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# Artemisia Gentileschi's Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting\*

Mary D. Garrard

In her *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-ca. 1652) made an audacious claim upon the core of artistic tradition, to create an entirely new image that was quite literally unavailable to any male artist. Her apparently modest self-image was, moreover, a sophisticated commentary upon a central philosophical issue of later Renaissance art theory, indicating an identification with her profession on a plane of greater self-awareness, intellectually and culturally, than has previously been acknowledged.

In the *Self-Portrait*, which at present hangs in Kensington Palace (Fig. 1),<sup>1</sup> Artemisia depicted herself in the act of painting, accompanied by several, though not all, of the attributes of the female personification of Painting as set forth in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*. These include: a golden chain around her neck with a pendant mask which stands for imitation, unruly locks of hair which symbolize the divine frenzy of the artistic temperament, and *drappo cangiante*, garments with changing colors which allude to the painter's skills.<sup>2</sup> In 1962 Michael Levey confirmed the identity of the artist through a comparison with other seventeenth-century images of Artemisia and connected the picture with Ripa's description of *Pittura*.<sup>3</sup> Levey's interpretation of the work as a self-portrait of the artist in the guise of *Pittura* has gained general acceptance.<sup>4</sup> Yet although his interpretation is iconographically correct, it remains iconologically incomplete, for the artist's unique artistic achievement has gone curiously unnoticed, a point best illustrated by Levey's remark that "the picture's real intention [might] have been earlier recognized if it had

been painted by a man." The fact is, no man could have painted this particular image because by tradition the art of painting was symbolized by an allegorical female figure, and thus only a woman could identify herself with the personification. By joining the types of the artist portrait and the allegory of painting, Gentileschi managed to unite in a single image two themes that male artists had been obliged to treat separately, even though these themes often carried the same basic message. A brief look at some concerns reflected in pictorial treatments of these two themes will shed light upon the dilemma faced by male artists who had to keep them separate. It will also clarify for us Artemisia's own intention in this work and, more generally, her ideas on the art of painting.

*Pittura*, or the allegorical representation of the art of painting as a female figure, made her appearance in Italian art sometime in the first half of the sixteenth century, along with the equally new female personifications of sculpture and architecture. Vasari was the first artist to make systematic use of female personifications of the arts. We find them in the decorations of his house at Arezzo (Fig. 2), in those for his house in Florence (Fig. 6), and on the frames of the individual artist portraits that head the chapters of the *Vite*.<sup>5</sup> The earliest sixteenth-century image of *Pittura* that I know was painted by Vasari in 1542, in the Stanza della Fama of his Arezzo house, along with images of *Scultura*, *Architettura*, and *Poesia*. Each is shown as an isolated female figure, seated and seen in profile, engaged in practicing the art she symbolizes. Vasari's archetypal *Pittura* is closely echoed in the mid-sixteenth-

\* This article is an expanded version of a paper delivered at the College Art Association meeting in Los Angeles in 1977. I am grateful to the American Association of University Women for a fellowship awarded me in 1978-79, which has facilitated my continuing study of Artemisia Gentileschi's treatment of traditional themes.

I would like to thank in particular Pamela Askew, whose insights generously offered at an early stage, and whose perspicacious advice provided later, helped to shape this study in an invaluable way. I am also indebted to Norma Broude for her thoughtful critical reading of the manuscript, and to H. Diane Russell and Law B. Watkins for many helpful suggestions and discussions.

N.B.: A bibliography of frequently cited sources appears at the end of this article.

<sup>1</sup> The painting, which bears on the table the inscription "A. G. F.," formerly hung at Hampton Court, but has been at Kensington Palace since 1974. Its presence in the English Royal Collections is first documented in 1649, when it was described in the inventory of Abraham van der Doort as "Arthemisia gentilesco, done by her selfe." See *The Walpole Society*, xxiv, 1935-36, 96, and Oliver Millar, *The Walpole Society*, xliii, 1970-72, 186, n. 5. The picture was sold to Jackson and others on October 23,

1651, and recovered for the Crown at the Restoration. It is mentioned again in an inventory of the reconstituted collection of Charles I prepared in 1687-88 (*The Walpole Society*, xxiv, 1935-36, 90). See also nn. 55 and 67, below. For literature on the picture not discussed in this article, see Michael Levey, *The Later Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, Greenwich, Conn., 1964, 82.

<sup>2</sup> Ripa, 429-30.

<sup>3</sup> Levey, 79-80.

<sup>4</sup> See Bissell, 162; and Spear, 98.

<sup>5</sup> W. Bombe, "Giorgio Vasaris Häuser in Florenz und Arezzo," *Belvedere*, xii-xiii, 1928, 55ff.; and Paola Barocchi, *Vasari pittore*, Milan, 1964, 23, 127; 50-51 and 138. See also Winner, 19ff. and 24-25.

Vasari's images of *Pittura* designed for the frames surrounding the artists' portraits appeared as woodcut illustrations in the second (1568) edition of the *Lives of the Artists*. These images were also included in Vasari's *Libro de' disegni*; proofs of the woodcut illustrations were pasted in as headings of the decorative borders framing the drawings in his collection. See O. Kurz, "Giorgio Vasari's Libro de' Disegni," *Old Master Drawings*, xi, June, 1937, 1-15 and plates; and xii, December, 1937, 32-44 and plates.



1 Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as La Pittura*. London, Kensington Palace, Collection of Her Majesty the Queen (photo: Lord Chamberlain's Office, St. James's Palace)

century engraving representing *Pittura* by Bartolommeo Passerotti (Fig. 3),<sup>6</sup> and she appears in art with increasing frequency in the later sixteenth and the seventeenth cen-

turies.<sup>7</sup>

The sixteenth-century creation of a noble personification for the art of painting constituted a kind of status

<sup>6</sup> Adam von Bartsch, *Le Peintre graveur*, Leipzig, 1870, xiii, 6. See also Mary Pittaluga, *L'Incisione italiana nel Cinquecento*, Milan, 1930, 313. The print is not dated, but the life-span of Passerotti (1529-1592) indicates

that his print undoubtedly postdates Vasari's image of *Pittura*.

<sup>7</sup> See Andor Pigler, *Barockthemen*, Budapest, 1956, II, 472, for a short list of images of *Pittura*.



2 Vasari, *La Pittura*.  
Arezzo, Casa Vasari  
(from Barocchi, *Vasari  
pittore*)

3 Passerotti, *La Pittura*.  
(photo: Metropolitan  
Museum of Art)



symbol for that art, indicating the moment of its social and cultural arrival. In the Middle Ages, painting, sculpture, and architecture had not been included among the Liberal Arts. The Trivium (Dialectic, Rhetoric, and Grammar) and the Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astrology) were established as the canonic seven arts in the fifth-century allegorical treatise of Martianus Capella, and in manuscripts and in sculptural cycles they were usually depicted as female figures, following the Roman tradition of allegorical personification, although the *artes*

*liberales* themselves were not personified in antiquity.<sup>8</sup> Painting and Sculpture were occasionally included in Liberal Arts cycles on the porches of medieval cathedrals, specifically those of Sens, Laon, and Chartres (north), and on the Florentine Campanile.<sup>9</sup> Invariably in these last instances, however, the personifying figure for Painting or Sculpture is not female but male, even when, as at Laon (Fig. 4), all of the other arts are shown as women. The distinction is significant. These figures do not represent the Fine Arts, as has been suggested, since the Fine Arts did

<sup>8</sup> On the complex history of the Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages, see P. d'Ancona, "Le rappresentazioni allegoriche delle arti liberali nel medio evo e nel rinascimento," *L'Arte*, v, 1902, 37ff., 211ff., 269ff. and 370ff.; L. Ettlinger, "Pollaiuolo's Tomb of Pope Sixtus IV," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xvi, 1953, 239-271, esp. 250ff.; L. Ettlinger, "Muses and Liberal Arts," *Essays in the History of Art Presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, London, 1967, 29-39, esp. 32, n. 23; Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, Princeton, 1972 (1st edition, 1953), chap. iv; Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *The Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral*, Baltimore, 1959, 15ff.; Horst W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, London, 1952, 295ff.; and L. Heydenreich, "Eine illustrierte Martianus Capella-Handschrift des Mittelalters und ihre Kopien im Zeitalter des Frühhumanismus," *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien für Hans Kauffman*, Berlin, 1956, 59-66.

