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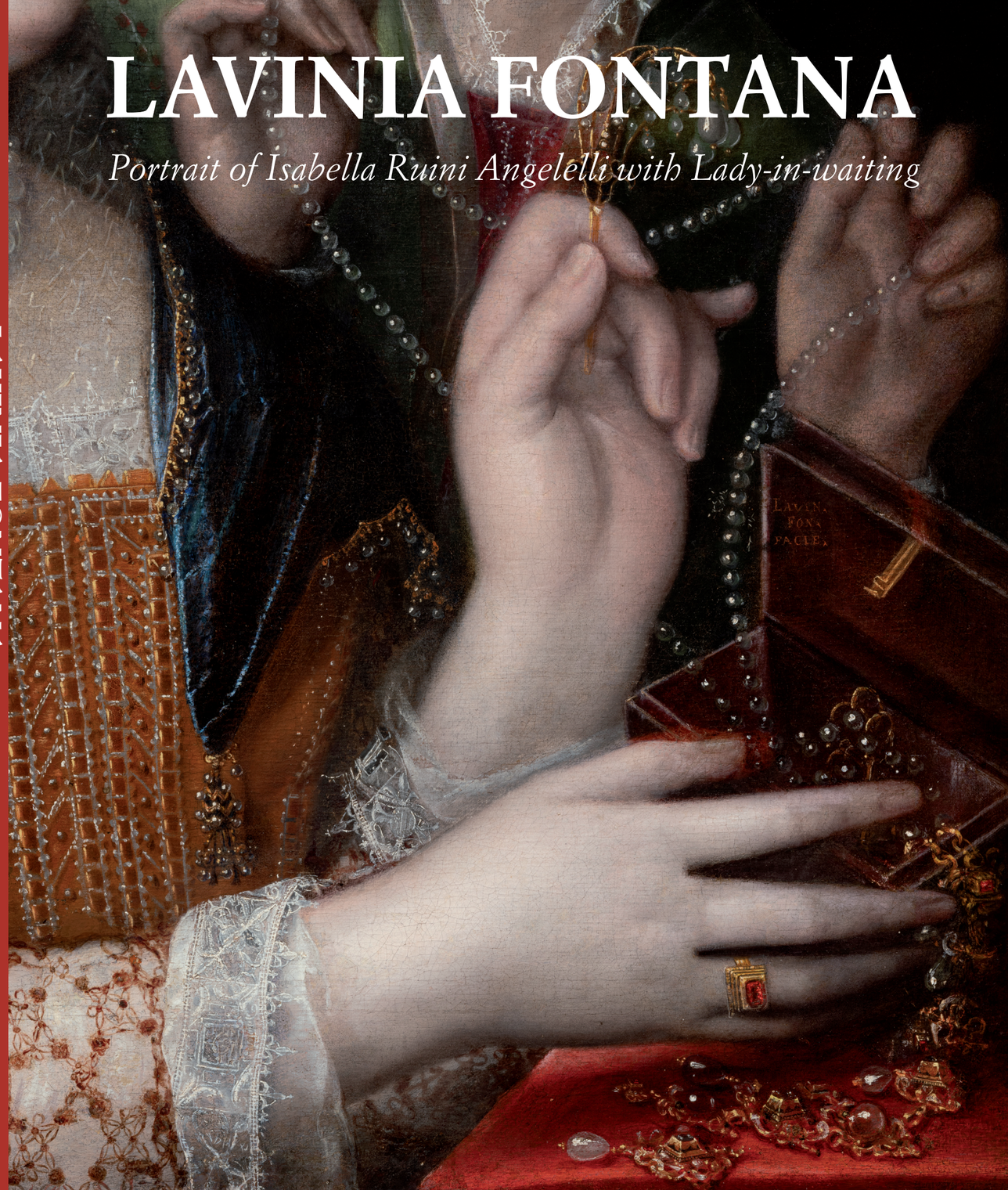

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Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli
with her lady-in-waiting

Raffaella Morselli

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Lavinia Fontana
Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting
Oil on canvas, 69,5 x 65,5 cm
Signed on the jewellery box "Lavin. Fon. Facies"

Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting An addition to Lavinia Fontana's painted almanac of Bolognese women.

Raffaella Morselli

In 1678, on the subject of Lavinia Fontana (24 August 1552-11 August 1614), the renowned daughter of Prospero, the historian Carlo Cesare Malvasia recounted how all wrote that the ladies of Bologna would "vie with each other [...] to have her stay with them for a while, entertaining her and showering her with extraordinary demonstrations of love and respect, considering it good fortune to be seen with her in public, and in gatherings, accompanied by the talented young woman"[1]. The painter – who had graduated at the Alma Mater in Bologna –, skilled in writing, playing music, and debating in academies, was a source of pride for Bologna as well as an animating spirit in salons and gatherings of high-ranking women, equally inclined towards the cultural delights that the city enjoyed during the last quarter of the 16th century. Lavinia frequented the palazzi and country villas of the female *élite* belonging to the senatorial families of Bologna, sharing their academic literary pursuits and forming friendships with some of these women. It is no coincidence that, in her vast production of private and public works, a noteworthy and substantial part is dedicated to official or family portraits of women, allegorical or mythological, individual or in groups. The painter was skilled in composition and so did not limit herself to the depiction of sumptuous artefacts placed as ornaments of the sitters she portrayed, but placed them in recognisable contexts, such as rooms of the their own palazzi, or else in alcoves, when it came to imagining the ladies as Venuses, Galateas or Judiths, or else including the object that had made them famous in the composition. The time Lavinia devoted to portraiture was equal to that devoted to public commissions, which were much more complex and difficult in terms of composition and also to manage; the time she devoted to the portrayal of female physiognomy was a feat of great skill, a diligent weaving of synoptic links between the woman's gaze and the objects, and through their history, the ties to family and society.

In the long gallery of portraits, very often still nameless, those that can be identified stand out and depict the painter's friends. In 1584, Lavinia painted the monumental *Por-*

Fig. 1
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family*, 1584, Bologna, Pinacoteca nazionale

Fig. 2
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni*, 1590, Washington, National Gallery of Art

Fig. 3
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Costanza Alidosi*, 1595, Washington, Museum of Women in the Arts

trait of the Gozzadini family (Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna) (fig. 1), commissioned by the refined and cultured Laudomia Gozzadini to pay homage to the prestige of her family: her father Ulisse, deceased, appears in the centre, her sister Ginevra, also deceased, is on the left, Laudomia on the right, and in the background, the respective husbands of the two women, Annibale and Camillo Gozzadini. On the back of the original canvas, no longer visible, an inscription in capital letters, perhaps by the hand of the painter herself, corresponding to each person depicted, identifying the subjects portrayed with certainty by name, age, position and family relationship, a kind of mnemonic map, a family tree in images[2]. In this instance, the relationship between the painter and the patron commissioning the painting was a very close one, so many are the details, painted with the tip of the brush, which presuppose an intimacy of the contacts with Laudomia, the objects in her home and her desiderata. Indeed, the bond became so strong that Laudomia would be godmother to the painter's seventh child, named Severo, on 9 June 1587, and the relationship so close that Lavinia named her eighth daughter, born on 29 October 1588, Laodamia[3]. Another eloquent painting is the *Portrait of Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni* (Washington, National Gallery of Art) (fig. 2), dated 1589-91, a famous lute-player who can be identified not only by the name which appears in the painting, but also by the in-

Fig. 4
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Ginevra Aldrovandi Hercolani*, end of XVIth century, Baltimore, Walters Art Museum

Fig. 5
Lavinia Fontana, *Costanza Sforza Boncompagni, Duchessa di Sora*, 1595 circa

strument she holds and the score[4]. In this case, there was a personal relationship between Lucia and Lavinia, documented in the list of baptisms of the Zappi family, drawn up by Giampaolo, husband of the painter, in which it appears that in 1595 Lucia Garzoni was godmother to the couple's youngest daughter named Costanza, replacing the Duchess of Sora, Costanza Sforza Boncompagni, wife of Giacomo Boncompagni, the legitimised son of the Bolognese Pope Gregory XIII[5].

We do not know what the relationship was between Lavinia and Costanza Alidosi Isolani, portrayed full-length beside a table (Washington, Museum of Women in the Arts)[6] (fig. 3), nor with Ginevra Aldrovandi Hercolani (Baltimore, Walters Art Museum)[7] (fig. 4), in which the framing of the portrait is tighter, the space reduced, replaced by a curtain; nor indeed with Virginia Malchiavelli, or with Flaminia Gozzadini Caccianemici (Vidor, private collection)[8], while with Costanza Sforza Boncompagni, Duchess of Sora, portrayed in a painting (fig. 5), the relationship between the two continued during the painter's years in Rome. However, her closest friendship must have been with the beautiful and cultured Isabella Ruini Angelelli, the only one to whom Lavinia dedicated four portraits, of various kinds, supports, and types, which are the subject of this study.

Fig. 6
Lavinia Fontana, *Apollo and the Muses (Parnasssus)*
Bologna, Private Collection

The group of women who were on familiar terms with one another and with Lavinia, cultured and devoted to poetry and music, are the subject of the decoration on a spinet lid depicting a concert of female musicians gathered around the figure of Apollo on Parnassus (Private collection) (fig. 6). Lucia Garzoni is identifiable as the third woman on the left with a recorder; Isabella Ruini Angelelli can be identified as the figure playing the viola da gamba in the centre, while the famous Modena poet and musician Tarquinia Molza (1542-1617), a friend of Torquato Tasso, is depicted playing the organ and can be identified in the first figure on the left in a red dress[9]. The other figures are still awaiting identification, but there is no doubt about the form of this group, intent on singing and playing. The representation of the muses with instruments, played by noblewomen, is not an unusual or eccentric choice, as can be seen in the contemporary illustration by Wilhelm Dilich, on the occasion of the baptism of Princess Elizabeth of Hessen-Kassel in 1598, in which the music-playing muses surrounding Apollo on Mount Parnassus are part of the court[10] (fig. 7). This is an image of a learnèd female universe in which the presence of men is tolerated only in the form of a deity.

Such attention to the world of women, not industrious but intellectual, is in tune with the literary production of these intense years in Bologna: Ercole Marescotti's book *Dell'eccellenza della donna* (On the Excellence of Women) dates from 1589, while *La gloria delle donne* (The Glory of Women)[11] by Giulio Cesare Croce – a friend of Lavinia and her fellows, dates from 1590. It is worth noting that the former is dedicated to Flavia Peretti Orsini, niece of Sixtus V, friend of Virginia de' Medici, wife of the duke Cesare d'Este; the noblewoman, distinguished by her "courtesy, grace and beauty", was a patron of poets, dancers, actors, musicians and writers. The book was written by the Bolognese man of letters Marescotti with the aim of refuting "the error of many who strive so hard to debase the most divine female sex" («l'errore di molti,quali tanto s'affannano in avilire il divinissimo feminil sesso»), and in it he celebrated several women, amongst which numbers Isabella Ruini[12]. Croce's small volume is dedicated to the Marchesa Marfisa d'Este, second wife of Alderano Cjbo, a cultured, strong-willed and very beautiful woman who lived in Ferrara until her death in 1608, refusing to follow the court to Modena after the devolution in 1598.The relationship between Lavinia Fontana and Croce is confirmed in the farcical discourse *L'eccellenza et il trionfo de porco* (The Excellence and Triumph of the Pig) of 1594, in which are brought together the merits of pig bristles

Fig. 7
Wilhelm Dilich, *Historische Beschreibung der kindtauf des fräuleins Elisabeth zu Hessen*, 1598, Munich

and the sublime quality of her painting[13], but also in the two paintings that are dedicated to him that have come down to us, the *Portrait* of the poet (Private collection), and the altarpiece depicting the Holy Family with the Infant Saint John and Elisabeth, an early work by Lavinia Fontana (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie, inv. Gal. -Nr. 121), maybe to be identified with the one hung in the chapel of Croce's house in the country, near Rigosa[14]. According to recent studies by Manes, this property seems to have been connected to the protection offered to him by Sulpizia Isolani, widow of Cornelio Pepoli since 1581, and by the respective family members[15]. The same country house originally housed a version of the famous painting depicting Rodolfo's wife, another member of the Isolani family and daughter of Giovanna Fantuzzi, namely Lavinia Fontana's *Portrait of Costanza Alidosi*, now in a private collection in Bologna[16] . Lavinia's work was present in the collections both in the city and in the surrounding countryside, but above all she was the point of reference for the women of the senatorial families.

Bologna was the centre of power in this scholarly female universe, in which poetry, music and painting openly intertwined, while the satellite cities of the courts of the *ancien régime* reflected onto the city of the Papal State the delights of the ladies imported from Mantua to Ferrara by the duchess Margherita Gonzaga d'Este, the young wife of Alfonso II. A world in decline was expanding within a reinvigorated and highly vibrant society, with Lavinia taking centre stage.

Four portraits of Isabella Ruini Angelelli

It is in this context that a new female portrait, of unusual dimensions, should be placed today; it is reflected and inextricably duplicated in another, of the same size and with the same layout. The pair is associated, within a time frame between 1586 and 1593, with two other portraits depicting the same sitter to whom Lavinia seems to have been very close: Isabella Ruini, married to Angelelli. A high-ranking lady whom Lavinia Fontana followed for eight years of her life, from a young bride-to-be to a noblewoman of the Bolognese aristocracy.

The sequence presented here, which follows the evolution of the effigy of the young and beautiful noblewoman, celebrated by poets and loved in the academies, following her in her social and intellectual life, begins with the small and freshly executed *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini*, now in Besançon (Musée des Beaux-Arts), on copper and signed, and until now not identified as Isabella Ruini[17] (fig. 8), followed by the pair *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus and Cupid* (fig. 10) and the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* (fig. 9), the former in Rouen (Metropole Rouen Normandie, Musée des Beaux Arts), signed and dated 1592, the latter, here presented for the first time, only signed, and finally the stunning official portrait, namely the

Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli, now in Florence (Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina), signed and dated 1593 (fig. 11).

Each of these portraits is of a different typology and has a very different function: the small painting on copper presents Isabella to her husband-to-be or to his family in a tiny portable portrait just over a palm's width, in which the red carnations, white orange blossoms and lilies of the valley gathered together in the vase on the table clearly indicate the purpose of the work[18]. It can be dated to around 1586, the year in which she married Giovanni Angelelli at the age of eighteen: a marriage of convenience that united the ancient Ruini family with one of the forty families of new senators created by Gregory XIII. This was probably the first time that the young woman submitted herself to the gaze of the painter, who was over thirty years old at the time, and already the mother of six children (two of whom had died in infancy), the prestigious creator, the previous year, of the monumental *Assumption of Ponte Santo* in Imola (Palazzo Comunale). Lavinia was fortified by her friendship with Laudomia Gozzadini, for whom she had just painted *The portrait of the Gozzadini Family* (Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale) and proud author of the suggestive and imposing *Venus and Cupid* (Venice, private collection)[19](fig. 12). These three works already indicate the direction taken between 1584 and 1585, one that would mark her future production. In the Besançon painting, Isabella is dressed in virginal white and already wears elements of the display of the jewellery that allow her to be identified with certainty.The painter does not date the work, but simply initialsit LAVI. FON. FA, without even adding her husband's surname, a *modus operandi* that was not so common from 1577, the year of her marriage to Giampaolo Zappi.

In order of appearance, it is now worth focusing on *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid* in Rouen, a long-accredited painting of extraordinary elegance, and this one displaying a skilfully appended signature inside Cupid's bow, as if the painter were following the grain of the wood, LAVINIA FONT. DE ZA[P]PIS FACIETAT MDLXXXXII[20]. In the guise of Venus, Isabella Ruini looks straight into the eyes of the viewer: she occupies the entire central part of the painting, proudly conscious of her own charms and, rather than disarming Love, she seems to suspend for a moment the conversation she was having with him, who takes hold of her wrist and brandishes his bow with his other hand, while she holds a gold-tipped arrow. Were they perhaps deciding together at whom to aim the dart, so as to strike yet another wooer of the beautiful Isabella? Lavinia looks to Titian and Veronese in the gestures of the two, in the red curtain that occupies the entire left corner of the painting, and is miraculous in her rendering of the sumptuous setting that can be read in every detail. It is an erotic painting, an academic composition that celebrates her beauty as the goddess of love,

Fig. 8
Lavinia Fontana, *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini*, 1586, Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie

Fig. 9
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting,* 1592

Fig.10
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid*, 1592, Rouen, Musée des Beaux Arts

Fig. 11
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli,* 1593, Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina

agent of the sudden infatuations of the men who meet her gaze, or a portrait associated with an epithalamium that celebrates her within her marriage, in line with an accredited 16th-century symbolism, an allegory of wedded love, fertility and the protection of her marital union with Giovanni Angelelli? After all, the reading of epithalamia and their pictorial translations must have been customary in Bologna. Just think of the *Venus adorned by the Graces*, which Annibale Carracci painted in the same years, probably for the Tanari family[21](fig. 13). Now in Washington, but present in Alessandro Tanari's inventory of 1640, it remained in Bologna until 1878: it depicts a scene from the Odyssey, later taken up by Claudian in the *Epithalamium of Honorius and Maria*, in which we see the Graces and Cupid dressing the goddess, while Vulcan and Mars sit in the background[22]. The red curtain, the rhythmic gestures and the jewels depicted are the same elements that recur in the painting of Isabella Ruini, whose pale, luminous complexion contrasts with the deep red of the curtains, while the opalescence of the pearls is enhanced by the transparency of the organza from which her pink nipples emerge: the enchanting beauty of the woman is enhanced by Lavinia Fontana's brush. In 1592, Isabella was already the mother of two children, Penthesilea and Carlo, and would wait almost nine years before giving birth to the others: what if the painting were linked to the third – delayed –conception? Many scholars have argued about the effectiveness of such images in prompting married couples to have children, and the placing of these in alcoves, as part of the headboards of beds, beginning with Savonarola and ending with Vasari in the Florentine context, but also passing through Venice, as in the cases of Titian and Lorenzo Lotto[23].

The painting of *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid* in Rouen has always been interpreted in a single direction, as an erotic work; Francesco Albani seems to have known it well, both in its composition and in its individual details, when, sixty years later, again in Bologna, he painted his version of *Venus Disarming Love* (private collection), recently rediscovered by Catherine Puglisi: a large central figure portrayed at half-length, a chatting cherub entering on the right, hand movements between the two figures and a red curtain on the left that provides depth to the scene[24]. The points of contact with Lavinia's work are so striking that the painter must have admired and studied the painting at Palazzo Angelelli in Piazza Calderini in Bologna.

