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Edited by Tanja L. Jones

# Women Artists in the Early Modern Courts of Europe (c. 1450–1700)

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# Women Artists in the Early Modern Courts of Europe

*c. 1450–1700*

# Visual and Material Culture, 1300-1700

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# Women Artists in the Early Modern Courts of Europe

*c. 1450–1700*

*Edited by  
Tanja L. Jones*

Amsterdam University Press



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Of course, my own work on this topic has long roots that extend back to graduate school, when Robert Neuman first introduced me to the topic of Early Modern women artists. Both he and Jack Freiberg were, and continue to be, sources of inspiration.



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# 1. Introduction: Women Artists in the Early Modern Courts of Europe, c. 1450–1700\*

Tanja L. Jones

## Abstract

Jones provides an introduction to the topic of women artists in the Early Modern courts, considering issues of historiography, terminology, and the state of related literature. She also addresses the value of the digital humanities – and network mapping/visualizations in particular – to the study of the topic, introducing the multi-faceted project *Global Makers: Women Artists in the Early Modern Courts*.

**Keywords:** makers; Early Modern women; professional vs. amateur artist; ladies-in-waiting; digital humanities; network visualization

In 1559, the young noblewoman Sofonisba Anguissola (1532?–1625) travelled from her native Cremona to the court of Philip II of Spain, where she was appointed lady-in-waiting (*dama della reina*) to the monarch's new bride, Isabel of Valois. The Italian seems to have charmed the court from the first, dancing with Ferrante Gonzaga during the wedding celebrations. But it was Anguissola's skill as an artist that distinguished her amongst the Queen's ladies and upon which contemporaries consistently remarked (fig. 1.1).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, by the time she arrived in Spain, Anguissola was already famed as a painter; her skill was appreciated by none other than Michelangelo.<sup>2</sup> In addition to tutoring the young queen in painting, Anguissola produced

\* Some of the issues addressed here are also considered in Jones, 'Makers'; and Jones, 'Digital Interventions'.

1 For example, when Anguissola's dance with Ferrante Gonzaga was reported by the Mantuan ambassador, she was described as 'that Cremonese woman who paints who has come to stay with the Queen', ('quella Cermonese che dipinge, ch'è venuta a star con la regina'); for this point and the quotation, Welch, 'Painting', p. 12.

2 Anguissola's drawing of *Asdrubale Bitten by a Crayfish* (c. 1557–1558, Museo Capodimonte, Naples), apparently a portrait of the artist's brother crying while one of their sisters laughs, was created in response to a challenge issued to the artist by Michelangelo. For this and epistolary documentation of both the creation and circulation of the drawing, see Jacobs, 'Woman's Capacity', pp. 95–97; idem, *Defining*, pp. 51–57.

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Figure 1.1 Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self Portrait at the Easel*, c. 1556–1557, oil on canvas, 67 × 56 cm, Muzeum-Zamek w Lancucie, Lancut. Image Credit: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

portraits of the royal family during her fourteen-year tenure at the Habsburg court (fig. 1.2) that were distributed across Europe.<sup>3</sup> She was also the only female artist Giorgio Vasari identified, in the second edition of his *Lives* (1568), as possessing the

3 For questions surrounding the attribution of the Prado portrait of Isabel of Valois and an assignment to Anguissola, see Baldwin, 'Anguissola in Spain', pp. 173–174, 258–259; and A. Pérez de Tudela in *Tale*, cat. no. 24, pp. 140–142.





Figure 1.2 Sofonisba Anguissola, *Portrait of Isabel of Valois holding a Miniature Portrait of Philip II*, 1561–1565, 206 × 123 cm, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid. Image Credit: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

capacity for *invenzione* and capable of creating portraits that ‘seem truly alive’.<sup>4</sup> Today Anguissola is, arguably, one of the best-known female artists of the Early Modern period and a relatively well-documented exemplar of a female artist at court. Even so, no official commission is known for the paintings she produced in Spain and she signed no paintings there, lacunae that pose significant difficulties to defining her mature oeuvre.

