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Self-Portraiture

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**SOFONISBA ANGUISSOLA'S
SELF-PORTRAITURE**

By

Susan Marie-Mosko Kozal

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

SOFONISBA ANGUISSOLA'S SELF-PORTRAITURE

By

Susan Marie-Mosko Kozal

This thesis focuses on Sofonisba Anguissola's self-portraiture. Though she produced more self-portraits than any other artist between Durer and Rembrandt, no scholarly publication has solely examined this large aspect of her *oeuvre*. Consequently, this thesis fulfills a perceived gap in research on Sofonisba.

It examines all works previously considered self-portraits of the artist. Concerning their authenticity and chronology, four categories emerge: 1)those generally agreed to as authentic; 2)those accepted by some, not accepted by others, but here defended as authentic; 3)those refuted; 4)those produced by followers. To place the artist in her *milieu* , this thesis surveys Cinquecento feminine education to suggest how and why she became trained in the art of painting. Also, the self-portraits are analyzed in the context of contemporary portraiture. Finally, her self-portraiture and sixteenth-century ideas concerning ideal feminine beauty receive examination through a comparison of her work, with that of contemporary male artists and with contemporary literature.

Following the essay, a *catalogue raisonnée* provides for each self-portrait: illustrations, an analysis of technique and style, a citation of provenance and references.

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1995**

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I extend many thanks to Marina Galvani, curatorial assistant for the 1995 exhibition at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and Pierangelo Moretti, director of the *Comitato Promotore Mostra Anguissola* in Cremona, who collaborated to provide me the 1995 Italian catalog of this exhibition.

I am grateful to Dr. Liana Cheney for discussing with me my objectives and research at an early stage, for her insightful suggestions, and for her shared intrigue in the artist. I thank the European painting curatorial staff at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for allowing me access to their portrait and for enabling me to view its information file.

Finally, I would like to recognize Dr. Janice Simpson for her continual support and Fr. David Van Horn whose mentorship inspired me to pursue the study of art history.

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CHRONOLOGY

1530	Amilcare Anguissola and Bianca Ponzzone marry.
1532	Sofonisba Anguissola born.
c.1535	Elena Anguissola born.
c.1536-38	Lucia Anguissola born.
c.1539-41	Minerva Anguissola born.
c.1542-44	Europa Anguissola born.
c.1545-46	Anna-Maria Anguissola born.
1546-49	Bernardino Campi trains Sofonisba and Elena.
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1551	Asdrubale Anguissola born.
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c.1553-54	Uffizi <u>Girl With an Old Woman</u> drawing.
c.1554	Uffizi <u>Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish</u> drawing.
1554	Vienna <u>Self-Portrait</u> .
1556	Guilio Clovio visits Farnese family in Parma and Piacenza.
c.1556	Naples <u>Self-Portrait at the Clavichord</u> .
c.1556-57	Lancut <u>Self-Portrait</u> .
1558	Ashburnham medallion.
c.1558	Boston <u>Self-Portrait</u> .
c.1558-59	Siena <u>Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola</u> .
c.1559	Althorp <u>Self-Portrait at the Clavichord</u> .
1561	Sofonisba in Spain. Milan <u>Self-Portrait</u> .
1564	Chantilly <u>Self-Portrait</u> . Minerva dies.

1565	Lucia dies.
1573	Amilcare dies. Sofonisba marries Don Fabrizio.
1578	Don Fabrizio dies. Sofonisba marries Orazio Lomellino.
1606	Rubens visits Sofonisba in Genoa.
c.1610	Niva <u>Self-Portrait</u> .
c.1615	Sofonisba moves to Palermo. Sofonisba visited by Van Dyck.
1625	Sofonisba dies.

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INTRODUCTION

A sixteenth-century Cremonese artist of minor nobility, Sofonisba Anguissola was renowned for her portraiture. Diverse contemporary literary sources acknowledge her distinction in this genre. Literature regarding her life and art continued through subsequent centuries, and the influences of feminist art history from the 1970's to the present have revitalized scholarly research about her and her paintings. As a result of this impetus, numerous art historians have been contributing articles about her in scholarly periodicals; the first monograph on Sofonisba appeared as recently as 1987.

Flavio Caroli's Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle (1987) examines Sofonisba's art and that of her sisters. It attempts to distinguish stylistic differences between the Anguissola sisters while providing critical historical documentation and an up-to-date bibliography. In 1992, Ilya Sandra Perlingieri published Sofonisba Anguissola: The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, which seeks to enhance the knowledge of Sofonisba's entire life, particularly her stay at the Spanish court. Reviewers have taken exception to both publications on various points, but overall these works have provided a more thorough understanding of the artist, as well as pertinent new information.

1994-1995 witnessed the first major exhibition, *Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle*, of this artist's and her sisters' works. The exhibition travelled from Cremona, Italy to Vienna, Austria and finally to Washington, D.C., where it was downsized and renamed *Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman*.¹ It assembled a substantial portion of the artists' *oeuvre*, and generated a voluminous catalog compiling numerous, innovative essays

¹The exhibition produced its own catalog of the same name (See below, p. 126).

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on Sofonisba's life and career. This exhibition opened new avenues through which to investigate Sofonisba Anguissola, while provoking many questions. Written contemporaneously to this exhibition, this thesis focuses solely upon Sofonisba's self-portraiture, which constitutes the greatest portion of her work.

Organized in the form of a monograph, the thesis contains an essay divided into four sections followed by a *catalogue raisonnée* entry for each self-portrait. This format allows the primary objectives of this study to be readily addressed as well as several secondary objectives. The essay sections address the primary objectives: to deal with the authenticity and chronology of her self-portraits; to consider her education in the context of Cinquecento feminine education; to correlate her work with contemporary portraiture; to compare aspects of her self-portraits with contemporary notions of ideal feminine beauty. The catalog entries incorporate the secondary objectives: to produce a visual reference to all of Sofonisba's self-portraits and those once attributed to her; to provide a close analysis of each self-portrait concerning technique and physical and compositional characteristics; to furnish for each image as accurate a citation of provenance and literary references as possible. In a time in which interest in Sofonisba Anguissola's artistic career has intensified, I hope to contribute a comprehensive analysis of her pursuit of the self-portrait, and an up-to-date guide to the literature on this topic.

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AUTHENTICITY AND CHRONOLOGY

Born to a family of Cremonese nobility, Sofonisba Anguissola was educated as a *nobil donna*. She studied music, literature, and the art of painting, achieving distinction in all three according to various contemporary sources. She is renowned especially for her self-portraits, yet several questions exist regarding them. To begin with, the question of which works are authentic self-portraits must be addressed. Secondly, controversy concerning the chronology of these works remains. Besides these initial queries, several corollary questions require consideration. Why did Sofonisba produce this plethora of self-portraits? Why does a distinct disparity of physiognomical traits exist among them?

Concerning the authenticity of these works, this thesis examines all of the images that are or have been considered self-portraits. First, it considers a group of works upon which scholars generally agree as to their authenticity. This core set comprises six examples: in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Lugt collection in Paris, the Muzeum Zamek in Lancut (Poland), the Siena Pinacoteca, the Uffizi, and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

One primary reason for this group's apparent authenticity derives from the evidence of inscriptions. The example from the Lugt collection -- known as the Ashburnham medallion (fig. 7)--is signed and dated, 1558.¹ The inscription on the Boston roundel (fig. 8) states: SOPHONISBA ANGUSSOLA VIR[GO] IPSIUS EX [S]PECULO DEPICTAM CREMONAE. The Uffizi portrait (fig. 2) bears this inscription:

¹Ilya Sandra Perilingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola: The First Great Renaissance Woman Artist (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), p. 109.

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SOFONISBA ANGUISCIOLA CREM. PICTRIX AETA SUE ANN XX. In the Vienna portrait (fig.4), she appears holding an open book displaying an autobiographical inscription, which states: *Sophonisba Anguissola virgo se ipsam fecit 1554*. Regarding the Siena portrait (fig.10), Perlingieri notes that "close examination in 1983 and 1988 also revealed part of a faint, but still visible, signature. The word 'Virgo', as she often signed herself, and '...SSOLA' are evident in very pale yellow in the lower right-hand corner of the canvas."² Many scholars believe Sofonisba's inclusion of "Virgo" within her signature infers a conscious reference to Iaia of Kyzikos, a classical female painter (see below, p. 23).

Rediscovered during the preparation of the *Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle* 1994 exhibition, the Lancut portrait's (fig.6) first published citation appears in the catalog for this exhibition. Only this painting, in this primary group, displays no visible inscription. It is possible that upon further research traces of an inscription may be found, as the catalog makes no reference to any detailed analysis or radiographic studies taken of it. Below (pp. 28, 41, 66-68), the reasons for its inclusion within this primary, authentic group appear, on the basis of compositional and physiognomical characteristics.

A second group comprises works that some scholars accept, and others do not accept, as authentic self-portraits of Sofonisba. This second collection includes the Althorp, Chantilly, Milan, Naples, Niva, and Sterling self-portraits as well as an early self-portrait drawing in the Uffizi; I will argue in defense of their authenticity. Several of the painted portraits within this group bear inscriptions, or were known to have been inscribed

²Perlingieri, *Sofonisba Anguissola*, p. 52.

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at one time. The Althorp portrait's (fig.9) signature and date, now nor entirely legible, appear in the lower left. It reads: SOPHONISBA ANGUISSOLA VIRGO SE IPSUM PINXIT JESSU AMI [lcaris] PATRIS 156[1]. Debate persists regarding the 1561 dating of the piece (See below, p. 15 & 79-84). The Milan portrait (fig.11) bears an inscription, on the right side just above the shoulder, that states (rather illegibly), [...]OPONISBA [...]ILCARIS [...]M[...]SIS L[...]XI. Again, questions arise regarding the dating of the work as 1561. The Sterling portrait (fig.1) bears the inscription: Sophonisba Angusciola virgo cremonensis se ipsam pinxit.

Works rejected as self-portraits comprise a third group: these are rejected here on the basis of physiognomical dissimilarities to one another as well as to those in the authentic collection. The five portraits included within this group are in the Godfried Keller collection in Bern, Switzerland; the Galleria Doria Pamphili; a Milanese private collection; and the Uffizi (which has two: the round miniature and the drawing Girl with an Old Woman). Finally, a fourth group assembles works previously attributed to Sofonisba as self-portraits. These will be demonstrated to be reproductions of her work, such as those the younger Anguissola sisters frequently produced . This group includes a variation upon Sofonisba's Lancut composition, in the collection of Federico Zeri , as well as two variations on the Boston composition, one in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the other in the Vancouver Museum.

As to chronology, this paper offers suggestions towards modification and reinforcement of dates proposed by other scholars. The problem of dating Sofonisba's work starts with the scholarly debate regarding her parent's marriage date and her birth

year. Presently, various art historians support one or the other of two theories regarding these issues. The first theory, which this thesis supports, is founded on the research and assertions of Carlo Bonetti. Basing his opinion on contemporary documents, Bonetti re-established the marriage date of her parents as 1530. The I Campi catalog and Perlingieri advocate this theory, which their dating of her work reflects. Both the Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle and the Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman catalogs affirm the parents' marriage date as c.1533, and thus give correspondingly later birthdates of the children and to Sofonisba's paintings.³ This study rejects this assertion on the basis that neither publication provides contemporary documentation to support their proposed dating and their denial of Bonetti's findings.

Bonetti's theory suggests Amilcare Anguissola, a Cremonese merchant of minor nobility, married Bianca Ponzone in 1530, following a previous marriage with no offspring. Amilcare's probable desire for progeny from this second marriage was most likely fulfilled soon. For this reason, the year 1532 appears quite probable for Sofonisba's birth, in my opinion, and in that of many contemporary scholars--although the catalogs of the 1994 and 1995 exhibitions suggest a later dating of c.1533-1534.⁴

The eldest of seven children, Sofonisba had five sisters, who were all educated in the arts of painting, and also a brother. Based on Bonetti's theory, Perlingieri proposed this succession for Sofonisba's siblings, which this thesis supports: Elena, born c.1535;

³Pp. 75-78, and pp. 27 & 32 respectively.

⁴I Campi, p. 171 notes C.Bonetti (1928 p. 7, 1932 p.109) stating the date as 1531-32 or later, F.Zeri (1976 p. 427): 1535-40; G.Morelli (1290-93, 1897 ed. p. 198): c.1539; about 1540 according to M.Haruszti-Takacz (1968 p. 66).

Lucia, born c.1536-38; Minerva, born c.1539-41; Europa, born c.1542-44; Anna, born c.1545-46; and Asdrubale, born 1551.⁵ The 1994 and 1995 catalogs suggest dates for Sofonisba's siblings presupposing a later marriage date of the parents, and thus do not correspond with those proposed here. Furthermore, the catalogs suggest Anna Maria as being born after Asdrubale, possibly as late as 1557. This thesis rejects this latter assertion because Sofonisba is thought to have trained her youngest three sisters in painting already during the mid 1550's. A dating of Anna Maria's birth year to 1552-1557 seems unlikely as Sofonisba travelled extensively in the late 1550's, which would have left her little time in which to train her sisters. Furthermore, Anna-Maria would have been too young to have been trained by Sofonisba in the mid 1550's.

Vasari's account of Sofonisba's life inaccurately denotes her as a disciple of Guilio Campo, and subsequent biographers followed Vasari on this point, until Bonetti corrected him.⁶ As Bonetti points out, Sofonisba, accompanied by her sister Elena, studied the art of painting under Bernardino Campi, "who was already renowned in Cremona...He introduced her to the pleasures of art, sometimes correcting her without reproach, sometimes praising her without flattery, to which she responded with affection. The stay lasted several years."⁷ Bonetti determined that Sofonisba and Elena's stay with Campi occurred between 1546 and 1549. In 1549, when Campi left Cremona for Milan,

⁵Sofonisba Anguissola, p. 29.

⁶Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects vol.8 (Bastiano - Taddeo Zuccheri), trans. Gaston DuC. De Vere (London: Philip Lee Warner, 1912-14), p. 45.

⁷Giovanni Battista Zaist, Notizie istoriche de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti cremonesi (1774. Reprint. Cremona: Banco Popolare di Cremona, 1976), p. 228; quoted in Ilya Sandra Perilingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola, p. 29.

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Sofonisba continued her study of painting under Bernardino Gatti. No extant documentation suggests, however, that Elena stayed on with Gatti. Elena's entrance into a convent, soon afterwards (c.1550-51), accounts for Vasari's exclusion of her in his discussion of the Anguissola daughters.

During this period of tutelage Sofonisba learned the technical aspects of oil painting as her proficiency in drawing increased.⁸ Perlingieri placed the two Uffizi drawings, believed by some to be self-portraits, during this period or possibly before.⁹ The I Campi exhibition catalog of 1985, on the other hand, proposes a correlation between these two drawings and a third --Sofonisba's Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish (fig.22, Chalk sketch (black chalk on white/ blue paper), 301 x 345 mm. Florence: Uffizi)-as members of a series. The notion that these three drawings constitute a series is based on documentary evidence: F. Baldinucci's citation of the inventory list of Leopoldo de' Medici's drawings.¹⁰ More recent scholars ignored this notion. Nevertheless, I would agree to it, if by the term "series" one can mean a group of works created within a close chronological proximity.

No contemporary source mentions the two supposed self-portrait drawings; however, significant documentation exists for the Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish. In turn, this information assists in dating the former drawings as well as clarifying

⁸Ilya Sandra Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola, p. 42-3. Perlingieri provides a lengthy discussion of this process based on contemporary occurrences within artistic studios without documentation.

⁹Sofonisba Anguissola, p. 44.

¹⁰I Campi, p. 302. Further citations of this notation of the Medici inventory list are provided as well on this page. They include: L. Ragghianti Collobi, Il Libro de' Disegni del Vasari 2 vols. (Florence, 1976), p. 116 and G. Bora, Il disegni lombardi e genovesi del Cinquecento no.60 (Treviso, 1980), p. 54.

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¹³ p 40.

misconceptions concerning Sofonisba's training. Giorgio Vasari's *Life of Sofonisba* supplies reference to this drawing:

Messer Tommaso Cavalieri, a Roman gentlemen, sent to the Lord Duke Cosimo (in addition to a drawing by the hand of the divine Michelangelo, wherein is a Cleopatra) another drawing by the hand of Sofonisba, containing a little girl laughing at a boy who is weeping because one of the crayfish out of a basket full of them, which she has placed in front of him, is biting his finger, and there is nothing more graceful to be seen than that drawing, or more true to nature.¹¹

A letter of Cavalieri's written to Cosimo de' Medici on January 20, 1562 survives, which states:

since I have one drawing done by the hand of a noblewoman of Cremona, named Sofonisba Angosciosa, today a lady of the Spanish court, I send it to you with this one (that of Michelangelo) and I believe that it may stand comparison with many other drawings, for it is not simply beautiful, but also exhibits considerable invention. And this is that the divine Michelangelo having seen a drawing done by her hand of a smiling girl, he said that he would have liked to see a weeping boy, as a subject more difficult to draw. After he wrote to her about it, she (Sofonisba) sent him this drawing which was a portrait of her brother, whom she has intentionally shown weeping. Now, I send them such as they are, and I beg your excellency to consider me as a servant, which, in truth, I am.¹²

The drawing, Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish, depicts Sofonisba's brother

Asdrubale with another sister. In Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, Maria

Kusche suggests that the sister depicted is "Minerva, who was an avid reader and may

have contributed the fable from which the scene was taken."¹³ Since Asdrubale is known

to have been born in 1551 and his physiognomical attributes indicate an age of about three

years, the drawing can be dated c.1554. As Cavalieri's letter states, before receiving the

Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish, Michelangelo had viewed another work of Sofonisba's,

possibly Girl With an Old Woman (fig. 18, see below, p. 11). Michelangelo and Sofonisba

¹¹Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, p. 128.

¹²Charles De Tolnay, "Sofonisba Anguissola and her Relations with Michelangelo," Journal of the Walters Art Gallery 4 (1941), 117. Several other scholars cite this letter, including: Papini, p. 574-75; Lancetti, p. 258; Perlingieri, p. 72. This letter and the drawings were received by Serristori, Cosimo I's ambassador to the papal court. Several days after this letter was written the works were sent on to the Duke Cosimo I accompanied by a letter from Serristori that Perlingieri includes, also on p. 72.

¹³p. 40.

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must, then, have made some kind of contact with one another at least as early as 1554.

Further contemporary documentation confirms that Michelangelo and Sofonisba remained at least indirectly in touch with one another over the next few years. Two letters remain from Sofonisba's father, Amilcare, to Michelangelo from May 1557 and 1558. In the 1557 letter Amilcare validates the correspondence between the two stating:

we are much obliged to have perceived the honorable and affable affection that you have and show for Sofonisba; I speak of my daughter, the one whom I caused to begin to practice the most honorable virtue of painting ... I beg of you that since, by your innate courtesy and goodness, you deigned by your advice in the past to introduce her (to art), that you will condescend sometime in the future to guide her again.¹⁴

These letters of Amilcare's and Tommaso de Cavalieri help to confirm a date of c.1554 for the Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish. Furthermore, the above quotation of De Tolnay's translations assist in correcting some inaccuracies in Perlingieri's publication. Reviewing Perlingieri's book, several scholars noted her translation of the May 7, 1557 letter that states that Michelangelo, rather than her father, had "introduced" Sofonisba to the art of painting. This led Perlingieri to assert that Sofonisba had travelled to Rome, where she believed Sofonisba studied under Michelangelo in the mid 1550's. De Tolnay's correct translation indicates that the advice occurred through written correspondence rather than personal contact. Furthermore, correspondence between Amilcare and other prominent Italians in the mid-to-late 1550's aids in chronologically placing Sofonisba still within the region of Cremona at that time.