Albani's work is similar to LaviniaFontana's in its proportions, although it is a few centimetres larger (83x69 cm), emphasising how the format used by the painter for the Rouen work is altogether atypical: 75 centimetres high by 60 centimetres wide, almost a square. This is an unusual format that prompts further reflection. The size, in fact, is not a standard one, with the canvas much shorter than the *tela d'Imperatore,* and a fraction narrower; it is therefore not a painting to fit a standard-sized frame, and unquestionably the subject did not favour display, but this consideration alone is not sufficient. None of Lavinia's works have this format, and even when the painter tackles licentious, allegorical or mythological paintings, she uses standardised canvases. A single painting cannot alone provide further answers, but the existence of another of the same size makes all the difference, and allows us to proceed in our reasoning.

The *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* is the pair, now reunited, with the painting in which she is depicted as Venus with Cupid: the features, style, demeanour and setting reveal that the sitter is still Isabella Ruini; the format is identical, except for two centimetres missing each side (69.5x65.5 cm), a physical loss in a work that dates from four centuries ago, while the composition is the same, with the large figure in the centre, the red curtain on the left, and the attendant, who occupies the space which was Cupid's. The latter, as in the twin painting, engages with the sitter through the interaction of their hands, which choose, display and touch. It is a virtuous intimacy, a figurative typology well codified in the 16th century, in which the gesture becomes rhythmic, almost musical, narrative: an aristocratic vocabulary of gestures, the movements frozen in time. The painting is signed in gold capital letters LAVIN. FON. FACIE in the depths of the lid of the jewellery casket, on the short side, on the left: the choice to insert the name in the secret part of a wooden object, as in the Rouen painting in Cupid's bow, has the same logic in the choice of support and the confidential nature of the detail. The date is missing in this work, but the stylistic similarity between the two is precisely the same and suggests that the pair were executed together in 1592. This is the year in which Lavinia

Fig. 12
Lavinia Fontana, *Venus Disarming Love*, 1585, Venice, Private Collection

Fig. 13
Annibale Carracci, *Venus Adorned by the Graces,* 1594-1595, Washington, National Gallery of Arts

Fontana was working on the *Scene of a Sacrifice* (Imola, Pinacoteca comunale) for the monumental fireplace, designed by Floriano Ambrosini and decorated by Giovan Battista Fiorini in the same year, in Lorenzo Magnani's palazzo[25]. At the same time she was painting the very important altarpiece for the Bentivoglio chapel in San Francesco oltrereno with the *Assumption of the Virgin* (Pieve di Cento, Santa Maria Maggiore), which she would finish the following year, in which she paints a striking representation of Bologna[26]. 1593 is the year inscribed, in gold, next to the signature, on the overhang of the red tablecloth, of the official portrait that Lavinia Fontana paints of Isabella Ruini (Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina): LAV. FON. DEZAP. FACIE MDLXXXXIII. This time, the painting is rectangular in format, and the beautiful figure, depicted in three-quarter profile, stands out for the refinement of the fabrics of her dress, the quality of the pigments and glazes used, the shimmer of her silver dress, and the transparent delicacy of her complexion. We can recognise the jewellery that Isabella wears, the necklace with its precious settings follows the movement of the dress, as she breathes, and the hairstyle is that of the fashion of the moment. Isabella Ruini Angelelli has transformed herself into the woman coveted by the poets of the academies, including those of the Gelati and the Ardenti, through a neo-Petrarchan contest that sets the Bologna of those years ablaze. 1593 was also the year in which

Giovanni Angelelli purchased, with his wife's dowry, the rural residence in Argelato from Senator Astorre Bandini, according to a valuation certifying the transfer of ownership[27].

Isabella Ruini prepares to become Venus

The *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* is set in an intimate interior in which the noblewoman and her damsel display the jewels (probably belonging to Isabella) in a velvet-lined casket with a lock, to us, the viewer. The space is confined, a red curtain raised on the left, and the framing is so intimate that the two women almost touch each other. Reflectography has been carried out revealing Lavinia's projected design: the most obvious change relates to the figure of the companion, whose face was originally the same size as Isabella's, almost in profile, down-ward looking and turned towards hers. If that composition had remained, the two women would without a doubt have been in greater proximity, the two faces closer to one another, but there would have been less space in the scene to focus on the gestures of the hands that hold up the long string of pearls and the *aigrette*. The other pentiment can be seen in the position of the little finger of Isabella's left hand, which in the initial design appeared lowered.

It is on the basis of the important change in the composition that it is possible to put forward a hypothesis for the sequence of the design and execution of the two paintings: the first, given the revisions, would be the composition with the damsel, the second that of Isabella as Venus, since Cupid's head is painted in the same position as that originally conceived for the damsel. Lavinia Fontana seems to have developed the composition simultaneously, conceiving the diptych as a composition with two interconnected stanzas. The emphasis she seeks, and achieves, is entirely focused on the gestures of Isabella and the attendant handling the jewels in the casket.

Is this treasure, which clearly belongs to Isabella Ruini, six years after her marriage, displayed to be worn or to be stored in the casket? The scene does not provide a clear explanation, as the gestures are as if suspended, but perhaps it should be interpreted according to the legislation of the time. There are domestic paraphernalia, keepsakes that commemorate the union between two people, and one of these is the jewellery casket, a gift offered by the husband at the time of the promise[28]. Isabella is therefore admiring the jewellery that Giovanni gave her as a gift in 1586 and which she is not wearing in the painting as Venus, in which she displays other marvels. There is a Florentine sumptuary law of 1472 that regulates the display of wedding jewellery in the six years following the marriage, scaling down the display every three years, until they are no longer worn[29]. This is a rite of passage that marks the true purpose of conjugal life, namely procreation, which is a civil, religious and social obligation. After the first six years of marriage and the first children, the woman, having survived childbirth

Fig. 14
Painter of Eretria, *Epinetron*, Athens, National Archaeological Museum

and infections, can enter her adult married life. This is a transition in the life cycle, in which old jewellery is replaced by new items. In Bologna, the sumptuary laws do not refer to six years – which is precisely the interval between 1586 and 1592, between one portrait and the other – but to two years[30]. Although Florentine law would not have been applicable in Bologna, as each form of government had its own legislation, the time interval is present in both cities, almost as if it were dictated by etiquette. Isabella Ruini Angelelli is considering her engagement jewellery, perhaps she will put it away, given that in the painting of her in the guise of Venus, reborn as the goddess of Love, in which she holds a golden-tipped arrow, the wonderful jewellery is completely new. However, she would appear wearing it again in the *Official Portrait* in Florence the following year. One wonders, therefore, why it is that the first portrait is signed without a date, while the second is signed with the date.

In an ensemble in which the two portraits are conceived as synchronous, the first being the most visible, Lavinia Fontana's choice to affix the date only to the second is interesting.

The painter's composition, painstaking and with revisions, as we have seen, is the fruit of a highly complex iconographic ensemble that opens up new vistas in terms of her knowledge and cultural references. While the painter looks to Titian and Veronese, who populate the imagination of the sixteenth century with the subject of Venus and Cupid, the artist is also looking to prints from beyond the Alps. The motif of the woman as Venus, the casket, the jewels and the attendant in the background also derives from the observation of a painting (or perhaps a print) of a work from the school of Fontainebleau (Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts) (fig. 31)[31], but other references can be added, not necessarily of a pictorial nature and of a much ealier date[32].

Fig. 15
Callimachus, *Stele of Hegesus*, 410-400 BC, Athens, National Archaeological Museum

The subject of the lady gazing at the casket that holds her jewels, brought or offered to her by an attendant, is very common one in both Greek and Roman sculpture. There are two types of scenes: the bride being dressed for her marriage, to whom the casket is offered, as in the *epínetron* depicting Thalia and Alcestis (Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. 1629)[33](fig. 14), or, more appropriately, the maid presenting the casket with jewels depicted on many steles for the tombs of noble and wealthy women. The best known and best represented example is the stele attributed to Callimachus, dating from around 400-410 BC (Athens, National Archaeological Museum, no. 3624) (fig. 15), in which the maid and the noblewoman are depicted in familiar proximity as they handle the jewels with the dynamic gestures that Lavinia depicts with such skill. It is inconceivable that the Bolognese painter could have seen this stele, but she may have seen another, or a printed image for example, or a description and sketch by Ulisse Aldrovandi, friend of her father Prospero, who had admired and commented on the collections of Roman antiquities during his journey to Rome in 1556[34].

As Dal Pozzolo has pointed out, the rediscovery, among other statues, of the Venus Callipyge provided Lavinia with a source of inspiration when she painted her *Venus and Mars* (Madrid, Liria Palace, Fundacion Casa de Alba) (fig.16)[35].

The similarity between the iconographic subject of the Greek and Roman funerary steles and that chosen by the painter is so striking that it leaves little room for doubt.

Moreover, from the cultured exchange between the patron and the painter, who shared a refined erudition with its inflections centred on female subjects and dialogues, the symbolic value that jewellery had in the context of marriage could not fail to emerge, as well as the role that contemporary literature played in celebrating its significance within courtly culture. It was in fact Torquato Tasso, in his *Rime* of the 1570s, who imbued the creation of jewellery with an aura of erudite literary metaphor, dedicating many verses to the praise of gems, semi-precious stones and diamonds.

In this way, the poet brought the tradition of the so-called "poesia petrosa" (Petrarchan Sonnet) up to date with late Renaissance sensibilities. This tradition was particularly highly regarded by the most cultured and influential princesses and ladies of the court, from Margherita Gonzaga to Leonora d'Este, and must have had some repercussions in Bologna as well[36].

Objects rarely speak for themselves, and their meaning can only be understood with the help of other material sources: the example of Lavinia Fontana's two paintings is emblematic. The pair share a related subject, the same dimensions, the same date and the same purpose. The private function of these two paintings has been discussed above, ruling out the possibility of an academic function, which was hypothesised above all for the painting in Rouen. It remains to be understood in what context the paintings were placed in the palazzo, and their interaction with the people and artefacts around them.

The surviving inventory of Palazzo Angelelli in Piazza Calderini, drawn up upon Giovanni's death in 1623, is not sufficiently descriptive, as is often the case, to enable identification of the paintings with any degree of certainty, let alone the furniture and its structure[37]. It is reasonable to assume, however, that Lavinia had worked to a specific commission, given the unusual dimensions of the two paintings, as if they had to be adapted to a predefined piece of furniture. Whether it was the headboard of a bed, with the two paintings visibly aligned, or, more likely, the pair was inserted into a piece of furniture with sliding doors that revealed the paintings, one above the other, is not known. A possible comparison comes to mind with portraits embellished with allegorical covers, also painted, such as those by Lorenzo Lotto, which overlapped by means of a specially carved frame. However, the difference in the support, wood for Lotto and canvas for Fontana, raises reasonable doubts as to the possibility of a similar arrangement for the two portraits of Isabella Ruini[38]. Whatever the arrangement, the two portraits of Isabella Ruini, accompanied by a lady-in-waiting and dressed as Venus with Cupid, served as protectors of conjugal love and a happy marriage as well as propitiators of fertility, which suggests that they were placed near the bedroom.

Fig. 16
Lavinia Fontana, *Mars and Venus*, 1595, Madrid, Palazzo Liria, Fundacion Casa de Alba

[1] MALVASIA 1678, p. 223 "gareggiarono [...] in volerla per qualche tempo presso di loro, trattenendola e accarezzandola con dimostrazioni di straordinario amore e di rispetto, riputandosi a fortuna l'esser vedute sui corsi, e nelle radunanze in compagnia della virtuosa giovane".
[2] CANTARO 1989, pp. 117- 120. GOZZADINI 1882, p. 9.
[3] The list of baptisms with the relevant godfathers and godmothers recorded by Giampaolo Zappi was first published by GALLI 1940, p. 114, transcribed by CANTARO 1989, p. 305. The document is in the Municipal Library of Imola, Ms. 940.
[4] TANZI 2021
[5] GALLI 1940, p.114.
[6] BRADY 2023, p. 78 and previous bibliography
[7] MURPHY, pp. 143- 147.
[8] CANTARO 1989, p. 206, MURPHY 2003, p. 147.
[9] FORTUNATI 2007, p. 158, no. 29.
[10] The manuscript was presented to the Landgrave Moritz, Elizabeth's father, by Wilhelm Dilich, DILICH 1598.
[11] MARESCOTTI 1589; Lavinia Fontana, great painter / One of a kind in the world like the phoenix. / She paints so wonderfully / That she equals Apollodorus, Zeuxis and Apelles, / and Michelangelo among others so excellent, / Correggio, Titian, and Raphael / And in her portraits she is so exquisite and diligent / That she has no equal / Such that now her name resounds / Wherever the sun unfolds its Rays/./I wish I had the talent to rise so high,/ In the praises of her whom I would make/ Dazzle with all her great merit and glory/Worthy of palms and immortal trophies,/But because my song is not equal to such a task,/I will remain silent here, because others will sing/Her supreme merit and sublime honours in more sonorous verse"; CROCE 1590, pp. 19-20. MAZZA 2009, pp. 99-100.
[12] GALLI 1940, pp. 110-114, document no. 4; CANTARO 1989, pp. 304-305, 5a.4.
[13] "And they are used to make paintbrushes, so that we can say that if it were not for them, Apelles, Zeuxis, Prassiteles, Timanthes, Timagoras, Parasius, Pologinotus, Giotto Fiorentino, Michelangelo, Raphael, Correggio, Titian, Parmigianino, Francia, Mantegna, Giambellino, Trevigi, Leonardo da Vinci, Giorgio Vasari, the duo Dossi, Hercole da Ferrara, Alberto Duro, Innocentio da Imola, Bassano, imitator of Nature, Federico Zuccaro, Federico Baroccio, Lorenzino, Samacchino, Passarotto, divine in drawing with the pen, Prospero Fontana, Bagnacavallo, Tintoretto, Camillo Percaccino, Cesi, the Carracci, Aretusi, Morina, Paccini, Scarsella, Mona, and Lavinia Fontana, the most wonderful painter, and many other illustrious and excellent painters, who with their brushes have created sublime and miraculous things, as the great Vatican can bear witness, which displays the greatness and value of painting, where the leading men of the world flock to admire the works of so many famous painters; not only in the beloved city of Rome, but also in Naples, Venice, Ferrara, Florence, Bologna, Milan, Genoa and many other cities in Italy",CROCE 1594 [2006], pp. 21-24.
[14] For the Portrait of Julius Caesar Croce, see Cantaro's essay in this volume; for the Dresden altarpiece, see CANTARO 1989, pp. 64-65, MURPHY 2003, pp. 24, 27, 30; BRADY 2023, pp. 85-86.
[15] MANES 2026. Regarding Croce's ownership of the painting, the reference source remains ORETTI XVIII sec., ms. B 124, c. 18, as indicated in the relevant entry by CANTARO 1989, pp. 64-65, cat. 4a. 8. See also Morselli 2025, pp. 27-37.
[16] CANTARO 1989, pp. 172-173, no. 4a.74; BENATI 2002; BRADY 2023, pp. 78-79, cat. 24.
[17] In particular, from Ferriani to Murphy it has been hypothesised that the sitter could be Laudomia Gozzadini in FERRIANI 1979, p. 26. MURPHY 2003, pp. 129-130. FORTUNATI 1986, pp. 732, 736. CANTARO 1989, p. 184. CANTARO 1993, p. 93; JOYEUX 2021, pp. 108-109.
[18] Nine years earlier, in 1577, the painter had executed a double self-portrait of herself and her husband Giovanni Paolo Zappi, also on copper, with the same purpose (Zaragoza, Museo de Zaragoza, NIG 11116). See RUIZ GÓMEZ 2019, no. 35, p. 168, with previous bibliography.
[19] CANTARO 1989, pp. 136-137.
[20] FORTUNATI 2019, no. 59 pp. 218-219 with previous bibliography.
[21] POSNER 1971, p. 35.
[22] POSNER 1986, pp. 281-282. DAL POZZOLO 2021, p. 230
[23] AJMAR-WOLLHEIM, DENNIS 2006, pp. 104-119. For Titian's Venus of Urbino, see GOFFEN 1997. For Lorenzo Lotto's *Venus and Cupid*, see CHRISTIANSEN 1986, pp. 166-173.
[24] PUGLISI 2026.
[25] BRADY 2023, pp. 110-111.
[26] CANTARO 1989, pp. 168.
[27] Valuation by Alfonso Nelli in 1593, Notebook of surveyors. The palazzo does not appear in the collection of Drawings of perspectives of palazzi and churches in the Bologna region. PANCALDI 2011, pp. 37-38.
[28] MATTHEWS-GRECO 2006, p.119.
[29] RANDOLPH 1998, pp. 182- 200.
[30] See Baccanelli's essay in this volume
[31] CANTARO 1989 p.161, BRADY 2023, no. 45 p.112-113.
[32] CANTARO 1989, p. 161.
[33] PORTER 2021.
[34] Aldrovandi 1562; HASKELL, PENNY 1984, pp. 85-86.
[35] DAL POZZOLO 2019, pp. 45-72.
[36] See ISEPPI 2025, in press.
[37] Inventory of the assets of Giovanni Angelelli, 24 July 1623, AsBo, Notarial, Notary Gregorio Malisardi, reported by Ravaioli, RAVAIOLI 1996 pp. 119-120, and transcribed for the paintings by Cammarota, CAMMAROTA 2000, pp. 99-103.
[38] Suffice it to think, as a term of comparison, of the *Portrait of Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi* with its *Allegorical cover* or the *Portrait of Bishop Tommaso Negri* by Lorenzo Lotto, DAL POZZOLO 2021, pp. 106- 109, 266-267.

Isabella Ruini Angelelli (1568–1628)
The life, the verses, the portraits

Maria Teresa Cantaro

The identification of the main figure depicted in the foreground of this double portrait, of an unusual, almost square, format is easily accomplished by comparing it with two other works by Lavinia Fontana featuring the same sitter[1]. These are the portrait of *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid*, signed and dated 1592, now in the Musée des Beaux Arts in Rouen (fig. 10), and the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli*, signed and dated 1593, now in the Galleria Palatina in Florence (fig. 11). The former is a refined example of an allegorical portrait, of a mythological-erotic nature, intended for private quarters, to be housed in an appropriate casing, away from prying eyes, in which the woman is portrayed as a half-naked idealised figure half-covered by a skilful and mischievous arrangement of transparent veils[2]. The latter is a magnificent example of a rigorous official portrait that follows the canons of international European portraiture, intended to be displayed in the reception room – the *salone* – of the palazzo, where indeed it appears to have been located in two of the inventories consulted, as will be seen below, and in which the woman is dressed in Spanish fashion.