Thanks to the ground breaking work of the last four decades, Anguissola, along with a handful of women painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – the Flemish-born Caterina van Hemessen (1528?–aft. 1567) and the Italian Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–aft. 1654) among them – are now regularly included in introductory art history survey texts.<sup>5</sup> Extraordinary contributions have been made to our knowledge of these artists, among many others, via focused studies, and each has been the subject of monographs, articles, or retrospective exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> But as ever-wider audiences are introduced to the contributions of Early Modern women artists, significant areas of scholarly need remain.<sup>7</sup> One of these is study of women artists in the courts of Europe, a field not previously the focus of sustained consideration. A notable exception is Valerie Mainz’s entry dedicated to the topic in the *Dictionary of Women Artists*, which offers a welcome introduction, albeit one limited by publication format.<sup>8</sup> There have been, as well, valuable studies dedicated to the activities of specific women artists in

4 ‘paiono veramente vive’, Vasari, VI, p. 498; here Vasari is specifically referencing Anguissola’s *Portrait of the Artist’s Sisters Playing Chess* (1555, now at the National Museum in Poznan, Poland); on the implications of this comment, see Jacobs, ‘Woman’s Capacity’, pp. 93–94; idem, *Defining*, pp. 51–53.

5 The catalogue by Nochlin and Sutherland Harris, *Women Artists, 1550–1950*, accompanying an eponymous exhibition, played a foundational role in the evolving field; the exhibition was presaged by Nochlin, ‘Why?’, elucidating the societal and institutional barriers that women artists historically confronted. Recent surveys of the state of research in these fields include Reiss, ‘Beyond’; ffolliott, ‘Early Modern’; and idem, “Più che famose”.

6 To focus only on these three women, monographs dedicated to van Hemessen are De Clippel, *Catharina*; and Droz-Emmert, *Catharina*. For a bibliography of Anguissola literature to 1994, see Garrard, ‘Here’s Looking’. Allied exhibitions dedicated to Anguissola in Cremona, Vienna, and Washington, D.C. in 1994/95 were accompanied by *Sofonisba Anguissola e le sue sorelle*; *Sofonisba Anguissola* (Vienna, 1995); and *Sofonisba Anguissola* (Washington, 1995). For more recent literature, see Cecilia Gamberini’s essay in this volume; Cole, *Sofonisba’s Lessons*; and, from the major exhibition of works by Anguissola and Lavinia Fontana at the Museo Nacional del Prado in 2019: *Tale*. For a summary of Gentileschi literature to 2000, see Spear, ‘Artemisia’. The subsequent joint exhibition of works by Artemisia and her father (*Orazio and Artemisia*) was followed by studies including Bal, ed. *The Artemisia Files*; Mann, *Artemisia*; and Locker, *Artemisia*; most recently, see Garrard, *Artemisia* and the catalogue accompanying the exhibition opened in 2020 at the National Gallery, London: *Artemisia*.

7 ffolliott, ‘Early Modern’, p. 432.

8 See Mainz, ‘Court’ and, more recently in brief, ffolliott, ‘Early Modern’. Also, published papers presented at a conference dedicated to the topic of Early Modern women artists: Strunck, ‘Hofkünstlerinnen’; and Jones, ‘Makers’.

individual courts that have informed our understanding of their oeuvres and experiences; but the disparate nature of those analyses suggests the time has come for a synthetic effort.<sup>9</sup>

This volume gathers, for the first time, a series of essays dedicated to women as producers of visual and material culture across the continental courts of Europe. Both individually and collectively, the chapters offer fresh insights into the careers of specific women, among them van Hemessen at the court of Mary of Hungary in Antwerp; Anguissola and, more than a century later, the sculptor Luisa Roldán (1652–1706) in Madrid; and the engraver Diana Mantuana (c. 1547–1612) in Mantua and Rome. Considered, as well, are groups of women, such as ladies-in-waiting at the seventeenth-century Medici court. Notably, the essays address production across media – including painting, sculpture, printmaking, and textiles – by women who occupied a range of social and economic positions both within and around the courts. This book offers the opportunity to both deepen our understanding of the individual artists and courts highlighted as well as to consider, more broadly, the variety of experiences encountered by female makers across traditional geographic and chronological distinctions. The publication of this volume is also accompanied by the *Global Makers: Women Artists in the Early Modern Courts* digital humanities project, detailed later in this essay, which is intended to extend and expand the work begun here.

## The ‘artist’ at ‘court’

The study of the Early Modern courts has, alongside that of women artists generally, intensified during the last forty years. The two fields have, however, only rarely intersected.<sup>10</sup> Martin Warnke’s monumental *The Court Artist: On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist*, first published in 1985 (English in 1993), did much to advance the study of artists in the courts. Based on a staggering amount of archival data, Warnke wove a narrative that traced the rise of the artist from dependence upon the guild-based strictures of the medieval urban environment to the opportunities for social advancement and recognition of intellectual achievement that, he argued, were afforded by the Early Modern courts.<sup>11</sup> Warnke’s approach has been criticized

9 As in, for example, the analysis of the career of Camilla Guerrieri Nati (1628–aft. 1694) at the court of Grand Duchess Vittoria della Rovere (Medici): Straussman-Pflanzer, ‘Medici’s First’.