If the Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish dates c.1554, then the attributed Uffizi self-portrait drawings--which Baldinucci cited together with it--might have been produced at around this same time. The Uffizi Self-Portrait (fig.3) drawing's authenticity as a work by

¹⁴De Tolnay, p. 116.

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Sofonisba goes unquestioned; however, some historians, including Caroli, believe it is, rather, a portrait of one her sisters--most likely Lucia. The catalog entry concerning this drawing (see below, pp. 52-55) considers its technical proficiency and the physiognomic characteristics of the portrayed individual. Based on this evidence, I propose the date c.1552-53, which would make this work the earliest of the three.

The drawing of the Girl with an Old Woman, believed by some to include a self-portrait of Sofonisba, displays physiognomical traits more akin to her sister Lucia (See below, p. 112-13). I would point out a correlation in age and in physical characteristics between the girl in this drawing and Lucia in the Chess Game of 1555 (fig.23, Poznan: Muzeum Narodowa). This thesis proposes a date of c.1553-54 for this drawing. Other scholars agree that this work precedes the Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish--for example, Kusche, who states:

the drawing dates earlier than the drawing of the Boy Bitten by a Crab, which should be dated 1554/1555 because of Asdrubale's age, in my opinion, the sister cannot be Europa, as Bora believes. Europa is considerably younger in the painting of the sisters playing chess.¹⁵

Its dating adds support to the concept of a series--that is, a set of works nearly all of the same date--including the Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish of c.1554.

The few painted works bearing legible signatures and dates provide important reference points about which other, comparable, portraits can be chronologically placed. The Uffizi Self-Portrait's (fig.2) inscription denotes that Sofonisba painted the work at the age of twenty; hence, the painting dates c.1552 based on Sofonisba's likely birthdate of c.1532. This accomplished work remains the earliest, undisputed painted self-portrait by

¹⁵Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, p. 104.

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Sofonisba. The dating of this work as c.1552 places it earlier, also, than the drawings discussed above.

The only other possible painting that could chronologically be placed contemporary to, or prior to, the Uffizi portrait is the Sterling Self-portrait at an Easel (fig.1). This thesis dates it to c.1550-52 on the basis of physiognomical characteristics and technical proficiency (See below, p. 46-48). This dating differs from that of other scholars, including Caroli, who date the work as c.1554.

Sofonisba produced the Vienna Self-Portrait (fig.4) in 1554, as its inscription, cited above states. Scholars note its compositional similarities to that of the Self-Portrait (fig.3) drawing of c.1553-4; some believe the drawing to be a preparatory work for the Vienna painting.¹⁶ Vasari records seeing a self-portrait, which may be this one, in Piacenza, along with Sofonisba's portrait of Piacenza's Archdeacon.¹⁷ Furthermore, Venturi discovered a letter written on March 17, 1556, by Amilcare to the Duke Ercole d'Este of Ferrara. Its content led him to suggest that Sofonisba sent this work to the Duke as a gift.¹⁸

Although it bears no inscription, the Naples Self-Portrait at the Clavichord (fig.5) apparently follows the Vienna portrait in chronological succession. Scholars agree to a date c.1556 for this work, in view of the maturity of physiognomical traits and technical progression as compared with the previously addressed works and those yet to be discussed. The Lancut Self-Portrait at an Easel (fig.6) strongly resembles the Naples work

¹⁶Marie Kusche, Rev. of "Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance," by Ilya Sandra Perlingieri. Burlington Magazine (Sept., 1993), p. 640.

¹⁷Giorgio Vasari., p. 46.

¹⁸Rossana Sacchi, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, ed. Paolo Buffa (Milan, Electra, 1994), p. 188.

in physiognomy and compositional drama. Both works illustrate an intense self-scrutinization and technical polish not previously observed. The elaborate compositions illustrate the type of "active portraiture", which male artists were also engaged in by mid-century (See below, p. 26-28). For these reasons, I suggest the Lancut portrait dates c.1556-67.

The Ashburnham medallion's (fig.7) inscription dates the work to 1558, making it the next portrait in the succession. Stylistic tendencies and a maturity of physiognomical traits support the inscribed date, as well. I propose that the Boston Self-Portrait (fig.8) dates close to this work, c.1558-59. Though they differ slightly in some facial features, overall a strong resemblance exists between the two (See below, p. 39-41). The similarities extend to their size and shape. They are of miniature dimensions: the Boston work measures 3-3/16 x 2-1/2"; and the medallion is 5-1/8" in diameter. In 1556 the renowned miniaturist Guilio Clovio visited Parma and Piacenza, historians believe that Sofonisba met Clovio at this time or at the very least found justification to work in this technique from hearing of his work.¹⁹ Clovio's influence may well have led Sofonisba to experiment in the miniature technique, which is displayed in the production of these two works, the smallest of her extant paintings.

A history of controversy surrounds the complex Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola (fig.10), in Siena, regarding its chronological placement. Flavio Caroli, in his book Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, provided a substantial account of

¹⁹Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, ed. P. Buffa, p. 196. The exhibition catalog Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman supports this assertions, while theorizing that she produced the Portrait of Guilio Clovio at the same time, p. 43 & 46.

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the painting's provenance and of its attribution to various other artists; also, he cites Morelli's proper identification, in 1890-1893, of the two individuals portrayed. Caroli presents a historical account of scholarly disagreement concerning the date of the work. He mentions Robert Willer's affirmation that it must have been painted in the 1550's; also, Romanini's belief that it dates from the 1540's or 1550's, for stylistic reasons, and thus nearer to Sofonisba's apprenticeship to Campi.

Cheney, Hamlich and Perlingieri all disagree on the date of the painting.

Perlingieri notes that "the date given for the painting by the museum is 1558. However, on the basis of the costume and Anguissola's own artistic style, an earlier date, c. 1550, would be more appropriate."²⁰ The fullness of Sofonisba's face, the perhaps inaccurate anatomical rendering of both Campi's and her own hands, and her light hair coloring constitute the evidence for Perilingieri's early attribution.

Hamlich notes Morelli's dating of the work as 1558 "because Campi , born around 1522 looks to be in his forties here", which agrees with the museum's dating. Finally, Cheney relates this work to the Althorp and Galleria Pamphili portraits (figs.9 & 16) in view of their double portrait compositions. Cheney theorizes that in Sofonisba's "later portraits she prefers to use the double portrait image representing her status as an artist or as a wife."²¹ Thus, she dates the painting 1559-60.

This study dates this work as c.1558-59 on stylistic, technical, and

²⁰P. 49.

²¹Liana Cheney, Rev. of "Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance," by Ilya Sandra Perlingieri. *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXIV/4 (1993), 944.

physiognomical grounds, while taking into account some circumstantial evidence. In 1559 Sofonisba had already left Cremona for Milan where she prepared for her trip to Spain. Sofonisba stayed there during the latter portion of 1559. Kutsche theorizes the work resulted from "a reunion with the much beloved old teacher, who had been living in Milan since he left Cremona."²² The duration of the trip to Spain and probable inconveniences along the way would make the completion of the work then most unlikely, especially given its large size among Sofonisba's compositions, 43-11/16 x 43-5/16".

The Althorp Self-Portrait at the Clavichord (fig. 9) also bears a history of disagreement regarding its chronological placement. The inscription on this portrait--quoted above--includes a not quite legible date: "156[1?]". Historians, since T. Martyn who cited this work in 1760 as inscribed as 1563, have debated between the dates of 1561 and 1563. Caroli cites a third date often considered, 1559, based on Sacchi's stylistic analysis. Upon comparing the work stylistically with those produced during her Spanish period, including the Milan and Chantilly self-portraits (figs. 11 & 12), this study agrees with Sacchi's placement of the work in the final segment of her Cremonese period, c.1559. Again, the period 1559-1560 a time of travel and relocation, appears improbable.

The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog recounts at length the debate over dating the Milan portrait (fig. 11). It notes the inscription, on the right side just above the shoulder, which states: (not very legibly)[...]OPONISBA [...]ILCARIS [...]M[...]SIS L[...]XI, as well as the varying interpretations of the date as 1559 and 1561. In view of the "XI" together with the noticeably heightened extravagance of her costume here and its

²²Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, p. 54.

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relation to fashions prevalent at the Spanish court at the time, I suggest the date of 1561 for this work. For the same reasons, the Chantilly work (fig.12) seems placeable within the Spanish period. The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog dates this work 1564; I have no reason to disagree.

The final self-portrait under consideration is the Niva painting (fig.13). Perlingieri promoted Harris' assertion of this work as a self-portrait of Sofonisba datable to 1620. The latest self-portrait painted by Sofonisba, it invites comparison with those portraits of her painted by Anthony Van Dyck several years later in 1624, at which point he reported that her eyesight had become greatly diminished (See below, p. 95-97). This study agrees with Harris, Perlingieri, and others in the assertion that it is indeed a late self-portrait, c.1620. Compositional and stylistic similarities shared between this image and her other self-portraits provide the foundation for this opinion (See below, p. 95-97).

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CINQUECENTO FEMININE EDUCATION AND SOFONISBA ANGUISSOLA

Before addressing the queries as to why Sofonisba produced this plethora of self-portraits, and why a distinct disparity of physiognomical traits exist among them, one must first ask what prompted her to produce these works at all. More directly, one must ask why Sofonisba and her sisters received an education that encompassed the art of painting no less than literature and music. One must briefly examine contemporary trends in the education of women at this time, contemporary literature concerning the education of women, as well as documented examples of other women renowned for their achievement in liberal arts. Furthermore, the Anguissola's societal position within the Cremonese minor nobility requires consideration to provide an idea of the educational opportunities open to Sofonisba.

Ruth Kelso's Doctrine for the lady of the Renaissance (1956 and 1978) and Ian Maclean's Renaissance Notion of Women (1980) consolidate a wealth of information concerning the education of women of Sofonisba's social status, and above it, drawn from contemporary literature. These critical resources provide the foundation for three works that study particular examples of renowned, educated Renaissance women. They are: King and Rabil's Her Immaculate Hand (1983), Patricia Labalme's Beyond Their Sex (1980) and Whitney Chadwick's Women, Art and Society (1990).

Scholars agree that in the Cinquecento literature concerning women, authors deemed it necessary to examine the woman's place within the universe before discussing her education. What was a Renaissance woman's place within the universe? To furnish an answer to this first question, Kelso and Maclean examine Renaissance humanist literature

bearing in mind its reverence for ancient authorities such as Plato and Aristotle. Kelso notes that by the sixteenth century literature on this subject and the vituperation of women by men had reached an extreme, amounting to a declaration of a "war of the sexes". This led to "recognized traducers and champions charg[ing] and counter-charge [ing], often changing sides and even fighting on both sides at once,"²³ thus providing material to determine what place in the scheme of things the lady was assigned by Renaissance opinion. "In Renaissance theory woman's place in the scheme of things depends primarily upon the qualifications seen in her or assigned to her.... Well, what are the traits that Renaissance writers praised most frequently on constituting perfection for women?," Kelso inquires. She continues:

First of all, beauty will have to be assumed, the chief good of the body, requisite for perfect happiness and all other perfection, moral and intellectual...the greatest concern here must be with moral qualities, listed with variation by almost every defender of women. [All agree women must have] humility, sweetness, simplicity, peaceableness, kindness, piety, temperance, obedience, patience, charitableness, and the like²⁴

with chastity rating the highest particularly for women of nobility, which would include the Anguissola daughters.

Granted her theoretical importance, what of her position in society? The institution of marriage constituted her primary social function, although many exceptions occurred for the sake of religious vocations. Maclean states that:

woman's protected and conservative role in the household and in society is justified by arguments from naturally preordained function, as is the institution of marriage itself. These structures of thought make changes in the realm of moral philosophy very difficult without dislocations of a fundamental nature. Such dislocations do occur: they are caused by changes in society such as the

²³Ruth Kelso, Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956 and 1978), p. 5-6.

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activities of queens, queens regents and court ladies, and the emergence of a class of women possessing leisure and the aspiration to fill it profitably. Claims that women have equal virtue and mental powers and an equal right to education become more strident throughout Europe after the middle of the sixteenth century,²⁵

and such claims may have found expression in the education of Sofonisba herself.

The contemporary literature on marriage and the woman's expected roles within that institution, offer plenty of argument for the education of women. Kelso observes:

It was also argued that prospects for marriage improved with increase of learning, even in the case of girls of lower parentage....If parents are of high birth and position and their daughters show promise, a careful education may bring about many commendable results. Young maidens well trained are soon sought in honorable matches because their qualities will correspond to their state, and their wisdom promises help in procuring the common good of the house not to speak of 'what frute the common weale may reape, by such witts so worthily advanced'.²⁶

This point pertaining to education as a means to essential ends, a desirable marriage and perhaps a lower dowry, is important to the discussion of Sofonisba's education, as well as her sisters'. Perlingieri said as much in her 1992 Sofonisba Anguissola: The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, although without offering documentation or examples. The above quotation from Kelso substantiates Perilingieri's idea that Amilcare educated his daughters to increase their virtues, and to improve his chances of diminishing the potential financial burden of providing dowries for six daughters. (The Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman catalog discusses the financial situation of the family at greater length.)

Already established in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Renaissance trend toward education for women of nobility flourished in the mid-to-late sixteenth

²⁵Ian Maclean, Renaissance Notion of Women (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press; 1980), p. 66.

²⁶P., 65.

century. King and Rabil's Her Immaculate Hand studies three generations of educated Italian women noted for their Humanist writing. This examination exposes similarities among the histories of these women:

All of them were from substantial , most from aristocratic families in the urban centers of Northern Italy. All came from homes in which learning was valued; in many cases the learning of young girls was strongly supported by their fathers. In at least two cases the fathers were the principal if not the only teachers; in other cases the fathers chose tutors who taught the young women, perhaps alongside their brothers.

In every case the women , as young girls, were encouraged and strongly supported in their studies. They were recognized by their families, by male humanists, and by their cities as prodigies.²⁷

Though this reference refers to female writers rather than female artists, this thesis suggests a plausible correlation between Amilcare's interest in the education of his daughters and that of the fathers discussed by King and Rabil. In Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, Kusche substantiates such an assertion while noting Amilcare's friendship with the scholar Marco Gerolamo Vida. She theorizes that "in their intellectual circle the topic of education, especially that of young girls, was a subject of discussion. Amilcare must have resolved to set theory into practice with his own children."²⁸

The Anguissola family's social position as a family of minor nobility has previously been mentioned in passing. Perlingieri provides a substantial amount of information regarding the family's history and social ranking that extends far beyond the purpose of this study. I note here only several of her points. First, the Anguissola's attempt to trace their lineage back to antiquity, indeed to Carthaginian history and Hannibal himself. She

²⁷Margaret King & Albert Rabil, eds. Her Immaculate Hand (Binghampton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1983), p. 25.

²⁸P.27. Kusche recommends Vida's Cremonensium Orationes III adversus Papienses in controversia Principatus (Cremona, 1550) and Valero Guazzoni's "Donna, pittrice e gentildonna: La nascita di un mito femminile de Cinquecento" in Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle (Cremona, 1994), p. 57.

recounts the history of Hannibal's family , with particular emphasis on the legends of his niece Sofonisba, and then the Anguissola genealogy and their choice of namesakes from the ancient Carthaginian family:

Lazzaro Anguissola named his son Annibale (probably after Hannibal), who, in turn, named his son Amilcare (probably after Hamilcare Barca). When Amilcare and Bianca Anguissola had their seven children, they continued the family tradition and also added their own penchant for mythological names.²⁹

Both Sofonisba and Asdrubale's names derive from this family tradition. The attempt by noble families to connect their family histories to renowned families of antiquity became a common occurrence during the Renaissance. The Medici family's effort to trace their genealogy back to Charlemagne, and Michelangelo's to the "counts of Canossa", furnish extreme examples.

The Anguissola sisters acquired distinction also by their learning in the arts of painting, music, and embroidery, as well as in becoming literate. As previously suggested their educations emulated those of the women writers that King and Rabil discuss in Her Immaculate Hand. Their father, Amilcare, made sure that his daughters received recognition for their accomplishments. His professional relationships with Bernardino Campi and Bernardino Gatti led to his choosing these men as painting tutors for Sofonisba. He directly involved himself in the promotion of Sofonisba's art. His letters to Michelangelo and Duke Ercole d'Este of Ferrara attest to his role of active involvement in Sofonisba's career; Ferino-Pagden even suggests his frequent letters led her to become an "international" name.³⁰ Amilcare was known to have sent one of Sofonisba's self-portraits

²⁹Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola, p. 28-29.

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¹¹ Anne Sutherland
House, 1976), p. 29-3

¹² Whitney Chas

to Pope Julius III, as well, which today is believed to be the Uffizi Self-Portrait of 1552 (fig.2).³¹

Obviously Sofonisba received encouragement and support from her family, and also from renowned male artists, including Michelangelo, Campi and Gatti. Vasari attests to Sofonisba's talents as well as her sisters', noting also their renown in their city of Cremona.

The nearby city of Bologna, meanwhile, offered an example of a reputable female artist: Properzia de' Rossi. Although perceived as difficult, and deviating from the social norm, de' Rossi set a precedent for female artists' receiving commissions and achieving renown. Vasari recounted de' Rossi's success in the art of sculpture:

while assuring his readers of her beauty, musical accomplishment, and household skills, also relat[ing] that she was persecuted by a jealous painter until she was finally paid a very low price for her work and, discouraged, turned to engraving on copper.³²

The first writer to make a connection between the achievements of de' Rossi and Anguissola, Vasari included his first, brief account of Sofonisba at the end of his account of de' Rossi.

Concerned as always about social position, Amilcare and his daughters would most likely not have looked so much to the example of Properzia de' Rossi as to the justification of the woman-as-artist offered by reputable writers, both ancient and contemporary: Pliny, Boccaccio, Alberti and Castiglione. Pliny cites the case of Iria of Kyzikos:

who remained single all her life, worked at Rome in the youth of Marcus Varro, both with the brush

³¹ Anne Sutherland Harris & Linda Nochlin, Women Artists: 1550-1950 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum, 1976), p. 29-30.

³² Whitney Chadwick, Women, Art and Society (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), p. 83.

and with the cestrum of ivory. She painted chiefly portraits of women, and also a large picture of an old woman at Naples, and a portrait of herself, executed with the help of a mirror. No artist worked more rapidly than she did, and her pictures had such merit that they sold for higher prices than those of Sopolis and Dionysios, well-known contemporary painters, whose works fill our galleries.³³

This account of Iaia of Kyzikos (sometime identified as Laia or Lala of Cizicus) yields validation of not only the production of portraiture and self-portraiture, but its production by a female artist.