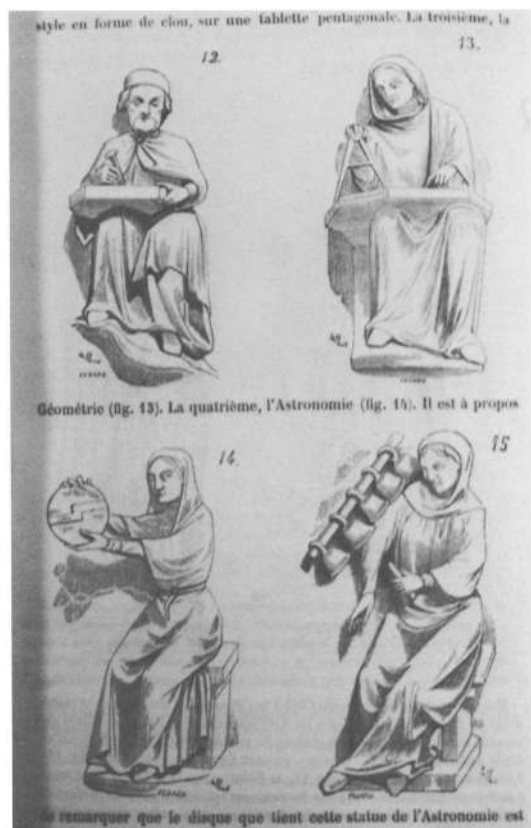
Contrary to a belief widely held in the Renaissance, the art of painting appears to have had no firm standing among the Liberal Arts in antiquity. In part, this is because the Liberal Arts did not become an organized set of entities until the Middle Ages, but see Pevsner, 34, who observes that art was not the profession of educated men in ancient Greece; and Wittkower, 7-8, and 16, who asserts that the visual arts were never admitted to the Liberal Arts in ancient Rome. Panofsky, on the

other hand (p. 13), sustains the contrary position of Pliny the Elder, that painting was a Liberal Art in antiquity (*Natural History* xxxv. 77), and points to the acceptance of this view in the Renaissance and to its reiteration by theorists. See also Kris and Kurz, 4ff.

<sup>9</sup> Figures representing Painting are found on the central portal of Sens Cathedral (end of the 12th century), at Laon Cathedral (1210-1230), and on the north porch at Chartres (ca. 1250). (In the last example, the male personification is found among male Liberal Arts figures.) See Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1874, II, 1-10. The male figure who stands for Painting on the Florentine Campanile, a relief of 1337-1340, from the Andrea Pisano workshop, is juxtaposed with a figure representing sculpture. These figures stand among female personifications of the traditional Liberal Arts. When, a century later, Luca della Robbia added to the north side of the Campanile figures symbolizing some of the Liberal Arts, he used male exponents of the arts, e.g., Orpheus for Music, Euclid for Geometry, Pythagoras for Arithmetic, sustaining the tendency seen in the earlier cycle to depict practitioners, now allegorized with reference to antiquity. See Walter and Elisabeth Paatz, *Kirchen von Florenz*, Frankfurt am Main, 1952, III, 389 and 549ff.; and d'Ancona, *L'Arte*, No. 5, 1902, 223ff.

not yet exist as a concept, but rather the Mechanical Arts, or what would later be called the crafts.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to their female neighbors, the male figures who stand for the guild-controlled crafts of painting and sculpture are not really personifications; rather, they represent artisans, human practitioners of the activities to which they refer. And this in turn reflects the status of these arts. Painting was not yet conceived as an activity whose practical aspect was subordinate to an intellectual or spiritually significant dimension, and thus it was not yet considered worthy of personification as an abstract entity, even though its progress toward that level was indicated by its occasional inclusion in medieval Liberal Arts cycles.<sup>11</sup>

In the fifteenth century, the seven Liberal Arts were raised to ten with the addition of Poetry, Philosophy, and Theology, as can be seen in the *Tarocchi* engravings, published in the 1460's, and also on Pollaiuolo's Tomb of Sixtus IV in the Vatican, of around 1490, where Poetry was replaced by Perspective. Painting and Sculpture were still not included among the Liberal Arts,<sup>12</sup> despite the earlier efforts of Ghiberti, Alberti, and the humanists to secure the position of these arts as noble pursuits.<sup>13</sup> The inferior position of Painting in the quattrocento, both in the intellectual order and in the popular imagination, is documented graphically in the scheme of the *Tarocchi* engravings, with its fixed sequence of levels of being and of value.<sup>14</sup> In the hierarchy of the *Tarocchi*, Painting is not included among the Liberal Arts; indeed, the Artisan (Fig. 5) appears in the very lowest category, the so-called Conditions of Man, where he is superior only to the Servant. The Conditions of Man, in turn, is separated from the third highest category, the Liberal Arts, by the intermediate class of Apollo and the Nine Muses, who also symbolize the arts, but, again, not the visual arts.<sup>15</sup> The structure of the *Tarocchi* vividly illustrates the traditional position of the arts of painting and sculpture in the social order, before they joined the Liberal Arts in the early sixteenth century as a consequence of the successful efforts



4 Laon Cathedral, figures from Liberal Arts cycle (from Viollet-le Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné*, II, figs. 12-15)

of Leonardo and Michelangelo to elevate them from manual to intellectual activities.

Leonardo's famous argument for the inclusion of painting (though not sculpture) among the Liberal Arts on account of its genesis in the imagination need not be recounted here.<sup>16</sup> Less familiar is one practical result of the

<sup>10</sup> Tolnay, 30, n. 19, called these figures "Fine Arts." The seven *artes mechanicae*, first codified by Hugh of St. Victor in the 12th century, were eventually joined in pictorial representations by a variety of other non-liberal crafts, occupations, and skills. See Michael Evans, "Allegorical Women and Practical Men: The Iconography of the *Artes Reconsidered*," in Derek Baker, ed., *Medieval Women (Studies in Church History, Subsidia 1)*, Oxford, 1978, 325-26.

<sup>11</sup> Evans (as cited in n. 10) has shown that male figures represented the Liberal Arts in some medieval manuscripts, either as famous exponents in combination with female personifications, or, more rarely, as the *artes* themselves. In the case of the canonical seven Liberal Arts, it is not easy to determine whether the male figure is an unidentified historical exponent or a literal practitioner. Evans cites many instances, however, of figures who represent the non-liberal arts, especially in the later Middle Ages; these are almost invariably male and, necessarily, practitioners rather than famous exponents.

<sup>12</sup> L. Ettlinger, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xvi, 1953, 258-59, convincingly rejects the interpretation of some historians that Perspective on the Tomb of Sixtus IV represents the fine arts in general and Painting in particular, on the ground that *Prospettiva*,

following medieval usage, is synonymous with optics, not with pictorial perspective construction. Ettlinger's position is confirmed by the inscription and by the attribute of *Prospettiva*, which is an astrolabe.

<sup>13</sup> Alberti (Book II, 28) echoes Pliny in asserting that painting was among the Liberal Arts in ancient Rome; Ghiberti had planned to add to the third book of his *Commentaries* a discussion of the *artes liberales*, which were in his view a necessary humanistic foundation for the education of the sculptor. See Richard Krautheimer, *Lorenzo Ghiberti*, Princeton, 1956, 311.

<sup>14</sup> A good brief overview of the *Tarocchi* engravings is given in Jay Levenson, Konrad Oberhuber, and Lynn Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings from the National Gallery of Art*, Washington, D.C., 1973, 81ff. See also Seznec, *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, 137ff.

<sup>15</sup> On Apollo and the Muses as symbols of the arts, and the deliberate anagrammatic parallel with Apelles, see Winner, 13ff; and Seznec, 140ff.

<sup>16</sup> For the passage in which Leonardo argues for the separation of the art of painting from craftsmanship, see Jean Paul Richter, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, London, 1939, I, 654ff. See also Pevsner, 30ff., and Blunt, 49ff.