10 For a historiography of court studies, with an emphasis on the study of women (although not focused on artists) at court, see Akkerman and Houben, ‘Introduction’.

11 Warnke, *Court Artist*.

based both upon the teleological underpinnings of the methodology as well as the prominence accorded to painters in the text.<sup>12</sup> As Evelyn Welch has noted,

while excluding other court employees such as goldsmiths, embroiders, tapestry makers, and ceramists from the term ‘artist,’ Warnke was willing to include all painters who had ever worked for the court regardless of whether or not they had a long- or short-term engagement.<sup>13</sup>

Equally problematic, but nearly absent from critiques of the text, is Warnke’s omission of any substantive discussion of women. The author references two – Anguissola and Angelika Kauffmann (1741–1807) – but then only as asides.<sup>14</sup>

As Christina Strunck’s essay in this volume highlights, Warnke’s comparative silence on the topic of women artists in the courts does not indicate an absence of information. Referencing a wide array of existing literature, Strunck identifies more than forty women who received commissions from a court and/or were offered permanent positions at one prior to 1800. She then systematically addresses the variety of experiences – in terms of training, social/marital status, demand, and career or market strategies – that those women encountered. Like Warnke, Strunck adopts a broad approach when defining what association with the court actually entailed, a method that acknowledges an issue confronting any researcher in the field – the difficulty in defining precisely what is meant by both the terms ‘court’ and ‘artist’. References to a ‘court’ are often intended to designate a distinct geographic location or building, the space inhabited by the ruler/patron. Yet the term might also be employed to designate the shifting network of individuals not bound by geography but tied to the ruler/patron through a variety of relationships, be they political, fiduciary, familial, or social, and which may or may not be documented via the award of specific payments or titles.<sup>15</sup>

It should be noted that, in opposition to the open approach adopted by Warnke and Strunck in defining what constitutes a ‘relation’ with the courts, a series of recent studies have sought to define the artist at court solely as one who received an official appointment or a regular salary, signified by inclusion on payment rolls.<sup>16</sup> While such analyses yield significant prosopographic insights, their objectivist methodology presents significant limitations, especially as relates to the roles and activities of women. One of the valuable contributions of Warnke’s richly

12 See, for example, Campbell, ‘Introduction’, in part. pp. 9–10.

13 Welch, ‘Painting’, p. 19.

14 Notable exceptions to this include Baldwin, ‘Sofonisba’, pp. 55–56; and Freisen, ‘Review’, pp. 76–78.

15 On the issue, see Campbell, ‘Introduction’, p. 16; Welch, ‘Painting’, pp. 19–20; Guerzoni and Alfani, ‘Court History’; Fantoni, ‘Introduction’, esp. pp. 8–12; and Fumagalli and Morselli, ‘Introduction’.

16 As in Fumagalli and Morselli, ‘Introduction’; Guerzoni and Alfani, ‘Court History’.

documented study and inclusive approach (not in terms of gender or media considered, as noted above, but as to what defined the court artist), was to illuminate the wide variety of circumstances male artists at court encountered, including duties assigned, titles awarded (or not), conditions of production, reception, and financial rewards received. Strunck's analysis reveals that the experiences of women artists at court, while differing in many respects from those of men, were at least as diverse. This variety reminds us that a 'court' was not a monolithic, static structure but, rather a series of individuals and administrative bodies that varied across time and geography, impacting the activities and expectations of those involved.

Of particular concern here is that to circumscribe the definition of the 'court artist' as one whose role is defined solely via the award of a corresponding title or receipt of distinct payments for works produced would exclude the nuances of women's experiences and contributions to the broad range of visual culture that characterized the sphere. Further, to limit consideration of artists at court to those who received official notice or payments as such would eliminate women (and men, for that matter!) who we are certain produced works of art but did so, on the basis of that definition, in archival anonymity.<sup>17</sup>

Such a narrow definition of 'court artist' would exclude, for example, Sofonisba Anguissola – who was never officially appointed *pintor de cámara* – and, as we shall see, numerous other women painters, embroiderers, and so on, who received varying or no official appointment. It would omit, as well, Anne Gulliver and Alice Herne, both painters, who were married, to John Brown (d. 1532) and William Herne (or Heron; d. 1580), respectively – two Sergeant Painters at the Tudor court. The wills of both men suggest the active role their wives played in their workshops, but much work remains to be done to better understand those women's professional activities in relation to the court, both before and after their husbands' deaths.<sup>18</sup> As Maria Maurer's essay in this volume reveals, it was not only in Spain and England that sixteenth-century women artists might be strongly identified with a specific court, receiving benefits from proximity and artistic associations, but operate without any specific appointment. Maurer argues that the Mantuan printmaker Diana Mantuana (c. 1547–1612) utilized the reproductive medium of engraving both to promote her knowledge of and access to the works of the official Gonzaga court artist Giulio Romano as well as to advocate her own artistic creativity in her natal city and in Rome, where her works ultimately found a strong audience and official papal sanction.