Sofonisba's use of the word 'Virgo' within her signature was briefly mentioned above. Several of Sofonisba's sisters also followed this convention. Contemporary scholars believe inclusion of this word represents a conscious reference to the classical female artist. Iaia was called "a *perpetua virgo*, who ... renounced physical pleasure to dedicate herself fully to the arts"³⁴; such a reference by Sofonisba would indicate similar personal convictions and career aspirations. Within her self-portraiture, Sofonisba's incorporation of iconography symbolic of her career aspirations/affirmations recurs, e.g. the Lancut and Uffizi paintings (figs. 6 & 2). The Boston portrait's (fig. 8) inscription which denotes the artist's utilization of a mirror also suggests a reference to Iaia. Thus, the notion of Sofonisba's use of the word 'Virgo' to convey classical reference or career affirmation correlates with other iconographic conventions incorporated into her work.

Sofonisba's knowledge of Pliny's reference to Iaia could have been acquired through various contemporary sources considered acceptable for her education.

✓ Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*, Alberti's *On Painting*, and Vasari's *Lives* all cite Pliny

³³K. Jex-Blake, *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art* (Chicago: Argonaut, Inc, 1968), p. 170-171.

³⁴Sykvia Ferino-Pagden, *Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman*, p. 16. Also noted in Schweikart 1992, p. 115 and by Ghirardi in exhibition catalog Bologna 1994, p. 39.

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the Elder, although discrepancies occur among their presentations of Pliny's information. Boccaccio misconstrues Iaia of Cyzicus as Marcia, daughter of Varro and he turns Iaia/Marcia into a moral example, indicating she painted women only because of "her chaste modesty". In antiquity, he explains, "figures were for the greater part represented nude or half nude, and it seemed to her necessary either to make men imperfect, or, by making them perfect, forget maidenly modesty. To avoid these things, it seemed better to her to abstain from both."³⁵

Like Boccaccio, Alberti utilizes the reference to Pliny's mention of female painters to emphasize his own objective, which differed from Pliny's. His reference to Pliny appears in *Book II* of his On Painting, where he cites a multitude of classical examples regarding the nobility of the pursuit of painting. After noting the interest in painting by both learned and unlearned individuals, Alberti goes on to say that:

indeed the skill of painting was a mark of honour also in women. Martia, Varro's daughter, is celebrated by writers for her painting. The art was held in such high esteem and honour that it was forbidden by law among the Greeks for slaves to learn to paint.³⁶

Following Boccaccio, he confuses Iaia with Marcia. Alberti affirms painting's nobility as well as its appropriateness as a pursuit by women--the latter point being expressed here for the first time.

In his Book of the Courtier published in April, 1528, Castiglione called for the court lady to "be knowledgeable about literature and painting, to know how to dance and play games, adding a discreet modesty and the ability to give a good impression of herself

³⁵ Anne Sutherland Harris & Linda Nochlin, p. 23.

³⁶ Leon Battista Alberti, On Painting, trans. Cecil Grayson (New York: Penguin Books, 1972 & 1991), p. 63.

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to the other principles that have been taught of the courtier."³⁷ Following Castiglione's lead, subsequent sixteenth century texts confirm that a woman of nobility should indeed have knowledge of literature, music , and painting. Included among these texts are: Giovanni Michele Bruto's *La institutione di una fancuilla nata nobilmente* (1555) and Vives' *De institutione feminae Christianae* (1538).

Sofonisba depicts herself clothed in black and white in all of her self-portraits. Particularly within those produced during her Cremonese period, her clothes appear quite stark and unadorned in comparison with other portraits of women at this time. The organizers of the 1995 *Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman* exhibition theorized that her rationale for doing this might have been influenced by Castiglione's writing, although his writing concerns the courtier primarily, not the courtlady. They said:

In an age when women were noted for their flamboyant apparel, she depicted herself as dignified and serious, wearing black jackets and high-necked white collars with little or no jewelry. It is possible that the artist may have drawn on the model recommended in Baldasser Castiglione's Book of the Courtier (1528), which suggests that male courtiers wear dark clothing and maintain a formal appearance. Anguissola likely shaped her image to avoid the fatal association with beauty, thereby allowing her artwork to stand on its own merit.³⁸

Whether or not her choice of clothing was an attempt to avoid associations with beauty, various aspects of her self-portrayals are discussed below (pp. 32-43) for their apparent compliance with contemporary notions as to what constitutes beauty in a woman.

³⁷Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, trans. George Bull. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967), p.

³⁸Wall label.

AN ANALYSIS OF SOFONISBA'S SELF-PORTRAITURE IN RELATION TO CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITURE IN GENERAL

Any study of self-portraiture in the Renaissance cannot be undertaken without considering portraiture in general. A brief discussion of the development of portraiture within the Renaissance must be addressed in order to elucidate the tradition of which Sofonisba's self-portraiture is a part.

Sir John Pope-Hennessy stated that "it is sometimes said that the Renaissance vision of man's self-sufficient nature marks the beginning of the modern world. Undoubtedly it marks the beginning of the modern portrait."³⁹ Already, achievements in portraiture had reached a high point in the early sixteenth century. Artists such as Leonardo, Raphael and Titian created not only physical resemblances but also revelations of personality and states of mind. This paper addresses Sofonisba Anguissola's self-portraiture in the light of these innovations. The portrait by Sofonisba entitled Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish (fig.22), of c.1554, portrays two different individuals in a juxtaposition of two human emotions. Within this image Sofonisba demonstrates her ability to act as "an interpreter whose habit is to probe into the mind and for whom inspection connotes analysis."⁴⁰ Leonardo da Vinci initiated portraiture's objective of illustrating the "motions of the mind" through emotional expression. Subsequently, Raphael embraced this objective which "by 1512 ... gave rise to a new type of active portrait."⁴¹

³⁹Sir John Pope-Hennessy, The Portrait in the Renaissance (New York: Bolligen Foundation, 1966), p. 3.

⁴⁰P. 3-4.

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Meanwhile, Titian introduced a new approach to portraiture as distinct from Giorgione's. Pope-Hennessy explains:

in Venice in the early 16th century two views of the function of the portrait were permissible. Should it portray the sitter, as Giorgione does ... in a state of emotional involvement which shows up one aspect of the personality as a beam of light shows up the face, or should it represent the whole man, stripped of local contingencies and outside time, for the inspection of mankind? No sooner was Giorgione dead than this second view of portraiture found its exposition in Titian ... Titian did not, like Giorgione, see the human personality through a haze of literary romance. For him the portrait was a panegyric, but a panegyric rooted in veracity.⁴²

Trained by Campi and Gatti, often said to imitate Moroni, Sofonisba inherited these trends of representation from her Venetian predecessors. Her portraiture cannot be equated directly either with that of Giorgione or that of Titian, but rather incorporates aspects of both. Sofonisba's conventionalization of features (addressed below, in the last chapter) might somewhat recall the vein of Giorgione. Her avoidance of a romantic attitude recalls Titian.

In his self-portraits Titian depicted himself not in an analytic mood, but rather "as he wished to appear before posterity", as Sofonisba was to do in her portraits.⁴³ His Self-Portrait (fig.24, c.1562, oil on canvas. Madrid: Prado), a typical example, illustrates his social position and vocation through his garments, the gold chain, as well as the brush held in his hand. Painted late in his career, it offers an interesting comparison with Sofonisba's portraits that include accoutrements of her vocation. The Uffizi work (fig.2), painted at the start of her career, particularly invites comparison for its similar objectives. Charles Hope noted that Titian's representation of himself in this self-portrait "conforms to the

⁴²P. 135-36.

⁴³Pope-Hennessy, p. 193.

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pattern of Titian's portraiture in general. In his life and work Titian always presented a public facade."⁴⁴ In many respects the same can be stated of Sofonisba's self-portraiture, particularly those appearing to be more conventionalized.

Catarina van Hemessen's Self-portrait (fig.25, 1548. Basel: Offentliche Kunstsammlung. Oil on panel 12-3/16 x 9-13/16") furnishes a further example of the potential use of the self-portrait as a vehicle for career/social statement, as well as a comparison with a work of this kind by another female artist. Like the Lancut and Sterling portraits (figs.6 & 1), de Hemmessen's image portrays the artist as though caught in the act of painting. Both works demonstrate the artists' social and vocational position. Quite possibly Castiglione's Book of the Courtier, which promotes the nobility of the art of painting as a pursuit acceptable for women, would have been known to van Hemmessen, as it had been to Sofonisba (see above, pp. 22, 24-25). Stylistically the two artists' works differ; Sofonisba's representation bears a life-like animation not apparent in de Hemmessen's work. Furthermore, the physical proportions, particularly in the bodice, depicted by Sofonisba are also more true.

Maria Kusche noted the similarities between the two artists' portraits, yet believed Sofonisba's works to be "influenced by the works of Caterina van Hemessen ... [Yet, she acknowledges] it is not known whether she was familiar with the work of the Flemish artist directly or through prints, or whether she had only heard of her."⁴⁵ This study doubts that Sofonisba would have known of, the comparatively obscure, van Hemessen or

⁴⁴ Charles Hope, Titian (London: Jupiter Books, 1980), p. 144.

⁴⁵ Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, p. 40.

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Deeply intertwined with the pursuits of contemporary humanism, Renaissance portraiture reflects upon "human motives and human character, the resurgent recognition of those factors which make human beings individual; that lay at the center of Renaissance life."⁴⁶ Like most Renaissance pursuits, portraiture received substantiation from Classical commentary concerning the nobility of the art of painting and the famous examples of portraiture by the ancient masters. Many humanist authors made specific reference to Pliny the Elder's (AD 23/24-79) *Historia Naturalis*. Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus* (c.1370), Alberti's *On Painting* (1440/1441), and Vasari's *Lives* (1568) all cite this classical source.

Sofonisba's concentration on self-portraiture was unique in its time, and nearly without precedent. Certainly, many male artists' produced self-portraits; however, the quantity of self-portraits Sofonisba created had some precedent only in the work of the Northern European artist, Albrecht Dürer, whose concentration upon the theme she exceeded. Dürer's investigation into self-portraiture is only one among many aspects of his art. Sofonisba's career and her renown began with her self-portraiture and might be said to end with it, in the Niva portrait (fig. 13) painted perhaps within five years of her death.

It is unlikely, moreover, that Sofonisba was aware of Dürer's innovations in the self-portraiture, even indirectly. Still, intriguing similarities occur between the two artists and their self-portrayals at similar periods of their lives. The most relevant affinity occurs

⁴⁶Pope-Hennessy, p. 3.

between Sofonisba's (1552) Uffizi Self-Portrait (fig.2) and Dürer's (1498) Self-Portrait (fig.26, Madrid: Prado). Sofonisba's Uffizi Self-Portrait depicts herself, as announced in her inscription, at the age of twenty. She holds within her hand the attributes of a painter in a declaration that carries several meanings. First, the inclusion of the artistic accoutrements announces her status as an artist in a declaration of a career, at a time when most females of her age were already married or shortly to be married. Secondly, the inclusion of the inscription in bold capital letters and roman numerals, along with the painting tools presents to the viewer several indications of her status within society. The fact that she is obviously literate, as well as educated in the art of painting denotes her upper-level social position. Likewise, Dürer's Self-Portrait, painted when he was twenty-eight, declares his independence as an artist as well as his recently advanced social status. "This is Dürer as the successful businessman as well as the proud artist," James Snyder writes. "Upon his return to Nuremberg, Dürer was elevated to a status rivaling that of the upper social circles of the city, the *Ehrbaren*, or wealth merchants."⁴⁷ The fine clothing he portrays himself in reinforces the effect of his affluence. The production of this portrait followed Dürer's first trip to Italy, after his apprenticeships, as evidenced by the Italian landscape shown through the window. The inclusion of the landscape, as well as his clothing, functions for Dürer as the painting accouterments had for Sofonisba, as a statement of artistic progress and career affirmation. Yet as previously indicated, Sofonisba gleaned from male artists' explorations of portraiture, conceptual ideals which

⁴⁷James Snyder, Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575 (New York: Abrams, 1985), p. 323, pl. 361.

she encompassed in her self-portraits, as well as her portraits of others.

Lorne Campbell asserts that "by paying close attention to the practicalities of portraiture, [it is possible] to make reasoned deductions about the painters intentions and to describe those small distortions by which, instinctively or consciously, they individualized and characterized their sitters."⁴⁸ This thesis follows this assertion in its analysis, below, of the disparities among Sofonisba's self-portraits.

⁴⁸Lorne Campbell, Renaissance Portraits: European Portrait Painting in the 14th, 15th, and 16th Centuries (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. X.

SOFONISBA'S SELF-PORTRAITURE AND CONTEMPORARY IDEAL FEMININE BEAUTY

In 1933 Adolfo Venturi professed that the Naples Self-Portrait at the Clavichord "shows the young Sofonisba where it calls to better attention her superficial but delicate pictorial qualities."⁴⁹ Other scholars have noted this conventionalization, or stylization, of features within Sofonisba's self-portraiture, yet the possible correlation of this process with contemporary, conventional notions of feminine beauty has yet to be discussed. This thesis offers suggestions as to how Sofonisba's conventionalization of physiognomic attributes within her self-portraits appears to correspond to Cinquecento notions of ideal beauty.

Particular physiognomic attributes repeatedly occur in her self-portraiture: a 3/4 facial portrayal, in which shading envelops half the face; the hair centrally parted and arranged in a braid that wraps about the crown of the head; the forehead comprising a third of the face; the eyebrows appearing highly arched and delineated; the large, wide eyes of a blue-green hue with a dark pupil and ring around the iris; the pronounced upper and lower eyelids; the long nose gently sloping to a rounded tip with the faintly shaded indication of a nostril; the pronounced indentation beneath the nose; the delicate, light vermillion lips curved into a slight smile with the lower lip casting a shadow onto the chin; the chin bearing a slight indentation in the center; the full, slightly flushed cheeks of a lighter shade of vermillion than the ear or lips; and when shown, elongated hands and

⁴⁹Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola, p. 213. Storia dell' arte italiana, vol. 9. La pittura del Cinquecento (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1933), p. 929-30.

fingers. All or most of these physiognomic traits appear together in each of her self-portraits, although Sofonisba accentuated, or otherwise varied, some of them moderately from work to work.

Within her self-portraiture two categories of deviations concerning facial attributes occur. The first category comprises subtle variation of traits that appear to conform to contemporary ideals of feminine beauty. Numerous male artists incorporated such idealizations in their portrayals of the woman; Parmigianino consistently idealized female attributes. Sofonisba sometimes did and sometimes did not. Scholars accept as authentic all of those conforming to such an idealized mode: the Ashburnham medallion, the Boston miniature, the Vienna and the Siena paintings, and also (to some extent) the one in the Uffizi. Scholars do not unanimously agree, on the other hand, upon those portraits of the second category which bear less conventionalized features, such as the Althorp, Lancut, Naples, and Sterling portraits. These works differ from the Ashburnham, Boston, Vienna, Siena, and Uffizi portraits, moreover, not only in their degree of realism but also in their more activated poses. In these the artist seems to take a more aggressive approach to her self-portrayal, and achieves a sharpened sense of self-scrutiny. This seemingly inconsistent approach to her self-portraiture recalls the potentially opposite theoretical ideals of contemporary Italian art: idealization vs. naturalism and active vs. passive.

Sofonisba's pursuit of these conventionalizing and also non-conventionalizing possibilities resists classification into a strict timeframe. Several comparisons between physiognomical features present in various portraits, found below, illustrate Sofonisba's varying use of these conventions throughout her Cremonese period. The Milan and

Chantilly self-portraits, through their lack of stylization, would suggest that Sofonisba discontinued her conventionalization of features within her self-portraiture once in Spain. However, as the only extant examples of self-portraiture from her Spanish period, this cannot be definitively proven. Her portraiture of members of the court would suggest she continued utilizing such idealizing tendencies, particularly in the 1576 portrait of Don Carlos now lost. Maria Kusche says as much in her discussion of this painting:

The prince liked it so much that he ordered thirteen copies from and six additional versions from another artist ... No wonder the prince preferred this portrait to the highly realistic ones by the court painter. The magnificent garment, already praised by Ribera and exactly described in Sánchez Coello's bills, hides the physical defects that the degenerate, hunchbacked prince suffered. Sofonisba transformed him into an acceptable successor to the throne, and he reciprocated with an acknowledgement of gratitude and a valuable ring.⁵⁰

Lorne Campbell notes Italian artists, in particular, as "encumbered by an artistic theory that was based on classical texts and that exalted both naturalism and idealization."⁵¹ Inherent aspects of portraiture perpetuate this duality of naturalism and idealization, though it affects other genres as well. Three famous works, preceding Sofonisba's are especially effective as examples of idealization of female features: Titian's portrait of Isabella d'Este (fig.27, c.1534-36, oil on canvas, Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum), Parmigianino's Madonna with the Long Neck (fig.28, c.1535. Florence: Uffizi), and his Antea (fig.29, 1535-37. Naples: Pinacoteca del Museo Nazionale).

Titian's Isabella d'Este demonstrates perhaps an extreme case. He painted it as a copy of a portrait by Francia, which itself was not rendered directly from her features. She had not sat for it; Francia based his likeness of her on second-hand verbal information

⁵⁰P. 68.

⁵¹P. 228.

and possibly an earlier portrait. Titian's portrait, in turn, pleased his 62-year old patron, who said: "We doubt whether, at the age at which he represents us, we were as beautiful as the picture."⁵²

Parmigianino's Madonna with the Long Neck (fig.28) epitomizes the lengths to which such idealization could extend. Freedberg notes that "no sixteenth-century work of art goes farther than this in its arbitrary reformation of humanity into images of artificial grace, grand yet precious, and of an improbable and quasi-abstract beauty."⁵³ Not only are the Madonna's facial attributes idealized within a perfect oval countenance, but the elongated neck, hand, torso, and legs take the conventionalization to its limits. Together these attributes constitute an ideal female type incorporated by the artist into both religious and portrait compositions.

Parmigianino's Antea (fig.29) illustrates his use of this idealizing approach in portraiture. Like the Madonna with the Long Neck, Antea's face is a perfect oval with an elongated, narrow, sloping nose and delicate lips. Moreover, Antea's head appears disproportionally smaller than the exaggerated frame of her body. Freedberg mentions this modification which suits Parmigianino's arbitrary canon of proportions, while noting that "the structure of her face must in reality have much resembled that of [his] invented female type. So easy was its translation into ideal terms that he in fact used it, or at least a face most closely modeled to it, in the group attendant upon the [Madonna with the Long

⁵²P.190.

⁵³Sydney J. Freedberg, Parmigianino: His Works in Painting (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), p.

Neck] in her ideal realm."⁵⁴ Such artistic conventionalization of feminine features corresponding to ideal notions of feminine beauty parallels an analogous pursuit by contemporary writers. Numerous sixteenth century treatises present these notions and allude to examples shown in contemporary painting. Mary Rogers analyzes three such works: Giangiorgio Trissino's *Lritratti* (Rome, 1524), Agnolo Firenzuola's *Delle bellezze della donne* (Florence, 1548), and Frederigo Luigini's *Libro delle bella donne* Venice, 1554). She presents a thorough discussion of contemporary philosophical notions as the foundation for such theories, which extends beyond the parameters of this thesis. While each work discusses aspects of feminine beauty and its manifestation in art, Firenzuola's study contributes ideal qualities for each physiognomic attribute that shares the strongest affinity with the considerations required by an artist.

