Priest or an Abbé, whereas I have painted the very first Princes in Rome.'⁴¹ This is all well and good but the problem for someone of her rank is to be remunerated. When Cardinal Albani asked for a portrait of his niece, Princess Chigi, Read had to treat this as a privilege:

the Italians despise people so much that are obliged to do anything for money that Mr Grant thought it proper to name no price when the question was ask'd [...] for in this Holy City Pride and Folly prevail so much that every thing is regarded according to the degree of show it makes.⁴²

Read could not even have the discussion herself: her protector abbé Grant had to undertake the negotiations.

Thanks to her art, Read received a series of gifts, which she attempted to assess in financial terms:

I have painted two Princesses, for which they gave me by way of a present two medals that both together weigh about ten guineas. From the Marchesa Maximy [Massimo] I got a very curious casket or box of ebony, so finely ornamented with oriental stones in imitation of fruits, flowers, birds, etc., that I am told in England it will be worth forty or fifty guineas. Some people advise me to make a present of it to the Princess of Wales, but I believe I shall rather convert it into money [...]. I had from a Monsignor a ring I believe of no very great value, and I expect in a few days to begin a picture of the Brother of Prince Cheserina [Cesarini] from whom I shall have perhaps some such useless Trinket.⁴³

Money is converted, in the painter's words, into decorative objects, in order to cleanse it and to remove any mercantile aspect from the exchange. This is all done to save appearances and make it look as though Read is a lady of leisure who has no need of funding and is only too happy to honour her friends. It maintains a fiction of equality between artist and sitter.⁴⁴ Read was delighted when, still in Rome, she could write to her brother that she had accepted a paid commission for a portrait of Marchesa Gabrielli: 'I shall get money for it', she notes gleefully.⁴⁵

It is perhaps a consequence of these early years in which she found it difficult to get even the going rate for her pictures, that Read, like Vigée-Lebrun, was to fix high prices for her art when she became famous. We know that, for her 1764 portraits of two French princes, the comte d'Artois and Madame Clotilde, she was paid 960 French livres.⁴⁶ In 1772, her sitters in London were charged thirty pounds for a pastel portrait. Three years later, the rate had risen to thirty guineas – and oil portraits were considerably more expensive. Read had a successful career in financial terms. She supported her Scottish family and left large legacies in her will.

Once she had gained fame and status, Read had her own studio in London to which her sitters – even aristocratic ones – came to pose and which visitors dropped into to view her works. This clearly set her out as a professional rather than simply a talented amateur. Within a studio, the artist could set her own rules for her subjects.

Even if they did not have a room of their own, many women managed to create the equivalent of a literal or metaphorical space of their own – Read, Vigée-Lebrun, and Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807) endeavoured to do this. Robinson, too, had a clear sense of space, both in the way she inhabited it and in her conception of writing. Creating metaphorical space was often achieved by taking over postures and attitudes traditionally associated with men.

More than Stand-Alone Portraits

Read, Robinson, and Vigée-Lebrun made sure that some of the women they represented were powerful ones. Read, alongside her society portraits, including those of members of the royal family, famously depicted some of the bluestockings and their circle. Her 1763 miniature of Catharine Macaulay (1731–1791), as described in detail in the chapter by Seren Nolen in this volume, shows the great historian as a Roman matron weeping over Rome's lost liberties,⁴⁷ a political statement, as well as one that presents Macaulay as a serious scholar. Read also depicted Elizabeth Carter (1717–1806), who edited Epictetus, with a bound volume and a quill, instruments of her trade. Like Macaulay, the sitter is in what could be classical dress, ennobled by the choice, joining the ranks at once of the great figures of antiquity and of the best of modern scholars (see plate 33, p. 380). Everything seems to indicate that Macaulay and Carter might have been the initial figures of a set of contemporary women intellectuals, along with novelist Frances Brooke (1724–1789) and perhaps some others. Read may have had the intention of having the portraits engraved to provide a sort of portable gallery of women of letters.⁴⁸

We tend to think of portraits on their own, except when for instance you have a matched pair (e.g. children of the same family or a husband and wife), but considering them in context is often useful. There is a 'serial' effect in some of Vigée-Lebrun's works, for instance, when you put her self-portrait alongside



Fig. 7. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie-Antoinette in a Muslin dress* (after 1783). Oil on canvas. © National Gallery of Art. Public domain. (Plate 25, p. 373)



Fig. 8. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Self-portrait with Her Daughter* (1786). Oil on canvas. © Musée du Louvre. Public domain. (Plate 26, p. 374)

those of Marie-Antoinette *en gaulle* (which created a scandal when exhibited) (Fig. 7), of Madame Élisabeth, or of the princesse de Lamballe. A few years after painting these, by choosing a Raphael Madonna as an implicit model to present her self-portrait with her daughter Julie in 1789 (Fig. 8), Vigée-Lebrun once again rivalled a great male artist. She was, however, seemingly also saying that she did not need to depict herself as an artist in the way she did in other self-portraits like the earlier Rubens-inspired one of herself in a straw hat. She is portraying herself according to the codes of sensibility and aesthetics in vogue at the time as a beautiful woman and as a devoted mother. In a way, the sentimental narrative expressed with her masterful artistic technique seems to say that she has it all. She also contradicts the premise often used to attack women painters and intellectuals, which states that they are too ugly to do anything else. In 1775, Frances Burney refers to Read in unflattering terms:

She is absent, full of care, and has a countenance the most haggard and wretched I ever saw; added to which she dresses in a style the most strange and queer that can be conceived, and which is worse of all, is always very dirty.⁴⁹

Other artists, like Rosalba Carriera, are routinely described as too unattractive to provoke desire in any man. Vigée-Lebrun is clearly showing that she can have her cake and eat it too: she can be a great artist but also a loving mother and an attractive woman.

Mary Robinson, in her memoirs, is also at pains to show herself not as she was when writing – handicapped after a streptococcal infection sustained when pregnant, if we are to believe Paula Byrne⁵⁰ – but as a beautiful and fashionable woman, on the one hand, and as a deep and caring individual, on the other. The coherence of the inner personality serves as a form of guarantee that all about her is accurate.

The three women seem to have used fashion as an adjunct – Read by making her portraits fashionable, Vigée-Lebrun by painting fashionable women and Robinson by instrumentalising fashion to stand out from the crowd. They thus used a consciousness of the changeability of taste and the way it could be marketed to attain what they knew was, at least in part, a form of success which might not be eternal. When Read was established in London, news of her fame gladdened the heart of her friend Peter Grant in Rome: ‘It was given to me to understand that she is already come into such great repute that all the fine Ladys have made it to be as much the fashion to sit to my friend Miss Read as to take the air in the Park.’⁵¹ One of the ways of being fashionable for all three women was to use other women. This repurposing of the frivolous to make sense is I think a clever form of agency, a soft power of its own.

An interesting case of empowerment is that of Mary Robinson, famed from her youth as the first mistress of the prince of Wales. She was first an actress,

then a novelist and poet. A great beauty, she was also the object of numerous caricatures during her royal liaison. Towards the end of her life when she was no longer in the public eye to the same extent and she had suffered physically and had aged prematurely, she used her skill at writing, in association with her recollection of what she looked like when she was in her prime, to leave behind memoirs, meant for publication, as a record to set things straight for posterity. Not only does she depict herself as a trendsetter, a stunning young woman, she also paints a picture at odds with the usual vision of actresses: if we are to believe what she writes, she was virtuous, faithful in love, and much wronged by men.

Through her words, Mary Robinson sets herself at the centre of the scene and, like the actress she once was, stages a performance for the audience's benefit – we are that audience. As readers, we look at her with wonder through the eyes of the contemporaries of her younger self:

A new face, a young person dressed with peculiar but simple elegance, was sure to attract attention at places of public entertainment. The first time I went to Ranelagh my habit was so singularly plain and Quaker-like that all eyes were fixed upon me. I wore a gown of light brown lustring with close round cuffs (it was then the fashion to wear long ruffles); my hair was without powder, and my head adorned with a plain round cap and a white chip hat, without any ornaments whatever.⁵²

What could have been seen as frivolity – undue attention to her appearance – thus becomes an important aspect of Robinson's construction of a self-portrait. The paradoxical nature of this is hinted at in her choice to dress plainly in order to stand out compared with the overdressed women around her. There are different modulations in the way she plays on the public's expectations.

The second place of polite entertainment to which Mr Robinson accompanied me was the Pantheon concert, then the most fashionable assemblage of the gay and the distinguished. At this place it was customary to appear much dressed; large hoops and high feathers were universally worn. My habit was composed of pale pink satin, trimmed with broad sable; my dear mother presented me a suit of rich and valuable point lace, which she had received from my father as a birthday gift, and I was at least some hours employed in decorating my person for this new sphere of fascination: I say some hours, because my shape at that period required some arrangement, owing to the visible increase of my domestic solitudes. [...] I observed two persons, evidently men of fashion speaking, till one of them, looking towards me, with an audible voice inquired of the other, 'Who is she?'

Their fixed stare disconcerted me; I rose, and, leaning on my husband's arm, again mingled in the brilliant circle. The inquiries followed us;

stopping several friends, as we walked round the circle, and repeatedly demanding of them, 'Who is that young lady in the pink dress trimmed with sable?'⁵³

Like the fashionable attendees at the Pantheon concert of yesteryear, the reader is invited to ask who the beautiful young woman in pink might be. By showing that she has thought through her attire, Robinson indicates that there



Fig. 9. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie-Antoinette, Queen of France, and Her Children* (1787). Oil on canvas. © Château de Versailles. Public domain. (Plate 27, p. 375)

is depth below the surface and that she knows how to manipulate the public gaze. By returning to the vision of the beauty she once was, she fixes it in our memories, even though we were not there when the scene took place. Her words, destined to be reproduced and to circulate eventually supersede the cruel caricatures that made her life a misery. The portrait of her that will live on after her death will, she clearly hoped, be closer to what she considered to be her true self. The reference to her pregnancy ties in with the codes of sensibility and helps sustain her overall narrative, which depicts her not just as a once striking teenager, but also as a caring mother, something her text does throughout, something, as we have seen, which Vigée-Lebrun strove to do through her self-portraits, but also for the long-suffering sovereign she often painted.

In her famous portrait of Marie-Antoinette and her children, Vigée-Lebrun depicts the queen in red, like a Raphael Madonna. The queen's jewellery cabinet is in the shadows. The maligned monarch is depicted as Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, showing off her children as her treasures, strong because she is the mother of the future king of France, but also because she is a woman (Fig. 9). In the group portrait, Vigée-Lebrun also arguably presents a different scene from one that a male painter of the time might have sought to show.

In the early modern period, it was not always easy to find ways to express oneself as a woman. Paradoxically, the more extreme interventions like Olympe de Gouges's *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* ('Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen') (1792) went largely unnoticed, whereas soft-touch revisions of male conventions like Vigée-Lebrun's portraits could command respect and make one famous. It was often by knowing the codes and manipulating them skilfully that Ancien Régime women could hope to make their mark. By acquiring agency in grey areas where they were tolerated, they could extend their authority. By supporting other women, they helped to normalise the idea of female talent. Empowerment was not won easily, but these gradual steps all counted: even if they did not succeed in gaining equality for women, they removed some obstacles along the way...

Notes

1. See Catriona Seth, 'Les rencontres entre Germaine de Staël et Marie-Aimée Steck-Guichelin', in *Cahiers staëliens*, "Corinne", 200 ans après, 2008, 41–51.
2. A. Francis Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', in *The Scottish Historical Review*, 1904, 2(5), 39.
3. *Ibid.*, 40.
4. *Ibid.*, 39.
5. Now a museum complex, the Certosa e Museo di San Martino, the Carthusian monastery was celebrated in particular for its collection of seventeenth-century Neapolitan artworks.
6. Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 42.
7. *Ibid.*, 41–42. Letter dated January 11, 1753.
8. Margery Morgan's attribution to Read of a portrait of compatriots who were amateurs and antiquaries, in an outdoor scene, illustrates the artist's temptation to extend her practice: Morgan, 'British Connoisseurs in Rome: Was it Painted by Katherine Read (1723–78)?', in *The British Art Journal*, 2006, 7(1), 40–44.
9. See Catriona Seth, 'Victoire Babois', in Christine Planté (ed.), *Femmes poètes du XIXe siècle: Une anthologie*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1998, 15–16.
10. Donald Richard Torrance, *The Reads of Auchenleck, Balmachie, Cairnie, Drumgeith, Logie, Montpelier, Turfbeg and in India*, Edinburgh, 1985; Samantha Howard, *A New Theatre Of Prospects: Eighteenth-Century British Portrait Painters And Artistic Mobility*, York, University of York, 2010.
11. Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 40.
12. Katherine Read to her brother, quoted in *ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. A letter from Read, in Rome, to her brother, quoted by Torrance (*The Reads of Auchenleck*, 77) affirms: 'I have been told by several connoisseurs that I would change my opinion were I at Venice to see Rosalba's best works'.
15. Andrew Lumisden, in a letter to Robert Strange dated August 3, 1751, describes the artist as 'Miss Read from Dundee who was sometime at Paris with La Tour' (Margery Morgan, 'Jacobitism and Art after 1745: Katherine Read in Rome', in *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 2004, 27, 233). In 1751, the painter herself wrote: 'I hear my old master La Tour is in London, where I don't doubt of his getting money by his great merit and great price, not from his quantity of work, unless he leaves off that custom of rubbing out which he practised but too much, although I can scarcely blame it in him as a fault, as it proceeded from an over delicacy of Taste and not from a light headedness as was alleged, for he has no more of that about him than is natural to and becoming a French man' (Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 39).
16. 'I am sitting to a very famous French man, one Blanchet, for my picture, who visits me often and is my present master' (see Torrance, *The Reads of Auchenleck*, 74). The current whereabouts of Blanchet's portrait of Read are unknown.
17. The same goes for Vigée-Lebrun when her *Souvenirs* were published in 1869: the title-page describes her as 'de l'Académie royale de Paris/ de Rouen, de Saint-Luc de Rome et d'Arcadie/ de Parme et de Bologne/ de Saint-Pétersbourg, de Berlin, de Genève et Avignon'.
18. 'Academies of Art', in Delia Gaze (ed.), *Dictionary of Women Artists*, vol. 1, Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997, 46.
19. See Melissa Hyde, "'Peinte par elle-même?": Women Artists, Teachers and Students from Anguissola to Haudebourt-Lescot', in *Arts et Savoirs*, 2016, 6.

20. 'Ce tableau me ravit et m'inspira au point que je fis mon portrait à Bruxelles en cherchant le même effet. Je me peignis portant sur la tête un chapeau de paille, une plume et une guirlande de fleurs des champs, et tenant ma palette à la main. Quand le portrait fut exposé au salon, j'ose vous dire qu'il ajouta beaucoup à ma réputation. Le célèbre Muller l'a gravé [...]. Peu de temps après mon retour de Flandre, en 1783, le portrait dont je vous parle et plusieurs autres ouvrages décidèrent Joseph Vernet à me proposer comme membre de l'Académie royale de peinture' (Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, Paris, Charpentier et Cie, 1869, 57).
21. Uffizi, inv. 1786, A 189. See Neil Jeffares, 'Carriera, Rosalba', in his online *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800* (www.pastellists.com).
22. 'Qu'on nous permette de le dire, car il y a quelque parité entre ces écarts: les femmes qui osent tout dire, tout révéler dans leurs romans, tout exposer dans leurs vers, nous paraissent se placer sur la même limite que celles qui, ayant déposé l'un après l'autre tous leurs vêtements, retiennent à peine un léger tissu. Certes, il est permis alors de jeter un cri' (Jean-Gabriel Peltier, *Paris pendant l'année 1801*, vol. XXXIV, Londres, Cox, Fils et Baylis, 1801, 306).
23. See Catriona Seth, "'L'Épître aux femmes": textes et contextes', in *Cahiers Roucher-André Chénier, Constance de Salm. Varia et documents*, 2010, 29, 41–63.
24. Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 38.
25. J. G. A. Frenzel, *Catalogue raisonné des estampes du cabinet de feu Madame la comtesse d'Einsiedel de Reibersdorf etc.*, vol. 2, Dresden, Meinhold et fils, 1833, 383.
26. Anonymous, *Letters concerning the present State of England, particularly respecting the Politics, Arts, Manners and Literature of the Times*, London, J. Almon, 1772, 257.
27. *Ibid.*, 41–2. Letter dated January 11, 1753.
28. Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 40.
29. Jeffares, 'READ, Katherine', in his online *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800*.
30. Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 41.
31. Morgan, 'British Connoisseurs in Rome', 43, refers to Algernon Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great-Britain 1760–1791, The Free Society of Artists 1761–1783*, [London, George Bell and Sons, 1907] Bath, Kingsmead Reprints, 1969.
32. *The Discovery*, January 1766, 42.
33. 'Je vous regrettais comme une amie, et comme une artiste sans égale, qui avait fait plus d'honneur à son sexe qu'il n'en eut jamais été, car je ne connais point d'ouvrages comparables aux vôtres. Pour ce qui me regarde, je vous considère comme une personne remplie d'inspirations et d'idées vraiment belles et angéliques' (*Le Gallerie nazionale italiana: notizie e documenti*, 1899, IV, 156).
34. Helena Beatson, born March 23, 1762, daughter of Jean or Janet Read (1728–1762) and Robert Beatson of Kilry, Fifé, died in 1839. Portraits of Helena by Katherine Read are in Neil Jeffares's online database (www.pastellists.com): J.612.128 and J.612.132.
35. Frances Burney and Annie Raine Ellis (ed.), *The Early Diary of Frances Burney*, vol. 1, London, George Bell and Sons, 1889, 274.
36. 'Miss Read is a delicate painter; but no very strong expression. She showed us some letters and drawings of her niece, which promise an extraordinary genius: the girl being only ten years of age' (Ralph S. Walker (ed.), *James Beattie's London Diary 1773*, Aberdeen, University Press, 1946, 51, entry dated June 1773).
37. See Jeffares's entrees 'YORKE, Mrs Charles, née Agnetta Johnson' and 'BENWELL, Mary, Mrs Robert Codd' in his online *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800*.
38. Marie-Jo Bonnet, 'Femmes peintres à leur travail: de l'autoportrait comme manifeste politique (XVIIIe – XIXe siècles)', in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 2002, 49, 140–167. See also Hyde, "'Peinte par elle-même?'".
39. For instance, by Joan DeJean, Madelyn Gutwirth, and Hugette Krief.

40. On Vigée-Lebrun, see Geneviève Haroche-Bouzinac's biography: *Louise Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun*, Paris, Flammarion, 2011.
41. Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 41.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*, 40.
44. In the same way, princes often rewarded faithful diplomats or generals with valuable bejewelled portraits and the like, or prizes attributed by Academies were gold medals rather than the monetary value they represented.
45. Read states this is a secret and mentions that it concerns a portrait for Lord Charlemont, without indicating whether the secrecy concerns the transaction or the commission (Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 41).
46. Archives Nationales (Paris) O1 1934B. See Xavier Salmon, in *Créer au féminin. Femmes artistes du siècle de Madame Vigée-Lebrun*, Tokyo, Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, catalogue entries 15 and 16.
47. Elizabeth Eger and Lucy Peltz, *Brilliant Women. 18th-century Bluestockings*, London, National Portrait Gallery, 2008; Kate Davies, *Catharine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, 28.
48. Several of Read's portraits, including those of Macaulay or Brooke, were engraved during her lifetime.
49. Burney and Ellis (ed.), *The Early Diary of Frances Burney*, vol. 2, 11.
50. Paula Byrne, *Perdita: The Life of Mary Robinson*, London, Harper Collins, 2005, passim.
51. Steuart, 'Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress', 42.
52. Mary Darby Robinson and Joseph Fitzgerald Molloy (eds.), *Memoirs of Mary Robinson* (1801), Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Co., 1895, 63–64.
53. *Ibid.*, 64–5.

PART II

**Types and Models of Female
Intellectual Authority**

CHAPTER 6

Penning the Midwife's Experience: Professional Skills, Publication, and Female Agency in Early Modern Europe

Valerie Worth-Stylianou

Over the last twenty-five years, histories of early modern women have increasingly recognised the importance of women's remunerated professional activities.¹ The medical world offered particular opportunities because of women's traditional roles as nurses, carers, and healers. One medical profession stands out, because for a long time, it was served only by women, namely midwifery. Like other forms of female medical activity, midwifery included women working without remuneration and unofficially or semi-officially, but for some midwives, this was a full-time, remunerated professional activity.² In this chapter, I examine three early modern professional midwives who were the first to publish manuals on their craft and learning. The outstandingly successful *Observations* by Louise Bourgeois first appeared, in French, in 1609;³ *The Court Midwife* by Justine Siegemund appeared, in German, in 1690;⁴ and Sarah Stone's *A Complete Practice of Midwifery*, in English, was published in 1737. These works allow us to examine how publication enhanced female professional and intellectual authority and also how these works made a wider case for the agency of female authorship.

In early modern Europe, women could not study at universities and were thus debarred from becoming physicians, surgeons, or apothecaries. However, when a delivery was attended by a professional – rather than the local 'wise woman', an experienced neighbour, or female friend – the midwife was called. She alone of medical practitioners had the right to view the labouring woman's private parts. While a physician would be summoned if complications such as

slow progress in labour necessitated a medical diagnosis or prescription, he would make only an external examination of the body, taking the pulse and checking the breathing or urine to assess the woman's condition and humoral balance. If a delivery was obstructed and beyond the midwife's ability to resolve – and much would depend on the individual midwife, since skilled midwives would regularly deliver breeches, turn transverse lies, birth twins, or remove a partially retained placenta – the local surgeon would be summoned. Unlike the midwife (and indeed the physician), he had the right to use an armoury of instruments, but not to view the woman's private parts. When conducting a vaginal delivery on a living woman, he must work under a cover, relying on the skill of touch, so that the woman's modesty would be assured.⁵

In addition to delivery, the midwife's role conventionally encompassed care during pregnancy and possibly advice on conception, although infertility was an area, as Monica Green has shown, which was increasingly colonised by male physicians from the fifteenth century onwards.⁶ Midwives would be expected to baptise a newborn if there were any risk of the child dying, an aspect that explains the close ecclesiastical control over the licencing of midwives.⁷ In many cases of legal disputes – determining virginity, rape, a father's identity in bastardy cases, whether a marriage had been consummated, or a man's ability to have intercourse with his wife – a midwife was an expert witness in court, albeit her testimony was often accorded a lesser status than that of male witnesses because of the general presupposition that a woman was a less valuable witness than a man.⁸ In parts of Germany where midwives were salaried by the town, they were particularly expected to report any suspected abortions or infanticides.⁹ Indeed, a trained or licenced midwife came under the aegis of male medical or ecclesiastical professionals, even though her practical training – or apprenticeship – would have depended upon other female midwives. The requirement that a midwife should call promptly upon a surgeon or physician in a critical situation was a source of significant and widespread tension,¹⁰ yet otherwise, she was expected to be remarkably independent. Hence, it is unsurprising that among the first midwives who published their works are strong voices seeking to legitimise and defend their authority as professional women.

The role of female midwives became increasingly contested with the rise, through the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of male midwife-surgeons. While some female midwives were still relatively or completely unlearned, the exceptional midwives who authored textbooks – always in their vernacular languages rather than in Latin, unlike physicians – used their writings to demonstrate the importance of a midwife's observations based on both looking at and touching the patient. They also contrasted their extensive practical experience with the purely theoretical understanding of childbirth, which characterised textbooks written by men. These midwives could not avoid, in part, meeting their male counterparts (or rivals) on their own terrain, namely

arguing their intellectual understanding of the physical processes of childbirth. Furthermore, they sometimes borrowed the rhetorical strategies, even the precise images, employed by male writers in order to establish their own credentials in the public eye.¹¹

We should, of course, beware assuming that early modern midwives all fell under the same banner. Samuel Thomas has warned against grouping midwives together purely by virtue of their profession, without due regard for their social context.¹² Equally, the work of Mary Fissell and Lisa Forman Cody has charted the intersection between the rise of male midwifery and the increasing masculinisation of science, including of gynaecological and obstetric knowledge.¹³ Hence, we must tread with caution, even in comparing here three elite midwives, given that their published works spanned three countries and well over a century, from 1609 to 1737. Nonetheless, I shall argue that there are strong and fundamental common elements in the published works of Bourgeois, Siegemund, and Stone.

In exploring how far these midwives claim '*intellectual* female authority', I shall ask whether the act of publishing itself constitutes a claim to agency.¹⁴ This begs the second question: whether midwives who published sought professional associations and networks primarily with other female midwives or with medical men. How far did the form of print – rather than manuscript circulation – and its attendant commercial networks shape the public portrait they proposed? Bourgeois (or her publisher) opts for impressive portraits of both herself and her patroness, Marie de' Medici, queen of France. In addition, the title page of the 1609 edition of her volume is finely wrought, indicative of a high-quality publication. However, I shall argue that Bourgeois was more interested in the portrait she painted with her pen, wresting this authority from her male predecessors. In the case of Siegemund, in contrast, the midwife goes to great personal expense to furnish anatomical copperplate engravings for the volume. In her book, the combination of anatomical plates and the written word establishes her medical and intellectual authority. Although Stone's volume does not include illustrations and is the most simply produced of the three case studies, it shares with Bourgeois and Siegemund the desire to paint *in words* a portrait of the authority of the ideally competent midwife (herself) in order to instruct other midwives, especially for difficult deliveries.

Finally, I shall highlight one interesting paradox present in the three volumes: despite affirming their independence and agency as expert professional women, all three midwives unquestioningly accept subservience to one masculine authority. While the portrait of a model midwife rests, above all, on the writer's ability to record her case histories in a manner that showcases her analytic understanding and her practical skills, especially that of touch, in which she has an advantage not ceded to male practitioners, these midwives recognise the (assumedly) masculine dominion of God and portray themselves as privileged to serve him.



Fig. 1. Title Page for Louise Bourgeois's *Observations diverses* (Paris: Abraham Saugrain, 1609).
© Library of Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Translation: *Diverse observations on sterility, miscarriage, fertility, births and diseases of women and newborn children. Discussed in detail and successfully practised by L. BOURGEOIS (called Boursier), midwife to the queen. A work useful and necessary to all persons. Dedicated to the queen.* Paris, by A. Saugrain, rue St Jacques, at the Silver Ship, in front of St Benoît.

The Catholic iconography that frames midwifery on the title page is apparent from the image of the Virgin and child (top centre), next to the patron saint of childbirth, Saint Margaret of Antioch (top right). The title page also celebrates the Bourbon monarchy, with fleur-de-lis and the mother holding the child (centre left), probably symbolising the queen, Marie de' Medici. Above her is the pious Latin motto *Timor dei* ('Fear of God'); the more humble female figure (centre right), possibly representing the midwife, bears the motto *Gratia dei* ('[by] the grace of God').

Louise Bourgeois, Midwife to the Queen of France

Male dominance of printed works on pregnancy and childbirth was first challenged when, in 1609, Louise Bourgeois, midwife to the French queen Marie de' Medici, published a volume of *Observations*.¹⁵ As Alison Klairmont-Lingo and Lisa Forman Cody have discussed,¹⁶ the volume has a notably elaborate title page, on a par with medical works published by some of the most distinguished male medical writers,¹⁷ as well as a surprising number of encomiastic poems celebrating Bourgeois's status (Fig. 1). This was followed in 1617 by her second volume, which also contained her account of her deliveries of the queen's children and her advice to her daughter on embarking on the career of midwifery. Finally, in 1626, the third volume of her *Observations* constituted a more reflective appraisal of her professional work.¹⁸ The last work published under her name, in 1635, the *Recueil des secrets* ('Collection of Secrets'), is a recipe book of her cures.

Although Bourgeois explains her reasons for publishing, it is noteworthy that, compared with Siegemund, she appears to have taken a limited part in deciding the material format of the volumes. As Klairmont-Lingo shows, Bourgeois is extremely proud of being 'the first woman of my art to take pen in hand to describe the knowledge that God gave me,'¹⁹ but leaves the fashioning of the volume largely in the hands of her printers, Abraham Saugrain and then Melchior Mondière.²⁰ In particular, the material in her final work, the *Recueil des secrets*, is reorganised by the publisher, who judged her manuscript 'lacking in order.'²¹ Even the volumes of the *Observations* that appeared when her career was at its height were not revised by Bourgeois from one edition to another, suggesting that once her work was in the public domain, she believed she had delivered her statement. She possibly played a key role in obtaining the impressive number of prefatory poems for the first volume – following the fashion in medical books by (male) physicians – and must have agreed to sit for the fine portrait of herself by Thomas de Leu, a leading Parisian portraitist and engraver (1560–1612) (Fig. 2). The symbolism of the portrait and its relationship to the text have been closely analysed by Lianne McTavish,²² who identifies the quiet, professional confidence it exudes and its powerful statement about Bourgeois's public position. It is no coincidence that the only other illustration in the *Observations* is a portrait of her august patroness, Marie de' Medici.



Fig. 2. Thomas de Leu, *Portrait of Louise Bourgeois, age 45, as royal midwife*. From: Louise Bourgeois, *Observations diverses* (Paris: Abraham Saugrain, 1609). © Library of Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Translation of poem by the poet Samuel Hacquin:

In this perfect picture, the limitations of painting
Are today clearly visible to our eyes
Because we can see only the representation of the body
Not the mind admired as heaven's masterpiece.

En ce parfait tableau le defect de peinture
Se connoist aujourd'uy clairement a nos yeux
Pour ce qu'on n'y peut veoir que du corps la figure
Non l'esprit admire pour chef d'oeuvre des cieux
S. Hacquin.

Why did Bourgeois meet male medical practitioners on their own ground by publishing her work? She states her answer very simply in her dedication to Marie de' Medici:

[...] to describe the knowledge that God gave me, in order to make known the mistakes that can occur, and the best way to practice the art [of midwifery] well. These mistakes are most often unknown to very learned Physicians and Surgeons because of the intimate nature of a midwife's work, the care of which must be done according to what is possible. Ordinarily, the modesty of our sex cannot permit doctors and surgeons to acquire this intimate knowledge except via the midwife's report, which is not always true, sometimes through ignorance and sometimes through the shame of confessing her mistake.²³

Bourgeois both defends midwives' exclusive right to examine labouring women (at a time when some surgeons in Paris, notably Monsieur Honoré, were acquiring a reputation for expertise in deliveries),²⁴ yet also allies herself with expert male practitioners against less competent midwives. Her own husband was a surgeon and a former pupil of the distinguished royal surgeon Ambroise Paré (1510–1590); some of her children pursued medical careers;²⁵ and she owed her coveted position as royal midwife to the support of elite physicians.²⁶ This is a midwife keen to distinguish herself from incompetent female practitioners, yet artfully suggesting that male physicians and surgeons must depend on the reports of midwives, notably for vaginal examinations. In her case histories, these two approaches are illustrated, with scathing reports of poor midwifery practice. For example, she argues for midwives to receive instruction in the anatomy of the female reproductive organs through attending dissections and recounts the terrible mistakes which result from ignorance:

The mistakes that some midwives often make lead me to say that it is extremely necessary for midwives to see the anatomy [i.e. a dissection] of the womb, so that they can distinguish it from the afterbirth and not pull out one instead of the other, which happens rather often in this city. I know that in four or five years, to the best of my knowledge, it has happened in three places. One was under the pillars of the Halles, to a sergeant's wife; another was near Saint Eustache's Church; and another on the rue saint-Avoie.²⁷

Equally, she is at pains to demonstrate that she was a respected member of the medical team, alongside physicians and surgeons, in difficult deliveries. This was one reason why she was recommended for the post of midwife to the queen:

Thus, there were five physicians present at Madame de Thou's consultation: Monsieur du Laurens, Messieurs Marescot, Hautain, de la Violette, and Ponçon. Monsieur Hautain asked the assembled company if he might

propose a midwife [for the queen]. They said yes, and he named me and said that I had delivered his daughter several times in his presence, quite difficult deliveries. Monsieur Marescot said that he had forestalled him in naming me [...].²⁸

Despite Bourgeois's self-confidence as a midwife, her first book of *Observations* initially follows a conventional structure. The first thirty-five of the fifty chapters are ordered chronologically, like male-authored medical textbooks, moving from conception to birth, and concluding with the postpartum period. However, from chapter 36, there is a structural break as she moves on to general topics and case histories. In chapter 36, she argues that midwives need to study the anatomy of the womb, thus placing the training of female practitioners alongside that of surgeons and physicians. The following thirteen chapters present a range of case histories drawn directly from Bourgeois's own practice, and a final chapter is devoted to practical questions such as the mother's milk supply. From this structural outline, I would suggest that Bourgeois was confident when writing short accounts based on case notes, but less adept – or interested – in arranging them in a coherent whole, unlike her German successor Siegemund. Book II (published in 1617) is autobiographically the richest. After twenty-three case histories comes a chapter on 'Illnesses of the Womb' (a standard subject in textbooks for male physicians), before reaching the autobiographical sections. These comprise her report of seeing the famous 'stone child [i.e. foetus] of Sens'; her account, for her daughter who was deciding to become a midwife, of 'How I Learned the Art of Midwifery'; and finally her 'True Account of the Births of My Lords and Ladies the Children of France'. The shorter final volume (Book III, published in 1626) contains only case histories accompanied by her reflections and some remedies.

In a period that saw a marked rise in physicians and surgeons publishing or exchanging medical case notes or advice on cases, Bourgeois is significant for offering a topical insight from the unique viewpoint of a female practitioner.²⁹ She seeks her authority not from profound intellectual statements or a learned style,³⁰ but from the validity of her professional experience. Nonetheless, in Book II, she records that when she took up midwifery (to support her family during the civil wars), she was encouraged by a much less literate midwife who predicted that, because Bourgeois could read and write, she would achieve much.³¹ She also records that, before undertaking her first delivery, she had studied the writings of the famous French royal surgeon Ambroise Paré, an authority to whose works she refers several times.³² By so doing, she is implicitly promoting the importance of female scientific and medical literacy. Set against this is her practical experience: she reminds us, for instance, that in over two thousand deliveries, she only twice needed to extract a placenta manually.³³ This projects an image of her unusual competence in difficult deliveries,³⁴ but – unlike Siegemund and Stone – her stock-in-trade is not mainly complicated

cases but the careful, caring delivery of any woman to whom she is called, whether the labour be quick or prolonged. She uses her substantial experience to reflect and guide her readers, whether these be other literate midwives, medical men prepared to enter into dialogue with female practitioners, or, equally, the increasing number of lay people of this period interested in understanding the physiology and processes of conception, pregnancy, and birth.³⁵ As the printer says in his preface to Book III, she furnishes her readers with ‘the most curious and diligently examined things that she daily encounters concerning women in labour, whom she has the honour to successfully help and comfort in her noble profession.’³⁶

The most outstanding case in which Bourgeois uses publication to convey her authority and agency as an expert practitioner is her report of the birth of the dauphin, Louis, which took place in 1600. Because he had become king in 1610, when the volume appeared in 1617 she was telling the story of how she had delivered the reigning monarch. I have shown elsewhere³⁷ how her account provides a carefully staged reconstruction, in which she appropriates the leading role. The physicians become her supporting actors, the surgeon who could deliver the child in an emergency must wait in the wings (and never needs to walk on), and even the king defers to her. By recalling (or imagining) snatches of the dialogue between herself, the king, and the queen, she adds verisimilitude and vigour:

When the remedies had dissipated the colic and the queen was ready to give birth, I saw that she held back from screaming. I begged her not to hold back, for fear that her throat would swell. The king said to her, ‘My love, do what your midwife tells you. Scream, lest your throat swell.’³⁸

How accurate the recreation is we cannot know – except to note that it differs in some details and emphasis from the manuscript kept by Jean Héroard, physician to the dauphin.³⁹ However, clearly, the first midwife to record her practical experience in print offered a compelling example of the expertise of a midwife attending elite as well as poor women, and at a time when midwives’ control of their specialist activity was subject to pressures from some male surgeons.⁴⁰ It is no coincidence that publications by other midwives appeared in France over the second half of the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century.⁴¹ In unashamedly promoting her own personal professional authority, Louise Bourgeois had given French midwives a voice. Furthermore, over the seventy years following her death, her work was translated into German and Dutch and formed a substantial part (albeit unacknowledged) of a bestselling English compendium, the *Compleat Midwife’s Practice*. However, as Forman Cody examines in detail, while some male publishers saw the marketing potential of Bourgeois’s gender and position as a royal midwife, they also imposed their own commercially-led choices on the material form of the volumes.⁴²

Their various strategies included excising some of the biographical sections of the French text, introducing works by male-authored medical authorities in the same volume, and reworking or omitting some paratextual elements, including illustrations and the layout of the title page. This appropriation of Bourgeois by foreign male publishers was at once a recognition of the French midwife's authority as an author, and yet a reframing or taming of it by men working within different linguistic, social, and religious contexts.

Justine Siegemund, Court Midwife in Brandenburg

Justine Siegemund (or Siegemundin) was born in 1636, the year Bourgeois died; she began working as a trainee midwife around 1658. Her practice thus commenced in the generation after Bourgeois's ended, but there are some clear similarities in their careers. After what was an unofficial apprenticeship as occasional midwife for difficult labours with a local midwife, in 1670 Siegemund became the town midwife in Liegnitz (now Legnic, in Poland), before, in 1683, taking on the post of official court midwife in Brandenburg.⁴³ Her patronesses included Sophie Charlotte, electress of Brandenburg; Mary II of England; Anna Sophia, electress of Saxony; Princess Henriette Amalie of Nassau; and Duchess Charlotte of Schleswig-Holstein.⁴⁴ However, unlike Bourgeois and most early modern midwives, Siegemund had no children of her own (due, it seems, to a prolapsed uterus). This is a fact she discusses openly in her 'Preliminary Account'. She must therefore make the argument that a midwife's competence, especially in difficult deliveries, need not depend on empathetic personal experience, but rather on her expertise. The German term she uses, *Wissenschaft*, indicates her respect for systematic knowledge, of the kind underlying scientific enquiries of the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴⁵ Equally, she uses a rationally based defence to ally herself with male practitioners:

Do we not have the example of clever and judicious physicians and surgeons themselves intervening in difficult births by dint of their well-founded knowledge and experience and thus delivering the woman in labour?⁴⁶

Siegemund is clear throughout the treatise that the midwife should act authoritatively and should not approve of unnecessary intervention by surgeons;⁴⁷ in her writing, she appropriates the male prerogatives of reasoned argument and study. Perhaps semi-humorously, she depicts herself as a bookish young woman, studying anatomical treatises and illustrations, and relying on this book learning to give her initial competence in difficult deliveries.⁴⁸ Only when her own experience had grown significantly did she take to recording case notes and, ultimately, having already undertaken some five thousand deliveries, publishing them to instruct other midwives.



Fig. 3. Title page for Justine Siegemund's *Die Chur-Brandenburgische Hoff-Wehe-Mutter* (Cölln an der Spree: Ulrich Liebperten, 1690). © British Library.

Translation of the title page: *The Court midwife of the Electorate of Brandenburg, that is, a highly necessary manual on difficult and unnatural births, presented in a conversation, namely, how with divine help a well-informed and practised midwife prevents such things with intelligence and a skilled hand or, when necessary, can turn the child based on many years of practical experience and found to be true. Now, however, published at her own expense, along with an introduction, copper engravings, and a requisite index, to honour God and to serve her neighbour and at the most gracious and fervent desire of many illustrious highborn persons. By Justine Siegemund, née Ditttrich, of Rohnstock in Silesia in the principality of Jauer with special privileges from the Holy Roman Empire as well as the Electorates of Saxony and Brandenburg. (Translated by Lynne Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 33)*

Siegemund took even more deliberate steps than Bourgeois to obtain the approval of theological and medical authorities before the publication of her work in 1690, and the title page specifically details these 'Privileges' (Fig. 3).⁴⁹ She explains that she needed to take legal action to defend herself against accusations that she had intervened unnecessarily (e.g. breaking patients' waters), and in self-defence, she cites a series of testimonies from elite women she had delivered⁵⁰ and supportive statements from male figures of authority. This did not prevent a physician and professor in Leipzig, Andreas Petermann, from haughtily criticising the volume, albeit his target was in part the rival medical faculty of Frankfurt, which had endorsed her publication.⁵¹ This male practitioner still considered it audacious for a midwife to publish.

Although Siegemund recounts births in which she believes surgeons acted poorly – notably, one unnamed French male midwife-surgeon, whose mistakes she had to correct⁵² – she also carefully respects the role of physicians, particularly in prescribing remedies:

Remedies are also medicaments. They belong to medicine and not to our trade. [...] The venerable doctors themselves often have trouble and reason enough to reflect; all the less do I wish to have anything to do with remedies or offer instruction about them.⁵³

On the vexed question whether a practitioner should risk killing a foetus that has little or no chance of being born alive in order to save the mother, she defers to legal authorities to resolve this 'lofty question', thus avoiding embroiling herself in a contentious ethical debate.⁵⁴ It is notable that, throughout her work, Siegemund reminds the reader that the midwife is a servant of God, subject to his will. She considers that a midwife's motto must be: 'Fear God, do right, and fear no one.'⁵⁵ For a seventeenth-century Lutheran woman, God was unquestionably a masculine and supreme authority, yet all men and women were subject to his will. However skilled a practitioner may be, they could only work within the limits set by God:

I can nevertheless not guarantee any woman that I can save her if God has ordained death for her or her child. God can make the sighted blind and the blind see. [...] Thus human life is in the hands of the Lord before, during, and after the birth, and no woman can rely on me any more than the extent to which God gives His blessing and mercy.⁵⁶

However, this theological submission is balanced by her Lutheran sense of duty that, as a midwife, she should actively fulfil the role God allotted her. Thus, she regularly reminds the reader of the importance of a midwife combining both manual skill and logical reflection.

In adopting the format of a conversation between two midwives – her own experienced voice responding to the questions of the inexperienced and uncertain Christina – she leads the discussion and controls its pace. For example, she repeats the most important information so that Christina (and the reader) will be sure to follow.⁵⁷ At the conclusion of the main dialogue, Justine poses eighty-six questions to test Christina's understanding (and probably to help student midwives to review what they have learned). This procedure is similar to the closed-question or catechistic format of the treatise published in 1677 by the French midwife Marguerite du Tertre de La Marche to assist midwives preparing to answer the questions that the Hôtel-Dieu physicians would pose before admitting them as sworn midwives.⁵⁸ Indeed, the husband of an Augsburg midwife also borrowed the catechistic format when publishing a midwifery handbook under his wife's name in 1735!⁵⁹

However, because Siegemund's approach is essentially intellectual, she also devotes an initial chapter of her treatise to the anatomical process of birth in general, rather than simply giving practical instructions for difficult deliveries.⁶⁰ It is evident that the subject of midwifery is an organic whole in her mind, as her preface explains:

In writing, one question grew out of another (and I see no end to them) so I finally resolved to present everything in a conversation that was expanded and improved on from time to time.⁶¹

She expects of Christina – and of other midwives – a commitment to reflection, associated with the key practical skill of ‘touching’ the mother, in other words, conducting a vaginal examination to assess the progress of labour and the lie of the foetus. Her association of sensory perceptions (touch and sight) with the intellect resonates with contemporary philosophical debates on how the mind generates mental models of objects that have been either touched or viewed.⁶² For midwives, she encourages ‘careful and confident touching’⁶³ and advises Christina:



Fig. 4. *Portrait of Justine Siegemund, midwife, age 63.* From: Justine Siegemund, *Die Chur-Brandenburgische Hoff-Wehe-Mutter* (Cölln an der Spree: Ulrich Liebperten, 1690). © British Library.

Translation of the motto: ‘On gracious God relying, / My skilful hand applying, / Devoted deeds allying.’



Fig. 5. *Visualization of breech delivery.* From: Justine Siegemund, *Die Chur-Brandenburgische Hoff-Wehe-Mutter* (Cölln an der Spree, Ulrich Liebperten: 1690). © Library of Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

In the case of frank breech births, Siegemund recommended that the midwife’s hands be ready to catch and support the presenting buttocks, without overly hastening the birth. The hands in the image are quite small, the arms slender; implicitly, this portrays a potential advantage of the female practitioner, although contemporary male midwife-surgeons, like the French surgeon (1637–1709) François Mauriceau, also took care to commission portraits displaying their neat hands.

If you wish to get a proper understanding [...]. You need to pay attention and reflect deliberately upon your hand and its feeling. [The fetal head] can no doubt be rightly felt, but it requires precise reflection.⁶⁴

Rouget has argued that, as Louise Bourgeois wrote the successive volumes of her *Observations*, she gave increasing emphasis to the intellectual processes of analysis and reflection.⁶⁵ In the case of Siegemund, the intellectual authority of the midwife-author is always present and fundamental.

In addition, Siegemund took an unusual interest in the print production of her book, which was published by the Brandenburg court printer, but at her own expense, as she reminds us.⁶⁶ Like Bourgeois, she includes a portrait of herself, albeit less idealised and courtly, since she was already sixty-three (Fig. 4).⁶⁷ The number of copperplate engravings – forty-three – is extraordinarily high for this period. Although the text's form of a catechistic dialogue is fairly traditional, the presence of these engravings sets it within the recent fashion for finely illustrated medical publications by male anatomists, such as Reinier de Graaf (1641–1673) or Govert Bidloo (1649–1713). Thirty-nine of Siegemund's plates represent the foetus in utero, many specifically showing how the midwife's hand expertly ensures a safe birth whatever the fetal position, as in the case of a breech presentation (Fig. 5). Although the quality of the engravings is considered by modern critics to be somewhat uneven, the best include several by leading artists, de Graaf himself among them. These illustrations enjoyed an independent afterlife, being silently borrowed in male-authored medical works over the following century.⁶⁸

Derivative and Pseudonymous Poses: Male-Authored Publications Profiting from the Authority of the Female Midwife's Voice

It is clear that, in the cases of Bourgeois and Siegemund, publication afforded the female writer significant agency in her lifetime and inspired some other female midwives to follow their examples.⁶⁹ However, agency could be undermined after an author's death. We have seen that Louise Bourgeois's *Observations* were subsumed posthumously alongside male-authored publications in the anonymous and popular English compendium *The Compleat Midwives Practice*, which first appeared in 1656.⁷⁰ Most critics now agree that this volume was the work of male compilers.⁷¹ It was largely derived, without acknowledgement, from Louise Bourgeois and continental male authors, with only four sets of initials as a clue to the identity of the compiler(s). Even during Siegemund's life, a Dutch printer in 1691 published an anonymous (and unauthorised) translation of her work, together with a treatise by a male surgeon, Cornelis Solingen, whose views contradicted Siegemund's in various respects.⁷² In the decades following her death, notwithstanding her treatise being republished in 1708, 1715,

and 1724, another German publisher, Johann Gohl, took over Siegemund's text and decked it with the habits of masculinised learning: marginal summaries, references to contemporary surgeons, and an appendix (of his own) on medications.⁷³ Perhaps, paradoxically, Siegemund's text invited this appropriation precisely because the new edition's authority was grounded upon the underlying voice of an expert (female) practitioner.

In another version of male authors or editors claiming authority over a female-voiced text, pseudonymity hovers over what has traditionally been hailed as the first manual by an English midwife: *The Midwives Book, or, the Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered*. This was published in 1671 under the name of Jane Sharp, leading contemporary readers and subsequent historians to assume it was authored by a historical woman of this name. However, no reliable biographical evidence has ever come to light about her.⁷⁴ 'Sharp' addresses the midwives of England as 'Sisters' in the preface,⁷⁵ but 'her' voice is not directly comparable with Bourgeois's or Siegemund's. Their authority derived explicitly from their professional positions and from the number of deliveries with which they were personally credited. From examining internal contradictions in the text and similarities to existing male-authored treatises, Katherine Phelps Walsh has argued that Jane Sharp's name may be a construct adopted by male authors to market their work as though authenticated by a midwife's experience.⁷⁶ Yet *The Midwives Book* is clearly written in the masculine tradition, relying primarily on the authority of earlier male medical writers, from the continent and from England, such as Daniel Sennert (1572–1637) and Nicholas Culpepper (1616–1654). While the work exploits the female voice to propose some corrective, anti-Galenic readings,⁷⁷ we should not forget that male authors could adopt the pose of the female voice of experience, and it was not uncommon for men also to criticise some of Galen's statements. Despite the author's protestations with regard to the balance between 'speculative and practical' knowledge,⁷⁸ the treatise is heavily weighted in favour of theoretical learning, including a lengthy opening survey of both male and female reproductive organs.⁷⁹ If this were the work of a single midwife, the absence of case histories or of specific personal experience to authenticate the general claims would be all the more surprising. Importantly, for our understanding of the authority a female voice could confer, the publisher responsible for the re-editions half a century later, in 1724, considered the attribution to a midwife still to be an essential asset: in these later editions, the length of the practice of 'Jane Sharp' is updated from the original 'thirty' to 'forty' years, and the new images on the frontispiece represent the midwife's craft – the birthing room, churching, and a family celebration (Fig. 6). Even if of dubious historical veracity, it remained commercially attractive to invoke a 'midwife's' experience in a book on reproduction, childbirth, and care of the infant.



Fig. 6. Frontispiece illustrating domestic scenes of birth, baptism and celebratory meal. From: Jane Sharp, *The Compleat Midwife's Companion, or, the Art of Midwifery Improv'd* (London: J. Marshall, 1724).

© Wellcome Library, London.

These three scenes represent key moments in the life of a middling family in early seventeenth-century England. The interiors are notably less lavish and less fashionable than those in the famous set of six engravings of 'A Town Marriage' by Abraham Bosse (Paris 1630s), which also included a scene

of the birthing room and the return from baptism. In the first panel of the English illustration, the birthing room is represented as an entirely female sphere (mother and three assistants), with the emphasis on domestic comforts (the warm fire, the broth offered to the newly-delivered mother, and the tightly swaddled child). The second and third panels situate birth within a family which celebrates this continuation of its prosperity by displaying its symbols of relative prosperity (fine clothing, fans) and unity (in the procession to church and the shared meal on the return).

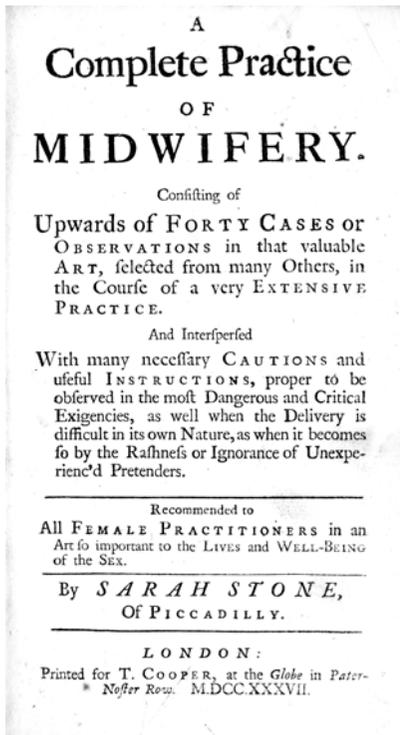


Fig. 7. Title page of Sarah Stone's, *A Complete Practice of Midwifery* (London, T. Cooper: 1737).

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Sarah Stone, English Midwife Expert in Difficult Deliveries

In contrast, when we turn to Sarah Stone, who was a historically attested English midwife of the earlier eighteenth century, we see again the authority in print of an experienced female practitioner, similar to that claimed by Bourgeois and Siegemund. There are, however, several significant differences. Stone served only local, non-elite women, first in Somerset, then in London.⁸⁰ In *A Complete Practice of Midwifery Consisting of Upwards of Forty Cases or Observations*, published in 1737, with a very plain title page, most of her cases start with details of the husband's address and trade (farmer, weaver, or tanner, for example) (Fig. 7). Her declared purpose in writing is to share with her 'sisters in the profession' her ways of conducting difficult deliveries.⁸¹

In the autobiographical information included in various case histories, she records that she left her practice near Taunton because the sole responsibility for difficult labours was 'so fatiguing and pernicious to my health'. Yet her concerns for the fate of the pregnant women after her departure compelled her to publish these case histories to instruct other midwives, 'as I cannot be serviceable in my person.'⁸² Furthermore, she insists that she is recording only

'my own performances', not 'the least practice of any other persons'.⁸³ This approach chimes with her dismissal of midwifery manuals in which theoretical instructions fail to match the skills required in real situations.⁸⁴ For example, she criticises manuals that recommend managing a shoulder presentation by easing the shoulder aside, yet fail to recognise that the shoulder may just return to its original position; instead, Stone recommends podalic version.⁸⁵ In such discussions, she assumes authority, even when not present herself, by showcasing her 'performance'. In a manner reminiscent of Siegemund, she generally structures her narratives around cases in which she was summoned – often after an undue delay – to resolve the poor clinical management of a difficult delivery attended by less skilled or ignorant midwives. Here, her accounts mirror those of male midwives who arrive to 'save the day'. We may note that she is careful to record how long a woman had been in labour before her arrival (often several days) and how quickly she herself delivers the woman (usually within an hour or two). She assumes agency both through her skilful manual performance but also through her narration of the events.⁸⁶ Other characters, especially the less competent midwives or the grateful mother, are given half-voiced roles, but like Bourgeois, Stone always maintains control of the momentum of the dialogue as well as of the narrative. This is well illustrated in a case with snatches of speech from the mother, an incompetent midwife, and 'handy women' (as reported by the mother to Stone), all testifying to Stone's superiority:

In Bridgewater I was sent for to a street below Huntspill, to a Farmer's wife, who had been in labour four days. I ask'd [her] Midwife, why she had not sent for help sooner? She reply'd, She waited for Pains. I then inform'd her, That in all Wrong Births Pains were of no Use, but, on the contrary, pernicious. [...] In her Delivery [the mother] never complain'd once of any pain. I ask'd her, How she could bear the turning of her Child, and Delivery without complaining? She told me, She had endur'd a thousand times more Pain by the hands of her Midwife; and some Handy Women (as they call them) which were about her, told her, That send for whom she wou'd, she could never be deliver'd but [...] she was deliver'd, and laid in her Bed in a comfortable manner, in less than half an hour, to their great surprize.⁸⁷

On the rare occasions when male physicians are present, it is noteworthy that Stone – like Bourgeois – depicts herself as their ally. They recognise her skills after they have despaired of less competent midwives, as, for example, in her delivery of a retained placenta.⁸⁸ Indeed, she (or her publisher) chose to include at the start of the volume a testimonial in the form of a letter from a Dr John Allen to her husband, in which the physician regrets that she has ceased to practise in Bridgewater. Yet she does not seek to impress the reader with technical medical language: 'os pubis' or 'matrix' are among the most learned terms, and even these may be glossed with an English equivalent in parentheses.⁸⁹

Furthermore, she professes a marked distaste for midwifery manuals that engage in discussions of ‘the parts of generation’, the ‘reasons of conception’, or the causes of infertility, judging such matters to be the business of physicians, not midwives.⁹⁰ Is this an attack on *The Midwives Book* or on male-authored works on childbirth and women’s health?⁹¹ In either case, it is clear that Stone rests her case on her practical skills as an expert in difficult deliveries, the core activity – in her view, like Siegemund’s – of a good midwife. This is the voice of a confident woman, whose authority derives from her long and generally successful professional experience, and although she berates ‘our young [...] pretenders’,⁹² that is to say male midwife-surgeons, one senses that personally she had little to fear from them.

Finally, what of the public persona that Stone adopts through publication? Like Bourgeois and Siegemund, Stone dedicates her book to her queen, although in this case, there is no evidence that Stone ever delivered her. Caroline of Ansbach, wife of George II, had ten (known) pregnancies, with eight deliveries and seven surviving children; her later deliveries left her with serious health complications, of which she died in November 1737 – by chance, the year Stone’s book was published. Stone addresses her, very respectfully, as ‘the Nursing-mother of a most happy people’ and a ‘generous Encourager of all Arts and Sciences’,⁹³ implying that her book is the kind the queen would approve (Fig. 8). Together with the recognition of some male physicians who esteem her above her ordinary ‘sisters’, the dedication to the queen indicates to the reader the respect Stone considers due to her published work, which bears testimony to her exceptional professional experience and expertise.

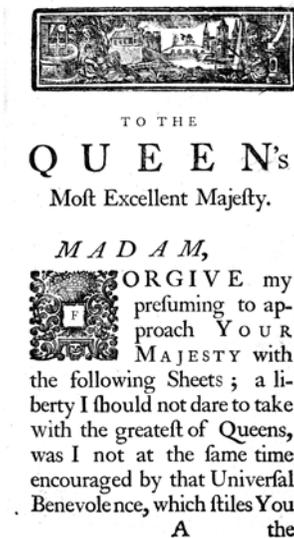


Fig. 8. *Dedicatory epistle to the Queen*. From: Sarah Stone, *A Complete Practice of Midwifery* (London: T. Cooper, 1737). © Wellcome Library, London.

Conclusion

Bourgeois, Siegemund, and Stone were among the most outstandingly successful midwives of their eras, known for their ability to handle even very difficult deliveries. Yet what set them apart from their many skilled contemporaries – as opposed to the ignorant female practitioners they berate or wish to instruct – was their choice to publish their experience and advice. The act of entering the world of print put them potentially on a par with male practitioner-authors. They use similar and well-tested means of asserting their authority, including the choice of elite patrons (among the women they had delivered) and carefully judged deferential references to men in positions of medical and (in the case of Siegemund)⁹⁴ theological authority, which thereby enhance their own status. However, in all three cases, the portrait of a model midwife rests, above all, on the writer's ability to narrate her case histories in a manner that showcases both her analytic understanding and her practical skills, especially the skill of touch in which she has an advantage not yet ceded to male surgeons.

The only (masculine) authority to whom all three midwives pronounce unquestioned subservience is God. Bourgeois wears a prominent cross in her portrait, indicating her standing as a dutiful Catholic; at various points in her *Observations*, she repeats the expectation that the midwife will do her best to ensure a child is born living and thus able to receive baptism,⁹⁵ and she vehemently opposes any maternal behaviour that might cause an unnecessary miscarriage (or, even worse, provoke an abortion).⁹⁶ Siegemund reminds us that she was the daughter of a Lutheran pastor⁹⁷ and, like Bourgeois, thanks God regularly for calling her to this profession.⁹⁸ Stone, who is Anglican, closes her preface with 'the hearty and sincere Prayer' that 'the Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent God, may grant [all my Sisters Professors in the Art of Midwifery] Success.'⁹⁹ Across the denominational differences, all three emphasise that midwifery is a God-given vocation, and as Bourgeois solemnly reminds her daughter, who would follow in her mother's footsteps, a midwife must be 'completely God-fearing'.¹⁰⁰ In regularly praising God for happy outcomes, while accepting that, on occasions, it was God's will that mother or child could not be saved,¹⁰¹ these midwives followed the conventional beliefs common also to male authors of midwifery treatises; submission to God's will is expected of medical practitioners of both sexes. More audaciously, they also follow masculine examples in thanking God for granting them theoretical knowledge. Bourgeois wrote her works 'to describe the knowledge that God gave me'.¹⁰² Siegemund describes the early years of her professional development 'seeking to serve God and my neighbour in this profession, and all the while I daily noted how one day taught me the next and how God showed me ever greater light in my profession'.¹⁰³ Likewise, Stone, although generally less theoretically reflective than Bourgeois or Siegemund, associates her professional training (in apprenticeship to her mother and her deputy) and her reading of 'Anatomy' with 'the blessing of

God, who has avoided ‘any Life [being] lost thro’ my ignorance.’¹⁰⁴ It is God who confers knowledge and light on women, leading them away from ignorance. Significantly, the writings of these three midwives do not refer to God’s curse on women in childbearing (Genesis 3:16). Rather, Siegemund’s volume is headed by a motto (Fig. 9) associating God’s help and the midwife’s hand,¹⁰⁵ and commences with a different, carefully chosen biblical quotation:

*So God dealt with the midwives.
And because the midwives feared God he built them houses.
Ex. 1: 20–21*

That is, he blessed them in their profession and rewarded their loyalty.¹⁰⁶

Thus, Siegemund confidently portrays herself as the God-fearing midwife, protected on earth by a benevolent (masculine) deity. In this she speaks with the same voice as Bourgeois and Stone.

Louise Bourgeois, Justine Siegemund, and Sarah Stone served in separate countries and in different social contexts, but they are united by their exceptional choice to publish accounts of their profession. Their writings offer a new portrait of the female midwife who must be respected for the learning that underpins her practical skills.



Fig. 9. *Motto of Justine Siegemund's Die Chur-Brandenburgische Hoff-Wehe-Mutter* (Cölln an der Spree: Ulrich Liebperten, 1690). © British Library.

The motto uses the same three lines that appear beneath the portrait of Siegemund (see Fig. 4). However, by giving a whole page to the motto, set here like an elaborate inscription, the printer and Siegemund are showcasing the association between God ('Gott') in the first line and Siegemund's own actions ('mein Tuhn') in the closing line.

Notes

1. See Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, I: 1500–1800*, London, HarperCollins, 1995; Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
2. See Susan Broomhall, *Women's Medical Work in Early Modern France*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004; Hilary Marland (ed.), *The Art of Midwifery. Early Modern Midwives in Europe*, London, Routledge, 1993.
3. The full title of Bourgeois's *Observations* ('Various Observations on the Sterility') is as follows: *Observations diverses sur la stérilité, perte de fruits, fécondité, accouchements et maladies des femmes et enfants nouveau-nés*.
4. The German title of Siegemund's *Court Midwife* is as follows: *Die Kgl. Preußische und Chur-Brandenburgische Hof-Wehemutter*. All references to Siegemund's *Court Midwife* are taken from Lynne Tatlock's translation: *Justine Siegemund: The Court Midwife*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2005.
5. See the comments of the surgeon Jacques Guillemeau, *De l'heureux accouchement des femmes*, Paris, N. Buon, 1609, 'Epistre liminaire, au lecteur'.
6. Monica Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2008.
7. See John R. Guy, 'The Episcopal Licensing of Physicians, Surgeons and Midwives', in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1982, 56, 528–542; Richard Petrelli, 'The Regulation of French Midwifery during the Ancien Régime', in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1971, 26(3), 272–292.
8. See, for example, Cathy McClive, 'Blood and Expertise: The Trials of a Female Medical Expert in the Ancien-Régime Courtroom', in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2008, 82, 86–107.
9. See Ulinka Rublack, 'The Public Body: Policing Abortion in Early Modern Germany', in Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Harvey (eds.), *Gender Relations in German History: Power, Agency and Experience from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, London, University College London Press, 1996, 57–79.
10. Although subsequently nuanced by later researchers, Jean Donnison's argument that medical men historically sought to subjugate or silence midwives remains significant. See Jean Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men: A History of Inter-Professional Rivalries and Women's Rights*, London, Heinemann Educational, 1977.
11. See Lianne McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority in Early Modern France*, Burlington, Ashgate, 2005; Alison Klairmont-Lingo, 'Connaître le secret des femmes: Louise Bourgeois (1563–1636), sage-femme de la reine, et Jacques Guillemeau (1549–1613), chirurgien du roi', in Laetitia Dion et al. (eds.), *Enfanter dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, Arras, Artois Presses Université, 2017, 113–126.
12. Samuel S. Thomas, 'Early Modern Midwifery: Splitting the Profession, Connecting the History', in *Journal of Social History*, 43–1, fall 2009, 115–138.
13. Mary Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies. The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004; Lisa Forman Cody, *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.
14. I focus here on outstanding midwives who disseminated their works *in print*. C.f., in contrast, the extensive unpublished manuscript left by Dutch midwife Catharina Schrader: Hilary Marland (trans. & ed.), *Mother and Child Were Saved: The Memoirs (1693–1740) of the Frisian Midwife Catharina Schrader*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1987.

15. For bibliographical details, see Valérie Worth-Stylianou, *Les Traités d'obstétrique en langue française au seuil de la modernité: bibliographie critique des 'Divers Travaulx' d'Euchaire Rösslin (1536) à l'Apologie de Louyse Bourgeois sage-femme (1627)*, Geneva, Droz, 2007, 319–60.
16. Alison Klairmont-Lingo's introduction to Louise Bourgeois in Stephanie O'Hara (trans.) and Alison Klairmont-Lingo (ed.), *Midwife to the Queen of France: Diverse Observations*, Toronto and Arizona, Iter Press, 2017, 5–8; Lisa Forman Cody, 'Re-Presenting a Midwife Across Borders: Paratexts and Imagery in Translations of Louise Bourgeois' *Observations diverses*, 1609–1707', in *Women's Studies*, 2020, 49, 296–322.
17. For example, the title page to Ambroise Paré's *Ceuvres* (Paris, Gabriel Buon, 1585).
18. See Francois Rouget, 'De la sage-femme à la femme sage: réflexion et réflexivité dans les *Observations* de Louise Bourgeois', in *Papers in French Seventeenth-Century Literature*, 1998, 48, 483–496.
19. See O'Hara (trans.) and Klairmont-Lingo (ed.), *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 3–13 and 90. All references to Bourgeois's *Observations* are taken from this English translation.
20. Klairmont-Lingo suggests that Saugrain pressed her to publish fast in 1609 to thwart a malicious attack. See O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 3–4.
21. *Ibid.*, 44–47.
22. See McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority*, 91–97.
23. O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 90.
24. On the rivalry between Bourgeois and Honoré, see Wendy Perkins, *Midwifery and Medicine in Early Modern France: Louise Bourgeois*, University of Exeter Press, 1996, 116–117.
25. O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 40.
26. *Ibid.*, 38–39.
27. *Ibid.*, 167.
28. *Ibid.*, 239.
29. On the rise of the genre of case notes, see Gianna Pomata, 'Sharing Cases: The *Observationes* in Early Modern Medicine', in *Early Science and Medicine*, 2010, 15, 193–236.
30. In the prefatory letter 'To the Readers', she claims that she speaks with 'no ornament but truth, no reason but that of experience'. (See O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 92).
31. *Ibid.*, 234.
32. *Ibid.*, 234–235.
33. *Ibid.*, 143.
34. *Ibid.*, 41.
35. See my discussion on the readership of French obstetric treatises in Worth-Stylianou, *Les Traités d'obstétrique en langue française*, 63–84.
36. O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 291.
37. Valerie Worth-Stylianou, 'La théâtralisation de la naissance du dauphin (1601) chez Louise Bourgeois, sage-femme de Marie de Médicis', in Sabine Chaouche (ed.), *Le «Théâtral» de la France d'Ancien Régime. De la présentation de soi à la représentation scénique*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2010, 137–154.
38. O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 254.
39. See Worth-Stylianou, 'La théâtralisation de la naissance du dauphin', 140–141, 151–153.
40. O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 272–273.
41. See Adeline Gargam, 'Un nouveau critère d'évaluation du «genre» en obstétrique: les opuscules d'accouchement écrits par les femmes au XVIIIe siècle', in Dion et al., *Enfanter dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, 51–65.
42. Forman Cody, 'Re-Presenting a Midwife Across Borders', 296–322.