The sitter has been recognised as Isabella Ruini first time by Matteo Marangoni in 1911 through the analysis of a partial copy of the Florentine portrait by the hand of Cristofano dell'Altissimo (1525-1605)[3], commissioned by Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici and intended for the collection of female beauties in the Medici villa in Artimino, where it was placed on 19 May 1599 (fig. 17). It appears in fact in the 1609 inventory drawn up upon the Grand Duke's death, published by Miles Chappell[4], in which it is clear that it was one of the first three portraits that initiated the series, many of which are now in the Uffizi[5]. This decision by the Florentine Grand Duke, who was very sensitive to feminine charms, is proof that the reputation of Isabella's beauty had crossed the borders of Bologna and reached Florence, partly through the notoriety of her official portrait painted by Lavinia Fontana in 1593, which must have been, as is perfectly clear, the reference model for the creation of the copy. The creation of this copy, which bears the inscription *'Gentildonna Bolognese di Casa Ruina'*, is conclusive evidence of the woman's identity.

A comparison of the female figures in the three portraits painted and signed by Fontana leaves no doubt as to her identity, as can be seen from the details of the faces (fig. 18). Not only do the features correspond, the oval of the face, the shape of the nose, the cut of the eyes, the subtle smile on the lips and their shape, but also the styling of the hair with the characteristic small curl on the forehead and temple, the auburn colour of the hair, the jewellery that she wears such as the earring, the pearl necklace around the neck, and the gold and pearl cluster which hangs down from her hair to the ear, are the same jewels depicted in the three different portraits, undoubtedly belonging to Isabella and part of her personal collection.

Fig. 17
Cristofano dell'Altissimo, *Portrait of a bolognese noblewoman from the Ruini family*, 1599, after Lavinia Fontana, Florence, Galleria Palatina

However, upon careful analysis of the painter's other female portraits, the small, refined and sophisticated painting on copper of the *Wedding Portrait of Isabellea Ruini*, signed LAVI. FON. FA, now in the Musée des Beaux Arts in Besançon, previously dated to the 1590s (fig. 8), opens up the possibility that it too may depict the beautiful Isabella Ruini, at an earlier date, namely on the occasion of her marriage, as a wedding gift, and therefore to be dated to 1586. This hypothesis is supported not only by the features, but also by the details of the dress and jewellery. In fact, the cut of the neckline of the elegant white gown, very similar to that of the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, and above all the presence in all three of the other portraits of Isabella Ruini of the characteristic and personal piece of gold jewellery with pearls that the woman wears above the ear, together with the hairstyle with curls on the forehead and temples that are also present in each of the paintings, suggest that it is the same woman[6].

In the vast output of the Bolognese painter, we know of only one other case of multiple portraits of the same person, namely that of the famous Modenese historian and philologist Carlo Sigonio (1523-1584). An extremely active intellectual in the city, a friend of Lavinia's father, founder of the Società Tipografica Bolognese, who held the *Humanitas* chair at the Alma Mater Studiorum from 1563 to 1584, as well as being a leading figure in Bolognese cultural life; we have three autograph portraits of him by Lavinia Fontana, one in the Museo Civico of Modena, one on copper sold on the art market in 2009, and a third in a private collection in Naples. A fourth, small-format portrait, known from ancient sources, is missing[7].

Fig. 18
Comparison of the detail of the faces in the four portraits of Isabella Ruini by Lavinia Fontana

But who then was Isabella Ruini, this renowned and wealthy Bolognese noblewoman, so close to Lavinia Fontana that she had her portrait repeatedly painted on different occasions, in different attire and for different ends?

Isabella was born in Bologna in 1568 to Carlo Ruini (1530-1598), a member of a prominent senatorial family. Ruini held various positions in the city's public life, having been repeatedly appointed *Gonfaloniere del Popolo*, and been a member of the Elder Consuls (Anziani Consoli) until he took up a permanent seat in the Senate in 1584. He was a man with deep scientific knowledge, author of the treatise *Dell'Anatomia e dell'infermità del cavallo* (On the Anatomy and Infirmity of Horses), considered a cornerstone of modern veterinary science, published in 1598 in Bologna by the Società Tipografica Bolognese, founded by Ruini himself together with Carlo Sigonio and Senator Camillo Paleotti (1520-1594), brother of the well-known Cardinal,

Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597)[8]. Ruini was part of that fertile circle of scientific experimentation in Bologna that mainly revolved around the figure of the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), pupil of the physician, botanist and pharmacologist Luca Ghini (1490-1556) – a scholar, collector and cataloguer of every element in nature[9].

Isabella's mother was Vittoria Pepoli, a noblewoman from a prestigious Bolognese family who married Carlo Ruini in around 1560. She was the daughter of Count Girolamo and Angela Boncompagni, the latter being the niece of Ugo Boncompagni, Pope Gregory XIII. Vittoria was a charming and cultured woman, celebrated by poets such as Alessandro Griffoni and Muzio Manfredi (1535-1609) (fig. 19), as reported by Caroline Murphy[10].


CENTO DONNE
CANTATE DA
MVTIO MANFREDI
Il Fermo
ACADEMICO INNOMINATO
di Parma.
Al Serenissimo Principe
di Mantoua.
IN PARMA
Nella Stamperia d'Erasmo Viotti.
MDLXXX.

Fig. 19
Muzio Manfredi, *Cento donne cantate* 1580, frontispiece

Isabella had several brothers, including Antonio Maria (1562-1606), who became a senator in 1598 upon his father's death, married Virginia Malvezzi in 1599 and acquired the noble title of count in 1602. On 7 February 1606, however, Antonio Maria was stabbed to death on Carnival Day, and his corpse found near S. Procolo, where the Ruini family lived, a tragic event at the root of many subsequent calamities in a chain of retaliation[11].

Another brother was Lelio (1563-1621), who graduated in law in Bologna in 1585 and became a senator in 1606 following the death of his brother Antonio Maria. However, in 1612, he renounced his seat choosing an ecclesiastical career and becoming bishop of Bagnoregio, and later Apostolic Nuncio to Poland. Isabella's other two brothers, Ottavio (1565-1601) and Orazio (1566-1601), died prematurely. Her only sister Clelia married the Roman nobleman Riniero Ceuli in 1593[12].

Carlo Ruini's family exploited some buildings in the parish of San Procolo, extending them in order to build a palazzo worthy of their social status. The palazzo was completed in 1584, as indicated by the inscription on the façade: CAROLUS RUINUS SENATOR FECIT 1584. It is believed that the building was designed by Antonio Palladio in 1582, who gave it a beautiful brick façade with three rows of windows. It then passed to the Ranuzzi family in 1679, who further enlarged it and added a spectacular elliptical double staircase designed by Giovanni Battista Piacentini (1664-1725). The 18th-century design of the great Sala delle Feste (ballroom) is by Ferdinando Bibiena (1657-1743). Some of the rooms on the *piano nobile* are decorated with 18th- and 19th-century frescos. The last owner of the palace was Felice Baciocchi, husband of Elisa Bonaparte, Napoleon's sister. Today, the building houses the Palazzo di Giustizia of Bologna (the Courthouse)[13].

Fig. 20
Column-krater, *Scene with Eros and woman*, Naples, Banca Intesa S. Paolo

Fig. 21
Hydria, *Bath scene*, Naples, Banca Intesa S. Paolo

In Carlo Ruini's home, the family enjoyed a life of comfort; the solid economic wealth of the family inherited from his grandfather Carlo senior, professor of civil law at the Studio of Bologna (the university)[14], and from his father Antonio, was rivalled only by the cultural elevation of its members. Carlo Junior had inherited a collection of ancient sculptures and fragments, as well as modern sculptures, including a Venus by the Ferrara sculptor Alfonso Lombardi (1497-1537)[15].

In this cultured and wealthy environment, there is no doubt that the young Isabella would have received an education worthy of her rank, as befitted the noblewomen of the time, who followed the established norms and presented themselves in the circles of the palazzi of the nobility, able to converse pleasantly, and proficient in literature and music. Isabella entered Bolognese aristocratic society in her own right when, at the age of 18, on 6 February 1586 in the church of San Procolo, she married Giovanni Angelelli (1566-1623), di Achille, two years her senior, bringing a very substantial dowry of 8,000 scudi, as reported by Pompeo Scipione Dolfi[16].

It is very likely that our *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, was created a few years after the wedding to propitiate new motherhood. Indeed, the nuptial reference of the casket overflowing with jewellery that is opened and displayed, so characteristic in all classical art as a consecration of the bride to Eros and as wish of fertility, as depicted in many Greek vases produced in Apulia in the 4th century BC, is an elegant and beautiful reference to the world of ancient myth, to which Lavinia and her patrons were so susceptible (figs. 20, 21)[17].

As both families belonged to the nobility, the Angelelli coat of arms is reproduced by Dolfi (fig. 22a), while the Ruini coat of arms is reproduced by Giovanni Nicolò Pasquali Alidosi when he refers to Bishop Lelio Ruini, Isabella's brother (fig. 22b). Both are reproduced in Floriano Canetoli's collection and blazoned by Giovanni Battista di Crollalanza[18]. The heraldic elements of both families are brought together and intertwined in the refined design of a lace pattern reproduced by Aurelio Passerotti in 1591. In the centre, we see the two winged griffins, emblem of the Angelelli family, facing one other next to the tower, emblem of the Ruini family. It is clear that the pattern for the lace was commissioned, as can be seen from the presence of the two surnames in the drawing, following the marriage alliance between the two families[19] (fig. 23).

Fig. 22a
Coat of arms of the Angelelli family

Fig. 22b
Coat of arms of the Ruini family

In addition to her dowry, Isabella brought prestige to her husband both because she belonged to one of Bologna's most prominent families, and through her renowned beauty, which was soon praised by her contemporaries and particularly by the poets of the time, who

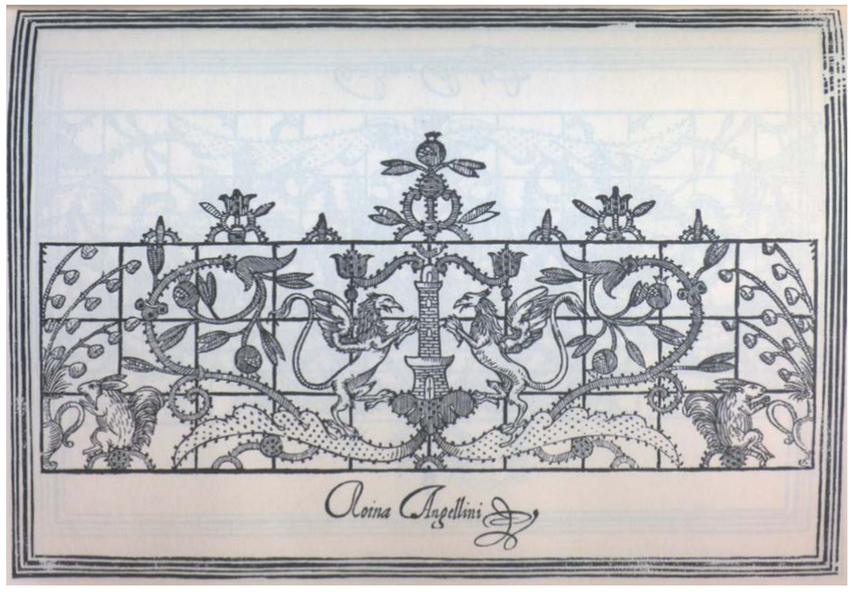


Fig. 23
Aurelio Passerotti, *Stemma Ruini Angelelli*, in, Libro di Lavorieri, 1591

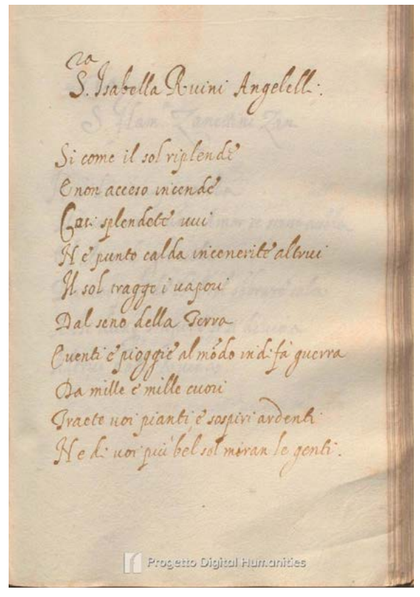
competed with one another in the composition of verses in her honour, consecrating her as the city's paragon of beauty, elegance and breeding. In an anonymous manuscript dating from the late 1580s, Isabella is compared to the shining sun (figs. 24, 25)[20]:

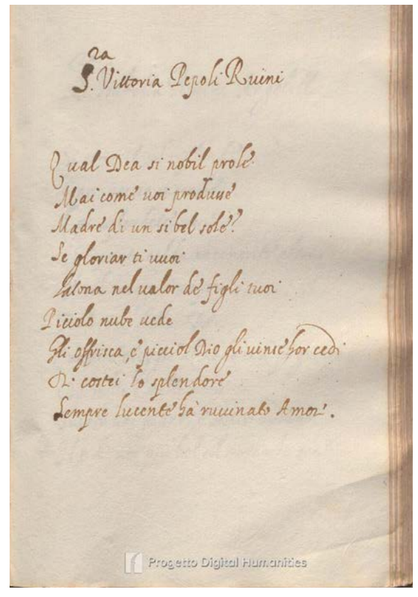
Just as the sun shines
And though not lit, it sets on fire...
(Si come il sol risplende
E non acceso incende ..)

and her mother Vittoria, in the same collection of verses, is thus addressed:

What goddess such noble offspring
Did ever produce,
Mother, of such a beautiful sun...
(Qual Dea si nobil prole
Mai come voi produsse
Madre di un si bel sole ...)

Figs. 24-25
Anonymous, Rhymes in honour of Isabella Ruini and Vittoria Pepoli





In 1589, Ercole Marescotti wrote that all were struck with wonder and enamoured at the sight of Isabella's beauty, incredulous at her perfect natural grace and the harmony between her body and face. Everyone in Bologna vied to see her, wishing to demonstrate their love: "...that all of Bologna competes to catch sight of her, and I have often found myself among countless crowds, where one could see the great, the mediocre and the insignificant, all filled with love, wonder and reverence for such a spectacle of superhuman beauty ..."[21].

Such was the admiration that perhaps it was precisely around 1589, in the wake of this poetic enthusiasm, that an oval painted lead plaquette was dedicated to her, created by an anonymous medallist who signed with the initials BG. She is portrayed in delicate and expressive profile, as in ancient medals, bust-length, richly clothed in a gown fastened at the breast with many small buttons, with a high collar and a ruff. The gown is of the same Spanish style as that worn by Isabella in the portrait by Lavinia Fontana painted in 1593, now in the Galleria Palatina in Florence. Her *coiffure* is original in style, very elaborate, consisting of braids gathered at the nape of the neck, held in place by a net that ends in a veil that falls to the shoulders, the end of which is held by the woman's hand in the foreground. This is a highly refined composition that aims to convey the elegance and beauty of the woman even in such a restricted space, with every detail depicted as accurately as possible. The small plaque bearing the initials in capital letters on the cut of the sleeve is in the Museo Civico Medievale of Bologna (fig. 26).

We have a 17th/18th-century drawing – mediocre in quality – that reproduces this precious portrait, and bears an inscription at the bottom identifying the woman and giving the date 1589 (fig. 27). The drawing is in the Raccolta di Ritratti di Bolognesi, in the Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna. Both of these were made known by Emilio Ravaioli in 1994, who believes that the author of the drawing may have traced the medal, but in his opinion the date 1589 holds good, and he suggests that the initials BG may identify Giovanni Battista Gambaro or Biagio Gambaro, two Bolognese goldsmith brothers from the Sclarici family, known as del Gambaro[22].

A second small plaque, again initialled BG, depicting Isabella Ruini in profile, in the same attire but in slightly flatter relief, is in Ferrara, Musei Civici d'Arte Antica, and was first published by Gualtiero Medri in 1933, and then by Raniero Varese in 1975[23] (fig. 28).

A third plaque, its present whereabouts unknown, was reported by Alfred Armand in the unidentified Vasset collection in Paris. The woman's identity is inscribed on the inside: "Dia. 90 'ISABELLA RUINA – B. G.' Sans. R.[24]".

There is therefore evidence of the existence of a series of painted metal plaquettes, produced by the same artist, of the same size, half-way between examples of classical portraiture and works of painted wax, an art-form that was highly regarded in Bologna in the circle of Ulisse Aldrovandi, as Stefano Tumidei rightly observes[25], created from the same mould,

Fig. 26
Medalist BG, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini*, Bologna, Museo Civico Medievale

Fig. 27
Anonymous, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini*, Bologna, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe dell'Archiginnasio

Fig. 28
Medalist BG, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini*, Ferrara, Musei Civici di Arte Antica

reproducing the profile of the beautiful, celebrated and lissom Isabella Ruini. There is no doubt that the medallist would have been commissioned by a client, perhaps on the basis of a request from Isabella's admirers who wanted to own among their most precious possessions an image of her, as a keep-sake, as suggested by Caroline Murphy, who imagined that a veritable market had been created for these plaquettes[26]. Although this hypothesis is not to be entirely ruled out, as the repetitive nature of these objects lends credence to it, it is more likely that rather than directed to a generic market, the production was perhaps limited to a more academic environment, for the individuals who were part of the circle of writers, poets and musicians, gentlemen and ladies who frequented Giovanni Angelelli's house, or for the high-ranking figures who visited Bologna and would hear of the celebrated Isabella.

An interesting episode in relation to this, testimony to the spread of Isabella's fame, is recalled by Antonio Francesco Ghiselli in the reception organised on the occasion of the visit to Bologna of the Florentine prince, diplomat and general Gian Francesco Aldobrandini (1545-1601), nephew of Pope Clement VIII, in July 1595. Ercole di Antonio Bentivoglio gave a banquet and a ball in his honour, inviting about thirty Bolognese noblewomen. The chronicles recount that Aldobrandini danced the entire time with Isabella Ruini, attracted by her great beauty. There was no shortage of social occasions for the couple. In the same year, Giovanni Angelelli hosted Cardinal Francesco Sforza Santafiore (1562-1624), as Ghiselli again recounts[27].