Written for the citizens of Prato, Firenzuola's dialogue embodies the Italian-Renaissance belief in a correlation of physical beauty with the beauty of the soul. Firenzuola's statement that "a beautiful woman is the most beautiful object one can admire, and beauty is the greatest gift God bestowed on His human creatures. And so, through her virtue we direct our souls to contemplation, and through contemplation to the desire of heavenly things,"⁵⁵ illustrates the affinity between the physical and the spiritual embodied by contemporary Neoplatonic philosophy. His *Second Dialogue* in this work provides a discussion of individual physiognomical traits of a woman and their

⁵⁴P. 118-119.

⁵⁵Agnolo Firenzuola, *On the Beauty of Women*, trans. and ed. Konrad Eisenbichler and Jacqueline Murray. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1992), p. 11.

corresponding ideal attributes. Seemingly aware of such notions of ideal beauty, Sofonisba would seem to have incorporated them into some, even all, of her self-portraits as the variations inherent in them fit within this standard.

In 1976, Elizabeth Cropper initiated the consideration of apparent correlations between Firenzuola's dialogue on ideal feminine beauty and sixteenth century paintings by men, particularly Parmigianino's Madonna with the Long Neck. Cropper's correlation led, in turn, to subsequent studies, such as Rogers', relating to male depictions of the female. Below, this study discusses Sofonisba's conventionalization in her self-portraiture as it corresponds to contemporary theories of ideal feminine beauty.

Consider, for a moment a comparison of the Vienna (fig.4) and Ashburnham medallion (fig.7) portraits as examples of Sofonisba's rendering of facial attributes in apparent conformity with standards of ideal beauty. In spite of physiognomical differences between them, they both seem to observe such standards. The Vienna portrait promotes a stylized representation of the prominent facial features. Contemplate the highly articulated arch of the eyebrows that through intense shading adjoin with the pronounced, elongated nose into a seemingly single element. The dominate, widely-opened eyes seem almost disproportionally exaggerated. On the other hand, the Ashburnham medallion offers a substantially different interpretation of the same face. In this image, the eyes and nose dominate less. The eyebrows, though still pronounced, receive less emphasis than in the Vienna portrait. At the same time, the Ashburnham medallion introduces other pleasing facial attributes. Notice the cleft of the chin, the slight dimpling at the corners of the mouth, and the pronounced extra curvation of flesh apparent just above the earlobe.

Furthermore, the facial coloration and skin surface seem truer to life than does the extremely pale complexion set off by dark vermillion lips in the Vienna portrait.

Both of these portraits might be used, in spite of their differences, to illustrate Agnolo Firenzuola's discussion of the ideals for each particular facial component.

Firenzuola writes:

there is no scarcity to those who praise blue eyes that tend toward the color of the sky, and it is written by very trustworthy authors that beautiful Venus had them like that. Eyes must be ... large and full, neither concave or hollow, for hollowness makes for a proud gaze, whereas fullness makes for a beautiful and modest gaze. Wanting to praise Juno's eyes, Homer said they were like those of an ox, meaning they were round, full, and large.⁵⁶

Sofonisba's conventionalization of the eyes in the Vienna portrait, by making them proportionally exaggerated, causes them to become the focal point of the composition. As Firenzuola denoted, "the fullness makes for a beautiful and modest gaze". By making this correlation, I do not deny the Ashburnham medallion's possession of this emphasis, but would point out its heightened degree of significance in the Vienna portrait. The Ashburnham medallion, likewise, seems to correspond to a greater degree with Firenzuola's idealized specifications for the chin and mouth. Particularly, the cleft in the chin, represented in this image, is noted by him as a "sign of beauty".

The Siena painting Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola depicts Sofonisba turned to her right as she is in the Vienna portrait. The two share certain physiognomic affinities particularly in the rendering of the hair, forehead, eyebrows, and ear. The eyebrows in each form stylized arches. The eyebrows in the Siena portrait illustrate, even more than the Vienna portrait, Firenzuola's idealizing specifications:

⁵⁶Firenzuola, p. 51, 53.

"they grow gently thinner from their middle to their extremities, on the side up to the hollow or socket of the eye, toward the nose, and on the other toward the part that is near the ear, and there they end."⁵⁷ Sofonisba rendered her forehead, hair, and ear in both works in a more painterly manner than in the Boston and Ashburnham portraits. The use of *sfumato* creates a softer impression of these traits. At the same time, the coloration of her complexion her conforms more to that seen in the Ashburnham and Boston portraits.

Likewise, the Boston Self-Portrait's physiognomical attributes bear a striking resemblance to those in the Ashburnham medallion. As in the previous comparisons, certain facial aspects differ, particularly the lack of a cleft markation and intensified coloration of the lips, cheeks, and chin to a richer vermillion in the Boston image. Their slightly differing facial features and similarities in size and shape were mentioned above, and yet still a strong resemblance exists between the two.

The affinities mentioned between these works continue in their correspondence to Firenzuola's idealized preferences. The Boston works heightened accent on the coloration of the cheeks, chin and lips finds justification in Firenzuola's writing which states:

As the cheeks swell they become fleshy-pink until, on their summit, they deepen into that reddish hue the sun leaves behind itself when it departs from our hemisphere in fine weather, and you know nothing else but fairness shaded with vermillion ... The lips should not be too thin, nor overly thick, but such that their vermillion may show against the flesh-pink that surrounds them ... The chin is round and colored in a light vermillion, a little brighter on its rise.⁵⁸

Except for the Siena painting, those works conforming to a great extent with contemporary ideals of feminine beauty tend towards rather minute dimensions. Their

⁵⁷P. 51.

⁵⁸P. 57-59.

small size made them readily transportable; thus, they were very likely used as tokens or gifts. The diverse recipients of these works have been discussed above; and, Kusche notes, "Sofonisba's portraits soon became collector's items."⁵⁹ Tommaso de' Cavalieri's comments, quoted above, along with other contemporary sources, indicate the reason for her works being considered "collector's items". As a portrait of a woman, the work was considered an object of beauty; yet, as an art object produced by a woman, the work was considered a marvel--an exception to the norm. Such a work would fit well in contemporary collections of rare objects of beauty. So, too, in another sense, might the Siena portrait, in its elaborate contrivance, its poetical "conceit"--which has been discussed by others. The Medici's collection of curiosities, of which Sofonisba's drawing became a part, received international renown. (Frederika Jacobs article "Woman's Capacity to Create: The Unusual Case of Sofonisba Anguissola" analyzes her at length as a curiosity of the time.)

All of the portraits discussed to this point conformed in many aspects to contemporary notions of ideal beauty. Likewise, they all portray the artist in a very traditional, ever passive, attitude with little or no indication within the compositions of the artist's psyche or her talents. But then her other portraits (the Althorp, Lancut, Naples, and Sterling examples) also produced in her Cremonese period, depict her quite differently--in an active pose, showing her engaged in a particular activity--yet affinities exist physiognomically between all the portraits as they represent variant depictions of the same face.

⁵⁹P. 40.

Both the Ashburnham medallion and the Boston miniature resemble the Lancut Self-Portrait at an Easel in Sofonisba's characteristic physiognomical attributes, but the Lancut image bears an even stronger affinity to the Naples Self-Portrait at the Clavichord. Although the Lancut and Naples portraits facial features conform to some of the ideal standards of feminine beauty, overall their heightened sense of self-scrutiny represents contemporary theoretical ideals associated with naturalism rather than idealization. Furthermore, the compositions illustrate an attempt at "active" portraiture (See above for an expanded discussion, pp. 26 & 28). The Naples painting acts as a compositional prototype for Sofonisba's Althorp Self-Portrait at the Clavichord, which also attempts a composition stressing naturalistic detail and psychologically and physically "active" drama. The facial maturity and technical proficiency evident upon comparison of the works attests to the Althorp's later production.

Historically the physiognomic differences between those works conforming to notions of ideal beauty (e.g. the Ashburnham, the Boston, the Siena, the Uffizi, and the Vienna) and those relying more on nature (e.g. the Althorp, the Lancut, the Naples, and Stirling) have posed problems for art historians. Some scholars have considered the differences between these groups to be such drastic disparities that they in turn have questioned the authenticity and chronology of the second, more natural category.

In the context of Cinquecento feminine portraiture produced by male artists, the renown of such painters as Parmigianino and Titian indicates the pursuits of naturalism and of idealism were approved and expected at that time. In this examination of Sofonisba's pursuit of both idealism and naturalism in her self-portraiture, I would suggest

that she was consciously aiming at both qualities throughout her Cremonese period.

Perhaps the finest illustration of the potential disparity of approach among her self-portraits at this time can be found in looking at her latest Cremonese works in this genre: the Siena portrait of Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola and the Althorp Self-Portrait at the Clavichord. Produced almost contemporaneously to one another, each could be said to demonstrate Sofonisba's technical progression, artistic innovation, and also further disparities among her self-portrayals. They give very different impressions. The Althorp portrait appears the most precisely rendered work yet considered; whereas, the Siena portrait exhibits a mellifluous handling of the paint in a sfumato effect that fades from clarity, in the hands as well as in the face. Perlingieri alluded to the depiction of the hand in the Siena portrait--less precise, perhaps rubbery--as sign of technical deficiency; however, I counter this proposition by suggesting that this comparatively soft rendering typifies the whole difference between this painting and the Althorp portrait, as well as her idealized vs. her realistic portrait styles.

Recently, scholars have questioned Sofonisba's accomplishments, particularly in compositional *invenzione*. Yet, contemporary scholars wrote of Sofonisba's pursuit of both *invenzione* and realistic portrait styles, although the modes never appear to be compared by these authors. Tommaso de' Cavalieri regarded Sofonisba's drawings as "truly inventive creations, *invenzione*. [Kusche notes] he thereby awarded the young Sofonisba the highest praise for an independent artist of the time."⁶⁰

Lorne Campbell believes:

⁶⁰P. 40.

the great attraction to portraiture is its power to falsify: if portrait-painters wish, or if they are compelled, they can not only flatter their sitters, dress them in expensive clothes, place them in grand settings and give them misleading indications of their ranks, tastes and interests, but also invent for them psychological traits that they do not naturally possess.⁶¹

Such considerations, whether conscious or unconscious, can not escape the artist's thoughts, especially in the realm of self-portraiture. It comes as little surprise, then, that in painting herself Sofonisba should have aimed at more than just a physical resemblance. Her self-portraits also promote her social position and reputation for attainments in painting and other arts. How such aims might be accomplished would certainly vary depending on the purpose of this or that self-portrait. Sofonisba's exploration of the theoretical ideals of idealization, naturalism, the active, and the passive resulted in a collection of self-portraits which bear differing physiognomic attributes and demonstrate portraiture's power to transcend mere resemblance.

⁶¹P. 36.

SUMMARY

This study attempted to provide a thorough analysis of Sofonisba Anguissola's pursuit of the self-portrait. Suggestions were made for four primary objectives: proposing authenticity and chronology; examining Cinquecento feminine education to suggest how and why she became trained in the art of painting; analyzing her self-portraits in the context of contemporary portraiture; and surveying sixteenth-century ideas concerning ideal feminine beauty through a comparison of her work, with that of contemporary male artists and with contemporary literature. While these concerns were met further considerations, primarily relating to Renaissance portraiture in general and contemporary notions of ideal feminine beauty, arose that extended beyond its parameters.

In researching this subject, I found bits of information regarding artists' self-portraits scattered throughout the sources concerning Renaissance portraiture and I wished for a source that would have discussed this topic at greater length and more broadly. The question as to how a female artist such as Sofonisba might utilize conventions of feminine beauty in contrast with how male artists might also utilize such notions within their depictions of women again deserves further consideration.

CATALOG ENTRIES

AUTHENTIC SELF-PORTRAITS

The portraits included within this first category--authentic self-portraits--represent those works upon which scholars generally agree to their authenticity as well as some about which debate remains. The previous discussion noted that many of these works include inscriptions that confirm their authenticity, and that these secure examples offer a standard on which one might determine the authenticity of still disputed works. This study also proposed dates based on inscriptions and contemporary references.

The arrangement of the portraits in this section reflect my opinion as to their chronological progression. For each portrait the following information is provided : 1.) all known titles and physical information; 2.) provenance; 3.) exhibition history; 4.) physical description. The fourth section offers support to the proposed sequential ordering of the works through a comparison of their physiognomic attributes and technical qualities with those of Sofonisba's other self-portraits.



Fig.1: Self-Portrait at the Easel, c.1550-52. Oil on panel. 18.5 x 23 cm. In the private collection of William Stirling. Inscription: *Sophonisba Anguisciola virgo cremonensis se ipsam pinxit.*

Self-Portrait at the Easel, c.1550-52. Oil on panel. 18.5 x 23 cm. In the private collection of William Stirling. Inscription: Sophonisba Anguisciola virgo cremonensis se ipsam pinxit.

Provenance: Unknown.

Literature: C.F. Waagen, Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Illuminated Manuscripts etc. etc. 3 vols., 1854-57; F. Sacchi, Notizie pittoriche cremonesi, 1872; B. Berenson, North Italian Painters of the Renaissance, 1907, p. 163; B. Berenson, Italian Painters of the Renaissance: Central Italian and North Italian Schools, 3 vols., 1968; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p. 106, pl. 8; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p. 23-4, 39, 67, 198, 200, fig. 5; S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kutsche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p. 22.

This composition would seem to be the prototype for the Lancut portrait (fig. 6).

Subtle physiognomical differences occur between the two portraits apparently as a result of the physical maturing of the artist in the interim between the works. In the Stirling portrait, which is the earlier version, her cheeks retain a greater fullness indicative of youth. Outside of this feature the rest of Sofonisba's characteristic features correspond to her better known portraits (see the general description above, pp. 32-33).

Sofonisba's garb varies from the one composition to the other. In the Stirling portrait, the collar of the dress flares. The white chemise undergarment also has a flaring collar, which ruffles at the edge, and a thin tie in a bow at the neck similar to that seen in the Boston image (fig. 8). The Juliet-style shoulders confine the ballooned effect between two pleated ruffles, which differs from the corresponding feature in the Lancut portrait. The ruffled-edged cuffs of the chemise protrude from the dress in both images. In this painting, a smock covers the lap of her dress.

Additional, trivial, dissimilarities occur between the compositions of the two paintings. This picture depicts Sofonisba in torso-length; the Lancut is bust-length. The

increased scope of this painting incorporates more of the easel (all three legs appear) and additional background space. In both works identical painting accoutrements lie on the ledge of the easel, though their placement differs. The Stirling's palette lies within the dimensions of the portrayed painting; the Lancut palette extends beyond it. The mahlstick in this portrait tilts at a greater angle, though the hand placement is the same in both portraits. The smaller brush suspended in mid-motion touches the canvas on the Madonna's drapery in this work. The brush in the other portrait touches the Christ child's forearm.

Her inconsistent paint application in this image renders certain areas loosely, e.g. the smock folds and hand holding the mahlstick, and other areas tightly, e.g. the face and portrayed Madonna and Child. Crackling occurs in Sofonisba's face primarily in the forehead, chin and left cheek. Both the Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog and Caroli discuss this work minimally, stating its date as c.1554; however, this work appears less technically evolved than the Uffizi Self-Portrait of 1552. Based on the indication of her physical youth and technical progression, this study dates the portrait c.1550-52, earlier than other scholars have proposed.



Fig.2: Self-Portrait, 1552. Oil on canvas. 34 7/8 x 27 3/8" (88.5 x 69 cm).
 Florence: Uffizi. Inscription: SOFONISBA ANGUISCIOLA CREM. PICTRIX
 AETA SUE ANN XX.

Self-Portrait, 1552. Oil on canvas. 34 7/8 x 27 3/8" (88.5 x 69 cm).

Florence: Uffizi. Inscription: SOFONISBA ANGUISCIOLA CREM. PICTRIX
AETA SUE ANN XX.

Provenance: G. Vasari in his *Vives* VII, p.133 notes a portrait being sent to Pope Julius III by her father, Amilcare, which may be this work which was bought by the Uffizi in Rome in 1666.¹ Caroli counters this information noting the Uffizi acquired it on the 27th of October, 1682 from the Grand Duke Cosimo III.²

Literature: Fournier-Sarloveze, "Sofonisba Anguissola et ses soeurs" *La revue de l'art* V, 1899, p.324; W. Prinz, "Die Sammlung der Selbstbildnisse in den Uffizien" I, *Geschichte der Sammlung*, Berlin, 1971, p.176, document 39; A. Sutherland Harris & L. Nochlin, *Woman Artists: 1550-1950*, 1976, p.29-30; F. Caroli, *Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle*, 1987, p. 94-5, pl. 2; I.S. Perilingieri, *Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance*, 1992, p.60-1, pl.31; P. Buffa, ed., *Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle*, 1994, p.23,43,196, tav.2; F. Jacobs, "Woman's Capacity to Create: The Unusual Case of Sofonisba Anguissola" *Renaissance Quarterly* 47, 1994, p. 74-5, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, *Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman*, 1995, p.66.

This painting depicts Sofonisba at the age of twenty, as indicated in the inscription on the upper left side of the painting. Perlingieri suggests that this work has not appeared in scholarly research "perhaps because it is located in the vast labyrinthian [sic] Vasari Corridor (named after its architect), which the museum keeps closed"³, although Caroli previously addressed it briefly. Since 1992, several scholarly publications included it in their discussions, as indicated above.

The figure assumes a nearly frontal pose, and gazes directly at the viewer in self-assurance. Here, as is customary of her self-portraits, the artist depicts herself with her hair braided, parted in the center and wrapped about the crown of her head. The addition

¹A. Sutherland Harris and L. Nochlin. *Women Artists: 1550-1950* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum, 1976), p.107-108, footnote no.20. See W. Prinz, "Die Sammlung der Selbstbildnisse in den Uffizien" I, *Geschichte der Sammlung*, Berlin, 1971, p.176, document 39.

²P. 94.

³P. 60.

of a black velvet band is atypical. The artist wears a white chemise which ruffles at the collar and cuffs; however, the collar lacks a tie to close the blouse at the neck, which most of her self-portraits include. Over the blouse, the artist wears a black dress with a flared high collar open in a V-shape at the neck. Its shoulders puff slightly.

She holds a rolled piece of paper, or parchment in her right hand. The fingers are elongated and tapered. Considered a trademark of her instructor, Bernardino Campi, this slenderization and tapering of the hands is in fact representative of the period. The left hand, holding two paint brushes, hovers above a palette with three additional paint brushes. The background, rendered a varying tonal range of brown hues, sets a precedent for a number of her subsequent self-portraits: the Chantilly, the Lancut, the Milan, the Naples, the Niva, and the Siena.