43. See Tatlock's introduction to her translation *Justine Siegemund*, 5–6, and the detailed biography by Waltraud Pulz, 'Nicht alles nach der Gelahrten Sinn geschrieben': das Hebammenanleitungsbuch von Justina Siegemund zur Rekonstruktion geburtshilflichen Überlieferungswissens frühneuzeitlicher Hebammen und seiner Bedeutung bei der Herausbildung der modernen Geburtshilfe, Munich, Münchner Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1994.
44. Surviving copies of the 1690 original edition are dedicated variously to one or several (but never all) of these. See Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 36–40.
45. See Tatlock's note on this term, *ibid.*, 45.
46. *Ibid.*, 46.
47. *Ibid.*, 140–142.
48. *Ibid.*, 90.
49. *Ibid.*, 8.
50. *Ibid.*, 167.
51. *Ibid.*, 8–9.
52. *Ibid.*, 124–125.
53. *Ibid.*, 181.
54. *Ibid.*, 122.
55. *Ibid.*, 75.
56. *Ibid.*, 76.
57. *Ibid.*, 201–235.
58. Marguerite de La Marche, *Instruction familière et très facile, faite par questions et réponses, touchant toutes les choses principales qu'une sage-femme doit savoir pour l'exercice de son art*, Paris, 1677.
59. On the handbook published under Barbara Widenmann's name, see Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 14.
60. Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 77–89.
61. *Ibid.*, 52.
62. E.g. Leibniz's discussion of Molyneux's question (whether a person born blind who could distinguish by touch between a sphere and a cube would be able to do so visually if their sight was restored). While Siegemund does not refer to philosophers directly, she might have encountered such discussions at the court of the Electress Sophie Charlotte of Brandenburg, who corresponded with Leibniz.
63. Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 162.
64. *Ibid.*, 85.
65. See above, note 14.
66. Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 11 and 15.
67. *Ibid.*, 15–16.
68. *Ibid.*, 25.
69. See above, note 36, and Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 24, for details of a short handbook published in Wolfenbüttel in 1700 by the midwife Anna Elisabeth Horenburg.
70. See Stephanie O'Hara's analysis in O'Hara and Clairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 73–76.
71. See O'Hara's summary of the case, *ibid.*, 74, n. 25.
72. Justina Siegemundin, *Spiegel der vroed-vrouwen*, Amsterdam, J. ten Hoorn, 1691. See Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 20–22.
73. *Ibid.*, 23–24.
74. The excellent edition of Sharp's text by Elaine Hobby assumes the author is a female midwife, but acknowledges at the outset that 'We do not know who Jane Sharp was'. See Jane Sharp and Elaine Hobby (ed.), *The Midwives Book, or, The Whole Art of Midwifry Discovered*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1999, xi.

75. *Ibid.*, 5.
76. Katherine Phelps Walsh, 'Marketing Midwives in Seventeenth-Century London: A Re-examination of Jane Sharp's *The Midwives Book*', in *Gender and History*, 2014, 26(2), 223–241.
77. Luca Barrata takes the text at face value in assuming that the emphasis on visual experience as certification of truth derives from Sharp's experience as a midwife. See Luca Barrata, "I had once the chance to see when I was performing my office of Midwifery": Paesaggi anatomici nel *Midwives Book* (1671) di Jane Sharp', in *LEA - Lingue e Letterature d'Oriente e d'Occidente*, 2017, 6, 231–258. Similarly, Eve Keller associates Sharp's anti-Galenic stance with female experience. See Eve Keller, 'Mrs Jane Sharp: Midwifery and the Critique of Medical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century England', in *Women's Writing*, 1995, 2(2), 101–111.
78. Sharp and Hobby (ed.), *The Midwives Book*, 11.
79. See, in contrast, Valerie Worth-Stylianou, 'Louise Bourgeois: An Early Modern Midwife's Observations on Female Infertility', in *Women's Studies*, 2020, 49(3), 281–295.
80. See the discussion of the demographic and geographical circumstances in which Stone worked in Robert Woods and Chris Galley, *Mrs Stone and Dr Smellie. Eighteenth-Century Midwives and Their Patients*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2014, 67–103.
81. Sarah Stone, *A Complete Practice of Midwifery Consisting of upward of Forty Cases or Observations*, London, T. Cooper, 1737 (facsimile published by Eighteenth-Century Collections on Line Print Editions), 12–13.
82. *Ibid.*, 40.
83. *Ibid.*, 40–41.
84. See Janette Allotey, 'English Midwives' Responses to the Medicalisation of Childbirth (1671–1795)', in *Midwifery*, 2011, 27, 532–538.
85. Stone, *A Complete Practice*, 34–35.
86. For quantitative comparisons between Stone's and male midwife-authors' styles – highlighting the oral features of Stone's – see Woods and Galley, *Mrs Stone and Dr Smellie*, 98–99.
87. Stone, *A Complete Practice*, 26–29.
88. *Ibid.*, 15–16.
89. For example, 'and with [my two fingers] gently drew the *Matrix* (or Womb) towards the *Os Pubis* (or Share-bone)', *ibid.*, 9–10.
90. *Ibid.*, xviii.
91. Woods and Galley contrast Stone's work with that of male midwives to identify 'advances' in eighteenth-century obstetrical practice (see Woods and Galley, *Mrs Stone and Dr Smellie*, 234–262).
92. Stone, *A Complete Practice*, xii.
93. *Ibid.*, vi–viii.
94. Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 59–60.
95. See, for example, O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 121–122 and 128.
96. *Ibid.*, 115–6.
97. Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 47.
98. *Ibid.*, 50–51.
99. Stone, *A Complete Practice*, xx.
100. O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 268.
101. See, for example, a case in which Bourgeois ascribes to God the safe delivery of one living twin and of the dead twin (O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 190). C.f. Siegemund reporting reliance on 'God's blessing' and 'God's mercy and His blessing' (Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 97 and 157), and Stone on 'God's assistance', or 'God's leave' (Stone, *A Complete Practice*, 12 and 77).

102. O'Hara and Klairmont-Lingo, *Midwife to the Queen of France*, 90.
103. Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, 49.
104. Stone, *A Complete Practice*, xv. For all occurrences of 'God' in Stone's text, see Woods and Galley, *Mrs Stone and Dr Smellie*, 99–100.
105. 'On gracious God relying, / My skilful hand applying, / Devoted deeds allying.' See Tatlock, *Justine Siegemund*, xxxii.
106. *Ibid.*, 35.

CHAPTER 7

Women's Strength Made Perfect in Weakness: Paratextual Authority Constructions in Printed Vernacular Religious Literature by Early Modern Dutch Women Writers¹

Nina Geerdink and Feike Dietz

In his contribution to the front matter of Geertruyd Gordon's poetry collection *Aandachtige opmerkingen by wijze van uytbreydinge over de tien geboden Gods* ('Close Observations as an Extension of God's Ten Commandments') (1686), the renowned poet Joachim Oudaen (1628–1692) presented Gordon as an example to other aspiring female writers.² In Oudaen's view, Gordon (1649–1728) succeeded in something that 'seems to exceed in itself the strength and fame of the female sex': writing poetry.³ Gordon's outstanding poetic success allegedly resulted from the religious content of her poetry. Oudaen enumerates many themes women wrote about, from love to politics, and concludes that women who choose these kinds of themes will never write perfect poetry, except if they engage in writing on religion, the only subject he deemed suitable for women. In doing so, they would build an 'irreproachable Mountain of virgins / on which Wisdom teaches.'⁴

This chapter focuses on similar paratexts⁵ that accompanied print-published religious literature written in the vernacular by Protestant women in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch Republic.⁶ We aim to understand how these women's supposed religious authority was referred to in order to legitimise their publications, as it was generally acknowledged that writing and especially publishing were difficult to reconcile with social constraints and gender expectations.⁷ Oudaen was not the only one to attribute authority to women's role as religious inspirators. Recent scholarship has revealed how women's religious agency allowed them to surpass the traditional 'image of a pious wife submitting to her husband's authority.'⁸ Despite existing conflicting ideas on early modern women's religiosity,⁹ women had many possibilities to perform

central roles in the religious domain,¹⁰ especially in the religiously diverse and tolerant Dutch Republic.¹¹ Zooming in on the Dutch Reformed Church, it is striking that, in this era, more women than men were formal members,¹² maybe because membership offered them ‘a vehicle for greater influence and recognition in the community.’¹³ Outside of the church, they were, for example, active as educators in the domestic sphere,¹⁴ and women could even become leading figures in more radical, sectarian Protestant movements and groups.¹⁵

Against this background, it seems only logical that female authorship of religious literature was accepted and even praised at a relative early stage. Indeed, religious writings such as (epic) poetry or songs were among the first independent publications by Dutch women, and they remained dominant in women’s writing during the whole early modern period.¹⁶ However, as our chapter will show, women’s devotional literary publications were not unproblematic, even when they appeared posthumously, as was often the case. Whereas every early modern author had to contest and create authority as a necessary condition for authorship, this applied even more so to women, also with regard to religious literature.¹⁷ In this chapter, we argue that the creation of women’s authority as authors of religious literature was based on a ‘strategy of inversion’: women’s supposed constraints and weaknesses – for example, their inability to acquire classical or theological knowledge, or to devote time to their religious poetry – were turned into advantages and strengths.

In particular, our analysis focuses on the pillars on which the contested authority of female religious authorship was built: divine experiences, regularly connected to the weakness of the female body, and female poetic skills to write edifying literature, which were sometimes linked to motherhood competences. We will demonstrate how references to women’s inability to cope with the demands of the literary system were a way to deal with dominant, patriarchal ideas about what the female role should be and what religious and literary authority should include. As such, this chapter confirms the argument – recently advocated by Martha Howell and central to this book – that women’s agency (which is always based on authority) commonly originated from opportunities offered by specific features of a cultural system, while only few women tended to disrupt this system as a whole.¹⁸ This vital interaction between claiming feminine poetic qualities and embracing female inferiority in the creation of women writers’ religious authority is also discussed by Aurélie Griffin in her chapter in this book.

In addition, this chapter contributes to a reassessment of the presumed opposition between women’s conforming domestic role and their public authority. In the introduction to a 2018 special issue of the *Journal of Early Modern History* on women’s religious activities, Lehtsalu, Moran, and Evangelisti argue that recent scholarship on non-conforming women who ‘felt authorized to speak publicly about religious and political matters’ has veiled ‘domestic and less radical aspects of Protestant women’s lives.’¹⁹ By focusing on female literary

publications on religious topics, this chapter responds to the need to reveal less radical practices that could be situated at the interface between women's domestic and public domains.

Our argument is grounded in a large-scale study of the front matter of female-authored print-published literature from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,²⁰ and it reflects the growing prominence of women writers on the Dutch book markets.²¹ Front matter could consist of a combination of paratexts (e.g. laudatory poems, dedications, forewords, and visual elements such as portraits and frontispieces). The analysis in this chapter particularly focuses on those publications in our corpus that belong to the field of Protestant literature, while we interpret them against the background of our larger corpus.²² Among the authors of these paratexts accompanying female-authored Protestant publications, different classes, family situations, geographical places, and religious or political communities are represented. The authors include both the female authors themselves, other authors (male or female), and printers. In some cases, the women writers themselves must have been involved in the composition of the front matter; in most cases, they were not. Notably, there are many posthumous publications in our corpus. The differences in gender of the paratextual authors and period of origin are certainly relevant when questioning religious authority and the justification of authorship: some women may have lacked the authority to publish their work during their lifetime or to include a preface of their own pen. Our analysis, however, primarily reveals that male and female authors of paratexts (whether published posthumously or not) shared the ambition to root the female religious authorship in the women's constraints to publish literature. Or, to say it with an often quoted biblical reference to 2 Corinthians 12 in these paratexts, the women's strength was made perfect in weakness.

Inspired by Divine Experience

When the Pietistic Rotterdam poet Sara Nevius (1632–1706) once asked a professor of theology for advice, he answered: 'why do you ask me, ask the Lord Jesus himself.'²³ Her publisher quoted this incident in the front matter of her posthumously published meditations as their direct cause. Many paratexts express this idea that women's religious writing is a gift of God, or, more strongly formulated, the realisation of God's decree. The woman writer then is not an autonomous actor, but rather a puppet, even more so when the act of writing itself is presented as being guided by God, for example, in the exclamation in a male-authored text in the front matter of Anna Rethaan's *Nagelaaten gedichten* ('Posthumous Poems') (1730), published by her Pietistic son-in-law: 'Which Spirit, which Deity controls the quill in the hands of a genuinely Godly Woman [...]?'²⁴ Rethaan (1684–1729), in this metaphor, is not even moving her writing material herself.²⁵ This process of divine control is visually depicted on the



Fig. 1. I. C. Philips, *Frontispiece of Jetske Reinou van der Malen's, Zede-, Mengel- en lykgedichten*, (Leeuwarden, Erven Hendrik Halma: 1728). © Royal Library The Hague.

frontispiece of another Pietist's publication, the Frisian Jetske Reinou van der Malen (1681–1752). On the frontispiece of her *Zede- Mengel- en Lyk-Gedichten* ('Moralistic, Miscellaneous, and Funerary Poems') (1728), which includes a fair portion of religious verses, Poetry is inspired and illuminated by Divine light, while being surrounded by Religion, Truth, and Virtuousness (Fig. 1).²⁶ According to the explanatory poem that accompanies this frontispiece, Van der Malen extracts 'literary honey' from Saron's rose garden, which is a reference to the Song of Songs, 2:1, depicting Saron as the region where the most beautiful roses grow.²⁷ The poem presents this rose garden as a place of 'true wisdom' ('waare wysheit') instead of mere beauty. As such, Van der Malen's inspirational source is depicted as a divine kind of wisdom.

At first sight, Rethaan and Van der Malen are portrayed as ignorant authors who depended on divine wisdom and guidance. In accordance with this representation, the preliminary work of Van der Malen's book primarily emphasises the writer's lack of knowledge and skills, and conventionally opposes Van der Malen to the learned preachers to whom this work was dedicated. At the same time, however, the frontispiece portrays Van der Malen as someone who

not only passively *consumes* divine wisdom but also *creates* poetry. The accompanying poem defines this poetry as an 'Eye' ('Oog') to see 'Knowledge' ('Wetenschap'):²⁸ an instrument that illuminates religious knowledge that is, in fact, invisible.

Despite her lack of learning and book knowledge, Van der Malen was presented as a woman able to produce useful religious poetry. This competence is, in her case as well as in that of others, grounded in the divine inspiration she received. Women's capacities of religious authorship are even presented as surpassing those of men, because they came directly and solely from God and as such were based on their own experiences as believers, in opposition to male knowledge based on books and learning. Several paratexts refer to this idea, implicitly or explicitly.²⁹ In a preface to Jacoba Petronella Winckelman's (1696–1761) Pietistic *Stichtelyke gedichten* ('Edifying Poems') (1763), for example, male, learned poetry inspired by classical knowledge and examples is opposed to the poems in this collection, emanating the 'fragrance of devote experience'.³⁰

Illustrative is also another laudatory poem from Joachim Oudaen for Geertruyd Gordon.³¹ Just like he did in the poem with which we opened this chapter, he shows himself surprised about Gordon's competences as a religious poet. In this case, he explicitly refers to her lack of learning as the reason for his surprise. Indeed, in her foreword, she herself had emphasised that she did not aim for 'a magisterial attitude of any kind', since she lacked the necessary book knowledge.³² In line with this, Oudaen at first cannot believe it is an unlearned woman who succeeds in seeing through God's plans instead of a learned man, but reading her work, he has no choice but to credit her for it:

Is this coming from the hand of one of the wisest?
 Of one, who gave the school of knowledges
 All what her wisdom knew, or all what her lessons needed?
 Of one, thoroughly trained in the languages,
 From which we think we can retrieve the secret of truth?
 Oh no! A weak constitution, a female Hand,
 Discovers the glory of this precious Diamond;
 [...]
 Here a wise Woman, touched by a higher Spirit,
 Made the perfect Work out of God's perfect Law:³³

Gordon is touched by God himself and that experience makes her more knowledgeable than any learned man. Thus, in the legitimisation of female religious authorship, the weakness of the female sex is converted into a strength. A woman's authority is related to something that at first seems to be a shortcoming: her lack of book learning and education. But exactly because such women are not learned and are not busy reading books all day, their opportunity to

maintain an intense relationship with God surpasses that of men and enables them to obtain valuable experiential religious understanding.

Women's authority as religious authors was, however, not based on their experiential knowledge solely, but predominantly on their initiative to transfer this knowledge by means of their literary writing, since poetry was considered an appropriate way to spread it.³⁴ It was exactly by combining references to their religious and literary abilities that women, while depending completely on God, could be turned into leading figures for other people. Whereas Gordon emphatically refrained from a leading role, many women writing religious poetry are presented as leaders or educators.³⁵ The late seventeenth-century poet Henrica van Hoolwerff (1658–1704), for example, is said to be able to 'Comfort, Teach, Edify' others by means of her poems.³⁶ The early eighteenth-century Allegunda Ilberi (1695–1740) even presents herself as a leading woman in religious affairs, while a female author of a laudatory poem in the front matter of her poetry collection emphasises how Ilberi inspires others, including herself, to sing and to follow in her footsteps.³⁷ Women's authority as writers of religious literature could thus be grounded in the allowance for a special relationship with God.

Experiences of Suffering

This special relationship with God was sometimes explicitly portrayed as grounded in a woman's physical infirmity. Suffering is a vital element of early modern religious culture: especially in more spiritual and meditative circles, the imitation of Christ's suffering was generally perceived as the most intense way to follow, understand, and honour God.³⁸ Albeit not systematically considered as a gender-specific phenomenon, representations of female suffering in paratexts implicitly confirm the widespread idea of the female sex as the physically weaker of the two sexes. The infirm female body thus enhanced the woman's spiritual capacities and her strong relationship with God: the female author's bodily suffering and renouncement of physical pleasures enabled her to receive divine messages.³⁹

In preliminaries to the earlier mentioned Henrica van Hoolwerff's *Kracht in zwakheid* ('Strength in Weakness') (1696), posthumously published after a long illness, the opposition between her weak body and strong mind is often highlighted by male pastors, suggesting that her 'highly learned Soul' and 'quick Mind' were the consequence of her ability to suffer her diseases patiently and to control her 'worn-out body'.⁴⁰ A mind able to distance itself from 'idle worldly commotion', now has the possibility to develop 'mental meditations and heavenly thoughts'.⁴¹ Because Van Hoolwerff was skilled to continually examine 'divine pages' from the 'heavenly book', she acquired a metaphorical type of book knowledge, which is fundamentally different from traditional book knowledge but is nonetheless modelled after it.⁴² The knowledge Van Hoolwerff possessed,

while mental and spiritual of character, is represented as material matter: a book to leaf through, a property that cannot decay. So in Van Hoolwerff's case, all oppositions between body and mind, material and immaterial substance are removed, to confirm the outstanding religious knowledge and divine experiences she was able to acquire.

While these reflections on physical suffering most of all established women's religious authority in general – a discourse that was also revealed by earlier scholarship on spiritual leadership among early modern women – this female quality was specifically used to legitimise authorship as well.⁴³ A telling example is Geesje Pamans (1727–1821), who opened her autobiographical doctrine of salvation *Egt verhaal van geestelyke bevindingen* ('True Story of Spiritual Experiences') (1775) with an extensive preface reflecting on her personal spiritual growth. She explains that God has repeatedly incited her to write, while she was, for quite a long time, unable to recognise this message and to turn it into concrete actions:

Again and again, I was spurred on by the Spirit, and encouraged by his promises of salvation, to write about my experiences and to bring them to light; but I feared it like a steep mountain. In this situation, I resembled the young Samuel, I did not recognise the Lord's voice in a sufficiently clear and distinct way, because I was not able to fathom that the Lord would demand of me, being his weak and unworthy handmaiden, to undertake such a severe work of love in his service, as it requires so much power, spirit and mercy.⁴⁴

Pamans, however, experienced a vital reversal once she became ill for a long time: her physical weakening enabled her to finally receive God's message:

After this, which is now five years ago, it happened to me that it pleased God to put me in bed with a protracted illness: during this illness, my heart experienced a wonderful amount of God and Christ's love, sent by the Spirit: it was like heaven already descended in my soul.⁴⁵

Her illness not only enabled her to get closer to God, but consequently also to write down her experiences. As a child, she never learned to write, 'since I went to school for only two weeks', but she rapidly developed her writing skills when she felt a desire to arouse and comfort 'souls searching for salvation', which, we assume, happened after she deepened her relationship with God as a consequence of her illness.⁴⁶

A couple of years after the publication of her *Egt verhaal*, she published a second book, the undated *Ziels verlustiging in Jehova* ('The Delight of the Soul in Jehovah'), which was not restricted to her own experiences of life, but departs from psalm 23. In her preface, she presents this as a daring and unusual choice:

while several 'learned and excellent men' have already discussed and explained this psalm,⁴⁷ she was a woman who did not read anything except for the popular exegesis by Hellenbroek⁴⁸ and who was curbed by her 'blindness, incompetence and weakness.'⁴⁹ She, however, had a strong inclination to undertake this work, as she felt that the order that God had given to her was still unfulfilled after the publication of her first work. That is why she dared to take this drastic step: leaving the safe borders of her own life, she got to work with God's word itself.⁵⁰

Pamans's prefaces are exceptional, since she as a woman (instead of a man) is reflecting on her spiritual relationship with God so extensively, while legitimising her authorship through her physical infirmity and the mental growth that resulted from it. Paratexts rarely discuss the connection between illness and authorship in such an explicit way, but in a more implicit manner, this idea also underpins other preliminaries about physical weakness: infirmity grants women writers the power and capacity, and thus the authority, to write.

Feminine Poetic Skills

In addition to a special relationship with God rooted in spiritual experiences of suffering, female authors were considered to have distinctive poetic skills that primarily enabled them to edify others. In an anonymous preface to Geertruyd Gordon's second publication, from 1710, her modesty is stressed by saying that the best way to praise her is by emphasising the usefulness of her work, since her only goal is to spread God's praise.⁵¹ At the same time, the author of the paratext presents poetic knowledge and skills as necessary conditions for reaching this goal: only skilled poets are able to use 'pleasing words' with which they can present 'grand and considerable matters.'⁵² In this way, Gordon's power of expression is anchored in her poetic qualities.

This line of reasoning should be connected to the general assumption that religious literature, fulfilling primarily edifying and meditative goals, had to be as clear, and thus as plain and simple as possible to reach a large audience of not necessarily highly educated people.⁵³ This could be problematic for authors who wanted to show their learning and the foundation of their poetic skills in classical literature and theory.⁵⁴ Given the relatively scarce possibilities to obtain exactly this learning and book knowledge for women in particular, the poetics of religious literature offered a possibility to stage their supposed 'softer' poetic skills, such as simplicity, virtuousness, and diversion.⁵⁵

The opposition between classical and divine inspiration was a topos in the representation of religious poetry, written by men as well as women. To give just one example from our corpus: one of Ilberi's laudatory poets states that Apollo and his muses should leave, because her edifying poetry is of a higher degree than all this classical nonsense.⁵⁶ It also occurs, however, that the opposition is used to contrast male learned literature and (preferred) female poetry, as is the

case in the poem from Rethaan's front matter quoted earlier: following his emphasis on her inspiration from God, the male author of the paratext states that '[a] lot of male poetry has to yield place to the style of these [Rethaan's] poems.'⁵⁷

The opposition between learned texts and 'softer' poetry is a central theme in the front matter of a publication by the seventeenth-century reformed Sibylle van Griethuysen (1621–1699).⁵⁸ The book, *Hemelsche Troost-borne* ('Heavenly Spring of Comfort'), consists of three prose treatises about Romans 8: 1–4, written by minister Sibrandus Francisci Eydelshemius (1594–1671). They are preceded by Van Griethuysen's poems about the same texts. In the paratexts written by herself and Eydelshemius, as well as by others, Van Griethuysen is presented as an extraordinary woman, having learning and book knowledge at her disposal.⁵⁹ She and Eydelshemius are treated almost as equals.⁶⁰ Yet her poetry is emphatically contrasted with Eydelshemius's solid arguments as being easier to digest for the reader and therefore better suited for edification and meditation.

Eydelshemius's long contribution to the front matter, his 'Oratie' ('Oration'), can be read in part as a defence of poetry.⁶¹ Apparently, Eydelshemius felt the need to legitimate to his fellow ministers and theologians that he had published a hybrid work, in which prose treatises were combined with poetry. He metaphorically presents himself and Van Griethuysen as cooks who use the same meat, but prepare different dishes. Whereas he writes extensive explications and illuminations, the poetry of Van Griethuysen is sweet, short, and good.⁶² Van Griethuysen's style is 'pure', her words are 'well-chosen', 'clear', 'plain', 'fine', and 'graceful.'⁶³ All this contributes to the function of the poetry: compared to the prose, these poems offer relief; they pass on virtues, edify, and aid memorisation.⁶⁴

Eydelshemius's defence of poetry is not explicitly presented as a defence of Van Griethuysen's poetry as being feminine, but it is evident he emphasises those characteristics that are traditionally attributed to women. When he reflects on his own poetic skills, which he modestly presents as not in any way approaching those of Van Griethuysen, he emphatically refers to writing verses in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, which implies they were far less plain and simple than Van Griethuysen's verses and much more grounded in learning and book knowledge.⁶⁵

Van Griethuysen is presented as surpassing her learned co-author because of her poetic qualities, not only by Eydelshemius himself but also by other paratextual authors. In a short poem, the publisher Claude Fonteyne (1594–1655) playfully states that both Eydelshemius and Van Griethuysen have earned a 'crown of life', whereas only Van Griethuysen also carries a second crown: the laurel wreath.⁶⁶ Combining religious knowledge with literary, feminine skills is considered a fruitful combination that makes Van Griethuysen an authority in the domain of religious poetry. This authority is also reinforced by means of the visual material in the front matter of the *Hemelsche Troost-borne*. The frontispiece (Fig. 2) depicts Religion and Poetry as the equal pillars of this publication, and they each fulfil their own vital role: while Religion relies on the Bible (in her hand) and the Church (to which she turns her eyes), Poetry, whose eyes are



Fig. 2. C. Fonteyne, after I. v. Meurs, *Frontispiece of Sibylle van Griethuysen & Sibrandus Francisci Eydelshemius's Hemelsche Troost-Borne* (Leeuwarden, Claude Fonteyne: 1651).
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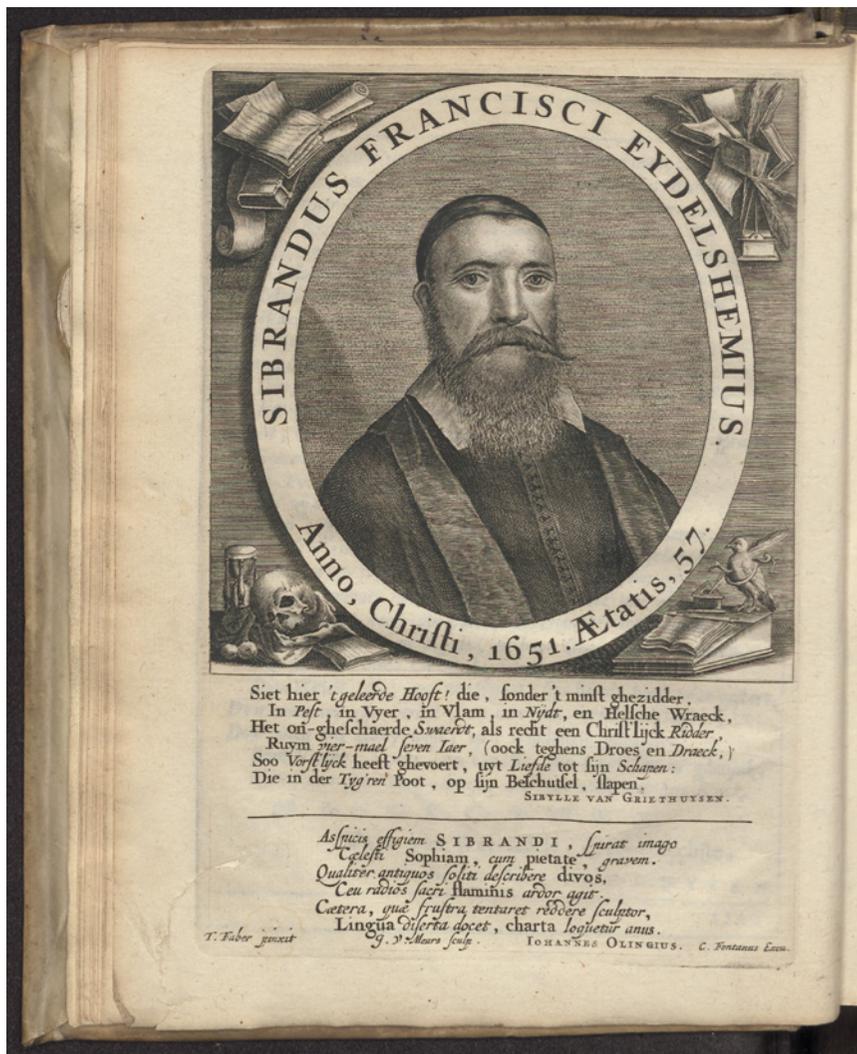


Fig. 3. C. Fonteyne (Fontanus), after T. Faber, *Portrait of Sibrandus Francisci Eydelshemius*. From: Sibylle van Griethuysen & Sibrandus Francisci Eydelshemius, *Hemelsche Troost-Borne* (Leeuwarden, Claude Fonteyne: 1651). © University Library Leiden.

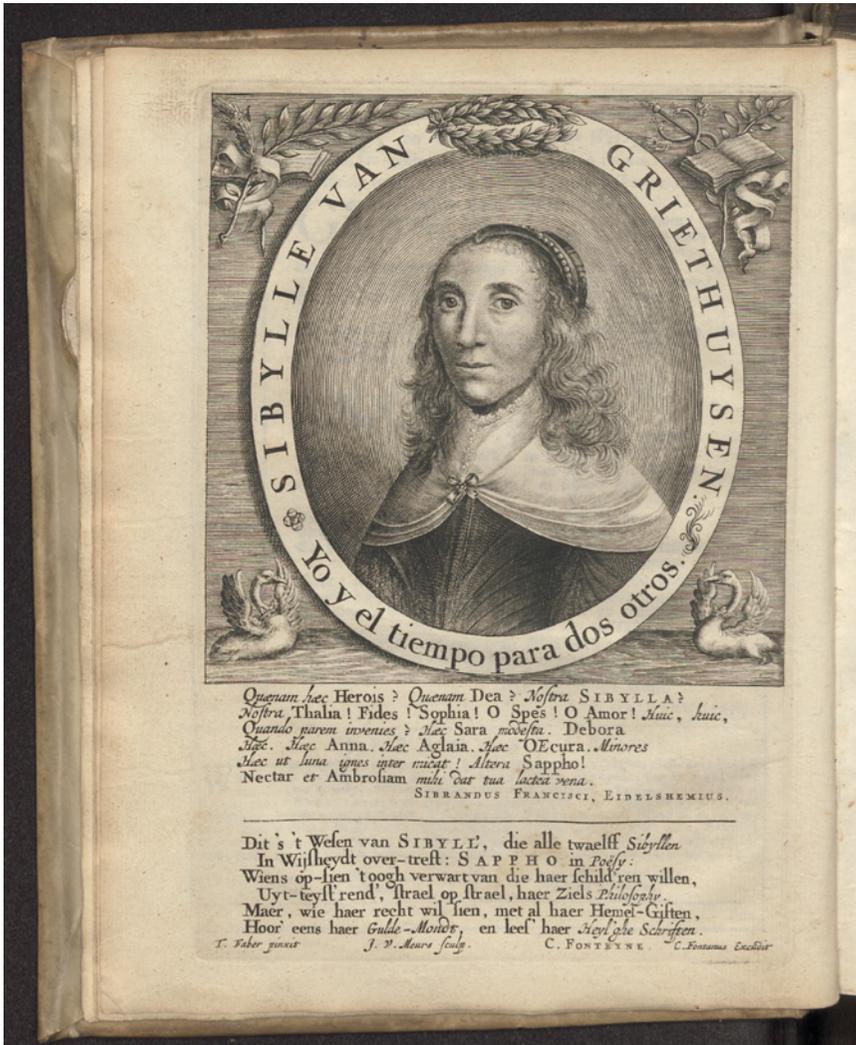


Fig. 4. C. Fonteyne (Fontanus), after T. Faber, *Portrait of Sibylle van Griethuysen*. From: *Sibylle van Griethuysen & Sibrandus Francisci Eydelsheimius, Hemelsche Troost-Borne* (Leeuwarden, Claude Fonteyne: 1651). © University Library Leiden.

turned to the reader, can be interpreted as transferring this knowledge to the larger public. With the 'unrolled scroll', she edifies the reader, as the explanatory poem clarifies.⁶⁷ That Van Griethuysen is the one to be connected to these poetic qualities of transfer, while Eydelshemius is the one who embodies the deep knowledge, appears from their portraits (Fig. 3 and 4). Van Griethuysen has a laurel wreath above her head and is surrounded by two small books, one of which has the format of a song book, and by two swans, conventionally accompanying poetry, whereas Eydelshemius is surrounded by more and larger books, a writing desk, and a vanitas symbol. The adaptation to the traditional Caduceus on Van Griethuysen's portrait is also meaningful: the inclusion of peacocks' heads, symbolising Juno, emphasises Van Griethuysen's femininity.

Notwithstanding demonstrations such as these, women did not completely refrain from embellishment and they, too, albeit some more than others, were focused on the classical framework in which literature was conventionally produced in the early modern period (as the above reference to Juno in Van Griethuysen's portrait demonstrates). It is more telling that, in the paratexts to their publications, the plainness of their poetry is highlighted and connected to the religious aims of the works. In the front matter of an earlier publication, *Spreekende Schildery* ('Speaking Painting') (1646), Van Griethuysen herself emphasises that the publication first of all aimed to add to God's praise and honour, which was the very reason for the unsophistication of her work.⁶⁸ She does so, however, in a dedication in which she emphatically asks the male dedicatee to act as her poetic tutor who corrects the weaknesses of her 'female style'. It is a prose text, but it is characterised by a highly literary style and extensively refers to classical mythology.

Mothers as Educators

Religious poetry's edifying aims were sometimes also explicitly connected to the women's didactic competence as mothers. Although in early modern literature, housekeeping and care for husband and children are conventionally represented as possible threats to writing, and current scholarship about early modern Dutch women's writing generally assumes that women's participation in writing and publishing literature was hampered by a lack of time due to household responsibilities, motherhood is also presented as an advantage in our corpus.⁶⁹ This is in line with the commonly acknowledged importance of women's mothering and educational potential in the Reformation and the Protestant tradition.⁷⁰ As appears from our corpus, a woman's qualities as a mother and educator could be expanded from the private household into the public domain by writing poetry, and as such contribute to her authority as an author of religious literature, who – as we saw in the previous section – was expected to teach and enlighten a broad audience.

We again turn to Van Griethuysen's publications to demonstrate how motherhood was presented as contributing to the edifying character of women's literary products.⁷¹ In this case, the edifying power of religious poetry and the poet's outstanding poetic qualities were connected to her motherhood, although the front matter of her oeuvre simultaneously shows the representation of motherhood as a threat to female authorship. Van Griethuysen ends the afterword of the above-discussed *Hemelsche Troost-Borne* by stressing that her husband will be happy the work is finished, since it enables her to return to her duties as a wife and a mother. She shows herself pleased with the fact that she will now be able to accomplish the education of her only daughter, who she emphatically presents as entering the age in which one starts to deepen the relationship with God.⁷² Indeed, in the afterword, she shares her intention to write less in the future.⁷³ Yet in all of her works' paratexts, edification and education are pivotal to their legitimation and are consistently connected to this very motherhood.

This is most visible in the front matter of *Spreeckende Schildery* (1646). Theologian Albertus Bieruma of Groningen presents Van Griethuysen's poetry in his laudatory poem as the proof that women too are knowledgeable in religious affairs. Indeed, her work elicits the followings lines from him:

Many Men have long sweated over this topic /
That you / Learned Woman! forge with your senses.
These are secret issues; You are capable of versifying them /
In such a manner that they are able to edify Laymen / and Scholars /
Yes / God's community will be Educated satisfactorily
For its Church's duties / From this Work.⁷⁴

In this praise, we recognise the mechanism we elaborated on in the previous section: Van Griethuysen, as a woman, surpasses men because her poetic skills enable her to teach and elucidate the secrets of God. Her ability to do so is asserted through references to her motherhood: in the preamble to this praise, Bieruma presents her as producing both 'natural progeny' (a reference to her daughter) and 'children of paper' (referring to her writings), and *Spreeckende Schildery* as such is the proof of her fertility.⁷⁵

Van Griethuysen's publisher, Claude Fonteyne, too, in one of his poems included in the after work, presents her as surpassing men.⁷⁶ Again, this is implicitly connected to her motherhood when he, in the second part of his short poem, enumerates all who profit happily from her 'Brains' and 'Art'.⁷⁷ He starts with her husband, to whose will 'this Brain can bow', to continue with 'the ones whom you raise and who are nursed by your breasts'.⁷⁸ After mentioning her town and her acquaintances, he ends with 'everyone', because 'from you, everyone can learn something'.⁷⁹

This suggestion of a relationship between motherhood and a woman's abilities to teach and edify a large reading public urges us to reconsider the interpretation of the constraints of motherhood as brought forwards by Van Griethuysen herself in the afterword to her third publication.⁸⁰ By emphasising in the last lines of the afterword, and thus of the publication as a whole, her duty to educate her daughter, albeit as something that cannot be combined with writing religious poetry, Van Griethuysen contributes to the underpinning of her own authority as an author of religious literature.

In this chapter, we have shown how, in paratexts of female literary publications about religion, women's authority was construed by means of a strategy of inversion, turning weaknesses and constraints into strengths and advantages, and presenting these as the building blocks of religious authorship. As an effect of our methodological choice to focus solely on paratexts included in female-authored publications, we are not able to establish to what extent these strategies differed from paratextual authority building among men: future research can compare our findings with male strategies. What our analysis did reveal, however, is how this strategy of inversion was a way for women to deal with their complex position as publishing authors of devotional literature, as this was perceived inappropriate and self-evident at the same time. Through their conventional rhetoric of modesty and references to the perceived shortcomings of women in the literary domain and beyond (their lack of time and education, and their weaker constitutions), paratexts confirmed as well as disrupted these women's positions.

As such, this chapter invites us to reassess the presumed opposition between women's conforming domestic role and their public authority. While scholarship on early modern religious women recognises the fluidity between private and public roles, it generally still underlines the limitations women's domestic roles posed on their authority.⁸¹ Our analysis, instead, reveals that female authority could rather be perceived as rooted in domestic restraints and qualities. Motherhood, for instance, a domestic, private matter, is simultaneously represented as a public function, as female writers were considered to 'mother' others, also beyond their own family. Women who were confined to their sickbeds were able to gain religious understanding that was unavailable in books, and as such vastly exceeded the borders of the bedroom. In such cases, the women's presumably restricted circumstances impacted positively on both the knowledge they acquired (not the accepted classical or theological knowledge, but experiential, divine understanding) as well as the abilities they had to transfer this knowledge by means of literature (since their caring capacities fed their skills to teach others in a plain and clear way). The authority of female religious authorship was thus mainly based on the women's domestic orientation and capacities, since their gendered religious knowledge and literary skills were rooted in this domesticity.

Notes

1. We would like to thank Pieta van Beek for her feedback on an earlier version of this chapter.
2. For biographical information and further references with regard to the life and work of the women writers discussed in this chapter, we refer to the extensive reference books by M. A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans. Schrijvende vrouwen uit de vroegmoderne tijd*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1997; Lia van Gemert et al. (eds.), *Women's Writing from the Low Countries 1200–1875. A Bilingual Anthology*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2010; as well as the online lexicon 'Digitaal vrouwenlexicon van Nederland', <http://resources.huylgens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon>.
3. 'de kracht en roem van 't Vrouwelijk geslacht schijnt in zich zelve t'overwinnen' (Joachim Oudaen, 'Burgerlijke eerbied aan de vrouwen onzes tiids [...]', in Geertruyd Gordon, *Aandachtige opmerkingen by wijze van uytbreydinge over de tien geboden Gods*, Rotterdam, B. Bosch, 1686, 7r).
4. 'onbesproken Maagdenberg / Waar op de Wijsheit geeft haar Lesse' (ibid., 8v).
5. Although paratexts are regularly defined as places to construct authority, studies of paratexts in female publications tend to focus more on the rhetoric of modesty and the conventionality of the genre than on self-assured claims of authority. Following Patricia Pender's plea to interpret tropes of modesty in early modern women's writing as part of strategic self-fashioning, we aim to approach paratexts as instruments to construct authority by negotiating between the women's weaknesses and strengths. Patricia Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, London and New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012. See also Karl A. E. Enenkel, *Die Stiftung von Autorschaft in der neulateinischen Literatur (ca. 1350–ca. 1650). Zur Autorisierenden und Wissensvermittelnden Funktion von Widmungen, Vorworttexten, Autorporträts und Dedikationsbildern*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2015; Kevin Dunn, *Pretexes of Authority: The Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1972.
6. Since 'literary' was no premodern category, we decided to demarcate our corpus pragmatically, based on what was included in the first and still most comprehensive anthology of early modern Dutch women's writing: Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*. Literary texts only available in manuscripts or in other languages (such as Latin or French) are not part of this corpus.
7. About women writers' social constraints and gendered expectations in the early modern literary field, see Juliane Jacobi, 'Education: Learning, Literacy and Domestic Virtues', in Amanda L. Capern (ed.), *The Routledge History of Women in Early Modern Europe*, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2019, 115–134; Martine van Elk, *Early Modern Women's Writing. Domesticity, Privacy, and the Public Sphere in England and the Dutch Republic*, Cham, Springer and Palgrave MacMillan, 2017; Sarah Joan Moran and Amanda C. Pipkin (eds.), *Women and Gender in the Early Modern Low Countries, 1500–1750*, Leiden, Brill, 2019; the introduction of Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*; Van Gemert et al. (eds.), *Women's Writing*; Annelies de Jeu, 't Spoor der dichteressen. Netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750), Hilversum, Verloren, 2000.
8. Cf. the historiographical survey provided in the introduction to a special issue on early modern women's religious activities: Liise Lehtsalu, Sarah Joan Moran, and Silvia Evangelisti, 'Introduction: Perspectives on Women's Religious Activities in Early Modern Europe and the Americas', in *Journal of Early Modern History*, 2018, 22, 3–5 (quote 3).

- For scholarship focusing on female interferences between domestic and public spheres, see Amanda L. Capern, 'Protestant Theology, Spirituality and Evangelicism', in Capern (ed.), *The Routledge History of Women*, 263–286.
9. Judith Pollmann, for instance, demonstrated that women's religious activities were portrayed as courageous as well as 'wrong, silly and superstitious' (Judith Pollmann, 'Women and Religion in the Dutch Golden Age', in *Dutch Crossing*, 2000, 24(2), 162–182, esp. 177).
 10. Capern, 'Protestant Theology, Spirituality and Evangelicism'.
 11. Cf. Moran and Pipkin, 'Introduction', in Moran and Pipkin (eds.), *Women and Gender*, 10–11. For women's activities in different confessional contexts, see Marybeth Carlson, 'In and Out of the Public Church in the Dutch Republic', in Susan E. Dinan and Debra Meyers, *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds*, New York, Routledge, 2001, 115–134. See also scholarship on female Catholics in the Dutch Republic, who experienced some freedom to perform religious activities and form quasi-religious communities, as a consequence of the weak ecclesiastical structure and control: Marit Monteiro, *Geestelijke maagden: leven tussen klooster en wereld in Noord-Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw*, Hilversum, Verloren, 1996; Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2008.
 12. Maarten Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 209–210.
 13. Carlson, 'In and Out of the Public Church', 120.
 14. Capern, 'Protestant Theology, Spirituality and Evangelicism'.
 15. Elizabeth Bouldin, "A Good Martha?" Female Leadership and Domestic Life in Radical Pietistic Communities', in *Journal of Early Modern History*, 2018, 22, 28–48; Mirjam de Baar, *'Ik moet spreken': het spiritueel leiderschap van Antoinette Bourignon (1616–1680)*, Zutphen, Walburg Press, 2004; Mirjam de Baar, 'Van kerk naar sekte: Sara Nevius, Grietje van Dijk en Anna Maria van Schurman', in *De zeventiende eeuw*, 1991, 7, 159–166; Pieta van Beek, *The First Female University Student: Anna Maria van Schurman (1636)*, Utrecht, Igitur, 2010; Pieta van Beek, 'Het is dezelfde geest waardoor ik leef en ademhaal': de spiritualiteit van Anna Maria van Schurman', in Jaap van Amersfoort, Pieta van Beek, and Gerrit Schutte, *Ora et Labora. Twaalf opstellen over christelijke spiritualiteit in de praktijk*, Hilversum, Verloren, 2014, 45–62.
 16. Cf. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*, 50–54.
 17. We build on scholarship that approaches authority as a necessary condition for authorship that must be actively contested and created during the early modern period, when the author 'lost much of his role as authorized leader': Stephan Donovan, Danuta Fjellestad, and Rolf Lundén (eds.), *Authority Matters. Rethinking the Theory and Practice of Authorship*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2008, esp. 5.
 18. Martha Howell, 'The Problem of Women's Agency in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe', in Moran and Pipkin (eds.), *Women and Gender*, 22–30.
 19. Lehtsalu, Moran, and Evangelisti, 'Introduction', 6.
 20. This research is conducted as part of the collaborative research project Creating a Knowledge Society in a Globalizing World 1450–1800, theme group 'Understanding Knowledge'. Cf. our upcoming chapter: Feike Dietz and Nina Geerdink, 'Clever, but Not Learned? Practical Knowledge Discourses in Paratexts of Literary Publications by Dutch Female Authors (1600–1800)', in Marieke Hendriksen and Fokko-Jan Dijksterhuis, *Understandings of Knowledge*, New York, Routledge, forthcoming. In total, we gathered over 450 paratexts from 223 publications – poetry, novels, songbooks, and plays, etc. – written by Dutch women active in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Starting from Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*, we included all

- women who published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This means all female authors mentioned in the book from Cornelia Ewoutsdr. Teellinck (ca. 1553–ca. 1576) to Anna Maria Moens (1777–1832), who published independently.
21. E.g. Van Gemert et al. (eds.), *Women's Writing*; Schenkeveld-van der Dussen et al. (eds.), *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*; De Jeu, 't *Spoor der dichtersessen*; M. A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'Schrijvende vrouwen in de Gouden Eeuw: onmogelijke mogelijkheid', in Internationale Vereniging voor Neerlandistiek, *Nederlands 200 jaar later. Handelingen dertiende Colloquium Neerlandicum*, Woubrugge, 1998, 119–136.
 22. Publications from the Southern Netherlands and/or written by Catholic women also form part of our corpus, but since the majority is published in the Republic and written by Protestant women, we decided to exclude these from our current analysis. We do, however, sometimes refer to paratexts from Catholic publications in the notes.
 23. 'waarom vraaght ghy my, vraaght het de Heere Jesus selve' (Willem à Brakel, 'Aan den leser', in Sara Nevius, *Een aendachtig leerling van den Heere Jesus*, Rotterdam, for the publisher [=W. à Brakel], 1706, fol. [*6]v).
 24. 'Wat Geest, wat Godheid stuurt de veder, in de hand / Der zeer Godvrugte Vrouw [...]?' (Pieter de la Ruë, 'Op de geestelyke gedigten van vrouwe Anna Rethaan', in Anna Rethaan, *Nagelaaten gedichten*, Middelburg, Michiel Schryver, 1730, fol. [5]v).
 25. About the pen metaphor as trope in the modest presentation of women writers more generally, see Helen Smith, 'Women and the Materials of Writing', in Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith (eds.), *Material Cultures of Early Modern Women's Writing*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 14–35.
 26. Jetske Reinou van der Malen, *Zede- Mengel- en Lyk-Gedichten*, Leeuwarden, Henrik Halma, 1728.
 27. 'letter-hooning' (J. Oosterwyk, 'Op de Tytelprent', in Van der Malen, *Zede- Mengel- en Lyk-Gedichten*).
 28. Ibid.
 29. See also Dietz and Geerdink, 'Clever, but Not Learned?'
 30. 'geur van godsvruchtige bevinding' (R. Schutte, 'Voorrede', in Jacoba Petronella Winckelman, *Stichtelyke gedichten*, Middelburg, Hendrik Sas, 1763, iii and ix).
 31. Joachim Oudaen, 'Op de Alderheerlijkste ter-neder-stelling der Gedachten over de tien geboden Gods', in Gordon, *Aandachtige opmerkingen*, fol. [6]r-v.
 32. 'eenige Meesterachtigheid' (Gordon, *Aandachtige opmerkingen*, fol. 3).
 33. Komt dit ons van de hand van eenen alderwijsten?
 Van eene, dien de School der wetenschappen gaf
 Al wat haar wijsheid wist, of eischte haar lessen af?
 Van eene, door en door geoefend in de talen,
 Waar uit men 't grond-geheim der waarheid meent te halen?
 O neen! een zwak gestel, een Vrouwelijke hand,
 Ontdekt den luister van dien dierb'ren Diamant;
 [...]
 Hier heeft een wijze Vrouw, door hooger Geest geraekt,
 Van Gods volmaakte Wet 't volmaakste Werk gemaakt:
 (Oudaen, 'Op de Alderheerlijkste ter-neder-stelling').
 34. See, for example, Schutte, 'Voorrede', ii; for further examples, see the arguments about the power of poetry in the next section.
 35. Related is the argument that women helped preachers with their task to speak to the community and enlighten the people, as brought forward, for example, in the front matter of Sibylle van Griethuysen, *In rym gestelde claeg-lieden Jeremiae*, Embden, H. Callenbach, 1645.

36. 'Troosten, Leeren, Stichten' (Johannes Reelandt, 'Oprichting en bericht aan Des Juffers nabestaande Bloedverwanten en vordere Goede Vrienden', in Henrica van Hoolwerff, *Kracht in Swakheit*, Amsterdam, Gerardus Borstius, 1696, 13).
37. J. B. Tegneus, 'Op de gemoedelyke verssen en gesangen van mejuffrouw Alberthoma geboren Ilberi', in Allegunda Ilberi, *Verademingen eener vermoeide ziele*, Leeuwarden, Tobias van Dessel, 1736, 33.
38. See, for example, Walter S. Melion, *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550–1625*, Philadelphia, Saint Joseph's University Press, 2009; Karl Enekel and Walter S. Melion (eds.), *Meditatio: Refashioning the Self. Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, Leiden, Brill, 2011.
39. See, for example, Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England*, London, Routledge, 2002, 13–16.
40. 'hoog-geleerde Ziel', 'vlugge Geest', 'afgematte lyf' (Abraham Oosterland, 'Een sterke Ziel in 't zwakke Lichaam van Mejuffr. Henrika van Hoolwerff', in Van Hoolwerff, *Kracht in Swakheit*, 10–11; Melchior Leydekker, 'Aan de Godvruchtige en achtbare juffer Henrica van Hoolwerff', in Van Hoolwerff, *Kracht in Swakheit*, 4).
41. 'ydel aardsch gewoel', 'geestelyk gepeyns, en Hemelsche gedagten' (Oosterland, 'Een sterke Ziel in 't zwakke Lichaam', 10).
42. 'Goddelyke blaëren', 'Hemels boek' (ibid., 11).
43. Cf. many examples in Marit Monteiro, *Geestelijke maagden: leven tussen klooster en wereld in Noord-Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw*, Hilversum, Verloren, 1996.
44. 'Ik wierd wel telkens op nieuw aangezet door den Geest, en met syne heilbeloften bemoedigt, om te schryven van myne ondervindingen, en die in 't ligt te geven; dog ik bleef 'er tegen aan zien als enen steilen berg. Het ging my in dezen als den jongen Samuël, ik kende de stemme des Heren niet klaar, nog onderscheiden genoeg; want ik konde niet denken, dat de Here my syne swakke en onweerdige dienstmaagd zo een zwaar liefde werk, daar zo veel kragt, geest en genade toe nodig was, zou gelieven op te leggen in synen dienst' (Geesje Pamans, 'Voorrede', in Pamans, *Egt verhaal van geestelyke bevindingen*, Zwolle, S. Clement, 1775, fol. *6v). Pamans refers to 1 Samuel 3.
45. 'Hier op gebeurde 't my nu vyfjaren geleden, dat God my op een langdurig ziekbedde geliefde teleggen: gedurende die ziekte genoot ik wonder veel van Gods en Christi liefde, door den Geest aan myn herte: 't was als of den Hemel reeds in myne ziele daalde' (ibid., *7r).
46. 'want ik hebbe maar twee weken ter schole gegaan', 'heilzoekende zielen' (ibid., **7r).
47. 'geleerde en voortreffelijke mannen' (Geesje Pamans, 'Voorreden', in Pamans, *Ziels verlustiging in Jehova. Naar aanleiding van psalm XXIII*, Zwolle, F. Clement, iv).
48. Abraham Hellenbroek's *Voorbeeld der Goddelyke Waarheden voor Eenvoudigen* ('Example of Divine Truths for Ordinary People') (1706) was a popular introduction to religious doctrines, which was often republished and was frequently used for the education of children as well, cf. John Exalto, 'Abraham Hellenbroek', in George Harinck et al. (eds.), *Het gereformeerd geheugen. Protestantse herinneringsculturen in Nederland, 1850–2000*, Amsterdam, Bert Bakker, 2009; P. J. Buijnsters, 'Nederlandse kinderboeken uit de achttiende eeuw', in Harry Bekkering et al. (ed.), *De hele Biblebontse berg. De geschiedenis van het kinderboek in Nederland & Vlaanderen van de middeleeuwen tot heden*, Amsterdam, Querido, 1989, 186.
49. 'blindheid, onbekwaamheid en zwakheid' (Pamans, 'Voorreden', vii).
50. Ibid., viii.
51. H. W. V. B., 'Opdragt. Aan alle Liefhebbers en waare Beleyders van de Algemeyne Leere van Gods Genade en dus der Christelyke Vryheid', in Geertruyd Gordon, *De Poësy van de Geest en Deugtryke Juffrouw G. Gordon de Graeuw*, Amsterdam, Johannes van Heekeren, 1710, fol. 3–4r. Defending one's authorship by referring to its fulfilment of a

- sense of duty and usefulness is conventional in women's (self-)representation; see Gillian Wright, *Producing Women's Poetry, 1600–1730: Text and Paratext, Manuscript and Print*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, 12.
52. 'aengename woorden' and 'grooten uytgebreyde dingen' (H. W. V. B., 'Opdragt', fol. [4]r).
 53. Ton van Strien and Els Stronks, *Het hart naar boven. Religieuze poëzie uit de zeventiende eeuw*, Amsterdam, Ambo and Amsterdam University Press, 1999, 342.
 54. *Ibid.*; more extensively, see Els Stronks, *Stichten of schitteren. De poëzie van zeventiende-eeuwse gereformeerde predikanten*, Houten, Den Hertog, 1996, 147–304.
 55. About the knowledgeability of female literary authors, see Dietz and Geerdink, 'Clever, but Not Learned?'
 56. B. Idema, 'Korte Inhoud [...]', in Ilberi, *Verademingen*, 20. Another example can be found in the 1686 foreword by Geertruyd Gordon, who states that she has described the truth as unadorned as possible: Gordon, *Aandachtige opmerkingen*, 3v. In the Catholic tradition, too, we recognize this topos; see, for example, the foreword of the Ghent nun Van den Kerchove: Van den Kerchove, *Het II. deel vanden speel-hof der liefde Gods*, Ghent, s.p., 1666. She underlines that she did not decorate her verses and kept them as simple as possible because she did not aim to compete with poets of high esteem, but instead only wished to communicate the face of God.
 57. 'Gedigten, voor wier styl, veel manlyk rym moet zwigten: / Gedigten, waar in zwier gepaard gaat met verstand' (De la Ruë, 'Op de geestelyke gedigten'). Another example can be found in the front matter of Catharina Pietersdr. de Wilde's publication of 1756, which is presented emphatically as produced by a female hand ('werk eener Vrouw hand') and as such surpassing male religious poetry because of women's tradition of being guided by God: V.Z., 'Op de bespiegeling van Gods Kerk- en Waereldbestier', in Vrouwe C. P. [=Catharina Pieterdr. de Wilde], *Bespiegelingen van Gods Kerk- en Wereldbestier*, Amsterdam, Pieter Meyer, 1754, fol. 4v.
 58. Sibylle van Griethuysen and Sibrandus Francisci Eydelschemius, *Hemelsche Troost-Borne*, Leeuwarden, Claude Fonteyne, 1651.
 59. See, for example, Sibrandus Francisci Eydelschemius, 'Oratie', in Van Griethuysen and Eydelschemius, *Hemelsche Troost-Borne*, fol. g.
 60. Van Griethuysen and Eydelschemius, *Hemelsche Troost-Borne*. The most important difference is that some of the poems directed to Eydelschemius are written in Latin. Also, the presentation of the two in titles of paratexts is conventionally gendered; whereas Eydelschemius is called 'learned', Van Griethuysen is 'honourable' or 'virtuous'.
 61. Sibrandus Francisci Eydelschemius, 'Oratie', in Van Griethuysen and Eydelschemius, *Hemelsche Troost-Borne*, fol. d–h ij–v.
 62. *Ibid.*, fol. f–v–f ij–r. See also H. W. V. B., 'Opdragt', who refers to Geertruyd Gordon's 'sweet evangelical voice' (in opposition, for that matter, to the 'compulsion' ['dwang'], 'cursing' ['vloekken'], and 'threats' ['dreygementen'] [of preachers?] that commonly led believers).
 63. 'reyn', 'uytgelesen', 'clær', 'duydelyck', 'schoon', 'cierlijk' (Eydelschemius, 'Oratie', fol. f ij–v).
 64. *Ibid.*, fol. f ij–v.
 65. *Ibid.*, fol. f ij–r.
 66. 'levens-croone' (Claude Fonteyne, 'Danckbaer Klinck-dicht', in Van Griethuysen and Eydelschemius, *Hemelsche Troost-Borne*, fol. j–v).
 67. 'uyt-gherolde Blat' (Arendt van den Busche, 'Tijtel-Plaets Verclaringhe', in Van Griethuysen and Eydelschemius, *Hemelsche Troost-Borne*, fol. a iij–r).
 68. Sibylle van Griethuysen, 'Den Eer- en Achtbaren, Voorsienighen ende Constrijcken Arnoldo van den Bosch [...]', in Van Griethuysen, *Spreeckende Schildery*, Leeuwarden, Claude Fonteyne, 1646, fol. A3v–A4v.
 69. Lia van Gemert, "'Onwederstanelyken drang": het vrouwelijk schrijverschap in achttiende-eeuws Nederland', in *De Achttiende Eeuw*, 1995, 27, 256–279; Schenkeveld-van der

Dussen et al., *Met en zonder lauwerkrans*, 39–43. Some of the references to advantageous motherhood in our corpus are to be found in Moonen's funerary poem about Anna Morian, published in her 1698 posthumous poetry, in which he compares her to a biblical mother (A. Moonen, 'Eerlant, of Herdersklagte over de Doot van Joffrou Anna Morian'; in Anna Morian, *De Dichtkunst van Anna Morian*, Amsterdam, Wed. Gysbert de Groot, 1698, 151); in Allegunda Ilberi's husband's laudatory poem in her *Verademingen eener vermoeide ziele* from 1736, in which he wishes her to 'Prosper long, in Church, at Home, for me and the sweet offspring' ('Bloei lang, in Kerk, in Huis, voor my en lieve spruiten') (A. Alberthoma, 'Op de Ziels-verademingen [...]'; in Ilberi, *Verademingen*, 36); and in Rethaan's front matter, in which her son-in-law emphasises how he, because he could call her 'Mother', was able to profit from her knowledge and wisdom (Pieter Boddaert, 'Aan den Lezer', in Rethaan, *Nagelaaten gedichten*, fol. 3–5r). Motherhood references also can be found outside of the domain of religious literature, as in Lambert Bidloo's poem in the front matter of Geertruid van Halmale's poem on the occasion of the birthday of William III in 1698, where the maternal metaphor is elaborated on extensively: Lambert Bidloo, 'Aan den E. Heere Antonio Maire [...]', in Geertruid van Halmale, *Algemeene Vreugde [...]*, Amsterdam, Erven Jacob Lescaillje, 1698, 3–5.

70. Capern, 'Protestant Theology, Spirituality and Evangelicism', 271.
71. The emphasis on the edifying and educational value of her works can be recognised not only in the publications discussed so far but also in Van Griethuysen's first publication of 1645: it is the main topic in both her own foreword and the two laudatory poems in Sibylle van Griethuysen, *Claeqlieden Jeremiae*, Embden, H. Callenbach, 1645.
72. Sibylle van Griethuysen, 'Een-voudighe Nae-reden. Aen alle Christen Menschen', in Van Griethuysen and Eydelshemius, *Hemelsche Troost-Borne*, 541.
73. *Ibid.*, 536.
74. Albertus Bieruma, 'Op het Gheleerde Rijn-Werck, Van de Hoogh-Begaefde Vrouwe, Vrou Sibylle van Griethuysen [...]', in Van Griethuysen, *Spreekende Schildery*, fol. D4r-v):
'Hier over hebben wel veel Mannen oyt gesweet /
't Geen gy / Geleerde Vrou! met uwe Sinnen smeedt.
't Zijn saken van Geheym; Gy weetse so te dichten /
So datse Leeck / en Clerck / tot lering' connen stichten /
Ja / Godts Gemeynte sal genoehsaem Onderricht
Bekomen / uyt dit Werck / tot hare Kercken-plicht'
75. 'Natuurlijck Zaet' and 'Papiere-Kinders', *ibid.*
76. Claude Fonteyne, 'Anagramma [...]', in Van Griethuysen, *Spreekende Schildery*, fol. D2r.
77. 'Breyn' and 'Kunst' (*ibid.*).
78. 'dit Breyn can buyghen', 'dien ghy queeckt, en die uw' Borsten suyghen' (*ibid.*).
79. 'yder een', 'van u, can elck wat leeren' (*ibid.*).
80. In which, for that matter, references to motherhood are less dominant, but can be found, too, for example, in Eydelshemius, 'Oratie', fol. g ij-v.
81. Also argued by Lehtsalu, Moran, and Evangelisti, 'Introduction', 6.

CHAPTER 8

‘Instructing herself by fad or fancy’: Depictions and Fictions of *Connoisseuses* and *Femmes Savantes* in Eighteenth-Century Paris

Belinda Scerri

In his 1759 *Essay on Taste*, Alexander Gerard asserted that the contemplation of diverse and select objects was necessary to develop aesthetic discrimination and thereby satisfy the senses: ‘Thus may we always be sure of administering pleasure to the mind, by presenting to its contemplation a multitude of objects, or even, a greater number than it expected to see.’¹ At the beginning of the eighteenth century, engagement in collecting and connoisseurship became a means not only to develop taste but also to fulfil aspirations for greater social power.² For noblewomen in particular the objects and art displayed in their Parisian *hôtels* and country *châteaux* were vehicles for the construction of cultural identity. Louise-Bénédicte de Bourbon, duchesse du Maine (1676–1753) and Jeanne-Baptiste d’Albert de Luynes, comtesse de Verrue (1670–1736) were renowned *connoisseuses* and women of learning in regency Paris. The term *connoisseur* or *connoiseuse* denoted a knowledgeable and aesthetically sensitive judge. Connoisseurs formed a community of taste. They stimulated arts’ patronage, and their *cabinets* and homes became the nexus for a new mode of social interaction that nurtured the arts and sciences. The identity and status of *connoisseuses* like Verrue and du Maine was further constructed through their portraits, both visual and textual.

This chapter explores Verrue’s and du Maine’s representation – and self-presentation – as a social construct, or pose, enabling a consideration of the deeper cultural meanings inflected through pictorial and literary portraits.³ The images of du Maine are nuanced compositions. While early portraits of the duchesse conform to the cultural mores of the period, depicting her in mythological guise, she also sat for an atypical, if not unprecedented, portrait at study.



Fig. 1. Jean-François de Troy, *Portrait of Anne-Louise-Bénédicte de Bourbon-Condé, duchesse du Maine [as Venus]*. Oil on canvas. © Musée des Beaux-Arts Orléans, François Lauginie. (Plate 28, p. 376)

The duchesse made the considered choice of eminent artist de Troy to represent her actively engaged in intellectual pursuits. By contrast, extant painted depictions of Verrue are apocryphal. Tracing Verrue's *savanterie* through sales catalogues of her book and painting collections, and through the inventory after her death, allows a more nuanced appreciation of her erudition and the breadth of her collection. Reading contemporary textual and visual portraits of these women through a narrow lens overlooks the manner in which they depict performed gender and power relations enacted by and upon the figures. Instead, a historicised examination of the act of connoisseurship, as articulated through Verrue's and du Maine's collections and portraits, allows for an understanding of how art, objects, and architecture conveyed their status and highlighted their intellectual capabilities and artistic taste.⁴

The Duchesse du Maine: Studied Poses

By the middle of the eighteenth century, there were over 450 private *cabinets* in the townhouses of Parisian connoisseurs. While the term *cabinet* implies an item of furniture, or a small room or closet, and indeed these collections were once housed in small cabinets, by the early eighteenth century, the *cabinet* was a room, or often several reception rooms, that allowed for the munificent display of art and precious objects.⁵ One of the finest *cabinets* in Paris at this time belonged to Louise-Bénédictte de Bourbon-Condé, duchesse du Maine (Fig. 1). She was the eighth child of the duc and duchesse of Enghien and, as a member of the reigning Bourbon house, was styled a *princesse du sang*, or princess of the blood. In 1692, aged fifteen, she was married to the twenty-two-year-old Louis-Auguste de Bourbon, duc du Maine, the favourite illegitimate son of Louis XIV and his mistress Madame de Montespan.