<sup>17</sup> Although argued within a different context, this issue is also addressed by Welch, 'Painting', pp. 19–20.

<sup>18</sup> James, *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 236–242. For a critique of James's work and a thorough discussion, see Tittler, 'The "Feminine Dynamic"'.

## Inclusivity and ‘professional’ problems

Given the concerns outlined above, it seems that to both establish and maintain a constructivist approach to the study of the woman artist at court is essential to advancing not only gender-based considerations but also a robust vision of artistic practices in the period. As Marcello Fantoni notes,

In general, we should not be afraid of a too generous use of the notion of court or overly broad temporal and geographic frameworks. The time is ripe for broadening our horizons [...] for this it is necessary to foster international dialogue, with full awareness of the language and ideological barriers, but also motivated by more ambitious objectives, in the effort of renewing topics and methods.<sup>19</sup>

An inclusive ontology would, as well, avoid the historical privileging of artists practicing in the traditionally canonical genres (i.e. large-scale painting and sculpture), which Early Modern women accessed relatively rarely. This would include continued and expanded consideration of women working in a variety of media – for example, printmaking, textiles, needlework, and an array of ephemera – at courts across Europe.

There is, especially in studies of the British courts, already a substantial body of literature relating to the needlework of royal and aristocratic women, including Mary Stuart, Bess of Hardwick, and Queen Elizabeth I.<sup>20</sup> Increasing scholarly interest in the households of Early Modern elite women and the roles and activities of ladies-in-waiting in the courts promises new insights into the artistic production of lesser or even now-unknown makers amongst their ranks.<sup>21</sup> Addressing the works of ruling and aristocratic women brings another issue to the fore – that of the ‘professional’ vs. ‘amateur’ artist. A word of caution when employing such distinctions is offered here, as to eliminate the consideration of works created by ‘professionals’ or ‘amateurs’ at court would not only nullify significant contributions on both sides but also impose what are a largely a shifting series of anachronistic distinctions – certainly in terms of women’s cultural production.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Fantoni, ‘Introduction’, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> This includes, most recently, Levey, *Embroideries*; Bath, *Emblems*; and Mason, ‘André Thevet’. On Elizabeth Tudor’s embroidery, see Klein, ‘Your Humble’; Frye, ‘Sewing’; and Quilligan, ‘Elizabeth’s Embroidery’.

<sup>21</sup> For example, Akkerman and Houben, eds., *Politics of Female Households*; and a series of sessions dedicated to the topic at the Renaissance Society of America annual meeting in Boston, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> On the historiography of aristocratic (‘amateur’ or ‘dilettante’) vs. ‘professional’ women artists, see Honig, ‘Art of Being’; and Stighelen, ‘Amateur Artists’ (the latter includes a troubled definition of Caterina van Hemessen as an ‘amateur’ that, I have suggested, is emblematic of this larger issue – see Jones, ‘Digital



As is often noted, Baldassare Castiglione recommended in *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528) that ladies at court, who were above all to be chaste and virtuous, should also study grammar, music, dance, and painting.<sup>23</sup> These skills were not, in principle, aimed at what we might today term ‘professional’ production, that is, guild membership, receipt of specific titles as artists, the completion of contracted work, or receipt of direct payments. Rather, as a series of sixteenth-century manuals of female conduct attest, the skills acquired by the ideal *cortegiana* were intended to ornament the court by supporting pleasant conversation, entertainments, and the pursuits of one’s mistress.<sup>24</sup> As Adelina Modesti’s essay suggests, ladies-in-waiting were instrumental in contributing to the rich diversity of visual culture at the courts. Modesti traces the patronage of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Vittoria della Rovere (1622–1694), who paid for the further education of numerous of her ladies-in-waiting in needlework and lacemaking, sending them to train in Paris for extended periods of time. Modesti’s work, grounded in a wealth of epistolary documentation, brings to light both the extensive inter-court patronage network exercised by the Duchess as well as the experiences and expertise of a group of women whose largely ephemeral works are, for the most part, no longer extant.