5 *The Artisan*, Tarocchi engravings, E series (photo: National Gallery of Art)

acceptance of Leonardo's point of view: only when the art of painting was understood to involve inspiration and to result in a higher order of creation than the craftsman's product did it become appropriate to symbolize the art with an allegorical figure. It must remain an open question how female personifications originally came into being, yet on an expressive level a female personification for *Pittura* could usefully signal, through the very unusualness of her connection with an activity largely practiced by men, that she stood for Art, an abstract essence superior to the mere existence of artists. Thus she could assist in conveying the concept that art was separate from the manual labor connected with its making. It may be more than coincidence, then, that Vasari's images of

*Pittura* and *Scultura* at Arezzo, apparently the first to present these arts as allegorical female figures, should have been created two years after the celebrated *motu proprio* of Paul III, which officially declared sculpture to be a free art, exempt from the jurisdiction of guilds.<sup>17</sup>

The pictorial elevation of the position of art above that of individual artists held immediate advantages for artists themselves who, in enlightened self-interest, sought to raise the status of their profession. As Tolnay has pointed out,<sup>18</sup> the theoretical separation between the fine and the mechanical arts during the Renaissance was intimately bound up with the social separation between artist and artisan. The social problems posed for the later sixteenth-century Florentine artist by the association with manual arts that still attached to him, despite the personal attainments of Leonardo and Michelangelo, and the theoretical defenses developed by artists to combat this stigma have been extensively described in Blunt's classic account.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Pevsner has definitively characterized the official formation of the Florentine Academy in 1563 as the outcome of a series of efforts by artists to raise their own social status by creating a new organizational structure that would effectively free them from their dependence on individual guilds, and from an essentially medieval system that still lingered in Florence.<sup>20</sup> The inevitable consequence of these concerns and efforts, an aspect that has received somewhat less focused art-historical attention, was that art itself was drawn into the service of propaganda, for the greater glory not of God, but of art and artists. It was surely for this purpose that Vasari created, shortly after 1561, about the time that the Academy was founded, a much fuller-blown Allegory of the Arts in his painted decoration for a room in his house in Florence. In this cycle, Vasari alternated personifications of the arts with narrative scenes from the life of Apelles, and added a row of portraits of famous painters along the tops of the walls (Fig. 6).<sup>21</sup> The campaign to elevate the status of art was extended to Rome, where the counterpart for Vasari's cycle can be seen in the residence of Federico Zuccaro, who was the principal founder of the Accademia di S. Luca, the institutional successor to the Florentine Academy. Zuccaro's ceiling fresco of 1598 in the Palazzo Zuccaro depicting the Apotheosis of the Artist (Fig. 7) presents an idealized male artist accompanied by Athena and Apollo, the protectors of the arts, who also serve here to sustain the allegorical mode.<sup>22</sup> The spreading effort to propagandize on behalf of the elevated status of

<sup>17</sup> On the importance of the *motu proprio* of 1539 and that of 1540, and their dependence upon Michelangelo's singular fame, see Pevsner, 34 and 56.

<sup>18</sup> Tolnay, 32.

<sup>19</sup> Blunt, chap. iv.

<sup>20</sup> Pevsner, chap. 11. See also C. Goldstein, "Vasari and the Florentine Accademia del Disegno," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, xxxviii, 2, 1975, 145ff.

<sup>21</sup> Vasari's house in Florence is located at Borgo S. Croce, No. 8. See n. 5 for literature. For Bocchi's description of the episodes in the life of Apelles, see Barocchi (as cited in n. 5), 138.

<sup>22</sup> Zuccaro's painting, executed a few years after the establishment of the Accademia di S. Luca, also follows shortly after the publication of Romano Alberti's *Trattato della nobiltà della pittura* . . . Rome, 1585, a treatise devoted to the proof that painting is a liberal and not a mechanical art. See Mahon, 163, n. 3.



6 Vasari, Sala della Fama. Florence, Casa Vasari (photo: Florence, Soprintendenza alle Gallerie)

art paralleled and sometimes preceded the foundation of art academies, a phenomenon exemplified by a painting, *Athena Introducing Pittura to the Liberal Arts*, by Hans von Aachen (Fig. 8), executed in Cologne around the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>23</sup> In this work, as in the Italian examples, the glorification of art is coupled with enhancement of the social position of the artist through the use of personifications, generally female, to set the narrative on an ideal plane.

Another mode of propagandizing for the status of art, and the second thematic tradition to be examined here, was self-portraiture in which the artist's personal status as a gentleman was emphasized. Self-portraits such as that by Antonio Moro in the Uffizi (Fig. 9) in which the artist stands before his easel, holding palette, brushes, and mahlstick, yet with the menial implications of these tools offset by his fine clothes and by the attachment to the blank canvas of a poem written in Greek, were clearly intended to place the painter among the learned and to differentiate him from the mere artisan.<sup>24</sup> An even more pointed expression of the social prestige of the artist can



7 Zuccaro, *Apotheosis of the Artist*. Rome, Palazzo Zuccaro, ceiling (photo: Biblioteca Hertziana)



8 Hans von Aachen, *Athena Introducing Painting to the Liberal Arts*. Brussels, Collection Mrs. Sonia Gilbert (photo: Warburg Institute)

<sup>23</sup> For a fuller discussion of the role of Athena (Minerva) as emblem of the arts, see Tolnay, 21-38, and Winner, esp. 88ff. The picture by Hans von Aachen is a *modello* for a painting in a private collection, London; there also exists an engraving after this work by E. Sadeler. Numerous examples of paintings and prints representing the theme of the admission of Painting to the Liberal Arts can be found in the photographic archive of the Warburg Institute, London.

Hans von Aachen's *Pittura* predates by a number of years the foundation of art academies in Germany, the first of which appeared about 1650 (see Pevsner, 113ff.). On the admission of the art of painting to the Liberal Arts in Spain, see M. C. Volk, "On Velázquez and the Liberal Arts," *Art Bulletin*, LX, 1978, 69ff; and Kahr, 1976, 163ff.

<sup>24</sup> The date 1558 is inscribed on the easel. The Greek verses on the canvas were published by Baldinucci, and they were translated into Italian by order of Cosimo III, who had acquired the painting. For the text, see *Reale galleria di Firenze illustrata*, ser. III (*Ritratti di pittori*), Florence, 1817, I, 167-69.



9 Antonio Moro, *Self-Portrait*. Florence, Uffizi (photo: Florence, Soprintendenza alle Gallerie)



10 Titian, *Self-Portrait*. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie (photo: Jörg P. Anders)



11 Sebastien Bourdon, *Apelles Painting Campaspe*, labeled *Pictura* (photo: Warburg Institute)

be found in the numerous self-portraits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that depict the artist wearing a golden chain, a reminder of the rank conferred upon him by a ruler. Perhaps the noblest example of this genre is Titian's *Self-Portrait* of ca. 1550 in Berlin (Fig. 10), which shows the painter wearing the tokens of rank given him twice by the Emperor Charles V.<sup>25</sup> Such an expression of the social exchange between ruler and artist, and of their comparable prestige, had as its original model the relationship between Alexander the Great and Apelles, symbolized in the story of Alexander's gift to the artist of Campaspe, the Emperor's favorite mistress and the painter's model. This legend became a popular theme in its own right in Renaissance art, as well as a metaphor for the exalted status of painting, a development that is illustrated in a print designed by the seventeenth-century French artist Sebastien Bourdon (Fig. 11), in which the Apelles and

<sup>25</sup> The golden chain given to Titian by Charles V symbolized the rank of Count Palatine and the Order of the Golden Spur, both conferred in 1533. See E. Panofsky, *Problems in Titian, Mostly Iconographic*, New York, 1969, 7-8; and on the more general relation between rulers and painters, see Kris and Kurz, 40ff. Z. Z. Filipczak discussed the tradition of the golden chain in the self-portraits of Rubens and Van Dyck in a paper delivered at the College Art Association meeting, New York, January, 1978.

Alexander theme is used to symbolize the art of painting, as its label PICTURA clearly shows.<sup>26</sup>

As these examples demonstrate, the modes of expressing the nobility of the art of painting and the dignity of the artist proliferated in the Renaissance. Unfortunately for artists, however, each of the modes carried certain inherent disadvantages. In the first place, indirect allegorical expression, whether through the personification of *Pittura* or the legend of Apelles, did not permit the painter to enhance directly his own personal status by the image he had created unless, like Vasari or Zuccaro, he placed it on the walls of his own house. On the other hand, a self-portrait that included a badge of social distinction like the golden chain did not make immediately clear that the sitter was an artist unless he was already famous enough to be recognized on sight, since other kinds of noblemen were awarded golden chains and medallions by princes and rulers.<sup>27</sup> Yet if the artist resorted to including studio paraphernalia in the picture, he risked evoking the very association with manual labor that he sought to escape, no matter how fine his clothes; and the finer the clothes, the more out of place he looked in the studio, as a Northern example reveals (Fig. 12).<sup>28</sup> In short, whereas the inclusion of artists' attributes tended to undermine the message that art was a noble occupation, the use of an allegorical personification tended to exclude portrayal of the individual artist.<sup>29</sup>

Baccio Bandinelli stands out in the sixteenth century as one artist who was able effectively to convert the image of the artist's studio into a metaphor for art itself in its higher, unmechanical aspects. The engraving of 1531 by Agostino Veneziano of Bandinelli's "academy" (Fig. 13), and a counterpart engraved some twenty years later by



12 J. C. Droochsloot, *Self-Portrait in the Studio*. Mâcon, Musée Municipal des Beaux-Arts (photo: Museum)

Aenea Vico, are both presumed to follow Bandinelli's own designs. These prints illustrate yet another way that the artist might attest the noble and intellectual character of his profession, by showing the workshop as a place where the arts were debated and compared as well as practiced.<sup>30</sup> This idea is expanded upon in an early seventeenth-century engraving by P. F. Alberti that depicts an academy of painters, as the inscription states (Fig. 14), whose specific groupings and spirit of analytical discourse intentionally recall Raphael's *School of Athens*.<sup>31</sup> That august association can only have boosted the image of the arts, yet in both these examples the connection of the artist-author with the academy he depicted remains tenuous,

<sup>26</sup> In this engraving by Sebastien Bourdon (1616-1671), the inscription narrates the story of Alexander's gift of Campaspe to the painter, who had fallen in love with her, and provides the appropriate reference to Pliny, the source of the legend (*Natural History* xxxv. 86-87; see K. Jex-Blake, trans., *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art*, Chicago, 1968, 125). Other notable Italian versions of the Alexander and Apelles theme include the painting by Primaticcio in the chamber of Mme. d'Estampes, Fontainebleau; and Tiepolo's picture (Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts), in which the image of Apelles is said to be combined with a self-portrait of the artist (Winner, 30).