The duchesse du Maine employed architecture as an expression of personal and political power. Nina Lewallen has noted that the duchesse commissioned her townhouse with multiple *cabinets*, which were spaces, typically encoded as masculine, wherein the owner might undertake intellectual and business pursuits.⁶ Lewallen observes that, in the *hôtel* du Maine, rooms dedicated to the display of collections or books replaced the *cabinet de toilette*, or *boudoir*, usually found in the home of a noblewoman.⁷ In *Architecture Française*, Jacques-François Blondel found the irregular layout of the *hôtel* du Maine noteworthy. The architect was critical of the design asserting that, while ‘all the rooms that are easily accessible serve to proclaim the magnificence of an edifice [...] & the interior and exterior decoration correspond’, the small scale of the rooms ‘does not follow the laws prescribed by the rules of the art [of architecture].’⁸

Of special interest to visiting connoisseurs was the *Salon de la Chine*. The room displayed the duchesse’s collection of Chinese porcelain and chinoiserie objects, ‘of the greatest magnificence’, rumoured to have cost close to 100,000 livres – an astonishing sum for the time.⁹ The collection was important, but of equal value to du Maine was its ability to convey her affluence and nobility. Katie Scott has documented the relationship of architecture to social function in the eighteenth-century *hôtel*.¹⁰ Du Maine’s Chinese room was located on the first floor in a suite of rooms that formed a hybrid of *appartements de société* and *de parade*. The former, Scott observes, were suites of rooms that served social functions as distinct from the formal, ceremonial purpose of the *appartements de parade*.¹¹ The first-floor rooms housing the duchesse du Maine’s collections were spaces in which her peers would have gathered to engage in entertainments or intellectual intercourse, but also where she welcomed important visitors. The enfilade nature of the rooms, opening successively from the central *Salon Doré*, ensured visitors could readily comprehend the abundance and richness of du Maine’s collection and her attendant eminence.¹²



Fig. 2. Jean-François de Troy (1679–1752), *The Feast of Dido and Aeneas: An Allegorical Portrait of the Family of the duc and duchesse du Maine* (1704). Oil on canvas. Private Collection.
 © Photo courtesy of Sotheby's New York. (Plate 29, p. 377)

A comparative analysis of the duchesse's portraits by pre-eminent artist Jean-François de Troy (1645–1730) reveals her personal trajectory: from the more conventional depiction of the noblewoman as Venus, dated 1694, to the ca. 1705 work lauding her study of astronomy. The portraits expose how the duchesse, as she amassed personal power and built her court at Sceaux, constructed a strategic representation of personal authority that still referenced accepted tropes of femininity. Jean-François de Troy was an artist favoured by Madame de Montespan and her children. His 1730 *Mercur de France* obituary makes particular reference to de Troy's facility in posing female sitters, noting 'he was very inventive in giving a woman in his portraits some historical, poetic, or gallantly conceived role, but always appropriate and full of decorum'.¹³ He painted at least two portraits of the king's mistress, Montespan, one in which she is posed as the goddess Diana. He later depicted her son, the young duc du Maine, alongside his sister Louise-Françoise de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Nantes, who is presented in the guise of Venus. De Troy's obituary touches on his connection to the family while highlighting his skill as an artist, 'he joined hereafter, two talents, of representing history and portraiture in several

inimitably tasteful paintings of families, among which one must mention above all that done for M. le duc du Maine, making reference to a monumental canvas depicting the duc and duchesse du Maine as the ill-fated royal lovers, Dido and Aeneas, surrounded by courtiers (Fig. 2).¹⁴ De Troy again evoked the goddess of love in his 1694 portrait of the duchesse du Maine depicted as Venus in what appears to be a typical, mythological portrait of a noblewoman of the era. This was painted just two years after her 1692 marriage to du Maine and likely commemorates their union. The duchesse is posed as Venus, accompanied by Cupid and a putto representing love, and the pomegranate fruit in the lower left symbolises fertility. The mythological portrait endows the duchesse, by association, with a patina of the power of the gods. She holds orange blossoms, symbol of eternal love, fidelity, and fertility.

While the portrait seems representative of noblewomen's portrayals of age, it can be read as an expression of both personal power and discontent. Mary Sheriff has positioned allegorical portraits of women as having the potential to capitalise on the slippage between the heroic competence of the character they are portraying and the sitter's personal aspirations. Portraits such as this one become the site of resistance as the female form shows what Sheriff terms 'the "truth" of castration' – or in this case, resistance to it.¹⁵ The duchesse du Maine considered her marriage an unequal match, her husband being an illegitimate son, unable to inherit the throne, while she was a royal princess from the house of Condé.¹⁶ The duchesse d'Orléans more crudely reported the inequity of the match in a letter, stating 'overtures of marriage have been made from the Cripple to the House of Condé' – a reference to the club-footed duc's approach to the exalted Condé family.¹⁷ One nobleman at court derided the duc du Maine, claiming: 'He has very little Merit, and a great deal of Vanity [...] he is very proud and jealous of his Rank', but noted that the couple related indifferently rather than acrimoniously, stating 'he lives in pretty good decorum with his Duchess.'¹⁸ The solo portrait reminds the contemporary viewer of the duchesse's elevated premarital status as a *princesse du sang*, daughter of the Bourbon prince de Condé and the Bavarian princess Palatine. The image claims power and authority independent of that of her husband.

A mere decade later, the duchesse made a more overt statement of resistance to accepted portraiture tropes in *The Astronomy Lesson of the Duchess du Maine* (ca. 1705) by Jean-François de Troy (Fig. 3). The portrait was painted in her study at Sceaux, a château and estate the duc du Maine purchased for his duchesse in 1700. The *Astronomy Lesson* is actually a triple portrait – of the duchesse, Nicolas de Malézieu, and the abbé Genest, a poet and member of the Académie Française. A mathematician, astronomer, *académicien*, and tutor to the duc and duchesse du Maine, Nicolas de Malézieu endowed Sceaux the status of satellite court to the power of Versailles when he called it 'this exclusive Court that Madame the duchesse du Maine has devoted to herself under the name of *l'Ordre de la Mouche à Miel* (*The Order of the Honey Bee*)'.¹⁹



Fig. 3. Jean-François de Troy,
*The Astronomy Lesson of the
duchesse du Maine at the
château de Sceaux* (ca. 1705).
Oil on canvas. © Collection
du Musée du Domaine
Départemental de Sceaux,
Benoît Chain. (Plate 30, p. 377)



Thwarted in her marriage, the duchesse sought to elevate her own status in several ways, including the establishment of *l'Ordre de la Mouche à Miel*, to which she admitted the favourites from her entourage, even going so far as to mint medals and have yellow sashes sewn to bestow on the members (Fig. 4).²⁰ The entertainments at Sceaux were magnificent and costly. At her country estate, the duchesse entertained the pre-eminent artists and writers of the era, including the Comte de Caylus, Voltaire, Henault, Montesquieu, and Rousseau, among others.²¹

The setting for de Troy's depiction of the duchesse du Maine at study are her private apartments at Sceaux. While the portrait purports to be of an astronomy lesson, it functions as a trope, not of learning but of inverted power relations. The duchesse, a princess of the blood, holds the position of influence behind the desk, with her *académicien* tutor Malézieu cast as her supplicant, perched on a tambour.²² While the 'learned male' figures could be viewed as bestowing a sense of weight and authority to the duchess, it is the duchess who commands the scene. De Troy has depicted her as of a similar stature to the academicians, but in reality, she was so diminutive that instead of the expected laudation *princesse du sang* ('princess of royal blood'), she was mockingly known as a *poupée* ('doll') *du sang* and was said to have the height of a ten-year-old.²³ Even the choice of de Troy as artist speaks to her ambition. At this time, he was an established painter, aged forty-nine, and at the height of his popularity; he had painted portraits of the legitimised children of Madame de Montespan and Louis XIV in 1691, and in 1710, he was the artist chosen to portray the duc d'Anjou (future Louis XV).²⁴ De Troy uses the portrait of du Maine at study to showcase his versatility; the rendering of sumptuous fabrics – the lustre of



Fig. 4. Henri Roussel, *Medal: 'l'Ordre de la Mouche à Miel'* (1703). Silver.
© CGB Numismatique Paris.

the silk and the inviting warmth of ermine – hints at regal connections. The repeated portraits of the duchesse posed as goddess and princess echo her royal blood and her aspirations to raise her status and that of her husband.

In this painting, the duchesse is directing Malézieu's attention authoritatively to the accoutrements of learning that surround her – the armillary sphere and



Fig. 5. Louis Borde, after Jean-Antoine Nollet, *Terrestrial Globe presented to the duchesse du Maine* (1728). Paper, papier-mâché, poplar, spruce, alder with vernis Martin, bronze. © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. (Plate 31, p. 378)

celestial sphere, and a tome to which she points, indicating the assiduousness of her scholarship, as evinced by the well-stocked library we glimpse through the gathered curtain. A physicist and prominent member of the Académie Royale des Sciences, Jean-Antoine Nollet, would later dedicate a terrestrial globe to his patron, the duchesse, in 1728 (Fig. 5).²⁵ In the painting, her tutor is strangely attired in Roman-style sandals, perhaps a reference to the Socratic mode of teaching that took the more equitable form of argument and dialogue between student and teacher. In the de Troy portrait, the duchesse is seated facing the viewer, elevated in a desk chair. The desk becomes the site of learning, a barrier for those of inferior social status, and a signifier of her erudition. The expected bureau plat – a piece of furniture one would typically find in a man's study – is swathed in fringed velvet, obscuring the table's form and therefore its

signification as either masculine or feminine.²⁶ Elsewhere, her sumptuous robes and the light causing her smooth, powdered skin and rouged cheeks to glow, are less equivocal assertions of femininity. De Troy's finely balanced painting manages to exalt the duchess's intellectual authority, reminding the viewer of her power and learning, while remaining a portrait replete with signifiers of feminine, noble beauty.

The portrait, which was displayed prominently at Sceaux, was later remarked upon by Annibale Antonini, an Italian visitor to Paris. His 1749 *mémoires* recount a visit to the *hôtel du Maine*, where the duchess entertained the *curieux* – learned visitors – drawn by the magnificence and taste of her collections. He finds the portrait of the duchess so striking and noteworthy that her other artworks are mentioned only in passing, yet he makes pointed reference to 'portraits of the family of Monsieur le duc du Maine, done by de Troy the elder, the same who had painted the Madame la Duchesse studying the globe with a master of mathematics.'²⁷ The portrait was exceptional, or perhaps anomalous, to the extent that its significance was known even to foreign visitors to Paris. If one considers this portrait of the duchesse du Maine at her astronomy lesson an early articulation of image construction, it can be seen as both self-promotion and as a forceful assertion of her status as an erudite, aristocratic woman of power and influence – an influence that remained undiminished despite marriage to a man who was her social inferior. This type of image fashioning is echoed in later *savante* portraits such as those of Louis XV's mistress, madame de Pompadour. In Melissa Hyde's research into Boucher's portrait of Pompadour at her toilette (1750), she argues that social and gender identity at this time were not simply fixed conditions from birth but an *état*, or state, which was the product of social performance.²⁸ Hyde notes that portraits such as Boucher's evidenced converging discourses of 'femininity', artifice, and class, and that such portraits were sites for the fashioning and representation of identity. Elise Goodman, in her exegesis of *femmes savantes* images, acknowledges this painting as a depiction of the duchesse actively and confidently studying. Goodman argues, however, that the figure of Malézieu exists to augment the duchesse's knowledge and, by way of contrast, highlight her beauty; the duchesse is labelled the 'quintessential *belle savante*.'²⁹ While this type of contrast is often marked in portraits of the era, here we have a more nuanced depiction of a *femme savante*: one that existed decades before such images became commonplace. While the figure of du Maine is that of an affluent, attractive noblewoman, her position within the portrait and the conspicuous display of the attributes of her learning demand the portrait be read as paean of learning, not beauty.

While the duchesse was engaged in study from 1696, when she began lessons with Malézieu, her detractors questioned her commitment to academic learning and her aptitude for it. One biographer asserted that

[s]he applied her eye to the telescope, and also to the microscope; in short, instructed herself by fad or fancy, out of passion or caprice, but without becoming one whit more enlightened in general. Through it all she played shepherdess and pastorals by day and by night; supplied ideas to be made into madrigals by her two writers Malézieu and Genest.³⁰

Her endeavours are presented as the passing indulgence of a bored aristocrat – and yet we know that this portrait was painted a decade after she first began lessons – revealing the longevity of her commitment to the study of mathematics and astronomy. Nonetheless, the unflattering picture of a *savante-dilettante* is partially supported by the reflections of her former lady's maid-turned-author Margeurite de Launay, baronne de Staal (1684–1750), who presents a provocative insight into her intellectual abilities. On one hand, de Staal observes that '[no] one ever spoke with more correctness, clearness, and fluency, or in a nobler and more natural manner.'³¹ Yet she continues, less flatteringly: 'Inquiring and credulous, she has desired to acquire all kinds of knowledge; but is satisfied to get them superficially [...] she believes in herself just as she believes in God and Descartes, without examination or discussion.'³² The duchess du Maine's contemporaries paint a chequered picture of a capricious, at times querulous, woman, committed to study and pleasure-seeking in equal measure.

The duchesse's aspiration to greater power would reach its height and ultimately engender her temporary fall from grace in 1718 when the duchesse plotted a coup to remove Philippe II, duc d'Orléans, as regent and replace him with her husband. The original manuscript documents detailing the conspiracy, along with records of the provost Trudaine's questioning of the duc and duchesse at Sceaux, reveal an elaborate scheme requiring the support of foreign powers that was doomed to fail.³³ When a German visitor to Paris published his travel guide, *Séjour de Paris* ('Sojourn in Paris'), he recorded that

[t]he duchesse du Maine also established, in the month of February 1718, an Academy of *Dames Savantes*, of which there were members Mesdames Dacier, Lambert, l'Héritier & others. But I think that since the duchesse's disgrace this Academy has closed, as one no longer hears of it.³⁴

The resultant exile from court hampered du Maine's attempts to expand opportunities for other women in her circle and social milieu to educate themselves.

The depiction of the duchesse's astronomy lesson powerfully articulates her desire for acceptance as an intellectual equal with her male peers. It is one of the earliest French portraits depicting a woman at study. The image pre-dates the portraits of *femmes savantes* that proliferated in France from the middle of the eighteenth century, the most famous of which remains the portrait of Émilie du Châtelet at study by Maurice Quentin de La Tour.³⁵ The terms *femme savante*

or *connoisseur/euse* require etymological excavation. Aspirational women of erudition and taste, like the comtesse de Verrue and duchesse du Maine, often existed outside the norms prescribed for noblewomen of their time, both in terms of fiscal independence, access to education, and, in the case of the duchesse, determined agency over depictions of herself. As became commonplace, especially after Molière's usage of the term in his famous satirical 1672 play *Les Femmes Savantes* ('The Learned Ladies'), the expression was often used to cast women back into the circumscribed role of wife, mother, and household manager. The eighteenth-century *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française's* ('Dictionary of the Académie Française') primary definition of *savant/e* – which included both male and female iterations of the term – specifies the *savant/e* as 'one who is well informed in matters of erudition, of literature, and those who have a deep understanding of the sciences' and, more generally, 'one who is well instructed or well informed in some matter'.³⁶ However, several supplementary meanings establish a pejorative application of the term in contemporary usage, in the sense of affected intellectual posturing. The pejorative exemplar of *savant/e* asserts: '*Savant, ante*: A [female] person who is too *savante*, that is to say, she knows things of which she ought to remain ignorant'.³⁷ The pejorative definition is unique among several to employ a female subject. The *connoisseur/euse* is differentiated as someone who has a specialised knowledge of objects or things rather than ideas.³⁸ The dictionary differentiates male and female forms of the latter term. In reality, the two overlapped, and the *connoisseur* was often a person with specialised knowledge of one, or in the case of the comtesse de Verrue and duchesse du Maine, several fields of study and collections of objects.

In Molière's 1672 *Les Femmes Savantes*, a satire on the education of women, the *honnête bourgeois* Chrysale exhorts his wife and sister to surrender their academic pretensions:

You ought to burn all these useless objects,
And leave science to the town's doctors;
Clear away from your attic the long telescope that strikes fear into people,
And the hundred knick-knacks that offend the eye,
Stop seeking to know what happens in the moon,
And involve yourself a little with what happens at home,
Where we see everything seems in disarray.
It is not correct, for many reasons,
That a woman studies and knows so many things.³⁹

The women are advised to turn their attention to more fitting tasks: housework, the management of servants and children, and fiscal prudence. An etching by Jean Moreau le Jeune for a 1773 edition of the play depicts fashionably dressed *femmes savantes* strolling about a library, books askew on the shelves, the accoutrements of learning – including an armillary sphere, bound tomes,

and scrolls – piled haphazardly and inaccessibly on a high shelf (Fig. 6). One of their male suitors, the only figure sporting a symbol of learning – a scroll in his coat pocket – attempts to engage an indifferent lady scholar in discussion. Common to the era was the notion of women as constitutionally unsuited to learning. The principle was inscribed in medical texts of the period, with an eighteenth-century medical treatise proclaiming: ‘The excessive sensitivity of the spirit, & the weakness of the organs, has rendered most women who inhabit cities subject to vapours.’⁴⁰ Education for women was rare and the preserve of the affluent.



Fig. 6. Antoine-Jean Duclos, after Jean-Michel Moreau le jeune, *The Femmes Savantes*, 1773. Engraving. From: Molière, *Oeuvres de Molière* (Versailles, Par la Compagnie des Libraires Associés: 1773). © Bibliothèque Municipale de Versailles.

The Comtesse de Verrue: Constraint and Accumulation

One of the duchesse du Maine's contemporaries, Jeanne-Baptiste d'Albert de Luynes, the comtesse de Verrue, also negotiated the performance of gender and self-representation in establishing herself as a *connoisseuse* and *femme savante*.⁴¹ She did so under more challenging personal conditions. Married at thirteen to Joseph Ignace Scaglia, count of Verrua, she matured among the intrigues of the foreign court of Savoy at Turin. Having birthed four children to her

husband by age eighteen, her life was further complicated by a liaison with Victor-Amedée II, duke of Savoy, to whom she birthed a further two children by age twenty-four. Her lover's determination to control all aspects of her life saw her held a virtual prisoner. Her brother, the duc de Chevreuse, recounted the difficulty of visiting her during his 1696 trip to Turin.⁴² She eventually made her escape from Turin, returning to yet another form of imprisonment in Paris in 1689. Punitive documents of legal separation from her husband dictated the comtesse remain cloistered in a convent with bars on the windows of her domicile.⁴³ The marquis de Feuquières recorded his own attempts to mediate between the estranged husband and wife, noting the details of the separation:

[...] And what is more, the Lady Verrue, is neither to go to the theatre, to the opera, to the Thuilleries, nor to public dances, nor to pass in the court-yards outside the hours of *assemblée*, and neither to go to the Foires Saint-Germain or Saint Laurent but only in the morning and only for one hour until midday and if she happens, by unforeseen accident, to find herself in a house where the count, her spouse, arrives she is to remove herself at once, and if she arrives at a house where the count will be, she will not enter there nor go to a place where he will be.⁴⁴

The comtesse's establishment as a notable connoisseur was predicated on access to funds and dependent on the goodwill of male relations. In the documents of separation, her husband denied her an allowance but allowed her to receive rents from previously granted estates – though at the reduced amount of 12,000 livres annually rather than the 15,000 livres that was her due.⁴⁵ She received a further 7,500 livre annuity through an inheritance from her father. The comtesse was a customer of John Law's private bank, which would later become the Banque Royale.⁴⁶ While the bank's paper currency and trading in shares of Law's associated *Compagnie des Indes* would be the downfall of many Parisians after its crash in May 1720, Verrue and her circle predicted the fall and sold their shares for great profit, allowing her to amass even greater wealth than she had inherited.⁴⁷ Her companion Jean-Baptiste Glucq, baron de Saint-Port (1674–1748) hailed from a family who were early investors in Law's scheme.⁴⁸ It is likely on his advice, and that of her well-connected family, that Verrue canily timed the sale of shares to avoid the crash. In her will, the comtesse made several generous bequests to members of her coterie, including gifts 'to long-time friends Monsieur Glucq de Sainte-Porte [Saint-Port] and Monsieur de Lassé [Lassay] all the paintings, chandeliers and furniture in the *cabinets* near the bedchamber and in several other rooms.'⁴⁹ The circle she gathered about her correlated, at times, with that of the duchesse du Maine and included the leading lights of noble society, members of the government, and of the academies as well as noted philosophers and connoisseurs like Voltaire, Chauvelin (who was minister of foreign affairs), Mairan of the Académie des Sciences,

l'abbé Terrasson of the Académie Française, fellow connoisseur the comte de Lassay, and Melon (the renowned economist and colleague of John Law).⁵⁰ In his *Mémoires*, her friend the comte de Tessé states that proceeds of *actions*, or shares, in the Compagnie des Indes facilitated the comtesse's acquisition of paintings, sculpture, jewels, and property, and allowed her to live in opulence, retaining twenty-five domestic servants for her personal needs.⁵¹ In 1719, with the influx of funds from her investments, she was able to sign a contract for a further two *hôtels*, adjoining her existing dwelling on the rue du Cherche-Midi, to house her ever-expanding collection.⁵²



Fig. 7. Léon Gaucherel, *Portrait of Jeanne-Baptiste d'Albert de Luynes, comtesse de Verrue*. From: Charles Blanc, *Trésor de la Curiosité tiré des Catalogues de Vente de Tableaux*, vol. I (Paris: Jules Renouard 1857). © Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art Paris, Collections Jacques Doucet.

Verrue contended with challenging constraints beyond the norm for wealthy noblewomen of her time. Even as a woman of elevated status and royal connection, a precondition of her ascendancy as *connoisseuse* was her widowhood, which came in 1704. Widows could function in a manner similar to their male counterparts in terms of collecting practices. Their acceptance, however, differed in the ways in which they were perceived, addressed, and depicted in textual accounts. In the latter, we see equal emphasis placed on their dress and manners as on their accomplishments. The accepted paths for an affluent widow in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were either retirement to a convent or dedication to the underprivileged or to the education of young women. Duchêne, in his research into widowhood in the seventeenth century, noted that a Christian widow's gestures were required to indicate adherence to

the dictates of religion and never to be self-serving.⁵³ Widowhood was either a liberation or a loss of home, contingent on her financial state and her dependence on relatives. The comtesse de Verrue's contemporary, Dangeau, reported the liberating effects of her widowhood, recording in November 1704 that 'she has caused the bars to be removed at this time. So she will have her freedom, and she will be in the world as are other women.'⁵⁴

Depictions as Fictions

Unlike the case of the duchesse du Maine, none of the extant portraits purported to be of the comtesse de Verrue are verified likenesses. Instead, we find apocryphal portraits – fictions presented as depictions. An etched female figure forms the frontispiece for the catalogue of sale for her art collection. The catalogue was not published widely at the time of her death but was reproduced, with a portrait, in a compendium of sale catalogues a century later.⁵⁵ The engraving is by Léon Gaucherel, a nineteenth-century artist, and is either an invented portrait or based on a lost eighteenth-century image (Fig. 7). Gaucherel depicts an attractive woman, coiffed and powdered, complete with beauty spot, the sheen of her décolleté bodice suggesting the lustre of silk. Sheer fabric billows, conveying a sense of movement, as though cropped from an allegorical scene of Diana at the hunt or the awakening of Galatea. Though the image accompanies the proof of Verrue's connoisseurship, the catalogue of her extensive painting collection, it excludes all signifiers thereof. Another portrait purported to be of the elderly comtesse reappeared in recent times at a Parisian auction house (Fig. 8). It was attributed to the circle of Rigaud and presents a dour though stylish and expensively dressed elderly woman. Tracing its provenance reveals the likelihood of another questionable attribution.⁵⁶ Her nineteenth-century biographer Quentin-Bauchart, in an explicatory footnote, details the existence of two other portraits that would date to the period before 1700: one, a miniature, in the *cabinet* of Jérôme Pichon, and the other he notes as by 'Rigaud or Largillière, belonging to M. le comte de Reiset and decorating the grand salon of his château of Breuil, near Dreux.'⁵⁷ Neither of these have been found.

The turbulent circumstances of her life may account for the dearth of extant portraits of Verrue.⁵⁸ Instead, the many textual portraits drawn of the comtesse deputise for painted and etched images. Textual depictions functioned differently from painted portraits. The sitter, or her family members, usually commissioned the latter, which could function as performative visual tropes of status and power. Written depictions, all by male authors in the case of Verrue, underlined the importance of adherence to gendered social mores and the subordination of intellect to signifiers of indolent affluence and femininity. The comte de Tessé's 1715 description of the comtesse in her library evokes a wealthy connoisseur of art, engaged in learning – though of a more idle, frivolous nature:



Fig. 8. École française, entourage de Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait of an Elderly Woman said to be the comtesse de Verrue* (ca. 1720). Oil on canvas. Private Collection. © TAJAN Paris. (Plate 32, p. 379)

‘With her left hand she plays with a snuffbox filled with the well-known tobacco, and with her right she holds up a book from her library [...] that she reads in an absentminded fashion.’⁵⁹ Her nineteenth-century biographer described her collection as one wherein ‘an artistic woman followed her temperament, compulsively, and alongside the theatre for which she had great affection, she assembled novels, memoirs, racy pieces, and spirited French books according to her whims.’⁶⁰ The inference we are led to draw is that she was an indolent woman who amassed a great library of lesser tomes. Her library is described as a place of opulence, with cabinets of marquetry inlay and brass, shutters with inset curtains of green taffeta, the lower sections covered in marble, occupying

a grand room with two windows onto the terrace and garden, leading onto a long gallery decorated with paintings depicting famous men and women of France in equestrian poses.⁶¹ The texts are similar in their insistence on casting Verrue in the role of dilettante.

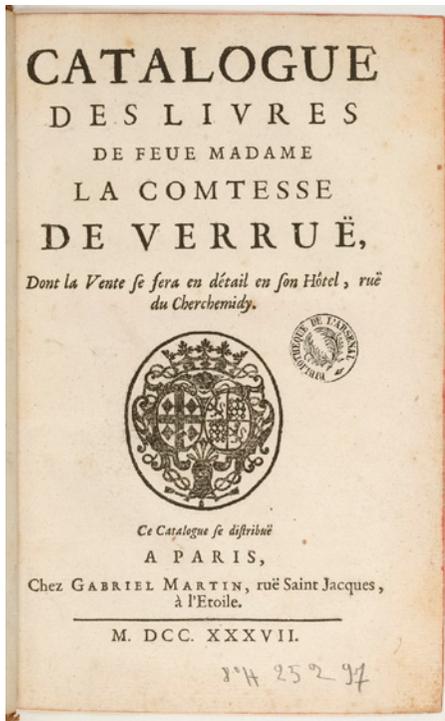


Fig. 9. *Catalogue des Livres de Feue Madame la Comtesse de Verrue* (Paris, Chez Gabriel Martin: June 18, 1737). © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

The catalogue of sale for Verrue's book collection presents a different figure: one of an erudite woman with diverse interests (Fig. 9).⁶² The comtesse was actively engaged with works we would today label feminist literature, including *Le Triomphe des Femmes* ('The Victory of Women').⁶³ She subscribed to the *Journaux de Scavans* ('The Scholar's Journal'), of which she held a complete set of issues from 1712 to 1722.⁶⁴ Her collection is that of a polyglot, containing books in Latin, ancient Greek, Italian, and French on subjects as diverse as mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, painting (historical and contemporary), and the history of different religions, including Judaism and Islam.⁶⁵ The catalogue does not, however, list all works from her vast collection.⁶⁶ Some were excised from the sale because they addressed religious *querelles* and had been condemned by *arrêt du Parlement*. Others, such as Nicolas Chorier's *Les Entretiens d'Aloisia* ('The Encounters of Aloisia') and Corneille Blessebois's

Du Rut ('On Heat'), were deemed too licentious for public consumption. The former is sapphic erotica that recounts the sexual initiation of the soon-to-be bride Octavia by her older, wedded female cousin Tullia. The inventory of her books shows that the comtesse was neither rigid nor strictly patrician in her taste. She was a true *savante* in the sense established by the Académie Française: well informed in matters of erudition.⁶⁷ In *Femmes Bibliophiles* ('Women Bibliophiles'), Bauchart made a pithy comparison of the duchesse's and comtesse's commitment to study, as reflected in their respective book collections. He asserted that the duchesse du Maine was no bibliophile; rather, he called her 'ambitious in the extreme' and claimed that, while she had 'read a great deal, learned a great deal, knowing how to speak on all manner of subjects [...] it didn't follow that she loved books, like those greats of her time, the comtesse de Verrue, and later, madame de Pompadour.'⁶⁸

Excess and Encomia

The inventory after Verrue's death provides insight into her home and collection. Running to almost one thousand pages, and completed over several months between December 1736 and February 1737, it reveals a collection so extensive and idiosyncratic it is unsurprising three dwellings were required to contain it. In his memoirs, the duc du Luynes, nephew of the comtesse, describes a panoply of objects in her townhouses. He claims the *hôtels* overflowed with bric-a-brac and multiples of like objects, unfettered by the taste of fellow connoisseurs.

She bought continually and refused nothing of her whims; and when she wanted something, she bought six or even ten more, none of which was necessary, and her whims changed as often as the object [...] she appeared to love her family greatly and was often the breadwinner [...] she left considerable pensions and money to her domestic staff.⁶⁹

In a similar vein, prolific essayist duc de Saint-Simon recorded an unflattering description of the comtesse, declaring that she acquired without the restraint of a connoisseur, calling her house '[a] type of shop, crammed with all that is rarest and most precious of jewels, furniture, porcelain, lights, silver, paintings and even rare books.'⁷⁰ There is undoubtedly an element of compulsive acquisition evident in the inventory after death and in descriptions of her collection.

The excess of the comtesse de Verrue's collection earned her a snide reference in Voltaire's *Apologie du Luxe* ('Apology for Luxury'), a satirical poem critical of excess. Voltaire wrote of her sardonically: 'the rich are born for great spending, the poor are made for great accumulation.'⁷¹ The open letter that Jean-François Melon, the regent's secretary and a member of her inner circle, wrote

in her defence, was later published in the 1740 collection of Voltaire's *Pièces Fugitives* ('Fleeting Compositions'). Melon asserted that luxury and investment in the arts was a necessity, not only for the circulation of currency but also for the maintenance of healthy industry.⁷² He proclaimed Verrue's importance as a patron of the arts, stating

I regard you, Madame, as one of the great examples of this truth. How many families of Paris subsist solely under the protection you give to the Arts. If one ceased to admire Paintings, Prints and Curiosities of all types: there you would have 20,000 men almost ruined at once, in Paris, & who are forced to go seek employment abroad.⁷³

Despite touching on the importance of her collecting practices and influence in the realms of court and politics, it is to her physical attributes that Verrue's biographer repeatedly returns, declaiming: 'It was difficult to find a physiognomy more lively, better made to arouse, than that which these biographies present in few words.'⁷⁴ Her eulogy, published in the *Mercure de France* shortly after her death in 1736, conveys a more nuanced portrait of the comtesse as *savante* and *connoisseuse*. While mention is made of 'her agreeable and engaging manner,' unlike le Blanc's nineteenth-century encomium, which dwells on her physical attributes, the *Mercure* tribute is unequivocal in its depiction of a discerning collector whose peers admired and respected her. The *Mercure* panegyric describes an accomplished *connoisseuse*: 'Her love for Paintings was her primary passion, and her House appears a Palace delightfully decorated for the glory and for the triumph of Painting and taste.'⁷⁵ The cabinet housing her art collection is described thus: 'It is of this type one of the greatest and most valuable collections that there are in Europe, and most desirable, to the liking of many of the most exacting *appréciateurs* [*sic*].'⁷⁶ Six months later, the newspaper would report on the proceedings of the sale of her art collection, observing her prevailing fine taste for painting and that the sale of both masters and contemporary artists had drawn collectors of note from Paris and elsewhere.⁷⁷ Contemporary commentaries and sales catalogues after her death reveal a woman embedded in the culture of collecting, displaying, and commissioning of fine art. What is often overlooked in accounts of the comtesse, which focus on her physical attributes, is the sharp intellect that underpinned her pre-eminence and led to the breadth of her investments. Her strategic imperative was to wield cultural and social authority by amassing and displaying objects of the finest quality – expressions of her *savanterie* – while surrounded by an influential coterie.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, visual and textual portraits of Parisian noblewomen were coded narratives reflecting both the narrow strictures that governed their existence and their attempts at resistance to them. These two exceptional women of early eighteenth-century Paris established

themselves as *connoisseuses* and patrons of the arts, as well as women of learning. They did so despite the strictures and derision, as depicted in texts like Molière's *Femmes Savantes*, that greeted women who sought a life of intellectual engagement. The painting of du Maine at her astronomy lesson is intelligible on multiple levels: as an expression of her determination to claim power in face of an inequitable marriage; as an assertion of her sagacity; and as a reflection of her social status at the centre of a coterie of scientists and artists. Furthermore, the design of du Maine's townhouse privileged spaces for displaying her collection. Visitors to the *hôtel*, whose architectural plan advertised the duchesse's connoisseurship, readily grasped the breadth and brilliance of her collection as an expression and extension of her authority. Contemporary memoirs of Verrue, however, offered equivocal accounts of her discernment and acumen; the male authors of these documents lauded beauty in greater measure than *savanterie*. The comtesse's testament and inventory after her death, and her addenda on building contracts, coupled with catalogues of her art and book collections, provide greater insight into her intellect and expertise. With widowhood granting freedom from marital strictures, the comtesse de Verrue's financial acumen allowed her to amass a substantial collection that reflected her diverse interests and idiosyncratic taste. The portraits of these noblewomen were mediated poses: mediation that expressed erudition and agency in the case of du Maine's portrait at study. They reveal that it was possible for *connoisseuses* of the early eighteenth century to exist outside the normal constraints of their time; though this was predicated on access to funds and relied on the weight of familial power to support their independence. The imagined and vestigial portraits, both textual and visual, are more than depictions of attractive women of learning. They reveal nuanced noblewomen who embraced and, at times, eschewed their prescribed roles, yet retained a place at the nucleus of scholarship, influence, and taste.

Notes

1. Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste with Three Dissertations on the Same Subject by Mr. de Voltaire, Mr. d'Alembert, Mr. de Montesquieu*, London and Edinburgh, Millar and Kincaid & Bell, 1759, 268.
2. David Porter has examined the elaborate networks of social ritual and private fantasy through which material objects participate in the construction of cultural meanings. See David Porter, 'Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of Chinese Taste', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 2002, 35(3), 396–397. Porter argues that the embrace of the exotic 'other' represented a revolt not only against the strictures of classical taste per se but also against narrowly conceived forms of privilege and the male social dominance associated with it. See also Mimi Hellman's discussion of furniture as a social actor in eighteenth-century France: Mimi Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 1999, 32(4), 415–445.
3. This chapter has benefited from the insight and advice of Jennifer Milam and Matthew Martin whose ongoing encouragement is a boon. I also wish to thank Lieke van Deinsen and Beatrijs Vanacker for their helpful suggestions.
4. See Nina Lewallen, 'Architecture and Performance at the Hôtel du Maine in Eighteenth-Century Paris', in *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 2009–2010, 17(1), 23.
5. Bettina Dietz and Thomas Nutz, 'Collections Curieuses: The Aesthetics of Curiosity and Elite Lifestyle in Eighteenth-Century Paris', in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 2005, 29(3), 244. Dietz and Nutz argue that the overlooked collecting culture of eighteenth-century Europe eludes the typology of either the *kunst-und-wunderkammer* polymathy or the Enlightenment rational classification. Rather, they examine the culture of *curiosité*, which is predicated on the intellectual interests of the collectors, their personal disposition, and their social values.
6. Lewallen, 'Architecture and Performance', 14.
7. *Ibid.*, 22.
8. '[...]toutes ces pieces [*sic*] d'un facile accès servent à annoncer la magnificence d'un édifice [...] que la décoration intérieure & extérieure y répondent [...] la proportion des pieces [*sic*] n'est pas suivant les loix prescrites par les regles [*sic*] de l'art' (Jacques-François Blondel, *Architecture Française, ou Recueil des plans, élévations, coupes et profils des églises, maisons royales, palais, hôtels & édifices les plus considérables de Paris*, vol. 1, Paris, 1752–1756, 277).
9. 'Le Salon de la Chine est de la plus grande magnificence; il a coûté seul près de cent mille livres' (Annibale Antonini, *Mémorial de Paris et de ses Environs, nouvelle édition considérablement augmentée*, vol. 1, Paris, Chez Bauch, 1749, 141).
10. Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior: Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1995, 104–105.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 106. Scott highlights that the enfilade was desirable, as it allowed rooms to be opened to extend the available space, but also because the act of passing through each successive space allowed visitors to measure the status and affluence of the *hôtel's* owner.
13. 'Il étoit très-ingenieux à donner à une Dame dans son Portrait quelque Rôle historique, Poétique ou galamment imaginé, mais toujours [*sic*] convenable & plein de bienséance' ('Obituary of Jean-François de Troy', in *Mercure de France*, May 5, 1730, Paris, G. Cavelier, 974).
14. 'Il joignit après, les deux talens de l'Histoire & du Portrait dans plusieurs Tableaux de Familles d'un gout [*sic*] inimitable, entre lesquels on doit citer sur tout celui qu'il fit

- pour M. le Duc du Maine [...]’ (ibid., 973). The painting incorporates portraits of the du Maine’s children and members of their inner circle. The *Mercur*e asserts that ‘all the people are depicted there with the most precise likeness’ (‘Tous les Personnages y sont dans la avanture la plus exacte’) and continues ‘[This is a] Painting one can call the finest undertaking and a masterpiece of Art’ ([...] Tableau que l’on peut nommer le dernier effort & le chef-d’oeuvre de l’Art’).
15. Mary Sheriff, ‘The Naked Truth? The Allegorical Frontispiece and Woman’s Ambition in Eighteenth-Century France’, in Cristelle Baskins and Lisa Rosenthal (eds.), *Early Modern Visual Allegory: Embodying Meaning*, Burlington, Ashgate, 2007, 253.
 16. Lewallen, ‘Architecture and Performance’, 3.
 17. Elizabeth-Charlotte of Bavaria, duchesse d’Orléans and Gertrude Stevenson (trans.), *The Letters of Madame from 1661 to 1708*, London, Arrowsmith, 1924, 137. Letter dated August 2, 1688 to the duchess of Hanover.
 18. A French nobleman, *Characters of the Royal Family, Ministers of State, and of all the Principal Persons in the French Court, with a short account of the French King’s Revenue, and of his Land and Naval Forces*, London, Francis Coggan, 1702, 6.
 19. ‘[...] cette cour choisie que Madame la Duchesse du Maine s’est attachée sous le nom de l’Ordre de la Mouche à Miel’ (Nicolas de Malézieu, *Les Divertissements de Sceaux*, Trevoix, Etienne Ganeau, 1712, a/ijj). See also Adolpe Jullien, *Les Grandes Nuits de Sceaux: Le Théâtre de la Duchesse du Maine*, Paris, J. Baur, 1876.
 20. The order’s title referenced her cruel barbs directed at courtiers – derived from the words of the poet Tasso’s *Animata*, with an inscription after his poem engraved on one side of the medals issued to members: ‘Small she is but she gives cruel wounds’ (‘Piccola si ma fa pur gravi le ferite’). See Hilda M. Ransome, *The Sacred Bee in Ancient Times and Folklore*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1937, 234.
 21. The female protagonist Mélinade in Voltaire’s popular and risqué novel *Le Crocheteur Borgne* is a textual portrait of the duchesse. Mélinade is a play on the name of her order ‘de la mouche à miel’. See Jacqueline Hellegouarc’h, ‘Mélinade ou la Duchesse du Maine. Deux Contes de Jeunesse de Voltaire: “Le Crocheteur borgne” et “Cosi-Sancta”’, in *Revue d’Histoire littéraire de la France*, 1978, 78(5), 723–724.
 22. Malézieu is described by contemporaries, unflatteringly, as a man of knowledge but little insight. Lemontey calls him an educated man ‘knowing mathematics, literature, Greek and Latin, improvising verses, planning theatricals, understanding something of business and combining in his servile position the advantages of universal mediocrity’ (Lemontey quoted in Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve and Katherine P. Wormeley (trans.), *Portraits of the Eighteenth Century, Historic and Literary*, New York, Knickerbocker Press, 1905, 31). The nature of the relationship between the duchesse and her cicerone and tutor was questioned by the duchesse d’Orléans, sister-in-law to Louis XIV. In a letter sent from Versailles to the duchess of Hanover and dated 1701, just a few years before de Troy’s portrait was painted, she claimed the duchesse and Malézieu were lovers (Charlotte Elisabeth de Bavière, duchesse d’Orléans and Ernest Jaéglé (trans.), *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d’Orléans, extraite des lettres*, vol. 1, Paris, A. Quantin, 1880, 268–269). For a discussion of the duc and duchesse du Maine’s relationship and their numerous infidelities, see also Marie-Catherine le Jumel de Barneville, baroness d’Aulnoy and Mr. A. B. (trans), *Memoirs of the Court of France. Relating to the Amours of the Duke of Maine, and the Marriages of the Other Illegitimate Children of the French King*, London, E. Whitlock, 1697, 75. D’Aulnoy recounts that one of the duc du Maine’s mistresses, Louise de la Vallière, later became mistress to the duc’s father, Louis XIV.
 23. Marthe-Marguerite le Valois de Villette de Murçay, comtesse de Caylus, *Souvenirs de Madame Caylus*, Paris Chaumerot jeune, 1823, 198.

24. Jean Cailleux, 'Some Family and Group Portraits by François de Troy (1645–1730)', in *The Burlington Magazine*, 1971, 113(817), xiv.
25. The globe's inscription states it was 'drawn up according to the latest and most exact observations approved by the gentlemen of the Académie Royale des Sciences in Paris. Dedicated and presented to Her Serene Highness Madame the duchesse du Maine by her very humble and very obedient servant Nollet' ('Globe terrestre dressé sur les observations les plus nouvelles et les plus exactes approuvées par Messieurs de l'Académie Roiale [sic] des sciences à Paris. Avec privilege du Roi. Dédié et présenté a S.A.S. Madame la Duchesse du Maine par son très humble et très obéissant serviteur Nollet'.) (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Collection numérique: globes. GE A-1741 and J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 86.DH.705.1.) Jean-Antoine Nollet designed and assembled the globe and Louis Borde, a publisher, engraved the map.
26. For further discussion of the gendering of furniture, see Carolyn Sargentson, 'Working at Home in the Eighteenth-Century: The History of the *Bureau Plat* and the duc de Choiseul's Writing Desks', in Shelley Bennett and Carolyn Sargentson (eds.), *French Art of the Eighteenth-Century at the Huntington*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008.
27. 'Les Portraits de toute la famille de Monsieur le Duc du Maine, sont faits par de Troy le pere [sic], le même qui a fait celui de Madame la Duchesse, qui étudie la Sphere avec un Maître de Mathématiques' (Antonini, *Mémorial de Paris*, 141).
28. Melissa Hyde, 'The "Makeup" of the Marquise: Boucher's Portrait of Pompadour at Her Toilette', in *The Art Bulletin*, 2000, 82(3), 453–475. See also Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure', 425–427, for a discussion of the multi-purposing of the *table de toilette* and its role as an object enabling the projection of self-identity.
29. Elise Goodman, *The Portraits of Madame de Pompadour: Celebrating the 'Femme Savante'*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2000, 99.
30. Sainte-Beuve discussing the duchesse du Maine in Sainte-Beuve and Wormeley (trans.), *Portraits of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 1, 34.
31. 'Car personne n'a jamais parlé avec plus de justesse, de netteté et de rapidité, ni d'une manière plus noble et plus naturelle' (Margeurite de Launay, baronne de Staal, *Mémoires de Mme de Staal-Delaunay, de M. le marquis d'Argenson et de Madame, mère du Régent*, vol. 1, Paris, Firmin-Didot Frères, 1853, 89).
32. 'Curieuse et crédule, elle a voulu s'instruire de toutes les différentes connoissances; mais elle s'est contenté de leur superficie [...] elle croit en elle de la même manière qu'elle croit en Dieu et en Descartes, sans examen et sans discussion' (Margeurite de Launay, baronne de Staal, *Mémoire de Madame de Staal sur la fin du Règne de Louis XIV*, vol. 2, Paris, Alphonse Lemerre, 1877, 93–94).
33. 'Affaire du duc et de la duchesse du Maine', in *Deuxième Section: Prisonniers Dossiers Individuels et Documents Biographiques*, Manuscrits de la bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Archives de la Bastille, Paris, 1718–1719, Ms-10895.
34. 'La Duchesse de Maine érigea aussi, au mois de Fevr. 1718 une Académie [sic] de Dames savantes, de laquelle furent membres Mesds. Dacier, Lambert, l'Héritier & d'autres. Mais je crois que depuis la disgrâce de la Duchesse cette Académie est déjà tombée, puisqu'aussi on n'en a plus rien entendu' (Joachim Christoph Nemeitz, *Séjour de Paris*, Leiden, Jean van Abcoude, 1727, 344).
35. Mary Sheriff, in 'The Naked Truth', discusses the 1740 frontispiece of *Institutions de Physique* which presents female allegorical figures including truth – a surrogate for Émilie du Châtelet – surmounted by portraits of male scientists to confer authority on the *savante*.
36. 'Qui sait beaucoup en matière d'érudition, de littérature, de ceux qui sont profonds dans les sciences', 'Qui est bien instruit, bien informé de quelque chose, de quelque affaire' (Académie Française, *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, vol. 2, Paris, 1762, 686).

37. 'On dit, *qu'une personne est trop savante, bien savante, pour dire, qu'elle sait des choses qu'elle devrait ignorer*' (*Ibidem*).
38. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 370. The dictionary lists diverse collections to which connoisseurs might dedicate themselves; these encompassed diamonds, paintings and even horses – any field of acquisition where knowledge might be specialised.
39. Molière et Gustave Lanson (ed.), *Les Femmes Savantes*, Paris, Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1900, act II, scene VII, 99–100.
 'Vous devriez brûler tout ce meuble inutile,
 Et laisser la science aux docteurs de ville;
 M'ôter, pour faire bien du grenier de céans,
 Cette longue lunette à faire peur aux gens,
 Et cent brimborions dont l'aspect importune;
 Ne point aller chercher ce qu'on fait dans la lune,
 Et vous mêler un peu de ce qu'on fait chez vous,
 Où nous voyons aller tout sens dessous.
 Il n'est pas bien honnête, et pour beaucoup de causes,
 Qu'une femme étudie et sache tant de choses'
40. 'L'excessive sensibilité de l'âme [*sic*], & la foiblesse [*sic*] des organes, ont rendu la plupart des femmes qui habitent les grandes villes sujettes aux vapeurs' (M. de Beauchêne, *De l'Influence des Affections de l'Âme dans les Maladies Nerveuses des Femmes, avec le Traitement qui Convient à Ces Maladies*, Paris, Chez Méquignon l'aîné, 1783, 1–2). The doctor proves himself more enlightened, however, when he advises against the common treatment of leeches attached to the anus as a cure for women's 'vaporous complaints'.
41. While extant documents cannot confirm the acquaintance of Verrue and du Maine, the women would undoubtedly have known of each other, if they did not directly interact. Their social circles overlapped – for example, both entertained Voltaire, and both women commissioned grand townhouses within a kilometre of each other at a similar time – 1715 (du Maine) and 1719 (Verrue).
42. Chevreuse reported his difficulties in arranging visits with his sister to the comte de Tessé who recorded the incident in a letter dated August 11, 1696. In Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon and Arthur Boislesle (ed.), *Mémoires de Saint-Simon: nouvelle édition collationnée sur le manuscrit autographe*, vol. 3, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1879, 434.
43. As late as 1704, the king's emissaries were interceding on behalf of the Verrue family to gain restitution of the confiscated estates. Tessé recounts the duc de Vendôme, head of the French armies in Italy, writing repeated letters of demand on behalf of the comtesse de Verrue. In René de Froulay, comte de Tessé, *Mémoires et lettres du maréchal de Tessé*, vol.1, Paris, Treuttel et Würtz, 1806, 93–94.
44. 'Et de plus, par les raisons cy-dessus [*sic*] exprimées ladite dame de Verrue a bien voulu s'engager de n'aller point aux comédies, à l'Opéra, aux Thuilleries ni aux bals publics, de ne passer aux cours que hors les heures d'assemblée, et de n'aller aux foires Saint-Germain et de Saint-Laurent que le matin sans y pouvoir rester plus longtemps que jusqu'à l'heure de midi au plus tard et même si par hazard imprevu ladite dame de Verrue se trouvait dans une maison où arriverait ensuite ledit sieur comte son époux, elle sera obligée de se retirer à l'instant, comme si elle arrivait dans une maison où serait le sieur comte de Verrue, elle ne pourra y entrer ou du moins elle ne pourra aller dans le même lieu où il sera' (Marquis de Feuquières, 'Lettres', in *Archives d'Etat de Turin*, reprinted in G. Lérès, *La Comtesse de Verrue et la cour de Victor-Amédée II de Savoie, étude historique*, Paris, A. Quantin, 1881, 175).
45. Documents from the *Archives d'Etat de Turin*, quoted in Lérès, *La Comtesse de Verrue*, 164; Rochelle Ziskin, *Sheltering Art: Collecting and Social Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris*, University Park, Penn State University Press, 37; see also a discussion

- of the comtesse de Verrue's painting collection in Noemie Wansart, 'L'Entourage de la comtesse de Verrue: une Circulation Originale des Oeuvres d'Art', in *Cahiers Saint-Simon, Collectionneurs et Mécènes*, 2009, 37, 3–16.
46. See Arnaud Orain, 'Une Équipe de Modernes', in *La Politique du Merveilleux*, Paris, Fayard, 2018, 103–111, for further discussion of Verrue as a share investor.
 47. Wansart, 'L'entourage', 4; Ziskin, *Shelting Art*, 43.
 48. See Ziskin, *Shelting Art*, for an insightful discussion of the circle of collectors around the comtesse. Ziskin undertakes the remarkable feat of tracing the collections and artworks of Verrue and her circle in a series of detailed appendices (211–272).
 49. *Testament de Madame Jeannne-Baptiste d'Albert, comtesse de Verrue*, September 20, 1736, AN/MC/ET/I/379. Her will contains addenda written in her own hand. Similar documents record that Verrue oversaw works on the dwelling of her sister, the marquise de Saissac, in Paris. *Transport par Jeanne-Baptiste d'Albert, comtesse de Verrue [...] en paiement des travaux faits et à faire dans l'hôtel que la marquise de Saissac, sa soeur, fait construire rue de Varenne*, June 20, 1712, AN/MC/ET/I/252.
 50. Tessé, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 1806, 96.
 51. *Ibid.*, 94–95. The comtesse was intimately involved in the decoration and commissioning of her own dwellings. A contract for building works dated July 1713 shows her engagement in the renovations undertaken for her country house at Meudon. Her personal addenda in the margins show alterations to the building contract. See *Devis et Ouvrages à faire [...] Comtesse de Verrue maison à Meudon*, July 27, 1713, AN/MC/ET/I/252.
 52. Ziskin, *Shelting Art*, 43.
 53. Roger Duchêne, 'La Veuve au XVIIe siècle', in *Onze Études*, 1984, 168.
 54. 'Elle en fait ôter les grilles à cette heure. Ainsi elle aura la liberté, et elle sera dans le monde comme les autres femmes' (Marquis de Dangeau, letter dated 1704, reprinted in Lérés, *La Comtesse*, 185).
 55. 'Catalogue des Tableaux de Feue Madame la comtesse de Verrue dont la Vente aura lieu le Mercredi 27 Mars 1737', in Charles Blanc, *Trésor de la Curiosité tiré des Catalogues de Vente de Tableaux*, Paris, Chez Jules Renouard, 1857.
 56. *Portrait of the Comtesse de Verrue*, Circle of H. Rigaud, French School, ca. 1720, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Tajan Auction House Paris, auction April 6, 2016, lot 109. According to the Tajan provenance, the portrait appeared in an exhibition in Paris in 1909 as by an unknown artist and was then displayed at the Berlin Academy in 1910 as *Portrait d'Elisabeth Desfontaines, la femme du sculpteur by Pater*. It appeared once more in 1956, attributed to Watteau as *Portrait de femme âgée*.
 57. 'Ce portrait, peint par Rigaud ou Largillière, appartient à M. le comte de Reiset et décore le grand salon de son château du Breuil, près Dreux' (Ernest Quentin-Bauchart, *Femmes Bibliophiles de France (XVIe, XVIIe & XVIIIe siècles)*, Paris, Damascène Morgand Libraire, 1886, 412).
 58. The reason for the lack of portraits in Verrue's middle age may be more prosaic. The marquis de Dangeau recounted, in his published journals, that the comtesse contracted smallpox in 1700, aged thirty, and was scarred as a result of the illness (Philippe de Courcillon, marquis de Dangeau, *Journal du marquis de Dangeau*, vol. 7, Paris, Firmin Didot Frères, 1854–1860, 256). See also Blanc after Dangeau, *Trésor*, 15.
 59. 'De sa main gauche elle joue avec une tabatière remplie de ce tabac que nous connaissons; et de sa main droite elle soutient quelque roman de sa bibliothèque [...] qu'elle lit d'une façon distraite' (Tessé, *Mémoires*, 1715, quoted in Blanc, *Trésor*, 1855, 42–43). The inventory after the comtesse's death (AN/MC/I/380) shows evidence of excess and superfluity in many areas; for example, it lists an immense collection of snuff and snuff boxes, running to several pages.

60. 'C'est une grande bibliothèque où la femme artiste a obéi à son tempérament, en compulsant, à côté du théâtre qu'elle affectionnait, tout ce qu'elle a pu réunir de romans, de mémoires, de pièces piquantes et de gauloiseries hardies jusqu'à la licence' (Quentin-Bauchart, *Femmes Bibliophiles*, 416).
61. *Ibid.*, 418.
62. *Catalogue des Livres de Feue Madame la Comtesse de Verrue*, Paris, Chez Gabriel Martin, 1737. Several copies of the *Catalogue des Livres* exist. The manuscript in the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles, contains hand-written notations of the prices fetched at auction – likely marked by a sale attendee.
63. The full title is listed in the comtesse's book-sale catalogue as *Le Triomphe des Femmes, où il est montré que le Sexe féminin est plus noble & plus parfait que le masculin* ('The Victory of Women, in Which Is Shown That the Female Sex Is More Noble and More Perfect than the Male Sex'), no author, Antwerp, 1700.
64. *Catalogue des Livres*, 228.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Actes Concernant la Succession de Madame la comtesse de Verrue*, April 1737, AN/MC/ET/I/383. See also Quentin-Bauchart, *Femmes Bibliophiles*, 416. The books remaining in her house at Meudon were bequeathed to her brother, Louis-Joseph d'Albert de Luynes, prince de Grimberghen.
67. Académie Française, *Dictionnaire*, vol. 2, 686.
68. 'La duchesse du Maine n'était pas bibliophile; [...] ambitieuse à l'excès, avait beaucoup lu, beaucoup appris, savait parler de toutes sortes de sujets et tourner les vers [...] mais il ne s'en suit pas qu'elle aimât les livres, comme les aimait, de son temps, la comtesse de Verrue, et comme les aime, plus tard, Madame de Pompadour' (Quentin-Bauchart, *Femmes Bibliophiles*, 433).
69. 'Elle achetoit continuellement et ne refusoit rien à ses fantaisies; et quand elle désiroit quelque chose, elle en achetoit six fois, dix fois même plus qu'il ne lui en falloit, et ses fantaisies changeoient souvent d'objet [...] Elle paroissoit aimer beaucoup sa famille et étoit le soutien de cette famille [...] elle laisse prodigieusement en pensions et en argent à ses domestiques [...]' (Charles-Philippe d'Albert, duc de Luynes and Dussieux & Soulié (eds.), *Mémoires du duc de Luynes sur la Cour de Louis XV (1735–1758)*, vol. 1, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1860, 131–132). In her last testament (AN/MC/ET/I/379), the comtesse made generous bequests to her domestic staff, with the will recording: 'Aux domestiques qui restent part à mon service à present y seront au jour de mon deces [*sic*] je leur donne à chacun une année de leurs gagnés [*sic*]' ('To the servants who remain in my service or who were so on the day of my death, I leave to each a year's wages').
70. 'Sa maison est moins meublée qu'elle n'est boutique accablée de tout ce qu'il y a de plus rare et de plus précieux bijoux, en meubles, en porcelaines, en lustres, en argenterie, en tableaux, même en livres curieux' (Saint-Simon and Boislisle (ed.), *Mémoires*, vol. 7, 595).
71. 'La Riche est né pour beaucoup dépenser, Le Pauvre est fait pour beaucoup amasser' (Voltaire, 'Defense du Mondain ou l'Apologie du Luxe', in Voltaire, *Recueil de Pièces Fugitives en Prose et en Vers*, Paris, 1740, 116).
72. 'Je me flatte d'avoir démontré dans mon essai politique sur le Commerce, combien de goût des beaux Arts & cet emploi des Richesses, cette ame d'un grand Etat, qu'on nomme Luxe, sont nécessaires pour la circulation de l'espece & pour le maintien de l'industrie; je vous regarde, Madame, comme un des grands exemples de cette vérité. Combien de Familles de Paris subsistent uniquement par la protection que vous donnez aux Arts. Que l'on cesse d'aimer les Tableaux, les Estampes, les Curiosités en tous genres: voilà vingt mille Hommes au moins ruinés tout d'un coup, dans Paris, & qui sont forcés d'aller chercher de l'emploi chez l'Etranger' (Jean-François Melon, 'Lettre de M. Melon à Madame de Verrue sur "le Mondain"', in Voltaire, *Recueil de Pièces Fugitives*, 113).

73. Ibid., 138. See also Arnaud Orain, *La Politique du Merveilleux: une Autre Histoire du Système de Law*, Paris, Fayard, 2018, 103–111 for a discussion of the comtesse de Verrue and her circle as investors in, and beneficiaries of, the Mississippi Bubble.
74. 'Il était difficile de trouver une physionomie plus piquante, mieux faite pour réveiller que celle que ces monographies présentent d'un peu terme' (Blanc, *Trésor*, 1857, 1).
75. 'Son amour pour les Tableaux étoit sa passion dominante, aussi sa Maison paroissoit elle un Palais heureusement orné pour la gloire et pour le triomphe de la Peinture et du goût' ('Obituary of the comtesse de Verrue', in *Mercure de France*, vol. 1, December 12, 1736, Paris, 2744).
76. 'Le Cabinet de la Comtesse de Verrue étoit en ce genre une des plus grandes et des plus précieuses Collections qu'il y eut en Europe, et préférable, au gré de beaucoup de juste Apréciateurs [*sic*] [...]' (ibid., 2745).
77. 'Report on sale of the comtesse de Verrue's art collection', in *Mercure de France*, June 6, 1737, Paris, 1179.

CHAPTER 9

Portraits of Female Mentors in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611)

Aurélie Griffin

As the author of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* ('Hail God, King of the Jews') (1611), a long religious poem that notably contains a defence of Eve, Aemilia Lanyer's bold choice to publish poetry in the famously misogynistic Jacobean age suggests an audacity that may not have needed or accepted much guidance. Her scandalous reputation now precedes her: Aemilia Lanyer, née Bassano (1569–1645) – believed by A. L. Rowse to have been Shakespeare's dark lady¹ – was the daughter of an Italian musician, became the mistress of Henry Cary, lord Hunsdon, married court musician Alfonso Lanyer while she was pregnant, and went on to publish her single volume of devotional poetry, the *Salve Deus*, before opening a school to try to support herself after her husband died. A commoner by birth who failed to elevate herself socially through marriage, Lanyer was forced to look for patronage among the aristocratic elite. Lanyer's defence of women's virtues throughout her volume is paralleled by her selecting female dedicatees only, choosing some of the most prominent women of her time as well as including a dedication 'to all virtuous ladies in generall'.²

At a time when writing was barely tolerated for women, Lanyer – like many of her female contemporaries – needed to justify her right not only to write but also to publish her own works. She thus situated herself in the wake of Mary Sidney Herbert, countess of Pembroke. Sidney Herbert was not only a famous patron but a translator and a poetess, having completed her brother's translation of the Psalms that he left incomplete when he died, as well as authored at least two original poems, which still exist today, 'The Doleful Lay of Clorinda' and 'To the Angel Spirit of Sir Philip Sidney', both elegies to her brother (among female patrons, only Queen Elizabeth and Queen Anne had more works dedicated to them).³ The need to look for a precedent that could provide both some moral and artistic guidance, together with potential material support, can easily be understood, given the controversial status of women writers in the period and the still dubious reputation of print.⁴ Like Lady Mary Wroth a few years

later, Lanyer introduces herself as a follower of the countess of Pembroke. The role of mentor is also attributed to the countess of Cumberland (although she was not a writer) in both the dedication to her and in the poem appended to *Salve Deus*, 'The Description of Cooke-ham.' Lanyer's interest in shaping a mentoring role for these patrons entails both a redefinition of patronage and of her own self-image as a poetess within her poems. This chapter will first examine the transformation of the role of patron into that of mentor in Lanyer's dedications, before exploring how the last poem of the collection, 'The Description of Cooke-ham,' enables the poetess to attribute that same role to herself in an effort to justify both her literary and religious endeavours.

As I will demonstrate, Lanyer chooses to construct her *persona* (or poetic subject, the 'I' of the poem) as a writer under the influence of female mentors across her volume: her dedication to the countess of Pembroke mirrors 'The Description of Cooke-ham' in that respect. A comparison of these two poems reveals how Lanyer wavers between the classic role of patron, offering social and financial support to an author who must willingly put themselves in an inferior position, and the more fluid one of mentor, in which social and financial inferiority can be compensated by moral, intellectual, and creative abilities. This evolution shows how the poetess attempts to regain agency over her social, artistic, and religious status.

Admiration and Self-Affirmation

Early on in the *Salve Deus*, Lanyer's encomiastic poem to the countess of Pembroke may only be the sixth of eleven dedications to illustrious women and 'to all virtuous ladies in generall', but it is also the longest, amounting to 224 lines, while the next longest, the dedication to the queen, is 162 lines. Moreover, the poem stands out from the rest because of its allegorical scope and prophetic imagery, as the persona has a vision of Mary Sidney Herbert descending upon the earth in a winged chariot, accompanied by various goddesses. Colleen Shea thus rightfully asserts that:

The Authors Dreame to the Ladie Marie, the Countesse Dowager of Pembroke is significantly other than the other dedications [...] and requires individual consideration. *The Authors Dreame* was the only dream vision poem Lanyer wrote, and one of the few written in the Renaissance at all.⁵

The singularity of this poem among the dedications is manifested in its title, being both longer and more complex than the others, which are more classically addressed to their addressee: 'To the Queenes most excellent majestie', 'To the Lady Elizabeths Grace', etc. In the titles of all the dedications but one, the author recedes behind the addressee, even when she offers her dedication to

an anonymous group ('To all virtuous ladies in generall'). The dedication to Mary Sidney Herbert, countess of Pembroke, breaks that pattern by putting 'the Author' forward in an explicit, self-referential fashion. This unexpected twist is highly revealing of the tension that will be further developed later on in the poem between the persona's elaborately expressed admiration for her model and her desire for self-affirmation.

In the title, the choice of the preposition 'to' where 'of' might have been expected is also revealing, as it shows that the dream is conceived metatextually, as a literary genre. The poem is defined by the person to whom it is addressed rather than by the person that features in it – even if they are one and the same. The title thus emphasises Lanyer's hopes for patronage from the countess, which are further addressed towards the end of the poem when the persona wakes up to go and offer her book to the countess, as any writer seeking patronage would have:

For to this Lady now I will repaire,
Presenting her the fruits of idle houres;⁶

Although most of the poem is devoted to the presentation of a foundational experience for the persona, it ends in a much more concrete manner, bringing the author back from the elevated field of dreams to the material consequences of her dire financial situation. This contrast highlights the idealising power of the dream, which miraculously compensates for Lanyer's lack of opportunity: only in a dream can Lanyer have access to the countess of Pembroke, having had no proper introduction.⁷ Yet the dream is also revealing because of the intimacy it is supposed to set up between author and reader. Far from expressing peace and harmony, the dream vision is thus pervaded by tensions that require careful examination.⁸

The dream vision thus functions as a negative introduction to Lanyer's conception of her role as a poetess, informing us as much about what she wished her status to be and what it actually was not.

Whenever she can, Lanyer stresses any contact she may have had with her addressees, either directly – calling Arabella Stuart a 'great learned Ladie, whom I long have knowne'⁹ or the countess dowager of Kent the 'Mistris of my youth'¹⁰ – or indirectly – remembering the favour she used to enjoy with Queen Elizabeth.¹¹ Lanyer makes no such attempt with the countess of Pembroke, and she underlines how far removed she is from the countess, even needing the assistance of the Graces to approach her:

Me thought I pass'd through th'Edalyan Groves,
And askt the Graces, if they could direct
Me to a Lady whom Minerva chose,
To live with her in height of all respect.¹²

Lanyer repeatedly emphasises the abstract construction that their prospected relationship is:

Yet looking back into my thoughts againe,
The eie of Reason did behold there;¹³

Yet studying, if I were awake or no,
God Morphy came and took me by the hand [...]¹⁴

This dream is one in which the persona is strangely conscious and in possession of her intellectual faculties, which confirm and reinforce her sensory experience.¹⁵ While the persona first casts herself into the modest, apparently inferior position of the admirer, this paradoxical consciousness elevates her mind above those of other human beings, not only because of the extraordinary, almost sibylline experience of the dream that connects her with goddesses and muses but also because of the rational control she is able to exert over it. At the same time, the emphasis on the process of thinking implicitly begins to establish a close connection between Lanyer and Pembroke, despite their social difference and lack of physical contact: a mental connection rather than an actual one. Lanyer suggests that her poetic talent renders her worthy of the companionship of the countess of Pembroke although she is her social inferior, and she explicitly presents herself as her poetic inferior as well. Indirectly and symbolically, the countess of Pembroke is unwittingly providing poetic guidance to Lanyer, taking on the role of mentor as well as muse by appearing in a dream.