## Women artists, decorum, and ladies-in-waiting

Numerous women who found success as artists in various contexts (and media) in the Early Modern period were never identified as such in documents, and this was certainly the case in the courts.<sup>25</sup> As Strunck’s essay reveals, rare indeed was the Early Modern woman who was actually appointed ‘court artist’ or ‘painter’ *per se*, a situation conditioned in no small part by the strictures of decorum. But if we look to the sixteenth century in particular, we find a relatively well-documented series of women painters who were appointed ladies-in-waiting at courts across Europe. Such appointments were often facilitated by complex networks of familial, social, and professional associations.<sup>26</sup> This was the case, as Cecilia Gamberini’s essay in this volume illustrates, for Sofonisba Anguissola, whose own family was of noble

Interventions’). On training and professionalism – and particularly the note that both men and women at court were frequently awarded with gifts within the system of clientage, ffolliott, ‘Early Modern’.

23 On this, *Women Artists, 1550–1950*, pp. 108; Mainz, ‘Court Artists’, pp. 39–41;

24 Collier, ‘How to Succeed’. It is within this vein that we learn of Anguissola’s participation in a court masque and Horenbout’s service as translator for and chief gentlewoman to Henry VIII’s fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, who spoke no English upon her arrival in England; see James, *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 245, 249–252.

25 Vicioso, ‘Costanza Francini’, p. 102.

26 Mainz, ‘Court’, p. 39.



descent and had long-standing connections with the Habsburgs in Spain. The values of appointment as lady-in-waiting were manifold. Ideally it offered financial and personal security; familial prestige and connections; official sanction for artistic production that avoided the taint of commercial enterprise; and, at times, the promise of a sustained income and/or arranged marriage.

While a court appointment offered numerous opportunities, the woman artist/lady-in-waiting was placed, both administratively and socially, in a liminal position. This was certainly the case for Sofonisba Anguissola, who was both an artistically productive and valued member of the Spanish court, a status confirmed by both surviving correspondence and attributed works.<sup>27</sup> Yet, as was noted above, Anguissola ceased signing works once she arrived at the court, whereas she had consistently signed and dated paintings previously.<sup>28</sup> As Gamberini's essay details, the institutional structures of the Spanish court regulated and maintained a strict decorum and division of the sexes, conditioning Anguissola's behaviour as well as our ability to trace her work. By contrast, numerous contracts, official requests, and payment records survive to document works produced by Alonso Sánchez Coello, who was appointed *pintor de cámara* by Philip II c. 1560, a year after Anguissola's arrival in Spain. Even as Sánchez Coello made numerous copies after Anguissola's original compositions, including at least six after her portrait of Philip II's son and heir Don Carlos, his commissions were documented, as was dictated by the mechanisms of court administration and his appointment, while hers were not.<sup>29</sup> The distinctions between the experiences of the young noblewoman and Sánchez Coello are not surprising at a court that, until 1677, designated artists who received payment for work as craftsmen.<sup>30</sup>

While Anguissola did not receive remuneration for her paintings *per se*, she was awarded a regular salary as a *dama* (100 ducats per year). She was also compensated with gifts within the traditional system of *clientage*, an economy of reciprocity, exchange, and obligation, that both insulated and excluded her from the commercial world.<sup>31</sup> This was the case, as well, for Lievene Teerlinc, who arrived at

27 On the existence of numerous works by Anguissola confirmed archivally only via correspondence – not via commission documents or payments, see Baldwin, 'Sofonisba', pp. 32, 170–176, 202–203.

28 On this, see Kusche, 'Sofonisba' (1989), p. 393; *Sofonisba Anguissola* (Washington, 1995), p. 60; and Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, p. 195.

29 For the portrait copies, see Baldwin, 'Sofonisba', pp. 53–62; Jacobs, *Defining*, p. 52.

30 *Sofonisba Anguissola* (Washington, 1995), p. 60. For the changing status of artists in Renaissance Spain, see Francchia, 'Women's Artistic', pp. 132–133.

31 On the compensation of Sánchez Coello vs. that of Anguissola, see Baldwin, 'Sofonisba', pp. 61–62. For Anguissola's salary and gifts, see *Sofonisba Anguissola* (Washington, 1995), *Sofonisba*, p. 60; Welch, 'Painting', p. 31; and Gamberini in this volume. On the practice of clientage or clientelism more widely, see Warnke, *The Court Artist*, pp. 132–155; and Campbell, 'Introduction', p. 11. For women specifically, Mainz, 'Court', pp. 41–42; and Akkerman and Houben, 'Introduction', pp. 4–5.