In the Netherlands, the Alexander-Apelles-Campaspe theme was often introduced into gallery pictures through the inclusion of a prominent painting representing the theme in a room full of numerous works of art, in order to glorify the collector as well as the artist. Madlyn Kahr has examined this tradition in some detail (Kahr, 1976, 141ff., and 1975, 229ff).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Velázquez's portrait of the Infante Don Carlos of ca. 1626 (Madrid, Prado). Don Carlos wears a chain of a type that, according to Cassiano dal Pozzo, was currently popular in Spain. See Enriqueta Harris, "Cassiano dal Pozzo on Diego Velázquez," *Burlington Magazine*, cxii, June, 1970, 371.

<sup>28</sup> The picture, by J. C. Droochsloot, is dated 1630 and is in the Musée Municipal des Beaux-Arts, Mâcon. See Georg Eckhardt, *Selbstbildnisse niederländischer Maler des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1971, 177-78.

Carlo Dolce's *Self-Portrait* of 1674 (Florence, Uffizi) very literally illustrates this dilemma, showing the "gentleman" self holding a drawing that depicts the "craftsman" self drawing. The picture was described by

Wittkower as a "revealing pictorial document of the dichotomy in the life of the gentleman-artist," who sees himself simultaneously as a "stylish melancholicus" and "a drably dressed, unshaven, anaemic little craftsman" (Wittkower, 240 and fig. 72).

<sup>29</sup> Self-portraits that included emblems of the arts in the background were rare before the 18th century. An exception is Livio Mehus's *The Genius of Sculpture*; see G. Ewald, "Livio Mehus's 'Genius of Sculpture,'" *Burlington Magazine*, cxvi, July, 1974, 392. By the 18th century, when the battle for the status of painting was largely won, attributes such as statuettes or brushes were often included in a relaxed, offhand way in the background of a self-portrait (e.g., that of Largillière, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tours).

<sup>30</sup> The earlier engraving bears the inscription "ACADEMIA DI BACCIO BRANDIN IN ROMA IN LUOGO DETTO BELVEDERE MDXXXI." The second engraving is inscribed "Baccius Bandinellus inven. Enea Vico Parmegiano Sculpsit." Pevsner, 39ff., has contrasted the two prints to show the changing meaning of "academy" in the 16th century and the evolving character of Florentine art education.

<sup>31</sup> On the "Academia d' Pittori" of P. F. Alberti (1584-1638), see Bartsch, xvii, 313-14. For the possibility that the *School of Athens* itself may contain a group that represents the Liberal Arts, see E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, Oxford, 1972, 92ff.

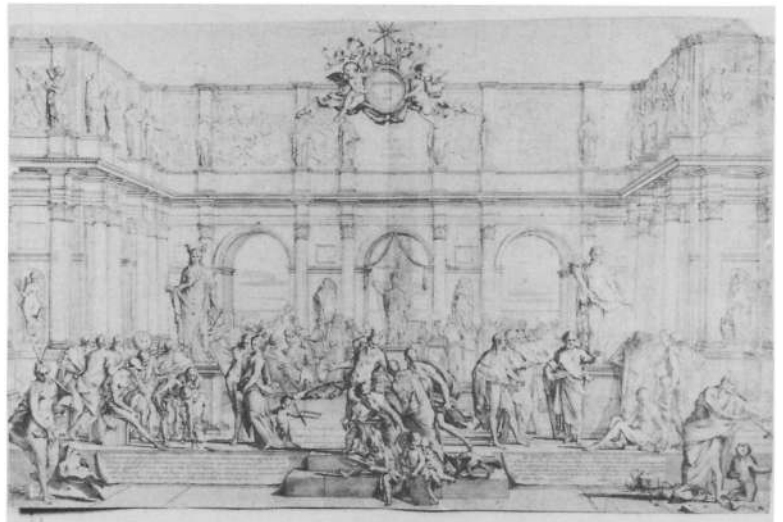
G. P. Lomazzo's *Allegory, Art and Glory* (Vienna, Albertina, *Albertina Kat.*, vi, 443) represents a variant of this tradition, combining allegorical figures with artists' workshops.



13 Agostino Veneziano, *Baccio Bandinelli's "Academy" in Rome* (photo: Warburg Institute)



14 P. F. Alberti, *Academy of Painters* (photo: Warburg Institute)



15 Pietro Testa, *Liceo della pittura* (photo: Warburg Institute)

depending for the Bandinelli upon the inscription alone. It is perhaps in some measure indicative of a lingering problem for the artist who sought to associate himself with the rising status of his profession that one of the culminating examples of this workshop/academy tradition, Pietro Testa's engraving of the early 1640's, the *Liceo della pittura* (Fig. 15), contains a poignant personal emblem, a snake and stone in the lower right corner, to stand for Testa himself, who as a living artist had no place in the ensemble of ideal characters he had created.<sup>32</sup>

Ironically, then, although the idea of painting as a noble

pursuit had acute personal relevance for every practicing artist of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, direct personal identification with the elevated status of art was only possible for the male artist through indirect and sometimes very awkward combinations of attributes. Two final examples may help to confirm this point. In one of several self-portraits that include his golden chain (Fig. 16), Van Dyck displays his trophy with naïve pride, at the same time pointing very self-consciously to a giant sunflower. Both attributes symbolize the art of painting, and form a composite expression of the artist's devotion to

<sup>32</sup> See E. Cropper, "Bound Theory and Blind Practice: Pietro Testa's Notes on Painting and the Liceo della Pittura," *Journal of the Warburg*

*and Courtauld Institutes*, xxxiv, 1971, 285-86.



16 Van Dyck, *Self-Portrait with Sunflower*. London, Collection, Duke of Westminster (photo: Courtauld Institute)



17 G. D. Cerrini, *Allegory of Painting with Self-Portrait of the Artist*. Bologna, Archiginnasio (photo: Frick Art Reference Library)

<sup>33</sup> Van Dyck was given the golden chain by Charles I in 1633; this picture (London, Coll. Duke of Westminster) dates from 1633-35. See R. R. Wark, "Notes on Van Dyck's *Self-Portrait with a Sunflower*," *Burlington Magazine*, xcvi, Feb., 1956, 53ff.; and J. Bruyn and J. A. Emmens, "The Sunflower Again," *Burlington Magazine*, xcix, Mar., 1957, 96ff.

<sup>34</sup> Cerrini (1609-1681) worked primarily in Rome for the Papacy. On this painting, see C. Gnudi, *Nuove acquisizioni per i Musei dello Stato*, 1966-71, exh. cat., Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna, Sept. 28-Oct.

"his King, to God and to the art of painting."<sup>33</sup> An equally ingenious though aesthetically deficient solution was offered by G. D. Cerrini (Fig. 17), who, in a painting of the mid-seventeenth century, combined the Allegory of Painting with a self-image by having the female personification hold forth a portrait of the artist.<sup>34</sup> When, in his *Self-Portrait* of 1650, Poussin reversed this arrangement, positioning himself as the living character in the center and alluding to *Pittura* in a painted image behind,<sup>35</sup> he created what is surely a superior work of art, and a more naturalistically plausible combination of artist and allegory, yet these entities still, necessarily, remain separate.

The prevalence of combined images such as these illustrates a continuing desire on the part of artists to link themselves with the elevated concept of art, yet in the very period when it mattered most, the allegorical conventions employed to promote that concept proved resistant to the inclusion of the living artist. Self-portraits might contain allusions to art, allegories of the arts might stand next to artists' portraits, Apelles or Minerva might be invoked, yet all possible forms of joining the two components were inevitably elliptical. And although elliptical or proliferated forms of expression, mixing ideal and real, were compatible with the tastes of *maniera* artists, the general preference in the seventeenth century for rendering complex abstract ideas sensate and clear through simple, cohesive images invited a more direct and naturalistic form of combining *pittore* with *Pittura*.