The hyperbolic panegyric to the countess of Pembroke thus becomes a paradoxical illustration of Lanyer's greatness as a poetess. Even if she explicitly presents herself as having less talent than the countess, the mere fact that she dares to compare herself with her enables Lanyer to promote herself to a similar level of creative achievement:

Thog many Books she writes that are more rare,
Yet there is hony in the meanest flowres;¹⁶

The contrary structure of the distich, with the two concessions 'though' and 'yet', signals the poetess's internal division between the requirements of praise and the desire to define herself as the countess's equal. Interestingly, Lanyer uses the adjective 'idle' in the former line, which may be an allusion to the preface to Sir Philip Sidney's *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, in which he defined his romance as 'this idle work of mine'.¹⁷ Since Lanyer had already referred to 'valiant Sidney'¹⁸ and to his translation of the Psalms, which was finished by his sister,¹⁹ earlier in her poem, the use of the term 'idle' can hardly be a coincidence. Through it, Lanyer not only measures herself to Mary Sidney Herbert, but to a male author who was even more revered at the time: her brother Philip. Lanyer

thus follows the leadership of the countess of Pembroke in setting Philip Sidney as a model for poetic creation, but rather than presenting him as unapproachable, she implicitly dares to place herself alongside him, in effect overtaking Mary Sidney Herbert herself.

The comparison with Mary Sidney Herbert continues this dual logic of explicitly displaying Lanyer's own inferiority while implicitly suggesting – at the very least – her right to poetic equality with her:

And though that learned damsell and the rest,
 Have in a higher style her Trophie fram'd;
 Yet these unlearned lines being my best,
 Of her great wisdome no whit can be blam'd.²⁰

The opposition between the countess's education and the persona's self-proclaimed lack thereof ('learned'/ 'unlearned') can easily be turned around: Lanyer's poetic achievements deserve all the more admiration that they spring from pure talent, not having had the benefit of an aristocratic education.²¹

Lanyer also returns to the image of the mirror she had formerly used in an equally paradoxical manner:

So craving pardon for this bold attempt,
 I here present my mirrour to her view,
 Whose noble virtues cannot be exempt,
 My Glasse being steele, declares them to be true.²²

The mirror, of course, functions as an allegory of truth, offering a true reflection that objectifies the inner qualities of the countess, proving that she fully deserves her reputation, to which this poem contributes. It also suggests a form of self-representation akin to a self-portrait within the poem itself, elaborating a *mise en abyme* that paradoxically emphasises the artistic sophistication of the text to suggest a form of transparency, revealing the poetess's true self. Patronage introduces a form of specularly by which the virtues of the patron are reflected in the textual qualities of the writer, while the writer has selected a patron whose reputation favourably reflects on them. In this case, if Lanyer herself is the mirror, the fact that Pembroke is reflected in her steel glass elevates her by presenting her as worthy of reflecting her model: she is as true, as virtuous, as exemplary a poetess as Mary Sidney Herbert herself. Rather than materialising the distinction between two women, therefore, the mirror image begins to subsume their respective identities, or as Megan Herrold writes: 'While the blazon tradition uses mirroring to enact rivalries, Lanyer enlists that same imagery in *Salve Deus* to further her goal of blurring intersubjective boundaries.'²³ Lanyer thus appropriates a poetic cliché redolent of misogynistic stereotypes to invert its gendering power and use it as a tool of self-definition. Because she is the

reflection, she herself becomes the index of the countess of Pembroke's truth. Even if she claims to affirm Mary Sidney Herbert as an unattainable standard for female poetic talent, Lanyer actually presents *herself* as the norm underneath that modesty trope.

Undermining Social Hierarchy

Through its repetitive but ambiguous affirmations of humility, Lanyer's poetic strategy thus clearly exemplifies what Patricia Pender has defined as the 'rhetoric of modesty', which takes the form of 'authorial alibis' among early modern women, who 'often circumvented the charges of impropriety or indecency entailed in assuming the mantle of authorship in denying that they were authors at all.'²⁴ In this context, the fact that Lanyer offers a modest discourse while affirming her own authorship and qualities as a writer is worth noting, as it shows that she was self-consciously manipulating what had already become a trope expected of any female writer. Moreover, the mental connection that Lanyer has established between herself and Pembroke suggests that she was able to manipulate the courtly codes of patronage to transform that hierarchical structure into a more egalitarian one. Through this reconfiguration of patronage, Lanyer not only seeks to elevate herself but also pays the countess of Pembroke the compliment of suggesting that her interest in her stems from pure admiration and is – almost – gratuitous.

Yet mere mentoring does not pay the bills, and Lanyer is not able to fully forget her needs. At the end of the poem, she presents her intentions more clearly:

And Madame, if you will vouchsafe that grace,
To grace those flowres that springs from virtues ground;²⁵

The antanaclasis on the word 'grace' functions as a euphemism for financial gain; as Lisa Schnell writes, 'Aware of the multiple meanings of "grace", Lanyer manipulates all of them to produce a situation of rhetorical obligation.'²⁶ The word 'grace' is indeed ubiquitous throughout the dedications and the subsequent poem²⁷ and allows her to create a direct link between 'this worke of grace'²⁸ (her book), the 'graces' of her dedicatees, and the 'graces' she hopes to obtain from them. The pun thus illustrates Lanyer's lack of comfort in tackling the financial needs she is nevertheless forced to express if she wishes to see them alleviated. Lanyer is aware that her wish to free herself from the mercenary constraints of patronage to immerse herself in a more abstract relationship between peers is doomed to fail.

Just like 'The Author's Dreame' ends by metatextually representing patronage, the dedication that comes immediately before closes in a similar manner. The persona, who initially presented herself as a 'handmaid'²⁹ to the Lady Susan,

countess dowager of Kent, finally refers to patronage but self-deprecatingly pretends not to ask for it:

And since no former gaine hath made me write,
 Nor my desertlesse service could have done,
 Onely your noble Virtues do incite
 My Pen, they are the ground I write upon;
 Nor any future profit is expected,
 Then how can these poor lines go unrespected?³⁰

Glossing these lines, Leeds Barroll asserts that '[g]iven the dowager countess's known [precarious] financial circumstances, Lanyer's lines insist on her own sincerity because her gesture cannot possibly be motivated by the anticipation of monetary gain. She is not disingenuous. She is factual.'³¹ Yet the very act of writing the poem and its existence as a dedication in a published work blatantly negate the affirmation of modesty and gratuity, rendering it all the more ironic as it takes the form of a rhetorical question. Aristocrats had, after all, other ways of bestowing gifts and favours than payments in cash; their reputation and influence as such could be of value to ambitious commoners like Lanyer seemed to be. More specifically, the last word of the poem, 'unrespected', highlights the irony of the situation, for it can be read as an allusion to a payment that would then be expected, whatever the author writes: since she does not 'expect' any 'future profit' from these 'poor lines' (metonymically suggesting the author's financial difficulties behind a pretence of literary modesty), the proper thing to do for the dowager countess would be to signify her appreciation of these lines by attributing them monetary value. Not to do so would be construed as a lack of respect and would thus be indecorous. Lanyer thus catches her dedicatee(s) in a double bind as she holds her 'betters' to their side of the bargain, trying to force them into positions of patronage they may not have been seeking to offer. The term 'respect' also anticipates on the beginning of the next dedication, in which the persona vouches to live with the countess of Pembroke 'in height of all respect', in other words comparing her own deference for her model with the treatment she expects of the countess dowager of Kent. The apparent *sprezzatura* of these lines is ostensibly presented as conventional, for, as Lisa Schnell has shown, Lanyer is 'breaking the rule of "*cortezia*"' in her dedications:

Lanyer situates the dedications to *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* ostensibly as a site of Barthes' *cortezia* – a marker of the poet's servitude – but finally as a fantasy of epistemological and ontological superiority that cannot accommodate the discursive positions demanded by courtly desire.³²

Lanyer's doubly low status as a commoner and as a woman in an aristocratic patriarchal society, together with her lack of means, on which many critics insist,

force her into a position of subservience that she resents. The transformation of the role of patron into that of mentor that she seeks to enact in her poems would thus ennoble her search for financial support, erasing the ‘vulgarity’ of poverty and replacing it by similarity of minds.

Towards Equality

The role of a mentor she casts on Mary Sidney Herbert, before taking it on herself at the very end of *Salve Deus*, levels out social difference to promote mental and creative kinship. The figure of a mentor, rather than merely a patron, helps her negotiate the tight rope she is walking, at a time when patronage itself was evolving. As Erin Mc Carthy observes,

Lanyer’s dedications are best understood, therefore, not simply as a product of the author’s gender but also as the product of a postpatronage, pre-professional literary system that provided few viable venues for individuals of either gender to support themselves through writing.³³

Although the line between the two may be fine – a patron sometimes offering guidance as well as financial and material support, as was indeed the case of the countess of Pembroke with the likes of Samuel Daniel or Michael Drayton – the difference is that the role of mentor can be reversible and is not necessarily associated with class or financial superiority. For instance, Anne Clifford credits both her mother and her tutor Samuel Daniel, who was a commoner repeatedly seeking patronage during his career, for her intellectual development.³⁴ One who is socially inferior may thus turn into an aristocrat’s mentor, bringing them closer both intellectually and in terms of class as they form a relationship to their mutual advantage. While the relationship between patron and author can only maintain class hierarchy, the role of mentor allows for levelling possibilities on both sides. If Anne Clifford made that claim from the standpoint of the aristocrat, metaphorically elevating her mentor through her gratitude, Lanyer purports to elevate herself through the mentoring figure that she constructs for herself. This is indeed what Lanyer intimates in her dedication to Anne Clifford, who was in the midst of her legal struggles, trying to obtain what she viewed as her rightful inheritance (she was her father’s only surviving child, but the bulk of his property had been entailed to male relatives):

What difference was there when the world began,
Was it not virtue that distinguisht us all?
All sprang but from one woman and one man,
Then how doth Gentry come to rise and fall?³⁵

In Lanyer's poem, Anne Clifford and the persona's common situation outside of the pale in an aristocratic patriarchal society ultimately erases their social 'difference', emphasising their 'virtue' instead. Lanyer thus manages to claim the equality she yearns for with her 'betters' while paying tribute to them. She further explores this possibility in another poem in which both Anne and her mother Margaret Clifford play a central role: 'The Description of Cooke-ham', a lyric that is appended to the *Salve Deus*. By reminding her addressee of the moral and religious standards that are supposed to define humanity – as a priest at church – Lanyer even puts herself in the superior position of the elder, more knowledgeable figure of the mentor, which she will more explicitly take on in 'The Description of Cooke-ham'.

'The Description of Cooke-ham' is often credited as the first country-house poem, published five years before Ben Jonson's 'To Penshurst'. In this poem, Lanyer looks back on times of happiness spent with Margaret of Cumberland and her daughter Anne Clifford. 'Cooke-ham' conveys the impression of a secular coda appended to a long religious poem, offering a solar foil to the Golgotha of Christ's Passion.³⁶ The poem begins with the word 'farewell', which can be read not only as the farewell to the country estate the Cumberlands are leaving but also metatextually as the preparation to close the book. 'Cooke-ham' is neatly tied to the rest of the volume because it is addressed to Margaret of Cumberland, and it follows one of the many dedications to her in the course of *Salve Deus* itself:

Your rarest Virtues did my soule delight,
 Great Ladie of my heart: I must commend
 You that appeare so faire in all mens sight:
 On your Deserts my Muses doe attend:
 You are the Articke Starre that guides my hand,
 All what I am, I rest at your command.³⁷

Positioning this stanza at the end of *Salve Deus* emphasises its importance. It is all the more crucial to observe that Lanyer does not describe the submission of her book to her patron, but instead, focuses on the inspiration and guidance she found in her. In other words, she is presenting Cumberland as a mentor rather than as a patron.

This line of thought continues in 'Cooke-ham', which begins by punning on the word 'grace' so as to downplay the material gain it represents in its first occurrence:

Farewell (sweet Cooke-ham) where I first obtain'd
 Grace from that Grace where perfit Grace remain'd;³⁸

The first mention of 'grace', in the sense of favour or support, recedes in the mind of the reader behind the next two, which both refer to the countess herself (the second metonymically). The run-on line, which breaks the flow of the sentence, may also convey some of the speaker's discomfort in tackling this question, as does its combination with the more abstract term 'grace'. As earlier, Lanyer underlines her addressee's virtues and associates them with her own 'worke of grace', returning to that phrase once again.³⁹ She thus establishes a direct correlation between her mentor and her own achievements as a poetess, establishing a new relationship that could be defined as a form of mutual grace. Susanne Woods suggests that 'the reciprocity of grace takes a familiar turn in this new place: the poem graces the patron, as the patron graces the poem'.⁴⁰

However, Lanyer seems to go beyond such a courteous patronage. It is true that she suggests in the same line that Cumberland was not only a patron to whom she submitted her work, but had even commissioned it:

Yet you (great Lady) Mistris of that Place,
From whose desires did spring this worke of Grace;⁴¹

Yet just as she appears to define a classic bond between patron and author, Lanyer also begins to question it. The word 'desires' implies that Cumberland explicitly asked Lanyer to write the poem – 'Cooke-ham' or *Salve Deus* as a whole? – but it could also have a more general meaning, suggesting that she merely encouraged her to write. The rhyme between 'Place' and 'Grace' confirms the role of the estate as a place of creativity – not merely a setting but one that actively promoted it. Cumberland, as 'Mistris', is thus responsible for fostering this particular atmosphere. Lanyer, though, reverses this idea by showing not that Cumberland has framed the place in her image, but that the place is transforming itself to adapt to her:

O how me thought each plant, each floure, each tree
Set forth their beauties then to welcome thee;⁴²

Cooke-ham, after all, was not a family house, but a 'crown manor leased to the Countess of Cumberland's brother, William Russell of Thornhaugh, where the Countess resided periodically until 1605 or shortly after'.⁴³

The transitory pleasures of Cooke-ham and the elegiac tone of the poem function as a vivid reminder of the difficulty for early modern women – both aristocratic and otherwise – to come into any possessions of their own. The poem thus offers a perfect backdrop to the countess of Cumberland's struggle for her daughter's inheritance, and it uncannily foreshadows Lanyer's own future struggles when her tenancy of a school was challenged by the owner because she had difficulties paying the rent.⁴⁴ The sadness of leaving, and the uncertainty about where to go or what to do next, are all shared by these three

women despite their difference in rank. Throughout the poem, the persona accordingly plays on the first- and second-person pronouns to emphasise the commonality of their experience:

Now let me come unto that stately Tree,
Wherein such goodly prospects you did see; [...]
How often did you visit this fair tree [...] ⁴⁵

The persona is walking through the estate one last time as she revisits her memories, mirroring her model by her actions as she did with Mary Sidney Herbert, but this time in a more concrete, bodily manner. Although references to the countess of Cumberland and her daughter are constant in the poem, their distant presence is overshadowed by the persona. Rather than being a simple witness, her ability to remember, perpetuate, and even transcend this experience through poetry gives her the advantage over those who must rely on her to enact this literary transmutation. From a social inferior who is dependent on her patron for her livelihood, Lanyer gains the upper hand to convert the favours she has received into poetic eternity:

When I am dead thy name in this may live,
Where in I have perform'd my noble hest,
Whose virtues lodge in my unworthy breast,
And ever shall, so long as life remaines,
Tying my heart to her by those rich chaines. ⁴⁶

In these lines, the persona is addressing Cooke-ham, but also, indirectly, Cumberland and Clifford, who are more given to transience than a country estate. By affirming the eternity of poetry, Lanyer is following in the footsteps of the likes of Shakespeare, another commoner who also pays tribute to aristocrats in his sonnets. ⁴⁷ In the eyes of the persona, poetic talent not only compensates for but even supersedes any social inferiority. Although her lines express gratitude for any support given, as would be expected, they also seemingly put the Cumberlands in her debt. The insistence on the first-person pronoun in these lines confirms this confidence in Lanyer's ability to reach posterity through writing. Not content with downplaying her social inferiority in the poem, Lanyer is even bent on turning the tables. The 'chaines' with which she willingly ties herself to the countess of Cumberland can be read in two allegorical ways, as a reference to the countess's virtues and to the poem itself. Beginning as a testament to the speaker's gratitude and admiration, the poem ends by showing the specular reflection or even the reversibility between the roles of the two women. As Cumberland has supported Lanyer in real life, Lanyer in return will support her through eternity. The end of the volume thus brings us back to the beginning through another metatextual reflection, as Lanyer fully

exploits the image of the mirror she had introduced in several of her dedications, in particular in that to Cumberland herself, where she presented her book as

the mirrour of your most worthy minde, which may remaine in the world many years longer than your Honour, or my selfe can live, to be a light unto those that come after, desiring to tread in the narrow path of virtue, that leads the way to heaven.⁴⁸

Divine Knowledge: From Poetess to Prophetess

The authority Lanyer finds in her reconfiguration of patronage into mentoring is indeed strengthened by the divine knowledge the persona purports to have in the book, functioning as an intermediary between God and her addressees, or, in other words, fusing the religious role of the priest with the classical notion of the poet as *vates*. Kari Boyd Mc Bride thus shows that:

the patronage poem functioned to construct a transgressive female authority for Lanyer because she fundamentally altered the context in which patron-client relationships were supposed to have functioned, substituting a religious sphere for a courtly one. [...] Rather than figuring herself and her book as humble supplicants for aristocratic favor, Lanyer's poetic assumes preemptively a divine favor that is most audacious in her repeated claims to offer her readers Christ, the Word that her poetry paradoxically makes flesh. And if Lanyer's poetry incarnates Christ to become a means of salvation for her readers (as she repeatedly suggests), then the banquet scene that adumbrates the hospitality topos of patronage poetry becomes a eucharistic meal with Lanyer its priestly celebrant.⁴⁹

Lanyer's encomiastic rhetoric thus enables her to take on two typically male roles, those of the author and of the priest, while still explicitly maintaining the humility expected of her. However, she shows that these two roles are inherently feminine, both in the dedications and in the poem itself. This programme is announced at the beginning of the first dedication, to Queen Anne:

Renowned Empresse, and great Britaines Queene,
Most gracious Mother of succeeding Kings;
Vouchsafe to view that which is seldome seene,
A Womans writing of divinest things:
Reade it faire Queene, though it defective be,
Your Excellence can grace both It and Mee.⁵⁰

The initial hyperbolic praise of the queen is immediately followed by a self-constructed image of the poetess, which is only superficially less hyperbolic, as the phrase ‘that which is seldome seene’ functions like a euphemism to designate her own exceptionality. The consecutive claim of modesty ‘though it defective be’ can only sound conventional, to say the least, following as it does such a blatant affirmation of the self. In this passage, Lanyer establishes the ‘reciprocity’ of patronage defined by Susanne Woods above, but the use of the imperative form also tends to put her in a superior position, although she is addressing the queen. This licence, however, seems authorised by the exceptional figure she cuts for herself, not only as a poetess or as an excellent Christian, but because of the perfect union she achieves of these two roles. Her religious and moral knowledge, combined with the poetic talent that enables her to skilfully and efficiently express it, allows her to mentor even a queen, guiding her in her most intimate beliefs through the medium of poetry. The poetess’s divine knowledge thus enables her to go even further in the inversion of social hierarchy her role as a mentor allows her to establish.

Lanyer also makes her proto-feminist agenda clear further down in the dedication:

Behold, great Queene, faire Eves Apologie,
Which I have writ in honour of your sexe,
And doe referre unto your Majestie,
To judge if it agree not with the Text:
And if it doe, why are poore Women blam’d,
Or by more faultie Men so much defam’d?⁵¹

The persona here playfully distinguishes the queen’s from her own gender, as if her taking on the male prerogative of writing had suddenly turned her into a man – but in the wake of her initial self-definition as a devotional poetess, this gesture can only seem ironic. By momentarily erasing her own gender from the poem, Lanyer appears to take on a position of objectivity that indirectly adds strength to her argument in favour of women. Her defence of women is presented as disconnected from any personal involvement, and even more importantly, it is in accordance with the Bible. This sudden show of alienation thus takes the persona away from her gender to bring her back to it and allow her to embrace it more fully, not as an accident but as the essential nature of womanhood.

Lanyer’s echoing of the *querelle des femmes*, which had been raging on the Continent for nearly a century and had reached England in the late sixteenth century, is worth remembering, as critics such as Barbara Lewalski and Patricia Pender have noted.⁵² Lanyer’s meliorative representation of women is constructed both negatively and positively, as it purports to deny misogynistic stereotypes and reveal their inherent qualities at the same – her defence of Eve is particularly illustrative in that respect. Lanyer’s intent is not only to oppose the

literary and religious limitations imposed upon women by presenting herself as a counterexample, but even further, to show that both writing and devotion are inherently feminine. Her daring – and, by definition, controversial – demonstration of women's excellence becomes abundantly clear in the course of *Salve Deus* itself, when the persona describes the women who supported Christ until the end: Pontius Pilate's wife Claudia, the widows of Jerusalem, and the Virgin Mary herself.⁵³ These female figures can thus be seen as mentors in the poem itself, leading the way for women in their own times and beyond to reject their social submission – models whose voices can be heard thanks to Lanyer's intercession on their behalf as she writes her poem. These women all recognised Christ's true identity while men were blind to it. Moreover, it is because they were women that they were touched by Christ:

Most blessed daughters of Jerusalem,
 Who found such favour in your Saviors sight,
 To turne his face when you did pitie him;
 Your tearefull eyes, beheld his eies more bright;
 Your Faith and Love unto such grace did clime,
 To have reflection from this Heav'nly Light:
 Your Eagles eyes did gaze against this Sunne,
 Your hearts did think, he dead, the world were done.

When spightfull men with torments did oppresse
 Th' afflicted body of this innocent Dove,
 Poore women seeing how much they did transgresse,
 By teares, by sighes, by cries intreat, may prove,
 What may be done among the thickest presse,
 They labor still these tyrants hears to move;
 In pitie and compassion to forbear
 Their whipping, spurning, tearing of his haire.⁵⁴

Overturning the misogynistic stereotype that women are more emotional than rational, Lanyer affirms that they thus achieve the contradiction of 'thinking with the heart', which allows them to recognise Christ's true identity and to behave accordingly. As Catherine Keohane puts it, reworking Barbara Lewalski's words: 'Lanyer's use of her religious topic is not, to use Barbara Lewalski's phrasing, "a thin veneer for", but rather is itself "a subversive feminist statement"'.⁵⁵ This statement is all the more subversive as it merges the poetess's literary and devotional ambitions. While much Lanyer criticism focuses on either her dedications or her religious poetry, it is essential to bear in mind how the two genres complement each other to reach a common goal: not only to redeem and extol women, but to make a case for the validity of their voices and points of view by example.⁵⁶

At this point in the poem, Lanyer establishes an implicit correlation between these women and herself as a poetess. Her description of Christ's passion is preceded by a 'preamble of the Author', where she abundantly insists on her inability to find the words for such a topic – what Patricia Pender calls the 'inexpressibility topos'.⁵⁷ Yet for all her self-proclaimed lack of wit, Lanyer ultimately affirms that her shortcomings as a woman paradoxically make her fit to tell the story. Addressing her 'dear Muse', she writes:

But yet the Weaker thou dost seeme to be
 In Sexe, or Sence, the more his Glory shines,
 That doth infuze such powerfull Grace in thee,
 To shew thy Love in these few humble Lines;⁵⁸

Lanyer has not transcended her womanly inferiority through writing in order to elevate herself to the level of Christ; instead, it is precisely because she is 'weak' that Christ speaks to her – confirming his preference for the weak, the sick, or young children. Literally inspired by the divine muse that Christ is to her, the persona becomes the vessel of his suffering and teaching, and she presents herself as better able to express them specifically because of her supposed inferiority. Lanyer thus overturns misogynistic stereotypes to demonstrate not only the greatness of women, but her own greatness as a writer.

In appealing to Christ as a witness of her poetic talent, Lanyer also establishes a correlation between her female mentors and her ultimate male, divine mentor: Christ himself. Paying homage to her female dedicatees in this way, she purports to 'deliver' them Christ, being authorised by the privileged relationship presented above. Following Christ's model, she becomes a mentor for women as a whole, in particular for her dedicatees and for a younger generation exemplified by Anne Clifford. Her dedication 'To all virtuous ladies in generall' is thus explicitly a bid for favour, but also implicitly an offer of mentorship on her part to provide moral guidance to her female readers through her poem ('Let Virtue be your Guide').⁵⁹ Because she is a woman and a poet, she achieves the perfect union of the sacred and the secular, using the figure of the mentor to affirm her own transgressive authority, which allows her to free herself – at least in the poem – from the constraints of her gender and her rank. The humility she claims to have as a writer is the same as her humility as a Christian and justifies both of her roles at the same time, yet they are equally fake, since they barely conceal her ambition as a female religious poetess. Although devotional poetry was one of the few 'accepted' genres of writing for women, Lanyer succeeds in reaffirming its transgressive, revolutionary nature so as to push forwards her own portrait as a poetic trailblazer for future generations of women.

Notes

1. A. L. Rowse (ed.), *The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady: Salve Rex Judaeorum by Emilia Lanyer*, London, Crown Publishers, 1978, 18, and Rowse, *Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age: Simon Forman the Astrologer*, New York, Scribner, 1974, 102.
2. Lanyer's proto-feminism has been studied in particular by Elaine Beilin and Barbara Lewalski, but it has then been mitigated by other critics such as Anne Coiro or Su Fang Ng, who have shown Lanyer's awareness of writing not only for a female but also for a male readership. See Elaine Beilin, 'The Feminization of Praise: Aemilia Lanyer', in Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987, 177–207; Barbara Lewalski, 'Re-writing Patriarchy and Patronage: Margaret Clifford, Anne Clifford and Aemilia Lanyer', in *The Yearbook of English Studies, Politics, Patronage and Literature in England, 1558–1658*, 1991, 21, 87–106; Lynette Mc Grath, "'Let Us Have our Libertie Againe": Aemilia Lanyer's Seventeenth-Century Feminist Voice', in *Women's Studies*, 20, 1992, 331–348; Anne Baynes Coiro, 'Writing in Service: Sexual Politics and Class Position in the Poetry of Aemilia Lanyer and Ben Jonson', in *Criticism, The Politics of Literature in Early Modern English Culture*, 1993, 35(2), 357–376; Su Fan Ng, 'Aemilia Lanyer and the Politics of Praise', in *English Literary History*, 2000, 67(2), 433–451; Mary Ellen Lamb, 'Patronage and Class in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*', in Mary Burke et al. (eds.), *Women, Writing and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1998, 38–60.
3. See Suzanne Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475–160*, San Marino, Huntington Library, 1982, 20–21.
4. See Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993.
5. Colleen Shea, 'Literary Authority as Cultural Criticism in Aemilia Lanyer's *The Author's Dreame*', in *English Literary Renaissance, Renaissance Poetics*, 2002, 32(3), 386.
6. Aemilia Lanyer, 'The Authors Dreame to the Ladie Marie, the Countesse Dowager of Pembroke', lines 193–194, in Susanne Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer. Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (Women Writers in English, 1350–1850)*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, 30.
7. See also Josephine Roberts, "'My Inward House": Women's Autobiographical Poetry in the Early Seventeenth Century', in Robert C. Evan and Anne C. Little (eds.), *The Muses Female Are: Martha Mouslworth and Other Female Writers of the English Renaissance*, West Cornwall, Locust Hill Press, 1995, 131; Shea, 'Literary Authority', 387.
8. Patricia Pender thus invites readers to 'examine the way in which the formal qualities of the dream vision draw attention to the provisional, fantastic, and problematic relationships that Lanyer constructs with literary history and with other powerful women'. See Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 123.
9. Lanyer, 'To the Lady Arabella', line 1, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 17.
10. Lanyer, 'To the Lady Susan, Countesse Dowager of Kent, and Daughter to the Duchesse of Suffolke', line 1, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 18.
11. Lanyer, 'To the Queen most excellent Majestie', line 110, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 8.
12. Lanyer, 'The Authors Dreame', lines 1–4, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 21.
13. *Ibid.*, lines 5–6, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 21.
14. *Ibid.*, lines 18–19, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 22.
15. See also Colleen Shea for comments on Lanyer's refusal of passivity, 'Literary Authority', 406.

16. Lanyer, 'The Authors Dreame', lines 195–196, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 30.
17. Philip Sidney, 'To my Dear Lady and Sister the Countess of Pembroke', in Katherine Duncan-Jones (ed.), *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008 [1985], 3.
18. Lanyer, 'The Authors Dreame', line 138, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 28.
19. Ibid., lines 117–152, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 27–28.
20. Ibid., lines 201–204, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 30–31.
21. Colleen Shea also shows that the poem is not uncritical of Mary Sidney Herbert's behavior as a patron; 'Literary Authority', 394–395 in particular.
22. Lanyer, 'The Authors Dreame', lines 209–212, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 31.
23. Megan Herrold, 'Compassionate Petrarchanism: The *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* Tradition in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*', in *Studies in Philology*, 2020, 117(2), 372.
24. Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing*, 3; Pender, "'This triall of my slender skill": Inexpressibility and Interpretative Community in Aemilia Lanyer's *Encomia*,' 122–148.
25. Lanyer, 'The Authors Dreame', lines 213–214, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 31.
26. Lisa Schnell, 'Breaking the Rule of "Cortezia": Lanyer's Dedications to *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 1997, 27(1), 91–92.
27. Susanne Woods also calls it a 'key concept' and has identified ninety occurrences throughout the book: Susanne Woods, 'Vocation and Authority: Born to Write', in Marshall Grossmann (ed.), *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre and the Canon*, Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 2009 [1998], 84.
28. The phrase is used both in Lanyer, 'To the Ladie Katherine Countesse of Suffolke', line 7, and in Lanyer, 'To the Ladie Anne, Countesse of Dorcet', line 1, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 36 and 41 respectively.
29. Lanyer, 'The Author's Dreame', line 4, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 18.
30. Ibid., lines 43–48, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 20.
31. Leeds Barroll, 'Looking for Patrons', in Grossmann (ed.), *Aemilia Lanyer*, 35.
32. Schnell, 'Breaking the Rule of "Cortezia"', 78.
33. Erin McCarthy, 'Speculation and Multiple Dedications in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*', in *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 2015, 55(1), 62.
34. Anne Clifford, *The Life of Margaret Clifford*, 28, cited in Barbara Lewalski, 'Re-writing Patriarchy and Patronage', 93.
35. Lanyer, 'To the Ladie Anne, Countesse of Dorcet', lines 33–36, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 42.
36. See Lanyer, *Salve Deus*, lines 1137–1147, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 100. Cooke-ham itself is situated on a hill, which heightens the symmetrical reflection between the two places. See Lanyer, 'The Description of Cooke-ham', line 135, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 131.
37. Lanyer, *Salve Deus*, lines 1835–1840, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 129.
38. Lanyer, 'To Cooke-ham', lines 1–2, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 130.
39. Ibid., line 12 in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 130.
40. Woods, 'Vocation and Authority', 92.
41. Lanyer, 'To Cooke-ham', lines 11–12, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 130.
42. Ibid., lines 33–34, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 131.
43. Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 130, note on the title.
44. Susanne Woods, 'Introduction', in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, xxvii–xxix.
45. Lanyer, 'Cooke-ham', lines 53–54, 59, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 132.
46. Ibid., lines 206–210, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 138.

47. See, for instance, Shakespeare's sonnet 55, in Colin Burrow (ed.), *The Oxford Shakespeare: Complete Sonnets and Poems*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, 491.
48. Lanyer, 'To the Ladie Margaret', lines 30–34, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 35.
49. Kari Boyd Mc Bride, 'Sacred Celebration: the Patronage Poems', in Grossmann (ed.), *Aemilia Lanyer*, 60–61.
50. Lanyer, 'To the Queene', lines 3–6, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 3.
51. Ibid., lines 73–78, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 6.
52. Lewalski, 'Re-writing Patriarchy', 102; Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing*, 123.
53. Lanyer, *Salve Deus*, lines 751–944, 969–1008, and 1009–1040, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 84–96.
54. Ibid., lines 985–1000, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 93–94.
55. Catherine Keohane, "'That Blindest Weakness Be Not Over-Bold": Aemilia Lanyer's Radical Unfolding of the Passion", in *English Literary History*, 1997, 64(2), 360. The quote by Lewalski is taken from her 'Of God and Women: The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer', in Margaret P. Hannay (ed.), *Silent but For the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators and Writers of Religious Works*, Kent, Kent State university Press, 1985, 207.
56. Recent Lanyer critics like Yaakov Mascetti and Megan Herrold also insist on the necessity to view her poetry as a whole; see Yaakov Mascetti, "'Here I have prepared my Paschal Lambe": Reading and Seeing the Eucharistic Presence in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*', in *Partial Answers*, 2011, 9(1), 3; Megan Herrold, 'Compassionate Petrarchanism', 366, n. 3.
57. Pender, 'Inexpressibility', *Early Modern Women's Writing*, 101.
58. Lanyer, *Salve Deus*, lines 289–292, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 63.
59. Lanyer, 'To all vertuous Ladies in generall', line 10, in Woods (ed.), *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, 12.

CHAPTER 10

Matrona Docta: Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Macaulay in the Guise of the Roman Matrona

Seren Nolan

Elizabeth Carter (1717–1806) and Catharine Macaulay (1731–1791) enjoyed reputations as some of the foremost British scholars of the eighteenth century. By no means unique as female citizens of the Republic of Letters, Carter and Macaulay were unusual among their learned peers as women intellectuals engaged in classical scholarship.¹ Though Macaulay, Britain's first female historian, wrote about the history of England, her works were animated by rigorous analyses of the political histories of ancient Rome. Carter, a poet, pamphleteer, and prominent member of the Bluestocking circle, was best known as a philologist and for her translation of the complete works of Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus, a feat never bettered by a male translator in her lifetime or indeed beyond; her translation was required reading at Oxford University until 1947.² Instructed in Greek and Latin by her clergyman father in her early youth, as a young woman, Carter's scholarly classicism earned her renown beyond British shores. German scholar John Philip Baratier addressed her in Latin as, 'Angliae sidus, orbit literati decus' ('Star of England, the ornament of the literary world').³ Both Carter and Macaulay were fêted by those who read their works; their starlike brilliance, which outdazzled many of their contemporaries, was both symbolic of their success but left them, starlike, too, suspended between spheres.

Carter and Macaulay rose to fame in an era that witnessed an unprecedented swell in the publication and consumption of literary works by women.⁴ The presence of such female scholars in the ranks of eighteenth-century intellectuals have complicated, indeed, confounded what was once presented as the gendered, mutual exclusivity of the public and private realms. The sparkling intellect of Britain's cohort of learned ladies has been revealed to have been considered a marker of Britain's social and cultural progress and a point of national and patriotic pride, much in the manner that John Philip Baratier's Latin paean to Carter suggested.⁵ However, while female scholarship was not novel, it was by no means uncontested. Alongside the celebration of female learning

in eighteenth-century Britain operated an equally prominent discourse that cajoled, castigated, and outright condemned women's intellectual endeavours as unfeminine; 'intense thought', as a critic of Macaulay's *Histories of England* warned in a 1763 *Monthly Review*, 'spoils a lady's features'.⁶ The woman learned in history could attract more rancour than ridicule for being 'too much taken up with the Dead to mind any Decorum of the living'.⁷ Not only posing a threat to femininity, female scholarship, especially where their studies involved engagement with the past, was often framed as dangerously defeminising; by displaying too much erudition, women could risk becoming 'unsex'd'.⁸

The double bind of the female intellectual in eighteenth-century Britain is a predicament often highlighted in publications on this period. Less commonly explored, but crucial to the context of this essay, are the ambiguities of female scholarship specifically in the field of classical scholarship that wound further tension into this bind.⁹ As queen of the Bluestockings, Elizabeth Montagu observed there was, among her contemporaries, 'a general prejudice against female Authors especially if they invade those regions of literature which the Men are desirous to reserve to themselves'.¹⁰ 'The Classics', the languages, literatures, and histories of ancient Greece and Rome, in eighteenth-century Britain represented perhaps the most staunchly defended regions of literature, but this defence did not go unchallenged.¹¹

This essay compares the portraits and careers of Carter and Macaulay, two female scholars who seized upon the iconography of antiquity to challenge, invade, and triumph in 'the Classics' and make claims for themselves as classically educated public intellectuals in eighteenth-century Britain. Although the political implications of their self-fashioning differed, this essay argues that both invoked examples of Roman women, or *matronae*, to legitimise their presence in the public imagination. In what follows, I will first outline further the gendered dimensions of classical learning to frame the dilemma of Elizabeth Carter's professional career as a female translator of ancient Greek, before exploring how the guise of the Roman matron was deployed in Carter's visual representations to reconcile her problematic ancient knowledge with the decorous gender norms of her contemporaneity. The chapter's second half addresses the contrasting, radical, indeed controversial portrait (self-)fashioning of Catharine Macaulay as a Roman matron, revealing the *matrona* as a multivalent allegorical guise for the female classical scholar that could be at once culturally palatable and radically subversive.

Gender, Classicism, and the Politics of Translation

In the eighteenth century, the study of classics was strictly organised along gender lines.¹² It was thought acceptable, indeed necessary, for elite eighteenth-century women to imbibe the moral teachings of antiquity through

contemporary translations of ancient histories.¹³ The study of history was recommended to elite women as an intellectually and morally superior engagement to reading romances and sentimental fiction, for example. As David Hume put it, '[t]here is nothing which I would recommend more earnestly to my female readers than the study of history, as an occupation, of all others, the best suited both to their sex and education.'¹⁴ History here meant national history and a knowledge of the classical past:

[...] but I must think it an unpardonable ignorance in persons of whatever sex or condition, not to be acquainted with the history of their own country, together with the histories of ancient Greece and Rome.¹⁵

The advantages such history offered to 'the tender sex', Hume concluded, were threefold: '[to] amuse the fancy, [to] improve the understanding, and [to] strengthen virtue.'¹⁶ By way of an anecdotal conclusion, he quipped that a woman could not possibly be virtuous unless she knew her Plutarch. As well as the strengthening of female morality, a knowledge of ancient history was deemed crucial for the cultivation of polite sociability. Politeness, the process by which individuals gained access to 'society' through learned conversation, was so infused by an emotional and intellectual acquaintance with the literature, history, and art of the ancients that 'politeness' was used as a byword for classicism and vice versa.¹⁷

Politeness, and its performance, was couched in heterosociability and thus required the presence of women in its activities, including its engrained classicism.¹⁸ However, there were limits placed upon the extent and potential of such knowledge; for polite women, there was such thing as being *too* familiar with ancient authors. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, upon meeting the young Catharine Macaulay at the salon of an acquaintance, remarked she knew rather too much Polybius than was becoming for a young lady.¹⁹ A historian of the ancient Roman Republic, particularly revered in this period as a rhetorical and political theorist, Polybius was considered an ancient author for masculine eyes and mores. While women, then, were to be present and to preside over the morally refining proceedings of enlightened sociability, they were rarely understood to participate in it as intellectual equals to men.²⁰ As Lady Wortley Montagu's comment implied, classical knowledge could be used to demarcate, indeed, defend the gendered dimensions of politeness as well as precipitate female participation. As we shall see in our discussion of Catharine Macaulay, the politicised tracts of the ancients were one such bulwark against female classical scholarship, but the most pronounced fault line between acceptable and unacceptable forms of classical knowledge for women in eighteenth-century Britain was found in philology.

The synchronicity of polite classicism and masculinity was couched in the rigour of the classical educations received by elite and middling boys in

this period, at the heart of which was the study of ancient Greek and Latin. As Penelope Wilson has argued, ‘masculinity was so encoded into the language of the subject [philology] that in the eighteenth-century it was virtually inseparable from it.’²¹ This was also an education from which most young women were barred.²² While eighteenth-century women were educated well enough in classical texts to hold their own in polite conversation among men, they were never to go so far in such interactions as to appear ‘pedantic’ – a charge loaded with damaging, defeminising connotations.²³ Moreover, ancient texts, with their paganisms and puerilisms were seen to hold especially malignant potential.²⁴ As such, women were especially discouraged from the study of ancient languages. Men were believed to hold the mental and moral acuity to sift through the turpitudes to uncover the triumphs of the ancients in their original Greek and Latin. Eighteenth-century translations of Greek and Latin texts are especially instructive in this vein. If it seemed lascivious or lewd in the original languages – which it very often was – such moments were translated or interpreted away and relegated to footnotes to preserve contemporary norms of decorum. As we shall see, Carter herself engaged in such distancing tactics. By such tokens, in the study of ancient languages, women teetered perilously between politeness and impoliteness, femininity and unfemininity, between intellectual and carnal knowledge. It is no surprise, then, that the most famous depiction of a female classicist in this period, Molly in Henry Fielding’s *Amelia* (1751), though gifted in her abilities in Greek translation, ends up a drunkard, destitute and living in notoriety with a lover, an illegitimate child, and an estranged husband.²⁵ Fielding apparently based this character on his sister, the novelist Sarah Fielding, who was also known to be problematically proficient in ancient languages. Indeed, it was rumoured that Henry Fielding cited his sister’s talents in philology as the reason for their ultimate estrangement. In an anecdote relayed by playwright Hester Thrale Piozzi, once Sarah ‘[...] resolved to make her whole pleasure out of Study, and becoming justly eminent for her Taste and Knowledge of the Greek Language, her Brother [Henry Fielding] never more could persuade himself to endure her Company with Civility.’²⁶ While classical knowledge was often the foundation of polite, masculine repute, it could generate the means for women’s social marginalisation, even ruin.

All of this, of course, makes Carter’s success as a classical translator remarkable. Yet, caught between the competing imperatives of publishing and politeness – particularly while performing a knowledge that injected such defeminising potential into her works – Carter’s position as a translator was not an unproblematic proposition to her audience, as some scholars have previously suggested.²⁷ Rather, her success was, alongside her immense talent, due to her deft negotiations with the peculiar and gendered tensions that surrounded classical scholarship in the period in which she published. Indeed, Carter’s oeuvre evidences a profound awareness of the complex conundrum

classicism posed to the status of her femininity and so, too, her intellectual authority. In her debut work of translation *All the Works of Epictectus Now Extant* (1758), for example, she was often at pains to assert the philosophical and moral distance between herself as translator and Christian and the pagan content of her translation. In a landmark study of Carter's numerous translations, Jennifer Wallace examined the textual devices Carter used to surmount the moral difficulties of translating pagan Greek to an idiom of Christian virtue.²⁸ As well as revealing the judicious and highly selective use of language in Carter's translations into English, highlighting Carter's self-conscious effort to mitigate some of the more problematic inferences and incongruities of the Greek, Wallace also revealed how Carter exploited paratextual elements of her translations, namely footnotes, to pass explicit comment upon or, often, to elide, pagan attitudes within a source text that she repurposed for Christian piety. As well as being central to Carter's personal moral landscape, piety was a fundamental marker of feminine virtue in eighteenth-century Britain. The inclusion of Christian interpolations served both to shore up the appearance of Carter's religious propriety as well as her scholarly virtue.²⁹

Similarly, Harriet Guest has argued that Carter's staunch Anglican faith offered a codex through which Carter mediated the publicity her considerable fame thrust upon her.³⁰ Guest has demonstrated how, in her letters, Carter depicted herself as a proponent of Christian humility, more concerned with enjoying a life of modest domestic retirement than one of literary celebrity. It is worth noting, too, that Carter's epistolary self-portraits were often issued through registering contrasts between the modern, feminine virtues she admired and masculine, classical bombast. This attitude – and her discomfort with the public celebration of her classicism – is neatly summarised in a comment made to her friend Catherine Talbot, in 1747, where she rejected the public and self-promotional heroism of male civic heroes of antiquity in favour of a domestic femininity:

[...] heroes or conquerors [...] are characters I look upon with so little reverence, that I think many an honest old woman who cries hot dumplings, a much greater ornament to human nature than a Caesar or an Alexander.³¹

In both Wallace and Guest's studies, Carter's literary efforts worked to negotiate her position as a female intellectual by asserting a distance from antiquity, constructing her authority as translator through a paradoxical textual rhetoric of self-removal from her source text. In visual sources, however, the image of Carter that emerged contiguous with her publications engaged differently – and far less cautiously – with Greek and Roman antiquity. In contrast to Carter's writings, artistic representations of Carter's intellect found a perhaps surprising accommodation with antiquity and marked the development of a visual grammar that reconciled the contradictions incumbent upon female

classical scholarship. Combining Christian piety, classical learning, and polite sociability, the iconography for a virtuous female classicism came to coalesce in the figure of the Roman *matrona*, in whose guise Elizabeth Carter was depicted by Katherine Read in 1764 (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Katherine Read, *Portrait of Elizabeth Carter* (ca. 1765). Oil on canvas. © Dr Johnson's House Trust, Gough Square, London. (Plate 33, p. 380)

Uses of the Matrona

By the 1760s, classical dress had emerged as the costume of refinement in elite portraiture, anticipating Joshua Reynolds's famous advice in *Discourse VII* that, for an artist to figure a female subject with 'dignity', he 'therefore dresses his figures [in] something with the general air of the antique [...] and preserves something of the modern for the sake of likeness.'³² Katherine Read was already practising something of Reynolds's grand style when she was commissioned for Carter's portrait by Elizabeth Montagu, so-called queen of the Bluestockings and close friend of Elizabeth Carter. Read, an eminent and celebrated pastellist heralding originally from Scotland had, by 1764, established a reputation as one of the most sought-after society portraitists in Britain, particularly for female sitters.³³ Novelist, diarist, and playwright Francis 'Fanny' Burney, who in 1770

found herself at the end of Read's refining pastel, commented that 'nothing could be so soft, so delicate, so blooming' as a self-likeness created by Read.³⁴ However, Read's value as a choice of portraitist for Carter was for more than her capacity to confer a flattering appearance upon her sitters. A famously shrewd manager of her own public image, Elizabeth Montagu solicited Read after seeing a frontispiece completed by her for the second volume of Catharine Macaulay's *History of England* that also depicted Macaulay in the guise of a Roman matron. Read's image of Macaulay was her first portrait to gain publicity and marked the artist out as the innovator of the *matrona*-ly guise for the depiction of the learned lady. In mid-eighteenth-century Britain, the *matrona* was to become both potent and pervasive as a means to dignify feminine learning through its integration within an established lexicon of female virtue that, depending upon who was wearing it, could be at once culturally palatable and radically subversive.

It is difficult to overstate the cultural standing of the Roman *matrona* as an archetype of female worthiness in mid-eighteenth-century Britain. *Matronae* had, for centuries, incarnated canonical virtues, acting as *exemplar virtutis* in stories that narrated the positive effects of female influence.³⁵ Communicated to eighteenth-century audiences mainly in translations of the *Histories* of Livy and the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch, they attained a renewed prominence in a social and political world increasingly invested in establishing the extent of women's 'proper place' within it.³⁶ Against this backdrop, there was fascination for characters such as Lucretia, the heroine whose rape and the rousing speech before her suicide – in which she demanded her father and husband to avenge her besmirched chastity – led to the wars that established the Roman Republic; for Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, whose patriotic pedagogy inspired the heroism and bravery of her twin sons Caius and Gracchus to become important social reformers in the second century BCE; for Veturia and Volumnia, mother and wife of Coriolanus (of Shakespearean and Plutarchan fame), whose intercession on behalf of the Roman people to end Coriolanus's military coup saved the city and its population from destruction. Each of these women were upheld as monuments to purity and self-sacrifice, maternity, patriotism, and civic bravery. In contemporary as well as ancient texts, *matronae*, such as Marcia, the daughter of the revered orator and statesman Cato the Younger, were given voice and form on the London stage, as in Joseph Addison's tragedy *Cato* (1712) or Bluestocking Hannah More's neoclassical tragedy *The Inflexible Captive* (ca. 1774).³⁷ Adapted from Metastasio's 1738 opera *Attilio regolo*, on the capture of the Roman general Attilius Regulus by the Carthaginians, More's female lead, Attilia, was praised for her bravery in spite of her youth as 'a Roman matron not a feeble girl'.³⁸ Sarah Fielding, the aforementioned novelist and talented ancient linguist, penned a 'biography' in the parallel style of Plutarch on *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (1757), turning Plutarch's epideictic tone to a praise of the steadfast Octavia and the perdition of Cleopatra as an adulteress.³⁹

As these examples imply, the particular cachet of the matron was located in her ability to amalgamate both normative aspects of feminine behaviour and social duties – as wives, mothers, and daughters – with performances of otherwise abnormal acts civic agency, even heroism. Apart from a few outliers, such as the Roman matron and female orator Hortensia (who petitioned the Senate on behalf of the women of Rome, and who thereby explicitly challenged male authority),⁴⁰ the *matrona* was almost always situated in relation to her male counterparts and to her domestic responsibilities. In a culture racked by anxiety over how to regulate and reprove women's behaviour, particularly where this intersected with the classical, the *matrona* operated as an essentially safe feminine ideal. What's more, given the ancient *matrona's* propensity towards civic intervention and interaction, there was a useful analogy to be made between such feminine feats of display in the ancient (re)public and contemporary female publishing. Read's portrait of Carter realised the opportunity for such comparative virtue signalling. Yet, while the costume of the matron could cloak a sitter in a mantle of abstract feminine virtue, in Read's portrait of Carter, the guise of the *matrona* also spoke directly to the personal and professional identities of her sitter.

Elizabeth Carter: The Modest Matrona

One of the most immediately striking visual inferences of the portrait is its echo of Christian imagery. Carter's pose – her averted eyes and her slight, gentle smile – is redolent of beatific iconography. The colour palette, too, muted and tonal, evokes something of the ecclesiastical. The veil, common in depictions of female saints, invites associations between the Marian and the *matrona*. Called in Latin the *palla*, the veil was worn by Roman women for religious rites, a sign of modesty, chastity, and deference.⁴¹ Carter's costume here is apiece with a particularly famous eighteenth-century example of the *palla*, worn by the allegory of *Pudicity* that was installed in Westminster Abbey around 1740. Dedicated by Horace Walpole in commemoration of his mother, Catherine, the Westminster statue was a copy of a famous monument, then owned by the Mattei family in Rome, of an ancient matron known colloquially as the Faustina Livia.⁴² Read trained in Rome under Quentin la Tour, and while it is likely she would have known the ancient model,⁴³ it is almost certain she would have encountered the *Pudicity* while in London. As such, Read figures Carter as a comparable embodiment of modesty and chastity, as the name of the figurine suggested, and also makes a subtle gesture towards the possible synchronicity of Christian decorum and classicism. Upon seeing the portrait for the first time, Catherine Talbot responded in the language of piety, calling it 'unaffected, sensible, mild [...]', which, she said 'set it apart from the common run of staring portraits.'⁴⁴ Indicating Carter's downcast eyes, Talbot dwells on Carter's half-profile pose



Fig. 2. John Fayram, *Elizabeth Carter as Minerva* (ca. 1741). Oil on canvas. © National Portrait Gallery, London. (Plate 34, p. 380)

that was, as her comment suggested, unusual in portraits of this kind in this period. As well as evoking a saintly humility, the half-profile also nods towards the numismatic tradition and the Roman-ness of a face in profile. While Carter's Christianity and her classicism are starkly juxtaposed in her writings, here, by contrast, they find an ecumenical equilibrium in the *matrona* guise.

Though highly effective in this mode, the *matrona* was not the only ancient allegorical figure capable of conflating chastity with female scholarship. An earlier portrait depicting Carter as the ancient goddess of wisdom, Minerva, by John Fayram (ca. 1741), assimilated Carter to the famously virginal ancient deity (Fig. 2). In the helmet and aegis of Minerva, Fayram swapped the spear traditionally held by the goddess for a volume of Plato, replacing her normally warlike accoutrements with the objects – and products – of scholarship. As Clare Barlow has argued, Fayram's composition represented an unprecedented vision of female intellect and purported to revere Carter's public status and intellectual confidence as almost divine.⁴⁵ However, Carter's commanding gaze as well as her guise, while armoring her against the potential sexual slurs that could be levelled at female writers, suggest an exceptionalism, even exoticism – not to mention a paganism – that seem at odds with the modest, self-effacing depiction of philosophical and poetic wisdom Carter presented in her writings. Although at the time of its creation Fayram's portrait received high praise, Carter herself seems not to have courted comparison to the goddess, preferring to style herself

as knowledge's conduit rather than its embodiment.⁴⁶ Writing once more to Catherine Talbot in 1764, Carter commented, 'though I am not Minerva, I may make my fortune very prettily as her owl.'⁴⁷

Much earlier, Carter had already articulated her affinity with the owl of Minerva in her poem *Ode to Wisdom* (1747).⁴⁸ Dedicated to 'The solitary bird of the night', the poem is a panegyric to the secluded retirement of the scholar, for which Carter depicts the owl of Minerva, rather than the goddess herself, as avatar. The poem achieved its first and widest circulation (though, initially, without Carter's permission) in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (first published in 1748), where the verse was used to instruct the young protagonist, Clarissa, in the value of learning as an adornment to female virtue rather than vanity.⁴⁹ In the poem, the owl, 'Fav'rite of *Pallas*', flies in private 'philosophic gloom', in contrast to the public-facing *Pallas/Minerva*, to impart wisdom that teaches its possessors to control passions and bestow, 'virtue's soft pervasive Charm's o'er all the senses.'⁵⁰ By the owl's guidance, learning is acquired through rejection of 'Av'rice, Vanity and Pride' and is revealed to be found instead in 'Retirement's silent Joys / And all the sweet endearing Ties / Of still, domestic Life.'⁵¹ Unlike *Minerva*, the *matrona* in many of her eighteenth-century iterations was also believed to enjoy such ties with 'domestic Life'. The poet Anna Barbauld, also a member of the Bluestocking circle, and who was in 1775 to be depicted as a Roman matron on a Wedgwood medallion, penned an ode in which 'the Mighty mothers of immortal Rome' mainly manifested 'household virtues.'⁵² Akin to the reclusiveness celebrated in *Ode to Wisdom*, Barbauld's matrons adhered to the feminine norm of domestic retirement:

Obscure in sober dignity retir'd,
They more deserved than sought to be admir'd [...]
Chaste their attire, their feet unus'd to roam,
They lov'd the sacred threshold of their home.⁵³

In Read's portrait then, the *matrona*'s equivocation with the gendered locus of the home offered yet another means by which to normalise Carter's profession as scholar, by situating her explicitly within the bounds of normative femininity.

Importantly, however, the claims the *matrona*'s costume made for Carter's piety and domesticity in Read's portrait were not at the expense of praising her scholarship. Poised with her arm upon a book, a quill in her hand, in the guise of the *matrona*, Carter is garbed both as an exemplar of moral femininity and posed as a cultural agent. To Carter's contemporaries, the womanly virtues of ancient matrons were often understood also to have been enhanced, even engendered, by their erudition. In a particularly famous proto-feminist tract by seventeenth-century educational reformist, Bathsua Makin – forbear of Carter in her reputation as 'England's most learn'd lady' – the learning of the women

of antiquity was posited both as an index for the virtue of ancient societies and as an authoritative precedent for expanding the educational horizons of England's own daughters:⁵⁴

There is no Question the Greeks and Romans, when most flourishing, did thus educate their Daughters: in Regard so many among them were famous for Learning [...] As Sempronia, Cornelia, Hortensia, Sulpitia, Portia, Valeria [...].⁵⁵

Makin's tract particularly stressed the value of these women's capacities in 'classical' subjects, which had become reserved for the instruction of men.⁵⁶ The canon of learned Greek and Roman *matronae* Makin included in *An Essay To Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen in Religions Manners Arts and Tongues* (1673), were versed not only in ancient languages but also in classical philosophy and history, botany, poetry – both lyric and epic – and so on. While, Makin wrote, Greek women are best at philosophy, Roman women 'make the best oratours', asserting their affinity not just for speech and rhetoric but for politics.⁵⁷

Widely read in the eighteenth century and republished well into the nineteenth century, recent research has also indicated the influence of Makin's treatise on the development of Bluestocking philosophy.⁵⁸ Certainly, the wide-reaching branches of learning in which Makin's *matronae* were educated anticipated those polite enlightened subjects for which the Bluestockings were to become famous. In particular, the reported abilities of Rome's *matronae* in oratory gelled with the Bluestockings' celebrated capacity for morally and culturally edifying conversation.⁵⁹ By figuring Carter as a *matrona*, then, Read not only aligned her sitter with the *matrona*'s conventionally feminine qualities, but etched her into an eclectic pantheon of educated, ancient antecedents for the burgeoning tradition of polite, feminine erudition. Indeed, upon its completion, the portrait itself took up residence in one key site for display of this branch of learning. Elizabeth Montagu hung the painting in the 'blue room' in her house first at Bath and later in London, where she convened her celebrated salon.⁶⁰ Signalling both refined femininity and polite learning, Read's *Elizabeth Carter in the Guise of a Roman Matron* displayed the virtues of a feminine classicism not only to be admired but also to inspire emulation.

Katherine Read's portrait of Elizabeth Carter would eventually come to hang in the house of Samuel Johnson, who, of his 'old friend Mrs. Carter', famously quipped, 'can make a pudding as well as translate Epictectus and work a handkerchief as well as compose a poem.'⁶¹ While we might read this comment as an absurd deflation of Carter's intellectual talent, Johnson's remark betrays little difficulty equating her domestic and scholarly virtues. In any case, it was her translations, not her puddings, that confirmed her as 'a very extraordinary Phaenomenon in the Republick of Letters, and justly to be rank'd with the

Cornelia's, Sulpicia's, and Hypatia's of the Ancients, and the Schurmans and Daciers of the Moderns.⁶² In the guise of the *matrona*, Elizabeth Carter cultivated a professional image as a philologist that stretched, though did not break with, gendered conventions of representation. In this way, one might suggest that Read's portrait visually situated Carter in a mode that Betty Schellenberg has termed 'the modest muse.'⁶³ But while the modest costume and connotations of the *matrona* could enable the female scholar to conform to the contours of conventional femininity and engage with antiquity without ill repute, it could also offer a guise in which to test, indeed, traverse those boundaries.

Catharine Macaulay: The Radicalised Matrona

Catharine Macaulay was Britain's first female historian.⁶⁴ In eight volumes published between 1763 and 1783, her path-breaking *History of England* investigated the political ferment of seventeenth-century England from the period spanning the accession of King James I to the Glorious Revolution.⁶⁵ Though her subject matter was not antiquity, Macaulay's works were deeply inflected by classicism. She found particular inspiration in the Roman historian Tacitus; his *Annales* provided the model for her *Histories*, and it was from Tacitus she learned how writing of the political vicissitudes of the past could provide a forum for discussion of the problems of her present. As well as providing the intellectual architecture for her works, the philosophy of ancient Rome, specifically of the Roman Republic, inspired both Macaulay's political imagination and her personality. Writing in 1769 to her long-time correspondent, the radical Whig and defender of American liberty, John Wilkes, she claimed, 'I have not like others stop't at admiration but endeavoured to regulate my own conduct by the most illustrious pattern of antiquity.'⁶⁶ Though she had no formal classical education – Macaulay could read neither Latin or Greek – her childhood was spent in her father's extensive library and in the thrall of the ancient republics, their histories and characters.⁶⁷ The depth and breadth of Macaulay's self-guided education was admired by Elizabeth Carter, who remarked 'between the Spartan laws, the Roman politics, the philosophy of Epicurus, and the wit of St. Evremond, she seems to have formed a most extraordinary system.'⁶⁸ Though impressed by her knowledge, Macaulay's penchant for political conversation troubled Carter's decorum; Carter noted she was 'much more learned than is becoming for a fine lady', in the mechanics of ancient and modern constitutions.⁶⁹

Macaulay attributed her cultivated and outspoken political subjectivity to her youthful investigation of the 'exalted states' of Greece and Rome, by which 'Liberty became the object of secondary worship in [Macaulay's] delighted imagination.'⁷⁰ As placing ancient Liberty – second only to her Anglican Christianity – as object of her veneration suggests, Macaulay's classicism was at the heart not only of her *Histories* but her republicanism. Although egalitarian,

her republicanism was not strictly anti-monarchical in the modern sense of the term. More a moral than constitutional ideology her republicanism prized the goal of self-government and the freedom of individual citizens from arbitrary interference in a 'democratic system, rightly balanced.'⁷¹ Macaulay's *Histories* theorised her vision of ideal government – often using Republican Rome as an exemplar – ideas that would come to form the scholarly basis for much of the radical reform movements led by the aforementioned John Wilkes in Britain during the 1760s and 1770s and for the rhetoric in support of the American Revolutionary War on both sides of the Atlantic.⁷²

Both as a historian and a republican, Macaulay, like Elizabeth Carter, was a female scholar at work in a man's world. Her singularity as a female political author was further amplified by her identification with the 'masculine' ideology of classical republicanism.⁷³ Like Carter, Macaulay's scholarship was used as an example by which to ratify female genius. In a commentary in the 1763 *Monthly Review* on the first volume of her *History of England*, Macaulay was praised for providing a check to 'the vanity of such as presume the privilege of thinking is confined to those who wear beards [...]'. The reviewer went on:

Not to speak of the ladies of antiquity, how many among the moderns, from the French Dacier to the English Carter have distinguished themselves in the several branches of literature. But it was reserved for fair Macaulay to tread the path of History and undergo the laborious task of collecting and digesting the political fragments which have escaped the reaches of so many learned and ingenious men.⁷⁴

Ranked among learned ladies ancient and modern, the reviewer posited Macaulay as a comparable paragon of female scholarship. Yet the reviewer also gestured to the peculiar, gendered nature of Macaulay's scholarly endeavour both by its eclipse of the efforts of 'ingenious men' and its intervention into that most masculine of realms, politics. The review was accompanied by a reproduction of the portrait that would become the frontispiece to her second volume, Katherine Read's *Catharine Macaulay in the Character of a Roman Matron Lamenting the Lost Liberties of Rome* (ca. 1763) (Fig. 3). The original portrait is now lost, but the engraving, like the review, presented Macaulay in a provocative and politicised posture.

The reproduction of Read's Macaulay is echoed in her portrait of Carter: just Macaulay's head and torso are depicted; her arm binds and fastens the *palla* over her head in half-profile, a pious, polite, feminine veil for her profession symbolised by the scroll. However, in contrast to Read's sparse and subdued image of Carter, Macaulay's portrait is furnished with a politicised prop: the urn. A stock trope in funerary architecture derived from antiquity, the urn in eighteenth-century visual culture was a sentimental symbol implying continued devotion to the dead. In this period, it was often deployed in images of wives



Fig. 3. James Williams (engraver), after Katherine Read, *Catharine Macaulay in the Guise of a Roman Matron Lamenting the Lost Liberties of Rome* (ca. 1763). Engraving. © British Museum.

mourning husbands. Indeed, as the title of the portrait alludes to Macaulay weeping, the suggestion of tears also encoded the image in the often feminised syntax of sentiment.⁷⁵ However, the urn here is not a monument to the memory of a late relative, but a sepulchral semaphore for the ‘lost liberties of the Roman Republic.’⁷⁶ As such, the urn is made to brim, not with Macaulay’s personal loss, but her fear for the loss of constitutional freedoms in an age of political corruption. Compared with Read’s image of *Carter as a Roman Matron*, the presence of the urn and its implied content work to furnish both Macaulay’s persona – and the project for which this portrait was frontispiece – with a more radical objective. Much as the author of the *Monthly Review* distinguished Macaulay’s *History* from the work of Carter and the canon of female classicists, Katherine Read posed Macaulay as a female author vying not for integration into polite culture, but into the *polis*.

In the eighteenth century, Roman women were regularly recognised members of the ancient body politic. In William Russell’s *Essay on the Character of Women* (1779), for example, Roman women were praised for their ‘austere manners’, to which they ‘joined an enthusiastic love of their country.’⁷⁷ To Scottish historian William Alexander, ‘they were the best of wives, of mothers and of citizens; having by their mediation, advice and money, several times saved the

sinking state.⁷⁸ Alexander's inference of citizenship here did not imply the full enfranchisement of Roman women to political office, but rather the demonstrable impact of *matronae* as political mediators and arbitrators during periods of civic strife. In her *Histories*, Macaulay herself repeatedly referred to the civic activism of exemplary *matronae* as a compliment to the political activities of admirable seventeenth-century women.⁷⁹ One figure of extensive praise in this mode was Lady Rachel Russell, wife of the celebrated Whig patriot William Lord Russell, who became implicated in an attempt to assassinate the king in the Rye House Plot of 1683. When Lord Russell refused to acknowledge the doctrine of non-resistance and was condemned to death, Rachel Russell supported his martyrdom. For her actions, Macaulay likened Russell to the Roman *matrona* Arria who, when the Emperor Claudius condemned her husband, Roman senator Aulus Caecina Paetus, to death by suicide for leading a revolt against his imperial authority, Arria stabbed herself first to spur on her husband's courage to do the same. She handed him the dagger with the immortal words '*Non dolet, Paete*' ('It doesn't hurt, Paetus').⁸⁰ Russell, however, did not join her husband in death. As Macaulay wrote:

It was the sense of religion, the duties of a mother and the promise which she had made Lord Russell in the hour of parting that she would preserve her life for the sake of their children, which alone prevented her from following the example of the Roman Arria in that act of conjugal heroism for which this illustrious woman is so justly celebrated.⁸¹

Macaulay's pairing of Rachel Russell's 'conjugal heroism' and her husband's last act of patriotism reveals how ancient examples of female activity were interpolated into her narrative of the virtuous Protestant Commonwealthmen. Elsewhere, the mother of the Scot James Hamilton, sent in 1639 to quell the Covenanters in Scotland, was compared to the mother of Coriolanus for intervening on behalf of her Scottish countrymen and women to plead clemency from the potentially damaging advances of her son and defending the liberties of her people.⁸²

In Macaulay's *Histories*, the virtues of Roman *matronae* were emphatically civic as well as domestic in scope. She deployed these ancient women to represent the measure of women's political as well as intellectual acumen, courage, and voice; qualities by which they could become assimilated to the abidingly masculine realm of high politics. Dialogic with the vision of ancient matrons expressed in her writings, the portraits of Macaulay marshalled the *matrona*'s potential as an iconic conduit for female political activism to articulate her own right to intellectual (though not actual) citizenship in the political realm. While the engraved portrait of Macaulay resonated with politicised sensibility, this civic vision of the matron was most audaciously articulated in the portrait that would front the final volume of her *History*, Robert Edge

Pine's *Catharine Macaulay in the Guise of the Roman Matron Wearing the Sash of a Roman Senator* (Fig. 4). Thought to have been commissioned by her friend and patron, the dissenting minister Reverend Thomas Wilson, Robert Edge Pine was a portrait artist by trade, known in this period for producing images of professional men, particularly medics.⁸³ A self-proclaimed 'liberty-seeker', Pine would later travel to America to make a living painting likenesses of renowned politicians, including George Washington.⁸⁴ A portraitist of some of the eighteenth century's most luminary men of science and medicine, this likeness by Pine placed Macaulay in her own professional milieu, that of the scholar and thinker. Not 'soft and blooming', and feminine like Read's portraits, Pine's image offers both the austere iconic presence of Macaulay as historian as well as the iconographic resonances of her politics.⁸⁵

As in Read's depictions, Macaulay is depicted holding a quill in an evocation of her authorial agency, but these accoutrements are set against a backdrop more symbolically rich than was Read's weeping widow. Standing with her elbow resting upon a pile of bindings – one of which indicates her *History of England* – atop a plinth inscribed with a republican credo taken from her own work ('Government a Power Delegated for the Happiness of Mankind Conducted by Wisdom, Justice and Mercy'), Macaulay stands supported by



Fig. 4. Robert Edge Pine, *Catharine Macaulay in the Guise of a Roman Matron Wearing the Sash of a Roman Senator* (ca. 1775). Oil on canvas. © National Portrait Gallery, London. (Plate 35, p. 381)



Fig. 5. Thomas Watson, after Benjamin West, *Thomas Sawbridge as a Roman Tribune* (1772). Mezzotint. © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

the gravitas of her own celebrated wisdom and erudition. Her pose mimics the attitude of a figurine produced by the Chelsea-Derby Porcelain Factory, which began distribution in 1773, of Catharine Macaulay as Clio, muse of History, that bore the same inscription.⁸⁶ Though distributed earlier than the frontispiece and her final volume, the attitude of the Derby figurine is likely taken from Pine's preparations for the portrait (sourced through networks of Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) though Pine's Macaulay would, of course, appear as matron not as muse.