The primacy of Isabella Ruini's beauty would last a long time in Bologna and was confirmed at all levels. However, the praise and tributes diminished and became the subject of heated debate when a young woman belonging to the Piacenza nobility, Margherita Anguissola, arrived in the city to wed Federico Fantuzzi. On that occasion, it was Francesco Galliani who chronicled the wedding ceremony, which took place on 10 November 1595, and described the young woman as 'a most beautiful lady' (*signora bellissima*)[28].

Galliani's opinion was shared by the members of the Accademia dei Gelati, who in 1596 decided to reassess the title of paragon of feminine beauty in Bologna. They recognised that for some years it had been held by "la Ruina", but with the arrival of Margherita Anguissola, this position became uncertain: "The lady Isabella Ruini enjoyed the primacy of beauty among the noblewomen of Bologna, until the arrival of Margherita Anguiscioli began to disturb this state of affairs, with rumours that this new beauty not only called into question the pre-eminent position already held by Ruini over a period of many years, but took it away from her entirely"[29].

The Accademia decided to organise a competition with the recitation of verses in their favour. The poet who supported Isabella was the academician Vincenzo Fabretti, known as 'the uncultured one' (*l'incolto*'), who declared her beauty to be brighter than the clearest and most invincible star. Melchiorre Zoppio, known as 'the hazy one' (*il caliginoso*), on the other hand, accused her of being too haughty and proud, and convinced many academicians to prefer Margherita, who was sweet, loving and sensual:

The ideal of beauty, would be the beauty of one
who with the grace, and charm
of Margherita unites with Isabella.
But excessive haughtiness
undermines beauty,
graciousness charms Victory.
So it is that one receives the glory, and the other pleases.
(Saria l'idea del bello, il bel di quella
che la gratia, e la laccia
di Margherita unisce e d'Isabella.
Ma soverchia alterezza
pregiudica a bellezza,
cortesia Palme allaccia.
Quindi è ch'una abbia il vanto, e l'altra piaccia.)

The final verdict was in favour of Anguissola because it was considered that, given equal beauty, her manner was more gentle and captivating; Ruini was rebuked by Zoppio with the following verses:

Learn, haughty one, learn,
to put your victory,
Your uncontested glory,
at risk and in competition.
Beauty that does not set on fire
Is as livid gold that shines without warmth;
Living fire is what we see
Where Love burns
Where its colour is its warmth.
Between beauty and beauty, the judge and the lover
Are moved more by affection than by semblance
(Impara altera, impara,
Metter la tua vittoria
La tua senza contrasto unica gloria
In compromesso e in gara.
Beltà che non incende
Qual livid'oro senza caldo splende;
Vivo foco è l'aspetto
Ov'arde Amore
Che il colore è l'calore.
Fra bello e bello il giudice e l'amante
E più si muove a grada, ch'a sembiante) [30].

But Cesare Rinaldi, the indolent and carefree member of the Accademia dei Gelati, published verses in 1605 in which he called Anguissola a liar, redeemed Isabella Ruini and restored her primacy, mocking those who had doubted her beauty:

Quarrel between two beauties
(Lite fra due bellezze)

And who dares to match
A weak face to my SUN? And who is it who presumes?
Every other light is but a shadow,
And a shade is he who brings such a quarrel to the field,

Nor does he know what light is,
Poor wretch, who in the end will say, weeping:
I wish I had been as mute as I am blind.
(E chi pareggiar vuole
Debil face al mio SOLE? E chi'l presume?
Un'ombra è ogni altro lume,
E un'ombra è, chi tal lite in campo adduce,
Ne sà, che cosa è luce,
Miser, ch'al fin dirà, piangendo seco:
Così muto foss'io, come son cieco.)

On the same subject
(Nel medesimo soggetto)

Her name is beautiful,
Her face is more beautiful,
Her eyes and hair are equally beautiful,
Therefore, you are blind and foolish,
If you believe that another light can equal hers;
But if you are blind, you are forgiven,
At least listen, if you cannot see,
Listen, how resounding is
The name of ISABELLA,
As if it were saying: only she is 'bella' [*beautiful*]
(Di costei bello è il nome,
Egli è più bello il volto,
Son gl'istessa beltà gli occhi, e le chiome,
Dunque sei cieco, e stolto,
S'altro lume al suo lume agguagliar credi;
Ma, se pur cieco sei, ti si perdoni,
Odi, come risuoni
Il nome d'ISABELLA,
Quasi ch'ei voglia dir: sol questa è bella)[31] .

This competition and academic dispute gives us an insight into the literary climate in Bologna at the time, which was searching for subjects which would ignite the creative imagination of the poets emerging at the end of the century, who often linked up to subjects represented by painters, as has been demonstrated in recent studies by Raffaella Morselli and Giulia Iseppi[32].

In this heated and lively climate, Giovanni Angelelli, son of Achille and Cassandra Dall' Armi, after his marriage, sought to improve his family's fortunes by entering the most prestigious circles of the city and proving himself to be a man of culture worthy of joining the famous Accademia degli Ardenti, founded in 1555 by Camillo Paleotti and dedicated to moral, political and administrative education, as well as to the humanist and scientific culture of the youthful nobility of Bologna. Lessons in calligraphy, music and dance were held for the complete education of a true gentleman of the time[33]. Giovanni would become a leading figure in the activities of this Academy, as also his sons, who would become very much active members, almost as if it were a hereditary mission. Giovanni's vast culture can be judged by his extensive library, which contained a large number of volumes, mainly on humanist subjects. He also had close ties with the University of Bologna, although it does not seem that he held a chair. His collection of paintings was also remarkable, as can be seen from the inventory drawn up in his will in 1623 upon his death[34].

Following the example of the customs of the Bolognese nobility and of the mercantile society, in 1593 Giovanni purchased some rural buildings in Argelato, near Bologna, which were enlarged to create a country villa. According to Giulia Pancaldi, both the renovation and the subsequent rich fresco decoration entrusted to Cesare Baglione (1550-1615), carried out between 1593 and 1604, were paid for with Isabella's rich dowry. The coats of arms of the three families, Dall'Armi, Angelelli and Ruini, appear repeatedly among the depictions of rural scenes[35].

Giovanni was appointed one of the Elder Consuls (Anziani Consoli) of Bologna in the second two months of 1591, becoming a senator in 1602. At that point, in order to strengthen his prestige, in 1605, he purchased the palazzo in Piazza Calderini from the Lucchini family, silk merchants who had gone bankrupt. The palazzo was already richly decorated with paintings by the Carracci, such as Annibale's *Resurrection of Christ*, now in the Louvre, painted for the Luchini family in 1593, and paintings by Nosadella (1530-1571) and Giovanni Battista Cremonini (1540- 1610). Angelelli added further paintings to these, works by Francesco Brizio (1574-1623) and Franceschino Carracci (1595-1622), and began to build up a family picture gallery, confirming his interest in art.

Lavinia Fontana's contact with Isabella Ruini and her family probably began at the time of her marriage to Giovanni Angelelli in 1586, as observed above. By that date, Lavinia had already earned the sympathy and esteem of the Bolognese aristocracy, and more particularly of the wealthy noblewomen, beginning with Laudomia Gozzadini, who in 1584 had commissioned her to paint the large family portrait, a monumental display

of prestige, wealth and nobility, which now hangs in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna (fig.1)[36]. Indeed, at the end of the 1580s and throughout the 1590s, the demand for female portraits by her hand increased. Besides Laudomia Gozzadini, also Ginevra Aldrovandi Hercolani, Costanza Alidosi Isolani, Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni, Costanza Sforza Buoncompagni, and Virginia Malchiavelli of which we know the portraits enter his orbit, as well as many other noblewomen whose identities can no longer be recognized today[37]. Several of these women were godmothers at the baptism of some of Lavinia Fontana's numerous children, as reported in the list of baptisms compiled by Fontana's husband, Giampaolo Zappi, in the Biblioteca Comunale of Imola, first published by Romeo Galli and then transcribed by Maria Teresa Cantaro[38]. Malvasia seems to hint at Lavinia's participation in a women's cultural circle that undoubtedly existed in Bologna, and held 'gatherings' in the *salons* of the city palazzi or in the suburban villas, as was all the rage at the end of the 16th century.

Then again, the painter had become 'learnèd' (*addotrinata*) in the Bolognese Studio (the University) in 1580, as Masini reports: "Learnèd Bolognese women, and others, who have studied in the public University [the Studio]. In the catalogue of women outstanding in letters can be listed Dorotea Dolsi, Gerolama Castellani in vernacular poetry in 1564 and Veronica Gambara in 1460, Lavinia Fontana in 1580..."[39]. This passage allows us to place the painter among the most educated women in Bologna, probably a graduate of the University. Although no document has yet been found to attest to this official level of erudition, there is no doubt that Lavinia Fontana possessed a high degree of education that allowed her to take her place alongside the most cultured intellectuals of Bologna, many of whom she had known since childhood as they had frequented her father Prospero's house as guests. This association continued naturally when she herself became an adult. The poets of Bologna praised her on several occasions, including Giulio Cesare Croce, Cesare Rinaldi, Ridolfo Campeggi, Giambattista Marino, Ottaviano Rabasco and many others. Among musicians, she had frequent dealings with Adriano Banchieri[40].

We know that she painted the *Portrait of Giulio Cesare Croce*, described by the poet himself, a work recently rediscovered in a private collection in Germany. In his autobiography, published in 1608, a year before his death at the age of fifty-nine, Croce refers very explicitly and in detail to having had his portrait painted: "It was not long ago that I had my portrait painted, / By Lavinia Fontana, and my portrait, / Was taken to Poland to abide. / I have neither the look of a sage nor a madman, / I stand temperate between the two, / No contract either with one or the other./ In the portrait that the Excellent One painted of me, / she did not use minium, nor a yellow lake, / But only lamp black and umber"[41].

The fact that the painter had executed a portrait of Croce is also confirmed by the Bolognese scholar Marcello Oretti (1714-1787) in his manuscript B124: "Lavinia Fontana painted the portrait of Giulio Cesare Croce, a pleasing poet from Bologna. She also painted a small panel for the small domestic chapel in Rigosa, which appears as though freshly painted, with the name and the year 1575"[42].

There is no doubt that the painter and the poet must have been already on good terms for some time; in fact, when Croce published *La gloria delle donne* (The Glory of Women) in 1590, he paid tribute to her by extolling her talents and comparing her to the greatest artists of all time, immortal like the phoenix: "Many others but you have followed Philosophy / And in music exceptional beyond measure / In Sculpture and Astrology / And in Arithmetic and Painting / Among whom, in this age, there appears / Great wonder among people and nature, / Lavinia Fontana, great painter / One of a kind in the world like the phoenix. / She paints so wonderfully / That she equals Apollodorus, Zeuxis and Apelles, / and Michelangelo among others so excellent, / Correggio, Titian, and Raphael / And in her portraits she is so exquisite and diligent / That she has no equal / Such that now her name resounds / Wherever the sun unfolds its Rays"[43]. These testimonies confirm that Fontana's contacts with the Bolognese literary milieu were unquestionably both intense and frequent.

Here we can add that we know of another work by the painter, which fits perfectly into this atmosphere of skilful relationships with noblewomen who gather together to talk and discuss, write poetry, read, play music, sing, enjoy pleasant and cultured conversations, and who love to have their portraits painted by Lavinia Fontana. This is the *Apollo and the Muses (Parnassus)*, a painting on panel that originally was the cover of a spinet, and later became an over-door, identified in the 18th century by Marcello Oretti in Bologna in the house of Domenico Natali, and now in a private collection (fig. 6)[44].

Here we see a group of nine women clothed *all'antica*, with veils, jewellery and high hairstyles, around the figure of Apollo at the foot of Mount Parnassus; they are depicted playing various instruments in the open, in an all-female concert, in the presence of Cupid and Pegasus at the top left, cherubs at the bottom, three other women in the background on the right, and against the backdrop of a landscape with ruins of ancient architecture (perhaps the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi), and around a shell-shaped fountain gushing water. Vera Fortunati offers an interesting and pertinent interpretation, considering it "a group portrait *sub specie fabulae*"; she also argues that Lavinia was inspired by *The Contest between the Muses and the Pierides*, painted by her father Prospero Fontana (1512-1597) between 1553 and 1555, in the Sala del Granduca in Palazzo Firenze in Rome, of which she obviously knew the drawing. The scholar identified as Isabella Ruini the seated woman playing the viola da gamba in the centre foreground (fig. 6), and the renowned Modena poet and musician, friend of Torquato Tasso, Tarquinia Molza (1542-1617), as the first figure on the left in a red dress, depicted playing the organ. According to Fortunati, it was she who had commissioned the

Fig. 29
Lavinia Fontana (attr. to),
Allegory of music, Chatsworth,
Devonshire Collection

painting[45]. We know that Tarquinia, grand-daughter of the musician and poet Francesco Maria Molza (1489-1544), a highly educated woman, in Ferrara she had been lady-in-waiting to the third wife of Alfonso II d'Este (1533-1597) Margherita Gonzaga (1564-1618), and the inspiration behind the Concerto delle Dame[46], in which the musicians Laura Peperara, singer, harpist and dancer, the soprano Livia d'Arco, and Anna Guarini, soprano and lutenist, daughter of the poet Giovanni Battista, performed regularly in private settings. The composer and organist Luzzasco Luzzaschi (1545-1607) wrote a series of madrigals in the 1580s, to be performed with five voices, specifically for the women musicians and singers of the Ferrara court, for whose performances he was the musical director. The Concerto delle Dame was an institution established by Duke Alfonso II to offer recreation to his young wife Margherita.

The performances, which could last up to six hours, were held regularly from the carnival of 1581 until 1597, the year of the duke's death[47]. It was an original and novel phenomenon that would prove a success also in other courts, so it is not surprising that it also had an impact in Bologna, and that the noblewomen of the city were inspired by this original experiment, which was in keeping with a certain degree of emancipation of Bolognese women.

Scholars are in agreement that muses depicted in *Apollo and the Muses (Parnassus)* are the portraits of noblewomen arranged in a theatrical and musical staging to reproduce the concerts that were actually performed in the *saloni* of the palazzi of the nobility or in the gardens of villas. Marco Tanzi recently identified the portrait of the famous lutenist and friend of Lavinia Fontana, Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni, in the third woman on the right with the recorder[48], and the scholar did not fail to note the personal relationship between Lucia and Lavinia documented in the list of baptisms drawn up by Giampaolo Zappi, the painter's husband, which shows that in 1595 Lucia Garzoni was godmother to the painter's youngest daughter, named Costanza, replacing the Duchess of Sora, Costanza Sforza Boncompagni, wife of Giacomo Boncompagni, the legitimised son of the Bolognese Pope Gregory XIII[49]. Lavinia had painted portraits of both in 1594[50]. The depictions of the other women are also portraits, yet to be identified, belonging to the circle of Lavinia, Isabella, Lucia, Laudomia and the others referred to above.

Going back to Isabella Ruini, we find ourselves before her fifth portrait painted by Lavinia Fontana, this time within the composition of *Apollo and the Muses (Parnassus*), dating from around the end of the century, 1596-1600, although in this case it is a more mythical depiction in the context of the composition. Her association with Lavinia must have been intense, almost a friendship.

A beautiful drawing on ochre-coloured paper, attributed to Lavinia Fontana, with an *Allegory of Music* as its subject (Chatsworth, Great Britain)[51], (fig. 29), has its place in this literary and musical environment. In the drawing, inside a stately home drawn in architectural detail, a group of individuals are arranged around a spinet, depicted diagonally in perspective, played by a woman, stiffly upright. She is accompanied on the lute by a young man standing, and another sitting in the foreground, while the figure of an older teacher instructs a young boy in how to decipher a score and sing. In the foreground, a number of musical instruments lie scattered on the floor in apparent disorder, reproducing a rich range of instruments such as in Raphael's famous *Saint Cecilia* of 1514, commissioned by Elena Duglioli of Bologna and now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna. It is a scene that depicts in detail a moment of rehearsal among musicians in preparation for a chamber concert to be held within the palazzo.

The 1599 treatise by the Bolognese music theorist Ercole Bottrigaro (1531-1612) provides instructions for maintaining chords and harmony when playing in concert with different

instruments, testimony to the intensity of musical study and practice in Bologna at the end of the century.

Over and above her own success, and that of her husband and her family, Isabella Ruini's life was unfortunately not without its bereavements and painful events.

On 2 February 1598, her father Carlo and mother Vittoria Pepoli both died on the same day and were buried in the church of San Giovanni in Monte. Regarding their almost simultaneous deaths, Mario Fanti recounts an anecdote narrated by historians about the suspicion of a poisoning occurring when the couple were returning from church in a carriage after Mass, and were offered a bunch of flowers by a peasant woman. They both took it and smelled it, and it was at this moment that the poisoning is supposed to have occurred. However, according to Fanti, this story is probably without foundation. It is more likely that food poisoning led to the death of both Isabella's parents on the same day, within a few hours of each other[52].

Isabella Ruini and Giovanni Angelelli had four children, three boys and a girl. Their first daughter, named Penthesilea, was born in 1588. As an adult, she married Filippo Calderini, an important figure who was appointed rector of the hospital of Sant'Alessio di Lovoleto by Cardinal Alessandro Ludovisi, Archbishop of Bologna, on 19 November 1614. Subsequently, on 8 October 1616, Emperor Matthias Habsburg made him Count Palatine with his eldest son. In 1620, Cardinal Giulio Savelli, legate of Bologna, appointed him podestà of Castel S. Pietro for the first half of the year[53].

The couple then had a son named Carlo, after his maternal grandfather, born in 1590. At the age of eight, this child was already a pupil at the Accademia degli Ardenti, but unfortunately he died prematurely on 2 August 1602 and was buried in Santa Maria dei Servi[54].