In these terms, Artemisia Gentileschi's *Self-Portrait as La Pittura* may be considered the quintessential Baroque version of the theme of the Allegory of Painting. In Artemisia's radically simplified picture, by contrast with every other example here discussed, the artist emerges forcefully as the living embodiment of the allegory. Here, painter, model, and concept are one and the same, and the environment of the artist's studio is evoked by the barest of means. Unselfconsciously engaged in the act of painting, the artist appears oblivious of the golden chain that has slipped aside on her breast, as if to indicate that the chain is hers by natural right, as an attribute of the personification whose identity she assumes. Similarly, the unruly locks of her hair are more than a symbolic reference to inspiration, as Ripa had it; they suggest, in this context of concrete naturalism, the painter's guileless indifference to personal appearance while caught up in the heat of work, a state of mind that contrasts sharply with

24, 1971, pl. 22.

<sup>35</sup> See D. Posner, "The Picture of Painting in Poussin's *Self-Portrait*," in Douglas Fraser, Howard Hibbard, and Milton Lewine, eds., *Essays in the History of Art Presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, London, 1967, 200ff. In Posner's opinion, the crown with one eye worn by the female figure depicted on the canvas in the left background of Poussin's *Self-Portrait* symbolizes Perspective, employed here "to denote the intellectual and creative vision which is the supreme characteristic of Painting."

that of contemporary male artists whose self-portraits indicate their efforts to look like gentlemen. Because of her identity as a woman, Artemisia was in a position to take creative advantage of the allegorical tradition, and to make a statement that was at once more humble and more profound.

Every writer on Artemisia's *Self-Portrait* has suggested that the picture's subject, dependent as it is upon Ripa, must have been dictated to the artist by a learned patron like Cassiano dal Pozzo.<sup>36</sup> There is no evidence, however, that the painting was ever part of Cassiano's collection (see Appendix), and since it was not painted for any other known patron, this proposal is gratuitous. We must resist the notion that a painting that draws upon Ripa's *Iconologia* necessarily displays a scholar's erudition. Although Ripa composed the *Iconologia* as an academician interested in the complex literary and artistic strands that made up the composite images,<sup>37</sup> many artists subsequently consulted the book for the purpose of creating broadly comprehensible images, not for the sake of arcane or erudite allusions. Moreover, a close study of Artemisia's painting in relation to Ripa's description of *Pittura* reveals that the artist made purposeful and selective use of her text, extracting from it for emphasis precisely those features which were of greatest philosophical interest to artists.

Ripa had called, for example, for *Pittura's* dress to be of *drappo cangiante*, a phrase that can be traced to Lomazzo, who in his treatise of 1584 describes it as a virtuoso technique practiced by painters of his day to demonstrate their skill in handling color.<sup>38</sup> To play the changes, Lomazzo explains, an artist painted a passage of cloth with one color in the lights and a different hue in the shadows. As Artemisia runs magnificent violets and greens through the cloth of the sleeves, she demonstrates a knowledge of the technique as well as her own ability to handle color with skill and flourish. Yet on a more subtle level, she develops rich, carefully adjusted color relationships throughout the painting, sustaining the dominant red-brown of the background in the bodice, harmoniously balanced with the dark green of the blouse and the blue-violet highlights of the sleeves; she modulates flesh to white highlights to establish spatial planes with great precision, and she

recapitulates the color scheme of the painting in the five patches of color on her palette. The color changes employed in the *Self-Portrait* are not simply embellishments added to make it conform to an iconographic specification, but, rather, they reflect Artemisia's use of Ripa's suggestive phrase as an opportunity to display, through her own interest in and command of color, the technical skill appropriate to *Pittura* herself, and perhaps even to take a position as well on a continuing controversy of art theory, aligning herself as she does with *colore* over *disegno*.<sup>39</sup>

In a theoretical vein quite contrary to Artemisia's expressive emphasis, Ripa also stipulated that *Pittura* wear a long dress covering her feet, in order to establish a metaphorical relationship between the covered female body and the ideal proportions of painting, set down in the underdrawing but disguised in the final work, when the color — the clothing, as it were — is added. In this formulation, Ripa followed a set analogy between female beauty and perfection of proportions that frequently appeared in sixteenth-century Italian theoretical treatises, in which, as Elizabeth Cropper has shown, female beauty served as a metaphor for the perfection of urns, columns, and even art itself.<sup>40</sup> Gentileschi, however, disregards this focus upon *disegno* and proportionate anatomical form as the essence of painting. Significantly, she ignores Ripa's overt suggestion that she convert the female image into a vehicle for a rhetorical conceit. Leaving out the skirt and feet altogether, she places herself in a foreshortened, transitory, and active pose that prevents the viewer's discovering conventional beauty, symmetry, proportion or even the arched eyebrows that Ripa had emphatically specified.<sup>41</sup>

Throughout the entry on *Pittura*, Ripa carefully interweaves the themes of the pure intellectual beauty of painting and the physical beauty of women, in order to reinforce the cerebral, and therefore noble, character of the art of painting. In this, he adopts the device of the Mannerist painters, namely, the creation of a formula by which women's bodies stand for men's minds. Women, in this conception, do not share in the cerebral bounty of the art they symbolize. The misogynist basis of the lofty theme sounded by Ripa is revealed in a satirical Italian print of

<sup>36</sup> Levey, 80, accounts for Artemisia's "slightly learned depiction of herself," through his suggestion that Cassiano was the patron of the picture. Spear, 98, states that "Cassiano himself may well have dictated the Ripa-based allegory." Bissell, 158, more generally connects Artemisia's interest in allegorical subject-matter in the 1630's, seen in her *Fame*, *Minerva*, and the *Self-Portrait as La Pittura*, with "an influence of the Roman cultural climate, particularly that of the circle of Cassiano dal Pozzo."

<sup>37</sup> On Ripa's approach to his subject, see E. Mandowsky, "Ricerche intorno all' *Iconologia* di Cesare Ripa," *La Bibliofilia*, xli, 1939, particularly 13ff. and 279ff.; also Cropper, 270.

<sup>38</sup> Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura*, Milan, 1584 (Hildesheim, 1968 facsimile), Bk. III, chap. x, 198-201.

<sup>39</sup> On the continuation of the *disegno-colore* controversy in the 17th cen-

tury, and on the relatively low status of color in academic theory, see Donald Posner, *Annibale Carracci*, London, 1971, text, 136-38; and Mahon, 65ff., 138, and 178ff.

<sup>40</sup> E. Cropper, "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, *Petrarchismo*, and the Vernacular Style," *Art Bulletin*, LVIII, Sept., 1976, 374-94.

<sup>41</sup> For obvious aesthetic reasons, Artemisia also saw fit to eliminate the cloth binding the mouth of *Pittura*, Ripa's specification following Horace's ancient description of painting as mute poetry. Illustrated editions of Ripa echo the text in showing *Pittura* with a gagged mouth. Artemisia, however, undoubtedly worked directly from Ripa's text, since no illustrations of *Pittura* were provided in the early editions of the *Iconologia* (the earliest image of *Pittura* that I have seen appears in a French edition of 1644).

the seventeenth century, a woodcut that illustrates a popular maxim (Fig. 18). "Women," the maxim asserts, "often have long dresses and short intellects."<sup>42</sup> This particular misogynist conception can be traced as far back as the Rig Veda ("The mind of woman brooks not discipline. Her intellect has little weight.")<sup>43</sup> and as far forward, in the Gentileschi literature alone, as Longhi's appraisal of 1916 that she was "una pittrice di razza, manualmente; come intelletto soltanto inferiore; anche a suo padre."<sup>44</sup> Although contemporary judgments of Artemisia's intellectual capacities have not survived, we do find in the artist's correspondence occasional expressions of a heightened sensitivity to conventional views of woman's ability. Writing in 1649 to her Sicilian patron Don Antonio Ruffo, she described to him some of her forthcoming paintings, concluding defiantly: "And this will show your Lordship what a woman can do."<sup>45</sup> In another letter written to Ruffo in the same year, Artemisia remarked expansively, "You will find the spirit of Caesar in this soul of a woman."<sup>46</sup> In this statement, the artist's play on words (Caesar's *animo*, her *anima*) serves to underscore the gender difference that makes her claim unorthodox. Yet the claim itself boldly transcends sex differences, for she applies to herself a literary formula that was typically used to characterize important men in the Renaissance, in which the contemporary figure is compared to Alexander the Great, Caesar, or another antique luminary. Ambition could not have been made of sterner stuff.