The artist's countenance displays the characteristically highly arched, well delineated eyebrows enhanced by shadowing and long nose rounded at the end and also pronounced by shading. Typically the eyes are wide-open, the coloration appears to be of blue-green hue. The lips are the tiniest feature: delicate and lightly rounded painted in a slight smile common for the time. The cheeks are of the usual fullness obliterating the cheekbone definition, while the chin bears a slight indentation in the center.



Fig.3: Self-Portrait, c.1552-53. Chalk sketch (black chalk on white/ blue paper). (351 x 264 mm). Florence: Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni (inv. no. 13248F). Inscription: (written along the left border, almost illegible): Anguissola Cremonese.

Self-Portrait, c.1552-53. Chalk sketch (black chalk on white/ blue paper). (351 x 264 mm). Florence: Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni (inv. no. 13248F). Inscription: (written along the left border, almost illegible): Anguissola Cremonese.

Provenance: Noted by Baldinucci to have been in the collection of Leopoldo de' Medici in the Sixteenth century, as stated in a drawing inventory. From this collection, it has transferred to its current location.

Exhibitions: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, Cremona, Vienna, 1994 & 1995 respectively.

Literature: C. Pirovano, ed., I Campi e la cultura artistica cremonese del Cinquecento, 1985, p.301-302, pl.2.12.3; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p.17; I.S. Perilingieri, "Sofonisba Anguissola's early sketches" Woman's Art Journal (Fall-Winter, 1988-89), p.11-2; Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.44-5, pl.18; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.278-79, pl.40; M. Garrard, "Here's Looking at Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist" Renaissance Quarterly, Fall 1994, p. 597, fig.20.

This portrait shows Sofonisba in a 3/4 length pose holding a book from which she has looked up to connect her gaze with that of the observer. Liana Cheney notes:

this self-portrait is carefully drawn as one observes the details in the treatment of the hair, hands, facial expression, and garments, as well as technical rendering such as shading ... the viewer, as well as herself - the painter - are the audience who have interrupted the sitter's concentration. The artist has depicted herself as an educated woman - a nobil donna- no accoutrements of her profession as painter are visible in this drawing. It is interesting to observe that there are many drawings of male self-portraits from the sixteenth century and it would appear that artists of this time were exploring observations of the self with all kinds of media including drawings.⁴

Contemporary male artists' self-portraits also typically avoid showing their artists' accoutrements, opting instead to focus on personality traits and social status (see above, pp. 27-28, 29-31).

Baldinucci cites the drawing, which he considered a member of a series, in the Medici drawing collection; its technical qualities share affinities with her other two drawings also residing in the Uffizi collection. While Perilingieri supposed this work to date c.1548 from Sofonisba's period of training with Bernardino Campi, it is more likely

⁴Cheney, p. 945-946.

that she drew it c.1552-53 as the earliest remaining work in the set. Although carefully rendered, the technical proficiency of this work, when compared with that of the two other drawings, appears less accomplished. The proposed date of 1552-53 takes this into consideration as the latter two drawings, reflecting a heightened proficiency, receive correspondingly later dates.

What was the purpose of the drawing? Its inscription "Anguissola Cremonese" leads one to believe that it may have been produced not as a mere sketch for her own use, but to have been sent on to someone else as an example of her work, or as a present. Similar inscriptions appear on her other self-portraits known to have been given to or commissioned by individuals outside of Cremona. The Boston miniature (fig.8) provides an example of this type of inscription and is known to have been produced while she was away from Cremona, to be sent back to her family.

Some historians have questioned whether the figure represents Sofonisba or rather one of her sisters. Included among these historians are: the editors of the I Campi catalog, Flavio Caroli, Mary Garrard, and the editors of the Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog, who believe it to be a portrait of Lucia Anguissola. Following Perilingieri and others, this study supports the notion of it as a self-portrait of Sofonisba. The basis for this assertion stems from a comparison of physiognomical characteristics of this figure with corresponding features in the authentic, painted self-portraits of Sofonisba. Included among these attributes are: the 3/4 facial portrayal, in which shading envelops half the face; the hair centrally parted and arranged in a braid that wraps about the crown of the head; the forehead comprising a third of the face; the eyebrows appearing highly arched;

the large, wide eyes with a dark pupil and ring around the iris; the pronounced upper and lower eyelids; the long nose gently sloping to a rounded tip with faintly shaded indications of a nostril; the pronounced indentation beneath the nose; the lips curved into a slight smile with the lower lip casting a shadow onto the chin; the chin bearing a slight indentation in the center; the full cheeks ; and the elongated hands and fingers (as also stated above, pp. 32-33). Perilingieri notes that "her left eye is disproportionately larger than her right" in this drawing, as perhaps a result of her seeing herself in a mirror.⁵ This characteristic occurs in several, perhaps all, of the painted self-portraits, particularly the Ashburnham medallion and Vienna portraits.

Lucia Anguissola, while bearing a strong family resemblance, brings out in her own Self-Portrait (fig. 30, Milan: Castello Sforzesco, inv. no. 562. Oil on canvas) several quite different traits. The two of primary importance are the shape of the ear and the indentation of the chin. Lucia's outer contour of her ear is a smooth, mellifluous curve while Sofonisba's ear bears a slight undulation of extra flesh just above the lobe. This drawing reveals this feature, which her painted self-portraits also depict -- such as the Uffizi portrait of 1552 (fig.2). With regards to the chin indentation: Sofonisba bore a more pronounced indentation than Lucia; this feature is hardly present in Lucia's self-portrait. Finally, Sofonisba's eyes as depicted in this drawing and the Uffizi painting are wide, almost oval shaped, whereas, Lucia's eyes are more almond shaped with a straighter lower lid as apparent in her Milan Self-Portrait and Sofonisba's Chess Game. For further comparative observations refer to the entry for the Girl and an Old Woman (pp. 110-12).

⁵P. 44.



Fig.4: Self-Portrait, 1554. Oil on panel. 6 3/4 x 4 3/4" (17 x 12 cm) Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no.285.

Self-Portrait, 1554. Oil on panel. 6 3/4 x 4 3/4" (17 x 12 cm) Vienna: Kunst-historisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no.285.

Provenance: Probably in the collection of the Duke of Ferrara in 1556, known to have been in the Viennese Imperial collection by, at the latest, 1606 (information expanded upon below).

Exhibitions: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, Cremona, Vienna, 1994 & 1995 respectively; Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, Washington, D.C., 1995.

Literature: R. Soprani, Le vite de' pittori, scoltori et architetti genovesi e de' forastieri che in Genova operarono con alcuni ritratti de gli stessi, 1674; Chretien de Mechel, 1784, p.146; V. Lancetti, Biografia cremonese. Ossia dizionario storico delle famiglie e persone per qualsivoglia titolo memorabili e chiare spettanti alla citta di Cremona dai tempi piu remoti fino all'eta nostra I, 1819, p.257; F. Sacchi, Notizie pittoriche cremonesi, 1872; E. Engerth, Katalog der K. K. Gemälde Gallerie in Belvedere zu Wien, 1884, p.14-5; A. Venturi, "Zur Geschichte der Kunstsammlungen Kaiser Rudolf II" Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft VIII, 1885, p.1-23; F. Sacchi, "Sofonisba Anguissola" La Provincia, Corriere di Cremona, 1888, n.97; G. Morelli, Della pittura italiana, 1897, p.197; Fournier-Sarloveze, "Sofonisba Anguissola et ses soeurs" La revue de l'art V, 1899, p.319; C.E. Clement, Women in the Fine Arts, 1904, p.15; H. Posse, "Sofonisba Anguissola" Thieme-Becker, Künstler-Lexikon I, (1907), p.524-25; Vienna Catalogue, 1907, p.30; E. Benezit, Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs I, 1911, p.185; H. Cook, "More portraits by Sophonisba Angussola" Burlington Magazine XXVI, 1915, p. 82; G. Nicodemi, "Commemorazione di artisti minori" Emporium LXVI 1927, p.225 (reproduction); N. Tarchiani, Il ritratto italiano dal Caravaggio al Tiepolo, 1927, p.175; C. Bonetti, "Pittori Cremonesi, Sofonisba Anguissola" Bollettino storico cremonese II, 1932, p.111; A. Venturi, Storia dell'arte italiana IX, 1933, p.931, fig 573; A.M. Romanini, "Sofonisba Anguissola" Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani III, 1961, p.321-24; I. Kühnel-Kunze, "Zur Bildniskunst der Sofonisba und Lucia Anguisciola" Pantheon XX, 1962, p. 89; B. Berensen, Italian Pictures of the Renaissance. Central Italian and North Italian Schools I, III, 1968, p.14; Berensen Arch. n.47; M. Haraszti-Tackacs, "New Facts of the life and work of Sofonisba Anguissola" Bulletin of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts XXXI, 1968, p.63, fig. 39; E. Tufts, "Sofonisba Anguissola Renaissance Woman" Art News LXXI, 1972, p. 53; A. Sutherland Harris & L. Nochlin, Women Artists: 1550-1950, 1976, p.13, 27, 106-07, fig 2; C. Pirovano, ed., I Campi e la cultura artistica cremonese del Cinquecento, 1985, p.171; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p.98, pl.4; I.S. Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.78, pl.43; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.19, 71, 188-89, 202, 216, pl.2; M. Garrard, "Here's Looking at Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist" Renaissance Quarterly, Fall 1994, p 558, fig 2., S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.15-6, 40, pl.12.

This composition portrays Sofonisba on a close-to-miniature-sized panel on about the same scale as the Boston oval miniature. The Ashburnham medallion, the Boston miniature and this work all share a similar shade of a khaki green unvarying hue as the background. This work shows Sofonisba in bust-length with her upper torso 3/4 to the left and head slightly turned to confront the viewer. Sofonisba's hair styling follows her

characteristic depiction: centrally parted with braids wrapped around the back crown of the head. Over the back of the head, covering the braid, is a black hairnet that can also be found in the Lancut portrait.

Sofonisba wears a black dress with burgundy-brown sleeves which is closed at the neck and down the bodice by small material buttons. Sofonisba depicts herself wearing the same dress in the Lancut portrait (fig.6) and possibly the Naples portrait (fig.5) as well (the dark tone of the canvas makes intricate details indiscernible). Its narrow collar folds tightly over. Four buttons are visible within the work, between the first two a small gap allows the chemise to show through. Its shoulders gather in two pleated ornamentations which also appears in the Boston portrait. Again, Sofonisba's white chemise shows at the collar and the visible right cuff. The highlighting on the ruffling forms a stylized curving line; rich shading produces strong contrasts. The fluid handling of the chemise collar and cuff recalls that of the Stirling portrait (fig.1). At the same time, it contrasts with the handling of the Uffizi, Naples, and Lancut portraits (figs.2, 5, 6) in all of which the depiction of the chemise cloth appears more naturalistic than the painterly application here.

The prominent eyebrow curving down into the nose almost describes an arc, a highly stylized line. The fullness of the lips exceeds her characteristic representations, but remain the most delicate facial feature. The coloration in the lower portions of the cheeks indicates, for the first time, evidence of the cheek bone structure; conversely, the chin indentation does not appear.

In Sofonisba's right hand she holds a small red book that is opened midway, held

forward to the viewer in order that it may be read. In it is written an autobiographical inscription: *Sophonisba Anguissola virgo se ipsam fecit 1554*. One of her few signed and dated works, the painting functions as a chronological reference point. Her thumb divides the front pages and the forefinger supports the binding around which the other fingers are placed. Perlingieri specifies this U-shape as a decisive characteristic indication of Sophonisba's work although in many cases it appears to be anatomically appropriate to the pose, as in this work.

In the Uffizi portrait the depiction of an open book seems indicative of yet another talent pertaining to her social status. When compared to the Uffizi Self-Portrait, where Sofonisba again holds an open book, this portrait does not convey the sense of interrupting her from reading. On the contrary, this portrait utilizes the open book merely to convey the inscribed information, a convention utilized by other artists within the Renaissance. A particularly poignant example of this type of display (although on a card rather than a book) appears in Giovanni Battista Trotti's (called il Malosso) Portrait of the Catholic Barbo Anguissola (fig. 14) believed by some to be a self-portrait of Sofonisba.

This inscription confirms the authenticity of this work. Recorded as a work in the Viennese Imperial collection from at the latest, 1606, subsequent documentation exists from the late Eighteenth century work of Chretien de Mechel (1784) onwards. Numerous subsequent publications exist have supported one or the other of two conjectural theories on how the work found itself in the Viennese Imperial collection. The variant theories stem from Sacchi's 1872 publication and Bonetti's of 1932.

In 1973, Hamlich noted that:

Sacchi recorded a tradition that the painting was a gift to the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia of Spain, when Sofonisba was her governess (1566-1576). Isabella supposedly took the painting with her when she married the Archduke to Ambras Castle, it passed to the Imperial collection of the Emperor Leopold. Bonnetti thought that the painting might be one of the two self-portraits of the artist sent by Amilcare to Messier Ieronimo Somenzo, in the service of the Duke of Ferrara in 1556. Cardinal Alessandro d'Este gave the paintings to Rudolf II, in 1606.⁶

The 1994 exhibition catalog Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle offers some clarification to these arguments. First, it notes that Federico Sacchi "hastily interpreted" the documentation of this work's provenance from an earlier source, Raffael Soprani's work of 1674. To further clarify, the catalog lists Adolfo Venturi's publication as 1885 as the source upon which Bonnetti's 1932 theory was to be based upon. Venturi's publication quoted a letter of March 17, 1556 from Amilcare Anguissola to the Duke of Ferrara which would have accompanied the Self-Portrait as a gift, after which the Cardinal d'Este brought the work along with others already in property of the Imperial collection to Emperor Rudolfo II between 1603-1604, not 1606 as Bonnetti suggested. This theory receives support as the more probable of the two, but remains unprovable as an inventory of the works no longer exists.⁷

⁶P. 58.

⁷Rosanna Sacchi, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, ed. Paolo Buffa (Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1994), p.



Fig.5: Self-Portrait at the Clavichord, c.1555-56. Oil on canvas. 22 1/4 x 18 7/8" (56.5 x 48 cm) Naples: Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte.

Self-Portrait at the Clavichord, c.1555-56. Oil on canvas. 22 1/4 x 18 7/8" (56.5 x 48 cm) Naples: Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte.

Provenance: Palazzo Farnese de Roma al Palzzo del Giardino di Parma in 1662, Palazzo di Napoli, and finally to its present location in 1838.

Exhibitions: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, Cremona, Vienna, 1994 & 1995 respectively.

Literature: H. Cook, " More Portraits by Sofonisba Anguissola" Burlington Magazine XXVI, 1915, p. 228, fig. D, pl. III; A. Venturi, Storia dell' arte italiana, vol. 9. La pittura del Cinquecento, 1933, p.929-30; S.J. Freedberg, Painting in Italy: 1500-1600, 1971, p.591; C. Peruvian, ed., I Campi e la cultura artistica cremonese del Cinquecento, 1985, p.172,174, pl.1.16.1; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p.100-01, pl.5.; I.S. Perilngieri, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.76, 78-9, 87, pl.44; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.190,196,198,202-03, 212, pl.9; S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.20,22,28,40.

Although compositionally more complex than the Uffizi portrait (fig.2), this portrayal bears many resemblances to it. The artist again portrays herself in a torso-length pose, although now the upper torso is turned 3/4 to the left while the head turns slightly so the artist may still gaze intently at the viewer. The face in this work receives increased shading on its left portion, and thus further stresses the characteristic facial features of the outlined eyebrows and nose, the wide eyes, delicate lips and cleft chin.

Perlingieri provides a detailed account of her clothing and hair style: "Her reddish brown hair is tied a bit differently, with a large, twisted chignon crowning the back of her head. Her black velvet bodice has dark brown sleeves with small, scalloped fullness at the shoulder. She wears a linen chemise with a ruffled edging at the collar and cuffs."⁸

Like the Siena portrait , the chemise bears a tie at the neck which in this work is fastened closing the neck of the chemise. The ruffling both around the collar and cuffs share a greater affinity with the Siena (fig.10) depiction than with the Uffizi work, in that they

⁸P. 78.

have received increased modelling through heightened contrast of highlighted and shaded recesses giving additional volume. As previously mentioned, the collar of both the chemise and the dress recall the Vienna and Lancut portraits (figs.4 & 6) although whether this dress is the same can not be definitively stated due to the obscurity of the dress's details.

Typically elongated and well defined, the artist's right hand appears caught in the mid-motion at the clavichord. The clavichord "is placed on a bright green velvet-covered table with a key nearby...this painting was poorly restored in 1959 and consequently, her left hand is now a chalky white and has completely lost its realism."⁹

This painting received significant discussion in both Caroli's and Perlingieri's publications as well as the 1994 and 1955 catalogs, although their focus on the information differs. Perlingieri continues her discussion by amending the previous mislabeling as Self-Portrait at a Spinnet by presenting the structural differences between a clavichord and a spinet.¹⁰ The 1994 and 1995 catalogs, the only scholarly publications to mention the portrait since 1992, disregard Perlingieri's identification of the musical instrument as a clavichord rather than a spinet.

Finally, Perlingieri addresses Adolfo Venturi's 1933 statement regarding this portrait as following the style of Moroni:

⁹Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola, p. 78.

¹⁰P. 213. "The clavichord originated in the 15th century and the 'earliest existing specimens are generally Italian and date from the first half of the 16th century.' The 'case is oblong and the strings are horizontally so as to cross the back ends of the keys' with a range of four octaves. See, Eric Bloom, ed., Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press 1970), vol.1, p. 336. The spinet, however, is 'a winged-shaped instrument typically of English make, with a compass of four to five octaves.' Bloom, vol. 2., p. 7.

The self-portrait, in the Museum in Naples, shows the young Sofonisba where it calls to better attention her superficial but delicate pictorial qualities. Here, the image is also presented in action with the painter's hands, large, like those large hands of Campi's ... as they touch the spinet's keys. The thoughtful face is turned to the viewer... There is something childish, youthful, in the round cheeks, in the delicate features, and the lightness of the hair. The shadows soften the flesh, undoing the antiquated stiffness, and signify a gentleness of spirit. The rough draft of Campi's influence, always superficial and weak, becomes polished in the grand portrait style of G. B. Moroni.¹¹

Whether or not this composition is directly influenced by Moroni or result of heightened self-observation by Sofonisba, this discussion leads into several further points. First, the use of the word "superficial" by Venturi suggests that Sofonisba may be stylizing some of her features to adhere to notions of ideal feminine beauty present in Late Italian Renaissance culture at the time as evident in Firenzuola's On the Beauty of Women (see above, p. 32). Second, the association with Moroni ties into, as does Perlingieri's discussion, Anguissola's portrayal of the Walter's Gallery Portrait of Massimiliano Stampa, the third marchese of Soncino, 1577 and similar compositional arrangements by Moroni "in many of his portraits, including Portrait of a Man (National Gallery, London) and Portrait of a Man (Prado Museum, Madrid)."¹²

Caroli's discussion of the work traces its provenance from the Palazzo Farnese, Rome, to the Palazzo del Giardino, Parma, in 1662 through multiple collection and inventory publications. He cites previous attributions of the work to other artists, such as the School of Carraci. He also expresses doubt that it is a self-portrait, and offers the suggestion that it may be a portrait of her sister Lucia instead.¹³

¹¹P. 213. Storia dell' arte italiana, vol. 9. La pittura del Cinquecento (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1933), pp. 929-

¹²P. 79.