The couple had another son, Giovanni Francesco, who was president of the Accademia degli Ardenti in 1622, becoming senator upon his father's death. Unfortunately, he was killed at the age of 22 on 28 December 1623 in a duel with a certain Gian Galeazzo Rossi. This was the consequence of the mysterious murder of Antonio Ruini, Isabella's brother, in 1606, as referred to above, for which a senator of the Legnani family had been sentenced to death and beheaded in Rome. The senator's relatives demanded revenge, and after the death of his brother-in-law, Giovanni Angelelli was obliged to intervene to defend the public interests and honour of the Ruini family, which had been left without any male lay representatives, as Isabella's other brother, Lelio (1563-1621), had embarked on an ecclesiastical career. It was therefore up to the young Giovanni Francesco to defend the honour of the Ruini family by facing the fatal duel[55].

Giovanni himself had died in 1623 at the age of fifty-seven, six months before his eldest son. Isabella died in 1628 at the age of sixty, five years after her husband.

The last son was Andrea (1608-1643) who, upon the death of his father and older brother, became head of the family at the age of 15 and, being a minor, was placed under the guardianship of his mother Isabella[56]. As an adult, in 1627, he became a senator in the seat that had

Fig. 30
Marie Victoire Jaquotot, *Portrait of Gabrielle de Estrées,* Paris, Musée du Louvre

belonged to his father and, for a very short time, to his brother. In 1629, he married Cristiana Duglioli, from the well-known and respected Bolognese family. In 1628, like his relatives before him, he became president of the Accademia degli Ardenti and was also a member of the Accademia dei Torbidi – composed of knights skilled in arms and letters – known both for its literary and its chivalric performances. On 8 September 1643 he also was killed in a bloody ambush in front of his house in Piazza Calderini, possibly as a result of inheritance disputes. The assassins were identified and hanged the following year, and it was established that the instigators were members of the Marsili family[57]. Upon his death, his wife Cristiana and their three children, Francesco, Isabella and Laura, had to flee Bologna. They moved to Rome in 1644, away from the dangerous climate that had been created for them, full of acts of reciprocal revenge that easily ended in bloodshed. Cristiana Duglioli brought part of the Angelelli art collection to Rome, together with the substantial collection belonging to her family of origin.

In 1649, her son Francesco married a young Roman noblewoman, Olimpia Naro, and in 1650 he returned to Bologna with his wife, in great style, where he resumed his rightful seat in the Senate and went to live in the family palazzo in Piazza Calderini. He was a brilliant man with a lively demeanour, involved in love affairs, betrayals, duels of honour, vendettas and bloody events in both Rome and Bologna. Unfortunately, he too was also killed in 1663 in a vicious revenge ambush carried out by Senator Rinaldo Bovio and his henchmen[58]. In the absence of male heirs, Francesco's properties went to his cousins Achille and Cristoforo Angelelli, of Piazza Maggiore, who retained the usufruct of the palazzo in Piazza Calderini.

His mother, Cristiana Duglioli, died in Rome in 1669 and was buried in San Lorenzo in Lucina. A memorial to her can also be found in the Roman church of S. Maria del Popolo. The Angelelli family finally died out with Achille Angelelli's son, Angelo Maria, who, upon his death in 1689, left the palazzo in Piazza Calderini and the villa in Argelato to Francesco Angelelli's sisters, Isabella and Laura.

Through Isabella Angelelli, wife of Costanzo Maria Zambeccari, who died in 1703, the Zambeccari family came into possession of part of the Angelelli and Zambeccari estates[59].

We know that Giovanni Angelelli had begun to build up a collection of paintings, which appears in the inventory of 1623 drawn-up upon his death, in which he left all his assets to his two living sons. The paintings were arranged in various rooms, among which, hanging

in the principal reception room of the palazzo in Piazza Calderini, eight papal portraits, twenty of distinguished men of the family, Annibale Carracci's *Resurrection of Christ*; in other rooms, thirty-six portraits of unidentified popes and a portrait of Giovanni Angelelli himself. However, in the list of paintings it is not possible to identify either the portrait of Isabella now in Palazzo Pitti, nor the portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli as *Venere with Cupid* that is in Rouen, nor the portrait that is the subject of this study[60].

In the inventory of 1643 drawn-up on the death of her son Andrea, the picture gallery has been enriched with 67 more paintings than appear in the collection left by his father. Among others, in a rear area of the palazzo in Piazza Calderini, there were two portraits painted for the senator by Bartolomeo Cesi in 1620, as well as a portrait of Innocent IX Facchinetti, one of Pius V Ghisleri, and several works by Guido Reni. But what is of the greatest interest to us, and is clearly identifiable in the 'Sala Lunga' (Long Room), in addition to the portraits of 36 popes in black frames, is the portrait of Giovanni Angelelli alongside that of his wife Isabella Ruini: "Painting with Lord Giovani Angelelli; Another with Lady Isabella Ruini"[61]. The latter is unquestionably to be identified with the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli* now in Palazzo Pitti, then in its original location. Again, the other two portraits of Isabella, *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid* and the portrait with the lady-in-waiting, cannot be identified.

Continuing to follow the bequests in the Angelelli inventories, we come to the one drawn up in 1663 on the death of Francesco, son of Andrea and Cristiana Duglioli, in favour of his cousins Achille and Crisoforo, from another branch of the family. Here, the official portrait of Isabella, is still listed in the picture gallery of the palazzo in Piazza Calderini, and is described as follows: "in the room where the Frenchwoman was: a woman from the Rouina family"[62].

The direct line of inheritance was definitively broken with the death of Francesco, of whom Isabella was the paternal grandmother. There is no reference to her official portrait of 1593 in any of the subsequent inventories. It can no longer be identified in the list of paintings in the inventory of 1676 of Achille Angelelli, Francesco's cousin who retained the usufruct of the palazzo in Piazza Calderini. Nor is it referred to in the 1689 inventory of Angelo Maria Angelelli, Achille's heir; both inventories list about twenty portraits from the Angelelli family without specifying the identity of the sitter, but it is unlikely that it would have been included amongst these as Isabella was a member of the Ruini family. However, in Angelo Maria Angelelli's inventory, among the works in a family residence outside Bologna in San Benedetto, there is listed another work (now unknown) by the Bolognese painter – placed over the altar: "a painting by Lavinia Fontana depicting the Adoration of the Magi"[63]. There is no further information on this additional altarpiece painted by our prolific artist.

The official portrait of Isabella may have left the picture gallery of the palazzo after 1689, and we do not know the path it took to end up in the Medici collections in Florence, eventually arriving in the Galleria Palatina where it now hangs.

Fig. 31
Anonymous artist from Fontainebleau, *Woman in the mirror*, Dijon, Musée des Beaux Artes

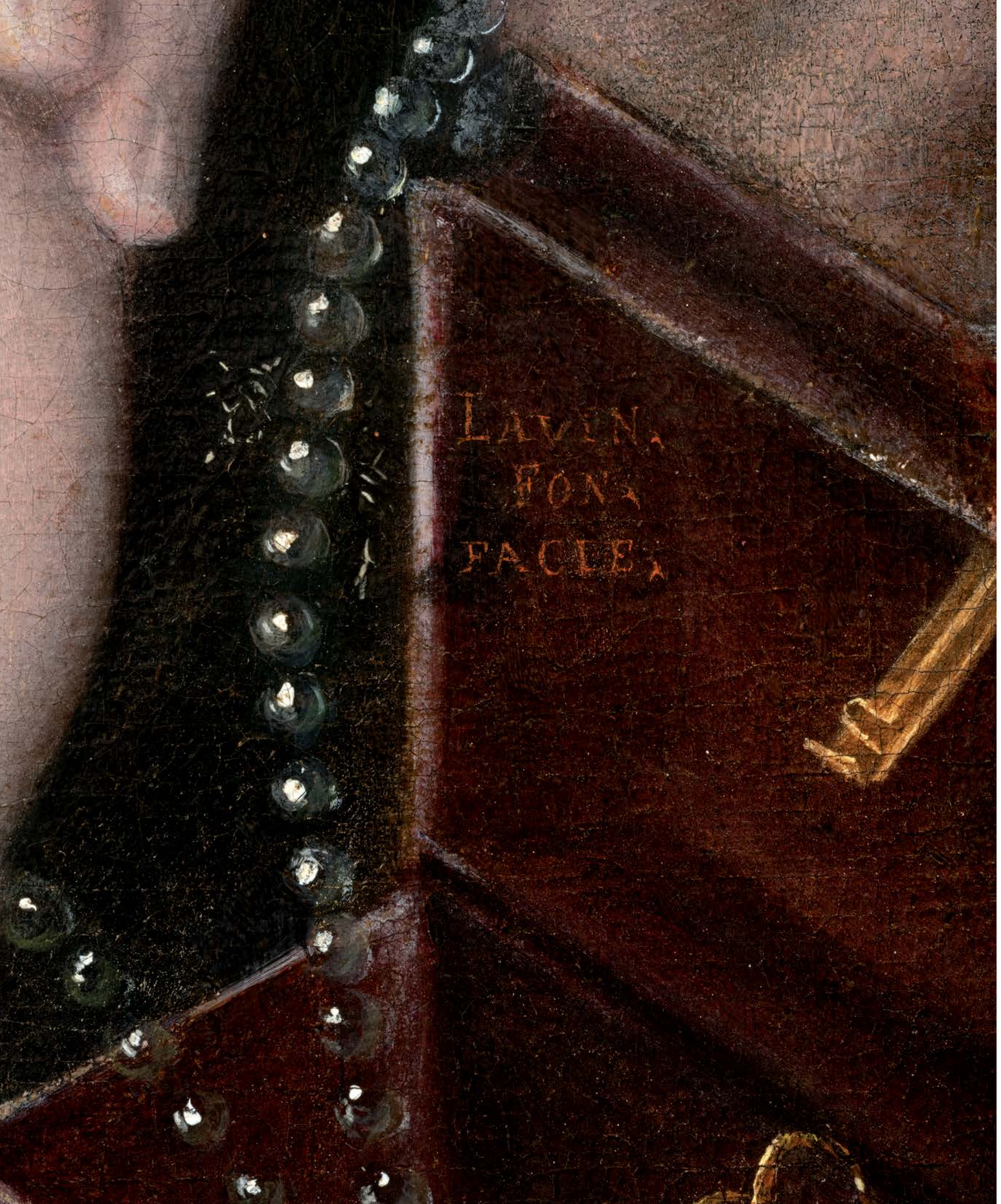
The painting depicting Isabella as *Venus with Cupid* emigrated to France; we do not know under what circumstances, nor at what date, but we do know that it arrived in the collections of the Louvre in 1872 or 1874, and was subsequently placed on-loan to the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, where it has been since 2007, as stated by the museum. This painting was perhaps already circulating in Parisian aristocratic circles as early as the end of the 18th century. In fact, we find a clear and surprising trace of it in this fine and rare example of a painted porcelain snuffbox lid, created in 1833 by Marie Victoire Jaquotot (1722-1855), measuring 6.5 x 5.5 cm, with a refined neoclassical miniature portrait of Gabrielle de Estrées, Duchess of Beaufort (1573-1599), who had been the favourite of King Henry IV (1553-1610) two and a half centuries earlier, and which is now in the Louvre, inv. 35637, Département des Arts Graphiques (fig. 30). It was part of a group of 48 miniature portraits on porcelain by Marie-Victoire Jaquotot, which were applied to snuffboxes at the discretion of King Louis XVIII. It is absolutely clear that the portrait is modelled on the portrait by Lavinia Fontana, which was therefore known and highly regarded at court, as were the other examples from the flourishing school of Fontainebleau at the time of Primaticcio (1504-1570). The hairstyle, the framing, the drapery, the jewellery, the veil over the breast, all elements plainly taken from the painting by Lavinia Fontana. Moreover, the links between this work by the painter and the French milieu of Fontainebleau were without a doubt mediated by the experience of her father Prospero Fontana, who had been in France in 1560, brought over precisely through Primaticcio. In that environment, several portraits were produced of women at their *toilette*, scantily clad, half-naked, etc... See, for example, *Woman at the Mirror*, in Dijon (fig. 31), also dated to the end of the 16th century, which has many typological similarities both with our portrait, in particular the casket from which the woman extracts her jewels displaying them to the viewer, and in the bare, partially veiled and bejewelled breasts, which on the other hand seem to relate to the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini as Venus with Cupid*. The arrival in France of Lavinia Fontana's painting must have generated a great deal of interest and, as we have seen, became a source of inspiration for the production of other portraits in its wake.

In conclusion, the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, the subject of this study, most likely dating to 1592 and created in close conjunction with the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid*, joins the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli* in Palazzo Pitti; to these three paint-

ings are joined the *Wedding portrait of Isabella Ruini* in Besançon, and finally the portrait in the classical style on the lid of the spinet with *Apollo and the Muses (Parnassus)*, forming a quintet of paintings linked to the figure of Isabella Ruini, who was in close contact with the painter and with the circle of Bolognese noblewomen who, at the end of the century, were passionately attracted to Lavinia Fontana's art.

This is therefore a remarkable rediscovery of an autograph work to be added to the vast catalogue of the artist's production, of high and refined artistic quality, highly original in its treatment of the subject, and of great iconographic value, which serves to document with absolute certainty the nature of the painter's relationships with the noblewomen of Bologna belonging to the cultural and aristocratic circle described above, shedding light on the relationships of esteem and mutual admiration that Lavinia Fontana forged throughout her career, both in her native city and in the papal city, when she moved there in 1603, remaining until her death in 1614.