As if to combat the misogynist stereotype of woman as unintellectual, Gentileschi depicts herself, the artist, not as a coquettish mannequin, but as intensely and thoughtfully absorbed in her work. She indicates through her pose as well as a response to the central philosophical issue raised in Ripa's entry on *Pittura*: the nature of the art of painting. While insisting that painting requires steady application of the intellect, Ripa also concedes that the art is rooted in material things, especially in comparison with poetry, since the painter is involved with brushes and pigments and with the visible effects of nature. In this, Ripa reflects the thinking of later sixteenth-century theorists such as Lomazzo and Zuccaro, who emphasize the distinction between an idea in the mind of the artist, the *disegno interno*, and its material realization, the *disegno esterno*.<sup>47</sup> It is a



18 G. M. Mitelli, satirical woodcut. Milan, Bertarelli Collection (from P. Toschi, *Populäre Druckgraphik Europas*)

distinction that provides a theoretical counterpart for the social distinction between artist and artisan, with art itself now exclusively identified with fine art and subdivided into its higher (intellectual) and lower (manual) aspects. Pietro Testa, Artemisia's contemporary who shared her interest in Ripa's *Iconologia* as a source of ideas rather than as a catalogue of attributes,<sup>48</sup> introduced this same distinction into his *Liceo* in a form that helps to clarify Artemisia's echo of it in her painting. As Elizabeth Cropper has explained, Theory and Practice, personifications that entered Ripa's *Iconologia* in an edition of 1618, were included in the *Liceo* at the suggestion of Testa's academican friend Fulvio Mariotelli, who was also a friend of Ripa.<sup>49</sup> Mariotelli conceived *Prattica* as looking at and directing her compass toward the ground, rooted as she is in terrestrial, lesser things, while *Teoria* looks and points

<sup>42</sup> This woodcut (Milan, Bertarelli Collection, Vol. A.A. 180) was executed by the Bolognese artist G. M. Mitelli (1634-1718) as part of a series of satirical prints that illustrated popular sayings. The maxim itself appears to be of 16th-century origin. See Paolo Toschi, *Populäre Druckgraphik Europas: Italien vom 15. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 1967, 23ff. and pl. 114.

The verse at the bottom of the print reads, in translation:  
Woman, you who want to show yourself off,  
Don't affect in your ornaments any ostentation  
Little wisdom is sometimes concealed under a large cape.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Merlyn Stone, *When God Was a Woman*, New York, 1976, 70.

<sup>44</sup> R. Longhi, "Gentileschi padre e figlia," *L'Arte*, No. 19, 1916, 292.

<sup>45</sup> ("... E farò vedere a V. S. Ill. ma quello che sa fare una donna.") Ruffo, 50.

<sup>46</sup> ("... Ritrovera uno animo di Cesare nell'anima duna donna. ...") Ruffo, 51. See Harris-Nochlin, 118-20, for Harris's discussion of other general remarks on women by Artemisia in her correspondence with Ruffo.

<sup>47</sup> G. P. Lomazzo, *Idea del tempio della pittura*, Bk. 1, chap. 2; and Federico Zuccaro, *L'Idea de' pittori, scultori ed architetti*, Bk. 1, chap. 3, 38ff. See also Blunt, 140ff.; and Panofsky, 85ff. and n. 30.

<sup>48</sup> See Cropper, 270ff.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 284-85. Alternate pairs of terms for the same basic distinction include *Ars* and *Usus* (see M. Winner, "Gemalte Kunsttheorie," *Jahrbuch Berliner Museen*, iv, 1962, 151-185), and also *Paideia* and *Techne* (see Panofsky, 183, n. 6).

her compass upward, deriving inspiration from the heavens, the source of eternal superior guidance. When Testa inserted the pair into his *Liceo*, he did not preserve Mariottelli's hierarchic relationship between Theory and Practice, pessimistically conceiving Practice as blind and Theory as bound, but he did retain the upward and downward orientation of the figures.

Without recourse to complex personification, Artemisia evokes the contrast between Theory and Practice in her *Self-Portrait*. She has posed herself with one arm raised upward, the hand stretched toward its invisible target, suggesting the higher, ideal aspirations of painting, with the other arm resting firmly on a table, the hand holding the brushes and palette which are the physical materials of painting.<sup>50</sup> Yet unlike her Mannerist predecessors and her more academic contemporary, Testa, Gentileschi does not separate, but integrates the concepts. The two arms form one continuous arc in the composition, and the plane of the palette and the line of the brush are precisely parallel. Art and craft, concept and execution, inner vision and outer manifestation, all are equally essential to painting, and they are joined in the mind of the artist, here the head of Artemisia Gentileschi, which intersects the curve of the arms and, as the compositional fulcrum, provides the point of resolution for the two aspects of painting.<sup>51</sup>

In defining art as an integrated whole, Gentileschi offers a revision of the lingering concept of the artistic tem-

perament as melancholic, a concept preserved by Ripa in his entry on *Pittura* in order to sustain its intellectual associations. Unlike Dürer's *Melencolia I*, paralyzed by excessive thought, and unlike Testa's Theory and Practice, who are mutually blocked from fulfilling their function, Artemisia the living artist acts freely and without inhibition.<sup>52</sup> By embodying the abstract allegory in realistic human form, she suggests that the worth of the art of painting derives neither from association with royalty nor from theoretical pretensions, but from the simple business of the artist doing her work, and further, that in this unimpeded performance, theoretical obstacles evaporate.

The idea of the artist engaged in work as a living allegory of art was to be developed in more elaborate form later in the seventeenth century, by Velázquez, in *Las Meninas*, and by Vermeer, in the *Artist in His Studio in Vienna*, and there is a distinct possibility that Velázquez may have been affected by Artemisia's *Self-Portrait*.<sup>53</sup> Within the existing conventions, however, only a woman artist could have sustained the specific idea of a unity between art and the artist in naturalistic terms. This Artemisia did, for without an outward sign of status, she inevitably recalled the noble allegory of the art of painting, and as the physical embodiment of the spirit of the profession, she could convey, through her self-portrayal as modestly adorned but profoundly absorbed, the idea that the act of painting in itself had both dignity and

<sup>50</sup> I am indebted to Pamela Askew for sharing her perceptive observation that the calculated and somewhat artificial placement of arms in this picture suggests the hierarchic distinctions of art theory.

<sup>51</sup> The deliberateness of Artemisia's decision to position herself as we see her is indicated by the very difficulty of painting oneself in near profile. To see herself from this angle, she must have used a double mirror. (If two mirrors are arranged at an appropriate distance from one another, at an angle of slightly less than 90°, one can see one's own left profile by looking into the mirror on the right.) The fact that Artemisia would have had to lean forward and away from the visually obstructing canvas in order to see herself in the mirror may account for the lack of direct physical connection between the depicted canvas and the depicted right hand.

The location of Artemisia's canvas in this picture remains a problem. There are some indications that the entire left three quarters of the background represents the canvas, its right edge defined by the vertical line that meets the top of the painter's head and marks the transition to the darker quarter on the right. The surface of this large area is marked with short dark lines, irregularly placed, which suggest cracks in a primed canvas. These are definitely painted in, and are not actual cracks in the surface. Yet it is curious that she should depict a fresh canvas as already aged, and that the depicted canvas should completely lack physical substance or firm definition.

<sup>52</sup> Annibale Carracci's extraordinary late *Self-Portrait on an Easel* (Leningrad, Hermitage), is a prime example of the use of the artist's studio as a metaphor for art, with particular emphasis upon melancholic artistic isolation. Although the character of expression here may have arisen, as Donald Posner suggests (text vol., 22), from Annibale's personal feelings in an alien social world, it also depends upon the sustaining 16th-century tradition of the artist as melancholic type (see Wittkower, 102ff. and 113ff.).

<sup>53</sup> There was a likely point of contact between the two artists in 1630. When Artemisia wrote to Cassiano dal Pozzo from Naples in August of that year, promising to paint a self-portrait for him after finishing some work for "the Empress," she was probably referring to Maria of Austria, sister of the Spanish king. Maria stayed in Naples as top-ranking royalty for four months, between August and December of 1630, while on her journey to Trieste to marry Ferdinand of Austria (Pietro Giannone, *The Civil History of the Kingdom of Naples*, Naples, 1723, and in English, London, 1731, II, 731ff.). Velázquez, who had been traveling in Italy, stopped at Naples before returning to Spain late in 1630, and visited Maria there long enough to paint her portrait (Madrid, Prado; see Kahr, 1976, 70-71, and fig. 28). He left on December 18, three days before Artemisia wrote to Cassiano that she was about to send him her self-portrait, the work that I have here identified with the painting in Kensington Palace. It is probable that the two artists would have met in that small vice-regal court, and quite possible that Velázquez saw Artemisia's self-portrait. All that we know about Velázquez suggests that such a work would have interested him greatly.