¹³Caroli, p. 100-101.

Sofonisba's depiction of herself as a woman with the ability to play a musical instrument illustrates not only one of her many other talents, but her place in Italian society, (see above, pp. 17, 21).



Fig.6: Self-Portrait at the Easel, c.1558-9. Oil on canvas. 26 x 22 1/2"(66 x 57 cm).
Lancut: Muzeum Zamek.

Self-Portrait at the Easel, c.1556-57. Oil on canvas. 26 x 22 1/2"(66 x 57 cm). Lancut: Muzeum Zamek.

Provenance: Unknown.

Exhibitions: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994.

Literature: M. Wallis, "Autoportret Sofonisby Anguisciola, Lancucie, W. Muzeum i Tworcka"; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.196,202,212, cover illustration; S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.22-3,40, cover illustration, pl.4.

The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog presents the first discussion of this work within any scholarly publication on Sofonisba, as previously stated, perhaps because of its fairly unfamiliar location: Lancut, Poland. (The Wallis article was unknown to most Anguissola scholars until this publication.) Compositionally, it essentially repeats the Stirling self-portrait of c.1550-52. Further precise correlations appear above in the discussion of that work (see above, pp. 47-48). This work shares physiognomical affinities with the Cremona works of the mid 1550's including the Vienna and Naples pieces (figs. 4 & 5); thus, it has been dated to c.1556-57, prior to her departure for Spain. The dress and chemise bear striking likenesses to those depicted in the Naples and Althorp (fig.9) compositions. More so than the Naples portrait, this work aspires to a distinct precision in detail not seen prior to this time. The face, the hands, and the portrayed canvas receive particular attention in this work. Here the highlighting within the braiding wrapped about the crown of her head is described in each twist and individual hair. The eyes have tightly rendered irises of the light blue-green hue, which as in the Chantilly portrait (fig.12), show some of the white beneath the iris. Again the upper and lower lids appear extremely pronounced. The hands, like those of the Althorp composition, depict

the fingers and fingernails with such precision that even the cuticles of the nails can be discerned. The portrayed canvas rendering the Madonna and Child is identical with that in the Stirling portrait except that here it has become more precisely rendered. The faces of the Madonna and Child have extremely pronounced features. The Madonna's ear provides a case in point as the individual folds may be followed exactly, curving into the inner ear.

Both the 1994 and 1995 catalogs theorize that the portrayed image probably existed. In light of Sofonisba's other religious paintings, all incorporating the Madonna, they continue:

As a painter of Madonna portraits Sofonisba also may have identified with her mythical predecessor Timarete, or Thamar, who, according to Pliny had created a painting of Diana of Ephesus and, according to Boccaccio, also a famous work depicting the Madonna. Sofonisba also presents herself here as the female counterpart to the Evangelist Luke, who was the archetypal Madonna painter or Christian artist.¹⁴

¹⁴P. 41, reference to 1994 catalog p. 24.



Fig.7: Self-Portrait, signed and dated 1558. Oil on panel. Diameter 5 1/8" (13 cm).
Paris: Fondation Custodia, Collection F. Lugt, Institut Neerlandais.

Self-Portrait, signed and dated 1558. Oil on panel. Diameter 5 1/8" (13 cm). Paris: Fondation Custodia, Collection F. Lugt, Institut Neerlandais.

Provenance: Prior to 1953; in the collection of Lord Ashburnham; sold at Sotheby's of London on June 23, 1953 to Frits Lugt.

Literature: F. Sacchi, *Notizie pittoriche cremonesi*, 1872, p. 10; Fournier-Sarloveze, "Sofonisba Anguissola et ses soeurs" *La revue de l'art* V, 1899, p. 181; H. Cook, "More portraits by Sophonisba Anguissola" *Burlington Magazine* XXVI, 1915, p. 228, fig. E, pl. III; G. Catalano, "Sofonisba Anguissola" *Annuario R.I. Magistrale*, 1925; G. Nicodemi, "Commemorazione di artisti minori" *Emporium* LXVI, 1927, p. 225; A. Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana* IX, 1933, p. 932 (note); B. Berensen, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance, Central Italian and North Italian Schools* I, III, 1968, p. 13, 1974; Berensen Arch. n. 26.; F. Caroli, *Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle*, 1987, p. 118-19, pl. 16; I.S. Perlingieri, *Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance*, 1992, p. 108-09, pl. 68; P. Buffa, ed., *Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle*, 1994, p. 196, 218, 231, 286, 290, tav. 1; S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, *Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman*, 1995, p. 46.

Perlingieri notes this work as being signed and dated (1558), as well as its common name of the Ashburnham medallion. The 1995 catalog dates it 1556 (a misprint, perhaps?). This roundel of again almost miniature size invites compositional and physiognomical comparison with the Boston and Vienna pictures (figs. 8 & 4). Tonally, the background appears again of the singular green coloration found in the previously mentioned works, yet varies in gradation from light on the right side to darker on the left. The portrait is a bust-length image with the upper torso in a frontal positioning, while the head is turned slightly to the right of the panel allowing for a single characteristic ear to show as in all previously mentioned works.

Characteristically, Sofonisba depicts her hair centrally parted with the braiding wrapped around the back portion of the crown of her head with no additional adornment. The facial placement allows for significant comparison with the Boston portrait, which Perlingieri notes to show "great consistency in the shape of Anguissola's face, right ear,

and eyes--note the slight droop of the eyelid."¹⁵ This comparison can indeed be furthered to incorporate the eyebrow and nasal bone structure raised to the attention of the viewer by increased shading that lines these area's protrusions, as well as the delicate handling of the lips and slight dimpling at the very left corner where the lips end.

Sofonisba's garb in this portrait and the Boston painting share distinct affinities. The dress appears to be black material with a flared collar that is indistinguishable in its edging; in the reproduction in Caroli's publication it appears a straight seam. On the contrary, the reproduction in Perlingieri's publication shows, on the right side, slight curving indicating ruffling at the far back corner on the right side nearest to her face; the Boston image shows the scallop distinctly by additional highlighting. This differentiation occurs as a result of dramatic craquelure in the painted surface. Severe cracking appears variously across the entire composition. On Sofonisba's face the intensity of the cracking becomes more dominant, with small, intricate areas across both cheeks as well as the throat.

The chemise in both images appear identical as it flares with the supportive backing of the dress collar outlined by a single ruffle and restrained by a tie tied in a bow at the Adam's apple. The roundel of the Boston miniature prevents comparing the dress any further, whereas, this image shows the neck opting to continue to a V-shape over which the ends of the chemise ties dangle naturally.

Caroli and Hamlich cite the provenance that justifies the name Ashburnham in the title of the work. It was acquired from Lord Ashburnham by Frits Lugt through Sotheby's

¹⁵P. 109.

of London on June 23, 1953, and since then it has resided in the Paris collection. Also, Caroli relates it to a work of Lucia at the Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo of Brescia. It must be noted that Caroli titles this work a portrait of her sister Minerva Anguissola with a question mark, citing as reference Sacchi and Berensen, "ritratto di una delle piu giovani sorelle."¹⁶ However, the characteristic similarities to her other self-portraits makes this identification unlikely.

¹⁶P. 118.



Fig.8: Self-Portrait, c.1559-61. Oil on card, miniature. 3-3/16 x 2 1/2" (8.2 x 6.3 cm).
 Boston: Museum of Fine Arts. Inscription: "SOPHONISBA ANGUSSOLA VIR[GO]
 IPSIUS EX [S]PECULO DEPICTAM CREMONAE".

Self-Portrait, c.1559-61. Oil on card , miniature. 3-3/16 x 2 1/2" (8.2 x 6.3 cm).

Boston: Museum of Fine Arts. Inscription: "SOPHONISBA ANGUSSOLA VIR[GO] IPSIUS EX [S]PECULO DEPICTAM CREMONAE".

Provenance: Mr. R. Gough, London, 1801; H. D. Seymour, Ashridge, England before 1862; J. M. Seymour, Knoyle, Wiltshire, 1912-1928; Auctioned at Sotherby's in London on May 9, 1928 and November 9, 1959; Emma F. Monroe Fund Purchase, 1960 (Kleinberger and Co, Inc.)

Exhibition: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, Cremona, Vienna, 1994 & 1995 respectively; Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995.

Literature: Gentleman's Magazine, London, 81, pt. 2, (October 1801) p.97-8, pl. 2; Pilkington, General Dictionary of Painters, (1824, p. 22?) 1840, p.13: Catalogue of the Special Works of Art of the Medieval Renaissance and More Recent Periods on Loan at the South Kensington, London, 1862, (pts. 1, 2, and 3), sct. 2, p 234, no. 2592, 1863 (revised same); Thieme-Becker, Kunstler-Lexikon, (1907), v. 1, p.525; Carlo Bonnetti, Sophonisba Anguissola, p.145, no. 25 -- this publication not available in Boston or Lansing areas (This may be: "Sofonisba Anguissola 1531-1625", Bollettino storico cremonese II, pp. 109-52); A. Sutherland Harris and L. Nochlin, Women Artists: 1550-1950, 1976, p.27, fig. 3; R. Simon, "The Identity of Sofonisba Anguissola's Young Man", The Journal of the Walter's Art Gallery 44 (1986), p. 117, fig. 4; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p.27, 96, no.3; I. S. Perilingieri, "Strokes of Genius", Ms. (1988), p.54; "Lady in waiting: rediscovering the forgotten brilliance of an illustrious Renaissance painter", Art & Antiques (1988), p.67; M. Kusche, "Sofonisba Anguissola en Espana: etratista en la corte de Felipe II Junto a Alonzo Sanchez Coello y Jorge de la Rua", Archivo Espanol de Arte 248 (1989), p.395, n.24; A. Ghirardi, "Una ricerca iconografica nel cenacolo delle Anguissola: i ritratti di Minerva" Paragon, 1992, n.509-511, p.35-43; I. S. Perilingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.60-4, pl. 33, 34; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.196-97, 218, pl.6; M. Garrard, "Here's Looking at Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist" Renaissance Quarterly, Fall 1994, p.604,606, fig 25, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.20-1, 46, pl.13.

This Self-portrait housed at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts depicts Sofonisba half-length and posed frontally except for her head, which is turned to a 3/4 pose. Characteristically, this 3/4 view presents Sofonisba with her hair centrally parted with braiding wrapped about the crown of the head displaying only the left. Delicate, minuscule brushstrokes are evident in her hair particularly on the left side and left braiding that allows individual strands to glisten in contrast to the darker right half, a solid hue of indistinguishable shadings. The contrast continues in the facial features as the right side reveals increased emphasis while her left side recedes into semi-darkness. Again, the

depiction of her facial features is typical: large eyes, emphatically arched brows, delicately sloped nose with only a short division between the nose and the delicate upper lip, the lower, fuller lip casting a heavy shadow on the chin, which in turn receives some highlighted definition in its slight cleft. The heightened tonal qualities evident on the right side of the face reveals copious details such as the light blue green color of the iris, the precise upper and lower eyelids. Untypically, the ruddy complexion of the cheek allows the cheekbone structure to be detectable, a characteristic only seen previously in the Vienna portrait (fig.4). Upon close inspection of the piece, cracking appears over the face particularly over the upper left cheek and nose. It should be noted that the Museum during one of its preliminary examinations of the work noted small amounts of crackling throughout the ground, paint, and surface film.

Sofonisba wears a black dress with flared scalloped collar underneath which is the white chemise also with a flaring ruffled edged collar fastened together by a slim bow. Only the shoulders, portions of the arms and hands appear with the bodice hidden behind the roundel. The portions evident bear a striking resemblance to the garments Sofonisba depicted on herself in the 1558 roundel Self-Portrait in the Paris Institut Neerlandais (fig.7). The background is a solid hue of green.

Upon the roundel's edge an inscription reads: Sofonisba Anguissola Vir[go] Ipsius Manu Ex Speculo Depictam Cremonae. Perlingieri translates this as, "The maiden Sofonisba Anguissola painted this from a mirror by her own hand, Cremona" and adds this comment:

Interestingly, in both this and the Uffizi Self-Portrait, dating the same year, she spells her name Sophonisba, which she generally did not do in her other paintings. Inside the circle of the miniature

are a series of intertwining letters: E, R, A, C, R, Y, M. The pattern of intertwined letters was a Renaissance device which played upon double entendre. Monograms, emblems, and riddles all were popular with Renaissance intellectuals who delighted in hidden meanings. Emblems were popular, and books on the subject were fashionable in France and England in the second half of the sixteenth century. Frequently, there were Latin inscriptions, as in this miniature, or mottoes that could have double meanings.¹⁷

The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog interprets the letters within the roundel as A C E I L M R, which form the name of her father Amilcare. Either interpretation indicates a direct connection with this work's purpose and Sofonisba's family. The Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman catalog acknowledges this but notes it does not "account for the K" on the right. Around the letters, leaves and grapevines can be found, which form a connection, within the background space surrounding the letters, with each other visually that could be interpreted to be wreath-like in character, which was an ancient symbol of honor. The wreath is an ancient symbol of honor, and might be related here to the Anguissola family tradition of connecting themselves with the Carthaginian history of Hannibal.

In discussing the significance of the roundel and its inscription, the Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman catalog notes the inscription:

around the outside of the medallion explains that Sofonisba painted her portrait with the help of a mirror, as her famous predecessor from Antiquity had done [Iaia]...The shield reminds Schwiickhart (1992, 120) of representations of Prudentia, who had a mirror as one of her attributes and was represented in the late Medieval manuscripts with similarly inscribed shields. Sofonisba may have wanted to allude to an aspect of virtue that she herself strove to attain. This is all the more likely, since the mirror also carried negative connotations, especially that of vanity.¹⁸

The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog recounts the different dates for this work by various scholars, including: Caroli's assertion of pre-1554; Ilya Sandra

¹⁷Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola, p. 63.

¹⁸Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, p. 23.

Perlingieri's dating of 1552; and Maria Kusche's 1555 attribution. This catalog notes the true miniature format that the work is produced in and correlates that with Giulio Clovio's 1556 visit to Piacenza/Parma. The correspondence of these facts led the catalog to suggest that the work could have been produced after 1556, but at the same time cautions against this chronological placement stating "gli autoritratti presentano infatti componenti piu complesse di quelle utilizzate nel 'ritratto dal naturale', concordandovi necessita di idealizzazione (per restituire il bel volto della virtuosa) e anche di ingovernamento (per suscitare ancora maggior meraviglia nell'osservatore)."¹⁹ (For further discussion, see above, p. 13) In reference to Sofonisba's unique spelling of her name, the meaning behind the letters within the written emblem, and the relationship of the roundel to Sofonisba, Perlingieri presents some conjectures.

In 1983, during an examination prior to loaning the work for an exhibition, the glass upon the piece was damaged in the lower right corner. In Perlingieri's book the illustration of the portrait appears with the damaged glass, as though it were the work itself, rather than the glass, that had been spoiled in that area. Perlingieri does not mention this occurrence. The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle exhibition catalog also includes this defective illustration, although it does make reference to the damage.

The authenticity of the Boston miniature has never been doubted as an original work by Sofonisba Anguissola. The miniature's provenance can be traced no further back than 1801, when it was first recorded as in the collection of Mr. R. Gough. The initial publication of this work dates to October of the same year, when the Gentleman's

¹⁹Rosanna Sacchi, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, ed. Paolo Buffa (Milan: Electra, 1994), p. 196.

Magazine of London produced a two page illustrated article upon the piece. Prior to 1862, the work was transferred to the collection of H.D. Seymour of Ashridge, England, after which it was documented in a **Catalogue of the Special Works of Art of the Medieval Renaissance and More Recent Periods on Loan at the South Kensington**. Caroli notes the catalog material (n.2592) as mentioning "degli oggetti d'arte colà raccolti per ordine cronologico."²⁰ Within the period of 1912-1928 the work belonged to the collection of J.M. Seymour of Knoyle, Wiltshire, after which the provenance remains in question until the Boston Museum of Art's purchase of the work in 1960 from the Kleinberger and Company, Inc. Extensive scholarly commentary on the portrait began only after its inclusion in A. Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin's **Women Artists: 1550-1950**, 1976.

²⁰p. 96.



Fig.9: Self-Portrait at the Clavichord, c.1558-59. Oil on canvas. 32 11/16 x 25 5/8" (83 x 65 cm). Althorp: Earl Spencer Collection. Inscribed lower left: SOPHONISBA ANGISSOLA VIRGO SEIPSUM PINXIT JUSSU AMI [LCARIS] PATRIS 1561 [?].

Self-Portrait at the Clavichord, c.1558-59. Oil on canvas. 32 11/16 x 25 5/8" (83 x 65 cm). Althorp: Earl Spencer Collection. Inscribed lower left: SOPHONISBA ANGUISSOLA VIRGO SEIPSUM PINXIT JUSSU AMI [LCARIS] PATRIS 1561 [?].

Provenance: Earl Cadogan; Earl Cadogan Sale, February 14-22, 1726, 2nd day, lot 83, bought by the Duchess of Marlborough for L140; by descent to the present owner.

Exhibitions: Art Treasures, Manchester, 1857; Women's exhibition, Earl's Court, London, 1900; Midland Art Treasures, Birmingham, 1934, no.456; Between Renaissance and Baroque, catalog by F.G.Grossman, City Art Gallery, Manchester, 1965, no.9.

Literature: F.G. Waagen, Treasures of Art in Great Britain III, London, 1854, p.456; M. Fournier-Sarloveze, "Sofonisba Anguissola et ses soeurs" Revue de l'art ancien et moderne V, 1899, part II, p.383, 388; H. Cook, "More Portraits by Sofonisba Anguissola" Burlington Magazine XVI, 1915, p.228, pl.III E; B. Berenson, Italian painters of the Renaissance. A List of the principal Artists and Their Works with an Index of Places, 1932, p.23; C. Bonetti, Sofonisba Anguissola, 1932, p.145; A. Venturi, Storia dell' arte italiana, vol. 9. La pittura del Cinquecento, 1933, p.923, 932, pl.IX; I. Kuhnelt-Kunze, "Zur Bildniskunst der Sofonisba und Lucia Anguisciola" Pantheon XX, 1962, p.86, fig.5; M. Haraszti-Takacs, "Nouvelles donnees relatives a la vie et a l'oeuvre de Sofonisba Anguissola" Bulletin du Musee Hongrois des Beaux-Arts XXXI, 1968, p.60; B. Berenson, Italian Painters of the Renaissance: Central Italian and North Italian Schools, 3 vols., 1968, p.14, pl.I; Tufts, "Sofonisba Anguissola, Renaissance Woman" Art News LXXI, 1972, p.50; A. Sutherland Harris & L. Nochlin, Women Artists: 1550-1950, 1976 107-08, 340, pl.3; C. Pirovano, ed., I Campi e la cultura artistica cremonese del Cinquecento, 1985, p.172; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p.130-31, pl.23; I.S. Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.116,138-39, pl.82; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.27, 190, 202, 212, 222, 224, tav.3; M. Garrard, "Here's Looking at Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist" Renaissance Quarterly, Fall 1994, p.589, 592, fig.14, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.28.