the Tudor court in 1545, having trained in the Bruges workshop of her father, the miniaturist Simon Binnick (alt. Bening; c. 1483–1561). Her husband, George, also entered service in the royal household.<sup>32</sup> Much like Anguissola, Teerlinc was appointed a lady-in-waiting – to Catherine Parr (1512–1548), sixth wife of King Henry VIII. She was not the first female artist to be so honoured in England. Susanna Horenboul (alt. Horenbout; b. 1503/4–1553/4), also from Flanders, served as a gentlewoman in the household of the English queens from c. 1522; she was also married – twice over – to members of the King's household.<sup>33</sup> Like Anguissola, neither Teerlinc nor Horenboul seems to have been paid for specific works of art produced and no securely documented work by either artist is affirmed.<sup>34</sup> In a pattern typical for the court artist – male or female – Teerlinc, like Anguissola, was initially compensated via an annual stipend attached to her appointment as a lady-in-waiting, supplemented by gifts of material goods.<sup>35</sup> Documentary evidence of Teerlinc's works survives in New Year's gift rolls, confirming that the artist gave Elizabeth I 'a Carde with the Queen's Matie [Majesty] and many other personages' in 1563.<sup>36</sup> There have been numerous attempts to assign works to Teerlinc on the basis of technique, style, and correspondence with documented works to greater or lesser success. This includes, recently, the so-called Roses miniature portrait of Elizabeth I (fig. 1.3), a work traditionally identified with the Tudor court miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard.<sup>37</sup>

As Jennifer Courts explains in this volume, a similar archival opacity surrounds the career of the Antwerp-born Caterina van Hemessen following her appointment as a lady-in-waiting (by 1455) to the Habsburg regent, Mary of Hungary. In fact, no works by the artist have been identified for the period following her marriage in 1554 to Chrétien de Morien (alt. Kerstiaen de Moryn), organist at the Antwerp Cathedral.<sup>38</sup> As a result, it has often been supposed that van Hemessen ceased

32 *Women Artists, 1550–1950*, p. 102; Edmond, 'Teerlinc'; Mainz, 'Court', p. 37; and James, *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 287–291.

33 For the assertion that Horenboul was 'hired' as a painter by Henry VIII, but placed in the queens' households, and that her husbands both rose in the ranks at court due to Horenboul's successes, see James, *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 244–247, 249, 252. Also see, Campbell and Foister, 'Gerard', pp. 725–727; and Mainz, 'Court', p. 37.

34 On gifts to Horenboul, see James, *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 247–248, 293; for the attribution of two miniatures to the artist, idem, pp. 271–279, figs. 6.3, 6.5, and 6.6.

35 On royal gifts from and to Teerlinc, see James, *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 293, 308–321; Mainz, 'Court', p. 41.

36 Quoted in *Women Artists, 1550–1950*, p. 102.

37 Regarding attributions, *Women Artists, 1550–1950*, pp. 102–104. For the Roses miniature, James, *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 314–316.

38 On van Hemessen, *Women Artists, 1550–1950*, p. 105; Mainz, 'Court', pp. 39–40.



Figure 1.3 Attr. to Nicholas Hillard (or Lievene Teerlinc?), *Elizabeth I (1533–1603), 'Roses Miniature'*, 1572, watercolour on vellum, 5 x 4.8 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London. Image Credit: © National Portrait Gallery, London/Art Resource, NY.

painting altogether at that point.<sup>39</sup> This may be presumptive, though, particularly as it was her skill as painter that likely led to the prestigious appointment in the Regent's household. While the absence of archival evidence and attributed works

39 For a notable exception, and a caution that 'It is surely premature to say that [Hemessen] did not paint after her marriage, or that her role as lady-in-waiting precluded painting for the queen and her court', see Gellman, 'Hemessen', p. 661–664. On the impact of marriage and motherhood on the lives of women artists generally, see ffolliott, "Più che famose", pp. 17–20.

from the period of van Hemessen's employ as lady-in-waiting prohibits definitive determination of her court activities at present, reference to the experiences of Horenbout, Teerlinc, and Anguissola suggest that women painters – married or not – who attained court positions continued to work even as the rules of decorum meant the cessation of documented commissions or signed works. Courts argues that consideration of the span of van Hemessen's career, from her father's workshop to the relative security of the court, suggests a wide array of factors, including social status and marriage, conditioned the artist's choices and career strategy.