[1] During cleaning, the painting was freed from the 18th- and 19th-century additions that weighed down the composition.
[2] On this type of portrait, see DAL POZZOLO 2019; on the iconological interpretations of Lavinia Fontana's mythological paintings, albeit with many inaccuracies, see DE GIROLAMI CHENEY, , 2020.
[3] MARANGONI 1911, pp. 212-216, in particular p. 214, fig. 3; CANTARO 1989, pp. 163-164.
[4] CHAPPELL 1981, pp. 59-64.The series included portraits of ladies, for the most part Florentine, but also Roman and Neapolitan, with links to the court of Ferdinando de' Medici; the original number in the series was around twenty-three, but in the inventory of the villa drawn up in 1609 upon Ferdinando's death, there were sixty-five. The paintings, examples of the common custom of portraying women famous for their beauty, were produced between 1599 and 1608. Generally, in the inventories, the series is described globally and it is not easy to follow the movements of individual paintings; the bulk of the group was moved to the Guardaroba in 1676, and then to the Uffizi Gallery, and from there to the villa at Poggio Imperiale, from whence they returned to the Uffizi towards the end of the 19th century; see also OLENGURG-CAVA2021, pp. 84-104.
[5] RAVAIOLI 1993, pp. 147, note 8.
[6] See Baccanelli's essay in this volume.
[7] See CANTARO 2021 (2023), pp. 74-75; DENUNZIO 2024, pp. 893-899; IDEM 2025, pp. 38-41, no. I. 3a-b.
[8] RUINI 1598.
[9] On Ulisse Aldrovandisi, see OLMI 1992; IDEM 1993. OLMI and PRODI 1986; OLMI and SIMONI 2018; OLMI and TONGIORGI TOMASI 2011; see also MASON 2023.
[10] MURPHY 2003, pp. 97–98; MANFREDI 1580, p. 226.
[11] See FANTI and CHIOSSI 1984, pp. 50-51, which provides a detailed account of the murder and its aftermath.
[12] The genealogical information is reported by FANTI and CHIOSSI , 1984, pp. 12-13.
[13] For information on the construction of the Ruini palazzo, see FANTI and CHIOSSI 1984, pp. 33-34; see also GUIDICINI 1869-1873, available on the Origine di Bologna website at:https://www.originebologna.com/strade/vasselli-via/n-742-4-palazzo-ruini-ranuzzi-bacciocchi/.
[14] CASANOVA 2017.
[15] FANTI and CHIOSSI 1984, p. 28; MURPHY 2003, p. 102.
[16] DOLFI 1670, p. 50.
[17] See Morselli's essay in this volume.
[18] DOLFI 1670, p. 45; PASQUALI ALIDOSI 1621, p. 152; CANETOLI 1791, reproduced in Palazzolo sull'Oglio, Edizioni Orsini De Marzo Ars Heraldica, 2006, *Famiglie Nobili, Angelelli no. 47*; *Famiglie Nobili, Ruini no. 869*; CROLLALANZA1886, pp. 44-45, Angelelli blazon: *D'azzurro al grifo rampante d'oro, con la bordura di rosso, caricata di 14 punte di penne di pavone al naturale*; IDEM 1888, p. 459, Ruini blazon: *D'azzurro allo scoglio al naturale, movente dalla punta, sormontato da una torre merlata di rosso, aperta e finestrata di nero, bandieruolata di rosso.*
[19] PASSEROTTI 2016, p. 12.
[20] Ms.Ambrosini 048, by an anonymous author, dating from the late 16th century, entitled *Versi in onore di alcune gentildonne bolognesi* (Verses in honour of some noblewomen of Bologna), a collection dedicated to Ludovica Campeggi consisting of 149 poems, each addressed to a noblewoman of Bologna, available at: https://digital.fondazionecarisbo.it/search?query=%22Ms.%20Ambrosini%20048%22&sort=. See the reference in MURPHY 2003, p. 207, note 46, and in TANZI 2021, pp. 165-180, in particular pp. 169-170.
[21] MARESCOTTI 1589, pp. 227-229,
[22] RAVAIOLI 1993 pp. 144-148. The Bolognese plaque was recently on display in the exhibition devoted to Bartolomeo Cesi in Bologna with a very extensive description by NEGRETTI 2025, pp. 166-167, no. I.3.
[23] MEDRI 1993, pp. 41-42, no. 33; VARESE 1975, p. 39, no. 23.
[24] ARMAND 1883, pp. 282-283; the engraving on the plaque is also reproduced by RAVAIOLI 1994, p. 146, note no. 13.
[25] TUMIDEI 2002, pp. 75–76, 222–223, no. 39.
[26] MURPHY 2003, p. 98.
[27] GHISELLI 1729, XX, 10–11, Ms. 770.
[28] GALLIANI *1589-1600*, 73, B3567; see reference in MURPHY 2003, p. 208, note 65.
[29] FANTI and CHIOSSI 1984, p, 35, p. 58 nota 125.
[30] Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna, Ms. A361, cc. 56r-60v, *Poesie diverse e trascritte da me Eligio Banzi*: "Giudizio del primato della bellezza fra le Signore Isabella Ruini e Margherita Anguiscoli, fatto in Bologna nell'Accademia de Gelati l'anno 1596" (Judgement passed on the primacy of beauty between Isabella Ruini and Margherita Anguiscoli, in Bologna, at the Accademia de Gelati in 1596), the reference and transcription given here is in FANTI and CHIOSSI 1984, pp. 35-36 and p. 58, note 125. A reference to the contest is also in MURPHY 2003, p. 103 and p. 208, note 66.
[31] RINALDI 1605, pp. 153-154; on the poems of Cesare Rinaldi, see RITROVATO 2005.
[32] MORSELLI 2024; MORSELLI and ISEPPI 2021, pp. 227-252; see also GARDI 2011, pp. 423-434.
[33] MAYLENDER and RAVA 1926, pp. 297-302; SIRK 1992, pp. 310-323.
[34] See the essay by RAVAIOLI 1996, pp. 117-139.
[35] PANCALDI 2010/2011, pp. 37-38; GUIDICINI 2011, pp. 49-68; on Cesare Baglione's frescos, see DANIELI 2011, pp. 17-19.
[36] In this portrait we see meticulously reproduced a number of rich jewels belonging to the two women depicted, described in a precious list from the period found by their descendant Giovanni GOZZADINI 1882, which also lists the jewellers who sold them.
[37] CANTARO 1989, pp. 170-173, 178-185; MURPHY 2003, pp. 85-106; the portrait of Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni was published by TANZI 2021, pp. 66-79, and acquired by the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 2022. The portrait of Virginia Malchiavelli in a private collection was attributed to Lavina Fontana in a private entry by the present author in 2016.
[38] GALLI 1940, pp. 110-114, document no. 4; CANTARO 1989, pp. 304-305, 5a.4.
[39] "*Donne bolognesi addottrinate, e altre, che hanno letto ne' Studi pubblici. Nel catalogo delle donne in lettere preclari si possono scrivere Dorotea Dolsi, Gerolama Castellani in poesia volgare del 1564 e Veronica Gambara del 1460, Lavinia Fontana del 1580 …*" MASINI 1666, p. 666.
[40] MALVASIA 1678, pp. 219-224; see also MORSELLI 2024, pp. 23-29.
[41] "*È poco tempo ch'io mi fei ritrarre, / A Lavinia Fontana, e'l mio ritratto, / Fu portato in Polonia ad abitare. / Non ho ciera di savio ne di matto, / Frà l'uno, e l'altro stòtempratamente, / Né con questo, o con quel faccio contratto. / Al ritrar che mi fè quell'Eccellente, / non pose in opra Minio, né Verzino, / Ma Fumo, e Terra d'ombra solamente*" CROCE 1608, pp. 20-21.
[42] "*La Lavinia Fontana dipinse il ritratto di Giulio Cesare Croce poeta piacevole bolognese. Dipinse ancora una tavolina per la cappellina domestica a Rigosa pare dipinta adesso col nome e l'anno 1575*" ORETTI, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio di Bologna, Ms. B124, second half of the 18th century, volume two, c. 18a bis.
[43] "*Tante altre che vi seguir Filosophia / E in Musica più rare oltre misura / Nella Scultura e nell'Astrologia / Ancora in Aritmetrica, e in Pittura / Trà quali a questa etade par che sia / Gran stupor delle genti e di natura / Lavinia Fontana alta Pittrice / unica al mondo come la Fenice.*
/ Pinge costei così mirabilmente / Che agguaglia Apollodoro, Zeusi et Apelle / Michel Angel tra gli altri sì eccellente / il Correggio Titian, e Raffaelle / E nel ritrar sì rara e diligente / che non ha pari o in quelle / Tal ch'or mai risuonar s'ode il suo nome / Per tutto dove il sol piega le Chiome." CROCE 1590, p. 13. I reserve the right to publish a more complete study of this portrait.
[44] ORETTI 1776, Ms. B109, Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio. The panel measures 66.5 x 94 cm and is now in the Galleria d'arte Fondantico di Tiziana Sassoli in Bologna, published by BENATI 2002.
[45] FORTUNATI 2006, pp. 33-34; FORTUNATI 2007, pp. 158-159.
[46] On the extraordinary figure of Tarquinia Molza, see CATELLI 2011.
[47] NEWCOMB 1980; see DURANTE and MARTELLOTTI 1979; CALCATERRA 2018; ZAMPERINI 2024, pp. 179-190.
[48] TANZI 2021, pp. 66-79.
[49] The list of baptisms with the relative godfathers and godmothers recorded by Giampaolo Zappi was first published by GALLI 1940, p. 114, CANTARO s1989, p. 305. The document is in the Biblioteca Comunale in Imola, Ms. 940, c. 5bv.
[50] The two portraits, one of which has been lost, are reproduced in CANTARO 1989, pp. 169-171.
[51] Published by POULTON 2023, p. 87, fig. 7. The attribution of this interesting drawing to the Bolognese painter is still being analysed by scholars.
[52] FANTI and CHIOSSI 1984, pp. 36-37.
[53] GARDI 2011, p. 428, note 15; RAVAIOLI 1996, p. 119, note 11; FANTI 1967, pp. 364-365.
[54] RAVAIOLI 1996, p. 122.
[55] The events are well reconstructed by CURTI 2007, pp. 25–26, note 66, pp. 16 and 17 for the family trees, pp. 19-27; see also BETTI 2019 (2018), pp. 183-186.
[56] PANCALDI 2007, p. 40.
[57] See CURTI 2007, pp. 25-26; 1996, p. 122, on p. 129 the family tree; BETTI 2019, p. 187, notes 22, 23.
[58] See the reconstruction of the issue in CURTI 2007, pp. 53-56; BETTI 2019, pp. 190-194.
[59] CANTARO 2019, pp. 220-225, no. 72; CURTI 2007, pp. 16 and 17; for the family trees, pp. 19-27.
[60] The inventory is in the Archivio di Stato in Bologna, Archivio notarile Gregorio Malisardi, prot. F, cc. 1r-2v, 24 July 1623, cited by RAVAIOLI 1996, p. 119, note 11, p. 120; also cited by CLERICI BAGOZZI 2012, pp. 104-105; transcribed by CAMMAROTA 2000, pp. 99-103; many references to this inventory and subsequent ones are also found in MORSELLI 1997.
[61] See CAMMAROTA 2000, pp. 108-115; CLERICI BAGOZZI 2012, p. 105, note 48.
[62] "*nella camera dove stava la francese*: *una donna di Casa Rouina*" , CAMMAROTA 2000, p. 126, no. 70.
[63] "*una tavola di pittura di Lavinia fontana che contiene l'Adorazione dei Maggi*", CAMMAROTA 2000, pp. 129-139.



Lavinia Fontana's exceptional skill: Isabella Ruini's apparel and jewellery[1]

Sara Baccanelli

Isabella Ruini's wardrobe

Isabella Ruini is depicted in half-length in an intimate setting, framed by a red curtain. To her left, close by, a lady is in attendance. At the centre of the scene is a casket that stands on a surface covered in red velvet from which the two women are taking, or perhaps putting away[2], jewellery, in a gesture suspended somewhere between preparation and ritual. Isabella's intense gaze, focuses directly on the viewer, and for a moment the action is arrested: it makes us witnesses to the intimacy of the gesture and, at the same time, compels us to decipher its meaning. The jewels, painted with diligence even when not worn, are not secondary accessories. In fact, they reappear in all the portraits in which Lavinia Fontana depicts the noblewoman, a common thread for us to follow in order to understand her status, her role, and her identity. The composition of the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* clearly brings to mind a nuptial scene, recalling similar representations of the dressing of the bride that stretch back to antiquity[3]. A key element in this interpretation is the presence of the casket, the jewellery that is lifted from it but not worn, and the presence of the attendant depicted in the action of withdrawing the jewels and displaying them to the noblewoman, before helping her to don them. Such an intertwining of objects and gestures refers, moreover, to codified wedding practices, in which the jewellery casket took on a specific ritual and social role. In the 12th century, in Florence, it was customary a few days after the betrothal of two young people for the fiancé to send his betrothed a small casket containing jewellery[4]. This tradition must also have been in use in Bologna in the 16th century, as can be inferred from the sumptuary laws in the proclamation of 27 May 1525, which state (following chapter four): "Item that in the bridal furnishings of brides, in terms of gold, silver or silk, as well as linen or wool, and in terms of apparel, chests or caskets and other similar items, no one, regardless of their dignity, rank or condition, may spend more than one third of the dowry that will be given or promised."[5]; and in the proclamation of 12 April 1568, "It is also forbidden to make or have chests made, coffers or caskets, small or large or medium-sized, covered with velvet,

or gilded or silver-plated, either on wood or on iron or copper, nor to give them to brides or to make use of them in any way"[6]. The great number of sumptuary laws promulgated throughout the Italian peninsula during the 16th century is indicative of the drastic changes that were taking place with regard to earlier periods, which worried legislators and, at the same time, it is also evidence of how little these laws were actually followed and enforced[7]. Whether or not they were actually respected, thanks to the two aforementioned proclamations, it can be said that even in Bologna it was customary for fiancés to send their betrothed caskets containing jewellery, the value of which, however, had to be proportionate to the dowry that the young bride brought with her. Cesare Vecellio himself, in *De li habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo* (On ancient and modern clothing in different parts of the world) at the end of the 16th century, reiterated how jewellery, in particular pearls and beads (*manili*), were received and worn by women following marriage agreements, and how these increased in number and value in the phases that followed the promise[8]. Isabella Ruini's wealth and the lineage of her family and that of her betrothed were considerable[9]. Evidence of this wealth are the jewellery and attire, all painted in exceptional detail; a practice that Lavinia Fontana would continue in later works.

The painting *Portrait of a Lady with Four Young Women (Dressing the Bride)*[10] of 1600-1605 in a private collection (fig. 32), although more crowded and public in character, unlike the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, which is more intimate and private, in fact shares the same disposition of the figures. In the centre of the composition sits the richly dressed noblewoman, while four young women stand by to assist her in her preparations. The ladies, moreover, wear gowns that are identical in style and colour, as if to emphasise their collective role. They wear an undergarment consisting of a close-fitting doublet (*giubbone*) in silver and gold tabby (*teletta*) adorned with gold braid (*galloni d'oro*) applied along the sleeves and the bodice, fastened at the front with densely placed buttons – of a golden hue – featuring a small tip , together with a skirt in a figured fabric in tonalities of green, also embellished with embroidered gold braid. The outer garment is a figured fabric on a red base featuring small gold bar and raceme motifs, embellished with embroidered or applied gold and silver braid, and is lined with what could be satin of a golden yellow hue. The overgown features a standing collar at the back of the neck, French style[11], which provides the perfect support for the ruff with its rich lace appliqués; hooked to the shoulder rolls (*baragoni)*, the decorative sleeves hang open, revealing those of the under-dress. The hair is gathered up, raised at the forehead and embellished with fresh flowers, and earrings hang from the earlobes. The four young women are all busy with the finishing touches to the dressing of the future bride: one of them retrieves a short pearl necklace that fastens with ribbons from the secretaire, another checks that the bride's hair is as it should be, a third hands her a variety

Fig. 32
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Lady with Four Young Women (Dressing the Bride),* 1600-1605, Private Collection.

of colourful flowers and one who, just as in the painting *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, presents her with a string of pearls. The pose of the young lady with the string of pearls is the same in both paintings. In the *Portrait of a Lady with Four Young Women (Dressing the Bride*) she holds up, between the thumb and forefinger of both hands, a long double-stranded pearl necklace, while in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting,* she holds a single stranded necklace. Furthermore, in the painting with the five women, the faithful little dog and a parrot perched on the armrest of the bride's chair are also present. These are elements – the dog, the parrot, together with the flowers, jewellery and even the fans – that appear in the portraits of noblewomen that Lavinia Fontana painted throughout her career, as well as in the four she painted of Isabella Ruini. The painter immortalises an austere aristocratic society, but one indifferent to established rules, and willing to be portrayed with all those objects that were as beloved as they were forbidden by the sumptuary laws and the precepts that Cardinal Paleotti himself imposed: "As for portraits of persons of rank and dignity, patrons should ensure that they are portrayed with the gravity and decorum befitting their status, and not with little dogs, flowers or fans in their hands, nor with birds, parrots or monkeys nearby, nor with unbecoming clothing"[12]. These were challenging years for the Italian peninsula, as they were for Europe as a whole. The printing press and the dis-

semination of ideas that it brought about had resulted in a drastic change in society at the beginning of the 16th century, allowing the circulation not only of books, but also of images and pamphlets of all kinds. One need only think of the Lutheran Reformation, which could not have taken place without the driving force of the press[13]. Printing - of which Venice was the most active centre -, and in particular the transition from incunabula to 16th-century books (the *Cinquecentine*), made it possible to reduce both production costs and the time required to disseminate knowledge, thus giving publishers the opportunity to experiment with genres that were new or that had previously been considered of secondary importance. It was in this context that pattern books of various kinds were printed and circulated; these ranged from lace to jewellery, to actual encyclopedias of fashion and costumes, such as those by Cesare Vecellio referred to above. From the 1560s onwards, attempts were made to systematically regulate this society that had changed so rapidly, and one of the means adopted for this purpose was the Council of Trent. Contrary to the commonly held view, the Council and the rules it promulgated did not regulate society but were part of a European context characterised by religious conflicts, increased literacy, the birth of new religious and social orders, the circulation of fashions and new models of consumption that coexisted alongside censorship[14]. Lavinia Fontana and the subjects of her paintings, such as Isabella Ruini, are of their time and fully representative of its spirit. Citizen of the second city of the Papal States, also the birthplace of Cardinal Paleotti, Lavinia Fontana depicts Isabella Ruini with the attire, jewellery and attributes that do not comply with the official dictates of the time in Bologna, but refer to a fashion that was not dissimilar to that of Venice. In fact, unlike *Portrait of a Lady with Four Young Women (Dressing the Bride),* a work of a public and solemn nature given the poses of the women depicted, and the cut of their gowns, the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* depicts a more intimate and private scene. The half-length composition contributes to bringing the viewer closer, and making the exchange between Isabella Ruini and her attendant more confidential. The attire worn by Isabella Ruini, although extremely rich and precious, differs from that worn by the noblewomen portrayed by Lavinia Fontana in the rest of her portraiture, and also from what she wears in the official portrait, also by Fontana, in Florence. What is most striking in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, as well as in the small *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini* in Besançon, is the cut of the neckline of the dress she wears, which leaves her shoulders bare, clearly visible as they are only covered by a veil.

This choice appears all the more significant when viewed against the backdrop of the transformations in European fashion in the second half of the 16th century, increasingly oriented towards styles of greater sobriety. Already in the 1540s, the fashion of deeply Catholic Spain, with its rigid and artificial lines, was gaining ground in Europe, resulting in the elimination

in women's clothing of all types of neckline, and the wearing of rich ruffs or high-necked, gowns, a style that would become prevalent among the upper echelons of the society of the Italian peninsula from the 1560s onwards. However, this fashion met with resistance in Florence and, above all, in Venice[15]. In the latter, ruffs were banned by the city's sumptuary laws which, although in general little observed here as elsewhere, were in this instance followed to the letter, probably, as Doretta Davanzo Poli points out, because of evident feelings of animosity against the Spanish nation[16] and the stringent rules that were spreading from the Papal States through the Council of Trent. Isabella Ruini, in a Bologna that was Papal but geographically not distant from the influence of Venice[17], looks to that city; and in the late 1580s, in the two portraits that are of a more private nature - the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* and the *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini* in Besançon - she is depicted wearing a gown the cut of which recalls the customs of the Serenissima.

In the portrait *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, the sitter wears what appears to be silk satin gown of a hue known as *leonato*[18], that is of a golden yellow colour[19], with a bateau neckline from shoulder to shoulder, embellished with an unusual and refined scalloped trim of triangles and rectangles that runs along the entire border of the neckline, passing over the narrow straps that rest just beneath the shoulder. Along the contour line of the upper part of the bodice, including the straps, and over the chest, we see silver thread embroidery with the addition of beads, probably executed on strips of fabric which were applied subsequently, as can be inferred in the attachment of the right strap to the bodice. The painter has faithfully reproduced the border of the band of embroidered fabric which, where applied to the upper part of the bodice, has been sewn and attached to the shoulder strap, thus overlapping on the bias the embroidery present beneath it. The foreground composition chosen by Lavinia Fontana does not allow us to see whether the waistline of Isabella Ruini's dress is shaped down to a 'V' point, but the disposition of the embroidery on the bodice, which form two isosceles triangles, leads us to believe that this is indeed the case. To better understand this hypothesis, it is useful to recall the evolution of the waistline in 16th-century fashion. At the beginning of the 16th century, the waistline of gowns was placed very high, but in the following decades it began to be placed lower and, from the 1540s onwards, it passed its the natural position, extending further downwards. In this way, the lowering of the waistline, resulted in a more tapering silhouette, and, because of the more fitted cut, increasingly compressed the breasts, also because of the stiffening (*infustitura*) present in the bodice[20]. With the point at the waist becoming more pronounced[21], the decorative bands of the bodice, with the exception of the neckline and lower border, were arranged vertically from the centre of the neckline to the lower hem, increasing the appearance of slenderness[22]. The point of the bodice is then given further prominence by the two lateral bands, which no longer run vertically down the hips but converge towards the tip of the bodice, as in the *sottana* with sleeves

in the Museo di Palazzo Reale in Pisa, which dates from around 1560 (fig. 33). This decorative solution is often also found repeated on the back of the bodice. As the fastening of Ruini's dress is not visible, we can assume that, as was customary at the time, there were two openings on the back of the dress that could be closed with laces[23]. We have visual evidence of this in contemporary paintings, such as in *Portrait of the family of Alfonso I Gonzaga, Conte di Novellara, and his wife Vittoria* of 1581 by Pietro Fachetti[24], in Rome in Palazzo Colonna (fig. 34). In this work, Isabella III, the little girl in the foreground with her back to the viewer because she is facing the table, clearly displays the back of her dress, the bodice of which is embellished with decorative bands with lacing running parallel to the outer borders. The opening at the back, or the side, is indicative of elegance in dress, as it requires the presence of someone to help in putting it on, unlike bodices that opened at the front, thus preventing any allusion, both practical and conceptual, to the physical functions of women, such as breastfeeding[25].

Fig. 33
Sottana with sleeves, c. 1560, Pisa, Museo di Palazzo Reale.

In the proclamation of 29-30 April 1559 of the Bolognese sumptuary laws, embroidery and embroidered trims, both woven on the loom and those executed with the needle[26], were completely banned, and the same prohibition was expressed and further tightened in the proclamation of 4 March 1561[27], and maintained as such in subsequent proclamations issued in 1568, 1570, 1572, 1575, 1582 and 1596[28].