Being the second composition with a clavichord, this work naturally invites comparison with that previously addressed from Naples (fig.5). It must be noted, again, that Perlingieri denoted this work as a clavichord, although, subsequent publications addressing this work appear to have ignored this point. Compositionally, the Althorp portrait demonstrates a heightened level of complexity and accomplishment as compared with the single portrait of Naples. As in the Siena portrait (fig. 10), within this depiction the artist portrays herself together with someone else. (The early sketch by her in the Uffizi, fig.3, provides a third instance, again containing an older woman believed to be a

servant.) Upon comparing the Chess Game (fig.23) by her hand in the Polish museum in Poznan, the Museum Narodowe, one immediately recognizes this older woman servant to be one and the same, which indicates a significant relationship between herself and this woman as it is the only person outside the immediate Anguissola family to appear in portrait paintings of the Anguissola family more than once.

As previously stated this comparison certainly could stake a claim as one of the most complex and accomplished works discussed up to this point. In it Sofonisba is portrayed slightly off the central vertical axis of the painting, as in the Naples composition, with her body turned 3/4 towards the left, while the head is slightly turned to the right enabling Sofonisba to encounter the gaze of the viewer directly, demanding the viewer's recognition. It must be noted that the Sofonisba's image is a 3/4 torso-length, unlike that of Naples. This format occurs in two other portraits: the Sterling and the Siena portraits (figs.1 & 10).

Stylistically, this rivals the Lancut portrait (fig.6) as the most precise rendition of Sofonisba thus far noted. Her hair is again characteristically parted in the middle with braiding wrapping around the back crown of the head. However, the intricacy of the rendition of the hair stands alone, as the additional highlighting provides the necessary contrast to denote individual strands, braid sections, and areas unlike any of her previous works. Furthermore, the black bow wrapped behind the ear about the top of the head appears only here.

In this work Sofonisba abandoned the facial stylization seen in previous works. The eyebrow and nose, while pronounced, do not run together in a single stylized

curvation as in the past works. The eyes are well defined with the lower lid indicated by increased highlighting. At this point it is necessary to address Perlingieri's discussion of her eyes in this work as in relation to the others:

In many of her self-portraits, her eyes are pink, puffy, and sometimes without eyelashes. This may indicate the presence, even at this date, of the ophthalmic problems that Van Dyck would describe after visiting Anguissola when she was in her nineties. ophthalmologist Milton Lincoff has looked at numerous enlargements of Anguissola's self-portraits and said that the way she painted her eyes shows great anatomical accuracy. According to Dr. Lincoff, Anguissola possibly was suffering from blepharitis, an inflammation of the eyelids, in her teens and twenties. It could have been due to granulated eyelids, which in severe cases can cause eyelashes to fall out, or possibly some kind of allergy. Despite what appear to be large eyes, they are still 'within the normal range of the eye size'.²¹

Continuing in the discussion of her facial features, her lips also receive increased delineation making them appear full though still delicate with the dimple at the left corner further indented. The indentation again appears in her chin as it has previously, while the full cheeks obliterate any cheekbone structure. The portrayal of the right ear demonstrates the most detailed modelling seen thus far.

The black/ brown dress (the sleeves appear brown beneath the shoulder puffs) also receives a more intimate detailing than her previous works. The collar flares with beading or scalloping about its edges leading down to a V-shape opening. The front of the dress is fastened with embroidering that appear to have cloth buttons at the central seam. Five of these embroidered button fasteners occur; the top one is unfastened and interwoven with the chemise ties. The shoulder seams lead to intricately puffed juliet upper sleeves that are pleated with scalloping upon each pleat, underneath the puff the sleeving narrows to follow the shape of the arm. Although unseen due to the bend of her right arm, the skirting appears pleated and seamed at the waist as the folds would indicate. Underneath

²¹P. 138.

the dress is again a white chemise with ruffling at the collar and wrist cuffs. The collar receives additional precision in its rendition due to increased contrast in the ruffling undulation. Two ties appear at the neck; the one on the top remains untied, while the lower is tied in a bow of which the bow ties have tassels at their ends. The cuffs are less clearly delineated, however, for the first time some of the sleeving of the chemise protrudes in a soft puff from the dress sleeves.

Sofonisba's hands, like those in the Naples work, appear caught in mid-motion at the clavichord. The elongation and tapering of the fingers previously present is not so pronounced here, and even each fingernail is now exactly described. The clavichord also received additional precision of rendering as it is portrayed in a more overhead view than that of the Naples piece. The diagonal formed by the clavichord starting at the center of the bottom side leads the viewer's eye back into the older woman in the shadows. Furthermore, the background coloration moves the viewer's eye from right of Sofonisba to the left to the old woman by gradating from light to dark. Within the light portion on the right multiple colors appear visibly merged as the brushwork of Sofonisba can be discerned in stark contrast to the tight linear rendition of the rest of the composition.

The older woman in the shadowing receives distinct highlight upon the protruding facial features that indicate a severely straight nose and tight thin lips. Wrinkles appear on the forehead and about the dark eyes. The right side of the face recedes into the shading. Her hair acts as a flat gray plane about which is a white cap with a seam in the center that ties in a bow underneath her chin. Her dress appears a matte gray tone without detailing, though with a white chemise beneath the boat neck.

Both Caroli and Perlingieri note that this work is signed and dated although its aging has caused fading making some areas indistinct. Caroli expands on its provenance and the bibliographical references which address the work particularly in regards to its signature. Caroli titles this work a Portrait of Lucia Anguissola again with a question mark, yet again the characteristic similarities to her other self-portraits truly denotes this as a self-portrait of Sofonisba. The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog discusses this work as a self-portrait though it was not in that exhibition. The Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman catalog agrees with this study's refutation of Caroli's belief in the work as a portrait of Lucia. The catalog utilizes Lucia's self-portrait (fig.30) and Sofonisba's Chess game (fig.23) to mention the difference in features which this study noted above (see p.54-55). Finally, the catalog states that in "1766 Sophonisba Anguisciola virgo se ipsum pinxit iussu Ami... patris..., could be deciphered, but in 1872 evidently only Sophonisba Anguisciola iussu patris."²²

²²P.28.



Fig.10: Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola, c.1558-59. Oil on canvas. 43 11/16 x 43 5/16" (111 x 110 cm). Siena: Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola, c.1558-59. Oil on canvas. 43 11/16 x 43 5/16" (111 x 110 cm). Siena: Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Provenance: Noted in 1852 in the Catalogo della Galleria dell'Istituto di Belle Arti of Siena, since then it has been in the present collection.

Exhibitions: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, Cremona, Vienna, 1994.

Literature: G. Greer, The Obstacle Race, 1979, p.181; C. Pirovano, ed., I Campi e la cultura artistica cremonese del Cinquecento, 1985, p.176, pl.1.16.6; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p. 102-03, pl.6.; I.S. Perilingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.49, 52, pl.24; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.34, 216-17, 220, pl.16; M. Garrard, "Here's Looking at Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist" Renaissance Quarterly, Fall 1994, p 556-58, fig.1., S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.54.

(For debate regarding the date of this piece in Sofonisba's oeuvre see above, p.).

Perilingieri notes that "close examination in 1983 and 1988... revealed part of a faint, but still visible, signature. The word 'Virgo', as she often signed herself, and '...SSOLA' are evident in very pale yellow in the lower right-hand corner of the canvas."²³ Several scholars agree to the terrible need of restoration to this work, noting that many details are obscured and that "the surface is warped so that the paint has puckered and is peeling obviously in certain passages of the background".²⁴ The work suffers, besides, under the accumulation of several hundred years of dirt.

The background is very dark and only highlights indicate any of Campi's hair or clothing. Campi's face appears obscured but remains distinct in its facial delineation especially on the left side of the face. Campi's hand does not appear anatomically incorrect

²³P. 52.

²⁴ Claire Hamlich. Towards an Understanding of Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625). Cremonese Painter (Unpublished, M.A. Thesis: University of Michigan, August, 1973), p. 71.

so much as undefined. Whereas, Sofonisba's left hand, which holds a pair of gloves, depicts the fore and middle fingers bent and splayed unnaturally (see above for further discussion of this feature, p. 42). The easel and wood framing around the portrayed canvas are barely distinguishable. Sofonisba's facial features are well delineated, indicating a fullness that would suggest a younger age. (See above for further discussion of her facial features, p. 32-33).

The compositional complexity of this work and its obscure psychological implications have stimulated much scholarly commentary on this piece in the past several years. The recent 1994 and 1995 catalogs offered new insight into when it may have been produced and whether Campi sat for the portrait (see above, p. 15). Other interpretations of this image have considered its composition to imply an undermining of her predecessor or at least as a declaration of independence from his influence. Only Kusche has considered it rather as a representation of the closeness between the two. What meanings lie within the painting will no doubt be the impetus for further scholarly debate.



Fig.11: Self-Portrait, c.1561. Oil on canvas. 14-3/16 x 11 7/16" (28.5 x 24 cm). Milan: Pinacoteca di Brera. Inscription: (not very legible)"[...]OPONISBA [...]ILCARIS [...]M[...]SIS L[...]XI".

Self-Portrait, c.1561. Oil on canvas. 14-3/16 x 11 7/16" (28.5 x 24 cm). Milan: Pinacoteca di Brera. Inscription: (not very legible)"[...]OPONISBA [...]ILCARIS [...]M[...]SIS L[...]XI".

Provenance: Pinacoteca di Brera acquired from a private collection, 1911. The Brera has kept the work within storage until its recent showing in the Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle exhibition.

Literature: F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p.134-35, pl.25; S. Bandera Bisoletti, Pinacoteca di Brera. Scuole lombarda, ligure e piemontese 1535-1796, 1989, pp.130-31; M. Kusche, "Sofonisba Anguissola en Espana retratista en la corte de Felipe II junto a Alonso Sanchez Coello y Jorge de la Rúa" Archivo Español de Arte LXII, 1989, n.248, pp.391-420; A. Ghilardi, "Una ricerca iconografica nel cenacolo delle Anguissola; i ritratti di Minerva" Paragone, 1992, p. 35-43; M. Kusche, "La Antigua Galeria de Retratos del Prado: su importancia para la obra de Ticiano, Moro, Sanchez Coello y Sofonisba Anguissola y su significado para Felipe II, su fundador" Archivo Español de Arte LXV, 1992,n.257, p.1-36; I.S. Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.139, pl.83 ; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.216, 222, 223-24, 226, 288, 340, pl.20, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.44.

This portrait, like that of the Althorp collection (fig.9), received a greater amount of attention to detail than Sofonisba's earlier works. Compositionally the artist portrays herself over much of the canvas surface leaving a very minimal amount of background which is a solid black/ brown hue into which the clothing fades. This self-portrait depicts Sofonisba frontally with her head turned slightly to the right so as the characteristic portion of the hair braid can be seen. As in the Althorp piece, Sofonisba's hair contains elaborate contrasting tonal ranges resulting in realistic highlighted areas that appear as individual strands. While her hair retains the traditional central part with braiding around the crown of the head, within the braiding magnificent ornamentation of pearl clusters set in gold have been added.

Sofonisba's facial depiction appears to be the most meticulous rendition of her features yet discussed. The left half of the face stands in high contrast to the right portion which recedes into the shadows. This dramatic use of chiaroscuro, only previously

witnessed in the Naples self-portrait (fig.5), accentuates the heightened precision of the facial features. The right eye recedes into the darkness as the normally light shade of the artist's eye is completely enveloped into a solid dark mass with only a minuscule reflection in the upper left portion. The right eye, also quite dark, retains a glimpse of its light coloration in a crescent shape in the lower right portion. Both eyes are delineated with lines around the interior of the upper and lower eyelids that cause the white of the eye, as well as the highlighted areas of the lids to become emphasized. Likewise the other facial features receive a richer tonal variation than her previous self-portraits making the face appear more volumetric and lifelike. Even the eyebrows illustrate this intricacy as individual hairs are now discernible as distinct from the shading.

Sofonisba has abandoned the previously modest frocks for an elaborately embroidered gown, on which the embroidery highlighted by gold and white pigment, is the only section distinguishable from the background. The sensuous white fur lined dress collar adds significant textural attributes that produce an interesting contrast to the delicate lace chemise.

Perlingieri provides a detailed description of Sofonisba's garments in this portrait noting, for the first time, that the "painting is known to have been signed: "[S]ophonisba [Angu]issola [Am]ilcaris filia [?]MLXI" (Sofonisba, daughter of Amilcare ... [illegible] ... 1561. However, none of this is now visible."²⁵ The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog expands upon this further noting the inscription's placement above the right shoulder that is now indistinguishable from the highlights upon the embroidery.

²⁵P. 139.

Perilingieri also addresses the facial illustration with particular focus on the eyes saying "the bulging of the eye closest to the viewer seen in many of her self-portraits (including those at Boston and Paris) is due to the distortion of having viewed herself through a mirror."²⁶ However, in my opinion, the eye does not appear as conspicuously disproportionate as this would indicate.

Typically, Caroli provides more bibliographical information concerning the provenance of this painting. Again, he questions whether it is Sofonisba, herself, entitling it instead Ritratto di Minerva Anguissola [?]. He notes that the Brera acquired the work in 1909.

²⁶Pp.138-39.



Fig.12: Self-Portrait, 1564. Chantilly: Musée Condé.

Self-Portrait, 1564. Chantilly: Musée Condé.

Provenance: Unknown.

Exhibitions: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, Cremona, Vienna, 1994 & 1995 respectively.

Literature: P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.29, 40, 218, 224, 340, tav.5, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.66, 67.

The Chantilly Self-Portrait depicts Sofonisba in the most ornate costume of all her self-portraits, surpassing even the Milan painting (fig. 11). The image portrays Sofonisba in a bust length composition, with the face shown in a typical, 3/4 pose turned to the left. Characteristically, only one ear comes into view, but this time adorned with an earring. The earring appears to be a gold hoop from which a pearl shaped bobble hangs. No longer can the hair be distinguished as centrally parted, though it is arranged in a braid that wraps about the crown of the head. Within the braiding pearls are set, while on top of the crown of the head a large cluster of pearls appears with a red ornament that appears to be in the shape of a rose. The hair along the brow line has been intricately curled into a multitude of petite ringlets. While the hairstyle appears much more ornate than previously seen, the technique that Sofonisba utilizes of highlighting small areas to emphasize individual strands remains the same.

Her facial proportions retain the characteristic allotments: a third of the face equalling the forehead. As previously mentioned, the head is turned slightly to our right, and as in the other portraits, the face is shadowed on that side. Her eyebrows appear prominently arched. The eyes are opened, so wide that the iris has a thin stripe of the white of the eye beneath it. The green hue of the iris is apparent in both eyes, with

reflected highlights in the upper right corner of each iris. Both the upper and lower lids are prominently depicted, with no indication of eyelashes. The eyesocket appears more dominant than in any previous depiction.

The nose, typically predominant bears a very distinguished rounded tip, and sharply delineated nostrils. For once the head is turned forward enough that a glimpse of the second nostril can be deciphered. The hollow beneath the nose appears very pronounced as do the lips. The lips again are dimpled at the corners, as the lower lip casts a shadow upon the chin. The cleft indentation upon the chin is also pronounced. The coloration of the cheeks appears a light, peach tone that appears faintly on the chin and tip of the nose. The lips bears an intensified tone of the same hue.

Sofonisba's garb consists of a Venetian style collar of intricate lace that comes high beneath the chin. The intricately patterned white lace stands out against the black background and bodice. The darkness of the background makes the bodice indistinguishable except for the areas bearing gold embroidery. The upper left portion of the background has large cracks. Noticeable, but much lighter and more intricate, cracking appears across the entire face.



Fig.13: Self-Portrait, c.1620. Oil on canvas. 38 5/8 x 30 11/16" (98 x 78 cm). Niva, Denmark: Nivaagaards Art Museum.

Self-Portrait, c.1620. Oil on canvas. 38 5/8 x 30 11/16" (98 x 78 cm). Niva, Denmark: Nivaagaards Art Museum.

Provenance: Unknown.

Exhibitions: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, Cremona, Vienna, 1994 & 1995 respectively.

Literature: F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p.146-47, pl.31; I.S. Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.199, pl.113 ; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.306-07, pl.54.

This composition portrays the 3/4 seated figure facing to the right with the head turned frontally on the central vertical axis. As in Sofonisba's earlier self-portraits the figure gazes directly at the observer. Facially, the features bear a stronger resemblance to her earlier works, than does the Keller portrait (fig.14), with its gentle sloping nose and soft, delicate upper lips. Characteristically, her hair is centrally parted, again covered with a veil as in the Keller work, with one ear showing. Additionally, the background is a solid color, but it lightens in hue glancing down the canvas.

Sofonisba's black dress covered about the shoulders by a black shawl appears a solid black mass in the upper torso; whereas, in the skirting accented undulating folds are apparent. The collar of the dress is a narrow V-shape with a solid dark cloth covering the lower portion. Uniquely, no chemise collar appears; however, white cuffs are displayed in a stylized ruffling mimicking the collar in the Keller work, but more freely represented.

Both, Perlingieri and Caroli discuss this work. Caroli does not consider it a self-portrait, noting a catalog reference datable to 1908 recognizing the date of the piece as circa 1585. Perlingieri notes that "[in 1927] Nicodemi attributed this portrait to Van Dyck, but recent attribution by Karen Petersen has given it rightfully back to Anguissola. Van Dyck's hallmark were his elegant long, slender tapering hands - which often had a

boneless, translucent quality - not Anguissola's 'square - U' - so evident in this self-portrait".²⁷ The hands do have a translucent quality, but certainly bear resemblance to her own typically elongated, slender fingers, an attribute inherited from her instruction from Campi, from her other self-portraits.

Upon comparing this work with those portraits of Sofonisba by Van Dyck (fig.30 & 31), extreme differences in the way she is portrayed are evident immediately. In stark contrast to this portrait which depicts the artist as aging but still agile, the portrait in the Sackville Collection (fig.32) represents her as greatly aged with sunken cheeks and eyes as well as quite frail. The Turin portrait (fig.31), goes even further, depicting the artist lying in bed. The form of the body can not be detected beyond her face and her hands which hold a rosary loosely between them. While neither of Van Dyck's portraits depict Sofonisba as greatly wrinkled as Giovanni Battista Trotti's portrait (fig.14), they indicate just as effectively the frailty of the artist. Interestingly, Sofonisba maintains her preference for wearing black and white at this late stage in her life.

²⁷ *ibid*, 199.

REJECTED PORTRAITS

The following portraits incorporate those portraits variously attributed by scholars as either authentic self-portraits or not authentic, but which are here rejected as self-portraits of Sofonisba. This examination's denial of their authenticity relies upon stylistic and technical differences within the images and those stylistic, technical, and physiognomical characteristics consistent throughout Sofonisba's authentic self-portraits. Some of this study's refutations follow those of other scholars. For example, my attribution of figure 14--Portrait of the Cathiloc Barbo Anguissola--to Giovanni Battista Trotti (called il Malosso), follows assertions of the Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle exhibition catalog. At the same time other opinions stated here are my own; for example, those concerning the Uffizi round portrait and the portrait in the Milanese private collection.