The similarities and differences between the experiences of Anguissola, van Hemessen, Horenbout, and Teerlinc as artists/ladies-in-waiting might be attributed to a range of variables including social and marital status and, more broadly, the relative rank accorded to artists in the different courts. In a striking variance, while Anguissola, Horenbout, and van Hemessen apparently remained ladies-in-waiting or specifically associated solely with a female household throughout their court tenure, Teerlinc did not. Shortly after arrival at court, in the spring of 1546, she was appointed *paintrix* to Henry VIII. As such, Teerlinc moved from the Queen's household to that of the King and, for a time, was part of both. This dual appointment compounded Teerlinc's fiduciary rewards. As *paintrix*, she was allotted £40 per annum, twice the amount paid to Hans Holbein. Further, as she remained a member of Catherine Parr's household, she retained a stipend from the queen.<sup>40</sup> Following Henry VIII's death in 1547, Teerlinc served each of his children in turn: Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I, who designated the artist *pictrix domine regine*.<sup>41</sup> While Teerlinc's mobility within the administrative structures of the court was certainly fuelled by artistic achievement, it was also likely due to a combination of social factors. She was born of a family of professional artists, was married prior to her appointment, and lived outside the court, elements that may have informed the acceptability of her revised status.<sup>42</sup> There was, as well, a prior tradition of women painters surrounding the Tudor court in various capacities.

## The challenges of court life

For some women, receipt of a court appointment might lead to a lifetime of financial security, but this, too, was not without challenges. When Anguissola left her father's household for that of Isabel of Valois she, like the other unmarried

40 On Teerlinc's pay, see James, *Feminine Dynamic*, p. 291.

41 On Teerlinc's appointments, see James, *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 291–292, 305.

42 Teerlinc and her husband, much like Susanna Horenbout and her spouse, maintained residence outside the court in London. As James has discovered, the Teerlincs lived near St. Bride's Church, an area in which other painters to the king resided; see *Feminine Dynamic*, pp. 247–248, 293.

*damas*, essentially transferred from one patrimonial system, that of their natal household, to another – that of the court, which ultimately placed her in the care of the King. Philip II was customarily obligated to arrange for both the eventual marriage and dowry of the *damas*, a situation which greatly pleased Sofonisba's father.<sup>43</sup> But the Spanish court was particularly noted for the strict moral codes imposed upon ladies-in-waiting, whose social interactions, movements, and residence were closely governed.<sup>44</sup> Anguissola, as Gamberini's essay reveals, chafed at the constraints imposed, particularly after the death of Queen Isabel. But true to this pledge, the King arranged Anguissola's marriage to the Italian Don Fabrizio de Moncado in May 1573. The artist then departed Spain to join her new husband in Sicily.<sup>45</sup> Catherina van Hemessen and her husband, too, seem to have fared well, receiving a lifetime pension at Mary of Hungary's death.<sup>46</sup>

The recognition of an official court appointment – even as 'artist' – did not, however, guarantee financial security, as Cathy Hall-van den Elsen's essay in this volume affirms. Hall-van den Elsen details the career of the Sevillian sculptor Luisa Roldán (1652–1706), who specialized in carving life-sized wooden figures for polychromy, and was appointed *Escultora de Cámara* to Carlos II and Felipe V following a move to Madrid. Even so, the sculptor repeatedly beseeched the kings for the regular payments that, she wrote, were customarily guaranteed to court appointees. Van den Elsen argues that, in response to the art market in Madrid and the hardships she and her husband encountered at court, the artist successfully innovated, adopting a new medium. Royal employers were notoriously slow to make payments or supply the gifts that fuelled the system of clientage. In Florence, at the court of Vittoria della Rovere, Camilla Guerrieri Nati (1628–aft.1694), who was salaried as *pittrice*, also found her payments significantly in arrears.<sup>47</sup> As Strunck's essay reveals, particularly later in the period under consideration here, women artists who might find commercial success elsewhere actually declined appointments; this is hardly surprising given the social and economic difficulties of court life.<sup>48</sup> Here, too, the important issues of agency and entrepreneurialism come to the fore as we find several of the artists considered

43 For the *damas de la reina* as 'wards of the king', as well as Amilcare Anguissola's letter to the King, in which he declared 'I take comfort in knowing that I have given [Sofonisba] into the service of the greatest and best king, Catholic and Christian above all others, and knowing also that Your Majesties [sic] house is by reputation and in actuality run like a convent'; see Baldwin, 'Sofonisba', p. 30; and *Sofonisba Anguissola* (Washington, 1995), p. 49.

44 See Baldwin, 'Sofonisba', pp. 37–42; and *Sofonisba Anguissola* (Washington, 1995), p. 57.

45 Baldwin, 'Sofonisba', pp. 49–50; and *Sofonisba Anguissola* (Washington, 1995), pp. 68–74.

46 See Jennifer Courts' essay in this volume.

47 Straussman-Pflanzer, 'Medici's First', p. 122.

48 See Christina Strunck's essay in this volume.

in this volume adopting strategies to best market their work in ways that would advantage them personally and financially – both in and outside the sphere of the court.