The composition is also redolent of an image of Macaulay's brother, radical Whig politician John Sawbridge, painted just two years earlier by renowned neo-classicist Benjamin West (Fig. 5), in which he appeared as a toga-clad Roman tribune, hand upon a pedestal marked *SPQR* (*Senatus Populusque Romanus*), the abbreviated catchphrase of the ancient Roman Republic.⁸⁷ Produced to commemorate Sawbridge's accession to the parliamentary seat of Middlesex (in the wake of John Wilkes, who he would also succeed as Lord Mayor of London in 1775), West's image, by its masculine subject and classicising content alone, clearly cast Sawbridge as a politician. Observing the parallels between West's and Pine's images of the Sawbridge siblings – their similar stances both framed and set against ancient architectural scenery – it is tempting to think of these

as pendant portraits, though we have little record of the fate of either physical image until Pine was reattributed as the artist for Macaulay's portrait in 1990.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the parallels bespeak the (self-)positioning of Macaulay in what might be considered a masculine and political visual register. Her pose, cogent with the already circulating depictions of her as the embodiment of History itself, the costume of the *matrona* and its civic associations, all serve as a feminine outfit for her outspoken, masculine politics.

Macaulay's classical attire recalls the habit of the Westminster *Pudicity*, but her veil is conspicuously absent. Instead, Macaulay's hair is left exposed, piled in a recognisably eighteenth-century style, perhaps to ensure likeness, but we may also read this absence as an intentional iconographic shift away from the demure feminine piety the veil could signify. The silken drape that adorned the head of Elizabeth Carter and Macaulay herself in Katherine Read's earlier likenesses is rearranged in Pine's portrait as a senatorial sash, the emblem of high Roman office. Recast in eighteenth-century Britain as the outfit of male political power, the sash signalled citizenship and, allegorically, the enfranchisement of parliamentarians to public, political speech. In the introduction to her final volume, for which Pine's image was frontispiece, Macaulay commanded the authority to speak on the affairs of state in spite of her sex:

The invidious censures which may prevent me from striking into a path rarely trodden by my sex will not permit a selfish consideration to keep me mute in the cause of liberty and virtue [...].⁸⁹

In the sash of a Roman senator, Pine's Macaulay makes as self-conscious and self-confident a comment on Macaulay's place in the political forum as her published *History* had. Indeed, the obelisk and temple pediment that rise behind Pine's Macaulay indicate, for the initiated, the monuments found in the Roman Forum still visible in the eighteenth century, as now, in the ruins of the ancient city.

Pine's blending of gendered classical iconographies helped Macaulay advance her claims to participate in the masculine forums of history writing and politics. However, the invocation of a senatorial *matrona* also signposts a richer context, conjuring up the ultimate icon of Macaulay's radicalism, the Roman *matrona* Hortensia. A political orator, famous for leading a delegation of Roman women into the Forum to demand the repeal of tax upon female property during the civil wars that ensued after the assassination of Julius Caesar, Hortensia is remembered for a vituperative speech before the Senate and Roman people, as recorded by Livy, and her condemnation of male bellicosity at female expense.⁹⁰ As Rome's renowned female advocate and activist, it was to Hortensia that Catharine Macaulay addressed her proto-feminist *Letters on Education*, a text for which she has since been far better known than her *Histories*, which were published before her death in 1790.⁹¹ In *Letters on Education*, Macaulay

made her most explicit argument for women's intellectual and political parity with men. Throughout, she explained to Hortensia the plight of women in her age and nation, their intelligence, their brilliance, and their subjugation to lesser beings by their refusal of a civic – classical – education and political voice. Macaulay wrote to Hortensia as a fellow advocate for women against their enforced disenfranchisement. A senatorial *matrona*, through her portrait, Macaulay projected herself as the radical, erudite, female republican Hortensia, standing defiantly in the political forum long before she ever addressed her *Letters on Education* to her as an imagined interlocutor. In *Letters* to Hortensia, Macaulay would make her most unambiguously feminist claim that there was 'no characteristic difference between the sexes', a claim to which Pine's Macaulay as matron and as historian is analogous.⁹² Through the intertwined intertext of Macaulay's political history and the politicised *matrona* in Pine's frontispiece, Macaulay appears as a reanimated Roman matron whose right to think, to write, and to speak was authorised by the example of antiquity.

While acolytes and radicals in Catharine Macaulay's own circle panegyricised their 'lov'd Hortensia' as another female favourite of Minerva,⁹³ many found Macaulay's classicising portrait to press uncomfortably at the parameters of politeness. Writing to Elizabeth Carter upon reading Macaulay's final volume, Elizabeth Montagu accused Macaulay of 'adopting masculine opinions and masculine manners', but saved her most caustic riposte in reference to Pine's frontispiece, of which she chided, 'I hate a woman's mind in men's cloath's almost as much as her person.'⁹⁴ Once eager to position her friend Carter in the guise of *matrona* following Macaulay's example, Montagu balked at the excesses of Macaulay, now known as 'the Republican virago.'⁹⁵ As Carter had predicted, Macaulay's insistent investment in ancient politics came to tarnish her reputation, at least among the Bluestockings. Where Carter's philological project sought to translate an alien antiquity to contemporary Christian sociability, ultimately, Macaulay's preoccupation with the revival of Roman radicalism and with her own, immodest, publicity, led Montagu to condemn her with the dreaded charge of pedantry.⁹⁶ To Montagu, Macaulay's pedantic, impolite classicism was in stark contrast to Carter's, compounded in her intransigent desire for the re-enactment of antiquity and her dogged attachment to the letter of ancient liberty.

Although occupying different positions in Britain's Republic of Letters, Catherine Macaulay and Elizabeth Carter continued to be constellated by their contemporaries as female stars in the literary firmament, called upon to add their lustre to accounts of female scholarship. Indeed, when Katherine Read was commissioned by Montagu to paint Carter after her version of Macaulay as *matrona*, Read initially envisioned her portraits of Carter and Macaulay as two of a series of nine matrons, echoing the nine muses of the arts. Montagu dismissed the idea, supposing the narrowing of Britain's learned ladies to just nine impracticable, impossible, and – if the series were to include Montagu



Fig. 6. Richard Samuel, *The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain* (ca. 1778). Oil on canvas.
 © National Portrait Gallery, London. (Plate 36, p. 382)

herself – impolitely vain.⁹⁷ However, the muses were to prove irresistible to Richard Samuel, whose *Portraits in the Characters of the Muses in the Temple of Apollo* (1778) collected and celebrated eighteenth-century women’s contributions to the polite arts (Fig. 6).⁹⁸ Perhaps the most famous visual amalgamation of eighteenth-century female intellectuals, the nine figures depicted – which included Carter, Montagu, and Macaulay as well as Anna Barbauld – never sat for Samuel but were drawn from the artist’s imagination. Carter wrote in typically self-deprecating fashion of the portrait to Elizabeth Montagu, ‘Oh dear! How pretty we look [...] though I am mortified [...] I cannot very exactly tell which is you, and which is I, and which is any body else!’⁹⁹ Though flattered by her inclusion in Samuel’s allegory, Carter indicated in their homogeneity a loss of agency and so, too, of individual intellectual identity. The ancient paradigms of the muses did not match with modern typologies of polite learning, nor could their characters accommodate the new realities of women’s publishing and cultural pursuits. Perhaps it was Montagu’s recognition of this discrepancy, more than vanity or impracticality, that led her to deny Read’s series of *matronae/*

muses. Indeed, in contrast to the fixed sequence and meaning of the ancient muses, Roman *matronae* were polyphonic and thereby might seem better fit to be shaped to – and help to shape – the idiosyncratic inspirations of female intellectuals. In the contrasting (and contested) portraits of Elizabeth Carter and Catharine Macaulay, the guise of the Roman matron allowed them to claim room of their own in the eighteenth century's public sphere as *matronae doctae*: classically learned women.

Notes

1. See Edith Hall and Rosie Wyles (eds.), *Women Classical Scholars: Unsealing the Fountain from the Renaissance to Jaqueline de Romilly*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016.
2. See Alice Gaussen, *A Woman of Wit and Wisdom: A Memoir of Elizabeth Carter, One of the 'Bas-Bleu' Society (1717–1806)*, London, Smith Elder and Co., 1906; Judith Hawley (ed.), *The Works of Elizabeth Carter*, London, Pickering and Chatto, 1999, iv.
3. Quoted in Rev. Montagu Pennington, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs Elizabeth Carter, with a New Edition of Her Poems*, London, F. C. and J. Rivington, 1807, 59. This is Pennington's translation.
4. See, for example, Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning and Patriotism 1750–1810*, London, University of Chicago Press, 2000; Elizabeth Eger et al. (eds.), *Women Writing and the Public Sphere 1700–1830*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001; Anne K. Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England 1780–1830*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002; Susan Dalton, *Engendering the Republic of Letters: Reconnecting Public and Private Spheres in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Montreal, McGill University Press, 2003; Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian Britain*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003; Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan (eds.), *British Women's Writing in the Long Eighteenth-Century: Authorship, Politics and History*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009; Elizabeth Eger, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe 1700–1800*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014.
5. See especially Guest, *Small Change*, and Eger, *Bluestockings*.
6. Unattributed review of Catharine Macaulay, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the of the Brunswick Line*, in *Monthly Review*, 1763, 29, 372.
7. 'Gentleman', *Man Superior to WOMAN; or a Vindication of MANs Natural Right to Sovereign Authority over the Woman*, London, printed for T. Cooper, 1739, 55.
8. According to Eger, this was a common term for women intellectuals captured particularly in Richard Polwhel's poem *The Unsex'd Females* (1798).
9. Hall and Wyles (eds.), *Women Classical Scholars*.
10. Elizabeth Montagu to Matthew Robinson, September 10, 1769, MO 4767, San Marino, Huntington Library.
11. Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 3–7.
12. *Ibid.*
13. See especially Mark Towsey, 'History, Politics and the Separate Spheres: Women's Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain and America', in Jonathan Rose and Mary Hammond (eds.), *The Edinburgh History of Reading: A World Survey From Antiquity the Present*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2019; Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, London, Cambridge University Press, 2009; Sylvia Tomaselli, 'Civilisation, Patriotism and Enlightened Histories of Woman', in Barbara Taylor and Sarah Knotts (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 117–135; D. R. Woolf, 'A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre and Historical Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century England 1500–1800', in *The American Historical Review*, 1997, 102, 645–679.

14. David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1963, 184.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth-Century', in *The Historical Journal*, 2002, 45, 869–898.
18. See G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth Century Britain*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1992; Laurence Klein, 'Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere', in Judith Still and Michael Worton (eds.), *Textuality and Sexuality*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993, 100–115; Klein, *Shaftesbury*. In the French context, but important for gender and the salon, see Dena Goodman, 'Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female Philosophic and Cultural Ambitions', in *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 1999, 22, 329–350.
19. Bridget Hill, *The Republican Virago: The Life and Times of Catharine Macaulay, Historian*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, 9.
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 74. *Monthly Review*, 241.
 75. For a discussion of the sentimental dimensions of this image, see Davies, *Macaulay and Warren*, 73–120.

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83. On Pine, see Susan Sloman, *Pickpocketing the Rich: Portrait Painting in Bath 1720–1800*, London, Holbourne Museum of Art, 2002, 2.
84. On Pine's radicalism, see John Sunderland, 'Mortimer, Pine and Some Political Aspects of English History Painting', in *The Burlington Magazine*, 1974 CXVI, 855, 322–326.
85. Letter XXIX in Frances Burney, *The Complete Works of Frances Burney*, Hastings, Delphi Classics, 2015, 39.
86. The Derby figurine and Pine's portrait would form the basis for a larger statue of Macaulay as the muse of History, which caused much controversy upon its installation in Rev. Thomas Wilson's church, St. Stephen Walbrook, in Westminster in 1777. Believed an idolatrous, sacrilegious representation of a living figure – not least one with controversial politics – the statue was eventually removed in 1778 and can now be found in the Warrington Public Library, in the northwest of England, without fanfare and inscribed simply as 'History'.
87. The original is destroyed, but engraved; see Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986, no. 694.
88. Acquired by the National Portrait Gallery in 1985, the portrait had been attributed to Mason Chamberlin. David Solkin urged the reattribution in 1990: Letter of July 23, 1990, National Portrait Gallery Archive, London.
89. Macaulay, *History*, vol. 8, 25.
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91. Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education with observations on religious and metaphysical subjects*, London, Charles Dilly, 1790, rpt. New York, Garland, 1974. See, for example, Catherine Gardner, 'Catharine Macaulay's *Letters on Education*: Odd but Equal', in *Hypatia*, 1998, 13, 118–137; Wendy Gunther Canada, 'Catharine Macaulay on the Paradox of Paternal Authority in Hobbesian Politics', in *Hypatia*, 2009, 21, 150–173.
92. Macaulay, *Letters*, 206.
93. Anonymous, *Six Odes Presented to the Justly Celebrated Historian, Mrs. Catharine Macaulay, on Her Birthday*, Bath, 1777, 17–19.
94. Cited in Eger and Peltz, *Bluestockings*, 104.
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96. Quoted in Hill, *Republican Virago*, 384.
97. Montagu to Carter, MO 3146, San Marino, Huntington Library, 1763.
98. See Elizabeth Eger, 'Representing Culture: The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain', in Eger et al., *Women and the Public Sphere*, 104–132, and Eger, *Bluestockings*, 1–32 for detailed discussions of Samuel's portrait and its implications.
99. Carter to Montagu, December 23, 1777.

PART III

**The Diachronic Dynamics of
Female Intellectual Authority**

CHAPTER 11

Portraits of Mary, Queen of Scots, as an Intellectual in Seventeenth-Century Collective Biographies

Armel Dubois-Nayt

By the time Mary Stuart, later to be the queen of Scotland, was born in 1542, many of the humanist treatises advocating some form of education for women, particularly royal women, had been published: from Anne of France's *Enseignements à sa fille* ('Lessons for My Daughter') (ca. 1505) to Erasmus's defence of female education in *Christiani matrimonii institutio* ('The Institution of Christian Matrimony') (1526) and Charles de Sainte-Marthe's *In obitum incomparabilis Margaritae* ('Funeral Oration on the Death of the Incomparable Marguerite') (1509).¹ Thomas More, Erasmus, and Juan Luis Vives might have had their disagreements about the most appropriate curriculum for the female sex and particularly about the skills that had to remain a male preserve, yet they all reached the conclusion that education was the safest way to preserve women's virtue.²

Mary clearly benefitted from the humanist notion that conferring an education on women would improve their own morals and social mores as a whole, and she was among the happy few women who actually received a formal education in the Renaissance. This chapter will first explain why and how Mary benefitted from a humanist education. It will then look at how this extraordinary female education she received affected her life, by investigating the descriptions of her intellectual achievements in the collective biographies of learned women to show how she became a role model for seventeenth-century women.

Collective biographies, or prosopographies, are the earliest genre in defence of the female sex in the *querelle des femmes*. This debate covers the discourses on the inequality or equality between men and women and pitted misogynists against philogynists from the fifteenth century until the end of the eighteenth century, if not longer.³ In fact, Christine de Pizan, who is considered to have launched the oppositional movement against medieval misogyny in general and more specifically against Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* ('The Romance of the Rose'), built her arguments in *La Cité des Dames* ('The City of Ladies') (1405) on 165 exemplary women.⁴ She thus authored the first female collective biography with a clear proto-feminist agenda – contrary to the equivocal Boccaccio, who compiled examples of good and evil women – and turned *accumulation*, typical of lists or catalogues, in favour of women.⁵ The genre of the collective biography developed with the *querelle* and, at the end of the fifteenth century, shifted from virtuous women to learned ladies. Examples of this are the works by Baptiste Fulgose, Barthélémy de Chasseneuz, Caelius Rhodiginus, and Ravisius Textor, who were no longer interested in rehabilitating women per se and thus advocated matrimony, but were eager to defend the virtues of female education.⁶

The role Mary, Queen of Scots, plays in collective biographies focused on learned ladies has never been studied before. Until now, more attention has been paid to her as a *femme forte* or as a competent sovereign in the progressive reappraisal of Agnes Strickland's *Lives of Queens of Scotland*.⁷ This chapter thus intends to fill this gap in studies on Mary, Queen of Scots, by analysing the first four prosopographies of learned ladies in which she features. I will start by looking at a late sixteenth-century collective biography, Brantôme's *Vies des dames illustres* ('Book of Illustrious Ladies'), which dedicated an entry to Mary.⁸ Then, I will consider several prosopographies, or collections of portraits in prose, which associate Mary, Queen of Scots, with a series of learned women with whom she had no apparent connection except her gender. Finally, I will study Jean de La Forge's *Cercle des femmes savantes* ('Circle of Learned Ladies') (1663), Jacqueline Guillaume's *Dames illustres* ('Illustrious Women') (1665), and Marguerite Buffet's *Éloges des illustres savantes anciennes et modernes* ('Laudations of Illustrious Learned Women, Both Ancient and Modern') (1668) to explain how Mary's example functions in these works to demonstrate female intellectual talent and authority.⁹

The fact that Mary only appeared in French collective biographies is noteworthy, but not as surprising as it might seem, for several reasons: first, in the seventeenth century, Mary's son, James I, who ruled over England and Scotland until 1625, thought ill of women who dared to claim male privileges for themselves, starting with education and learning; this remained the rule throughout most of the Stuart era until the Restoration in 1660. Second, as a Catholic charged with high treason against the iconic Elizabeth, Mary, Queen of Scots, was not a likely candidate for English collective biographies of illustrious women when they first appeared.¹⁰

A Humanist Education

The formal education Mary Stuart received while she was residing at the court of France is no doubt ascribable to her status as a ‘crowned queen’, which gave her precedence over the rest of *les Enfants de France* (‘the Children of France’), including the dauphin himself, with whom she eventually shared the royal curriculum.¹¹ When she arrived in France at the age of six, she was taught with Elizabeth of France, the king’s eldest daughter, under the supervision of Diane de Poitiers. The focus was initially put on her cultural conversion and her command of French, which she read and studied for two hours a day.¹² After 1554, the year Mary’s mother officially became regent of Scotland, Diane de Poitiers was succeeded by Mary’s uncle, Charles of Guise. Simultaneously, her education took a new turn to be further enhanced and aligned with the three steps that made up a humanist princely education according to historian Sylvène Édouard: first, learning and mastery of Latin, second, rhetorical education, and finally, introduction to moral philosophy.¹³ Her learning of Latin was initially entrusted to Claude Millet or Millot, who was also Elizabeth’s schoolmaster.

We know nothing about the textbooks she used, but much can be learned from a small manuscript in her handwriting that was recovered in the nineteenth century in the Imperial Library of Paris and edited by Anatole de Montaiglon. This exercise book gives us an insight into the books she had access to, something we cannot establish from an existing inventory of the library of her schooling years. It contains sixty-four short letters and translations, composed between July 26, 1554 and January 9, 1555. These letters, on the one hand, discuss the importance of the study of good letters for princes and, on the other hand, refute the assumption that women had nothing to do with learning.¹⁴ Based on the references in these letters, it is possible to conclude, with Sylvène Édouard, that Mary was at least familiar with Vives’s *De Ratione Studii Puerilis* (‘On the Right Method of Instruction for Children’), his *Satellitium Animi* (‘The Soul’s Escort’), Aesop’s *Fables*, Plutarch of Chaeronea’s *Moralia* (‘Morals’), the *Manuel Royal* (‘Royal Manual’) by Jean Brèche, and Erasmus’s *Institution principis Christiani* (‘Education of a Christian Prince’), as well as his *Colloquia* (‘Colloquies’).¹⁵ Mirrors of princes was a literary genre Mary Stuart was well versed in, as further evinced by her reading of Guillaume Budé’s *L’Institution du Prince* (‘The Institution of the Prince’), which she brought back with her to Scotland. John Guy also includes among her set texts Cicero’s *De Officiis* (‘On Duties’), Plato’s *Nómoi* (‘Laws’), Aristotle’s *Politiká* (‘Politics’) and *Rhētoriké* (‘Rhetoric’), Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* (‘Education of an Orator’), and Plutarch’s *Bíoi Parállēloi* (‘Parallel Lives’).¹⁶ Additionally, she continued to study Latin, with Jacques Amyot, the dauphin’s tutor. Once she had mastered the rudiments, she also studied Greek with Pierre Danès and geography, using Ptolemy’s pioneering textbook.

According to Elyot, when the prince reached maturity at the age of fourteen, he entered the second stage of princely education, with instruction in the art of oratory. Mary's syllabus seems to have strictly followed the humanist curriculum, for in 1555, at the age of thirteen, she delivered a deliberative oration of her own composition to the French court. In this public speech, she defended the access of women to literature and the liberal arts. This rhetorical performance was given at the Louvre in presence of the king, Henri II, and his spouse, Catherine de' Medici. The Latin text of the oration has been lost, so it is difficult to assess its quality or argumentation, but we can appreciate her skills in eloquence by reading testimonies that suggest that she had benefitted from the teachings of Antoine de Fouquelin. Fouquelin explained, for instance, how orators should use their voices expressively as if they were playing a musical instrument.¹⁷ Mary's mastery of this skill is obvious from the cheers of the Scottish Parliament witnessed by the Scottish reformer John Knox after a speech she gave there.¹⁸

Her education also clearly involved more womanly undertakings such as dancing, singing, playing the harp and the harpsichord, baking, and embroidering. She perfected this latter skill in Scotland just like her more scholarly ones, for her royal education continued until the day she died. In 1562, just a year after she returned to Scotland, she wrote French and Italian verse to send to Elizabeth of England, with the assistance of the humanist George Buchanan, who acted as her tutor and with whom she also worked on the study of Livy and Sallust. During her reign (1561–1567), she put together a rich library, which encompassed 243 books on moral philosophy, the art of war, history, astronomy, and cosmography.¹⁹ More than fifty of these were in Greek and Latin. In 1574, while imprisoned in England, she was still reading in Latin the long treatise of neo-Stoic and Christian teachings of her spiritual adviser John Leslie, which she adapted in her own poem 'Méditation sur l'Inconstance et Vanité du Monde, Composée par la Reine d'Écosse et Douairière de France' ('Meditation on the Inconstancy and Vanity of the World, Composed by the Queen of Scotland and the Queen Dowager of France').²⁰ For her contemporaries and later generations of philogynists, these were legitimate reasons to consider her a learned lady.

Portraying Mary as a Learned Lady in the Late Sixteenth Century

Brantôme's *Vies des Dames Illustres* can be considered as the initial source for later prosopographers writing on Mary, Queen of Scots. He wrote this collective biography after 1589, because he had retired in Périgord, partly ruined after a career as a soldier and a courtier. It was a rebuttal of bitter attacks on two of the queens who feature in it: Catherine de' Medici, who was the target of a vitriolic pamphlet that bemoaned her accession to power, and Mary, Queen of Scots, whose execution, in 1587, was justified to the French a year

later.²¹ Brantôme, contrary to the Protestant anti-gynaecocrat treatise *Discours Merveilleux* ('Marvellous Discourse'), believed in women's ability to govern and his not-so-hidden agenda was to advocate the repeal of the Salic law to enable Marguerite of Valois to succeed her brother Henri II.²²

Mary, Queen of Scots, is the subject of the third discourse, and she stands therefore at the centre of the collective biography to illustrate the benefits of a princely humanist education for women, particularly the accomplishment that it made their souls more beautiful. In his laudation, Brantôme follows the three-step syllabus identified by Sylvène Édouard and starts with Mary's mastery of Latin before turning to her mastery of the art of public speaking:

She had made herself learned in Latin, so that being between thirteen and fourteen years of age, she declaimed before King Henri, the queen, and all the Court, publicly in the hall of the Louvre, an harangue in Latin, which she had made herself, maintaining and defending against common opinion, that it was well becoming to women to know letters and the liberal arts.²³

He starts, therefore, with Latin and rhetoric, the two subjects that were considered a male preserve at the time, before turning to the study of the French vernacular, which was the actual starting point of Mary's education as future French consort:

Also she made Antoine Fochain, of Chauny of Vermandois, prepare for her a rhetoric in French, which still exists, that she might the better understand it, and make herself as eloquent in French as she had been in Latin, and better than if she had been born in France.²⁴

The emphasis is on the exceptionality of Mary as a learned lady, an exceptionality Brantôme demonstrated with an anecdote based on first-hand experience: 'Think what a rare thing and admirable it was, to see the wise and beautiful young queen thus orate in Latin, which she knew and understood right well, for I was there and saw her.'²⁵ He does not care so much about the details of her learning, which he encapsulates in a global statement: 'there was no human knowledge she would not talk upon.'²⁶

Brantôme then moves to her love of poetry and her patronage of the Pléiade poets. He commends her verse for being 'fine and well done', and he sets it apart from the coarse and ill-polished verses contained in the casket letters.²⁷ When he then returns to her ordinary manner of speech, as opposed to her rhetoric as a public speaker, he complies with early modern gender norms by simultaneously acknowledging her masculine royal majesty and her feminine discretion, modest reserve, and beautiful grace. Brantôme also briefly mentions her skills as learner and speaker of foreign languages. But oddly enough, he does not mention her mastery of Spanish or Italian, both languages held in high

esteem in France. Instead, he pays tribute to her ability to make her 'rustic, barbarous and ill-sounding' native tongue, Scots, seem 'beautiful and agreeable'.²⁸ This confirms, on the one hand, the lack of interest early modern continental Europeans had in northern languages 'viewed askance as being too guttural for delicate throats', and on the other hand, Brantôme's intent to portray Mary as an extraordinary queen whose vocal and instrumental musicality raised her far above her linguistically unpleasant subjects.²⁹

In doing so, Brantôme may have been implicitly responding to the aforementioned attacks on Mary, especially to that by the Scottish reformer John Knox, a fierce opponent to female rule, in his account of Mary's opening speech³⁰ in front of Parliament in 1563. Knox mocked it in the *History of the Reformation*, written between 1559 and 1571, and first printed in London by Thomas Vautrollier in 1586. Brantôme, who started working on his book after 1589, may therefore have been aware of Knox's disparaging remark.

Such stinking pride of women as was seen at that Parliament, was never seen before in Scotland. Three sundry days the queen rode to the Tolbooth. The first day she made a painted orison; and there might have been heard among her flatterers, 'Vox Dianæ! The voice of a goddess (for it could not be Dei), and not of a woman! God save the sweet face! Was there ever orator spake so properly and so sweetly!'³¹

In this passage, Knox is irritated by the positive reaction of Mary's audience, who lauded her oratory skills in clearly gendered terms ('properlie', 'sweetlie'). He thus counters those praises by a similarly gendered equation between female eloquence and stinking pride, a fault he systematically blamed on women who assumed a position of power.³² Brantôme, on the contrary, is eager to stress the beauty and the agreeableness of Mary's voice as she delivers speeches, not as a sign of her femininity, but of her royalty. It can be contended that by contrasting 'an extraordinary queen' to her 'linguistically unpleasant subjects' through her voice and her eloquence in Scots, Brantôme adopts the contemporary conception of the two voices of the king shared by Jacques Amyot, Cardinal du Perron, and Germain Forget. These three men, who advised Henry III on his public speaking, believed that the king's royal voice, as opposed to his personal voice, was a tool he should sharpen to command well.³³ Du Perron, for instance, wrote: 'It is [eloquence] which leads entire assemblies of men just through words, directs their wills wherever it pleases, and redirects them when it disapproves of their inclinations.'³⁴ Based on Brantôme's testimony, Mary, who had been taught by Fouquelin, preceded her former brother-in-law in acquiring that particular skill in the art of ruling.

All in all, Brantôme's point is clearly to illustrate that Mary, Queen of Scots, had received the classical education that a future queen needed at the Valois court just like the other queens he portrayed – namely Anne of Brittany, Catherine de' Medici, Élisabeth of France, and Marguerite of Valois – had. Brantôme is not interested in women as a category but in queens as a category

and learning is, along with beauty, one of the features that elevate these extraordinary women above their subjects. Combined, these two recurring features in the portraits he draws mirror the royal magnificence that justifies the positions of authority held by Mary and her equals. This is also why Brantôme decided, in the opening of the discourse that deals with Mary's education, to ignore the people who made that education possible, namely the king of France and her tutors. This was a way to empower her further: 'she had made herself learned in Latin,' 'she had made herself [...] her harangue in Latin,' and 'she had made Antoine Fochain [Fouquelin] [...] prepare for her a rhetoric in French.'³⁵ But could this extraordinary empowerment of an early modern queen, taking charge of her own education, survive in the following century? Or was it perhaps bound to evolve, when female education in general became the principal topic of discussion, as opposed to female princely education? To answer these questions, we will turn first to three texts printed in the 1660s in the wake of the golden age of women's salons between 1630 and 1650, which cover the regency of Anne of Austria in the 1640s and the Fronde.³⁶

La Forge's 'Precious' Portrait

In this context, Mary first appears in *Le Cercle des femmes savantes* ('Circle of Learned Women'), a dialogue between Mécène, Livie, the wife of the Roman emperor, and the poet Virgile, which was published in 1663 by Jean de La Forge, about whom very little is known.³⁷ Some have assumed that he was the brother of Louis de La Forge, the French philosopher and friend of Descartes.³⁸ This would suggest that Jean belonged to a family of men of letters, although he did not produce a treatise on the human mind like his Cartesian brother but lighter pieces such as a romantic comedy, *La Joueuse dupée ou l'intrigue des Académies* ('The Jolly Betrayed, or the Intrigue of the Academies'), a heroic poem, *La Hongrie secourue* ('Hungary Assisted'), and his *Cercle des femmes savantes*.³⁹ La Forge, who lived in Paris, according to the *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne*, was nevertheless famous enough for his heroic poem to be presented to the king in 1664, as indicated on the title page.⁴⁰ His two other works show that he had at least two patrons, the marquis de Dubois, to whom he dedicated his *Joueuse dupée*, and the comtesse de Fiesque, to whom he dedicated his *Cercle des femmes savantes*.

The countess had a renowned literary salon, which, according to Léon Bredif, was the most prestigious after the Hotel of Rambouillet ran by Catherine de Vivonne.⁴¹ It seems, therefore, that La Forge was admitted to the comtesse de Fierque's *ruelle* – literally the space between the bed of the hostess and the wall of her bedroom – along with many fashionable social and literary figures of the day. Visitors included, for instance, Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who tells about the love story between the comte de Fiesque and Gilonne

d'Harcourt, the future countess, in her romance *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* ('Artamenes, or the Grand Cyrus') through the characters of Pisistrate and Cléorante.⁴² As for La Forge, he took part in the defence of the *précieuses* – women who claimed an access to culture – after they were satirised by Molière in *Les Précieuses ridicules* ('The Affected Ladies') (1659).⁴³

The nineteenth-century biographer Victor Fournel claims that La Forge's *Cercle* is a 'genuine supplement to the great dictionary of Somaize', which presented the fashionable language used by the *Précieuses* as well as the sociable practices and the main figures who gathered in the salons in the early 1660s.⁴⁴ But, while Somaize's 1661 *Grand dictionnaire des précieuses, historique, poétique, géographique, cosmographique, cronologique et armoirique* ('Great Dictionary of the Affected Ladies, Historical, Poetical, Geographical, Cosmographical, Chronological, Armorial') comes after a first satirical version entitled *Grand Dictionnaire des précieuses ou la clef de la langue des ruelles* ('Great Dictionary or the Affected Ladies of the Key to the Language of the Bedside') (1660), which was entirely based on Molière's play, La Forge unreservedly supported women's access to intellectual life – be it simply games of wit – through gatherings presided over by a woman.⁴⁵ His theme, however, just like the title of his work, is hardly new, and he was still relying on the *précieuse* 'vogue', as Christophe Schuwey puts it, with a by-product that comes after Samuel Chappuzeau's plays *Le Cercle des femmes* ('The Circle of Women') (1656) and *Académie des Femmes* ('Academy of Women') (1661). The first play defends the *précieuse* women in their salons; the latter mocks them.⁴⁶

The paratext of the *Cercle* – which includes lines by nine male readers who praise La Forge, as well as his patron and the learned ladies mentioned – suggests that these learned men, some of whom were lawyers at Parliament, may have been part of the comtesse de Fiesque's literary circle. This paratext also illustrates how the ladies' bedsides were the tribunals where books were judged, as Adrien Baillet wrote, but it is worth underlining that only male written opinions on the *Cercle* ended up in print.⁴⁷

La Forge, on the contrary, builds around Fiesque a 'troop of illustrious women' to pay tribute to her patronage of learned men.⁴⁸ And although the paratext seems to show that the *Cercle* was read by men, the foreword claims that it is aimed almost exclusively at women, whom he addresses with authorial humility. In his foreword 'to the female readers', he concedes in fact that, if he has left out the names of some learned ladies by ignorance, he will revise his text if the book meets with enough success to be reprinted.⁴⁹ La Forge shows no inclination to enter the debate about women's access to culture in a confrontational manner. By arguing that he is mostly writing for a female readership, he is in fact adopting the private tone of the feminocentric salon as opposed to the public discursive space of the academy or university conference.

La Forge, however, acknowledges that his collection of portraits in verse belongs to the tradition of collective biographies by male authors to which

he refers his readers for information about learned ladies of ancient times: Hilarion de Coste (1595–1661), Louis Jacob de Carme (1608–1670), Buxtor (*sic*) (1564–1629), and others.⁵⁰ La Forge states that his intent is to praise women for their learning or their patronage of learned men without ranking them in any way and with no consideration for their other achievements. He then explains that he has changed their proper names, which are insufficiently poetic for French verse. That is his excuse for giving them aliases that were, in fact, a feature of *préciosité* as a literary style.

In the case of women, these aliases or pseudonyms also corresponded to the discretion that was still expected of learned ladies, who were discouraged from making their writings public by having them printed. The secrecy surrounding the salon was indeed a way for seventeenth-century *précieus* women, who might have felt they deserved a place in the cultural scene, to keep complying with the social demands of silence and humility imposed on them. As Erica Harth has shown, ‘many women of the salons if they wrote at all did so anonymously or pseudonymously. Similarly, it was not unusual for women to pursue their studies under a strict veil of secrecy and to hide their learning.’⁵¹ There is therefore undoubtedly more than poetic ambition behind La Forge’s renaming of the learned ladies in his portraits. This literary device can be attributed to the ‘euphemisation’ that characterises the salon speech, according to Alain Viala.⁵² This process of self-censorship, when applied to gender issues, suggests, however, a willingness to compromise more than to confront.

La Forge’s humbleness is in keeping with that of his character Virgile in the dialogue between Mécène, Livie, and Virgile. In this text, Livie complains about the recent praise of her learning by the poet, which she judges excessive and undeserved. Mécène asks Livie to forgive Virgile, who then profusely apologises by means of a catalogue of learned ladies whose learning also commands admiration. Mary, Queen of Scots, is one of them and features in the list of sixteenth-century marvels next to Anne de Marquets (Mélinte), the Dominican nun who wrote religious sonnets, Margaret More (Macarise), and two Parisian learned ladies who died in the year of Mary’s execution, Mesmoiselles Diane and Lucrece Morel (the Marphises).

La Forge does not, however, clearly refer to Mary Stuart’s learning or literary works. Instead, he comments in the key to the names of all the learned ladies in his book that the Queen of Scots is rather well known and adds, ‘to make his metrical line long enough’, that although her life was ended by the hand of an executioner, she died as a queen and lost none of her dignity nor of her glory.⁵³ If one is to make sense of the portrait of Mary as a learned lady hinted at by La Forge, one is therefore left with her alias, that of Mariane. La Forge is making a connection here between the Scottish queen and Mariamne the Hasmonean, wife of Herod I, who became the victim of her husband’s passion. His sister Salome slandered her and accused her of adultery and high treason, two crimes that corresponded to those with which Mary, Queen of

Scots, was charged between 1564 and 1587. Mary was indicted for complicity in the Babington plot to kill her cousin Elizabeth and, before that, had been tried for committing adultery and plotting with her lover, Bothwell, to assassinate her second husband, the king consort Henry Darnley. By choosing the pseudonym Mariane for Mary, La Forge is clearly absolving her from those crimes.

Mariamne's story was very popular in the second half of the seventeenth century, and in France, her tragedy was dramatised successively by Alexandre Hardy (*Mariamne*, 1625) and François Tristan L'Hermite (*La Mariane*, 1636). She also featured in another collective biography, *La Cour sainte* ('The Holy Court'), by the Jesuit Nicolas Caussin, which also includes Mary, Queen of Scots, in the list of martyrs.⁵⁴ By the middle of the seventeenth century, Mariamne was therefore an established model of virtue, persecuted innocence, and the importance of being true to oneself. As a wife, she also claimed a degree of empowerment and more specifically the right not to comply with her husband's desire. It is difficult to draw a definite conclusion as to what Mary's portrait by La Forge, in the guise of Mariamne, may represent in terms of female knowledge, apart from the notion that knowledge is not, like virtue, an end in itself. It can also support the idea that women can and should be assertive in both their marital and their spiritual lives.

La Forge's portrayal of Mary as a learned lady is therefore a long way removed from Brantôme's initial praise. Moreover, while the sixteenth-century prosopographer represented less than a score of learned ladies in richly detailed portraits, La Forge sketched sixty-seven early modern women, and a few more from ancient times, each in a few lines. In Mary's case, the sober depiction takes less than two lines and points out her 'fate', 'her beautiful days', and her 'beautiful death'.⁵⁵ La Forge's economical style therefore requires the reader/viewer to look at the gallery from a distance to make sense of the whole and of its parts. Each individual exemplum becomes clear when considered in the light of the surrounding characters. When looking at Mary from that perspective, she becomes the reflection of the 'dazzling beauty' and 'double charm' of her contemporaries (Mélinte, Macarise, and the Marphises) but also of Ronsard's Héléne, mentioned a few lines before her.⁵⁶ This is where La Forge's vision of female education coincides with that of Brantôme, for both consist of a combination of female beauty and learning, a learning that 'will bewilder all together heart and mind' and 'inspire science and learning' in others.⁵⁷ One difference remains, though: La Forge envisions a broader spectrum of female learning, both geographically (from the Seine to the Thames) and socially, since he is not merely concerned with the privileges of royal women but wants to see them granted further down the social hierarchy. It is therefore no longer royal magnificence that is at stake but a brilliance achievable by the *salonnières* whose side La Forge took in his dialogue. His ideas were not intended for ordinary women. A Scottish queen was still a relevant model to emulate.

Mary's Place and Role in Guillaume's Gallery

The next gallery in which Mary is featured with others to jointly represent female learning was the *Dames illustres*, composed by Jacqueline Guillaume. Guillaume is another enigmatic author among collective biographers of women, for nothing has been written about her apart from references to her in later collective biographies of women from Buffet's to Fortunée Briquet's and Elizabeth Elstob's.⁵⁸ From Buffet's testimony, it has been assumed that Guillaume's prosopography was initially well received – although it enjoyed only one edition. Buffet praises its merits and expresses her admiration for the woman who managed to 'shut the mouths of those who do not want them to equal men in skill'.⁵⁹ A century later, Elstob is still complimentary about Guillaume, whom she acknowledges as one of the four sources for her workbook of sketches of learned women.⁶⁰

When we turn to eighteenth-century French dictionaries, however, it transpires that the appreciation of Guillaume's audacity has suffered: both Fortunée Briquet and Jean-François de La Croix are critical of her antagonistic attitude towards men. The former considers Guillaume 'one of the women who had pushed the love of her sex too far', along with Lucrèce Marinelli.⁶¹ The latter reckons that 'the arguments of this work and of all those that championed this cause have not been found very compelling'.⁶² This leaves us to consider what she could have done to go down in history as an overenthusiastic portraitist of her sex and how this impacted the portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, as an educated lady. In fact, Guillaume claims to be a portraitist, explaining in her epistle: 'I have applied myself to lend them the brightest colour and I have adorned them with the richest ornaments'.⁶³

Guillaume produced her voluminous tome, which she divided into two parts, in 1665. The first part, 181 pages long, accumulates evidence to support the argument that men surpass women in mischief, foolishness, and impertinence, while women outdo men in faithfulness, benevolence, gentleness, and generosity. Having belittled men, particularly those who 'belittle the merits of learned ladies', to praise women, Guillaume then tries to comprehend and explain why women's superiority has not resulted in a better social status and why women still find themselves subordinated.⁶⁴ She believes that the answer lies in female education or the lack of it, and thus, in the second part of the book, she builds a gallery of learned ladies, both pagan and Christian, to prove that women's knowledge has a long history and that this history has been continuous.⁶⁵ Each of them individually, but more importantly all of them considered in connection, prove that women have consistently distinguished themselves in science, eloquence, wisdom, prudence, or good behaviour and are tributes to what women can achieve given the opportunity of an education.

The originality of Guillaume's contribution to seventeenth-century collections devoted to famous women lies in the talking portraits of named learned

ladies (like Anna-Maria van Schurman and Christina of Sweden) and nameless ones, who were learned in theology, gemology, ornithology, geography, and so on. Guillaume relied on talking portraits so much that *Dames illustres* has been considered the first anthology of scientific texts written by women in the wake of François Dinet's chapter on 'Dames Françaises illustres en Science' ('French Ladies Illustrious in Science'), published in his *Théâtre françois des seigneurs et des dames illustres* ('French Theatre of Illustrious Gentlemen and Ladies').⁶⁶ As for the talking portraits, they clearly echo the conversations in the learned circles of the time, for Guillaume gathered each woman in a virtual literary circle around Élisabeth d'Orléans.⁶⁷ They also mirror both the learning of the dedicatee and that of the female author.

Unlike the anonymous contemporary learned ladies of the second part, Mary, Queen of Scots, features under her own name in the third and last part about unfortunate ladies. At first glance, there is no reference to her humanist education or her achievements in public speaking or writing in Guillaume's portrayal of the Scottish queen as a victim of men's vices. She writes: 'Marie Stuard, Queen of Scots, left [her head] on the scaffold, for having been suspected of intelligence with the Spanish. Most men only fill their brains with suspicion, nonsense and stupid ideas, which makes almost all women unhappy.'⁶⁸

Yet this portrayal clearly fits with the general theme of the book. First, as Beaulieu contended, Mary, Queen of Scots, just like the other unfortunate ladies, is a reminder that sometimes there is a price to pay for wanting to distinguish oneself as a virago or simply as a learned lady.⁶⁹ Second, one can easily explain Guillaume's decision to pass over Mary's humanist education in silence. This can be ascribed to the more general loss of interest for the humanist ideal of scholarly erudition at the time Guillaume was writing, as well as the tendency of aristocratic circles to turn to a more 'vernacular culture, acquired through oral conversation.'⁷⁰ As Linda Timmermans has concluded, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the cultivated but not scholarly gentleman became the new ideal, and the humanist learned lady became a phenomenon of the past.⁷¹ Language skills were still important, as discussed earlier, but not so much public speaking in the form of the ability to give Latin orations as the one Mary gave for the court in the Louvre. Mentioning Mary giving that speech would have been counterproductive and tantamount to depicting her as a 'burlesque figure', that of the *femme savante* who would not be able to hold her own among seventeenth-century society. This was indeed a social crime for which women were heavily sanctioned, as was also obvious from Mademoiselle de Scudéry's advice to women 'to hide part of the treasures they possess' for fear of falling into public disgrace.⁷²

A contemporary reader might also be puzzled by Guillaume's absence of any reference to Mary's Catholicism and defence of her faith, considering that Guillaume viewed Christianity as 'the rule of the genuine science.'⁷³ For instance, she presents Christina of Sweden as a defender of her faith, relating how she

confronted Protestant ministers on the Mass and confession among other theological matters. In the case of Mary Stuart, Guillaume only points out the political crime with which she was wrongly charged and turns what she describes as an unfair accusation into another illustration of men's fake knowledge. One can thus assume that, with Mary, Guillaume not only refused to repeat herself by representing Mary as another queen who argued with Protestant theologians, a fact the reformer John Knox acknowledges in *History of the Reformation*.⁷⁴ Instead, Guillaume sought to broaden the scope of women's potential.

In fact, Guillaume postulates that knowledge can be read in actions that in the case of some women – and Mary, Queen of Scots, is one of them – meant that she does not need to go into detail about their already established learning. Instead, she could introduce new material and a new perspective, which is characteristic of her work that also singularly ignores women's physical and moral qualities. This explains why, in *Dames illustres*, Mary, Queen of Scots, ends up being depicted as a victim of the English intelligence service, an all-male institution, which Guillaume aims to ridicule to enhance the straightforward intelligence of the Scottish queen.

All this means that to see Mary properly in Guillaume's, as in La Forge's, gallery, the reader/viewer is again expected to take a broader perspective. As a sad reminder of the perils women achievers faced in their quest for knowledge as in other endeavours, she becomes part of a wider community that includes women whose names have not even gone down in history. This might be read as a hint that even commoners could become extraordinary through their learnedness and as a step towards a more comprehensive, if not universal, claim to education for women.

Buffet's Gallery

Three years later, Mary entered the gallery of portraits drawn by grammarian Marguerite Buffet, another mysterious early modern French female author. As Lynn S. Meskill has pointed out, we only know what Buffet cared to disclose: that she was a gentlewoman of noble birth and that she needed to work to support herself financially, which led her to teach French as a first language and as a foreign language to aristocratic women.⁷⁵ This explains why she wrote her collective biography after a grammar book for the French language. The latter places Buffet in the controversy about the proper way of speaking for educated women at the core of the seventeenth-century literary assaults on supposed female *préciosité*.

Buffet was eager to teach women how to effectively write and speak in public but, like Guillaume, she disapproved of excessive speech. All the women she portrayed to demonstrate the equality of the sexes in terms of learning, however, were chosen 'for their intelligence and command of language specifically in the

art of persuasion.⁷⁶ This also applied to Mary, Queen of Scots, who appears in the list of ancient examples, after Sappho and Erinna, and before six medieval saints. Buffet considered language accuracy a key skill for those who wanted to elevate themselves in society:

Since men are born to be in society, and since society can function only by means of language, it should come as no surprise that the greatest minds, not only of our own time, but also of times past, have praised those wishing to learn languages correctly.⁷⁷

This emphasis on language is unique, but Buffet's work stands out among early modern collective biographies of learned women on other grounds. First, contrary to other seventeenth-century writers, she does not hide her characters (as La Forge or Guillaume did), or herself behind pseudonyms or anonymity. On the contrary, she proudly claims to be acknowledged as an author through the king's privilege and the dedication to the queen, Marie-Thérèse, the consort of Louis XIV. This is something she shares with Guillaume, who also made a statement about the female quest of authorship through her own privilege and dedication. Second, she breaks away from the tradition of lengthy 'tedious and dizzying' digressions and writes directly and concisely.⁷⁸ In this regard, she is simply following her own advice in the *Éloges des illustres savantes anciennes et modernes*: 'the real secret of speaking and writing well is knowing how to express much with few words.'⁷⁹

This is where, however, she still complies with the imposition of modesty on seventeenth-century women: Buffet is cautious not to display too much of her learning or that of her characters. She aims to portray them as cultivated women in terms of her contemporaries and only allows the reader glimpses of their extraordinary knowledge and achievements. References to public demonstrations of their mastery of Latin are thus absent and she only cursorily mentions the proficiency in Latin of some of her characters.⁸⁰ Mary, Queen of Scots, is not among them.

The sparse style characteristic of Buffet's praises is also illustrated by her paragraph on the Scottish queen, which can be better understood if we keep in mind that Buffet did not establish a hierarchy between women's abilities and argued that all their achievements, whatever shape or form they took, were evidence of female erudition. This applies to ruling with prudence, keeping the people loyal to their sovereign, abdicating to protect the monarchy, demonstrating personal strength and courage, or speaking and writing in prose and verse.

Mary's learning is thus demonstrated obliquely through her capacity to remain clear-headed and unshaken at all times despite her misfortune, a point Buffet stresses three times in less than three lines without a single pleonasm, a figure against which she had advised in the *Éloges des illustres savantes anciennes et modernes*: 'Even in the midst of her numerous misfortunes, this illustrious

and virtuous princess never lost her senses. Her mind was always clear and never fluctuated before the fury of her enemies.⁸¹ Mary thus became a model for those around her in her lifetime:

After a long time in prison, the invincible queen arrived at the moment when she must die. Her constancy and virtue revived the drooping spirits of those who sought to console her and even gave them a desire to die with her in order to find a happier life than here.⁸²

Buffet even makes Mary a role model for the Scots: 'The Scottish people still revere her memory. She will never die among these people who have always loved her.'⁸³ This point could be qualified in the light of her black legend in Scottish historiography. Yet it suggests that Buffet is trying to gather a crowd of admiring viewers, both contemporaries and later readers, around the 'crowned head [...] unjustly persecuted' and 'unable to defend [...] herself'.⁸⁴

It is only in her final words on Mary that Buffet mentions that 'she applied her excellent brain to acquiring knowledge' and was fluent in 'many different languages'.⁸⁵ The reference to the queen's intellect points to the new fields of knowledge and interest that seventeenth-century women were keen to discover. It is equally representative of the new scientific arguments brought into the debate about gender differences. Buffet had mentioned such arguments in her apology of the female sex: 'now our adversaries state that the ventricles, the seams in the skulls, and the brains of the female are smaller and narrower than those of the male'.⁸⁶ To debunk this argument and prove that size does not matter, she borrowed from natural philosophy and gave the examples of asses and oxen, 'which even though they have huge heads, have neither brain nor spirit in them'.⁸⁷ By referring to Mary's 'excellent brain', Buffet was both modernising the defence of female intelligence and ability to learn, and drawing a negative portrait of men's fake knowledge, just as Guillaume had done before her. Buffet was also, like her predecessors, making Mary more attainable as an ideal and taking her as her own role model. With the same constancy as the steadfast queen, Buffet encouraged her female readers to 'let men brag as much as they like and let them glory in the greatness of their body and the largeness of the heads. They have this in common with the stupidest animals and the heaviest beasts'.⁸⁸ And this is how she turns Mary into the epitome of men's unjust attacks on the female sex, the latest being those of Molière and his likes.

This is definitely the key topos in Mary's representations in the three seventeenth-century female biographies that mention her. At first glance, none of them have much to say about her learnedness per se. But we should not ignore her portraits in these works, because they consist in mere fading shadows; that would amount to misunderstanding how these prosopographies work as artistic constructions and neglecting a part of Mary's legacy that has been left out for

too long. This untapped legacy is crucial, for it offers a counterimage to the die-hard clichés of Mary as a failed queen undone by her passion.

To conclude, it seems therefore that none of the four portraits of Mary, Queen of Scots, as a learned lady that have been studied in this chapter intended to draw a full-blown picture of her humanist education. This was left to professional historians, who are still gathering evidence and debating her talents.⁸⁹ Brantôme's sixteenth-century portrait highlights her exceptional learning – including Latin and rhetoric – as a feature of Mary's identity as a reigning monarch, who was in charge even of her own education as a child. That sense of empowerment survives in La Forge's portrayal of Mary through Mariane's features, which grants seventeenth-century women aspiring to an intellectual life the right to be assertive. Guillaume shares La Forge's vision of Mary as an exemplum of men's vindictiveness towards intellectually ambitious women, but she is far more critical of masculine domination. Buffet's representation of Mary's learning is still a gendered diptych, with a touch of scientificity. It contrasts Mary's fruitful brain to the impaired brains of beastlike men. Like her three predecessors, therefore, Buffet conforms to what seems to be a persisting element in Mary's portrayal as a learned lady in the seventeenth century, namely that of the counterimage of men's prejudice, that is unreasonable opinion formed without enough thought or knowledge, as defined by the Cambridge dictionary.

It is through this *mise en abyme* that the four texts examined here manage most effectively to promote the idea that universal education is necessary and that men need it just as much as women are in want of it. As works of history making up for the 'great forgetting' of women in traditional narratives, these female biographies have contributed to broaden knowledge in two ways.⁹⁰ First, they have recovered part of the female past, and second, in the specific case of Mary, Queen of Scots, they have changed the paradigm of her representation in historiography from saint or evil woman to learned lady.

Notes

1. Anne de France, Tatiana Clavier, and Éliane Viennot (eds.), *Enseignements à sa Fille; Suivis de l'Histoire du Siège de Brest*, Saint-Étienne, Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2006; Erasmus, *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio*, Basel, apud Joannem Frobenium, 1526; Charles de Sainte-Marthe, *Oraison Funèbre de l'Incomparable Marguerite, Royne de Navarre, Duchesse d'Alençon*, Paris, Regnault Ier et Claude Chaudière, 1550.
2. Thomas More, *Utopia*, London, 1551 [Latin edition 1516]; Desiderius Erasmus, 'Colloquies and Writings: Marriage', in David Englander et al. (eds.), *Culture & Belief in Europe: 1450–1600*, Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers, 1990, 58–65; Juan Luis Vives, *A Very Fruteful and Pleasant Boke Called The Instruction of a Christen Woman [...] Tourned out of Latyne into Englishe by Richard Hyrde*, London, 1557.
3. Eliane Viennot, 'Revisiter la « querelle des femmes »: mais de quoi parle-t-on?', in Viennot, *Revisiter la querelle des femmes. Discours sur l'égalité/inégalité des femmes et des hommes, de 1750 aux lendemains de la Révolution*, Saint Étienne, Publications de l'université de Saint Étienne, 2012, 7–29.
4. Christine de Pizan, *La Cité des Dames*, BnF, MS Français 607; Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, BnF, MS Français 25526.
5. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Livre des femmes nobles et renommées [De Claris mulieribus]*, BnF, MS Français 598.
6. Baptiste Fulgose, *Factorum dictorumque memorabilium libri X*, Antwerp, apud J. Bellerum, 1565; Barthélémy Chasseneuz, *Catalogus Gloriarum Mundi*, Frankfurt, impensis S. Feyerabendii, 1579; Caelius Rhodiginus, *Antiquae lectiones*, Venices, Aldus and Andrea Torresani, 1516; Jean Tixier de Ravisi ('Textor'), *Officina*, Basel, apud N. Bryling, 1552. For an in-depth analysis of their works, see Jean Céard, 'Liste des femmes savantes au XVIe siècle', in Colette Nivel (ed.), *Femmes savantes, savoirs des femmes; du crépuscule de la Renaissance à l'aube des lumières. Actes du colloque de Chantilly, Septembre 1995*, Geneva, Droz, 1999, 85–94.
7. Marie-Félicie Perez and Bruno Saunier, 'Une série des femmes illustres ou femmes fortes par Guy François (1578?–1650)', in *In Situ*, 2009, 10, [online] <<http://journals.openedition.org/insitu/4514>>; Nicole Cadène, 'L'histoire au féminin: la « vie » de Marie Stuart par Agnès Strickland', in *Romantisme*, 2002, 115, 41–52.
8. References to Brantôme's *Vies des Dames Illustres, Françaises et Étrangères* will be made in Katharine Prescott Wormely's translation, *The Book of Ladies by Pierre de Bourdeille Abbé de Brantôme*, Boston, Hardy and Pratt & Company, 1899.
9. Jean de La Forge, *Le Cercle des Femmes Sçavantes*, Paris, Jean-Baptiste Loyson, 1663; Jacqueline Guillaume, *Les Dames Illustres*, Paris, Thomas Jolly, 1665; Marguerite Buffet, *Nouvelles Observations sur la Langue Française [...] avec les Éloges des Illustres Sçavantes tant Anciennes que Modernes*, Paris, Jean Cusson, 1668.
10. The only collection in which she features is Nathaniel Crouch's *Admirable Curiosities Rarities and Wonders in England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, Tho. Snowden, 1682), a popular work that does not specifically deal with learned ladies and was published only in 1682.
11. John Guy, *'My Heart is My Own': The Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, London, Fourth Estate, 2004, 68.
12. Aysha Pollnitz, *Princely Education in Early Modern Britain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 211.
13. Sylvène Édouard, *Les Devoirs du Prince – l'Éducation Princière à la Renaissance*, Paris, Garnier, 2014, 41.

14. Anatole de Montaiglon, *Latin Themes of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots*, London, printed for the Warton Club, 1855.
15. Sylvène Édouard, 'Un Exercice Scolaire et Épistolaire: les Lettres Latines de Marie Stuart, 1554', in *Cour de France.fr*, 2013, [online] <<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00942437>>.
16. Guy, 'My Heart is My Own', 68.
17. Xavier Le Person, *Pratiques et Praticqueurs – La Vie Politique à la Fin du Règne de Henri III (1584–1589)*, Geneva, Droz, 254.
18. John Knox and William Croft Dickinson (ed.), *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, vol. 2, London, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1949, 77–78.
19. Julian Sharman, *The Library of Mary, Queen of Scots*, London, Elliot Stock, 1889; John Durkan, 'The Library of Mary Queen of Scots', in Michael Lynch (ed.), *Mary Stewart: Queen in Three Kingdoms*, Oxford and New York, Basil Blackwell, 1988, 71–104.
20. Joannis Leslaei, [...] *Libri duo quorum uno, piae afflicti animi consolationes, divinaeque remedia, altero, animi tranquilli munimentum & conservatio, continentur; ad serenissimam principem D. Mariam Scotorum reginam*, Parisiis, P. Lhuillier, 1574; Mary Queen of Scots, 'Meditation in Verse', in P. Stewart-Mackenzie (ed.), *Queen Mary's Book*, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1907, 106–110.
21. Anonymous, *Discours Merveilleux de la vie, Actions & Deportemens de Catherine de Medicis Royne Mere*, 1575; Anonymous, *Apologie ou Defense de l'Honorable Sentence et très Juste Execution de Defuncte Marie Steuard*, 1588.
22. Eliane Viennot, 'Échos de la Propagande en Faveur de la Loi Salique dans les Textes Favorables aux Femmes des Dernières Décennies du XVIe Siècle', in Pascale Mounier and Colette Nativel, *Copier et Contrefaire à la Renaissance. Faux et Usage de Faux*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2014, 89–102.
23. Brantôme, *The Book of Ladies*, 90.
24. *Ibid.*; Brantôme, moreover, refers here to Antoine de Fouquelin's (?–1561) *La Rhétorique*, [...] *Nouvellement reveüe* (Paris, A. Wechel, 1557).
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, 90–91.
27. *Ibid.* The Casket Letters were eight letters found in a silver casket after the arrest of Mary, Queen of Scots, by the Scottish rebels. The casket was in possession of her third husband Lord Bothwell. The letters were accompanied by twelve sonnets. The defenders of Mary claimed that both the letters and sonnets were forged.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Wendy Gibson, *Women in Seventeenth Century France*, Basingstoke and London, Macmillan, 1989, 36.
30. Cf. note 18.
31. Knox and Dickinson (ed.), *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, vol. 2, 77–78.
32. On this, see, for instance, Armel Dubois-Nayt, 'Le statut sémiologique du personnage de Marie Stuart dans l'œuvre de John Knox: la séduction et la sédition', in François Laroque and Franck Lessay, *Enfers et délices à la Renaissance*, Paris, Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2003, 102–115; Armel Dubois-Nayt, 'La différence des sexes dans le *Premier coup de trompette contre le monstrueux gouvernement des femmes*: Construction et fonction du « genre » dans la pensée politique de John Knox', in *Revue cités*, 2008, 2(34), 157–169; Armel Dubois-Nayt, 'The Black Legend of Mary of Guise', in Christine Sukic, Bruno Maes, and Annette Bäschstädt (eds.), *Les Annales de l'Est, dossier « Marie de Lorraine-Guise (1515–1560), un itinéraire européen*, 2017, 1, 137–150.
33. On this, see Roxanne Roy, 'L'institution oratoire du Prince ou le savoir au service du bien dire', in *Renaissance and Reformation*, 2008, 31(4), 85–96.

34. 'C'est elle qui meine les assemblées des hommes toutes entieres par la parole, se rend maistresse de leurs affections, tourne leurs volonteز où bon luy semble, et les retire de là où il ne lui plaist pas qu'elles soient inclinées' (Jacques Davy du Perron, *L'avant-discours de rhétorique, ou traité de l'éloquence*, Paris, Pierre Chaudière, 1633, 759).
35. Brantôme, *The Book of Ladies*, 90.
36. The Fronde was a series of civil wars between 1648 and 1653 that took place during the minority of Louis XIV. It was triggered by the opposition of the discontented Parliament and nobility to the policies of the Queen-Regent Anne of Austria and her chief minister, Mazarin.
37. La Forge, *Le Cercle des femmes sçavantes*, 9.
38. Louis de La Forge, *Traité de l'esprit de l'homme, de ses facultez & fonctions*, Amsterdam, Abraham Wolfgang, 16.
39. Jean de La Forge, *La Joueuse dupée ou l'intrigue des Académies, Comédie*, Paris, A. de Sommaville, 1664; Jean de La Forge, *La Hongrie secouruë, poëme héroïque présenté au Roy*, Paris, J. Du Brueil et P. Collet, 1664.
40. *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne ou dictionnaire de tous les hommes*, Brussels, H. Ode, 1843–1847, 35.
41. Léon Brédif, *Segrais - Sa vie et ses oeuvres*, Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1971, 9.
42. Madeleine de Scudéry, *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus*, Paris, A. Courbé, 1650–1653.
43. Molière, *Don Juan. Les Précieuses ridicules*, Paris, J. Tallandier, n.d.
44. 'Notice sur J. de La Forge de Victor Fournel (1875)', in *Théâtre classique*, [online] <http://theatre-classique.fr/pages/programmes/edition.php?t=../documents/LAForge_JOUEUSEDUPÉE.xml>
45. Delphine Denis, 'Ce que parler "prétieux" veut dire: Les enseignements d'une fiction linguistique au XVIIe siècle', in *L'Information grammaticale*, 1998, 78, 53–54.
46. Christophe Schuwey, 'Une trajectoire exemplaire au début des années 1660: Antoine Baudeau de Somaize', in *XVIIe siècle*, 2019, 71(3), 540–545; Dominique Lanni, 'La Critique des Femmes Savantes. La Satire des Salons Littéraires dans le Théâtre Antiphilosophique de la Fin de l'Ancien Régime', in Isabelle Brouard-Arends (ed.), *Lectrices d'Ancien Régime*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003, 1–8.
47. Adrien Baillet, *Jugements des savants sur les ouvrages des principaux auteurs*, vol. 1, Paris, 1685–1686, 75–77, in Linda Timmermans, *L'Accès des femmes à la culture*, Paris, Champion, 1993, 154.
48. La Forge, 'Epistre à Madame la Comtesse de Fiesque', in *Le Cercle des femmes sçavantes*, f. Aij.v.
49. 'Que si j'en ay oublié quelques-unes de ce temps icy, dont le mérite qui ne cède pas à celui des autres, ne m'a pas été connu, ce n'a point été dans le dessein de faire tort à leur réputation mais parce que le bruit de leur nom n'est pas encore parvenu à mes oreilles, & que si ce livre réussit assez bien pour m'obliger d'en donner une seconde impression, je ne manqueray pas de réparer mon silence & de leur rendre justice' (La Forge, *Le Cercle des Femmes Sçavantes*, f. B.r-v).
50. Hilarion de Coste, *Les Éloges et les vies des reynes, des princesses et des dames illustres en piété, en courage et en doctrine*, Paris, S. Cramoisy, 1647; Louis Jacob, *Éloge de Mademoiselle Anne Marie de Schurman*, Paris, Rolet le Duc, 1646. I am grateful to Line Cottegnies for suggesting that Buxtor is most likely Johannes Buxtorf, who collects quotes about women, although not always positive ones, in his *Florilegium hebraicum: continens elegantes sententias, proverbia [...]*, Basel, impensis L. König, 1649, 205–221.
51. Erica Harth, *Cartesian Women: Versions and Subversions of Rational Discours in the Old Regime*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1992, 24.
52. Alain Viala, *La Naissance de l'Écrivain: Sociologie de la Littérature à l'Âge Classique*, Paris, Minuit, 1985, 121–122.