A point that remains to be emphasized here is that, for all that *Las Meninas* may be claimed in its entirety as the supreme expression of the nobility of the art of painting, even Velázquez was compelled to depict himself wearing at his belt the keys that symbolized his status in the royal court. And when, after Velázquez's death in 1660, someone painted the Cross of the Order of Santiago on the artist's breast, conferring upon him pictorially the sign of that highest rank Velázquez had struggled for years to obtain, he added to *Las Meninas* a mere reiteration of what the picture already expressed: "the dignity of the artist as creator" (Tolnay's phrase). Velázquez, however, would probably not have disapproved, for here, as in other examples we have seen, the metaphorical language employed by the artist to elevate the status of art could not metaphorically elevate the artist.

philosophical significance.<sup>54</sup>

Unsung as it has been, Gentileschi's *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* continues to bear its silent but eloquent witness to the proposition that there is nothing "mere" about artistic practice, nothing "unintellectual" about an ability to see in natural life raw metaphors for profound human concerns, and, more particularly, nothing "unintellectual" about a picture that offers both recognition of and a solution for an aesthetic dilemma that had troubled artists for nearly a century.

The American University

## Appendix

The provenance of the *Self-Portrait as La Pittura* cannot be traced earlier than 1649, when it was already in England, and first mentioned in the inventory of the collections of Charles I.<sup>55</sup> The painting has, however, been logically connected with one of Artemisia's principal Italian patrons, the learned Roman scholar Cassiano dal Pozzo. In three letters written from Naples in 1630 to Cassiano, Artemisia repeatedly promised to deliver a self-portrait that he had evidently requested.<sup>56</sup> There is no further mention of a self-portrait in their correspondence until 1637, when she wrote to Cassiano offering some large paintings, through him, to Cardinal Barberini, whom Cassiano served as secretary, in order to raise money for her daughter's wedding, and offering as well a self-portrait to be added to Cassiano's collection of portraits of famous artists. A month later, she repeated the offer; no further correspondence is preserved.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Artemisia's achievement appears to have been innovative but not influential. There exist numerous portraits and self-portraits of women artists, but few if any that directly join the image of the artist with the allegory of painting. The portrait medal of Lavinia Fontana (Biblioteca, Imola), executed after her death by another artist, depicts her in bust length on the coin's face, and on the verso, a figure painting at an easel who is clearly the Allegory of Painting (identifiable by her wild locks of hair, medallion, and bound mouth), but who may or may not be Fontana herself. Occasionally, allegorical figures were combined in a single picture with images of artists, as in Angelica Kauffman's *Angelica Hesitating Between the Arts of Music and Painting* (Yorkshire, Nostell Priory), but in such examples as this, the artist employs the male artist's method and keeps the separate identities intact. For reproductions of these two works, and others that represent unallegorical self-portraits (Vigée-Lebrun) and impersonal allegories of painting (Carriera), see Eleanor Tufts, *Our Hidden Heritage*, New York and London, 1974, figs. 14 a and b, 63, 69, 60 and others.

<sup>55</sup> Artemisia's *Self-Portrait* does not appear in the first inventory of the collection of Charles I, that prepared in 1639 by Abraham van der Doort, although Van der Doort's inventory does contain references to three other pictures by Artemisia Gentileschi (*Fame*, mentioned twice, a *Susanna and the Elders*, and a *Tarquin and Lucrezia*). See O. Millar, "Catalogue of the Collections of Charles I," *Walpole Society*, xxxvii, 1960, 46, 177 and 194.

<sup>56</sup> Giovanni Gaetano Bottari and Stefano Ticozzi, *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura*, Milan, 1822, I, 348-351. In a letter of August 24, 1630, she acknowledges measurements he was sent for an un-

There are strong indications that no self-portrait by Artemisia ever joined Cassiano's collection of portraits of famous artists. No portrait of or by her was named either in de Cotte's description of the dal Pozzo collection that dates from about 1689, or in Ghezzi's inventory of Cassiano's collection prepared in 1715.<sup>58</sup> Haskell and Rinehart have commented upon the curious absence, in these lists, of works by Artemisia Gentileschi, among others, leading them to conclude that Cassiano's collection is likely to have been in the process of dispersal before 1715.<sup>59</sup> There is, however, an earlier clue to the contents of Cassiano's portrait collection. In 1641, a set of epigrams was composed by Gabriel Naudé, a Frenchman then working in Rome, to accompany 42 of the portraits of famous artists (more accurately, famous exponents of art, science, and letters, since Galileo and Lope de Vega were also included). Artemisia is not among those commemorated in the epigrams.<sup>60</sup>

Several hypotheses have been proposed by scholars to explain the relation between the existing painting and the picture or pictures mentioned in the correspondence between Artemisia and Cassiano. Levey suggested that the letters of 1630 and 1637 described the same portrait, that it was never delivered to Cassiano, but was instead brought to England by Artemisia herself, when she went to London in about 1638 to join her father.<sup>61</sup> Bissell, on the other hand, thought that the documents referred to two different paintings, the first supplied in 1630 to Cassiano but, Bissell speculated, perhaps given to Cardinal Barberini, leading Cassiano to request a replacement for his own collection in 1637.<sup>62</sup> Bissell identified the *Self-Portrait* in London with the second commission and proposed that the work under discussion in 1630 is identical with a *Portrait of a Woman Artist* that presently hangs in the Palazzo Corsini in Rome, bearing an attribution to Artemisia Gentileschi (Fig. 19).<sup>63</sup>

specified work, and promises to take care of his request as soon as she has completed some pictures for "the Empress." (Most probably, this was Maria of Austria; see n. 53.) In the second letter, dated a week later, she again promises the requested picture, as soon as work for the Empress is done, and this time calls the picture a self-portrait. She reiterates her promise in the third letter, of Dec. 21, 1630: "ho usato ogni diligenza in farle il mio ritratto, il quale l'inverò con il seguente procaccio." No letters from Cassiano to Artemisia are preserved.

<sup>57</sup> Bottari-Ticozzi, I, 352-53. In a letter of October 24, 1637, she speaks of several paintings, "et un altro per V. S. col mio ritratto a parte, conforme ella una volta mi comandò, per annoverarlo fra' pittori illustri." In the final letter of November 24, 1637, she enumerates the pictures offered in the preceding letter, but does not specifically mention the self-portrait.

<sup>58</sup> See F. Haskell and S. Rinehart, "The Dal Pozzo Collection: Some New Evidence, Part 1," *Burlington Magazine*, cii, July, 1960, 318ff.

<sup>59</sup> Haskell-Rinehart, 320.

<sup>60</sup> Naudé's collection of epigrams was published as *Epigrammatum libri duo*, Paris, 1650. On Cassiano's collection of portraits, see Haskell-Rinehart, 318ff., esp. 320; and G. Lumbroso, "Notizie sulla vita di Cassiano dal Pozzo," *Miscellanea di storia italiana*, xv, Turin, 1876, 129-388, esp. 164ff.

<sup>61</sup> Levey, 80.

<sup>62</sup> Bissell, 162.

<sup>63</sup> The painting was attributed to Artemisia Gentileschi in 1935 by Sergio Ortolani (*La mostra della pittura napoletana*, Naples, 1938, 318). See also Bissell, 162 and n. 75.

In my opinion, Levey's explanation is the more convincing. For reasons of style, the Kensington Palace portrait should be dated around 1630. The precision of its lighting, its naturalism, and its sharp detail connect the painting with Artemisia's early, intensely Caravaggesque period, and there are particularly close analogies with the Detroit *Judith and Holofernes* of about 1625 in the treatment of light and the conception of form, seen especially in the similarity of pose between the maidservant and the artist's self-image.<sup>64</sup> The brushstroke used in the *Self-Portrait* is, however, somewhat freer than in paintings of the 1620's, and there is a more sophisticated combination of blurred and sharp edges. There are also changes in the direction of generalizing form (here still held in careful balance with sharply rendered focal points and planes), changes that eventually led to Gentileschi's more idealized and more fluidly painted works of the 1640's, a direction of development that is indicated as early as the figure in *Fame*, signed and dated 1632.<sup>65</sup>

Despite its thematic connection with the London *Self-Portrait* and with Cassiano's commission, the Palazzo Corsini painting does not appear to be by the hand of Artemisia, and especially not if it must be conceived as a work of the 1630's.<sup>66</sup> The handling of light is quite different from that seen in the Kensington Palace painting, less specific and less observed. The backlit fleshy protrusion in the sitter's neck, for example, has no counterpart in any documented work, and the shadow cast by the mahlstick on the artist's right forearm would have been impossible to observe, since the mahlstick is positioned at nearly a right angle to the arm. By contrast, Artemisia took great care in rendering light effects naturalistically. Further, although the Palazzo Corsini painting is about the same size as the London picture, its scale is quite different, since the female figure is treated more broadly, with less delicacy, and it fills a larger area of the picture surface than her London counterpart. The poses of the two women, moreover, are very different in conception: the self-image in the London painting is freer in movement and much less stiff, and the spatial positions of her limbs are much better clarified. Finally, the closely comparable hands that hold the brush in the two pictures differ considerably, in overall shape, in



19 Anonymous artist, *Portrait of a Woman Artist (as La Pittura?)*. Rome, Palazzo Corsini (photo: GFN)

the positions of fingers, and in detail.