Fig.14: Giovanni Battista Trotti called il Malosso. Portrait of the Catholoc Barbo Anguissola , c.1610. Oil on canvas. 94 x 75 cm. Bern, Switzerland: Godfried Keller Collection.
 Inscription: "alla m.Mag.ca Sig.a\ Catolica Barbova Angussol[a]"

Giovanni Battista Trotti called il Malosso. Portrait of the Cathiloc Barbo Anguissola, c.1610. Oil on canvas. 94 x 75 cm. Bern, Switzerland: Godfried Keller Collection.
Inscription: "alla m.Mag.ca Sig.a.\ Catolica Barbova Angussol[a]"

Provenance: Unknown.

Exhibitions: Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, Cremona, Vienna, 1994 & 1995 respectively.

Literature: I.S. Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.192, 194, pl.110 ; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p. 306, 328-329, pl.65.

Interestingly, the artist--Giovanni Battista Trotti--studied under Bernardino Campi as well. Freedberg records his lifespan as 1555-1619 and notes that

he was quickly caught up in the new currents of influence, now no longer Mannerist, that came to Cremona from Emilia. By the middle of the last decade of the sixteenth century he was working effectively in the repertory of the Carraccesque reform.²⁸

As Sofonisba stayed in contact with Campi and was perhaps his most renowned pupil, Trotti would undoubtedly have been familiar with her accomplishments. Their stylistic differences are quite apparent upon comparison of this portrait to Sofonisba's Niva portrait (fig.13).

This portrayal displays a 3/4-length representation a woman in her late seventies or eighties. Compositionally, she dominates the central axis of the canvas and is seated in a chair, partially seen, with a solid dark background. The facial depiction is quite detailed with intricate wrinkling on the forehead, between the eyebrows, and around the mouth. The eyes do not gaze directly at the viewer as in all of her previous self-portraits, but stare slightly below the gaze of the viewer. The lips are pursed. The hair is centrally parted and covered by a thin, transparent veiling that hangs down the breast of the dress. The nose

²⁸Sydney J. Freedberg, Painting In Italy: 1500-1600 (New York: Pelican Books, [1971] rpt.1990), p. 591

has a large protrusion and drops down lower than in authentic self-portraits of Sofonisba.

She wears a black dress that fades into the background in areas. It does not receive very specific detailing other than in the left sleeve and cuff where some shadowing can be found. The white collar and cuffs achieve an effect of delineation through emphatic contrast between light and dark. The collar is the most elaborate seen in any of her self-portraits, with a continuous undulation of thick, dense ruffling. Her hands are very muscular with veins showing. The left holds a book which is divided by her forefinger. Perilingieri, who believes it to be a self-portrait of the artist, writes that this portrait was produced for King Philip III and "dates from the first decade of the seventeenth century. On the piece of paper she holds in her right hand... [is inscribed]: 'Alla Mag[esta]d Catolica besa la m [ano] ... Anguissola' (To his Catholic Majesty, I kiss your hand, Anguissola)".²⁹ No discussion of this portrait appears in Caroli's publication.

²⁹ P. 194.



Fig.15: Portrait of a Young Lady. Oil on panel. 35 x 27.5 cm. Milan: Private Collection.

Portrait of a Young Lady. Oil on panel. 35 x 27.5 cm. Milan: Private Collection.

Provenance: Unknown prior to the current placement.

Literature: P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p. 220-221, pl.18, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.54.

This composition appears mentioned for the first time in the recent Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog, where it is identified as a self-portrait of Sofonisba. However, due to physiognomical disparities between this and Sofonisba's authentic self-portraits, this study argues that it is not a self-portrait. As with other portraits rejected in this study, the primary features that differ from those typical of Sofonisba's self-portraits are the jaw line and fullness of cheeks, among others. Once again, the jaw line of the portrayed figure appears very angular, unlike her own full jaw line and full cheeks as apparent in any number of her authentic works. Another pertinent feature that differs in this composition is the eye placement; this painting depicts a woman looking off into the distance, completely detached from the viewer's gaze. Sofonisba's gaze has consistently, without deviation, turned to confront the viewer's glance directly.

Correlations are possible between the costume worn by the figure and those depicted in works produced in Sofonisba's Spanish period including the Chantilly and Milan self-portraits. However, this woman bears an extensive amount of jewelry including multiple necklaces, intricate hair adornment, earrings, and rings that exceed anything portrayed in the Chantilly or Milan paintings.

The work also illustrates the figure in a standing 3/4 length pose, never utilized in Sofonisba's extant authentic portraits. While this type of stance can be compared to her portraits of the Spanish royal family, as addressed by the Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue

sorelle catalog, differences from her authentic self-portraits outnumber any similarities.

The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog mentions the work receiving restoration, yet the canvas condition appears more deteriorated, and bears more cracking, than any other work previously discussed.



Fig.16: Attributed to Sofonisba Anguissola. Portrait of Husband and Wife, c.1570-71.
Oil on canvas. 72 x 65 cm. Rome: Galleria Doria Pamphili.

Attributed to Sofonisba Anguissola. Portrait of Husband and Wife, c.1570-71. Oil on canvas. 72 x 65 cm. Rome: Galleria Doria Pamphili.

Provenance: Unknown prior to the current placement.

Literature: G. Greer, The Obstacle Race, 1979, p.184; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p.182-83, pl.A3; I.S. Perlingieri, Sofonisba Anguissola: The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.142, 152-53, pl.91.

This depiction of a couple raises doubts as to who is portrayed as well as by whom the work was produced. Both Perlingieri and Caroli note that since 1902 the museum's catalog attributed the portrait to Sofonisba which had been named Titian and His Wife in 1965 by Torselli. However in 1983 the museum "took the attribution from her and it became an anonymous Italian 16th century work".³⁰ Perlingieri re-attributes it to her; Caroli separates it from her authentic works into only an attributed category. This thesis asserts only its attribution to Sofonisba, on the basis of seeing only black and white photographic reproductions of it. The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog excludes it.

Both authors discuss the works in varying degrees stylistically and compositionally. Perlingieri writes "the most noticeable feature of this portrait is the striking similarity of her face, which is older--by ten years--version of Sofonisba's self-portrait at Althorp: the same face with slightly dimpled chin; same shape of the left ear; and tiny curls at her hairline---all softly colored".³¹ This study disagrees with these listed similarities. Differences within the shaping of the eyes, ears, and jaw line appear quite

³⁰ P. 152.

³¹ P. 152-53.

distinct from her other self-portraits.

The eyebrows do not retain Sofonisba's characteristically arched shape, but rather are thin and flat with little curvation. Likewise, the prominence of the eyes appears reduced as they are not widely opened, but rather of more ordinary proportions. The ear shape differs from Sofonisba's in the elongated earlobe and less pronounced undulation of an additional curve of flesh above the lobe. Finally, the jaw line appears very angular, making the face rather almond shaped; whereas, Sofonisba's jaw line has always been depicted as much fuller, making the face oval, almost round in shape. These differences indicate that this is probably not a self-portrait of Sofonisba.



Fig.17: Portrait of a Young Lady (possibly Lucia or Minerva?). Oil on a small walnut panel. 4" (10.2cm) in diameter. Florence: Uffizi Gallery.

Portrait of a Young Lady (possibly Lucia or Minerva?). Oil on a small walnut panel. 4" (10.2cm) in diameter. Florence: Uffizi Gallery.

Provenance: Cited in the inventory of the "stanzino segreto della villa del Poggio Imperiale, as the property of Vittoria della Rovere".³²

Literature: P.P. De Ribera, Le Glorie Immortali de' Trionfi, et Heroiche Imprese di Ottocento Quarantacinque Donne Illustri antiche e moderne dotate di conditione, e scienze segnalate 1609, p.313; S. Meloni Trkulja, 1976, p.38; M. Kusche, "La Antigua Galeria de Retratos del Prado: su importancia para la obra de Ticiano, Moro, Sanchez Coello y Sofonisba Anguissola y su significado para Felipe II, su fundador" Archivo Espanol de Arte LXV, 1992, n.257, p.9; P. Buffa, ed. Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.218-219, 220, 286, pl. 17, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.44-45, 46, 54, pl.10.

The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog discussed this portrait as an authentic self-portrait of Sofonisba, comparing it compositionally to the other miniatures of Boston and the Ashburnham medallion (figs.8 & 7). There are obvious similarities between the Ashburnham medallion and this medallion shaped image, but, in physiognomical attributes this image is quite different from that work as well as from the Boston miniature

It differs from those works also in the technical application of the paint, as do the Vancouver, London, and Zeri reproductions (figs.19, 20, 21). Only the facial area receives any substantial amount of modelling or shading. The typical highlighting within the hair diminishes to a sparse amount along the brow line, with indistinguishable adornments in the braiding. The eyes are brown, unlike Sofonisba's typical blue-green irises. Again, the jaw line appears very angular, unlike the rounded type seen in her authentic works including the Boston and Ashburnham paintings. The background appears a matte green as in the Boston image, and the black dress with white chemise are

³² P. 218.

reminiscent of Sofonisba's typical garb; however, again the paint application is extremely flat with only a thin line of highlight to break the monotonous black of the bodice.

For these reasons, this study rejects this work as a self-portrait of Sofonisba. Furthermore, if the work should indeed have been produced while Sofonisba was in Spain, then I would doubt its authenticity as a work produced by Sofonisba at all, due to the discrepancy in the technical proficiency between this and the Milan or Chantilly portraits.



Fig.18: Girl with an Old Woman, c.1554-55. Chalk sketch (black chalk on white/ blue paper). 301 x 345 mm. Florence: Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni, inv. n. 13936F.

Girl with an Old Woman, also called **Self-Portrait with Old Woman**, **Vecchia che studia l'alfabeto ed e dierisa da una bambina**, c.1554-55. Chalk sketch (black chalk on white/ blue paper). 301 x 345 mm. Florence: Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni, inv. n. 13936F.

Provenance: Noted by Baldinucci to have been in the collection of Leopoldo de' Medici in the Sixteenth century, as stated in a drawing inventory. From this collection, it was transferred to its current location.

Literature: C. Pirovano, ed., I Campi e la cultura artistica cremonese del Cinquecento, 1985, p.301-302, pl.2.12.2; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p. **, pl.; I.S. Perilingieri, "Sofonisba Anguissola's early sketches" Woman's Art Journal (Fall-Winter, 1988-89), 11-12; *ibid*, Sofonisba Anguissola. The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance, 1992, p.44, 45, pl.17; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.270-71; M. Garrard, "Here's Looking at Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist" Renaissance Quarterly, Fall 1994, p.614, fig.31, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p.20, 40.

This drawing is the earliest extant portrait by Sofonisba involving more than one figure. It has been proposed that this portrait sketch is a study done while she was under the supervision of Bernardino Campi. Most of her earliest works, of which this is one, involve family members, servants, or herself in genre scenes. Sofonisba's utilization of family members as models conforms with contemporary restrictions on women from access to models from outside the family. Sofonisba's inclusion in the minor nobility of Cremona made the enforcement of such a restriction necessary. Some scholars, nevertheless, credit this emphasis on genre as an innovation, forming a foundation upon which the late Sixteenth century Northern-Italian genre tradition evolved from.

The drawing represents a young girl, probably one of her sisters, in a 3/4 length pose gazing directly at the viewer while pointing to something of importance in the book held by the older woman. Perilingieri, who believes this to be a self-portrait, describes the young girl to be:

in her early teens (or possibly at eleven or twelve) wearing a mid-sixteenth century costume with the

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typical corseted bodice and sleeves that re puffed and slashed at the shoulders and then fitted to the wrist with lace at the cuff. The linen chemise is gathered at the neckline into a drawstring tie. The full skirt is shown gathered at the waist and the overskirt is pulled back and tied ... her bodice laces up the center front, and the sleeves and chemise are quite plain. The old woman's simple gown suggests that she was a servant in the Anguissola household.³³

As previously mentioned, Baldinucci includes this work in his citation of the Medici drawing collection inventory from the time of Leopoldo de' Medici as one of a set of three drawings that includes her Uffizi Self-Portrait (fig.3) and the Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish (fig.22) of c.1554, both of which are known to have come into the possession of Cosimo I de' Medici at about that time (see above, p. 8-9).

The possibility of its being an actual self-portrait diminishes upon comparison of facial attributes with those in the authentic self-portraits. The head of the young girl has some characteristics that recur in those images, such as a 3/4 facial pose and the centrally parted hair with a braid wrapping about the crown of the head, but the face here differs markedly in other features from the authentic examples. This young girl has no cleft markation in her chin and the more petite nose stands in stark contrast to Sofonisba's prominent elongated nose. The eyes are less wide and less wide-open; they are more of an almond shape, in comparison to Sofonisba's large, round eyes. The eyes narrow as a result of her smile, as well.

None of Sofonisba's self-portraits depict her with such a pronounced smile, and with teeth showing. They render only a hint of a smile. Upon consideration of the smiling depiction of this young girl, Sofonisba's Chess Game (fig. 23) comes to mind in which Lucia, Minerva, and Europa are depicted all smiling in distinctly various states. A further

³³ P. 44.

comparison in age and physiognomy of the young girl depicted here and Lucia in the Chess Game indicates the possibility that this portrait drawing represents Lucia rather than Sofonisba.

COPIES OF SELF-PORTRAITS BY FOLLOWERS OF SOFONISBA ANGUISSOLA

The images discussed below are rejected as authentic self-portraits. They appear to be, rather, copies of self-portraits by followers of Sofonisba Anguissola. Stylistic and technical qualities provide the foundation for such assertions. Of the three works discussed two of them are considered by other scholars to be reproductions. The Vancouver portrait had not entered into any scholarly publication until its inclusion here.



Fig.19: Follower of Anguissola, possibly a sister. Sofonisba Anguissola in miniature. Oil on unknown material, probably card or parchment. Vancouver: Vancouver Museum.

Follower of Anguissola, possibly a sister. Sofonisba Anguissola in miniature. Oil on unknown material, probably card or parchment. Vancouver: Vancouver Museum.

Provenance: Unknown.

Literature: None known.

The Boston Museum of Art holds in its file on their self-portrait a photograph of this image, which is attributed to Sofonisba. No documentation is known for the work and the provenance prior to Vancouver's access of the piece is also unknown. The work appears to be a reproduction of the Boston composition, converted to a square format. Little can be said of this work outside of the fact that the application of the paint appears far looser and less accomplished than in Sofonisba's Boston original. This kind of application occurs in the similar composition at the Victoria Albert Museum, also believed to be by a follower of Sofonisba, possibly a sister.



Fig.20: Follower of Anguissola, possibly a sister. Sofonisba Anguissola in miniature. Oil on copper. 9.8 x 9.6 cm. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, cat. 103.

Follower of Anguissola, possibly a sister. Sofonisba Anguissola in miniature. Oil on copper. 9.8 x 9.6 cm. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, cat. 103.

Provenance: Unknown prior to the current placement.

Literature: Redgrave, 1874, p.9; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p.196.

The Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog includes this image in the discussion of the Boston miniature. Little documentation exists for the work and the provenance prior to London's access of the piece is unknown. The work appears to be a reproduction of the Boston composition, converted to a square format. Unlike the Vancouver image, within the square format a circle appears around the figure. Here the figure looks less like Sofonisba and even more akin to the younger images of Minerva and

Europa. Compositionally, everything else remains the same outside of the chemise tie in Sofonisba's composition being replaced here by a strand of pearls. As with the Vancouver portrait, little else can be said of this work outside of the fact that the technical application of the paint appears far looser and less accomplished than in Sofonisba's Boston original.

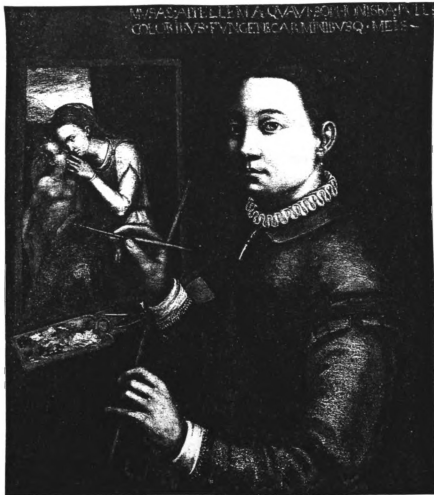


Fig.21: Follower of Anguissola, possibly a sister. Sofonisba Anguissola at the Easel. Oil on canvas. 66 x 59 cm. Mentena: collection of Federico Zeri. Inscription (written in all capital letters): MUSAS APELLEM A QVAVI SOPHONISBA PVELEE/ COLORIBVS FUNGENS CARMINIBVSQUE MEIS".

Follower of Anguissola, possibly a sister. Sofonisba Anguissola at the Easel. Oil on canvas. 66 x 59 cm. Mentena: collection of Federico Zeri. Inscription (written in all capital letters): MUSAS APELLEM A QVAVI SOPHONISBA PVELEE/ COLORIBVS FUNGENS CARMINIBVSQUE MEIS".

Provenance: Unknown prior to the current placement.

Literature: B. Berenson, Italian Painters of the Renaissance: Central Italian and North Italian Schools, 3 vols., 1968, vol. I, p. 14; F. Caroli, Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1987, p. 107, pl. 9.; P. Buffa, ed., Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle, 1994, p. 200-01, pl. 8, S. Ferino-Pagden & M. Kusche, Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Woman, 1995, p. 22.

This composition depicts an apparent replication of Sofonisba's Lancut composition. The canvas size differs by only two centimeters in width. Berenson and Caroli attributed the painting to Sofonisba herself, on the basis of the signature. Only the recent Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle catalog denotes the work as by one of the sisters of Sofonisba, citing Anna Maria or Europa as the possible painters.³⁴ Here, as in the Vancouver and London reproductions, a definitive derivation in style from Sofonisba is apparent. The paint application appears much less proficient with little variation in tonality resulting in a very comparatively flat appearance.

³⁴ P. 200.

Supplementary Images



Fig. 22: Boy Being Bitten by a Crawfish, c. 1554, Chalk sketch (black chalk on white/blue paper), 301 x 345mm. Florence: Uffizi.



Fig. 23: Chess Game, 1555. Poznan: Muzeum Narodowa



Fig. 24: Titian. Self-Portrait, c.1562, oil on canvas. Madrid: Prado



Fig. 25: Catarina van Hemessen. Self-Portrait, 1548, oil on panel. Basel: Öffentliche Kunstsammlung.



Fig.26: Albrecht Durer. Self-Portrait, Madrid: Prado.



Fig.27: Titian. Isabella d'Este, c.1534-36, oil on canvas. Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum.



Fig. 28: Parmigianino. Madonna with the Long Neck, c.1535. Florence: Uffizi.



Fig. 29: Parmigianino. Antea, 1535-37. Naples: Pinacoteca del Museo Nazionale.



Fig.30: Lucia Anguissola. Self-Portrait, oil on canvas. Milan: Castello Sforzesco, inv. no. 562.



Fig.31: Anthony Van Dyck. Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola, 1624. Turin: Galleria Sabauda.



Fig.32: Anthony Van Dyck. Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola, 1624. Knole, Kent: Lord Sackville Collection.

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