53. 'Mariane, Marie Stuard. Elle est assez connuë dans le monde, & je ne diray seulement pour justifier un de mes vers, que bien qu'elle ait perdu la vie par la main d'un boureau, elle mourut en reyne, & ne perdit rien de sa dignité ny de sa gloire' (La Force, *Le Cercle des Femmes Sçavantes*, 'clef des noms des sçavantes de France', n.p.).
54. Parisien, *Le Théâtre d'Alexandre Hardy*, vol. 2, Paris, Jacques Quesnel, 1625; François L'Hermitte, *La Mariane*, Paris, Augustin Courbé, 1636; Nicolas Caussin, *La Cour sainte, ou l'institution chrestienne des grands*, Paris, S. Chappelet, 1624.
55. 'Telle Mariane en dépit de son sort, finira de beaux jours par une belle mort' (La Forge, *Le Cercle des Femmes Sçavantes*, 9).
56. Ibid.:
 Du célèbre Ronsard, Hélène les délices,
 appliquera ses soins aux mesmes exercices,
 Et sur un double charme appuyant son crédit
 surprendra tout ensemble et le cœur et l'esprit.
 Comme l'on vit jadis les beautez de la Grèce,
 joindre aux autres vertus la science & l'adresse,
 et comme l'on verra dans l'Italie un jour
 de célèbres beautez éclater à leur tour,
 telles on pourra voir Mélinte & Macarise,
 annoblir en naissant la Seine et la Tamise.
57. 'auront l'art d'inspirer la science et l'amour' (ibid.).
58. Elizabeth Elstob was an eighteenth-century woman scholar who translated Madeleine de Scudéry's *Discours de la gloire* ('Essay upon Glory') (1708) and published a grammar book, like Buffet, entitled *the Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue* (1715). She was a friend of George Ballard, who made use of Elstob's preliminary research to write his *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (1752).
59. 'de fermer la bouche à ceux qui ne veulent pas qu'elles égallent les hommes en tout ce qui les rend habiles' (Buffet, *Éloges des illustres sçavantes*, 276; translation by L. S. Meskill). I am grateful to Lynn S. Meskill for letting me use a typescript of Marguerite Buffet and Lynn S. Meskill (ed. and trans.), *New Observations on the French Language with Praises of Illustrious Learned Women*, forthcoming in the series *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series*.
60. Maureen E. Mulvill, 'Jacquette and Marie-Anne Guillaume', in Katharina M. Wilson (ed.), *An Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers*, vol. 1, New York and London, Garland Publishing, 502.
61. 'GUILLAUME, (Jacquette) du 17ème siècle, est une des femmes qui ont porté trop loin l'amour de leur sexe. Elle a marché sur les traces d'une Vénitienne, Lucrece Marinelli, auteur d'un ouvrage où elle soutient que, pour le mérite, les femmes sont supérieures aux hommes' (Fortunée Briquet, *Dictionnaire Historique, Biographique et Littéraire des Françaises et Étrangères Naturalisées en France*, Paris, Treuttel and Würtz, 1804, 165). Lucrezia Marinella or Marinelli (1571–1653) is an Italian proto-feminist who took part in the *querelle des femmes* and answered the attacks launched on her sex by Giuseppe Passi in *Dei donneschi difetti* ('Women's Defects') (Venetia, Iacobo Antonio Somascho, 1599). Her defence is entitled *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne co' diffetti et mancamenti de gli uomini. Discorso di Lucrezia Marinella in due parti diviso* ('The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men') (Venice, Giovan Battista Ciotti Senese, 1600).
62. 'Les raisons de cet ouvrage & de tous ceux qui défendent la même cause n'ont pas été trouvées fort convaincantes' (Jean-François de La Croix, *Dictionnaire Portatif des Femmes Célèbres*, vol. 2, Paris, Belin, 1788, 325).
63. 'ie me sois étudiée à leur donner la teinture du plus éclatant coloris, & [...] ie les ayes parées de leurs plus riches ornemens' (Guillaume, *Les Dames Illustres*, f. aiii).

64. Jean-Philippe Beaulieu, 'Jacquette Guillaume et Marguerite Buffet: vers une Historiographie du Savoir Féminin ?', in Sylvie Steinberg and Jean-Claude Arnould (eds.), *Les Femmes et l'Écriture de l'Histoire*, Rouen, Presses Universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2008, 326.
65. *Ibid.*, 325.
66. The term 'talking portrait' as a translation for 'portraits parlants' is used by Jean-Philippe Beaulieu in his article '« La gloire de nostre sexe » : savantes et lectrices dans Les dames illustres (1665) de Jacquette Guillaume' (*Études françaises*, 47, 3, 2011, 127–142). François Dinet, *Le Théâtre françois des seigneurs et dames illustres*, 1664, chapter XII, 54–59, quoted in Colette H. Winn, *Protestations et revendications féminines – Textes oubliés et inédits sur l'éducation féminine (XVIe–XVIIes)*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2002, 21.
67. Jean-Philippe Beaulieu, "La Gloire de nostre sexe": savantes et lectrices dans Les Dames illustres (1665) de Jacquette Guillaume', in *Études françaises*, 2011, 47(3), 130.
68. 'Marie Stuard Reyne d'Escosse, laissa [sa tête] sur un échaffaut, pour avoir été soupçonnée d'intelligence avec l'Espagnol. La plupart des hommes ne remplissent leur cerveau que de soupçons, de niaiseries, & de sottises, ce qui rend presque toutes les femmes mal-heureuses' (Guillaume, *Les Dames illustres*, 439).
69. Beaulieu, 'Jacquette Guillaume et Marguerite Buffet', 330.
70. Timmermans, *L'Accès des femmes à la culture*, 71.
71. *Ibid.*
72. 'L'art de cacher une partie des trésors qu'elle possède à des gens qui ne la connaissent pas' ('Lettre à Mlle Chalais, Décembre, 13 1640', in Edmé Rathery and Madeleine Boutron, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry, Sa vie et sa correspondance*, Paris, Léon Techener, 1873, 168).
73. 'La règle de la véritable science' (Guillaume, *Les Dames Illustres*, 221).
74. Knox and Dickinson (ed.), *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, vol. 2.
75. Meskill (ed. and trans.), *Praises of Illustrious Learned Women*, 27.
76. *Ibid.*
77. 'Puisque les hommes sont nés pour la société, et que cette société ne se peut entretenir que par les Langues, il ne faut point s'étonner si les plus grands esprits non seulement de nôtre siècle, mais mesme de tous les siècles passés ont toujours este les panégéristes de ceux qui se sont attachez à les apprendre dans leur pureté' (Buffet and Meskill (trans.), *Éloges des illustres sçavantes*, 1–2).
78. Isabelle Ducharme, 'Marguerite Buffet lectrice de la querelle des femmes', in Isabelle Brouard-Arends (ed.), *Lectrices d'Ancien Régime*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003, 260.
79. 'Le véritable secret de bien parler, & bien escrire estoit celuy de sçavoir faire entendre beaucoup en peu de mots' (Buffet and Meskill (trans.), *Éloges des Illustres Sçavantes*, 91).
80. Madame de Chaune, Julienne Moelle, Marguerite Morus, Marguerite of France, Claude Catherine de Clermon, Cassandra, Bestizia Gosadina.
81. 'Cette illustre & vertueuse princesse, parmy la foule de ses malheurs, n'eut jamais d'emportement ny aucune, absence d'esprit, sa raison demeura toujours égale, sans estre altérée par la furie de ses ennemis' (Buffet and Meskill (trans.), *Éloges des illustres sçavantes*, 335–336).
82. 'Cet esprit invincible après un long-temps de prison, sur le temps de mourir, sa constance & sa vertu ravissait ceux qui vouloient l'en consoler, & leur donnoit envie de mourir avec elle, pour aller trouver une beatitude & une vie plus heureuse que celle qu'ils possédoient icy bas' (*ibid.*, 336).
83. 'Les Ecossois révèrent toujours sa mémoire: elle ne mourra jamais parmi ces peuples qui l'ont toujours aimée' (*ibid.*).

84. 'Si les têtes couronnées & les mains qui ont porté le sceptre ne peuvent se defendre de la persecution de leurs ennemis, c'est sans doute où il paroist très injustement en la personne de Marie Stuart qui fut reine de trois royaumes' (ibid., 335).
85. 'Son bel esprit s'appliquoit aux bonnes lettres, elle sçavoit fort bien parler diverses langues' (ibid., 336).
86. 'Les adversaires disent que les ventricules, les sutures des testes, & cerveaux féminins sont plus petits, & plus serez que ceux des mâles' (ibid., 227).
87. 'Les philosophes remarquent en divers animaux & principalement aux asnes & aux buffles, & aux bœufs, lesquels pour avoir de grosses testes, n'en ont pas plus de cervelle ny plus d'esprit' (ibid., 228).
88. 'Que les hommes se vantent donc tant qu'ils voudront, & qu'ils fassent gloire de la grandeur de leurs corps & de la grosseur de leurs testes, cela leur est commun avec de très stupides animaux, & de très grosses et lourdes bestes' (ibid.).
89. Édouard, 'Un Exercice'; Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 199–219.
90. Gina Luria Walker, 'The Invention of Female Biography', in *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 2014, 29, 79.

CHAPTER 12

Women Jurists? Representations of Female Intellectual Authority in Eighteenth-Century Jurisprudence

Laura Beck Varela

The Querelle des Femmes & Early Modern Jurisprudence: A Research Outline¹

In one of the foundational texts of the so-called *querelle des femmes*, written in 1509, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim announces his intention to present a thesis '[...] based on reason, authority, and *examples drawn from Holy Scripture and both civil and canon law*', avoiding 'pretentious rhetorical ornaments.'²

Medieval and early modern savants, when writing about the socially pertinent issues of their time, could hardly have ignored the authoritative exempla of learned law or learned jurisprudence (*iurisprudentia*, *jurisprudence savante*, *Rechtsgelehrsamkeit*): with theology and medicine, it was one of the three higher disciplines. Agrippa von Nettesheim, although rebellious and somewhat outside of the mainstream, was no exception.³

Recent studies have emphasised the social and political relevance of the debate known as the *querelle des femmes*, a wide-ranging dispute on the relationship of men and women and their role in society, on women's access to education, and on the nature of marriage. Beyond the original focus on its rhetorical and literary dimensions, scholars increasingly see the *querelle* as a *cultural paradigm*, a point of intersection of cultural and political problems in the early modern period, or even as a *specific political tradition*, a set of arguments meant to influence public opinion and to serve as a form of political mediation.⁴ In addition to its cultural transcendence, the *querelle's* intertextual,

transdisciplinary, 'transnational', and 'transgeneric' nature has been pointed out.⁵ As Julie Campbell has stressed, the *querelle*, with its recurrent set of tropes, arguments, and commonplaces, has provided topoi for many fields of early modern writing,⁶ including traditional disciplines such as medicine and theology.⁷

Even though historians never mention academic jurisprudence as one of the possible contexts of the *querelle* (despite its obvious juridical implications⁸) and usually overlook the copious 'examples drawn from both civil and canon law'⁹ in the *querelle* texts, there is plenty of evidence that jurists have engaged with the debates on the social role and the education of women.

In this essay, my aim is to explore certain points of contact between academic jurisprudence, an apparently hermetic discipline, and the set of challenges posed by the *querelle des femmes*. I argue that, as one of the main textual traditions of medieval and early modern European societies, jurisprudence is certainly one of the relevant contexts to examine the impact, the ubiquity, and the persistence of the *querelle* during the eighteenth century.

Jurisprudence is generally associated with misogynist discourses, since the two basic corpora of authoritative texts, the bodies of civil and canon law (known as *corpus iuris civilis* and *corpus iuris canonici*), which constituted the core of medieval and early modern legal education and practice,¹⁰ contained famous passages excluding women from all public and civil offices. According to one of the most notorious extracts of Justinian's Digest, commented on in thousands of legal treatises and glosses between the eleventh and the eighteenth centuries, women were blocked from becoming magistrates and judges, bringing suits to court, signing surety contracts, or acting as attorneys (D. 50.17.2). Their capacity of being witnesses in court and in testaments was also restrained.¹¹

In spite of this apparently restrictive framework, early modern jurists vividly discussed the instances of women jurists, lawyers, and lawgivers, their level of legal expertise, and the convenience of instructing women in the knowledge of law, among other polemic topics related to the *querelle*. In the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries, several legal treatises, university dissertations, and orations deliberated about the political and intellectual authority of both legendary and historical women who had allegedly excelled in the field of law. They were echoing well-known references in catalogues of illustrious women popular at the time, which followed Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus* ('Concerning Famous Women'), among others, as sources of social images, models for feminine behaviour, and also for the 'exclusion of women from virtue, public life and history'.¹² These collections of memorable women, different 'attempts to express or critique cultural attitudes towards women',¹³ were especially abundant in the German territories, together with the new genre of dictionaries of women (*Frauenzimmerlexica*). Besides celebrated authors such as Peter Paul Finauer (1732–1788), with his *Allgemeines*

historisches Verzeichnis gelehrter Frauenzimmer (1761), and the prolific theologian and physician Christian Franz Paullini (1643–1712), whose chapter ‘*Das gelehrte Frauen=Zimmer in Teutschland*’, printed in 1695, was enhanced in three subsequent editions until 1712, other works circulated anonymously and under pseudonyms, such as the *Lobwürdige Gesellschaft der gelehrten Weiber* (by Israel Clauder, under the pseudonym Johannes Frawenlob, 1631), the *Nutzbares, galantes und curioeses Frauenzimmer-Lexicon* (by Amaranthes, a pseudonym of the jurist and poet Gottlieb Siegmund Corvinus) (1715, 1739, 1773), and the anonymous *Gallerie merkwürdiger Frauenzimmer* (1794–1798).¹⁴

In this study, I will examine why eighteenth-century jurists were interested in discussing representations of women’s intellectual authority in the field of law. For my case study, I will focus on a work entitled *Litteratura iuris*, a sort of overview on jurisprudence, its history as a higher discipline, and its main sources, written in 1761 by Carl Ferdinand Hommel (1722–1781), law professor at the University of Leipzig and one of the most prominent jurists of his time. In an eccentric chapter, dedicated to women allegedly ‘imbued’ with notions of law (entitled ‘*De foeminis iuris notitia imbutis*’), Hommel offers a comprehensive itinerary to assess the reception of misogynist diatribes and pro-woman arguments in the world of academic law. What role did written portraits of women jurists play in works of this kind, which were mostly written in Latin and addressed to a male professional audience? What women were represented in these works? These questions will also allow me to tackle more general questions about strategies of representation: how were women jurists categorised in the history of jurisprudence? How did early modern jurists describe the various levels of ‘legal expertise’ commanded by the most notable women in the history of law? How did they adapt their vocabulary to exclude or include female participation in the legal tradition?

Hommel’s chapter is only one example among several texts written by jurists that reflect a constant interaction with different topics of the *querelle*. Other prestigious jurists, who enjoyed solid reputations in the professional and academic circles, engaged at different levels with arguments related to the women’s question in numerous orations, dissertations, chapters, and passages of their works. This was the case, among others, of Henrik Brenkmann (1681–1736), Christian Hoffman (1692–1735), Augustin Leyser (1683–1752), Johann Peter Ludewig (1668–1743), Johann Carl Conrad Oelrichs (1722–1798), Daniel Nettelbladt (1719–1791), and Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741–1796),¹⁵ in the German- and Dutch-speaking areas; Jacques Cujas (1522–1590), André Tiraqueau (1488–1558), and Gilles de Ménage (1613–1692), in Francophone areas; Gianvincenzo Gravina (1664–1718), Giuseppe Aurelio di Gennajo (1701–1769), and Paolo Mattia Doria (1667–1746) (best known as a mathematician, but who was also a jurist), in the Italian areas. Some to whom I will allude in the following pages are less known or completely forgotten today, such as Jenichen, Iugler, Kellerhaus, Kratzenstein, Reich, and ZurMüllen.

Fragmentary and dispersed, this set of manifold references to the topics of the *querelle* found in various legal texts might appear anecdotic or even insignificant if considered isolated from each other. Together, nonetheless, they illustrate a constant flow of intertextual exchanges between academic jurisprudence and the *querelle des femmes*, a controversy that crossed many centuries and different historical contexts.

Rulers, Litigants, Jurists: Representations of Female Intellectual Authority in Eighteenth-Century Legal Literature

Carl Ferdinand Hommel (1722–1781) is one of those voices who are practically forgotten today, despite the high recognition he enjoyed during his life as a professor of law, and later a chancellor, of the University of Leipzig, and as a member of the Upper Court of the Kingdom of Saxony (*Oberhofgericht Leipzig*).¹⁶ His limited reception is largely due to his exclusion from the disciplinary canon of legal history built by the German Historical School in the nineteenth century. Although best known today for having introduced the Marquis of Beccaria's ideas¹⁷ to the German readership and as one of the followers of Christian Thomasius, his vast production touched upon all main legal branches of the time. Some of Hommel's treatises also dealt more directly with forensic praxis, such as his *Teutscher Flavius* (1763), a practical guide for lawyers,¹⁸ his edition of Johann Georg Bertoich's legal promptuary (1777),¹⁹ as well as his alphabetic repertoires for professional and lay audiences, such as the *Pertinenz- und Erbsonderungsregister* (1767) (on goods and chattels owned or acquired through inheritance),²⁰ and the *Catalogus testium*, a catalogue of the various sorts of witnesses (1780).²¹ He also devoted writings to the critical study of the legal sources, such as his annotated edition of the body of civil law (*Corpus iuris civilis cum notis variorum*, 1768; reprinted under the title *Hommel redivivus* as late as 1858²²), his editions of Georg Beyer's work,²³ and his edition of the celebrated indexes of Abraham Wieling and Jacques Labitte.²⁴ He was also an active book reviewer in the various protojournals of the time.²⁵ His double role as critical reviewer and editor of legal texts inspired his *Litteratura iuris*, of which the unconventional chapter on women guides the present essay on the representations of female intellectual authority in eighteenth-century jurisprudence.²⁶

The *Litteratura iuris* was printed in Leipzig in 1761 and was reprinted in 1779.²⁷ It is divided into two parts (*libri*, in Latin): the first one, the 'bibliographical' part ('*Liber primus, qui est bibliographicus*'), contains chapters related to the branches of law (from books related to civil and canon law to feudal, public, or criminal law: '*Libri classici iuris civilis, iuris canonici, iuris naturalis et gentium, Germanici, feudalis, criminalis, publici*' [...]); the second one, the 'biographical' part, contains chapters on notable jurisconsults ('*Liber*

secundus biographicus, qui non de libris, sed iurisconsultis agit'). In the second edition of his work, Hommel made significant amendments to the chapter dedicated to 'women jurists' ('De foeminis iuris notitia imbutis'), including its relocation from the *Liber primus (bibliographicus)* to the *Liber secundus (biographicus)*.

Hommel's *Litteratura iuris* reproduced the structure employed in the *historia litteraria* genre. This type of work was usually divided into two parts: *notitia librorum* (information related to books) and *notitia auctorum* (information related to the lives of the authors, their various expertise, schools of thought, etc.). Following Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* (1605), *historia litteraria* as a specific scholarly genre, with a strong pedagogical appeal, flourished from the middle of the seventeenth century until the 1740s. This period is known as the era of the *Polyhistorismus*, particularly at German and Dutch universities. Hommel's work belongs to the subset of *historia litteraria iuris*, one of the concrete, later developments of *historia litteraria* in the field of law.²⁸ It shows all the programmatic goals associated with *historia litteraria* in general, which are, according to Grunert and Syndikus, to provide a selection of sources and foster a double power of judgement (*doppelte Urteilskraft*) and to promote information storage and the progress of knowledge (*Wissensspeicherung und geleherter Fortschritt*). *Historiae litterariae* also served to reinforce moral standards in the selection of books and were characterised by an entertaining aesthetic.²⁹

In this context, *historia litteraria* 'emerges not as a discipline, but as a universally applicable method',³⁰ a sort of 'critical history of human knowledge', as François Waquet has stated.³¹ Like Daniel Georg Morhof's work, which was the most successful of the *Polyhistor*s and one of Hommel's prime references, the *Litteratura iuris* was not conceived as a mere accumulation of data. Instead, it was meant as a productive tool for ordering, classifying, and hierarchising it in order to create a new map of the world of legal knowledge. Moreover, *historia litteraria iuris*, as a specific genre, also responded to challenges related to the role of jurists and to the status of jurisprudence as a discipline in the broader landscape of the *respublica litteraria*. In this environment, the members of the *natio iurisconsultorum*, or *respublica iurisconsultorum*, were concerned about their own identity as scholars (as were other members of the learned community).³² Jurists were apprehensive about the decline of jurisprudence's prestige and its loss of social recognition among the higher faculties on the eve of the *Streit der Fakultäten*.³³ This anxiety is evident in the various *historiae litterariae iuris*, which endeavoured to present jurisprudence's scholarly dignity to the wider public of the *respublica litteraria*. Their authors, such as Hommel, filled their pages with strategies of self-fashioning and representations of jurists as idealised, prestigious scholars. These concerns are essential for contextualising the chapter dedicated to women jurists, which was exceptional in this genre of works.

The place of the chapter on women jurists within the structure of the *Litteratura iuris* reveals its subordinate position in the hierarchy of legal knowledge. As mentioned above, it was initially located in the bibliographical first part of the book rather than in the second part, which was devoted to the lives of the 'real' jurisconsults (*vitae iurisconsultorum*). In both editions of the *Litteratura iuris*, however, it was relegated to a section dedicated to an ensemble of *variétés*, containing various notions related to books and authors and other miscellanea (*Sectio secunda, varia ad librorum auctorumque notitiam pertinentia, et promiscua continens*). The chapter on women jurists came right before one entitled 'Societates iurisconsultorum litteraria'³⁴ (in which Hommel offers an account of literary societies and a list of Leipzig professors and notorious former students), and right after another one dedicated to the so-called *micrologia litteraria*.³⁵ The extensive title of the 'micrological' chapter, typical of the *historia litteraria*'s approach, gives a detailed description of the manifold subjects it contained. It mentioned jurists who had also been theologians, popes, cardinals, imperial electors, physicians, philosophers, and mathematicians; jurists included in saints' catalogues; jurists 'deserving' of many honours; jurists who were the illegitimate sons of concubines and those who had remained single;³⁶ jurists bearing identical names (*homonymi*); jurists who had been the object of ridiculous panegyrics; and jurists with diverse afflictions, such as blindness, excessive sweating, and scaly infections of the skin.³⁷ Other chapters in the section on varieties addressed jurists who had written profusely or not at all ('Iurisconsulti polygraphi et agraphi') and the representation of jurists in various social estates, such as royalty, nobility, and the plebs ('Iurisconsultorum in principes, nobiles et plebeios distinctio').³⁸

The title chosen by Hommel is also telling: *De foeminis iuris notitia imbutis*. To be 'imbued', or initiated, with some 'notions of law' (*iuris notitia*) was clearly of less value than to be a genuine, true 'jurist'. The 'real jurists' occupied an independent section of the book, where the most prominent names of every historical period were chronologically listed from the second century to contemporary times. This broad, not very technical term – *imbuere* – allowed the Leipzig professor to cover various aspects of women's engagement with law: women as lawgivers, rulers, or advisers of sovereigns (I); women as lawyers or litigants in the courts (II); and, finally, women's legal education and their membership of the scholarly community (III). Given this categorisation, it then becomes interesting to examine the forms and functions of these labels, as well as the specific examples that served to illustrate them.

For his discussion of women's roles as lawgivers, rulers, or advisers, he started with ancient mythological characters, such as the deities Themis, Ceres, and the nymph Egeria, wife and counsellor of Numae Pompilius, the second Roman king. These three frequently featured in the popular galleries of illustrious women³⁹ and offered Hommel the opportunity to examine women's participation in rulership. He evoked Ovid's words on Egeria ('Numa coniux

consiliumque fuit') but attempted to correct the common assumption that she had played an active role as 'legislator' by explaining that Pompilius had only *simulated* having received the laws from her ('a qua se leges accipere simulauit Pompilius'⁴⁰). The tale (*fabula*) of Ceres as legislator had appeared in basic reference works for jurists⁴¹ and had even inspired recent academic dissertations.⁴² Hommel himself had presided over the defence of dissertations that argued for the 'jurisdictional' nature (instead of a prophetic one) of the Delphic oracle. He maintained that the goddess Themis, 'who had advised upon legal matters in Delphi' ('quae in Delphis de iure respondit'⁴³) had the superior faculty of *ius publice respondendi*. The *ius publice respondendi ex auctoritate principis* (literally, 'the distinction attributed to some jurists of giving advice under the public authority of the emperor, that is, with binding force'), which is commonly associated with the Augustan era, was a key concept for the social and professional activity of jurists.⁴⁴

Other ancient legendary female rulers were Cambra Formosa, associated with the *Leges Sicambrorum* (allegedly deceased ca. 3590 BCE), and Marta Proba, queen of Britain (ca. 400 BCE).⁴⁵ Hommel's main source for the characterisation of Marta Proba was a famous treatise on marriage written by the French jurist André Tiraqueau (ca. 1480–1558). Even though he quoted every single word of Tiraqueau's passage, Hommel significantly diminished Proba's intellectual and political role in his subsequent commentary. He claimed that she had merely *written down* (*conscriptit*) the laws of the land through her natural talent ('quae leges proprio ingenio patrias conscripsit'). *Conscribere* – a task that a mere scribe could have performed – was of less importance than that of *legem condere*, the term Tiraqueau used in his written portrait of the British queen.⁴⁶ The word choice was certainly intentional: every educated jurist was familiar with the meaning and implication of *legem condere* (to establish, to found the law, in harmony with the divine precepts), which was associated with the higher degree of power (*imperium*) exercised by the *princeps*, and with the notion of *iurisdictio*. *Iurisdictio*, one of the main concepts used to explain the production and 'interpretation' of law (and thus the notion of public authority itself) in the medieval and early modern European tradition is, for various reasons, hardly translatable with the present-day term 'jurisdiction'. As its etymology indicates, *ius dicere*, 'to say the law', meant to declare in each case what was right and just, according to a pre-existing, divine order (which was 'unavailable' to the political authorities). If the texts of the *querelle* show 'a pervasive concern with questions of authority and subordination' and with the 'nature of authority' itself,⁴⁷ the fundamental vocabulary relevant to a historical reading of these sources can be retrieved in the hundreds of late medieval and early modern legal glosses, commentaries, and treatises that built the semantic field of *iurisdictio* and *imperium*.⁴⁸

The Byzantine empress Theodora (ca. 500–548), wife of Justinian I, was another frequent target of criticism regarding women's contribution to

government and lawmaking. She offered further proof of the negative effects of women's intervention in the superior task of *condere leges*. Theodora was blamed for negatively influencing Justinian, the main responsible for the compilation of ancient Roman jurisprudence (the body of texts later known as the *corpus iuris civilis*, which, together with the *corpus iuris canonici*, defined jurisprudence as a discipline), whom she had infected with her 'superstitions'. Reproducing the usual narrative of popular lexica for women, Hommel accused her of defending her sex too generously ('sui sexus patrociniū ubique liberaliter suscipiens [...]') and of persuading Justinian to grant several 'privileges' to the 'inferior sex' ('imo plura alia sequioris sexus privilegia suasisse putatur').⁴⁹ One of these privileges consisted of limitations to women's imprisonment.⁵⁰ In 1623, the Vatican archivist Niccolò Alemmani had published Procopius's *Anecdota*, which had renewed interest in Theodora's life; it depicted both the empress and the emperor in negative and decadent terms.⁵¹ At the beginning of the eighteenth century, jurists' circles still actively discussed it: in 1731, the prestigious jurist Johann Peter Ludewig (1668–1743), chancellor at the University of Halle, who had succeeded Christian Thomasius in the university chair, had written a thorough response committed to correcting the 'errors and calumnies' and to restoring Justinian and Theodora's reputation.⁵² Two years earlier, another famous jurist, the previously quoted Abraham Wieling (1693–1746), had presided over the defence of an extensive dissertation on the same topic, presented at the University of Franeker in 1729.⁵³ Another dissertation, by the young Johann Friedrich Jugler (1714–1791), later known for his amendments to the famous *Bibliotheca Historiae Litterariae* by Burkhard Gottlef Struve (1671–1738), focused on the topic of Theodora's alleged legal wisdom. Jugler responded directly to Ludewig's arguments and disparaged her intellectual skills.⁵⁴ He argued that Theodora's role as adviser was not due to her erudition (*adparatus eruditionis*), for that could only be acquired through formal education, but depended on her cleverness in practical affairs.⁵⁵ She was merely a shrewd (*versuta*) woman, instead of an erudite one.⁵⁶

Further recurrent tropes about women rulers in the history of the legal tradition concerned Countess Matilda of Canossa (1046–1115).⁵⁷ Based on an early passage by Burchard of Ursperg (*Abbas Urspergensis*), which dated to 1133, the noble lady had allegedly charged Irnerius with the task of *renovatio* of the study of Justinian's compilation ('ad petitionem Mathilde comitisse renovavit'⁵⁸). Once again, Hommel's position was to deny her any role or authority in ordering Irnerius to compile the Roman law ('aut Mathildem? cuius auctoritate Irnerium ius Romanum reduxisse, nonnulli fabulantur'⁵⁹). The action of persuasion, he said, did not require any *iuris peritia* ('ad persuadendum aut excitandum nulla requiritur iuris peritia'⁶⁰). He was probably familiar with Gianvincenzo Gravina's argument that the Urspergensis testimony was historically unreliable.⁶¹ Hommel used, in this instance the term *iuris peritia*, which was stricter and more technical than *iuris notitia imbutis*, to be merely 'imbued'

in some 'notions of law' (*iuris notitia*). Analogously, the Halle professor Daniel Nettelbladt (1719–1791), in a short section dedicated to women in his work, had chosen to allude to women *instructed* in legal expertise (*de foeminis iuris peritia instructis*), with the same purpose of restricting the merits of the mythical and the historical examples under scrutiny.⁶²

Women involved in legal praxis occupied a more reduced space in Hommel's *De foeminis iuris notitia imbutis*, although they were no less relevant to the author's argumentation. The Roman Caia Calphurnia (or Caia Afrania), Hortensia, and Plotiana were the usual candidates to qualify as female lawyers in the common inventories of illustrious women.⁶³ Hommel's bitter lines about them were not another trivial literary game to denigrate the heroines of popular collections. The negative image of the 'quarrelsome woman', of medieval origin,⁶⁴ and as lively as ever in the eighteenth-century *querelle* texts, was connected to a highly sensitive topic for jurists. It could be associated with one of the persistent controversies in the jurisprudential tradition: the role of lay practitioners or pettifoggers (*rabulae, leguleii*). From medieval and sixteenth-century treatises to recent orations – from Antoine Favre's *De erroribus pragmaticorum et interpretum iuris* (1598) to Johann Gottlieb Heineccius's *De iurisconsultis semidoctis* (1727) – learned jurists complained about the lack of technical knowledge and the immoderate ambition of the *rabulae*, whose vices unnecessarily increased the volume of litigation in the courts. Indeed, the primary pedagogical goal of *historia litteraria iuris* as a legal literary genre was to provide the necessary *eruditio* for a real jurisconsult to distinguish himself from uneducated practitioners.

It is in this framework that we should read the condemning lines about the 'excessively talkative' (*nimum verbose*) Afrania. According to Valerius Maximus, she was the origin of the general ban on women in the administration of justice, crystallised in the previously mentioned Digest's passage (50.17.2). Hommel approved of this decision, which had righteously prevented the 'contentious genre' of bringing cases to court and protected tribunals from being disturbed by women's constant quarrels ('ne porro foeminarum rixis tribunal turbaretur, sed a postulando abstinere illud contentiosum genus'⁶⁵). He mentioned Afrania's unbearably strident voice, which sounded like bells, with recourse to Juvenal's *Satyrs*.⁶⁶ Contemporary *opuscula*, such as a piece by Gottlob August Jenichen (1709–1759)⁶⁷ and a dissertation, the defence of which was presided over by Johann Reich in 1706,⁶⁸ show a renewed interest in this 'quarrelsome' character. Nettelbladt also expanded his commentaries on women's 'itch for litigation' ('in mulieribus litigandi pruriginem') in the second edition of his work.⁶⁹ Likewise, in 1779, Hommel introduced changes to the third chapter ('Ius civile Romanum') of his *Litteratura iuris* to allow for a more detailed exploration of his concern about women's *litigandi prurigo*, a feature associated with the *rabulae*.⁷⁰ He added a harsh judgement about what was probably the first elementary legal handbook for women, *Institutes du droit civil pour les*

dames, which was printed in Helmstedt in 1751. Its author, Johann Heinrich Kratzenstein, had presented it as a partial translation of Justinian's *Institutes* aimed at offering some basic notions of jurisprudence to the 'beautiful sex'. As soon as it was published, this 'legal primer' for women was severely criticised in the legal journals of the time.⁷¹ I believe that its publication was one of the main reasons that led Hommel to expand his discussion of women jurists, practitioners, and readers of law books in the revised version of the *Litteratura iuris*. Hommel and others were also concerned with the 'disadvantages' associated with the growing amount of legal literature published in Romance languages instead of Latin, since they would be available for women. He feared that this kind of 'legal catechisms' would also cause an undesirable increase in litigation in the courts (and indeed, in certain jurisdictions, petitions brought to the courts by women as plaintiffs or defendants represented a substantial part of the total amount of lawsuits⁷²):

The architect of this kind of catechisms hopes that the nebulous heads of these rustic people can be enlightened by the catechisms, but, believe me, they will be darkened, and, by understanding even less than they understand now, indeed, inflated by their abnormal wisdom, they will raise worthless and frivolous legal disputes which otherwise had never occurred to them.⁷³

Nevertheless, Kratzenstein's handbook was not the only one to attract Hommel's attention in relation to the women's question. The Leipzig professor made another significant addition to the new edition of his *Litteratura iuris*. This was related to the curious dissertation *Bitisia Gozzadina seu de mulierum doctoratu apologetica legalis-historica dissertatio* ('Bittisia Gozzadina, or an Apologetic Legal Historical Dissertation on the Doctoral Degree of Women'), printed in Bologna in 1722 under Carlo Antonio Machiavelli's name,⁷⁴ although it had actually come from the pen of his brother Alessandro, a notorious forger in the Italian learned community.⁷⁵ Important bibliographical repertoires for jurists, such as Martin Lipenius's *Bibliotheca*, cited Machiavelli's *dissertatio*.⁷⁶ The episode that had inspired Machiavelli's book was the frustrated attempt of the young noblewoman Maria Vittoria Delphini Dosia to earn the degree of doctor in laws, which generated a vivid debate in the Bolognese society of the time. Reviews appeared in journals such as *Il Giornale dei letterati*, *Mercurio storico e politico*⁷⁷ and in the German *Acta eruditorum Lipsiensia*.⁷⁸ The Dosia family had mobilised efforts to convince the university's authorities and secured the patronage of Elizabeth Farnese, wife of Philip V of Spain, as well as the support of Cardinal Ulisse Gozzadini, bishop of Imola (allegedly a descendant of the legendary Biltisia).⁷⁹ Hommel expanded the references to this event in the second edition of his work, mentioning the *Acta Lipsiensia* and an oration written by Andreas Westphal, professor in Greifswald.⁸⁰

To make the case for Delphini Dosia, Machiavelli highlighted a woman who was assumed to have enjoyed *auctoritas* as a jurist in Bologna, according to several catalogues of women, such as Hilaire de Coste's *Eloges*,⁸¹ Damiano de Froes's *Theatro heroico*,⁸² and several recent academic dissertations.⁸³ Her name was Biltisia (or Bitisia, Beatrix) Gozzadini, and she had come from a family of jurists. Machiavelli did not hesitate to build his thesis upon forged documents, such as a fictitious medieval calendar to prove Gozzadini's public acknowledgement as a jurist.⁸⁴ His *Dissertatio apologetica* was a sort of florilege—an selva of tropes, commonplaces, and loci regarding women's legal condition, and also introduced several alleged precedents of women jurists to the history of legal studies in Bologna.

Any discussion of Gozzadini's qualifications as a jurist must be understood as a statement about Delphini Dosia's contested aspirations. Given the considerable repercussions of the incident, and other cases of 'exceptional women' who held academic positions in Bologna, such as the physicist Laura Bassi (1711–1778)⁸⁵ and the mathematician Maria Gaetana Agnesi (1718–1799),⁸⁶ Hommel felt compelled to tackle these issues as well. Agnesi's name had been invoked by Kratzenstein as one of the sources of inspiration for his *Institutes du droit civil pour les dames*.⁸⁷ Not only Hommel but also other prestigious authors such as Nettelbladt (who was less inclined to similar 'micrological' details in his narrative), expanded their notes on Machiavelli's book in the subsequent editions of their works. Learned jurists raised their voice to offer an authorised version of the exceptional cases that could impact their own academic expertise, just as others were doing in medicine⁸⁸ and theology.⁸⁹ Despite its fruitless outcome, cases such as Delphini Dosia's functioned as new foci of discussion, inciting reconsideration of various topics of the *querelle* for different purposes.⁹⁰ These apparently anecdotal lines on women's intellectual authority, hidden inside legal compendia written for a male professional readership, function as an expressive 'barometer of social and cultural tensions'⁹¹ in the field of jurisprudence.

Biltisia Gozzadini was the only woman who, according to Hommel, fulfilled all requisites to be taken seriously as a *jurisconsulta*. First, she was of noble origin and had learned Latin, which was an unusual skill for a woman and indispensable for accessing legal texts. She had 'despised the loom and the needle to devote herself to the study of Latin and the law' ('filia Nobilis Bononiensis quae colum et acum contempsit et studio linguae latinae et iuris se dedit'⁹²). Second, she had received the doctorate in laws ('iuris utriusque doctrix solenniter creata'⁹³). Third, she had taught both privately and publicly, beginning with the lecture on Justinian's *Institutes* (the usual starting point in the academic *cursus honorum* in law) and later as a paid instructor, and she had finally ascended to a public lectureship ('primum Institutiones Iustiniani priuatim, deinde salario constituto et ad professionem anno 1539 vocata etiam publice interpretata est'⁹⁴). She had also authored a number of legal treatises, although printed under a pseudonym or someone else's name ('sub nomine ficto

et alieno⁹⁵). This last qualification was essential. On the one hand, it associated Gozzadina with the vicious, illegitimate forms of authorship which he had condemned in two separate chapters of the *Litteratura iuris*.⁹⁶ On the other hand, anonymity gave the story certain verisimilitude. Anonymity or pseudonymity would have been the only possible forms of authorship for a woman in this context, considering that there was not a single woman's name in the basic early modern repertoires of legal authors, such as Giovanni Battista Ziletti's *Index*⁹⁷ or Wolfgang Freymon's *Elenchus*.⁹⁸ Jurists were unlikely to have accepted the *actoritas* of a woman in the long chains of *opinio communis doctorum*, the pillar of scholastic legal reasoning.

Finally, what made her existence as a *jurisconsulta* 'digestible' was the virtue of chastity. A virgin skilled in law ('iuris virgo peritissima'), Gozzadina had died without knowing a man ('viri inexperta obiit'⁹⁹). Other possible candidates for the podium of female jurists were the members of the family of Giovanni D'Andrea (ca. 1271–1348), canon law professor in Bologna (his wife Milanzia and his daughters Novella and Bettina), and the daughters of Francesco Accursio (ca. 1181–ca. 1259), the founder of the school of the glossators. None of these women, however, met all the requirements as Gozzadina did. Novella D'Andrea, present in several catalogues of the time,¹⁰⁰ nearly achieved full qualification as a woman jurist. Like her sister Bettina, she had been 'imbued', or initiated in legal knowledge by her father ('imbuit etiam doctrina sua Ioannes Andreae par filiarum'), to the point that she became capable of replacing him during his illness at the public lectures of canon law in Bologna. She did so covered in a veil, 'so that Cupid would not expel Minerva from the breasts of the students' ('patre aegrotante e suggestu iura praelegisse scholaribus, velamine vultum operiente, ne Cupido ex auditorum pectoribus Minervam propelleret'¹⁰¹).

Even if Gozzadina was more qualified than the other well-known female figures, Hommel's characterisation shows a clear ambivalence towards her. He did not go so far as to dismiss her case as mere fiction (*fabula*), as he did with other alleged female authorities (such as Matilda), but he did not take her completely seriously as a historical precedent. In the paragraph he devoted to her, he quoted *ad verbum* Hilaire de Coste (who situated her in the sixteenth century, as transcribed *supra*) and simultaneously Machiavelli's fictional character (thirteenth century). Hommel did not make any effort to solve this chronological inconsistency. In fact, following the traditional scholastic method of reasoning in jurisprudence, as in other disciplines, the historical truth of the case under examination was of secondary value. Rather, the exercise emphasised the discussion of a certain premise and its possible consequences, and tested opposite opinions and authoritative exempla regarding each *quaestio*. The Leipzig jurist was clearly interested in making a statement about Delphini Dosia's case. It is even possible that Gozzadina's story, which offered a more substantial subject for discussion, motivated him to move the women's chapter to the second part of the *Litteratura iuris* in its later edition (since, as mentioned above, the second

part of the book encompassed the *vitae iurisconsultorum*, the lives of the 'real' jurists). Yet his aim was to undercut her consideration as a real jurist and to relegate her in the realm of exceptionality rather than to integrate her into a chain of female predecessors. By discussing women's participation in the history of jurisprudence, his main concern was with the discipline's honour and with jurists' self-image as scholars. As McLeod has outlined, women's characterisations have often been more descriptive of their creators than of women themselves.¹⁰²

This brief incursion into the world of jurists demonstrates that not even jurisprudence, one of the most self-referential and hermetic academic disciplines,¹⁰³ was irresponsive to the *querelle des femmes*. The *querelle*, as a trans-generic set of questions, 'appeared in virtually all kinds of narratives'.¹⁰⁴ It is not enough, however, to simply acknowledge its presence in various cultural and scholarly environments. On the contrary, it is necessary to explore possible reverberations between texts and contexts,¹⁰⁵ the various uses of arguments and tropes related to the women's question, how they served different agendas,¹⁰⁶ and how they evolved through intersections with different academic traditions. The taxonomy of women jurists scrutinised by Hommel and other eighteenth-century jurists offers rich examples of these various social uses. Their discourses were motivated by recent episodes closely related to the academic arena, such as Delphini Dosià's frustrated doctorate in laws in Bologna or the publication of Kratzenstein's legal 'catechism' for women. The *querelle's* topics offered learned jurists tools to engage in the debate, even if their purpose was, in most cases, to exclude, to correct, or to 'domesticate' the characters that proliferated in the popular galleries of illustrious women. It also offered them an occasion to present the image of the ideal legal scholar in the context of the emergence of new disciplines such as *Kameralistik* and *Polizeiwissenschaften* in the German area, which were challenging the old jurisprudence's social relevance. Moreover, the intersection between the *querelle* and academic jurisprudence resulted in new themes and formats for legal literature available to law students and legal practitioners, and in the insightful reassessment of traditional texts and themes. These intersections have also helped, in certain cases, to disseminate a more pro-feminine approach to legal solutions and interpretations.

In short, early modern jurisprudence should be taken into account if we want to understand the broad impact of the *querelle*, its ubiquity and persistence, and particularly if we want to understand the various cultural roles that representations of female intellectual authority, agency, and authorship played in early modern European societies.

Notes

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2. 'Ideoque non tam studium fuit rhetoricis figmentis officiosisque mendaciis verba in laudes ornare, quam rem ipsam autoritate, exemplis ipsisque sacrarum literarum et utriusque iuris testimoniis commonstrare.' I have consulted the bilingual Latin-German edition prepared by Otto Schönberger: Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De nobilitate et praecellencia foeminei sexus*, Würzburg, Königshausen und Neumann, 1997, 30 and the English translation by Albert Rabil published in The Other Voice series: Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Declamation on the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996. My emphasis.
3. Agrippa's work has been defined as 'one of the most revolutionary manifestos of the Renaissance' (Pierre Béhar, 'From the Cabala to the Glorification of Woman: Agrippa von Nettesheim's *De nobilitate et praecellencia foeminei sexus*', in *German Life and Letters*, 2014, 67(4), 455-466).
4. See Margarete Zimmermann, 'The Old Quarrel: More Than Just Rhetoric?', in Wolfgang Aichinger et al. (eds), *The Querelle des Femmes in the Romania. Studies in Honour of Friederike Hassauer*, Vienna, Turia & Kant, 2003, 27-42; Zimmermann, 'La Querelle des Femmes come paradigma culturale', in Silvana Seidel Menchi et al. (eds), *Tempi e spazi di vita femminile tra medioevo ed età moderna*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1999, 157-173; Éliane Viennot, 'Introduction', in Viennot (ed.), *Revisiter la Querelle des femmes. Discours sur l'égalité/inégalité des femmes et des hommes, de 1750 aux lendemains de la Révolution*, Saint-Étienne, Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2012, 12-13; Ana Vargas Martínez, 'La Querelle des femmes: una tradizione politica', in *Segni e Comprensione*, 2018, XXXII (94), 134-149.
5. Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990; Vanda Anastácio, 'Notes on the Querelle des femmes in Eighteenth-Century Portugal', in *Portuguese Studies*, 2015, 31(1), 50-63; Emily C. Francomano, 'The Early Modern Foundations of The Querella de Las Mujeres', in Nieves Baranda (ed.), *The Routledge Research Companion to Early Modern Spanish Women Writers*, Routledge, 2017, 41-60; Mónica Bolufer, 'La querella de las mujeres: renovación historiográfica y nuevas potencialidades pedagógicas de un tema clásico', in Henar Gallego Franco (ed.), *Feminidades y masculinidades en la historiografía de género*, Granada, Comares, 2018, 73-100.
6. Julie D. Campbell, *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, 5; see also Campbell, 'The Querelle des femmes', in Allyson Poska et al. (eds.), *Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2013, 361-379.
7. Gianna Pomata, 'Was There a Querelle des Femmes in Early Modern Medicine?', in *Arenal. Revista de historia de las mujeres*, 2013, 20(2), 313-341.
8. On the reasons for the persistent anachronisms (and silences) of cultural, social, and economic historians regarding law, see Bartolomé Clavero, 'Historia y antropología. Por una epistemología del derecho moderno', in Joaquín Cerdá and Pablo Salvador Coderch (eds.), *I Seminario de Historia del Derecho y Derecho Privado - Nuevas Técnicas de Investigación*, Barcelona, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1985, 9-35; António Manuel Hespanha, 'Depois do Leviathan', in *Almanack Brasileiro*, 2007, 5, 55-66; more recently, Carlos

- Garriga, '¿La cuestión es saber quién manda? Historia política, historia del derecho y puntos de vista', in *PolHis. Boletín Bibliográfico Electrónico Programa Buenos Aires de Historia Política*, 2013, 10(5), 89–100, besides the several studies collected by Paolo Grossi in *Storia sociale e dimensione giuridica. Strumenti d'indagine e ipotesi di lavoro*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1986.
9. Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De nobilitate*, 30.
 10. The body of civil law, *ius civile* (i.e. the medieval rearrangement of emperor Justinian I's recompilation of Roman legal texts) and the body of canon law, *ius canonicum* (formed by Gratian's *Decretum*, written ca. 1140, and other texts sanctioned by the papacy from the thirteenth century onwards), were the two pillars of the so-called *ius commune* tradition. As with other learned disciplines of late medieval birth and early modern development, such as theology and medicine, it consisted of a corpus of texts, authorities, questions, commonplaces, and tropes, which functioned according to the scholastic way of reasoning. Its formation and diffusion crossed political and religious boundaries. As with any other fields of knowledge, jurisprudence was a cultural artefact rather than a product of a local sovereign or a parliament's will, completely different from what we understand as 'law' in contemporary societies. For overviews on the historical formation of legal tradition, see Aldo Schiavone, *Ius. L'invenzione del diritto in Occidente*, Turin, Einaudi, 2005; and Bartolomé Clavero, *Historia del Derecho: Derecho Común*, Salamanca, Universidad, 1994.
 11. 'Feminae ab omnibus officiis civilibus vel publicis remotae sunt et ideo nec iudices esse possunt, nec magistratum gerere nec postulare nec pro alio intervenire nec procuratores existere' (Digest 50.17.2) (Trans.: 2. Ulpianus, On Sabinus, Book I. Women are excluded from all civil or public employments; therefore they cannot be judges, or perform the duties of magistrates, or bring suits in court, or become sureties for others, or act as attorneys). Canon law sources reproduced similar prescriptions: see, for example, Gratian's *Decretum*, C. 33 q. 5 c. 17, and *Decretals*, 5. 40.10. One of the best accounts on women's condition according to the early modern legal literature is still António Manuel Hespanha, 'El estatuto jurídico de la mujer en el derecho común clásico', in *Revista Jurídica. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, 2001, 4, 71–88.
 12. Glenda McLeod, *Virtue and Venom. Catalogs of Women from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991, 8.
 13. McLeod, *Virtue and Venom*, 9. See also Mónica Bolufer, 'Galerías de mujeres ilustres o el sinuoso camino de la excepción a la norma cotidiana (ss. XV–XVIII)', in *Hispania*, 2000, 204 (LX/I), 181–204, and Susanna Bucci, 'La produzione letteraria dedicata alle donne illustri. Pubblico e autori nel clima polemico del dibattito sui diritti del sesso femminile', in Susanna Bucci and Fiorenza Taricone (eds.), *La condizione della donna nel XVII e XVIII sec.*, Rome, Carucci, 1983, 139–236.
 14. For a detailed account on these genres, see Karin Schmidt-Kohberg, 'Manche Weibspersonen haben oftmals viel subtilere Ingenia als die Manspersonen'. *Weibliche Gelehrsamkeit am Beispiel frühneuzeitlicher Frauenzimmerlexika und Kataloge*, Sulzbach, Taunus, 2014; for a comprehensive bibliography in German and English, see Jean M. Woods and Maria Fürstenwald, *Das gelehrte Frauenzimmer. Kataloge der Schriftstellerinnen, Künstlerinnen und gelehrten Frauen von 1606 bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart, Metzler, 1984.
 15. Hippel's *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* (Berlin, Voß, 1792) is one of the unique examples of the use of legal tradition to employ a pro-woman approach. A partial English translation of Hippel's work has been edited by Timothy F. Sellner under the title *On Improving the Status of Women*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1979.
 16. On Hommel's biography, see Gerd Kleinheyer and Jan Schröder (eds.), *Deutsche und Europäische Juristen aus neun Jahrhunderten. Eine biographische Einführung in die Geschichte der Rechtswissenschaft*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2017, 206–210 (Hagen Hof);

- Rolf Lieberwirth, 'Hommel, Karl Ferdinand', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* [NDB], 1972, 9, 592; Albert Teichmann, 'Hommel, Karl Ferdinand', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* [ADB], 1881, 13, 58–59; Roderich Stintzing and Ernst Landsberg, *Geschichte der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft*, vol. 3/1, Aalen, Scientia, 1957 [2nd. facsimil rep., Oldenbourg Verlag, 1898]. For an early autobiography, see Christoph Weidlich, *Zuverlässige Nachrichten von denen jetzlebenden Rechtsgelehrten*, Halle, Kümmel, 1760, 4, 249–280.
17. Wolfgang Rother, 'Strafrechtsreformdiskussionen in Leipzig: Karl Ferdinand Hommel, "Germanorum Beccaria"', in Hanspeter Marti (ed.), *Die Universität Leipzig und ihr gelehrtes Umfeld*, Basel, Schwabe, 2004, 459–486.
 18. Karl Ferdinand Hommel, *Teutscher Flavius, das ist: Vollständige Anleitung sowohl bey bürgerlichen als peinlichen Fällen Urthel abzufassen, worinnen zugleich die Advocaten bey rechtlichen Klagen und Vorbringen, die Schlusbitte behörig einzurichten, belehret werden. Dritte Ausgabe, durchgehends stark vermehret*, Bayreuth, bey Johann Andreas Lübeck, 1775.
 19. Carl Ferdinand Hommel, *Promptuarium iuris Bertochianum ad modum lexici iuris practici sive locorum communium*, Leipzig, Fritsch, 1777.
 20. In several reprints, Hommel's preface of 1773 stated the utility of the *Register* for 'ladies', who took it for a classical reference book: '[...] das Frauenzimmer [...] dieses Register bey der Gerade für ein classisches Buch hält' (Hommel, *Pertinenz und Erbsonderungs Register...*, Leipzig, Junius, 1782, XIII).
 21. Carl Ferdinand Hommel, *Catalogus Testium Alphabeticus: ex quo cognoscitur, qui testes plane inhabiles, qui semitestes, qui plus quam semitestes, et qui semitestibus fide minores sint...*, Vratislaviae, Korn, 1780 (translated into German in 1843).
 22. Theodor Schimmelpfeng edited this work under the title *Hommel redivivus, oder Nachweisung der bei den vorzüglichsten älteren und neueren Civilisten vorkommenden Erklärungen einzelner Stellen des Corpus iuris civilis*, Kassel, Theodor Fischer, 1858. See the critical note in Landsberg, *Geschichte*, vol. 3/1, 398.
 23. Hommel worked on some of the volumes of Georg Beyer's *De utili et necessaria autorum iuridicorum et iuris arti inservientium notitia schediasma*, whose first volume appeared in 1726.
 24. Carl Ferdinand Hommel, *Palingenesia librorum iuris veterum sive Pandectarum loca integra: ad modum Indicis Labitti et Wielingi oculis exposita et ab exemplari Taurelli Florentino accuratissime descripta*, Leipzig, Georgius, 1767. Abraham Wieling's *Jurisprudentia Restituta, seu Index chronologicus in totum iuris Justinianaei corpus* (Utrecht, Abraham van Paddenburgh, 1739), and Jacques Labitte's *Index legum omnium quae in Pandectis continentur: in quo singulae ad singulos iurisconsultorum libros ex quibus desumptae sunt* (Paris, Nivellius, 1557) were basic reference works for professional jurists.
 25. See, for instance, various articles from his pen in Johann August Bach (ed.), *Unpartheyische Critik über juristische Schriften inn- und ausserhalb Deutschland*, Leipzig, Lankisch, 1750–1758.
 26. Rolf Knütel and Ulrike Malmendier offer a partial translation into German of Hommel's curious chapter (although not accompanied by significant study) in 'Frauenforschung im 18. Jahrhundert: Karl Ferdinand Hommels Studie De foeminis iuris notitia imbutis – Über juristisch gebildete Frauen', in W. Schön et al. (eds.), *Gedächtnisschrift für Brigitte Knobbe-Keuk*, Cologne, Otto Schmidt, 1997, 861–877.
 27. Carl Ferdinand Hommel, *Litteratura iuris*, Leipzig, apud Ioannem Wendlerum, 1761; *Litteratura iuris. Editio secunda, adeo reformata ut fere novuum opus videri possit*, Leipzig, apud Casparum Fritsch, 1779.
 28. Heinz Monnhaupt offers an overview on this legal genre, focusing on its impact in the later development of the *deutsche Rechtswissenschaft* in 'Historia literaria iuris. Beispiele juristischer Literaturgeschichten im 18. Jahrhundert', in *Max Planck Institute for European Legal History Research Paper Series*, 2013, 3, 1–23.

29. Frank Grunert and Anette Syndikus, 'Historia literaria: Erschließung, Speicherung und Vermittlung von Wissen', in Grunert and Syndikus. (eds.), *Wissenspeicher der Frühen Neuzeit. Formen und Funktionen*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2015, 243–293. Sari Kivistö has also emphasised the inseparability of moral and intellectual virtues and vices in early modern polemical discourses, with a special focus on university texts: Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities*, Leiden, Brill, 2014.
30. Paul Nelles, 'Historia litteraria and Morhof: Private Teaching and Professorial Libraries at the University of Kiel', in Françoise Waquet (ed.), *Mapping the World of Learning: The Polyhistory of Daniel Georg Morhof*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2000, 42.
31. François Waquet, 'Introduction', in Waquet (ed.), *Mapping the World of Learning*, 10.
32. Anne Goldgar stresses the general concern of members of the Republic of Letters with their own identity as scholars in Goldgar, *Impolite Learning. Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters 1680–1750*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1995, 6–7.
33. For an English translation of Immanuel Kant's celebrated text of 1798, see Mary J. Gregor (trans.), *The Conflict of the Faculties [Der Streit der Fakultäten]*, New York, Abaris Books, 1979.
34. 'Societates iurisconsultorum litterariae, ubi quaedam de Facultatis iuridicis et de Ordinario', in Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, lib. I, caput XXI, 399–409.
35. Pascale Hummel, *Mœurs érudites: étude sur la micrologie littéraire (Allemagne, XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)*, Geneva, Droz, 2002.
36. On celibacy as an academic ideal in eighteenth-century Protestant universities, see Elizabeth Harding, *Der Gelehrte im Haus: Ehe, Familie und Haushalt in der Standeskultur der frühneuzeitlichen Universität Helmstedt*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2014, 226 ff. Hommel uses Cornelius van Eck's example to register jurists' discourses against marriage (Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 316–317).
37. Chapter XIX: 'Micrologica, siue iureconsultos qui simul fuerunt theologi, iureconsultos in sanctorum numerum relatos, pontifices, cardinales, electores imperii, qui summos in iure honores assecuti, medicos, philosophos, iurisperitia claros et mathematicos, nec non poetas, iureconsultos ex concubina natos, caelibes, ridicula iurisconsultorum elogia, homonymos, coecos, sutores et huius furfuris alia continens', in Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, 342–291.
38. This chapter title, used in the first edition of 1761, was changed to 'Iurisconsultorum classēs' in the second edition.
39. See, for example, Amaranthes, *Nutzbares, galantes und curioeses Frauenzimmer-Lexicon*, Leipzig, Gleditsch, 1715, 342 (Ceres), 434 (Egeria), 2008; on Egeria, see also Hippel, *On Improving*, 134, 208n; on Ceres, see Christine de Pizan (here quoted in the Spanish translation by M. J. Lemarchand, *La Ciudad de las Damas*, Madrid, Siruela, 2006) I, 35, 28, 29.
40. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, lib. I, caput XX, 393. He eliminated this reference in the second edition.
41. As depicted by Christian Gottfried Hoffman in his *Historiae Juris Romano-Justinianei*, vol. 2, Leipzig, apud Haeredes Joh. Grossii, 1726, 67.
42. In Jena, the dissertation presented by Diedrich Andreas Kellerhaus and Johann Heinrich ZurMühlen, *Dissertatio De Cerere Legifera quam suffragante philosophorum in Alma Ienensi Collegio*, Ienæ (Jena), Literis Müllerianis, 1700.
43. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, 393. See *De Apolline Iurisperito: Dissertatio in qua ostenditur oracula primis temporibus non de futuris sed de iure consulta fuisse*. Praeside D. Carolo Ferdinando Hommelio Respondente Simone Friderico Olbrecht, Lipsiae, Imprimebat Io. Chr. Langenhemius, 1748, 22–23.
44. For a fresh account on the *ius respondendi*, a widely debated topic in legal scholarship, see Kaius Tuori, 'The ius respondendi and the Freedom of Roman Jurisprudence', in *Revue Internationale des droits de l'Antiquité*, 2004, 51, 295–337.

45. 'Quendam etiam inter has sibi locum vindicat Belini Britannorum regis filia, Cambria Formosa, quae Antenoro secundo Francico regi nupsit, et leges Sicambrorum uno libro scripsisse dicitur. Neomagum condidit, in quo anno orbis 3590 vivere desiit.' (Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 312; ed. 1761, 394).
46. '[...] quae leges proprio ingenio patrias conscripsit, si vera sunt, quae in Legibus Connubialibus Tiraquellus his verbis tradit: Marcia Proba omnibus propemodum artibus liberalibus doctissima, quae condidit et scripsit leges patrias, quas Marcianas vocant [...]' (Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 312; ed. 1761, 394). Giuseppe Aurelio di Gennaio (Ianuario), one of Hommel's most recommended authors, went further, blaming Marta Proba of usurping the laws elaborated by a sagacious jurisconsult, for the sake of her own vanity: 'De legibus patriis a Martia Proba scriptis, facile credam, illas, a sagace Jurisperito conceptas, feminam dominatricem in ornamentum suarum vanitatum sibi usurpasse' (Iosephi Aurelii de Ianuario, *Respublica Jurisconsultorum. Editio novissima*, Neapoli, Aere Domini Terres, 1752, 17). For Hommel's praise of Ianuario's work, see his *Prolegomena* (Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, 7).
47. Jordan, *Renaissance*, 4, 307–308.
48. The *sedes materiae* were, among others, Digest 1,1,9; 1,3,32; 1,4,1; 1,21,1; 2,1,3; 2,2,1; Codex 1,14 (pr., 1, 2, 19); 3,13,1. The indispensable points of departure for understanding the medieval genesis of *iurisdictio* are Pietro Costa, *Iurisdictio. Semantica del potere politico nella pubblicistica medievale (1100–1433)*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1969 (repr. 2002, with an insightful prologue by Bartolomé Clavero), and Jesús Vallejo, *Ruda equidad, ley consumada. Concepción de la potestad normativa (1250–1350)*, Madrid, Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1992. The act of *iurisdictio*, which was a characteristic exercise of *publica potestas* in those centuries, consisted of *ius dicere* (declaring what was right in every case, according to the divine order) and the solving of controversies. The task of *interpretari* was also a sort of normative act in this context (Vallejo, *Ruda equidad*, 317–320), since there were no formal hierarchies of legal sources as we know in contemporary legal systems. A fundamental reference for the so-called jurisdictional turn in legal historical studies, showing the relevance of the jurisdictional paradigm as a key to reading contractualists such as Locke, or the genesis of the separation of powers, is Bartolomé Clavero, *El orden de los poderes: historias constituyentes de la trinidad constitucional*, Madrid, Trotta, 2007. Luca Mannori offers an overview of the transition from the old 'government of justice', based on *iurisdictio*, to a model based on the separation of powers between three branches of government in Mannori, 'Justicia y Administración entre Antiguo y Nuevo Régimen', in *Revista Jurídica de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, 2007, 15(I), 123–146.
49. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, 396 (with the marginal annotation 'Exempla spuria' for Theodora and Matilda). This passage was suppressed in the edition of 1779. For the image of Theodora in the *Frauenzimmer lexica*, see, for instance, how the jurist Gottlieb Siegmund Corvinus (writing under the pseudonym of Amaranthes) depicted her: 'Theodora. Des Kaisers Justiniani Gemahlin, der zu Gefallen so viele herrliche Privilegia und Wohlthaten vor das weibliche Geschlechte der Kayser Justinianus in sein Corpus Juris setzen lassen. Sie lebte im sechsten Jahrhundert, und hegte viel ketzerische und irrige Lehren [...] auch dadurch ihren Gemahl selbst endlich verführte [...]. Vid. Procopium in Arcan. Histor. It. D. Schmid. Mulier. Heterodox. §24 p. 33' (Amaranthes, *Nutzbares*, 2010). Justinian's superstition, which was traceable in several passages (such as D.48,8, *Ad legem Cornelianam de sicariis et veneficis*) was another familiar topic for learned jurists.
50. *Novellae* 134,9 (see also Nov. 134,10–13) (for a standard edition of Justinian's texts, see *Corpus iuris civilis*, Paul Krüger and Theodor Mommsen (eds.), Berolini (Berlin), Weidmann, 1877).