## New directions

Without doubt, attempts to trace the court careers of Early Modern women are met with significant challenges, not the least of which is establishing an artist's oeuvre based upon a few or even no securely attributed surviving works.<sup>49</sup> Stylistic analysis – when possible – and archival research, including review of inventories, gift rolls, household accounts, and correspondence remain the standard for research. As the essays in this volume demonstrate, a combination of these sources and methods can yield valuable results. This is the case when Gamberini assigns a portrait long attributed to Federico Barocci (**fig. 4.2a**) to Sofonisba Anguissola, on the bases of stylistic analysis, consideration of the court context in which the work was produced, and correspondence that suggests a long-standing relationship between the artist and likely patron.

The tools of the digital humanities offer additional avenues for expanding our knowledge of women artists in the Early Modern courts of Europe – and beyond.<sup>50</sup> Accompanying the publication of this volume is the multifaceted digital project *Global Makers: Early Modern Women in the Courts* ([www.globalmakers.ua.edu](http://www.globalmakers.ua.edu)).<sup>51</sup> The project aims to fill a significant need in existing scholarship by encouraging and supporting sustained, interdisciplinary consideration of the role Early Modern women played in the hands-on production of visual and material culture in the courts of Europe and Asia (c. 1400–1750). Initiated as a partnership between art historians, computer scientists, and library faculty and staff at the Digital Humanities Center at the University of Alabama, the web platform is conceived as a scholarly collaborative, the goal of which is to advance knowledge in this field. The website

49 On strategies for identifying and correcting attributions of works, see ffolliott, “Più che famose”, pp. 20–22.

50 For additional information, see Jones, ‘Makers’; and Jones, ‘Digital Interventions’.

51 The *Makers* title was chosen to evoke the model of the contemporary ‘maker’ movement – one based on collaboration and an appreciation for hands-on production. The project is directed by Tanja L. Jones and Doris Sung, in collaboration with Dr. Xiaoyan Hong, and with the support of the Alabama Digital Humanities Center (ADHC) including former Director Emma Wilson; current Director Anne Ladyem McDivitt; and library staff, including Patrick Motley. Additional project staff are Becky Teague and Pawan Subedi. The project is supported by a CARSCA grant from the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of Alabama as well as by a Digital Art History award from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.



is designed to act as a digital commons, bringing together scholars and students interested in the topic of Early Modern women in the courts.

Towards that end, the web platform is designed to serve four interrelated functions. The first is to establish an open-access, crowd-sourced, and vetted database cataloguing women artists working between c. 1400 and 1750 in Europe and Asia across a wide variety of media, the objects they produced, and the patrons associated with them, if known. This is a space where interested individuals can join, upload, and share information. An essential goal of the database is to create precisely the sort of inclusive ontology discussed earlier in this essay – one that is flexible enough to include ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’ women, some awarded official titles at court and others not. The site will also provide a bibliography of related, scholarly materials and support a forum for discussion. Finally, the intent is to feature a network visualization/mapping tool to illuminate previously overlooked relations between the artists, works, and patrons included – across traditional geographic and disciplinary boundaries. For an area of study, such as women artists in the courts, in which the subjects – either artists or works of art – have traditionally been studied in isolation, network visualization and analysis offer an array of opportunities to advancing discourse.<sup>52</sup>

The network mapping tool will also be a particularly innovative element of the website. This is the case as digital projects in art history during the past three decades have focused largely upon discrete considerations such as digitizing documents and archives; creating – often revelatory – object scans; or conducting spatial analyses of specific sites. Such projects align with what Johanna Drucker has termed ‘digitized’ art history – that which propels traditional practices via technological advances.<sup>53</sup> By contrast, ‘digital’ art history, according to Drucker, is that which utilizes emergent technologies and techniques to expand the traditional methods employed by art historians – this would include network analysis.<sup>54</sup> The *Global Makers* team believe that this tool will spur new and cross-cultural ways of thinking, looking, and researching what seemed previously to be disconnected or unique items, persons, and/or events.

The present volume, then, as an introduction and companion to the issues that the web-based platform addresses, serves as a significant component of this larger project. The web platform, it is hoped, will perform in tandem with the book to encourage extended and real-time scholarly interaction, future collaborations, and further print publications, advancing research in this emerging field.

52 On the issue of isolating or ‘siloeing’ the study of women artists from larger art historical discourse, see ffolliott, ‘Early Modern’, p. 425; and Jones, ‘Digital Interventions’.

53 Drucker, ‘Is There’, p. 7. This distinction was observed as well by Pamela Fletcher, when she divided her remarks between ‘digitizing art history’ and ‘computation’ projects; see Fletcher, ‘Reflections’.

54 A short historiographic consideration of the field of digital and digitized art history is given by Zweig ‘Forgotten’, pp. 40–45.



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