If the Palazzo Corsini picture was not painted by Artemisia, however, it may well be an image of her painted by another artist. The face bears some resemblance to the image of Artemisia recorded in Jérôme David's contemporary engraving of her, a print supposedly based upon a self-portrait.<sup>67</sup> Yet the picture in

<sup>64</sup> See Bissell, 157-58, on the dating of the Detroit *Judith*. The style of the Kensington Palace *Self-Portrait* is also generally comparable to that of the firmly dated *Annunciazione* (Naples, Capodimonte) of 1630.

<sup>65</sup> On this picture, see Bissell, 159 and n. 51; and Harris and Nochlin, 122. Ann Harris recently pointed out to me that the figure should be identified as Clio and not Fame, since she has no wings (see Ripa, 154 and 368).

Another important consideration in the dating of the *Self-Portrait* is Artemisia's youthful appearance in the picture, certainly nearer the age of 37 than 44. Spear, 98, rightly rejects Bissell's argument that the artist intentionally depicted herself as younger than she was.

<sup>66</sup> Alfred Moir (*The Italian Followers of Caravaggio*, Cambridge, Mass., 1967, 100, No. 4) and Nolfo di Carpegna (*Pittori napoletani del '600 e del '700*, Rome, 1958, 18, and No. 16) accept the Palazzo Corsini painting as by Artemisia, but not a self-portrait. Spear, 98, states that it "does not appear to be a self-portrait of Artemisia."

<sup>67</sup> See Levey, 79-80, for an illustration and discussion of David's engraving and a 17th-century portrait medallion of Artemisia. David's engraving is inscribed "Artem Pinx." indicating that its source was a self-portrait, but the work on which it was based is not known.

Although the broader question of portraits and self-portraits by Artemisia Gentileschi is beyond the scope of this article, it may be useful to set forth the evidence. According to Sandrart and Baldinucci, Artemisia was especially known for her portraiture (Joachim von Sandrart, *Academia nobilissimae artis pictoriae*, Nuremberg, 1683, 192; Filippo Baldinucci, *Delle notizie de' professori del disegno*, Florence, 1772, xii,

9). An addition to the English translation of Roger de Piles, *The Art of Painting*, London, 1754, 376, informs us that she drew portraits of the English royal family and many of the nobility. The only existing portrait of another person certainly by her hand, however, is the *Portrait of a Condottiere*, Bologna, Palazzo Comunale (see Bissell, 157; and Harris and Nochlin, 122). Another portrait by her, of the engineer A. de Ville, was engraved by J. David (Bissell, 166).

The engraving of Artemisia in Sandrart's *Academia* (opp. 290), one of an entire collection presumably based upon existing portraits, does not closely resemble any of the known portraits of her, though it may record her appearance at a very early age. In addition to the self-portrait promised Cassiano, Artemisia promised one to Don Antonio Ruffo in letters of Jan. 30 and Mar. 13, 1649 (Ruffo, 48-49). This picture was never delivered. Levey, 79, has rightly rejected the *Self-Portrait of a Woman Artist* in Earl Spencer's collection as "neither by nor of" Artemisia Gentileschi; for other rejected portrait attributions, see Bissell, 166-67.

Ward Bissell has called to my attention a second picture representing *Pittura* in the collection of Charles I, which is listed, separately, in the same inventory as the Kensington Palace *Self-Portrait*. This work is described as "A Pintura A painteinge: by Arthemisia" (*Walpole Society*, XLIII, 191), and although it is of great interest, it is not necessarily a self-portrait. Since the word "painteinge" is probably a noun, not a gerund, the description is less likely to apply to the picture under consideration here than the description cited in n. 1.

Rome represents an entirely different conception from the Kensington Palace painting, and has in fact more in common with the type represented by Cerrini's *Allegory of Painting* (Fig. 17), in that the artist, idealized in physiognomy, wearing laurel in her hair, and gazing expectantly at the viewer, appears primarily to represent the allegory rather than a living person.<sup>68</sup> Significantly, the face of the man on the easel is more particularized and more tangible in the rendering of light on skin than is that of the painter herself. If Cerrini's formula is an accurate guide, the face on the easel should represent the artist who painted the picture, a picture that may have secondarily complimented Artemisia as the contemporary female embodiment of *Pittura*, perhaps even alluding to her *Self-Portrait as La Pittura*. In view of the Roman provenance of the Palazzo Corsini painting and its possible connection with the Barberini Collection, and considering the comparable dimensions of the two pictures,<sup>69</sup> it is not inconceivable that the picture in the Palazzo Corsini was the unknown painter's contribution to Cassiano dal Pozzo's famous artist series, a hybrid of himself and Artemisia Gentileschi, whose promised self-portrait was never delivered.<sup>70</sup>

Levey may be right in suggesting that Artemisia took the picture with her to England in about 1638, a year after her correspondence with her patron ended, and that the painting entered the Royal Collection shortly after her arrival. Since the painting is conspicuously absent, however, from the 1639 Van der Doort inventory of the King's collection (it is also absent from the appendix added by another writer, probably in 1640), it is equally possible that the painting was obtained separately by the King in the early 1640's, when he is known to have continued buying pictures in Italy through agents (see Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, New York, 1963, 179).

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<sup>68</sup> Although the woman in the Corsini painting does not have the attributes of *Pittura* (her laurel wreath suggests *Poesia*), her depiction in the act of painting precludes our identifying her as any other allegory. That the *Allegory of Painting* could be shown without Ripan attributes is demonstrated by Cerrini's painting itself. See also a painting attributed to Giacomo Cavedoni (1577-1624) in which the sitter also lacks the appropriate attributes, but which is described in Pitti Palace inventories as an *Allegory of Painting* (Evelina Borea, ed., *Pittori bolognesi del seicento nelle gallerie di Firenze*, Florence, 1975, No. 63 and fig. 31).

<sup>69</sup> The Kensington Palace painting measures 96.5 × 73.7cm; the Palazzo Corsini picture, 93 × 74.5cm. As Bissell observed, Artemisia's mention in her letter of Oct. 24, 1637 to Cassiano dal Pozzo of his "conforme" suggests that dimensions were stipulated. Even more explicitly, she states in her letter of Aug. 24, 1630, that she has seen the "misura" that he has sent her.

Bissell, 162, points out that the Palazzo Corsini painting was acquired for the Galleria Nazionale in 1935, the same year that some pictures from the Barberini Collection were sold by the Galleria l'Antonina in Rome. Other pictures in the Galleria Nazionale are known to have come from the collection of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, whom Cassiano dal Pozzo served as secretary, and Bissell suggests that this picture may have been one of them.

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<sup>70</sup> Cassiano dal Pozzo may have had a particular interest in acquiring a portrait of Artemisia because she was a woman artist. His collections were built around curiosities of natural phenomena, both animal and mineral, and the portrait collection contained, as Lumbroso explained (p. 164), "personi singolari per longevità, o per qualche fisico fenomeno o per ingegno precoce od altra qualsiasi ragione." Certainly women artists were curiosities in Cassiano's time, as earlier, and portraits of women were claimed as objects of double beauty, of the picture and of the sitter, as Annibale Caro avowed (see Harris and Nochlin, 107). This sentiment is also evoked in a French artist's description of the hand of Artemisia Gentileschi that accompanies his drawing of the hand (see P. Rosenberg in *Paragone*, cclxi, Nov. 1971, 69-70). Cassiano himself actively sought portraits of several other women, one from the hand of another woman artist. He corresponded in 1630-31 with Giovanna Garzoni, the miniaturist from the Marches who, like Artemisia, worked in Rome and Naples; he wanted from her a portrait of Anna Colonna (Bottari-Ticozzi, 342-48; on Garzoni, see Harris and Nochlin, 135-36). From Fra Giovanni Saleano he requested portraits of two French women, Mme. d'Aubignan and Mme. d'Ampus (Bottari-Ticozzi, 361-63). Finally, according to Naudé's epigrams, the dal Pozzo Collection contained a portrait of Christina of Sweden.