51. The chapter on Theodora's lasciviousness, omitted in the first edition, was restored in later editions, according to Anthony Kaldellis's 'Introduction' in Prokopios and A. Kaldellis (trans.), *The Secret History*, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 2010, ix.
52. Johannes Petrus Ludewig, *Vita Iustiniani M. atque Theodoraë, Augustorum nec non Triboniani, iurisprudentiæ iustinianæ proscenium*, Halæ Salicæ, Impensis Orphanotrophei, 1731, vii. On Theodora's consideration as *docta femina*, see especially 155–157; on her piety and attitudes of religious toleration, see 367.
53. The defence of the dissertation, by Johan Dovw, was presided over by Wieling: *Schediasmatis tumultuarii De Iustiniano et Theodora Augustis*, Franequæ (Franeker), G. Coulon, 1729.
54. Ioannis Friderici Jugleri, *Commentatio De eruditione Theodoraë Augustæ. Editio secunda*, Hamburg, 1742. Also, the Portuguese jurist and diplomat Duarte Ribeiro de Macedo (1618–1680) wrote *Vida da Imperatriz Teodora* (Lisbon, 1677).
55. 'Ad eiusmodi enim negotia plerumque non eruditionis apparatus requiritus, sed usus potius, et in causis publicis peritia, quam aliqua ex parte non denego Theodoraë, sanctuarium quippe mariti Principis quotidie circumstrepenti' (Jugler, *Commentatio De eruditione*, 14).
56. '[...] fuisse Theodoram versutam magis mulierem, quam eruditam' (ibid.).
57. See Henrik Brenkmann, *Historia Pandectarum seu fatum exemplaris florentini. Accedit gemina dissertatio de Amalphi*, Trajecti ad Rhenum, apud Guilielmum vande Water, 1722 (who critically discusses her role, especially in chapters V and VII), and August Bünemann, who tends to follow the tradition: 'Sed ius Iustinianum plane fere neglectum erat in Italia, et demum Guarnerii studio, itemque Ducis Mathildis iussu primum in academiis ibi illustratum postea usu inualuit' (Bünemann, *Historiæ litterariæ iuris primæ lineæ in usum studiosorum iuris specimen ad excitandas doctiorum acroases*, Hannoveræ (Hannover), apud Io. Christoph Richter, 1750, 33).
58. Andrea Padovani offers an overview of the legal scholarship on Matilda's role and the *renovatio* of legal studies: Padovani, 'Matilde e Irnerio. Note su un dibattito attuale', in *Matilde di Canossa e il suo tempo: Atti del XXI Congresso internazionale di studio sull'Alto Medioevo in occasione del IX centenario della morte (1115–2015)*, Spoleto, Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2016, 199–242.
59. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, 396. Hommel suppressed the references to Matilda in the second edition of his work.
60. Ibid.
61. Gianvincenzo Gravina, *Origines iuris civilis, quibus ortus et progressus iuris civilis, jus naturale, gentium*, Leipzig, apud Jo. Fridericum Gleditsch, 1708, 171. Like Ianuario, Gravina was one of Hommel's favorite authors; see Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, 50–51.
62. Daniel Nettelbladt, *Initia historiæ litterariæ iuridicæ universalis, Hallæ Magdeburgicæ*, in *Officina Libraria Rengeriana*, 1764, 151–152 (reprinted in 1774). For a comparison of Nettelbladt's and Hommel's position regarding women: Laura Beck Varela, 'Nostris Studiis Formosum Monstrum. Semblanzas femeninas en las historias de la jurisprudencia', in Jesús Vallejo and Sebastián Martín (eds.), *En Antidora. Homenaje a Bartolomé Clavero*, Cizur Menor, Thomson Reuters and Aranzadi, 2019, 123–152.
63. Plotiana was quoted, for instance, by Frawenlob (Schmidt-Kohberg, 'Manche', 202).
64. For the medieval construction of the topic of 'quarrelsome women', see Helen Solterer, *The Master and Minerva: Disputing Women in French Medieval Culture*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995.
65. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, 393. This passage was changed in the second edition.
66. 'Grave videbatur Romanis foeminae in tribunal audire' (Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 311). Nettelbladt was even harsher in his judgement (Nettelbladt, *Initia*, 1764, §177, 149). St Paul's words about women's silence in the church had been incorporated into canon law

- sources, such as Gratian's *Decretum*. For a consistent analysis of medieval legal sources regarding women: Giovanni Minnucci, 'La donna giudice, Innocenzo III e il sistema del diritto comune', in *Vergentis* 2017, 4, 77–106.
67. Jenichen's *Observationes selectae de C[ai]a Afrania* were originally written in 1734, according to the author. They were added to Augustin Leyser's *Meditationes ad Pandectas... Volumen IX. Et ultimum*, Leipzig, Meisnerus, 1748.
 68. The *Dissertatio apologetico-votiva qua Calphurnia sapientissima inter mortales femina a conuitiis Ulpiani vindicatur* consists of a congratulatory piece issued on the occasion of Jacob Otto's doctoral promotion in laws (August 11, 1706).
 69. *Nettelblatt, Initia*, 1774, 179.
 70. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 76.
 71. Johann Heinrich Kratzenstein, *Institutes du droit civil pour les dames*, Helmstedt, Schnorr, 1751. I have analysed the reactions to this publication in Laura Beck Varela, 'Translating Law for Women? The *Institutes du Droit Civil pour les Dames* in Eighteenth Century Helmstedt', in *Rechtsgeschichte*, 2016, 24, 171–189.
 72. See Lyndan Warner, 'Before the Law', in Poska et al. (eds.), *Ashgate Research Companion*, 241–243; Deborah Youngs, 'A Besy Woman... and Full of Lawe: Female Litigants in Early Tudor Star Chamber', in *Journal of British Studies*, 2019, 58(4), 735–750.
 73. 'Sperant huiusmodi cathecismorum architecti, nebulo illustrari catechismis posse rusticorum capita, sed, credant mihi, obscurabuntur, et intelligendo minus etiam, quam nunc, intelligent, immo abnormi hac sua sapientia inflati lites suscitabunt friuolas et stultas, de quibus nunquam cogitassent' (Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, lib. I, cap. III: *Ius civile Romanum*, 76).
 74. *Bitisia Gozzadina seu de mulierum doctoratu apologetica legalis-historica dissertatio, Caroli Antoni Machiavelli, Iurisconsulti Bononiensi, ad illustrissimam comitissam juriumque cultricem clarissimam Mariam Victoriam Delphinam Dosiam, Bononiae (Bologna), Jo. Baptista Blanchus, 1722.*
 75. For an account of Delphini Dosia's episode, focusing particularly on Alessandro Machiavelli's career efforts, see Paula Findlen, 'Inventing the Middle Ages: An Early Modern Forger Hiding in Plain Sight', in Ann Blair and Anja-Silvia Goeing (eds.), *For the Sake of Learning. Essays in honor of Anthony Grafton*, Leiden, Brill, 2016, 871–896. Also indispensable is the study of Lucia Toschi Traversi, who reconstructs the episode in Toschi Traversi, 'Verso l'inserimento delle donne nel mondo accademico', in *Alma Mater Studiorum. La presenza femminile dal XVIII al XX secolo. Ricerche sul rapporto donna/cultura universitaria nell'Ateneo bolognese*, Bologna, Clueb, 1988, 15–37. On the public ceremony, which took place in the Colegio de España in Bologna, see David García Cueto, 'La celebración de la sabiduría: Maria Vittoria Delfini Dosi y la presentación pública de sus conclusiones académicas en Bolonia (1722)', in Felipe Serrano (ed.), *Docta Minerva: Homenaje a la profesora Luz de Ulierte Vázquez*, Jaén, Universidad, 2011, 405–414.
 76. Under the entry 'Doctores', in Martin Lipenius's *Bibliotheca Realis Iuridica*, Leipzig, Frisius [1738] (edition corrected by Friedrich Gottlieb Struve, with indexes by Gottlieb August Jenichen), 160.
 77. *Mercurio storico e politico, tradotto dall'originale stampato in Olanda*, vol. 55, Venezia, per Luigi Pavino, July 1722, 17–26; *Il Giornale dei letterati d'Italia*, vol. 34, Venice, 1723, 355–357 (*apud* Toschi Traversi, 'Verso l'inserimento', 35).
 78. *Acta eruditorum... anno 1724 publicata*, Leipzig, Grosse & Gleditsch, 1682–1731, 239–240.
 79. Toschi Traversi, 'Verso l'inserimento', 35; Findlen, 'Inventing the Middle Ages', 878.
 80. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 313 (he had not quoted it in the first edition).

81. Hilarion de Coste, *Les eloges et les vies des reynes, des princesses, et des dames illustres en pieté, en courage & en doctrine, qui ont fleury de nostre temps, & du temps de nos peres: avec l'explication de leurs deuises, emblèmes, hieroglyphes, & symboles. divisez en deux tomes*, vol. 1, Paris, Cramoisy, 1647, 522.
82. Damião de Froes Perym, *Theatro heroïno: abecedario historico e catalogo das mulheres illustres em armas, letras açcoens heroicas, e artes liberae*, Lisboa Occidental, Theotonio Antunes Lima, 1736, 170.
83. *De feminis prima aetate eruditione ac scriptis... David Schultetus Hamburg[ensis] [praeses], Ioannes Dietericus Starckius Lubeck[ensis] [respondens]*, Wittenberg, PhD diss., 1703, 3–4. Other references to Gozzadina in the works of Paulin Erdt, *Philoteens Frauenzimmer= Akademie für Liebhaberinnen der Gelehrsamkeit. Aus dem Französischen übersetzt von der Frau von**, Augsburg, Veith, 1783; and Christian August Wichmann, *Geschichte berühmter Frauenzimmer. Nach alphabetischer Ordnung aus alten und neuen ausländischen Geschicht-Sammlungen und Wörterbüchern zusammen getragen*, Leipzig, Böhmen, 1772–1775 (apud Schmidt-Kohberg, 'Manche', 208).
84. Findlen, 'Inventing the Middle Ages', 879–881.
85. Laura Bassi (1711–1718) was, together with Maria Gaetana Agnesi, one of the first women to hold a university position, having contributed to the spreading of Newtonian physics. See Monique Frize, *Laura Bassi and Science in 18th Century Europe. The Extraordinary Life and Role of Italy's Pioneering Female Professor*, Heidelberg, Springer, 2013.
86. On Agnesi and the context of Italian universities, see Marta Cavazza, 'Dottrici e lettrici dell'Università di Bologna nel Settecento', in *Annali di Storia delle Università Italiane*, 1997, 1, 109–126; Rebecca Messbarger and Paula Findlen (eds.), *The Contest for Knowledge: Debates over Women's Learning in Eighteenth-Century Italy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005.
87. Kratzenstein, *Institutes*, 8.
88. In medicine, a few years before, in 1754, a polemical argument arose around the medical degree earned by Dorothea Leporin Erxleben at the University of Halle. See Elisabeth Poeter, 'Gender, Religion, and Medicine in Enlightenment Germany: Dorothea Christiane Leporin's Treatise on the Education of Women', in *National Women's Studies Association Journal*, 2008, 20(1), 99–119. Analogous dissertations on women with medical expertise include: Polycarp Schacher (praeses) and Johann Heinrich Schmid (respondens), *Dissertatio Historico Critica: De Feminis Ex Arte Medica Claris/Von Weibern die sich in der Artzneywissenschaft gerühmt gemacht...*, Leipzig, PhD diss., May 8, 1738.
89. On Elena Cornaro Piscopia's failed attempt to earn a theological degree at the University of Padua: Patricia H. Labalme, 'Women's Roles in Early Modern Venice: An Exceptional Case', in Labalme (ed.), *Beyond Their Sex. Learned Women of the European Past*, New York, New York University Press, 1980, 129–152.
90. Zimmermann, 'The Old Quarrel', 35.
91. Campbell coined this expression in 'The Querelle', 362.
92. Nettelblatt, *Initia*, §177, 149–150.
93. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 314.
94. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 314 (transcribing Hilaire de Coste's passage).
95. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1761, 396. In the second edition, he mentioned only 'sub fictis nominibus', reproducing again Hilaire de Coste's passage (Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 314). This subtle change, omitting the reference to 'sub nomine alieno', left Gozzadina in a slightly better position: see Hommel's discussion on the use of pseudonyms in chapter XIX, 241.

96. See cap. XIX ‘*De libris sine parente genitis seu de scriptoribus innominatis et pseudonimis*’ and cap. XX ‘*De furtis litterariis iureconsultorum aliisque fraudibus*’ in Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 240–249 and 250–262, respectively.
97. On Ziletti’s work, first printed in 1563, see Gaetano Colli, ‘Le edizioni dell’*Index librorum omnium iuris civilis et Pontificii* di Giovanni Battista Ziletti. Sulle tracce dei libri giuridici proibiti nella seconda metà del XVI sec.’, in Mario Ascheri et al. (eds), *Manoscritti, editoria e biblioteche dal Medio Evo all’Età contemporanea*, vol. I, Roma, Roma nel Rinascimento, 2006, 205–244.
98. Johann Wolfgang Freymon von Randek, *Elenchus omnium auctorum sive scriptorum, qui in iure tam civili quam canonico vel commentando*, Frankfurt, [Feyrabend], 1574.
99. The lack of chastity was precisely the main vice of another woman supposedly learned in law, Susanne Cujas, the daughter of the French jurist Jacques Cujas, a recurrent reference in the catalogues of women and mentioned also by Hommel. Some references in Beck Varela, ‘*Nostri studii*’, 149.
100. Novella was quoted by ‘*ipsa docta mulier Christina de Pisa*’, according to Hommel (*Litteratura*, 1761, 395; 1779, 313). Ianuario also had quoted Pizan’s authority in his *Respublica iurisconsultorum*, 12.
101. Hommel, *Litteratura*, 1779, 313.
102. McLeod, *Virtue and Venom*, esp. 8, 81–109.
103. António Manuel Hespanha, ‘O direito na Academia (Coimbra, 1570–1640). A identificação do direito numa comunidade comunicativa’, in *Quaderni Fiorentini*, 2019, 48, 537–618.
104. Jordan, *Renaissance*, 308.
105. Campbell, ‘The Querelle’, 364.
106. Francomano, ‘The Early Modern Foundations’, 42.

CHAPTER 13

‘Diotime’ and ‘La Muse Belgique’: The Intellectual Mobility and Divergent Legacies of Amalia Gallitzin and Marie-Caroline Murray

Lien Verpoest

When looking at the impressive momentum of diplomatic networks in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe, the scientific and academic contacts of Austrian and Russian career diplomats are often overlooked. Envoys in cosmopolitan contexts like Brussels, Paris, The Hague, and Vienna not only worked incessantly on political-strategic and administrative matters but also fostered intellectual contacts with men of letters, scientists, and artists. Several of them even contributed to the creation and development of academies in Brussels, France, and the Dutch Republic.¹ The cosmopolitan contexts they worked in provided unique settings for international meetings of minds.² What is more, this cosmopolitan context also gave room for increased *female* intellectual agency, not only in the salon culture but also due to the forced mobility that was a consequence of the European revolutionary and military turmoil.³ ‘Celebrities’ like Baroness Germaine de Staël travelled the continent, and many other women contributed to contemporary political and intellectual discussions by moving between different national contexts and intellectual circles.⁴ In this chapter, I will focus on the intellectual mobility of two women who stood out because of their intense intellectual activity and the unanimous high regard they enjoyed from their political, diplomatic, and literary contemporaries. Moreover, they befriended each other in one of these cosmopolitan contexts. As they moved along different intellectual and national environments, their meeting also led to a friendship and correspondence that renders an interesting insight into the touchstones of their female intellectual authority.

Amalia Adelheid Gallitzin (1748–1806), earlier Schmettau, was married to the Russian ambassador in The Hague, Prince Dmitrii Alekseevich Golitsyn.⁵ Through her husband’s friendship with Karl Johann von Cobenzl, the minister

plenipotentiary to the Austrian Netherlands, she befriended the Belgian artist and writer Marie-Caroline Murray (1741–1831). Although Amalia Gallitzin never published during her lifetime, she remains widely remembered as a central member and host of the Kreis von Münster, a circle of philosophers and intellectuals who regularly met at her house. Marie-Caroline Murray, on the contrary, published several prize-winning works and was known as *la Muse Belgique* ('the Belgian muse'), but is now almost forgotten. This leads to two questions: first, what are the causal mechanisms behind Gallitzin and Murray's divergent legacies, especially because they started out with very similar trajectories? And second, which social, geographical, and historiographical factors legitimised or constrained their intellectual authority? Exploring the mechanisms behind their divergent legacies will bridge gaps in the diplomatic history of the long eighteenth century and will contribute to overcoming the paradigmatic separation of women intellectuals and intellectual history.

Hilda Smith points out that intellectual history as a specialty within broader historical scholarship has long omitted women and gender issues. She adds that these lacunae should be addressed by the analysis of the writings of early modern women, which 'can offer useful insights as to how intellectual historians can more effectively open up their specialty to women's knowledge and gender analysis.'⁶ I will do so by developing the concept of *legitimising mobility*. By looking for the reasons behind divergent legacies of female intellectuals, I will identify what sort of mobility (social, geographical, financial) legitimised their intellectual authority.

The professional and personal trajectories of the two women will be studied from the perspective of Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers's comparative historical analysis, which encompasses the interesting vector of looking at both the parallels in these case histories as well as taking into account the contrasting contexts of the two female intellectuals.⁷ I will start out by describing the biographical contexts and intellectual agency of Gallitzin and Murray to identify the social, geographical, and historiographical factors that legitimised or constrained their intellectual authority. Then I will focus on the networks these women navigated and their correspondence with members of these networks to assess the legitimising mobility and legacy.

Acquaintance and Correspondence (1768–1770)

In late 1767, the Russian envoy Prince Dmitrii Alekseevich Golitsyn (1734–1803) was recalled from his diplomatic mission in Paris and returned to Russia.⁸ During a stopover to take the waters in Aix-en-Chapelle, he fell in love with the young Countess Adelheid Amalia von Schmettau. She was the daughter of Prussian Field Marshal Samuel von Schmettau and then lady-in-waiting of Princess Ferdinand of Prussia.⁹ After a brief engagement, Golitsyn and

Schmettau married in Aachen on August 14, 1768. The newly-wed couple embarked upon a nearly two-year trip that led them from Brussels and Spa to Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Berlin, and their final destination, St Petersburg. There, Golitsyn received orders for a new posting as minister plenipotentiary in the Dutch Republic.

It was during this trip that Amalia Gallitzin met Marie-Caroline Murray. Prince Golitsyn was a patron of the arts and a middleman for Empress Catherine II, who sought to buy European paintings, sculptures, and books in Paris, Brussels, and The Hague. Golitsyn visited his friend Karl Johann von Cobenzl (1712–1770) to arrange the sale of Cobenzl's collection of drawings to the empress. This collection would later on form the basis of the collection of the Hermitage.¹⁰ As Golitsyn took his new wife to Brussels to introduce her to Cobenzl and to discuss the sale, Amalia struck up a friendship with Marie-Caroline Murray, a good friend of Count Cobenzl.¹¹ There was an eight-year age difference, but both women were known for their strong intellectual streak, and their meeting seemed to be a meeting of the minds. After the Golitsyns left, Amalia took up a correspondence with Marie-Caroline during her trip to Russia and invited her to come and stay in The Hague.

Although practically absent in the academic literature on eighteenth-century Brussels, Marie-Caroline Murray was actually relatively well known among the Brussels elite in the second half of the eighteenth century. Born in 1741, she was the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Murray, a lawyer at the Council of Brabant and Marie-Caroline Savage. Both her parents were of Scottish descent, their families having arrived as Scottish Jacobite refugees after the 1707 Act of Union.¹² She was the eldest of seven children, of which three died in infancy. Marie-Caroline's family were not well off, but not without reason: her parents were later described as 'a couple more rich in children than in écus.'¹³ This can be derived from the limited number of servants listed in her mother's household book and the different entreaties of her father to put in a good word for him professionally via her influential connections in diplomatic circles in Brussels, The Hague, and at the Austrian court.¹⁴ After her parents passed away, Marie-Caroline also became responsible for providing for her younger sisters.

Despite the family's limited means, her father's job at the Council of Brabant provided an interesting network, and the family atmosphere was decidedly intellectual. Later on in life, Murray wrote that she inherited the library that was started by her grandfather George Savage, who was a military man but also 'a distinguished man of letters.'¹⁵ Because of the limited studies and literature about her life and work, correspondence needs to be used to derive an impression of how her personality and intellect was perceived in the Brussels elite. Two main characteristics surface time and again in the descriptions of her contemporaries: her exceptional beauty and her exceptional intelligence. As Charles Maroy put it in one of the rare articles that written about Murray: 'Her cradle was watched over by two fairies, Beauty and Intelligence', which turned her into

‘one of the most beautiful persons Brussels had ever seen born.’¹⁶ Charles-Joseph de Ligne had equal admiration for her intellect and described in his *Fragments d’histoire de ma vie* how she outshone many of her contemporaries:

I do not know any man of letters as distinguished as Miss Murray: all literatures of all languages, perfect history, taste, judgement, the most beautiful verse you can write. Mme de Genlis and de Staël do not do this. Before, Mme de La Fayette and de Riccoboni also did not do this. Les Deshoulières and la Suze did too much, but no novels. Mme Dacier knew Greek but not French. Thus, I can assure you that all female authors can be only her ladies-in-waiting.¹⁷

Despite the absolute consensus about her character, her occupations were a bit more diverse. Murray had many talents, among which music, writing, painting miniatures, and editorial work stood out. In different stages of her life, she was described as a writer, *préceptrice*, or literary assistant. In the file that contains her request for an Austrian government pension after she fled Brussels in 1794, she describes herself as ‘artiste.’¹⁸ Yet in 1768, when she made her acquaintance with the young Amalia Gallitzin, she was mainly known as a talented and intellectual beauty who was well known and liked among the political, literary, and artistic elite in Brussels. Her friendship with Austrian minister plenipotentiary Cobenzl was noted in Charles de Lorraine’s secret ‘little black book’, which he kept about the clandestine relations of the Brussels elite.¹⁹ Although Cobenzl denied the liaison during his lifetime, on his deathbed in January 1770, he entrusted the abbé de Coudenberg with a valuable ring for Murray, to compensate all the discomfort their acquaintance had caused her.²⁰ It seems that around that time, Murray considered it best to leave Brussels for a bit and to visit her new friends in The Hague. In March 1770, the Golitsyns arrived in The Hague, and Amalia was eager to receive her Belgian friend.

The Hague (1770–1779)

In The Hague, the Golitsyns had settled in the Russian diplomatic residence on Kneuterdijk 22. Apart from the ambassador’s diplomatic work, the couple received many friends and local and foreign dignitaries. Encouraged by his wife, Golitsyn engaged with scientists like Martinus van Marum and Petrus Camper on favourite subjects like mineralogy and natural electricity. The couple also developed cordial relations with the stadtholder Willem V and his wife Wilhelmina.²¹ Until the end of her life, Amalia Gallitzin maintained a correspondence with Wilhelmina. The stadtholder himself also took a real liking to the young princess. He allowed her to pursue her scientific interests with the assistance of Petrus Camper and kept her letters in a private folder labelled

'package and secret pieces of the Prince of Orange, which cannot be opened but by himself'. On the back of a letter by Golitsyna is written 'my Immortal Treasure.'²² Like Murray, Gallitzin stood out for her beauty and intellect. One of the famous guests at the Russian embassy was Denis Diderot, who passed The Hague in 1773 on his way to Russia and stayed there again for several months in 1774 on his way back to Paris.²³ He wrote down his observations about Amalia in his famous correspondence with Sophie Volland:

She is a very lively woman, very cheerful and full of wit, and has a rather amiable figure; is more than young enough, educated and talented; she is well-read; knows several languages; this is the custom with German women; she plays the harpsichord and sings like an angel; she is full of ingenuous and sharp words; she is very good: [...] She is extremely sensitive; even a little too much for her happiness. As she is knowledgeable and accurate, she argues like a little lion. I love her madly, and I live between the prince and his wife, as between a good brother and a good sister.²⁴

Unlike her amiable friend, Gallitzin had a remarkably intense personality, which shone through in her correspondence. The same Diderot had pointed out his fears about her being a 'mauvaise tête' several years earlier in a letter to Volland. After the Golitsyns' betrothal, Diderot received a letter of introduction from Amalia that left the impression of her being unbalanced. He wrote Volland about Amalia's 'bizarre' letter, which contained 'the most sanguineous, dishevelled, and indecent satire of herself'. If he hadn't known from Golitsyn it was not written in a serious manner, he would have been 'most worried'.²⁵ This is also corroborated by the memories of the Dutch-Swiss writer Isabelle de Charrière, who in later years reminisced about Amalia's behaviour during her first years in The Hague:

One day I will exonerate Diderot in relation to Princess Gallitzine. To say the least she was very bizarre before she knew him. Her infatuation with the friend of an Austrian minister, governor – if I am not mistaken – of Brussels, caused much more sensation in The Hague than her cropped hair.²⁶

The 1769–1770 correspondence of Gallitzin to Murray that preceded Murray's visit to The Hague indeed bears witness of this 'engouement': her discourse veers between intense feelings of friendship and slightly amorous expressions.

I always receive your letters with a new feeling of joy! The pleasure they give me finally decided the uncertainty I still was in whether I should bless or bemoan the moment I met you. The regrets that our separation gives me almost made me wish I had never known you, but my consolation is

in your letters. [...] I am delighted to see that you are doing my feelings the justice to be persuaded that I can ever erase you from my heart. You hold the high end to it and are so deeply engraved in it that you can only be torn away from it by ruthless death.²⁷

Murray's replies have not been found, but the formality of Murray's regular correspondence, even to known lovers, seems to point in the direction that the intensity was not encouraged and simply may have been inherent to the personality of Gallitzin.²⁸ Another sign of this intensity in her friendship is the fact that Amalia gave her daughter Marianne, born in 1769, the same nickname as Marie-Caroline had when she was with friends and family: Mimi.

After countless invitations ('come here to never part with me'), Murray finally visited Amalia Gallitzin between April and October 1770.²⁹ Afterwards, the more distant tone of the correspondence, which quickly petered out altogether, is obvious. The gossipy reminiscences of Isabelle de Charrière shed some light on what occurred during the visit, as she wrote about Murray:

This young lady was the daughter of a lawyer and became the mistress of Count da Cunha, the ambassador of Portugal. I will ask Baron Chambrier what has become of this wicked man as soon as he wants to come and see me.³⁰

Indeed, Marie-Caroline Murray returned to Brussels and gave birth to a little girl, Josephine, who died several years later.³¹ Nothing remains of this episode in her life except the correspondence with Count José Maria da Cunha, which continued for more than a decade. Murray seems to have managed to avoid scandal (by disappearing due to illness) and, according to Lepeer, laughed off the few rumours.³²

Interestingly, only two years later, Gallitzin broke with protocol and customs and made her own choice to leave her restricted way of life. She had developed a deep platonic friendship with the Dutch philosopher Frans Hemsterhuis and became increasingly fed up with the formalities and obligations at the Russian legation in The Hague. In their correspondence, Hemsterhuis addressed her as 'Diotime', referring to Socrates's teacher, the philosopher Diotima of Mantinea, and signed his letters with 'Socrate' (Fig. 1).³³ From 1774 onwards, Amalia Gallitzin rented a house in Scheveningen, which she aptly named Niethuys (alluding to the Dutch *niet thuis*, 'not home'). There, she intended to quietly raise her children, according to the principles of Rousseau and the Enlightenment, together with only Frans Hemsterhuis and the children's tutor, Dentan. Ambassador Golitsyn seems to have acquiesced in this separation. In 1779, Amalia Gallitzin moved with her children to Münster, where she enrolled her son in a Catholic gymnasium that was part of the University of Münster, founded in 1773 by the statesman Franz Friedrich Wilhelm von Fürstenberg.



Fig. 1. Frans Hemsterhuis, '*Diotima as Pallas Athena*'; Portrait of Amalia Gallitzin (ca. 1775). Pastel drawing. © Westfälische Landesmuseum.

She spent the rest of her life in Münster, where she became the central figure in the Kreis von Münster, a literary philosophical circle that supported pedagogical views based on Enlightenment ideas.

Despite their separation, the Golitsyns never divorced officially, and Amalia kept her name and title. This is interesting, because it implied that she retained her social status. She also returned to The Hague for official occasions, like the 1881–1882 visit of the tsarevich Pavel Petrovich and his wife. Prince Golitsyn visited his family once a year in Münster.³⁴

Marie-Caroline Murray spent the remainder of her life in very different circumstances. Unlike Amalia Gallitzin, she never enjoyed high social status or fortune. Rather, she was always in a dependent social and financial position, either on her family or other 'benefactors'.

After her return to Brussels, Murray worked as a literary assistant for the duke of Arenberg. Like so many who had close ties with the Austrian court, she fled Brussels in 1796 after the French conquest of the Southern Netherlands. She was invited to stay at the estates of Christian Auguste, prince of Waldeck, after which she moved to Münster in 1797. Devoid of funds, she had to earn a living by painting. No letters remain to verify whether she and Gallitzin met there

again. To be able to receive the small state pension from the Austrian court, she moved to Vienna in 1798. There she remained the rest of her life, protected from poverty by her influential friends: prince de Ligne, Cobenzl's daughter the Comtesse de Thiennes de Rumbeke, and the duke of Arenberg. She outlived them all and died in solitude in 1831, aged ninety.

'Diotime' and 'La Muse Belgique': Networks and Legacy

These biographical portraits recount how these women's lives evolved from parallel trajectories to contrasting contexts. They were not entirely on an equal social footing when they met in 1768, but they both lived in elite settings and were two young women who shared a decidedly intellectual outlook on life. At the end of her life, Gallitzin could look back on a life filled with learning, intellectual contacts, sound intellectual recognition, and a legacy that resonates to this day. Marie-Caroline Murray, on the contrary, seems to have vanished into thin air. She lived until 1831 but the last reference to her is in 1815, in a secret police report during the Vienna Congress. Moreover, it is a reference by association, as she is identified as 'de Ligne's good friend Mme Murray'.³⁵ Despite her descent into anonymity and her financial problems, she continued her intellectual and editorial work, albeit more often than not in a secondary role. When Madame de Staël took up the idea of publishing a selection of prince de Ligne's memoirs, it was Murray who assisted her in compiling the 1809 edition of his *Lettres et Pensées* ('Letters and Reflections').³⁶

In the second part of this chapter, I will look for causal mechanisms behind their divergent trajectories. As Skocpol and Somers point out, there are two ways of comparing historical trajectories, and they often overlap. If one starts out from a 'parallel logic', one seeks to show that a theory holds good from case to case. Differences among the cases are seen as contextual 'particularities' that overall do not curb the generality of the process with which one is concerned – in this case, intellectual mobility of women in the late eighteenth century. Conversely, the 'contrast of context logic seeks to bring out the unique features of each particular case selected and to show how these unique features affect the working-out of general social processes'.³⁷ Here also, these unique features or contextual particularities overlap, which makes these two women's trajectories an interesting case for comparison.

Starting out on practically the same footing, their intellectual development seems to have evolved in a parallel manner, yet other (socio-economic) parameters determined their trajectories diverged significantly. In this comparative historical analysis, I will take different factors into account: social status, geographic mobility, network and male patronage, oeuvre and legacy. In the conclusion, I will discuss what seems to have been crucial in establishing not only intellectual authority but also what I call *legitimising* mobility: if one's

intellectual authority is recognised through a certain legacy, then what are the reasons behind divergent legacies of female intellectuals? By taking into account the above-mentioned factors, I will explore what sort of mobility (social, geographical, financial) legitimised their intellectual authority.

Social Status and Geographic Mobility

Both women spent different parts of their lives in different places and thus navigated not only different geographic but also different social contexts. The main difference between Gallitzin and Murray is, however, that Gallitzin's social status remained unchanged even after her separation from ambassador Golitsyn, whereas Murray's social independence decreased over the years and even became the main reason for her geographical mobility. Amalia Gallitzin traded her life as the lady-in-waiting of Princess Ferdinand of Prussia for a life as a princess consort in one of the oldest noble families of the Russian Empire. Even though she shared her life with her husband at the embassy for only four years, they remained married for the rest of their lives and she retained her status and the title of Princess Gallitzin, by which she remains known to this day. Her move to Niethuys in Scheveningen might have raised some eyebrows, but did not decrease her social prestige, nor did her later move to Münster. This can be partly explained by the fact that, although like Murray, she befriended famous intellectuals, she remained financially independent throughout.

Murray may not have been born into nobility, but her father's position as an *avocat* at the Council of Brabant put her into contact with the highest elite in Brussels, as is shown by her early friendships with Philippe Goswin de Nény, prince de Ligne, and minister plenipotentiary Cobenzl, through whom she befriended Golitsyn and his wife. This last friendship led her to spend some time in The Hague. This geographic change of surroundings was not permanent, yet due to her changed circumstances after her return, her social status seems to have altered. More than her friendship with Cobenzl or Nény, her relation with the duke of Arenberg during her last years in Brussels implied a connotation of dependence. This is obvious from their correspondence, in which expresses her friendship and high regard for him, but also shows a professional *sérieux*:

Politics turns my head, Monsieur le Duc, or to put it better, the desire to guess your wishes and to carry them out [...] I have undertaken a response, criticism, and analysis of what you like of Mirabeaux's [*sic*] work. This strange enterprise dates from yesterday, and I have already written fourteen pages [...] Berg, to whom I read my work this morning, maintains that it is not so bad, and consequently he will send your secretary tomorrow to copy this beginning first in order to send it to you right away for you to judge whether it is worthwhile to continue.³⁸

Her self-expressed dependence on his opinion unveils how she, financially supported by the duke, strived to be of (intellectual) use to Arenberg.

Compelled to leave Brussels because she was considered too *joséphiste*, her subsequent stay with the prince de Waldeck, her move to Münster, and her eventual trip to Vienna were all undertaken out of financial concerns. Whereas Gallitzin seems to have ‘upgraded’ her social status and well-being through her geographic mobility, Murray’s geographic mobility was prompted by the urgent need for funds. As a recently retrieved file in the Haus-, Hof und Staatsarchiv shows, she could not claim the small state pension attributed to her by the Austrian emperor from Münster, so she needed to move to Vienna to be able to receive this very necessary income.³⁹

Network and Male Patronage

Throughout her life, Amalia Gallitzin created a solid network of which the Kreis von Münster proved to be the most lasting. In the Dutch Republic, she first navigated the diplomatic and scientific network of her husband. When she moved to Niethuys outside The Hague in 1774, his role was taken over by the Dutch philosopher Frans Hemsterhuis, who became a fixture in her new household. He had a lot of input in her children’s education and also played a crucial role in her move to Münster. It was Hemsterhuis whose work was known in Germany and who took her to visit the schools around Münster founded by Fürstenberg. His introduction to the latter proved to be the end of his (not so) platonic relationship with his ‘Diotime’. Despite a continued correspondence with Hemsterhuis after moving there in 1779, Amalia Gallitzin expanded her network in Münster through cordial friendships with Franz von Fürstenberg, Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Johann Georg Haman, and later on, Goethe. She surrounded herself with a group of like-minded intellectuals, professors, and artists, which later crystallised in literary philosophical salon meetings of the Kreis von Münster, which was known for their opinions on education (with a focus on practical skills, sports, and learning living languages instead of Latin or Greek) and Catholic charity.

Like Amalia Gallitzin, Marie-Caroline Murray surrounded herself with an interesting network of successful and intellectual men. She enjoyed a lifelong warm friendship with prince de Ligne. She had consecutive friendships with the statesman Philippe Goswin, count de Nény, Guillaume Bosschaert (who later became the first director of the Brussels Museum of Fine Arts), Austrian minister plenipotentiary Count Karl Johann von Cobenzl, Portuguese ambassador José da Cunha, and the blind Duke August Engelbert of Arenberg. Unlike Gallitzin’s, Murray’s network was not a coherent circle of friends. Although some of them enjoyed the same salons (Cobenzl, de Ligne, Goswin de Nény), diplomatic circles (da Cunha, Golitsyn), or social status (de Ligne, Arenberg),

they were not all professionally or intellectually interlinked and did not subscribe to the same line of thought, ambitions, or goals like the Münster Kreis. What they did have in common was their acquaintance with and deep esteem for Marie-Caroline Murray. The extensive correspondence between Murray and Ligne, Arenberg, Nény, and Bosschaert illustrates how her intellectual qualities and intelligence was widely appreciated and sometimes even adored, as was her beauty. As her childhood 'ami de Coeur' Nény wrote:

My dear friend, you are unique. Poets and novels never even imagined anything that looks like you, and with a little delicacy it is no longer possible to love anything when you have been loved by you. You have forever spoiled any other affair for me.⁴⁰

In his short letters about the edition of a selection of his memoirs in which she assisted him, Ligne usually addressed her as the 'woman whom I love more than those I love, and whom I admire more than those I admire'.⁴¹

Yet despite their adoration, their esteem for her intellectual and artistic qualities led many of these men to solicit her help or even assistance. She not only assisted in editing Staël's edition of de Ligne's memoirs but also served as a literary assistant to the blind duke of Arenberg and as a *préceptrice* to his children. In her younger years, she was a companion to the Cobenzl children.⁴² Her relations with these men veered between friendship and patronage: musical scores written by Murray and her sister can be found in the Arenberg archive in Enghien, which suggest leisurely stays at the Arenbergs.⁴³

Nevertheless, as the passing of her father in 1779 confronted her with more financial responsibilities, Murray gradually turned into a literary assistant of the duke of Arenberg. She took care of his paperwork and prepared a lot of informative *mémoires* to be read to the blind duke. One of the most famous ones is the memorandum on the proposal to create a theatre in Brussels that was later presented by the duke of Arenberg, Fernand Rapedius de Berg, and Marie-Caroline Murray. The draft memorandum in the Arenberg archive shows that this proposal was entirely written by Marie-Caroline Murray.⁴⁴ The duke showed his gratitude and admiration for all her intellectual essays and secretarial work by providing financial support and a small house in the Rue aux Laines. In 1791, during his Italian travels, he, moreover, nominated her as a member of the Accademia degli Arcadi in Rome.⁴⁵

Interestingly, the lack of funds actually also increased her literary activity. In the early 1780s, as she bore the brunt of her deceased father's debts and responsibility for her sisters, the incentive to submit her work for prizes or to publish it to make a small income increased substantially. Later in life, she used her literary skills to earn a small income as a 'literary assistant' or tutor. As her good friend de Ligne, who saw her struggle financially in Vienna and tried to help her where possible (despite his own dire finances), wrote compassionately to her:

Be proud to be poor, dear friend, and to receive. A log of Pauline does you honour, a louis of Corinne [Madame de Staël] too. Her printer earns more than a hundred from us. How and why do you have nothing? Think about it and be proud. First England, then the Netherlands, then France and the Devil took you. Allow gratitude and admiration to take its place and pity me for not being able to make you cry [like other charitable people].⁴⁶

Oeuvre and Legacy

Interestingly, Amalia Gallitzin never published anything during her life. She was a keen correspondent and a mediator of ideas as a central figure of the Münster Kreis, but she never ventured to turn any of her ideas into a publication. Only after she passed away were parts of her diaries and of her correspondence with Frans Hemsterhuis published.⁴⁷ Still, from the nineteenth century onwards, she was widely remembered, both in historiography as well as in a broader cultural legacy. Already twelve years after her death, in 1828, a biography of Amalia Gallitzin was published by Theodor Katerkamp, a professor in theology at the University of Münster who had known her personally. It is significant that even on the title page, she was remembered through her connections, as it reads: ‘Memorabilia from the life of Princess Amalia von Gallitzin, née Countess von Schmettau, with specific reference to her closest connections: Hemersthuis, Fürstenberg, Overberg and Stolberg.’⁴⁸ Outside Münster, in Angelmodde, where she is buried, her house was temporarily turned into a museum, remembering her and her role in the Kreis von Münster. Also, the Gallitzin-Stiftung pays testimony to her legacy to this day. The *stiftung* focuses on charitable work and promotes scientific work, mainly literary studies and art studies related to the cultural area of Westphalia or to Amalia Gallitzin. They also award a Gallitzin *preis* for dissertations on literary studies or art history.

So it seems that, despite such a limited output, Gallitzin’s high societal visibility, status, and famous friendships contributed to her lasting legacy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is in sharp contrast with Marie-Caroline Murray, whose intellectual output was remarkable but whose visibility and therefore also legacy was almost non-existent.

Unlike Golitsyna, Murray was a published author in her lifetime. Initially, she wrote many poems and musical scores. Under increased financial pressure after the death of her father in 1779, she upped her publication strategy by writing laudatory pamphlets about the Austrian rulers Maria Theresa (*Essai d’éloge historique de Marie Thérèse*, ‘Attempt to a historical eulogy of Maria Theresa’, 1781) and Joseph II (*Stances pour l’Arrivée de l’Empereur*, ‘Stanzas for the Arrival of the Emperor’, 1781). These publications ensured Murray a state pension from the Austrian court. In 1785, she became the first female laureate of the Prix de l’Académie Impériale et Royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de

Bruxelles for her *Eloge et Mémoire historique et politique sur la vie de Jean de Carondelet* ('Eulogy and Historical and Political Memorandum on the Life of Jean de Carondelet').⁴⁹ In later years, she added to this oeuvre of 'official' laudatory literature a *Discours sur la Mort de l'Empereur Leopold II* ('Essay on the Death of the Emperor Leopold II') (1792) and an *Ode sur la Mort de Cathérine II* ('Ode on the Death of Catherine II') (1796).⁵⁰ In 1800, her last published work, *Aventures et anecdotes françaises tirées d'une chronique du XIV^e siècle* ('French Adventures and Anecdotes Taken from a Fourteenth-Century Chronicle'), appeared in Vienna.⁵¹

Apart from her published work and her unpublished poems and essays, Murray was also responsible for a considerable amount of 'invisible' editorial and translation work. As mentioned before, she assisted Germaine de Staël in her selection of de Ligne's *Lettres et Pensées*. In 1772, she was approached by ambassador da Cunha to translate the poem 'Os Lusíadas' ('The Lusíads') by the poet Luís Vas de Camoens, which resulted in her *Essai d'imitation libre de l'Episode d'Ines de Castro dans le poème des Luziadas de Camoens* ('Attempt at Free Imitation of the Episode of Ines de Castro in the Poem the Lusíads by Camoens').⁵² Other (unpublished) translations of works by Alexander Pope and Ossian have been mentioned but have not been found in her papers.⁵³ Apart from her publications, Murray was also a distinguished painter and an entertaining correspondent. She discussed Voltaire and other Enlightenment thinkers in her lively letters to Cobenzl, Arenberg, Ligne, and Nény. All these activities and the interesting essays and poems she sent them contributed just as much to her reputation of *la Muse Belgique* as her printed oeuvre did.⁵⁴

Intellectual Authority and Legitimising Mobility

At the outset of this chapter, I briefly mentioned the letters of the young Amalia Gallitzin to Marie-Caroline Murray.⁵⁵ The tone in Gallitzin's letters to Murray is different from the more reserved and intellectual tone in the correspondence of her Münster days. Her letters to Murray are those of a young woman desperate to engage in conversation and friendship with a woman well acquainted with society life. There are no intellectual references, no engaging discussions on Voltaire or Rousseau, but letters about lace cloth that has been bought or bouts of jealousy about her husband's earlier affairs.⁵⁶ These two women, in later years recognised by their contemporaries as intellectuals in their own right, do not seem to have discussed any literary, societal, or political topics. We of course have to take into account their age, but it seems that these women did not look at each other to legitimise their intellectual authority; this was relegated to their contacts with men. Two observations corroborate this. First, the lifelong correspondence between Golitsyna and Wilhelmina, the wife of the stadtholder, is of a comparable tone: friendly, confidential, cordial even, discussing mutual

friends and household affairs, and absolutely devoid of any literary, political, or philosophical references. This was very different from the correspondence with men like Frans Hemsterhuis, which is one long intellectual exchange.⁵⁷ Second, despite her young age, Murray's epistolary exchange with Philippe Goswin de Nény, among others, discusses his meeting Rousseau and visit to Voltaire in Ferney, which gives a good impression of the level of intellectual exchange between Nény and Murray at an age younger than when she met Gallitzin.⁵⁸

As a preliminary conclusion, male patronage seems to be an important factor used by both women to legitimise their intellectual authority. The importance of male patronage, however, does not explain the unequal legacies of Murray and Gallitzin. Other aspects like social status and geographical networks also seem to have been decisive factors in the legitimising mobility and constraints of female intellectual authority. These factors shed more light on the parallel agency and the contrasting contexts of Murray and Gallitzin's intellectual trajectories.

Both women were well-read, gifted intellectuals in their time. Both also enjoyed the support and encouragement of a remarkably extensive network of male patrons. Gallitzin evolved from supporting her husband's scientific efforts into being the intellectual sparring partner of Frans Hemsterhuis, and eventually became known as an intellectual in her own right at the centre of the Münster Kreis.

Murray was maybe even more established and recognised for her intellectual prowess than Gallitzin, not only because of the famous praise immortalised in prince de Ligne's memoirs but also because of her publications on Jean de Carondelet, Empress Maria Theresa, Emperor Leopold, and Empress Catherine II, as well as her translation of Camoens and her editorial work for de Ligne and Staël. Moreover, her literary output extended far beyond her published work. Her correspondence is full of poems, essays, and reflections on societal and political questions. Murray's friends and patrons were all part of the cosmopolitan and diplomatic elite in Brussels and later Vienna. Apart from her youthful acquaintance with Philippe Goswin de Nény, her friendship with Cobenzl, Arenberg, and de Ligne in particular implied access to the highest echelons of the Belgo-Viennese society. As pointed out in the discussion of her oeuvre, her financial vulnerability after the death of her father seems to have been an incentive to increase her literary output in order to provide an income from publications and literary prizes. Yet at the same time, the vulnerability of her social status and 'invisible' work as a literary assistant might also have been her undoing, as her limited legacy and absence in historiography shows.

Despite their parallel trajectories and brief acquaintance, we can thus summarise three major contrasts between these two learned women. The most obvious contrast lies in their oeuvre: Murray's is rather extensive, and Gallitzin's is not. A second important contrast lies in their status and financial independence. Gallitzin retained both throughout her life, while Murray lost

both in the 1770s. As Murray grew into old age, she also lost her male patronage, outliving most of her contemporaries who had supported her after her move to Vienna.⁵⁹ This led to a third important contrast: the difference in mobility of Gallitzin and Murray. The first chose where to go and to settle socially as well as geographically (The Hague, Niethuys, Münster), whereas Murray's geographic mobility was determined by financial constraints: she moved to the place where she could get a state pension, as this was her only source of income. This necessary move, however, placed her in a fascinating cosmopolitan setting where, together with Charles Joseph de Ligne, she found herself at the apex of a conservative counter-revolutionary network that would later determine the outcome of the Vienna Congress.⁶⁰

This late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European setting, in which these women negotiated their intellectual authority, men still set the intellectual norm. Based on the parallel trajectories and contrasting contexts of Amalia Gallitzin and Marie-Caroline Murray discussed in this chapter, one can conclude that legitimising mobility was fostered by social status, male patronage, and geographical network rather than by their oeuvre. Gallitzin's legacy as Hemsterhuis's 'Diotime' and as the central figure in the Kreis von Münster legitimised her intellectual authority. Despite being a published author and well-known *homme de lettres*, Murray faced social dependence, the loss of male patronage, and subsequent disappearance of her network in old age. These major constraints obliterated the legacy of *la Muse Belgique*.

Notes

1. Foreign members of the academies were often diplomats; see Hervé Hasquin (ed.), *L'Académie impériale et royale de Bruxelles: ses académiciens et leurs réseaux intellectuels au xviii^e siècle*, Brussels, Académie royale de Belgique, 2009. See also Lien Verpoest, 'Layered Liberalism. The Golitsyn Legation in the Dutch Republic (1770–1782)', in *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review*, 2019, 134(1), 96–120.
2. Like the Ancien Régime network of prince de Ligne, Count Carlo Andrea Pozzo di Borgo, Friedrich von Gentz, Count Sergey Uvarov, Ekaterina Dolgoroukova, the comtesse de Thiennes, and Count Andrey Razumovsky in early nineteenth-century Vienna. See Lien Verpoest, 'An Enlightened Path Towards Conservatism: Critical Junctures and Changing Elite Perceptions in Early Nineteenth-Century Russia', in *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 2017, 24(5), 704–731, and Lien Verpoest, 'The Ancien Régime and the Jeune Premier. The Birth of Russian Conservatism in Vienna (1803–1812)', in Matthijs Lok, Friedemann Pestel, and Juliette Reboul (eds.), *Cosmopolitan Conservatism: Countering Revolution in Transnational Networks, Ideas and Movements (1700–1930)*, Leiden, Brill Studies in Political Thought, 2021, 219–240.
3. See James Melton Van Horn 'Women in Public: Enlightenment Salons', in Melton Van Horn (ed.), *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 197–225, and Juliette Reboul and Laure Delcour (eds.), *French Emigrants in Revolutionised Europe. Connected Histories and Memories*, Palgrave Macmillan, War, Culture and Society 1750–1850, 2019.
4. Germaine De Staël, *Memoires de Madame de. Stael Dix Annees d'Exil*, Paris, Charpentier, 1843.
5. As the wife of Prince Dmitrii Alekseevich Golitsyn, her official name was Princess Amalia Golitsyna, yet due to her time in Münster, she is more commonly known under the German version of her name, Amalia Gallitzin. Since most of her legacy, like the Gallitzin Haus, the Nachlass Gallitzin, and the Gallitzin Fund, is known under this name and distinguishes her from her husband Dmitrii Golitsyn, we will use her 'German' name in this chapter.
6. Hilda Smith, 'Women Intellectuals and Intellectual History: Their Paradigmatic Separation', in *Women's History Review: Women, Wealth and Power*, 2007, 16(3), 353.
7. Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, 'The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1980, 22, 174–197.
8. Grant Tsvetava, *Dmitrii Alekseevich Golitsyn 1734–1803*, Leningrad, Nauka, 1985, 11.
9. Margravin Louise Elisabeth-Louise von Brandenburg-Schwedt (1738–1820), on the relation between Amalia von Schmettau and Princess Ferdinand of Prussia, see Mathilde Köhler, *Amalie von Gallitzin. Ein Leben zwischen Skandal und Legende*, Paderborn, München, 1995.
10. Catherine Phillips, *Art and Politics in the Austrian Netherlands: Count Charles Cobenzl (1712–70) and His Collection of Drawings*, Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 2013, and Catherine Phillips, 'Collecting Drawings: Russian Engagement in Elite Artistic Collecting Practices', in Emmanuel Waegemans et al. (eds.), *A Century Mad and Wise. Russia in the Age of Enlightenment*, Groningen, Netherlands Russia Centre, 2015, 472.
11. Xavier Duquenne, 'Le prince Dmitri Galitzine (1734–1803) et la Belgique, avec son discours inédit en vue du développement des beaux-arts en Russie', in *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art*, 2013, 82, 105–134.
12. Félicien Leuridant, 'Le Prince de Ligne, Madame de Staël, et Marie-Caroline Murray', in *Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne*, 1920, 8.

13. 'Un couple riche plus d'enfants que d'écus' (Charles Maroy, 'La société belge d'autrefois. Mlle Marie-Caroline Murray', in *L'Eventail*, 1932, 25, 5).
14. Marie-Caroline Murray, *Livre de Mémoire de Caroline Murray née Savage, Bruxelles le premier de l'an 1740*, State Archives, AGR LA 6878.
15. 'Mon grand-Père qui quoique militaire était un homme de lettres distingué' (Marie-Caroline Murray on her grandfather and his library, State Archives, AGR LA 10092).
16. 'Son berceau fût veillée par deux fées, la Beauté et l'Intelligence', 'l'une des plus jolies personnes que Bruxelles eut jamais vu naître' (Maroy, 'Mlle Marie-Caroline Murray', 5).
17. 'Je ne connais pas un homme de lettres aussi distingué que Mlle Murray: toutes les littératures de toutes les langues, l'histoire parfaitement, le gout, le jugement, les plus jolis vers qu'on puisse faire. Mme de Genlis et de Staël n'ont font pas. Autrefois Mme de La Fayette et de Riccoboni non plus. Les Deshoulières et la Suze n'en faisaient que trop, mais point de romans. Mme Dacier savait le grec mais point le français. Ainsi, je puis assurer que toutes les femmes-auteurs peuvent être que ses dames de palais' (Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne and Félicien Leuridant (ed.), *Fragments de l'histoire de ma vie*, vol. 2, Paris, Plon, 1928, 8).
18. Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv, Kamerale rote Nummer 2308, 2309, 2310.
19. Duquenne, 'Le prince Dmitri Galitzine (1734-1803)'
20. Antoine Hennequin de Villermont, *Le Comte de Cobenzl*, Bruges, Desclée, de Brouwer et Cie, 1925, 247-248. Unfortunately for Murray, the spendthrift Cobenzl left massive debts after he passed away, and she was asked to restore the ring to meet the urgent demands of his debtors. On his financial affairs, see Duquenne's article, 'Le prince Dmitri Galitzine (1734-1803)'
21. For more on Golitsyn's work at the Russian legation in The Hague, see Verpoest, 'Layered Liberalism', 96-120.
22. 'Paquet et pièces secrets au Prince d'Orange qui ne doit être ouvert que par lui' and 'Mon trésor Immortel' (Royal House Archive, Letter from Willem V, A31, 92). For the correspondence with Wilhelmina, see Koninklijk Huisarchief A 32, 147, 148.
23. Golitsyn and Diderot's friendship dated back to ten years earlier, when Golitsyn was a young diplomat in Paris. Diderot had been invited several times to Russia before, the first time in 1762, when he wrote to his friend Sophie Volland: 'j'ai oublié de dire que j'ai reçu, il y a une quinzaine de jours, par le prince Gallitzin, une invitation, de la part de l'impératrice régnante de Russie, d'aller achever notre ouvrage à Petersbourg' (Denis Diderot to Sophie Volland, Paris, October 3, 1762, in J. Assezat et M. Tourneux (eds.), *Oeuvres complètes de Diderot*, vol. XIX, Paris, Garnier, 1875, 145-146).
24. 'C'est une femme très-vive, très-gaie, très-spirituelle, et d'une figure assez aimable; plus qu'assez jeune, instruite et pleine de talents; elle a lu; elle sait plusieurs langues; c'est l'usage des Allemandes; elle joue du clavecin et chante comme un ange; elle est pleine de mots ingénus et piquants; elle est très-bonne: [...] Elle est d'une extrême sensibilité; elle en a même un peu trop pour son bonheur. Comme elle a des connaissances et de la justesse, elle dispute comme un petit lion. Je l'aime à la folie, et je vis entre le prince et sa femme, comme entre un bon frère et une bonne sœur' (Denis Diderot to Sophie Volland, La Haye, July 22, 1772, in Assezat and Tourneux, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. XIX, 341-343).
25. When Diderot heard the news of their betrothal and received three letters by Golitsyn and his new wife, he wrote to Sophie Volland on August 24, 1768: 'J'ai reçu trois lettres d'Aix-la-Chapelle; deux du prince, une de sa femme. J'ai bien peur que Mme la princesse Galitzin ne soit une mauvaise tête. Imaginez que sa lettre est anonyme; quelle contient la satire d'elle-même la plus sanglante, la moins ménagée et la plus indécente; et cela avec tant de sérieux et de vérité, que, si le prince ne m'eût pas dit le mot de l'énigme, je m'y serais trompé, et j'en aurais à coup sûr conçu la plus cruelle inquiétude. Que dites-vous

- de cette bizarrerie ? Cette lettre est incroyable. Il faut la voir. Grimm, à qui je l'ai montrée, doute encore qu'elle soit d'elle, en dépit de l'avis du prince qui ne permet pas d'en douter. On me recommande fort de ne la communiquer à personne, parce qu'elle pourrait compromettre la réputation de la femme et du mari. Madame Galitzin ! et si, par hasard, on l'avait décachetée à la poste ? Vous penserez comme moi qu'avec un peu de sens, d'esprit et de dignité, on n'aurait point eu recours à une espièglerie aussi maussade, dans une circonstance sérieuse et qui prêtait par elle-même à des choses tendres, douces, honnêtes, touchantes et délicates. Au milieu de son ivresse, le prince ne me paraît pas sans quelque souci sur un mariage contracté avant d'avoir obtenu le consentement de sa famille et l'agrément de sa cour. Mais il croit que le boudera pendant quelque temps et qu'ensuite tout ira bien' (Denis Diderot to Sophie Volland, Paris, August 24, 1768, in Assezat and Tourneux, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. XIX, 265–269).
26. 'Quelque jour je disculperai Diderot relativement à la Princesse de Gallitzine. Elle était du moins très bizarre avant de le connaître. Son engouement pour l'amie d'un ministre d'Autriche, gouverneur – si je ne me trompe – de Bruxelles, fit beaucoup plus de sensation à La Haye que ses cheveux coupés' (Isabelle de Charrière to Jean-Pierre de Chambrier d'Oleyres, July, 15, 1802, in Jean-Daniel Candaux (ed.), *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 6, Amsterdam, G. A. van Oorschot, 1979, 501).
 27. 'Je reçois vos lettres toujours avec un nouveau transport de joie! Le plaisir qu'elles me causent a enfin décidé l'incertitude dans laquelle j'étais toujours encore si je devois bénir ou pleurer l'instant où j'ai fait votre connaissance. Les regrets que notre séparation me donne m'avoit presque fait désirer de ne vous avoir jamais connue, mais ma consolation est dans vos lettres. [...] Je suis ravie de voir que vous rendez à mes sentiments, la justice d'être persuadé que jamais je puis vous effacer de mon cœur. Vous y tenez le haut bout et y êtes si profondément gravé qu'il y a que l'impitoiable mort qui puisse vous en arracher' (Galitzine to Murray, Vienna, January 23, 1769, ARG MG 7451/05).
 28. Gallitzin's correspondence is kept in the Gallitzin-Nachlass in the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Münster. No letters from Murray have been found there.
 29. 'venez-y pour ne vous en séparer jamais' (Gallitzin to Murray, Berlin, February 28, 1770, AGR Arenberg MG 7451–04).
 30. 'Cette demoiselle était la fille d'un avocat et devint la maîtresse du Comte da Cunha, envoyé de Portugal. Je demanderai à M. le baron Chambrier, ce que ce méchant homme est devenu, la première fois qu'il voudra bien me venir voir' (Isabelle de Charrière to Jean-Pierre de Chambrier d'Oleyres, July, 15, 1802, in Candaux, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 6, 501).
 31. Jeroom Vercruysse, 'Le Portefeuille de Marie-Caroline Murray. Lettres et vers inédits du Prince de Ligne', in *Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne*, 1997, 9, 55.
 32. Christine Lepeer, *Marie-Caroline Murray, une Romantique des Lumières. Sa Vie – Son Oeuvre*, Brussels, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1979–1980, 15.
 33. Frans Hemsterhuis and M. F. Fresco (ed.), *Lettres de Socrate à Diotime: cent cinquante lettres du philosophe néerlandais Frans Hemsterhuis à la princesse Gallitzin*, Frankfurt, Hänsel-Hohenhausen, 2007, and Jacob van Sluis (ed.), *François Hemsterhuis, Ma Toute chère Diotime. Lettres à la princesse de Gallitzin, 1780–1782, 1783*, Hemsterhusiana 3–4, Berltsum, 2011. See also <https://www.kb.nl/themas/filosofie/frans-hemsterhuis/het-leven-van-frans-hemsterhuis-vanaf-1775>
 34. They remained in correspondence about their children, especially when worries arose about their youngest son, Dmitrii, who travelled to America in 1792 and decided then and there to become a Catholic priest and to settle in the Alleghanies.
 35. The secret police report of the Congress of Vienna reads 'die alte Melle Murray, bekanntlich bel esprit, Freundin der Seel. Gräfin Rombeck und des Seel. Pce de Ligne, sagte gestern: "Der seel. Pce de Ligne äusserte unter vier Augen von dem russischen Kaiser nachstehendes Urtheil: "L'Empereur n'est nullement ce que l'on croit, ni ce qu'il

- voudrait bien faire penser de lui. L'empereur aime plutôt à faire penser qu'il fait que de faire lui-même en effet. Ce n'est pas une tête, ce n'est que du fumo [...]’ (August Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongreß. Eine Auswahl aus ihren Papieren*, Vienna, Tempsky, 1913, 305).
36. Madame la Baronne de Staël Holstein (ed.), *Lettres et Pensées de Maréchal Prince de Ligne*, Paris and Geneva, Paschoud, 1809.
 37. Skocpol and Somers, ‘The Uses of Comparative History’.
 38. ‘La politique me tourne la tête Monsieur le Duc, ou pour mieux dire, le désir de deviner votre volonté et de les executer [...] j’ai entrepris la réponse, la critique, l’analyse à tous ce qui vous plaira, de l’ouvrage de Mirabeaux [*sic*], cette étrange entreprise datte de hier, et j’ai écrit déjà quatorze pages [...] Berg à qui j’ai lu ce matin mon ouvrage, soutient que cela n’est pas si bête, et en conséquence il m’enverra demain votre secrétaire pour copier d’abord ce commencement afin de vous l’envoyer tout de suite pour que vous jugiez s’il vaut la peine de continuer’ (Murray to Arenberg, May 6, 1785, AGR MG 7450/01).
 39. Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv, Kamerale rote Nummer 2308, 2309, 2310.
 40. ‘Ma chère amie, vous êtes unique. Les poètes et les romans n’ont même jamais rien imaginé qui vous ressemble, et avec un peu de délicatesse il n’est plus possible de rien aimer quand on a été aimé de vous. Vous m’avez gâté à jamais tout autre liaison’ (Nény to Murray, July 1, 1766, MG 7452/3).
 41. ‘Femme que j’aime plus que celles que j’aime, et que j’admire plus que celles que j’admire’ (Ligne to Murray, lost letter quoted in Jeroom Vercruyse, ‘Le Portefeuille de Marie-Caroline Murray’, 75).
 42. And later, in Vienna again, she was *dame de compagnie* of Cobenzl’s daughter, the comtesse de Thiennes de Rumbek (known in Vienna as ‘Madame Rombec’), see Georges Engelbert, ‘Une amie de Prince de Ligne et dame cosmopolite au XVIIIème siècle: la Comtesse Charlotte de Thiennes de Rumbek née Cobenzl’, in *Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne*, 1998, 12, 145–165.
 43. Marie Cornaz, ‘Le Fonds musical des archives de la famille d’Arenberg à Enghien’, in *Revue belge de Musicologie/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap*, 1995, 49, 129–210.
 44. Jeroom Vercruyse, ‘Les projets d’un nouveau théâtre de la Monnaie au XVIIIème siècle. Le Duc d’Arenberg, la “Muse belge” Marie-Caroline Murray et l’Amman Rapédius de Berg: l’alliance de la finance, de la culture, et du pouvoir urbain’, in Manuel Couvreur (ed.), *Le Théâtre de la Monnaie au XVIIIème siècle*, Brussels, GRAM-ULB, 1996, 111–115.
 45. Xavier Duquenne, *Le voyage du Duc d’Arenberg en Italie en 1791*, Brussels, Xavier Duquenne, 2013, 44.
 46. ‘Soyez donc fière d’être pauvre, chère amie, et de recevoir. Une bûche de Pauline vous fait honneur, un louis de Corinne [Madame de Staël] aussi. Son imprimeur en gagne plus de cent par nous. Comment et pourquoi n’avez-vous rien? Pensez-y et enorgueillissez-vous. Jadis l’Angleterre, puis les Pays-Bas, puis la France et le Diable vous ont pris. Laissez la reconnaissance et l’admiration y suppléer et plaignez-moi de ne pouvoir pas vous faire pleurer’ (Félicien Leuridan, *A propos de la première anthologie du Prince de Ligne*, Brussels, l’Imprimerie Monnom, 1919, 9).
 47. Amalia Gallitzin, *Mittheilungen aus dem Tagebuch und Briefwechsel der Fürstin Adelheid Amalia von Gallitzin nebst Fragmenten und einem Anhang*, Stuttgart, Liesching, 1868.
 48. ‘Denkwürdigkeiten aus den Leben der Fürstin Amalia von Gallitzin, gebornen Gräfin von Schmettau, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf ihre nächsten Verbindungen: Hemersthuis, Fürstenberg, Overberg und Stolberg; Theodor Katerkamp, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus den Leben der Fürstin Amalia von Gallitzin, gebornen Gräfin von Schmettau, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf ihre nächsten Verbindungen: Hemersthuis, Fürstenberg, Overberg und Stolberg*, Münster, Theissingsche Buchhandlung, 1828.

49. This work was published a year later, in 1786: Marie-Caroline Murray, *Eloge et Mémoire historique et politique sur la vie de Jean de Carondelet*, Brussels, Antoine d'Ours, 1786.
50. Murray wrote the ode to Catherine II as part of a literary contest in Hamburg, where she stayed briefly after she had fled Brussels, probably out of financial necessity. She did not win the first prize, but her ode was published in *Monument littéraire consacré aux mânes de l'auguste Catherine II, impératrice de toutes les Russies*, Hamburg, s.l., 1798.
51. Marie-Caroline Murray, *Aventures et anecdotes françoises tirées d'une chronique du XIV siècle*, Vienna, Fr. Ant. Schrämbl, 1800.
52. Marie-Caroline Murray, *Essai d'imitation libre de l'Episode d'Ines de Castro dans le poème des Luziadas de Camoens*, La Haye, s.l., 1772.
53. Lepeer, *Marie-Caroline Murray*, 40, 44.
54. State Archives, Arenberg Archive, MG 7450,02; MG 7450,03.
55. Eleven of these letters are in the State Archive, AGR MG 7451/04.
56. Gallitzin to Murray, 1769–1770, AGR MG 7451–04.
57. See Hemsterhusiana 3–4, and Royal House Archive, Willem V, A31.
58. Nény to Murray, July 1, 1766, AGR MG7452/3, 1–15, and Bernard Bruno, 'Amours et voyages. Les pérégrinations méditerranéennes de Philippe-Goswin de Nény et sa correspondance avec Marie-Caroline Murray', in *Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne*, 1992, 7, 183–230.
59. Like his brother Louis Engelbert Arenberg, Auguste Marie Raymond Arenberg, known as the comte de la Marck, rented a house for Murray where she could live in Vienna. See Leuridant, *A propos de la première anthologie*, 10, and Vercruysse, 'Le Portefeuille de Marie-Caroline Murray', 86.
60. Other members of this network were Friedrich von Gentz, countess de Rumbeke, Carlo Andrea Pozzo di Borgo, and ambassador Andrei Razumovsky; see Verpoest, 'The Ancien Régime and the Jeune Premier', and Lien Verpoest, 'Sergey Uvarov and the Coming of Age of Russian Conservatism', in Mark Hewitson and Jan Vermeiren (eds.), *Europe and the East: Self and the Other in the History of the European Idea*, London, Routledge, 2021.

CHAPTER 14

‘It Wasn’t Enough for Me Just to Be a Singer’: (Self-)Representations of the ‘German Prima Donna’ Gertrud Elisabeth Mara

Vera Viehöver

After hearing the young singer Gertrud Elisabeth Schmeling (1749–1833) perform at the Großes Concert in Leipzig, the Hamburg poet Daniel Schiebeler was inspired to write a ten-stanza poem in praise of her talent. It contains the following lines:¹

O you, the honour of your times,
And your country’s ornament!
A faint sound from my strings,
Sublime Schmeling, is dedicated to you.

In sounds that touch the heart,
In sounds full of melody,
The power of feeling teaches you to sing,
And diligence and art embellish it.
[...]

Savagery flew from Germany’s sons
But the sound of their language remained rough;
Marry it to your tones,
and it will become as soft as your singing.
[...]

Many times the Thames has listened to you,
Enraptured she lingered in her course,
And gave to you the applause
That she usually gives to Faustina.

Your portrait dazzles, your name shines
 In the temple, where glory sits enthroned,
 The innocent forehead is crowned
 With laurel that rewards diligence.

But more than lustre and laurel,
 The silent charm of humility adorns you;
 While the dunces, seduced by pride,
 Value nothing but their own little selves.

The poem, published in 1773,² clearly demonstrates to what extent gender and national stereotypes are entangled in Schiebeler's perception of this exceptional singer, whom Frederick II would, a few years later, appoint to the Berlin opera as the 'first German prima donna'. As Laurenz Lütteken has argued, the poem should be seen in the context of the debate about whether German could match the emotional depth of Italian in the art of singing. This becomes apparent, for example, from the fact that the German singer is presented as not only equal, but superior to 'Faustina', a reference to the Italian singer Faustina Bordoni.³ Mara's typically 'German' qualities – sensitivity, gentleness, diligence, humility, and innocence – absolve her of any suspicion of arrogance or moral depravity. She thus represents the ideal of the 'German girl', omnipresent in German literature of the sixties and seventies of the eighteenth century: unaffected, unspoiled, and sexually innocent.⁴ In this respect, she presents a marked contrast to the cliché of the glamorous and proud Italian virtuosa, indulging in a less than reputable lifestyle. Remarkably, in Schiebeler's poetic portrait, Schmeling's superiority over Faustina does not arise from an intellectual and artistic competence acquired in the course of long studies, but rather originates from 'the power of feeling', in other words, a specifically female emotionality that is considered 'natural' and that only needs to be perfected through diligence.⁵

Schiebeler's homage is a clear example of how representations of persons – be they painted or written portraits – are always simultaneously attributions that expose the thought patterns typical of the period. For several reasons, the example of Gertrud Elisabeth Schmeling, who became known throughout Europe under the name Mara after her marriage to the cellist Johann Baptiste Mara, is suitable for analysis of such attributions in painted and textual portraits: as a singer at the court of Frederick II, she was one of the stars in the eighteenth-century musical world whose personality and private life interested the audience at least as much as her artistic achievements. In Mara's particular case, three factors intensified public interest: first, as a young girl who had previously performed in an environment marked by bourgeois ideals of virtue, she entered the sphere of the royal court and thus the world of the great divas, a change of context that became a challenge for portraitists and biographers.

Second, she married – against the will of Frederick II – a man who thrilled the imagination in his own right: Johann Mara was not only a brilliant cellist with the court orchestra but also a physically attractive man who, according to contemporary rumours, was the favourite of the homosexual prince and was considered depraved and vulgar. The alliance with this man therefore damaged the previously dominant image of the virtuous young singer: Mara was henceforth perceived as part of a scandalous couple. For example, in a letter to his father dated November 24, 1780, Mozart described how 'Madame Mara' had caused annoyance in Paris in the elector's orchestra with 'her innate air d'effronterie' when she tried to impose her husband as her accompanist without respecting the rights of the first cellist of the orchestra. The detailed report ends: 'if you should know the two people, you can see the pride, rudeness, and true effrontery in their faces.'⁶ Third, Mara was one of the first female singers who set out to live as a freelance artist, thus embarking on a career path that, in her time, was still unusual – even for male musicians. As a singer, Mara thus embodied not only professionalism but also a provocative endeavour to artistic authority and economic autonomy.

In this article, I will first present two painted portraits to show the two opposite types of attribution that also run through the numerous textual portraits of the singer: the ideal-typical virtuous, natural girl and the power-conscious opera singer who fatally chose a disreputable man as her partner. In the second section, I will explain how the tension between these two opposite attributions becomes the subject of textual portraits through which (male) authors reject Mara's claim to autonomy by turning her life story into a victim narrative. The third section is devoted to anecdotes circulating about Mara, which I understand as miniature textual portraits. Here, I will show that the narrative form of the anecdote itself portrays the singer, because it can only achieve its effect through poignancy. In these anecdotes, Mara's self-confident confrontations with male colleagues and authorities are turned into the narrative of the obstinate diva, who must be tamed. The final section is devoted to Mara's autobiography, one of the first ever autobiographies of a female musician. I read this autobiography as an attempt to reappropriate her public image: I argue that Mara responds to the circulating misogynist attributions with a self-portrait that represents her as a competent, powerful woman whose singing expertise is not limited to 'the power of feeling', but owes just as much to determined work and comprehensive training.

Portraits of a German Singer

The image of the childlike, innocent singer in the poem by Schiebeler is also conveyed by an early portrait of Gertrud Elisabeth Mara, painted around 1775 by the famous 'soul painter' ('*Seelenmaler*') Anton Graff (1736–1813).⁷ It shows

the singer at the age of twenty-six. The portrait is based on a likeness dating from 1771, which is preserved in two only minimally different versions.⁸ A side-by-side comparison of both works reveals how Graff puts an even stronger focus on the singer's youthful naturalness in the later portrait,⁹ even though Mara had married in the meantime and was no longer a *demoiselle*. The hair in the 1771 portrait, which is arranged in formal baroque style, is allowed to fall naturally in the later painting and to show its curls. In addition, the formal fur collar of the older painting is replaced by a casually knotted chiffon scarf. Although she had reached a position previously only held by Italian prima donnas, Mara is portrayed, in accordance with the sentimental ideal of beauty, as a 'German girl' who has retained her natural childlike charm despite her fast-paced career (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Anton Graff, *Portrait of Gertrud Elisabeth Mara geb. Schmeling* (1775). Oil on canvas. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Schlossmuseum Weimar (all rights reserved). (Plate 37, p. 383)

However, a seemingly completely different woman meets the spectator's eye in the Mara portrait by the Berlin court painter and later director of the Art Academy Johann Christoph Frisch (1738–1815) (Fig 2). This portrait was painted around 1780, only six years after the Graff portrait.¹⁰ Through his in-depth analysis of the painting, the art historian Hans Ost reached several intriguing

conclusions that are relevant to this volume’s main topic. His starting point is the sheet music that is prominently displayed on the keyboard stand. On closer inspection, it is clear that this is a bravura aria from the opera *Silla* (1753) by Johann Gottlieb Graun (1703–1771), scored with a thorough bass and to be sung presto. Comparing the music on the stand to the original opera score, for which Frederick II himself had supplied the libretto, Ost could ascertain that this is the revenge aria cursing the tyrant Silla, from the second act of the opera.



Fig. 2. Johann Christoph Frisch, *Portrait of the Singer Gertrud Elisabeth Mara* (ca. 1780). Oil on canvas. ©Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung, Universität zu Köln. (Plate 38, p. 383)

According to Ost, Frisch used his painting to deliver a coded message related to an incident that had caused quite a stir in Berlin in the 1770s and that was to become a turning point in Mara’s career. In 1771, shortly after Frederick II had appointed her as the first German prima donna of his court opera and thus had made her one of the highest paid star singers of her time, Gertrud Elisabeth Schmeling met the cellist Johann Baptiste Mara (1744–1808), whom she married in 1773, against Frederick’s wishes and despite Johann Mara’s reputation as an alcoholic and a spendthrift.¹¹ The king started harassing the couple and even went so far as to imprison Johann Mara, who, it must be said, behaved most unseemly on repeated occasions.¹² After Frederick II finally forbade Johann

Mara to go to England for a concert tour with his wife, the couple fled to Prague. Frederick II officially released Johann Mara from his employment in 1780.

Mara and her husband never avenged upon the monarch, as Graun's bravura aria threatened. Nevertheless, as Ost has argued, the portrait is that of a secret winner. Although Frisch depicted Mara with the insignia of the bourgeoisie – the robe and the powdered wig that were common in bourgeois circles at that time – in an oblique and subtle way, he invokes the traditional pictorial scheme used in the iconography of rulers and statesmen:



Fig. 3. Titian, *Portrait of Philipp II, King of Spain* (1551). Oil on Canvas. © Museo del Prado, Madrid. (Plate 39, p. 384)

With its life-size representation, the three-quarter turn towards the viewer – one hand on the keyboard, the other on the hip – the portrait conjures up the typical stance of rulers. Portraits of kings or princes with the left hand casually resting on the hilt of the sword, and the right hand positioned on a table with a magnificent helmet or other insignia of rank and power are familiar enough. In the same way, the singer has placed her right hand on the keyboard, with the score of the revenge aria signposting her power: a translation of the pathos found in the portraits that Titian, Rubens and Van Dyck once painted of emperors and kings.¹³

The well-known portrait of Philip II of Spain by Titian (1551) (Fig. 3) may illustrate this hypothesis. The juxtaposition of the two portraits demonstrates the conflicting images of femininity Gertrud Elisabeth Mara was identified with when her extraordinary career as a 'German prima donna' began: on the one hand, (mainly male) contemporaries projected on her ideals of impeccable virtue, naturalness, and sensitivity, while on the other hand, her transition from the bourgeois to the courtly sphere was linked to clichéd notions of the diva as a woman who is highly conscious of her own power and thus dangerous, because she potentially subverts male power structures. The fact that Mara, since her move to Berlin, had enraptured her audiences as a singer and at the same time challenged them as a woman is evident not only in the (few) biographical portraits dedicated to her in the last decades of the eighteenth century but also in the numerous anecdotes that began to circulate about her from the 1770s onwards.

Early Biographical Portraits

As Melanie Unseld has shown in her study *Biographie und Musikgeschichte* ('Biography and Musical History'), musicians were not deemed worthy subjects for biographies until the eighteenth century, which is late compared to other artists. What is more, unlike visual artists, they were not entitled to 'moral dispensation' before 1800, which means that if their behaviour had been questionable, they were only worthy of a biography after 1800.¹⁴ What is true for musicians in general is even more so for female musicians. In the early modern period, musicians were only worthy of a biography if their life had been irreproachable and if they had musical learning and erudition. Consequently, female musicians, who in general did not receive lessons in music theory, were effectively excluded from the circle of individuals worthy of a biography. This is borne out by a brief remark by Johann Mattheson, editor of the most extensive collection of music biographies to appear in the early modern period, the *Musikalische Ehren-Pforte* ('Musical Triumphal Arch') from 1740: after 'careful consideration', he wrote, he had decided against including women in his work.¹⁵

A more favourable and inclusive picture emerges in the early specialised encyclopaedias. Already in Johann Gottfried Walther's *Musicalisches Lexicon* ('Musical Lexicon') published in 1732, there are individual entries for female musicians.¹⁶ Musical lexicography thus preceded musical biography in the narrower sense; in his *Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Musikgelehrten und Tonkünstler neuerer Zeit* ('Biographies of Famous Musicologists and Musicians of Recent Times'), published in 1784,¹⁷ Johann Adam Hiller still did not consider a single woman worthy of a biography. Towards the end of the century, the composer and author Ernst Ludwig Gerber (1746–1819) deemed it necessary to include female singers in his *Historisches und biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* ('Historical and Biographical Lexicon for Musicians') (1790/1792), not for their own sake, but because their physical beauty and charming voices had inspired male composers to write outstanding music: 'Ladies in particular should grace this book, for many a beautiful aria has only been created thanks to a beautiful singer!'¹⁸

While in most entries for female musicians, Gerber provides only brief information about the subject and her music teachers, he presents a far more detailed portrait of Elisabeth Mara,¹⁹ for reasons he does not even try to conceal: Gerber had met the singer in Leipzig in the 1760s and had been deeply impressed by both her musical talent and her personality. He uses the encyclopaedia entry to paint a counterimage to the negative public image that had emerged after Elisabeth's wedding to and subsequent running off with the infamous Johann Mara.

According to this image, Mara, since her Berlin period, had abandoned the female virtues of humility and modesty, which Schiebeler had emphasised in his Leipzig poem, and was now marked by 'obstinacy' and 'wilfulness'. She even provoked disputes and challenged others in matters of musical competence²⁰ – not only other female singers but also male composers and conductors. Gerber tries to exonerate Mara by laying all the blame on her husband for the 'shadows' that have fallen on her character.²¹ The 'wilful' singer, now quite unlike the ideal image of the German girl, had become the victim to the erotic attraction of man who tends to 'fierceness'.²² Gerber systematically deflects the reproach against the successful singer's increasing self-confidence, expressed not only in professional decisions but also in private choices, by referring to the bad influence of Johann Mara. The image of the 'natural' Leipzig girl with a sensitive heart is thus preserved:

She is not tall in person, nor is she beautiful, but is far from unpleasant in appearance. Rather, in each of her features, her excellent nature radiates, which is captivating at first sight.²³

The music writer and editor Friedrich Rochlitz also rejects Mara's claim to autonomy with this clichéd story of a fateful encounter between female virtue

and male beauty, described in *Erinnerung an Elisabeth Mara* (‘Recollection of Elisabeth Mara’), from 1802:

She saw him at the theatre of Prince Henry. She was captivated by his beautiful playing. She heard all kinds of strange anecdotes about the bizarre man. Her own slightly bizarre nature made her even more impressed by this. Mara courted her, fierce and impetuous as he was: she hesitated. All her friends advised her against him: she became firmer. The lover urged her with alternately tenderness and despotism: she decided and, even against the king’s will, tied her fate forever to his.²⁴

G. E. Grosheim also takes up this topos of the *homme fatal* when he writes in his biography, published in 1823: ‘She saw and heard the truly beautiful man and admirable cellist Mara, and the arrow hit her deeply.’²⁵ Like Gerber, his intention was to prove that the virtuous girl had maintained moral integrity despite all outward appearances:

It is well known that she would better not have entered into this union. She, who had previously enjoyed the love of all, soon made many enemies, who suspected that she was embracing her husband’s way of life and his quarrels. The private life of the two is dealt with here only insofar as to protect the morality of the unhappy woman.²⁶

Also in the correspondence between Goethe and Zelter, there are traces of the narrative of the *homme fatal* and his female victim: ‘Nobly, she [Mara] never spoke of the source of her many sufferings, and that was her husband, the most depraved of all Greeks.’²⁷ The victim narrative long dominated her story: Mara’s claim to authorship of her life, both professionally and privately, was completely ignored, and her consciously made decisions were transformed into an ‘unhappy fate.’²⁸

The Joy of Storytelling: Mara in Anecdotes

An anecdote is a ‘short, trenchant story that is told about a real person,’²⁹ usually light-hearted and culminating in a punchline. Within the Enlightenment endeavour for the ‘rediscovery of man,’³⁰ the anecdote experienced a heyday in the eighteenth-century German-speaking world.³¹ To contemporaries, it seemed suitable for ‘representing the character of a person and thus his biography in an appropriate and authentic way.’³² While the anecdote was a popular medium of anthropological reflection in the century of Enlightenment, this form of representation, often scorned as unreliable, played a particularly important, even constitutive role within the history of the biography of

musicians. At a time when monographs (even of male musicians) were still largely non-existent,³³ it formed 'one of the most constant genres in writing about music.'³⁴ Unseld therefore sees the anecdote as the germ of biographical writing about musicians, so much so that musician biographies may be said to derive from the anecdote form itself.³⁵ In *Die Legende vom Künstler* ('The Legend of the Artist'), to which Unseld refers, Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz revealed so-called 'biographical "formulas"' ('biographische "Formeln"')³⁶ that appear in numerous anecdotes about the childhood, youth, and adulthood of artists. These formulas – recurring basic narratives, which together constitute a longer life story – include the early discovery of talent, social ascension, self-education, the child prodigy topos, the amazement of laypeople at the artist's inexplicable virtuosity, or love as a source of inspiration.³⁷ In their attempt to work out central elements in the formation of legends about artists, however, Kris and Kurz focus exclusively on male visual artists, so to what extent can the results of their investigations claim validity, first, for musicians and, second, for female musicians in particular? As Unseld has dealt extensively with the first question, I will concentrate on the second one and use the example of Mara to show which specific biographical narratives accompanied the career of this female musician.

The anecdotes circulating about Mara since the eighteenth century, which still appear in the biographies and novelistic accounts of her life in the twentieth century,³⁸ generally present the well-known biographical formulas exposed by Kris and Kurz. They tell of her early talent, of her rise from poor circumstances, of extraordinary performances as a child prodigy, and of the amazement of the audience at unbelievable virtuoso performances, for example, singing the most difficult arias from a musical score. What is new in the anecdotes about this *female* artist, however, is at least one further biographical formula that I would like to examine more closely in the following: the combative confrontation with male authorities.

The anecdotes about Mara and her relationship to male authorities, whether secular rulers or superiors in the music business, were initially transmitted orally during the first half of the 1770s, after the singer's arrival at the court of Frederick II. Gerber's aforementioned encyclopaedia article from 1790 relates: 'People tell of the various ways she teased distinguished men around that time. For example, she humorously parodied their works in her cadenzas.'³⁹ Here, the author alludes to various anecdotes that even now are present in any story about Mara. Elisabeth Mara's inclination to and indeed her pleasure in confrontations with men who were – in terms of status and competence – actually or supposedly superior to her and in stubbornly asserting her interests, sometimes even appearing impertinent, is indeed a constant in the numerous rumours and anecdotes that circulated about her in various German and foreign newspapers since the 1770s. These incidents have also left their mark in private correspondence.

For example, one of the most famous anecdotes highlighting Mara's pleasure in competition and provocation tells of her first meeting with Frederick II, who, regarding the proposed engagement of a German singer, is supposed to have said that he would rather hear a horse neighing than a German singer singing an aria.⁴⁰ Louis Schneider tells the story of the first encounter, which he claims Mara herself told to his father:

Without a word, he [the king] went to the piano, and seemed to take no notice of her for a quarter of an hour. This aroused the pride of the then twenty-one-year-old girl. She thought of the "horse neighing" and longed for an opportunity to change the unfavourable opinion of the dreaded Royal Art Judge in her favour. But when he would not stop playing the piano, she began to look openly at the paintings on the walls and even turned her back on the king. It is unclear whether the king noticed this or had reached the end of his piano improvisations, but he suddenly waved to the waiting girl [...].⁴¹

Initially, Mara demonstrated her virtuosity, to the king's pleasure, but then, during the *adagio*, she again sought confrontation:

But mischievousness went hand in hand with triumph; she remembered the king's bad opinion of German singing, and sang the first half of the *Adagio* so badly, so listlessly and with such forced roughness that the king reluctantly tapped his fingers on the armrest and turned around. That was just what she had wanted. "Forgive me, Your Majesty, something is stuck in my throat, that's why I sang so badly that one would almost mistake it for the neighing of a horse."⁴²

Another almost farcical story had apparently already been circulating in the English press in the 1790s, before it was condensed into an anecdote by Friedrich Rochlitz in 1824. One day, when Grand Duke Paul of Russia announced his attendance at the opera, Mara called in sick in the morning. The king warned Mara, but she did not react. Since neither the king nor the singer gave in, a showdown took place:

Two hours before the beginning of the opera, a carriage appeared in front of Gertrud's apartment, surrounded by eight dragoons. A moustached captain entered her room: 'Madame, I must deliver you to the opera house alive or dead.' – 'As you can see: I'm in bed.' – 'If there is no other way, I'll take you and your bed together with me.' – Begging and defence were to no avail. Gertrud had to get up and get dressed.⁴³

But this ‘taming of the shrew’ story would not be an anecdote without an unexpected turn at the end. As if to punish the king, Mara sang with a barely audible weak voice, which, however, she brought to the highest brilliance in the last cadenza to impress the grand duke with her art, despite the unfortunate circumstances:

Gertrud ended this cadenza with such a persistent trillo, from the quietest to the strongest, from the slowest to the fastest change between the two tones, increasing, decreasing again in the same proportion and finally dying, that the delight experienced by the listener was simultaneously compounded by the fear that she would burst her lungs.⁴⁴

All the early anecdotes and stories about Mara have one thing in common: they revolve around a ‘headstrong’ diva unwilling to acknowledge the prevailing order, who, by virtue of her virtuoso abilities, is able to save situations that would have ended less well without these abilities. It is also striking that, almost without exception, the bad influence of Johann Mara – or more abstractly, the ‘fatal power of love’ – was held responsible for the singer’s behaviour that deviated from the ideal image of the German girl outlined at the beginning. Rochlitz, for example, writes in his *Erinnerung an Elisabeth Mara*:

Now [after she had married Mara] her peace and contentment were disturbed. She took part in the quarrels her husband used to have with other members of the orchestra, and the more certainly people had predicted all this, the more eagerly she tried to justify her choice, to glorify her husband’s peculiarities, and to enforce his whims. No virtuoso opponent of her husband’s was safe from her – skills. Singing, she parodied and travestied their manners in public, winning the laughs and beating the opposition with trills and cadences. One might complain or advise calmness: but each settled dispute only produced several new ones.⁴⁵

In this way, Mara’s frequent confrontations with powerful or musically competent men were placed in a purely private context: they were emotionally motivated and were not perceived as the self-positioning of an equally competent woman.

Mara’s Autobiography: A Rectification

Mara did not defend herself against this tendency to adapt her life to the needs of anecdotal narrative until late in life. This was when the anecdotes became common knowledge, distributed by the musical magazine *Für Freunde der Tonkunst* (‘For Music Lovers’), which was widely read by the bourgeoisie.⁴⁶ Angered by

Rochlitz's portrait, Mara, shortly after reading it, decided to write her own life story – one of the first autobiographies ever written by a professional musician. As Mara explains in her introduction, 'if I had foreseen that people would take such an interest in my biography [...], I would long before have published a true account of my artistic life, thereby converting false news into truth.'⁴⁷ This remark serves as a justification for her use of the autobiographical mode of writing: it was imperative that 'fake news' be corrected. The autobiography was written between 1824, the year that Rochlitz's portrait *Gertrud Elisabeth Mara* was published, and 1829, as one can deduce from the correspondence between Goethe and Zelter.⁴⁸ It covers the years 1749 to 1793, from her childhood and youth to the years of her greatest international successes, and was first published in 1875. Why it was not completed and published during the singer's lifetime cannot be reconstructed today. Was she unable to find the peace and quiet to finish the text to her own satisfaction? Was she undecided as to where it should be published? Or did she ultimately simply shy away from calling public attention to her life as a singer with a longer text or even a monograph from her pen – at a time when even autobiographies by male musicians were by no means a matter of course?

Mara's autobiography can be read as an attempt to reclaim authorship of her own life or, to put it differently, as an defence against the forcing of her life story into the anecdotal narrative frame of male expectations. Thus, her central concern is to counter the circulating stories about the vicious Johann Mara, who put the life of a virtuous girl on the wrong track, with a different picture: Johann Mara was a 'beautiful and educated man', 'full of talent and fine behaviour', who courted her with perfect manners and even supported her professionally.⁴⁹ According to her, she had not been Mara's victim, but that of envious courtiers who, with Prince Henry and Frederick II, had tried to discredit her. She vehemently defends her headstrong partner choice: 'It was no wonder that if such a man made every effort to win my heart, I preferred him to all others.'⁵⁰

Mara objects not only to the tendentious stories about her private life but also to a misrepresentation of her career and her professional skills. She contradicts the widespread view that she owes her mastery as a musician largely to men and instead emphasises the importance of female helpers and teachers; furthermore, she defends herself against clichéd portrayals of herself as a 'self-willed prima donna' by placing her conflicts with men in the context of professional disputes about competence. This will be illustrated in the following with some examples. Without exception, all of Mara's biographical accounts refer to her time in Leipzig, when she sang at the Leipzig Großes Konzert under Johann Adam Hiller. Hiller himself writes in his autobiography from 1789: 'During the four years when she sang here at the Concert [...], [Mara found] the opportunity to acquire all the knowledge she still lacked to become a perfect singer.'⁵¹ While Hiller alludes rather discreetly to his own role, Rochlitz presents the encounter with the Leipzig Kapellmeister as a momentous turning point

in Mara's artistic life: 'The time in Leipzig [...] was decisive for Elisabeth. She perfected her art under Hiller's direction.'⁵² He thus describes Hiller's role in the singer's training: 'When Hiller now studied larger vocal pieces with her, with which she was to appear in public, he first explained to her the meaning of the text and the music [...].'⁵³ Mara's first biographer, G. E. Grosheim, is even more emphatic: 'Here [in Leipzig], under the aegis of a great and respected man [...], she quickly deepened her musical education.'⁵⁴ Mara herself counters this depiction of Hiller's role as follows:

Since I have seen in a recent biography how he [Hiller] is presented as speaking as if I had been a mere student, completely dependent upon him, I feel compelled not to grant him even a modicum of credit (as far as my art is concerned). Where would he have found the knowledge to educate such a singer as I was?⁵⁵

In contrast to the authors of the biographical accounts mentioned above, she emphasises her own responsibility for her competences:

Nature has equipped me with all that is necessary to become a perfect singer: health, strength, brilliant voice, great range, pure intonation, agile larynx, a lively, passionate, sensitive character. Nevertheless, I work as if I had none of these. Perseverance and diligence made me a true artist, for it wasn't enough for me just to be a singer. I practiced singing for at least four hours a day, I looked for arias written by the best masters, which, together with Tosi's singing method, laid the foundation for my subsequent fame. The remaining lessons were provided by two language teachers, a German writing teacher, a piano teacher and a dance instructor.⁵⁶

The emphasis on self-education, however, is, as mentioned above, a recurring formula in musical biographies, which means that Mara, by presenting large parts of her education as self-taught, puts herself – consciously or unconsciously – in line with male colleagues. The fact that she emphasises her own agency in her education so much⁵⁷ does not mean that she denies having had teachers at all; on the contrary, she would rather give credit to renowned teachers 'than to be called a natural-born artist.'⁵⁸ During her time in Berlin and on her own initiative, she took lessons in thorough bass from the 'renowned contrapuntist'⁵⁹ Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721–1783), a fact that is mentioned neither by Grosheim nor Rochlitz. Mara then concludes the account of her training and education in an almost mocking manner: 'I was also acquainted with some learned men who were most kindly interested in forming my mind a little'.⁶⁰

In contrast to the biographies about her, Mara's autobiography also emphasises the great influence of female helpers on her career – partly because they

gave professional advice; partly because they provided practical support. For example, she tells how a 'Lady' in Antwerp lent Mara her own singing master to teach her 'scales and solfeggio'.⁶¹ With respect to the influence of professional female musicians, Mara dedicates a passage to the widowed Maria Antonia of Saxony (1724–1780), who had made a name for herself as a composer of operas and a librettist and who brought Mara to the Dresden court in 1767.⁶² In Gerber's, Grosheim's, and Rochlitz's biographical accounts, Maria Antonia's role is reduced to her positive influence on Mara's initially unflattering appearance. According to these three authors, the elegant electress had taught the inexperienced younger singer refined poses and gestures as well as an appropriate dress style.⁶³ In Mara's own narration, however, Maria Antonia is assigned a central role in her *musical* education:

The electress received me kindly, and when I expressed my concern that I had never appeared on stage, she took it upon herself to teach me. The music was of her own composition. [...] The ability to sing recitatives, a skill with which I was still very much unfamiliar, I owe entirely to her. [...] Singers can be judged by the way in which they execute the recitatives.⁶⁴

The autobiography highlights the self-confidence she received from her profound musical education – and not only from her training in singing. Mara talks about competing female singers who have not enjoyed such an education and explains that the main reason for her overwhelming success in Venice was her knowledge of harmony, which gave her greater freedom in improvising than her competitor Brigida Banti (1757–1806), who was uneducated in music theory:

This was, I thought, a good opportunity to display my genius and knowledge in harmony; so I had my bravura aria, which left room for improvisation, put in the score, with four open lines, so that I could make four different variations without fear of dissonances. This actually made my triumph in Venice, because Banti, with her beautiful voice and good singing, was not musically gifted, and always sang her arias as she had learned them by heart [...].⁶⁵

Finally, let us return to one of the most popular Mara anecdotes, in which eight – sometimes even twelve – dragoons carried her in her bed to the opera to demonstrate to the Russian grand duke all her virtuosity in a single drawn-out trill after a weak vocal performance. Mara has nothing but scorn for this burlesque:

As if half a gendarme had not been enough to carry such a tiny woman as me? The biographer probably wanted to be funny, but did not consider that he made a fool of the great Frederick in doing so.⁶⁶

In Mara's own account, the story of the extended trill is placed in a completely different context, namely that of musical ability. As illustrated by various examples in the collective volume *Per ben vestir la virtuosa* ('To Dress Up the Virtuoso'),⁶⁷ it was crucial for eighteenth-century opera composers to write their arias in a way that brought out the singer's best qualities. In acknowledgement of her exceptional musical prowess, Frederick II had granted Mara the privilege to sing some of her own arias in the operas she performed. However, when Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752–1814) came into Frederick II's employment in 1775, he took issue with this arrangement and forced Mara to sing his arias instead. Mara comments:

So I had to learn how to sing Mr. Reichardt's arias. This, however, was not to his advantage, because I sang every single note, but as woodenly as they had been written, and when I came to the cadenza of the bravura aria, I held the note for a very long time, thereby keeping the audience in suspense and finally started singing eight bars of the theme of the aria [...], ending with a long trill. Reichardt, who had struck the second-inversion chord, could not dissolve it since his hands dropped. [...] One can imagine how Reichardt's opera failed to please, for if the first singer does not lift the opera, everything is lost.⁶⁸

In this little counter-narration, Mara clearly expressed her claim of being able to equal or surpass many men in terms of musical competence. In her autobiography, she repeatedly demonstrates that men can profit from her professional competence, for example, in another episode concerning her collaboration with Reichardt:

I took the aria [that Reichardt had composed], went over it, and erased some forty measures – he had the fault of never being able to finish. He exclaimed: 'My God! I have spent a whole night on it, and a woman like her erases it in five minutes!'⁶⁹

Mara was well aware that the competence demonstrated in such episodes had nothing to do with intuition or natural sensitivity. Rather, it was the result of a comprehensive education and of continuous training. Even so, in the portraits and biographical notices devoted to her, her 'self-will' (*Eigensinn*), her 'tenacity', and her extraordinary musical knowledge were repeatedly turned into material for spiteful anecdotes with latent and sometimes overt misogynist tendencies. In her autobiography, which she unfortunately did not complete, Mara rectifies widespread falsehoods about her professional and private life. But the crucial concern of this autobiographical project finally lies on a metalevel: Mara writes not only against individual false statements but also against the reality-distorting power of the anecdotal narrations, which constantly forces female artists to

fit into ready-made moulds – of the seduced, innocent girl, of the tamed shrew, of the impertinent diva – but which completely fail in the narration of female professionalism. In a musical culture in which women were only intended to play the role of *performing* artists, Mara's claim to competence could not fail to grate. It is not surprising therefore that Friedrich Rochlitz concludes in his *Erinnerung an Elisabeth Mara*: 'Mara has always been more masculine than feminine; she never fully conformed, or did not want to conform, to those things that give a woman charm.'⁷⁰

Notes

1. Unless otherwise mentioned, the translations are mine.
2. Daniel Schiebeler, 'An Mademoiselle Schmeling', in Daniel Schiebeler and Johann Joachim Eschenburg (eds.), *Daniel Schiebelers Auserlesene Gedichte*, Hamburg, J. J. C. Bode, 1773, 145–146.
3. Cf. Laurenz Lütteken, *Das Monologische als Denkform in der Musik zwischen 1760 und 1785*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1998, 175.
4. One may think of the protagonists of popular novels, often based on English models, the most successful of which is Sophie von La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771), and especially Lotte from Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774) and Gretchen from *Urfaust* (1772–1775). Cf. Helga Meise, 'Sophie von La Roche und der Genderdiskurs', in Michael Hofmann (ed.), *Aufklärung Epoche – Autoren – Werke*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2013, 61–74. For more general information, see also Inge Stephan, *Inszenierte Weiblichkeit. Codierung der Geschlechter in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Cologne, Böhlau, 2004.
5. The opinion that musicians owe their abilities to a God-given, i.e. natural, talent, which must first be brought to perfection through diligence, i.e. through personal effort and willpower, is a frequent topos in the biography of musicians in early modern times. See Wilhelm Seidel, 'Naturell – Unterricht – Fleiß. Telemanns Lebensläufe und der Geniebegriff des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Joachim Kremer, Wolf Hohohm and Wolfgang Ruf (eds.), *Biographie und Kunst als historiographisches Problem*, Hildesheim, Olms, 2004 (= Telemann-Konferenzberichte 14), 90–100.
6. 'ihrer angebohrnen Air d'effronterie', 'wenn sie sie kennen sollten die 2 leute, man sieht ihnen den stolz, grobheit, und wahre Effronterie im gesichte an' (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 'Letter to his father, 24 November 1780', in Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen. Gesamtausgabe. Hg. von der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg. Gesammelt und erläutert von Wilhelm A. Bauer und Otto Erich Deutsch, auf Grund deren Vorarbeiten erläutert von Joseph Heinz Eibl. Erweiterte Ausgabe mit einer Einführung und Ergänzungen hg. von Ulrich Konrad*, vol. 3: 1780–1786, Bärenreiter, Kassel, 2005, 30f).
7. In his *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*, the art theoretician Johann Georg Sulzer states that his son-in-law Graff could penetrate the soul of the portrayed person: 'I have noticed more than once that various persons painted by our Graff, who has an excellent gift for representing the whole physiognomy true to nature, can barely stand the sharp and sensitive gazes he throws at them; because these seem to penetrate the innermost part of the soul' ('Ich habe mehr als einmal bemerkt, daß verschiedene Personen, die sich von unserm Graf [sic], der vorzüglich die Gabe hat, die ganze Physionomie in der Wahrheit der Natur darzustellen, haben mahlen lassen, die scharfen und empfindungsvollen Blike [sic], die er auf sie wirft, kaum vertragen können; weil jeder bis in das Innere der Seele zu dringen scheint') (Johann Georg Sulzer, 'Portrait', in Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*, vol. 2, Leipzig, 1774, 920).
8. Cf. Ekhart Berckenhagen, *Anton Graff, Leben und Werk*, Berlin, Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1967, 259.
9. This is particularly striking in comparison with the portrait of the actress Esther Charlotte Brandes (1746–1786), almost the same age, who poses in the role of Ariadne of Naxos. See Markus Fehlmann and Birgit Verwiebe (eds.), *Anton Graff. Gesichter einer Epoche. Für das Museum Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur*, Munich, Hirmer, 2013, 189.
10. This portrait, which was long thought to depict the Berlin court actress Auguste Stich-Creliner, could with certainty be attributed to the Berlin painter in the course of

- its restoration by Dorothea Keulen. Cf. Hans Ost, ‘Johann Christoph Fritschs Bildnis der Gertrud Elisabeth Mara – Zu Musik und Malerei am Hof Friedrichs des Großen,’ in *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, 1998, 59, 213–222, [online] <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24663546?read-now=1&seq=4#metadata_info_tab_contents>.
11. For more information on Mara’s time at the court of Frederick II, see Sabine Henze-Döhring, *Friedrich der Große. Musiker und Monarch. Mit 20 Abbildungen*, Munich, Beck, 2012, 51–56. Mara’s annual salary as prima donna at the Berlin Court Opera was initially 3,000, and later 6,000 Thaler. Cf. Louis Schneider, *Geschichte der Oper und des Königlichen Opernhauses in Berlin*, Berlin, Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1852, 167.
 12. Schneider, *Geschichte der Oper und des Königlichen Opernhauses in Berlin*, 172.
 13. ‘Mit der lebensgroßen Darstellung, der dreiviertel Wendung zum Betrachter hin – eine Hand am Klavier, die andere über der Hüfte – ist an herrscherliche Posen erinnert. So kannte man die Fürsten mit der lässig herabhängenden Linken am Degengriff, die Rechte auf einem Tisch, auf dem ein Prunkhelm oder die Insignien von Rang und Macht zu finden waren. Und so legt nun die Sängerin ihre Rechte auf das Klavier, und ihr Herrschaftszeichen ist das Notenblatt mit der Bravour- und Rachearie: anverwandteltes Pathos jener Bildnisse, die Tizian, Rubens und Van Dyck einst von Kaisern und Königen gemalt hatten’ (Ost, ‘Johann Christoph Fritschs Bildnis der Gertrud Elisabeth Mara’, 220).
 14. Melanie Unseld, *Biographie und Musikgeschichte. Wandlungen biographischer Konzepte in Musikkultur und Musikhistoriographie*, Cologne, Böhlau, 2014, 69–76.
 15. Johann Mattheson, ‘Vorbericht zur musikalischen Ehrenpforte,’ in Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte, woran der Tüchtigsten Capellmeister, Componisten, Musikgelehrten, Tonkünstler etc. Leben, Wercke, Verdienste etc. erscheinen sollen*, Hamburg, Verlegung des Verfassers, 1740, x: ‘Nevertheless, a certain French woman opera singer almost tempted me, because of a considerably good piece of work, to grant her a place in this Ehrenpforte; but after careful consideration it failed to happen’ (‘Bald hätte mich gleichwohl auch eine gewisse französische Operistin verführet, wegen eines beträchtlich-guten Wercks, ihr etwa ein Plätzgen in dieser Ehrenpforte einzuräumen; allein nach reifer Überlegung ist es unterblieben’).
 16. The entry for Maria Elisabeth Rings is an example: ‘Ringin (widowed Rhodin), a learned daughter of the famous professor Rings of Franckfurt an der Oder, has not only excelled in poetry, but along with *Mathesi* also in Latin and French, has been a good musician, and also knew something about painting’ (‘Ringin (verwitwete Rhodin), eine gelehrte Tochter des berühmten Profess. Rings zu Franckfurt an der Oder, hat nicht nur in der Poesie excelliret, sondern auch nebst der *Mathesi* die lateinische und Frantzösische Sprache, ist dabei eine gute *Musica* gewesen, und hat auch etwas in der Mahlerey verstanden’). See also das Frauenzimmer-Lexicon, which refers to the well-known lexicon for women by Gottlieb Siegmund Corvinus (1715, 1739, 1773). See Johann Gottfried Walther and Friederike Ramm (ed.), *Musicalisches Lexicon oder Musicalische Bibliothec. Studienausgabe im Neusatz des Textes und der Noten*, Kassel, Bärenreiter 2001, 476.
 17. Johann Adam Hiller, *Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Musikgelehrten und Tonkünstler neuerer Zeit*, vol.1, Leipzig, im Verlage der Dykischen Buchhandlung, 1784.
 18. ‘Die Damen sollten insbesondere das Buch zieren. Wie manche schöne Arie haben wir auch nicht bloß einer schönen Sängerin zu danken!’ (Ernst Ludwig Gerber, ‘Vorerinnerung,’ in Gerber, *Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler welches Nachrichten von dem Leben und Werken musikalischer Schriftsteller, berühmter Componisten, Sänger, Meister auf Instrumenten, Dilettanten, Orgel- und Instrumentenmacher, enthält*, vol. 1: A-M, Leipzig, verlegt Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf, 1790, vii).

19. Ernst Ludwig Gerber, 'Mara (Elisabeth), gebohrne Schmebling', in Gerber, *Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*, vol. 1, 856–865.
20. 'Hartnäckigkeit', 'Eigensinn' (ibid., 863).
21. 'Schatten' (ibid., 858).
22. 'Heftigkeit' (ibid., 860).
23. 'Sie ist nicht groß von Person, auch keine Schönheit, aber deswegen von keiner unangenehmen Bildung. Vielmehr leuchtet aus jedem ihrer Züge ihr vortrefl. Herz hervor, welches macht, daß man auf dem (!) ersten Blick von ihr eingenommen ist' (ibid., 865).
24. 'Sie sahe ihn auf dem Theater des Prinzen Heinrich. Sein schönes Spiel nahm sie ein. Sie hörte allerley wunderliche Anekdoten von dem bizarren Manne. Das gewann sie, die selbst etwas Bizarre, noch mehr. Mara bewarb sich um sie, heftig und stürmend, wie er war: sie schwankte. Alle Freunde widerriethen: sie wurde fester. Der Liebhaber drängte sie mit Wechsel von Zärtlichkeit und Despotismus: sie entschied, und knüpfte, selbst gegen den Willen des Königs, ihr Schicksal für immer an das seinige' (Friedrich Rochlitz, 'Erinnerung an Elisabeth Mara', in *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, 1802, 4(29), 465–474; 4(30), 481–489; and 4(35), 575–576; here, 4(30), 482f).
25. 'Sie sah und hörte den wahrhaft schönen Mann und bewunderungswürdigen Cellisten Mara, und der Pfeil hatte tief getroffen' (G. E. Grosheim, *Das Leben der Künstlerin Mara*. Cassel, in der Luckhardt'schen Hofbuchhandlung, 1823, 20. This seventy-page biography may be considered the first biography on Mara in book form.)
26. 'Es ist nur zu bekannt, wie wohl sie gethan haben würde, diese Verbindung nicht einzugehen. Sie, die zuvor Aller Liebe genoß, machte sich bald durch den Verdacht, sie nehme an ihres Gatten Lebensart und seinen Zwistigkeiten Antheil, viele Feinde. Das Privatleben Beyder gehört nur in so fern hierher, als die Moralität der unglücklichen Frau dadurch geschützt wird' (ibid., 19).
27. 'Ueber den Urquell ihrer vielen Leiden hat sie [Mara] sich noch zuletzt auf edle Art ignorirend bewiesen, und das war ihr Mann, der verdorbenste aller Griechen' (Carl Friedrich Zelter to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, about February 22/23, 1831, in Max Hecker (ed.), *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Zelter in vier Bänden*, vol. 3: 1828–1832, Leipzig, Insel-Verlag, 1918, 390–393).
28. An example of this is Kürschner's article on Mara in the *Allgemeine Deutschen Biographie* published in 1884: Joseph Kürschner, 'Mara, Elisabeth', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 1884, 20, 286–289.
29. 'kurze, pointierte Geschichte, die einer wirklichen Person nachgesagt wird' (Heinz Schlaffer, 'Anekdote', in Klaus Weimar et al. (eds.), *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, vol. 1: A-G, Berlin, de Gruyter, 2007, 87).
30. Cf. Alexander Košenina, *Literarische Anthropologie. Die Neuentdeckung des Menschen*, Berlin and Boston, de Gruyter, 2016.
31. The conductor Johann Adam Hiller, Gertrud Elisabeth Schmeling's patron in Leipzig, played no small part in the popularisation of this form of narrative by publishing *Anekdoten zur Lebensgeschichte großer Regenten und berühmter Staatsmänner* ('Anecdotes on the Lives of Great Regents and Statesmen') between 1766 and 1772.
32. 'den Charakter eines Menschen und damit seine Biographie zu angemessen und authentisch zu repräsentieren' (Sonja Hilzinger, *Anekdotisches Erzählen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Zum Struktur- und Funktionswandel der Gattung Anekdote in Historiographie, Publizistik und Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart, M&P, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1997, 17).
33. John Mainwaring's *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel* (1760), which has been translated into German by Mattheson, is generally considered the first biography of a musician in book form. For an overview of the development of musical biography in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Vera Viehöver,

- ‘Musikerbiographien und –autobiographien’, in Bernhard Jahn (ed.), *Die Musik in der Kultur des Barock. Mit 64 Abbildungen und 2 Notenbeispielen*, Laaber, Laaber Verlag, 2019 (= Handbuch der Musik der Barockzeit, vol. 7), 185–195.
34. ‘eine der konstantesten Gattungen im Schreiben über Musik’ (Melanie Unseld, *Biographie und Musikgeschichte. Wandlungen biographischer Konzepte in Musikkultur und Musikhistoriographie*, Cologne, Böhlau, 2014, 118).
 35. ‘Nucleus des biographischen Schreibens über Musiker und Musikerinnen im 18 Jahrhundert’ (ibid.).
 36. Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Die Legende vom Künstler. Ein geschichtlicher Versuch*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1995 [1934], 158.
 37. Unseld distinguishes a total of fifteen central formulas, which are also important for the biography of musicians. See Unseld, *Biographie und Musikgeschichte*, 123–126.
 38. These include the historical novel *Die Primadonna Friedrichs des Großen* (‘The Prima Donna of Frederick the Great’) by Oskar Anwand from 1930 and the novelistic biography *Die Mara. Das Leben einer berühmten Sängerin* (‘Mara. The Life of a Famous Singer’) by Rosa Kaulitz-Niedeck from 1929, both of which have been re-edited by Wieland Giebel in 2011 and 2012 (second edition 2015) and have appeared with the Berlin Story Verlag.
 39. ‘Man erzehlt sich verschiedene Arten von Neckereyen, die sie um die Zeit gegen würdige Männer vornahm. So parodirte sie unter andern, auf eine komische Art in ihren Cadenzen derselben Arbeiten’ (Gerber, ‘Mara (Elisabeth), gebohrne Schmehlung’, 861).
 40. This bon mot is quoted in almost every account about Mara, but there is no certain proof that Frederick actually uttered it.
 41. ‘Ohne ein Wort zu sagen, ging er [der König] zum Flügel, und schien wohl eine Viertelstunde lang gar keine Notiz von ihr zu nehmen. Dies weckte den Stolz des damals einundzwanzigjährigen Mädchens, sie dachte an das “Pferdegewieher” und sehnte den Augenblick herbei, wo sie überzeugt war die ungünstige Meinung des gefürchteten Königlichen Kunstrichters zu ihren Gunsten zu ändern. Als das Spielen auf dem Flügel aber gar kein Ende nehmen wollte, fing sie an mit grosser Unbefangenheit die Gemälde an den Wänden zu betrachten und unterstand sich sogar, dem Könige den Rücken zuzukehren. Hatte der König das gemerkt, oder war die Flügelphantasie zu Ende, plötzlich winkte er der Harrenden [...]’ (Schneider, *Geschichte der Oper*, 165).
 42. ‘Aber der Muthwille ging mit dem Triumph Hand in Hand; sie gedachte der schlechten Meinung, die der König vom Deutschen Gesange ausgesprochen, und sang die erste Hälfte des Adagio so schlecht, tonlos und mit erzwungener Rauhigkeit, daß der König unwillig mit den Fingern auf die Stuhllehne klopfte und sich umdrehte. Das hatte sie eben gewollt. “Verzeihen Ew. Majestät, es ist mir etwas in den Hals gekommen, darum habe ich so schlecht gesungen, dass man es fast für das Wiehern eines Pferdes halten musste.”’ (ibid., 166f).
 43. Friedrich Rochlitz, ‘Gertrud Elisabeth Mara’, in Rochlitz, *Für Freunde der Tonkunst*, Leipzig, 1824, quotations follow the second edition, Leipzig, 1830, 48–136, here 78. Available online here: https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_QPcqAAAAAYAAJ/page/n289.
 44. ‘Gertrud schloß diese Cadenz mit einem so ausdauernden, vom leisen bis zum stärksten, vom langsamen bis zum schnellsten Wechsel der beiden Töne gesteigerten, in gleichem Verhältniß wieder abnehmenden und endlich ersterbenden Trillo, daß der Zuhörer, neben dem Entzücken, zugleich die Angst fühlte, es möchte ihr die Brust zersprengen’ (ibid.).
 45. ‘Nun war ihre Ruhe und Zufriedenheit gestört. Sie nahm Theil an den Zwistigkeiten, in denen ihr Gatte stets mit andern Mitgliedern der Kapelle stand, und je bestimmter man ihr alles das vorausgesagt hatte, desto eifriger suchte sie ihre Wahl zu rechtfertigen,

ihres Mannes Seltsamkeiten zu verherrlichen, und seine Grillen durchzusetzen. Kein Virtuos, der Gegner ihres Mannes war, blieb sicher vor ihrer – Geschicklichkeit. Singend parodierte und travestirte sie seine Manier öffentlich, gewann die Lacher, und schlug die Opposition mit Trillern und Kadenzen. Man klagte, man verwies zur Ruhe: aber Ein so beygelegter Zwist erzeugte nur mehrere neue' (Rochlitz, 'Erinnerung an Elisabeth Mara', 485).

46. In total, four volumes were published, which reached three editions by 1868.
47. 'Hätte ich vorausgesehen, daß man sich so oft und so lange mit meiner Biographie beschäftigen würde, so hätte ich schon längst eine wahre Darstellung meines Künstlerlebens herausgegeben, und dadurch falsche Nachrichten in Wahrheit verwandelt' (Gertrud Elisabeth Mara, 'Eine Selbstbiographie der Sängerin Gertrud Elisabeth Mara. Mitgetheilt von O. von Riesemann', in Kaulitz-Niedeck and Wieland Giebel (eds.), *Die Mara. Das Leben einer berühmten Sängerin*, Berlin, Berlin Story Verlag, 2012, 251).
48. 'She wrote to me two years ago: she was in the process of writing her autobiography, since only half of her was known, but by no means the right half – we will see' ('Sie schrieb mir vor zwei Jahren: sie sey im Begriff, ihren Lebenslauf zu schreiben, da man von ihr nur Halbes, keineswegs aber das Rechte wisse, was wir denn abwarten wollen') (Carl Friedrich Zelter to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, about February 22/23, 1831, in Hecker (ed.), *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Zelter*, vol. 3: 1828–1832, 390–393).
49. Mara, 'Selbstbiographie', 268f.
50. *Ibid.*, 268.
51. '[B]innen den vier Jahren, als sie im hiesigen Concerte sang [...], [fand Mara] Gelegenheit, sich das Alles zu erwerben, was ihr noch an Kenntnissen fehlte, um eine vollkommene Sängerin zu werden' (Johann Adam Hiller, 'Autobiographie', in Hiller and Mark Lemstedt (eds.), *Mein Leben. Autobiographie, Briefe und Nekrologe*, Leipzig, Lemstedt, 2004, 23).
52. 'Der Aufenthalt in Leipzig [...] war für Elisabeth entscheidend. Sie machte unter Hillers Leitung ihre hohe Schule' (Rochlitz, 'Erinnerung an Elisabeth Mara', 470).
53. 'Studirte nun Hiller mit ihr größere Gesangsstücke ein, mit denen sie öffentlich hervortreten sollte: so erklärte er ihr erst den Sinn des Textes und der Musik [...]' (*ibid.*, 59).
54. 'Hier [in Leipzig] war es, wo sie unter der Aegide eines großen und anerkannten Mannes [...] ihrer höheren Bildung mit schnelleren Schritten entgegen gieng' (Grosheim, *Das Leben der Künstlerin Mara*, 11f).
55. 'Seitdem ich aus einer ganz neulich herausgekommenen Biographie ersehen habe, daß man [...] ihn so sprechen läßt, als wäre ich eine von ihm ganz abhängige Schülerin, so sehe ich mich dadurch gezwungen, ihm auch nicht einen Schatten von Ehre (was meine Kunst anbetrifft) einzuräumen. Wo hätte er auch sollen die Kenntnisse hernehmen, eine solche Sängerin, als ich war, zu bilden?' (Mara, 'Selbstbiographie', 258).
56. 'Die Natur hat mich mit allem, was zu einer vollkommenen Sängerin nöthig ist, begünstigt, Gesundheit, Kraft, brillante Stimme, großen Umfang, reine Intonation, geläufigen Hals, einen lebhaften, leidenschaftlichen, gefühlvollen Charakter; dem ungeachtet arbeite ich eben so, als hätte ich nichts von alle dem; Beharrlichkeit und Fleiß mußten mich also zur wahren Künstlerin machen, denn es war mir nicht genug, bloß Sängerin zu heißen. / Ich übte mich wenigstens vier Stunden des Tags im Singen, suchte also Arien von den besten Meistern, welche dann, nebst Tosis Singlehre, den Grundstein zu meinem folgenden Ruhm legten. Die übrigen Stunden wurden durch zwey Sprachlehrer, einen deutschen Schreibmeister, einen Klavier- und Tanzlehrer besetzt' (*ibid.*, 259).

57. For example, she also downplays the influence of the singer Paradisi, who is mentioned in many biographies as one of her most important teachers. According to Mara, Paradisi had not given her more than four weeks of lessons (*ibid.*, 256).
58. ‘erstrebenswerter als eine Natur-Künstlerin zu heißen’ (*ibid.*).
59. ‘berühmten Contrapunctisten’ (*ibid.*, 269).
60. ‘Ich war auch mit einigen gelehrten Männern bekannt, welche sich gütigst angelegen sein ließen, meinen Geist ein wenig zu bilden’ (*ibid.*, 260).
61. ‘Scalen und Solfeggiren’ (*ibid.*, 253).
62. *Ibid.*, 254.
63. See Gerber, ‘Mara (Elisabeth), gebohrne Schmeuling’, 858f.; Grosheim, *Das Leben der Künstlerin Mara*, 13f.; Rochlitz, ‘Gertrud Elisabeth Mara’, 68f. Mara – as she was a *German* singer – appears as unfavorably or poorly dressed for important events in many Mara biographies. This can be seen as a *topos*.
64. ‘Die Kurfürstin nahm mich freundlich auf, und als ich ihr meine Besorgnis, niemals eine Bühne betreten zu haben, äußerte, so übernahm sie es, mich zu unterrichten. Die Musik war von ihrer eigenen Composition. [...] das Recitativ, worin ich noch sehr zurück war, habe ich ihr ganz zu verdanken. Recitiren und Declamiren ist eins. [...] Am Vortrag des Recitativs erkennt man den Sänger’ (Mara, ‘Selbstbiographie’, 260).
65. ‘Ich glaubte hier Gelegenheit zu haben, mein Genie und Kenntniß in der Harmonie am Tage zu legen; ich ließ mir also meine Bravour-Arie, welche offen für Veränderungen geschrieben war, in Partitur setzen, mit vier offenen Linien, wodurch in vier verschiedene Veränderungen machen konnte, ohne zu befürchten, daß ich in der Harmonie anstoßen würde. Dieses machte eigentlich meinen Triumph in Venedig, denn die Banti mit ihrer schönen Stimme und gutem Singen war nicht musicalisch, und sang ihre Arien immer so, wie sie dieselben auswendig gelernt hatte [...]’ (*ibid.*, 291).
66. ‘Als wenn nicht ein halber Gendarme genug gewesen wäre, sich einer solchen kleinen Frau als ich zu bemächtigen? Der Biographist hat vermutlich wollen witzig seyn, hat aber nicht bedacht, daß er den großen Friedrich dadurch lächerlich gemacht hat’ (*ibid.*, 270).
67. Daniel Brandenburg and Thomas Seedorf (eds.), “*Per ben vestire la virtuosa*”. *Die Oper des 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhunderts im Spannungsfeld von Komponisten und Sängern*, Schliengen, Edition Argus, 2011.
68. ‘Ich musste mich also bequemen, des Herrn Reichardts Arien zu singen. Er gewann aber nichts dabey, denn ich sang sie Note für Note, aber so steif als sie geschrieben waren, und als ich zur Cadenz der Bravour-Arie kam, so hielt ich den Ton sehr lange aus, spannte dadurch die Erwartung des Publicums und fing endlich an, acht Takte vom Thema der Arie [...] zu singen, und endigte mit einem langen Triller. Reichardt, welcher den Quartsext-Accord angeschlagen hatte, konnte denselben nicht auflösen, denn ihm fielen die Hände herunter. [...] Man kann sich vorstellen, daß Reichardts Oper nicht gefiel, denn wenn die erste Sängerin die Oper nicht hebt, so ist alles verloren’ (Mara, ‘Selbstbiographie’, 272f).
69. ‘Ich nahm die Arie [die Reichardt komponiert hatte], sah dieselbe durch, und strich einige 40 Takt, sein Fehler war, daß er nie das Ende finden konnte. Er rief aus: “Mein Gott! Eine Sache, worüber man eine ganze Nacht zugebracht hat, streicht eine solche Frau in fünf Minuten.”’ (*ibid.*, 274).
70. ‘Mara ist immer mehr männlich, als weiblich gewesen; hat sich nie ganz in das, was eine Frau, ohne andere Verdienste, als weibliche, liebenswürdig macht, finden können oder finden mögen’ (Rochlitz, ‘Erinnerung an Elisabeth Mara’, 488).

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Plates



Plate I. Anna Morandi Manzolini, *Self-Portrait*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 153, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna. © Opificio delle pietre Dure di Firenze. Photo credit: Giacinto Cambini. (Fig. 1, p. 28)

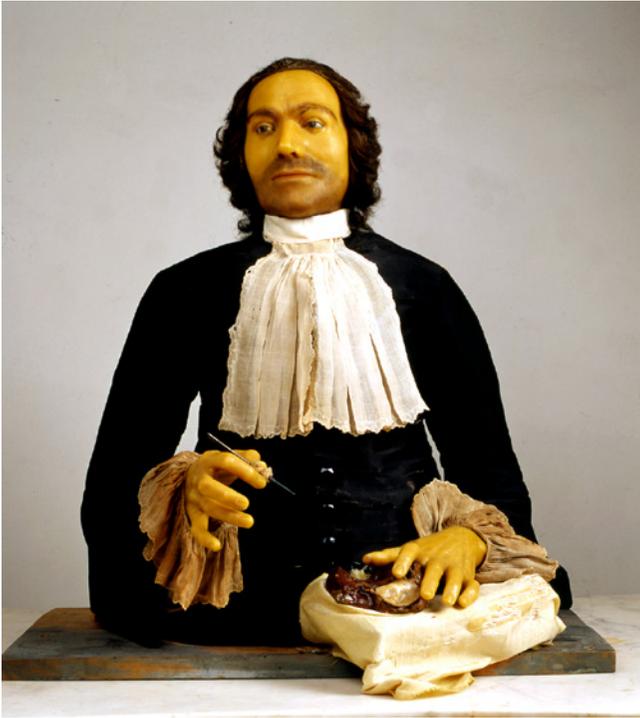


Plate 2. Anna Morandi Manzolini, *Bust of Giovanni Manzolini*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 154, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna; © Università di Bologna – Sistema Museale di Ateneo. Photo credit: Fulvio Simoni. (Fig. 2, p. 30)



Plate 3: Pierre Hubert Subleyras, *Pope Benedict XIV (Prospero Lambertini)*, 1746. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Friends of European Paintings Gifts, Bequest of Joan Whitney Payson, by exchange, Gwynne Andrews Fund, Charles and Jessie Price Gift, and Valerie Delacorte Fund Gift, in memory of George T. Delacorte, 2009. From the Metropolitan Museum of Art, www.metmuseum.org (accessed 12 September 2021). (Fig. 4, p. 33)



Plate 4: Lavinia Fontana, *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo*, 1579. Oil on canvas. Florence, Uffizi Gallery. Photo: Scala/Art Resource. (Fig. 6, p. 34)



Plate 5: Catharina van Hemessen, *Self-Portrait at the Easel*, 1548. Oil on oak panel.
From Kunstmuseum Basel, Sammlung Online. (Fig. 7, p. 35)

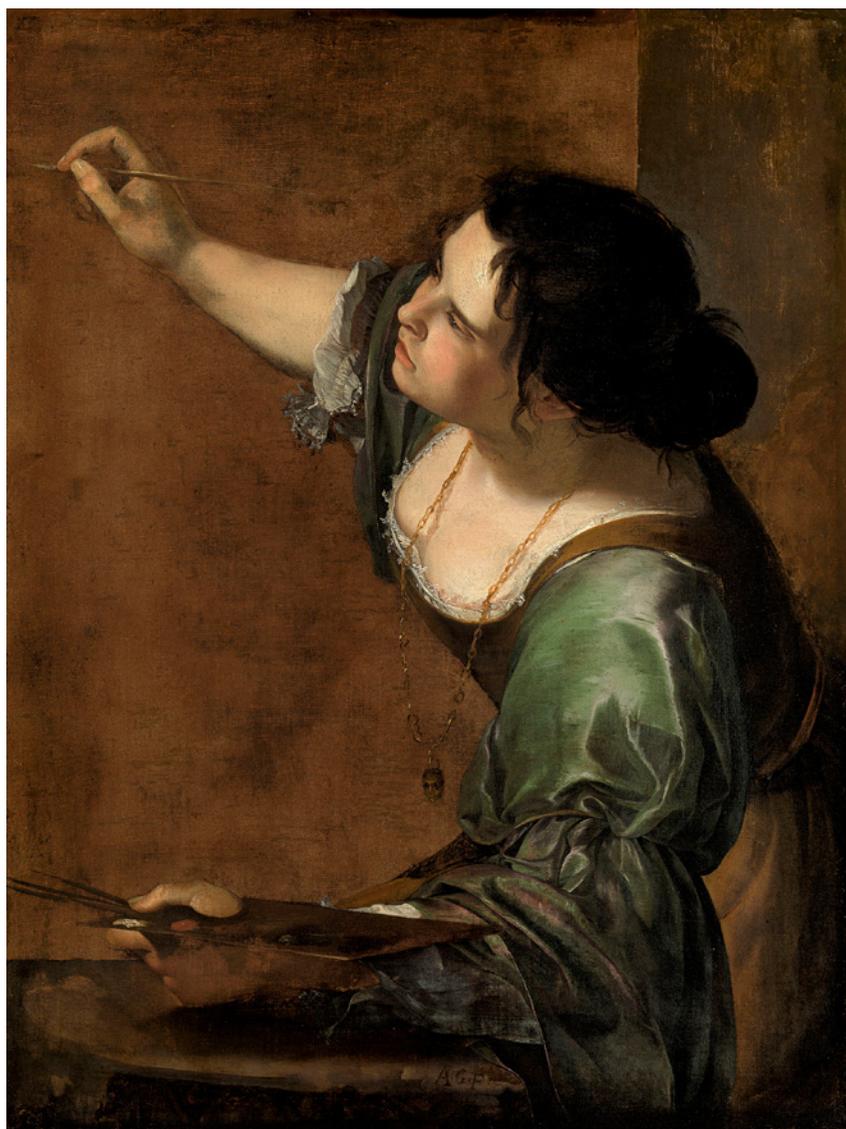


Plate 6. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, 1638–1639. Oil on canvas. Royal Collection Trust, London. (Fig. 8, p. 36)



Plate 7. Anna Morandi Manzolini, *Pair of Hands*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 126, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna; © Università di Bologna – Sistema Museale di Ateneo. (Fig. 9, p. 38)



Plate 9. Anna Morandi Manzolini, *The Extraocular Muscles*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 102, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna; © Università di Bologna – Sistema Museale di Ateneo. Photo credit: Fulvio Simoni. (Fig. 11, p. 44)



Plate 8. Giovanni Manzolini and Anna Morandi Manzolini, *Foetus with Placenta and Umbilical Cord*, eighteenth century. Wax and mixed media. Inv. n. CECOMA 94, Museo di Palazzo Poggi – Bologna; © Università di Bologna – Sistema Museale di Ateneo. Photo credit: Fulvio Simoni. (Fig. 10, p. 42)



Plate 10. Elisabetta Sirani, *Self-Portrait as a Nun-Saint*, 1657–1658. Oil on canvas. From Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna. Photo courtesy of the Ministero della Cultura – Archivio Fotografico Direzione regionale Musei dell'Emilia Romagna. (Fig. 14, p. 46)



Plate 11. Marie-Victoire Lemoine, *Portrait Identified as Mme de Genlis* (1781). Oil on canvas. © Wikimedia Commons. (Fig. 1, p. 98)



Plate 12. Anonymous, *Portrait de Stéphanie Félicité Ducrest, Comtesse de Genlis* (eighteenth century). Pastel. © Chantilly, Musée Condé. (Fig. 2, p. 99)



Plate 13. Anonymous, *Portrait of Stéphanie Félicité Ducrest de Saint-Aubin, Comtesse de Genlis Playing the Harp*. Ivory. © Chantilly, Musée Condé. (Fig. 3, p. 99)



Plate 14. Amédée Faure, after an anonymous painting of 1787, *The Duchess of Orléans with Her Children at Spa* (1848). Oil on canvas. © Chantilly, Musée Condé. (Fig. 4, p. 100)



Plate 15. E. Leguay, after Henri Félix Philippoteaux, *Philippe Égalité, His Wife and Their Children*. Engraving. Musée Louis-Philippe, château d'Eu. (Fig. 5, p. 102)



Plate 16. Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse, after Jean Antoine Théodore Giroust, *The Harp Lesson* (1743).
Oil on canvas. © Collections des musées de France, Joconde. (Fig. 6, p. 103)



Plate 17. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, *Portrait of Madame de Genlis* (1790). Oil on canvas.
© Los Angeles County Museum. (Fig. 8, p. 105)



Plate 18. George Romney, *Portrait of Madame de Genlis* (ca. 1792). Oil on canvas.
© Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. (Fig. 9, p. 105)



Plate 19. Sophie Chéradame, née Bertaud, *Portrait of Mme de Genlis* (1821). Oil on canvas.
© Musée de l'Histoire de France (Versailles). (Fig. 10, p. 106)



Plate 20. Johan Joseph Zoffany, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy* (1771–1772).
Oil on canvas. © Royal Collections Trust. Public domain. (Fig. 2, p. 117)



Plate 21. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Self-Portrait with a Straw Hat* (1782, signed copy after a popular self-portrait she painted the same year). Oil on canvas. © National Gallery, London. Public domain. (Fig. 3, p. 118)



Plate 22. Rosalba Carriera, *Self-portrait Holding a Portrait of Her Sister* (1709). Pastel.
© Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Public domain. (Fig. 4, p. 120)



Plate 23. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Self-Portrait* (1790). Oil on canvas.
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Plate 24. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* (1785). Oil on canvas.
© Metropolitan Museum of Art. Public domain. (Fig. 6, p. 123)



Plate 25. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie-Antoinette in a Muslin dress* (after 1783).
Oil on canvas. © National Gallery of Art. Public domain. (Fig. 7, p. 126)



Plate 26. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Self-portrait with Her Daughter* (1786).
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Plate 27. Élisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie-Antoinette, Queen of France, and Her Children* (1787). Oil on canvas. © Château de Versailles. Public domain. (Fig. 9, p. 129)



Plate 28. Jean-François de Troy, *Portrait of Anne-Louise-Bénédicte de Bourbon-Condé, duchesse du Maine [as Venus]*. Oil on canvas.
© Musée des Beaux-Arts Orléans, François Lauginie. (Fig. 1, p. 186)



Plate 29. Jean-François de Troy (1679–1752), *The Feast of Dido and Aeneas: An Allegorical Portrait of the Family of the duc and duchesse du Maine* (1704). Oil on canvas. Private Collection. © Photo courtesy of Sotheby's New York. (Fig. 2, p. 188)



Plate 30. Jean-François de Troy, *The Astronomy Lesson of the duchesse du Maine at the château de Sceaux* (ca. 1705). Oil on canvas. © Collection du Musée du Domaine Départemental de Sceaux, Benoît Chain. (Fig. 3, p. 190-191)



Plate 31. Louis Borde, after Jean-Antoine Nollet, *Terrestrial Globe presented to the duchesse du Maine* (1728). Paper, papier-mâché, poplar, spruce, alder with vernis Martin, bronze.
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Plate 32. École française, entourage de Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait of an Elderly Woman said to be the comtesse de Verrue* (ca. 1720). Oil on canvas. Private Collection.
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Plate 33. Katherine Read, *Portrait of Elizabeth Carter* (ca. 1765). Oil on canvas.
© Dr Johnson's House Trust, Gough Square, London. (Fig. 1, p. 236)



Plate 34. John Fayram, *Elizabeth Carter as Minerva* (ca. 1741). Oil on canvas.
© National Portrait Gallery, London. (Fig. 2, p. 239)



Plate 35. Robert Edge Pine, *Catharine Macaulay in the Guise of a Roman Matron Wearing the Sash of a Roman Senator* (ca. 1775). Oil on canvas.
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Plate 36. Richard Samuel, *The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain* (ca. 1778).
Oil on canvas. © National Portrait Gallery, London. (Fig. 6, p. 250)

Plate 37. Anton Graff,
*Portrait of Gertrud Elisabeth
Mara geb. Schmeling* (1775).
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(Fig. 1, p. 326)



Plate 38. Johann Christoph
Frisch, *Portrait of the Singer
Gertrud Elisabeth Mara*
(ca. 1780). Oil on canvas.
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Sammlung, Universität zu
Köln. (Fig. 2, p. 327)



Plate 39. Titian, *Portrait of Philipp II, King of Spain* (1551). Oil on Canvas.
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