In the history of costume, sleeves are an important decorative element because they can be removed and changed, and they fall into the category of the trimmings (*fornimenti*) of a garment that could be decorated by means of slashes, embroidery or *appliqués* (*impressioni*)[29], all of which often fell foul of the sumptuary laws[30]. In Bologna, in the city's sumptuary laws of the 16th century, references to possible interventions relating to sleeves appear only in the proclamation of 27 May 1525, in which, in chapter seven, the wives or daughters of knights, counts, doctors and gentlemen are allowed to wear "sleeves as they please" ("*maniche come alloro piace*")[31] provided they are not lined with brocade[32]. In subsequent laws, that is from 1545 onwards, no further reference is made to sleeves. In the 1540s, these were long enough "on occasion" to cover the hand, becoming more close-fitting over time. The sleeves, visible in the absence of over-gowns, were characterised by horizontal and then vertical arrangements of braids (*galloni*), trimmings (*passamanerie*), slashes and embroidery. From the 1560s onwards, in keeping with the use of lighter fabrics, the decorations became smaller and arranged in bands[33]. In the painting *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* the sleeves that Isabella Ruini wears, over a chemise and attached to the bodice, are extremely refined and precious in their workmanship. Probably embroidered with rust- coloured silk thread, comparable in hue to that of the embroidery on a mid-16th-century women's chemise in the Museo del Tessuto in

Fig. 34
Pietro Fachetti, *Portrait of the family of Alfonso I Gonzaga, Conte di Novellara, and his wife Vittoria*, 1581, Rome, Palazzo Colonna.

Fig. 35
Women's chemise, mid-16th century, Prato, Museo del Tessuto.

Prato[34] (fig. 35). The sleeves feature work with the needle that appears very similar to that of tatting (*chiacchierino*) even though the technique is only firmly attested to from the 17th century onwards[35], and is executed following two different patterns repeated along the sleeve, connected by what appears to be a half-stitch (*mezzo nodo*) of tatting[36]. The application of needle lace on top of the chemise was already in use at the end of the 1570s, as can be seen in Giovan Battista Moroni's *Portrait of a Woman with a Fan*, 1576-1579, in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam[37] (fig. 36), in which the young woman wears a chemise embellished with gold braid (*galloni dorati*), the sleeves of which are covered with delicate needle lace, probably of black silk, consisting of a decorative motif similar to one of the two patterns on Isabella Ruini's sleeve. (fig. 37). In Lavinia Fontana's *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family*, dated 1584[38], needle work, probably in black silk, can be clearly seen, not applied specifically to the sleeves, but used to embellish the entire dress, as if it were an overgown worn over the dress itself (figs. 38, 39). The exceptional detail of the over-garment worn by the Gozzadini sisters are portrayed is not *punto in aria* (openwork lace)[39], but is a *burato* , that is fine work with the needle onto a previously woven mesh as a base[40], decorated with vases containing flowers alternating with crowns very similar in design to the engravings in Alessandro Paganino's 1532 volume "Burato", to which points (*punte*) probably of bobbin lace, have been applied to the shoulders and as an edging to the en-

Fig. 36
Giovan Battista Moroni, *Portrait of a Woman with a Fan*, 1576-1579, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 37
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, 1592.

Fig. 38
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family*, 1584, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale

Fig. 39
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family*, 1584, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale

tire border of the gown. We know for certain that *burato* over-garments were worn in Bologna, thanks in part to the testimony of Cesare Vecellio who, in describing the *Bolognese woman of noble birth*, states: "They wear a silk *burato* cloak, or *ferandina* in the Lombard style."[41] Lavinia Fontana, with her customary precision and attention to detail, not only depicts the basic *burato* mesh but also, in the bodices of the two Gozzadini sisters, along the lines where the over-gowns are fastened, faithfully describes the black silk embroidered button fastenings that clearly reveal the white and red fabric of the underlying dress which, rightly, do not have the characteristic open mesh woven pattern of *burato*. On closer inspection, this system of fastening replicates the isosceles triangle shape of the bodice which emphasises the lowered fitted waistline characteristic of the period that is also present in Isabella Ruini's dress in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting.*

Going back to our portrait, it is clearly visible how the lace decoration is at the wrists and along the neckline is applied to the chemise. Lace, an ornament of similar value to jewellery, was applied and eventually unstitched from chemises which, worn in direct contact with the skin, were woven from plant fibres; the richer examples were sewn from the finest transparent linen fabrics[42]. The strip of lace applied to the neckline stops exactly in the centre of the chest, symmetrically to the space present between the two bands of embroidered fabric on the bodice. In this portrait of Isabella Ruini, it is difficult to categorise precisely what kind of lace was applied to the cuffs and neckline.

Fig. 40
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting,* 1592.

Fig. 41
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli,* 1593, Florence, Palazzo Pitti.

Fig. 42
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini,* 1586, Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie.

Because the lace of the bodice rests directly on the bare and extremely fair skin, this creates a tone-on-tone effect that makes it impossible to discern whether the lace is worked entirely as openwork *(punto in aria)* or in a cutwork technique (*punto tagliato*)[43]. The same difficulty is encountered with the lace on the right wrist, as it is depicted folded over onto the same thin, fine chemise, which optically creates a white base tone (fig. 40). The pattern of the lace on the left wrist reveals the tones of the tatting (*chiaccherino*) of the sleeve, but as only part of it is depicted, it is impossible to judge whether the other lace are examples cutwork technique or not. The situation is different in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini* in Florence, where the lace is positioned above the sleeve of a doublet fashioned from silver tabby (*teletta*)[44], which becomes its base, allowing us to clearly distinguish between the cutwork and the fillings (fig. 41). The same precision in the depiction of the difference between cutwork lace and the fillings is masterfully rendered by Lavinia Fontana in the small painting on copper in Besançon (fig. 42), in which it is possible to see that it is the same lace that Ruini wears as in the painting now in Florence.

Isabella Ruini's shoulders remain visible, albeit covered by the exquisite finely wrought and pleated gauze veils, most probably made of silk, enriched with gold thread and seemingly edged with gold thread adorned with what appear to be finely wrought needle-lace points (*punte*) rather than spangles (*tremolanti*) or sequins (*bisanti*) of gold. The quality of Bolognese silk gauze (*velo*) was renowned for its fineness throughout Europe as early as the 14th century, thanks to the mechanical silk mill and the throwing machines (the *filatoio* and *torcitoio*). These mechanised techniques had been imported to Bologna by silk workers from Lucca, who had emigrated there between 1231[45]and 1314[46], specialising in the production of *zendadi,* fabrics that were lightweight and transparent. While the first statute of the Arte della Seta (the Silk Guild) in Bologna was only drawn up in 1372[47], evidence of the slow development of this sector, at the end of the 16th century, however, more than a third of the population of Bologna was involved in this manufacturing industry[48]. The integration of the water wheel to the circular spinning frame, already in use in Lucca since the 13th century, had given rise to veritable silk mills, which spread rapidly in Bologna because of the presence of canals in the city, thus enabling an increase in production and a higher quality of twisted yarn, the *organzino*[49], which was the distinguishing feature of the gauze veil[50]. The strength and fineness of the yarns obtained in Bologna then allowed the weaving of veils, *zendadi*, *zendadini* and taffeta,[51] which could withstand subsequent treatments such as ruffling (*increspatura*). This was a costly operation - it required the presence of at least two people - during which the veils were boiled in water together with gall. Having been treated with gall, they were left to dry, then treated with gum, stretched on the weaver's beam and kept warm, and finally folded[52]. Furthermore, as Elisa Tosi Brandi reports[53], 16th-century sources show that Bolognese veils could be produced in a great variety of finishes ("*formighini, listini, quadretti, bastoncini, criveleti, toche*, *lame* with gold and silver")[54]. Ruini's veil in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* covers her shoulders and part of her neck, where, after rising, it is folded back down, thus bringing the gold thread of the edging to rest on her shoulders (fig. 43) . The same type of veil, pleated and transparent, rising towards the neck, can be seen in the *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini* on copper, in Besançon (fig. 44).

Another type of transparent veil embellishes the figure of Isabella Ruini as Venus in the portrait, again by Lavinia Fontana, *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid*,

Fig. 43
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting,* 1592.

Fig. 44
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini,* 1586, Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie.

now in Rouen. While on the veil in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* golden glints can be seen that do not clearly depict the gold threads in the fabric, in the Rouen painting, gold threads create a decorative pattern consisting of three stripes in gold alternating with one also of gold. The same rhythmic alternation of gold threads on a diaphanous veil is a stylistic hallmark of Lavinia Fontana's depictions of goddesses and mythological female figures; indeed, it is also to be found in the gossamer-thin veil that arrays Minerva[55], now in a private collection (fig. 45), in the veils that adorn Judith's clothing in *Judith with the Head of Holophernes* in the Davia Bargellini Museum in Bologna (fig. 46), and in the sheer cloth draped around the little cherub to the right in *Venus Receives Homage from Cupids*[56] in a private collection (fig. 47). In this latter small painting on copper, the nakedness of Venus is also covered, or perhaps more accurately uncovered, by a single transparent veil edged with gold. The increased preciosity of an item that is as sought-after as it is impractical is heightened in mythological representations.

Fig. 45
Lavinia Fontana, *Minerva*, 1604-1605, Private Collection.

Ruini's attire in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* is completed by a stole which, draped across her left shoulder, falls down her back before reappearing behind her arm. Probably of blue silk, the precious cloak is edged with seed pearls and adorned with a bow (*fiocco*) [57] that is also embellished with pearls and rests on Isabella Ruini's breast. A blue mantle also covers the shoulders of Isabella Ruini portrayed as Venus. In this case, however, the cloak is a diaphanous veil edged with gold, as precious as the gauze veil that covers and at the same time reveals the body of Isabella Ruini as Venus.

The lady-in-waiting depicted together with Isabella Ruini, who lifts up the long string of pearls, although she is not wearing any jewellery or earrings, is nevertheless richly attired. Like Isabella, she wears a dress which must be laced either on the sides or on the back. This is clear when one studies the precious red-tonalities of the bodice, on which silver stitching is present, probably in the decorative bands of the bodice that emphasise how the woman's breast is covered, and fastened centrally. The neckline is not edged with the triangular and rectangular decorations that embellish the bodice of Isabella Ruini's gown. As with the noblewoman, we can see that her attendant also wears a chemise decorated with additional lace edging, the border of which peeks out above the red bodice.

Fig. 46
Lavinia Fontana, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, 1595-1600, Bologna, Musei Civici d'Arte Antica, Museo Davia Bargellini.

Fig. 47
Lavinia Fontana, *Venus Receiving Homage from Cupids*, Bologna, Private Collection.

This colour is echoed in the circular decorative motifs applied near the seams of the over-garment, on the right sleeve and along the shoulder. The over-garment, of a green shade, is lined with a light-coloured fabric similar to écru, that is the colour of raw silk that has been spun and woven but not dyed. Just like the ladies depicted in the *Portrait of a Lady with Four Young Women (Dressing the Bride),* the collar of the French-style over-gown is raised at the back of the neck and supports not a ruff but a very fine gauze collar, probably made of silk, embellished with points (*punte*) in needle lace.

Isabella Ruini's jewellery

The jewellery, together with her *coiffure* with the single curl of hair depicted in the middle of her forehead, constitute the common thread linking all the paintings by Lavinia Fontana in which she portrays Isabella Ruini. Hairstyles also followed the taste of the time and were also regulated by sumptuary laws. The interest shown in this sphere of women's fashion can be gaged not only from the books on fashion and dress cited above, but also in the volumes of an almost encyclopaedic nature such as Giovanni Guerra's *Varie Acconciature di teste usate da nobilissime dame in diverse*

città d'Italia (Various hairstyles worn by noble ladies in various cities of Italy)[58]. In the second half of the 16th century, Cesare Vecellio recorded an increased presence of curls in women's hairstyles throughout the Italian peninsula; these would be worn to frame the face, and would become increasingly pronounced culminating in the fashion for 'horned' hairstyles that was extremely popular in Venice[59], but also widespread in other regions of northern Italy, so much so that Cardinal Paleotti himself defined them as *conciature corniculate*[60]. Leaving aside the excesses of some of these hairstyles, from the 1570s and 1580s onwards, there was a pronounced trend towards displaying a 'peak' in the hairline in the middle of the forehead[61], which could be further emphasised with a jewel, a pendant pearl or a single curl[62]. That such a curl was also in vogue in Bologna, is attested by its presence in the Gozzadini sisters and the woman portrayed in *Woman with Dog* (fig. 49), and it is the hairstyle that distinguishes Isabella Ruini in all the portraits in which she is depicted. We believe that even in the small painting on copper in Besançon, *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini* (fig. 8), the curl on Isabella's forehead was originally present but was probably removed by an overly aggressive cleaning, which has left a light pink mark in the middle of her forehead, near her hairline.

Although Isabella Ruini is always depicted wearing rich clothing and abundant jewellery, it is to be noted that in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, the noblewoman is wearing fewer jewels than in the other paintings. One cannot fail to notice, however, that most of the jewellery consists of pearls and that some of these are present in all four portraits: *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini, Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid, Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli.* Throughout history and in ancient times, pearls, rare and precious, have taken on different meanings. Closely linked to Marian symbolism signifying virginal purity, dating back to medieval lapidaries and *The Physiologus*[63], particularly in the Renaissance, they became attributes associated with Venus. The association between Venus and the pearl did not in fact belong to Greek mythology, which limited itself to the link with the shell (the goddess's means of transport) and a clear allusion in its opening and closing to female genitalia[64]. The association of the pearl with the goddess began to spread in Roman times, as seen for instance in the depiction of Venus and Mars in the House of Venus and Mars in Pompei, now in the Museo Archeologico in Naples, and reached its peak in 16th-century Venetian painting, especially as a pendant on earrings[65], as exemplified for example by Titian's *Venus of Urbino*[66] or Paolo Veronese's *Venus and Mars*, and it was a fashion that spread among noblewomen of the time. However, the link between pearl necklaces and the woman betrothed, married or newly-wed became

Fig. 48
Comparison between the drop pearl earrings worn by Isabella Ruini in her drop pearl earrings "and head jewellery" four portraits

established in Bologna in the 1540s, when the wearing of pearls indicated the status of newly-wed women[67]. The provision of 25 June 1557 of the sumptuary laws prohibited the wearing of "pearls and jewels of any kind" ("*perle e gioie di sorte alcuna*")in the ears or anywhere else, except by married women for the two years following marriage[68]. The sumptuary ban on pearls is also to be found in the proclamation of 29-30 April 1559, again with an exception made for brides[69], a rule that was slightly modified in the proclamation of 4 March 1561, and then maintained in the proclamation of 12 April 1568[70], which in Bologna allowed brides and women already married to wear a string of pearls around their necks, provided that the length "did not exceed the hollow of the throat." ("*non passi la fontanella della gola*")[71]. This permission remained in the sumptuary laws of 1575 and 1582, to be revoked with the proclamation of 6 and 8 April 1596, "Furthermore, every kind of pearl is prohibited; they are to be removed entirely and completely, without any exception made"[72]. Despite the prohibitions, pearls were worn and displayed; to such an extent that, looking closely at Ruini's four portraits, it can be seen that the only constant and defining elements in all of these likenesses are the drop pearl earrings, immediately identifiable because of the more thickly worked gold, at the bottom of the hoop where the pearl is suspended, and the cluster of round pearls which, secured at the back of the neck, falls onto the helix of the ear, ending with a drop pearl at the height of the tragus (fig. 48). This appears to be the only jewellery head-piece with which Isabella Ruini has been depicted in known paintings by Lavinia Fontana. The other piece of head-jewellery (*gioiello da testa*) depicted in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, held by the noblewoman in her left hand, is the *aigrette* (hair-pin) with round and tear-drop pearls attached to golden stems branching out from a black enamelled lily-shaped base, a twin of which can be seen inside the casket.

Fig. 49
Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Woman with a Dog,* c. 1590, Auckland, Mackelvie Trust Collection.

Jewellery similar to the cluster of pearls worn by Isabella Ruini and displayed in the same position but of different workmanship, can be seen in other works by Lavinia Fontana, such as the *Portrait of Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni* (fig. 2) of 1590, Washington, National Gallery of Art the *Portrait of a Woman with Dog* (fig. 49) of around 1590, in Auckland, and

Fig. 50

Detail, Ginevra Gozzadini, in, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family,* 1584, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

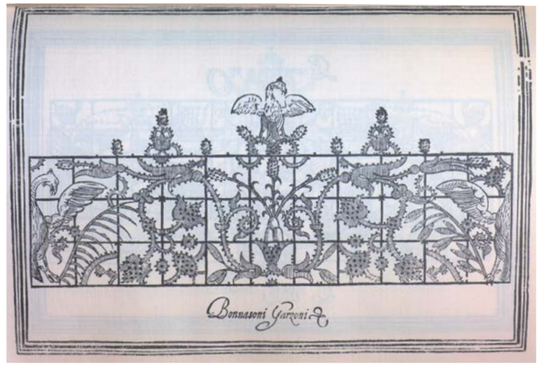
Detail, Laudomia Gozzadini, in, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family,* 1584, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni,* 1590, Private Collection.

Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Woman with a Dog,* c. 1590, Auckland, Mackelvie Trust Collection.

worn by Ginevra as well as Laudomia Gozzadini in the *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family* of 1584, in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna (Fig, 39).

Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni's jewel features a rose made of small pearls and a teasel (*garzo*), adorned with small green leaves[73]– probably glass beads – and small pearls, that falls to the earlobe, and is also visible over her left ear . As Marco Tanzi points out, this motif recalls the name of the woman depicted as well as her husband's family crest, and is also repeated in the pattern of the lace dedicated to her in Aurelio Passerotti's *Il libro di Lavorieri*[74](fig. 51) . In the Auckland portrait *Woman with Dog*, the sitter also wears paired pieces of jewellery, one above each ear; in this case it is made up of several ensembles of small pearls as if little white flowers, together with large leaves and loose individual pearls. The Gozzadini sisters are wearing the same piece of jewellery consisting of white flowers made up of seed pearls, bordered with small decorative gold elements, probably gold sequins (*tremolanti*) or bezants (*bisanti*) (fig. 50). The two pieces of jewellery are identical except for the addition of three red flowers in Ginevra's adornment. The jewellery in fact, for the sisters also, consists in a jewelled headpiece rather than earrings; the flowers, which terminate in front of the ears, sweep across the head and finish behind the back of the neck, where they are most likely secured to the transparent veil enriched with gold threads that falls over their shoulders. As with Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni, we believe that the Gozzadini sisters' jewelled head-pieces may be wedding jewellery linked to their two husbands, Annibale and Camillo Gozzadini. However, as Ginevra and Laudomia's husbands were first cousins of the two sisters on their father's side, even after their marriage, the sisters' surname remained Gozzadini, whose coat of arms, as also reported by Aurelio Passerotti in *Il libro di Lavorieri,* is composed of lilies and bezants (Fig 52), elements present in the head-pieces of the two. Isabella Ruini's head-piece consists of a cluster of pearls alone and, in all four portraits, it is impossible to establish from the



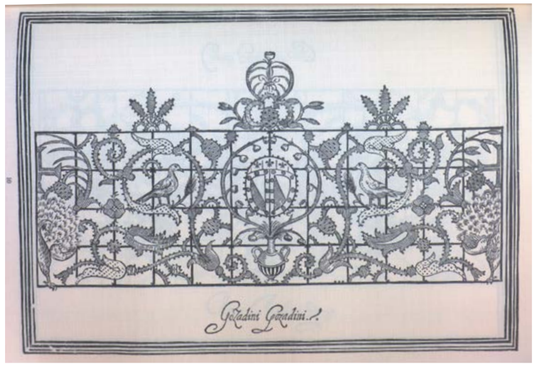


Fig. 51
Aurelio Passerotti, *Bonasoni Garzoni Coat of Arms*, in *Libro di Lavorieri*, 1591.

Fig. 52
Aurelio Passerotti, *Gozadini Gozadini Coat of Arms*, in, *Libro di Lavorieri*, 1591.

paintings whether she wears a matching piece over her left ear. However, what it is possible to establish, looking at the official portrait in Florence, is that the piece of jewellery, along with the pearls, would have swept up the back of the neck and, to all intents and purposes, was a head-piece, so much so that in the *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini* (fig. 8) in Besançon, we can see that the head veil worn by Isabella Ruini was attached to it, in the same way as in the portraits of the Gozzadini sisters. This head-piece, together with the pearl earrings, is the only constant element, reproduced with extreme precision, in all four portraits of Isabella Ruini. Based on the observations made above, we believe it is reasonable to propose that it was, to all intents and purposes, a bridal jewel, in all likelihood a gift from her husband Giovanni Angelelli. A similar piece of jewellery, albeit with differences in workmanship and the number of pearls, is also worn by Judith in *Judith with the Head of Holophernes* in the Museo Davia Bargellini in Bologna.

Another constant element in the portraits of Isabella Ruini is the inclusion of two distinct strands of pearls, one shorter and one longer. In the Besançon portrait, Ruini wears both necklaces, composed of pearls interspersed with smaller beads, and in addition, in the longer necklace, a small perfume holder attached to the string of pearls with a silver ribbon tied in a bow. In the official portrait in Florence and the *Venus* in Rouen, on the other hand, we see Isabella Ruini wearing the shorter of the two necklaces around her neck, composed of pearls and beads, while the long strand is wrapped several times around her arm, the right arm in the Florentine painting and the left arm in the French painting, thus becoming an apparently improvised, but extremely elegant bracelet.

Finally, in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, she is painted wearing the inevitable short string of pearls around her neck, in this case without interstitial beads between the pearls, and the long string of pearls not as yet worn but displayed, as observed above, by the lady in attendance, as was customary in wedding paintings. In this painting, Isabella Ruini is portrayed not wearing a single bracelet, which is interesting considering not only that they were generally worn, but also that she herself wears bracelets in her other portraits. She wears the pearl necklace wound around her arm in the paintings in Florence and Rouen and, in the latter, also a sumptuous bracelet on her upper arm (*bracciale da òmero*) that matches the belt across her chest. In the small painting on copper *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini* in Besançon, on the other hand, Lavinia Fontana has reproduced in meticulous detail, with small touches of a fine brush, two twin gold bracelets with black glass beads, typical nuptial ornaments[75] and very much in fashion from the second half of the 16th century[76]. This kind of jewellery can be seen worn by Laudomia on both wrists in the *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family*, as also in the *Portrait of a Woman* by Gian Paolo Lolmo of c. 1588-1590, in the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo[77]; in the latter example, the bracelets match the two necklaces, also made of black glass beads, worn by the same noblewoman (fig. 54). These are similar, albeit more sumptuous, to the two-strand necklace worn by the *Woman with Dog* in Auckland painted by Lavinia Fontana. Examples of these necklaces, which were very popular in the 16th century, have survived, such as the one in the Museo Civico Archeologico in Bergamo, found in tomb 94 during the campaign of excavations carried out in the 2000s in the hall of the former church of Sant'Agostino, now the main hall of the University of Bergamo[78] (fig. 53). This necklace, most probably of Venetian manufacture[79], bears a very strong resemblance to those depicted in such detail by Fontana and Lolmo.

The ring worn on the ring finger of Ruini's right hand in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* is the same as the one she is wearing on her right index finger in the Florence portrait. It is a ruby ring with a serrated bezel setting. It was common practice[80] to give brides ruby rings as gifts, and ruby rings can be seen worn on the right ring finger of the lady in the *Portrait of a Lady with Four Young Women (Dressing the Bride),* in the lady in the *Portrait of a Lady* in Auckland, in the lady in *Portrait of a Woman* by Gian Paolo Lolmo, and on the right little fingers of Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni and Ginevra Gozzadini, as well as on the right thumb of Laudomia Gozzadini. The three rings depicted in the official portrait of Isabella Ruini in Florence, with ruby, diamond and emerald respectively, were studied by Silvia Malaguzzi[81], who pointed out that not only are the three gemstones explicit references to the theological virtues of Charity, Faith and Hope, but that the position of the three rings may have deeper meanings. The ruby is in fact placed closer to the dog's muzzle and emphasises the fidelity and conjugal love of which the two, the ring and the little dog, are symbols[82]. In this regard, it can be noted that in the Besançon portrait, Isabella Ruini wears the ruby ring on her right hand in the same position as in the Florence painting; her right hand, however, is occupied with holding the luxurious fan away from the little dog, which, supported by her left arm, wears a red collar of the same shade as the ruby worn on her index finger. A small

Fig. 53
Glass necklace, late
16th century, Bergamo,
Museo Civico Archeologico.

dog of the same breed is present in the official portrait of Isabella Ruini of 1593, embellished here with a rich earring on its left ear composed of a silver buckle and three hanging pearls, the two outer ones round, and the central pearl tear-drop shaped. The symbolism of fidelity is inherent in the depiction of the dog, often represented in jewellery from the second half of the 16th century and linked to betrothal or the promise of marriage[83]. Among the works we have already seen, it can be found in the pendant worn by Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni in the painting signed by Lavinia Fontana[84], as well as in the one worn by the young woman in *Portrait of a Woman with a Fan* by Giovan Battista Moroni[85] the structure of which is very close to that of the jewel worn by Vittoria di Capua in the *Portrait of the family of Alfonso I Gonzaga, Conte di Novellara, and his wife Vittoria* of 1581, painted by Pietro Fachetti. Going back to the painting in Florence, the second and third rings have the same serrated bezel setting as the ruby jewel and display a diamond and an emerald respectively (fig. 56). According to Malaguzzi's interpretation, the diamond in the centre symbolises marriage and is the focal point of the entire portrait[86], while the emerald facing downwards and placed just above Isabella Ruini's belly refers to the chaste fertility of the gemstone of Venus[87]. Some of the finest emeralds came from the island of Cyprus, the island of Venus, a connection between the gemstone and the goddess that was emphasised by Pliny the Elder, then taken up by Marsilio Ficino and survived throughout the Renaissance[88]. It is interesting to note that the three different stones set in rings, although with different workmanship and worn on different fingers of both hands, are also depicted by Moroni in his *Portrait of a Woman with a Fan* (fig. 55).

Fig. 54
Gian Paolo Lolmo, *Portrait of a Woman*, c. 1588-1590,
Bergamo, Accademia Carrara.

Fig. 55
Detail, Giovan Battista Moroni, *Portrait of a Woman with a Fan*, 1576-1579, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 56
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli*, 1593, Florence, Palazzo Pitti.

The last and most opulent and elaborate piece of jewellery in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting* is the precious necklace, a section of which lies on the table whilst the remainder is still in the casket. Depicted with light touches of the brush by Lavinia Fontana, we can infer that it is an extremely important necklace composed of a series of broad *compassi*, (that is highly worked gold mountings)[89], with a raised setting in their centres. The painter has skilfully depicted and in great detail, compared to the rest of the necklace, the first of the gold mountings resting on the table, closest to the viewer, which allows one to intuit the composition of the necklace as a whole (fig. 56). Observing this single setting (the *compasso*), clearly visible is the tear-drop pearl attached to the lower end of the spiral links; just above it, set in the border of the *compasso*, is a red stone, a ruby, while in the centre of the setting we see a tall truncated pyramidal setting,

Fig. 57
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, 1592.

Fig. 58
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli*, 1593, Florence, Palazzo Pitti.

Fig. 59
Ring, German manufacture, last quarter of the 16th century, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello

Fig. 60
Matthias Zündt, Designs for four pendants, 1550-1560.

with a square base and sharp edges, in which is held what appears to be a diamond.

The base of the setting has a serrated edge and the four sides of the truncated pyramid are decorated with as many lobed arches, two per side, in black enamel. The meticulous rendering with which Lavinia Fontana has painted this single 'unit', has allowed us to establish that the necklace (*collare*) depicted here is the same as the one as worn by Isabella Ruini in the painting in Florence (fig. 58).Two links and settings (*compassi*) alternate in the necklace (*collare*), – a larger one with a diamond set in the centre, with two smaller rubies top and bottom, and a tear-drop pearl pendant while the smaller link, has a pearl in the centre and a ruby pendant at the bottom. The base of the settings of the larger links which hold the diamonds, is serrated in exactly the same way as that of Isabella Ruini's rings, but above all it is the decoration of the eight lobes on the raised sides of the settings that are a precise indication of the period and manufacture. Similar settings are found in jewellery depicted in other works discussed above, such as the necklace in the *Portrait of a Woman* by Gian Paolo Lolmo, in the rings worn by the young bride in the portrait *Double Portrait, the Bergamo newlyweds*, also by Lolmo, the diamond worn on the little finger of the right hand of Ulisse Gozzadini, the one on the left index finger of Ginevra Gozzadini, and the ruby on the right thumb of his sister Laudomia in the *Portrait of the Gozzadini family.* In the Gozzadini family memoir, as Yvonne Hackenbroch observed[90] (and also cited by Babette Bohn)[91], reference is made to Girolamo Allè and Pauolo Emilio Allè whose surnames could mean "German" (*allemagno*), that is referring to their German origin. This type of setting is present in two rings in the Museo Bargello in Florence (fig. 59), probably of German manufacture and dating from the last quarter of the 16th century[92]. While the two-lobed setting is typical of German craftsmanship, it is worth noting that it spread rapidly throughout Europe thanks to the onset and diffusion of printed jewellery pattern books[93] (fig. 60), and met with such success that it was also reproduced in other parts of Europe[94]. The same design with a multi-lobed setting is visible in the belt and armlet worn by *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid* in Rouen. This kind of upper arm bracelet

Fig. 61
Detail, Lavinia Fontana, *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini*, 1586, Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie.

Fig. 62
Fan, page of openwork parchment, 16th century, Burano, Museo del Merletto.

or armlet is documented in Hellenistic-Roman sculpture and reused and brought up to date by Titian in the bracelet (*maniglia*) worn on the wrist by the reclining Venus[95]. The armlet on the upper arm, like the belt that passes halfway down the torso, is also present in the *Galatea* painted on copper in a private collection[96], in the aforementioned *Venus with Cupids*, and in the depiction of *Venus*, also by Lavinia Fontana, now in a private collection in Venice (fig. 12), the composition of which, as Enrico Maria Dal Pozzolo points out, may have been taken from the *Standing Venus with Cupid in the Stories of Proserpina* in Fontainebleau, which the painter probably knew through her father[97], but also from Orazio Samacchini in the painting now in a private collection in Zagreb, a motif later taken up by Guido Reni in the work now in Toledo, Ohio[98]. This motif must have been well known and particularly popular in the Emilia region thanks to the drawings of Francesco Mazzola, known as Parmigianino, such as the red chalk drawing of *Venus Disarming Love*, in Parma, on which the aforementioned paintings are based[99]. Thus, even in her depiction of Isabella Ruini as Venus, Lavinia Fontana draws on the figurative culture of the Venetian tradition, distinguishing it with elements characteristic of her own era which would have been familiar to Isabella Ruini. Proof of this are the curl she wears on her forehead, the jewellery and the clothes she wears, together with the objects held in her hands in all the likenesses painted by Lavinia Fontana: the *aigrette* and necklace (*collare*) presented to her by her husband in *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, the arrow in *Isabella Ruini Angelelli as Venus with Cupid*, the small dog in the *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli* in Florence, and the small dog together with the fan in the small painting on copper *Wedding Portrait of Isabella Ruini* (fig. 8) in Besançon.

In the latter, the fan, probably of Venetian manufacture (fig. 61), bears a close resemblance to the openwork parchment fan (*ventola*) in the Museo del Merletto in Burano, in which the decorative patterns typical of lace work are reproduced (fig. 62). A practical item, during the 16th century the rigid fan became an object to be displayed and was made out of precious materials, such as parchment and lace, with refined handles in equally precious materials, such as ivory and tortoiseshell, often embellished with gemstones[100]. It became such a sought-after and precious object that, even on a figurative level, it began to be a distinctive element in representations of Venus, as in the case of Paolo Veronese's *Venus and Adonis* of 1580, now in the Prado Museum[101] (fig. 63). At the same time, fans were also produced and met with great success in the form of decorated paper, which, like the more luxurious parchment, was glued onto a rigid support attached to a long stick to be employed and displayed[102]. Paper fans, in the same way as sacred images and playing cards, were sold at low prices by small printers in public squares, and were purchased by people from different social backgrounds[103]. Of particular interest is the

Fig. 63
Paolo Veronese, *Venus and Adonis*, 1580, Madrid, Museo del Prado.

Printed sheet for a rigid fan (*Foglio per ventola*) in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna, featuring a romantic rebus created by Giulio Cesare Croce[104] (fig. 64). In their contributions to this volume, Maria Teresa Cantaro and Raffaella Morselli have discussed Croce, the leading role he played in Bologna, his intellectual activity, and his frequent contact with Lavinia Fontana[105]. What it is important once again to emphasise in this instance, is how Bologna, in those years, was characterised by continuous exchanges and influences that passed from intellectuals, writers and painters to the nobility and aristocracy and even to the common people, also through everyday objects such as fans. Returning to Isabella Ruini, portrayed in the small painting on copper now in Besançon, the fan she is holding, as observed above, is Venetian in style, as are the cut and neckline of her dress. A portrait that seems to resonate in the small painting on copper in Besançon is Titian's *Portrait of a Lady in White* of 1561, now in the Staatliche Gemäldegalerie in Dresden[106] (fig. 67). Possibly depicting Lavinia, the painter's daughter, dressed as a bride[107] with bridal jewellery consisting of a ruby ring worn on her left ring finger, two matching bracelets, a pearl necklace and earrings[108]; the painting was sent by Titian to Alfonso II d'Este in 1561 and remained in the Este collections, before being moved to Modena following the devolution of Ferrara to the Papal States, until the sale of the collections of Duke Francesco II d'Este in 1745-1746.

Fig. 64
Giulio Cesare Croce, *Page for fan*, second half of the 17th century, Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio.

Fig. 65
Cesare Vecellio, *Bride of Padua*, in *Degli habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo*, 1590.

Fig. 66
Cesare Vecellio, *Brides in Sensa*, in *Degli habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo*, 1590.

According to Cesare Vecellio in *Degli habiti antichi, et moderni*, the fan was part of the wardrobe of brides in Padua, Friuli and "other nearby places" ("*altri luoghi vicini*")[109] (fig. 65), but above all of Venetian brides who married around the feast of the Ascension, that is the Festa della Sensa, characterised by the Marriage of the Sea (fig. 66) .

"During these days, we see the display of riches with the largest pearls and other precious jewels, adorning their ears, braids, necks and breasts, refulgent with gold and gems down to the partlets on their shoulders, adorned with the richest trimmings in use among them: so that they are almost a marvel to themselves, contemplated by others, to whom they are a portrait of what nature and art can display of beauty and delight to the eyes of others. Thus they walk through the Sensa, making their sweet scents felt, no less than the sight of the magnificent display of their beauty. They wear white satin dresses, but their bodices and sleeves are uncovered, with all the hems and edges enriched with gold, and gold chains with elaborate workmanship crossed over and interspersed with jewels. [...] The rest of the over-garments are made of black silk from the bodice bust down, some embroidered, some simple with a train, as can be seen: and in their hands they carry a fan woven of gold and silk, with a beautiful design and a silver handle"[110].

Fig. 67
Titian, *Portrait of a Lady in White*, 1561, Dresden, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie.

Vecellio's detailed description highlights important elements for Venetian brides of the time, which can also be found in the small Besançon painting. The large quantity of pearls, the use of rich perfumes, the sumptuous fan woven with gold with a silver handle held in the hand, the white satin dresses with bodices laid bare and sleeves finished with edgings, and finally, the attention paid to the lower part of the dress, characterised by its black colour. Isabella Ruini presents these elements, in addition to those already described above. The fan she holds in her right hand is not only decorated with a geometric pattern reminiscent of the fan in Burano, but is also depicted in shades of gold,

edged with openwork (*punte in aria*) in silver, attached to a silver handle. In addition to the ruby ring, the small dog and the pair of black glass bead bracelets, all symbols of marriage and references to fidelity, as we have seen, the sleeves of the dress are finished with cutwork lace trimmings. Between the bodice and the skirt, what appears to be a black belt, probably made of leather or fabric, falls to Isabella Ruini's feet, ending with a silver tip. Belts were usually decorative elements in themselves, featuring perfume bottles, precious gemstones or proved useful for attaching ermine or fans. In this case, not only does the belt have no decorative elements, but its black colour, unusual in itself, breaks the soft chromatic continuity that characterises both the undergarment and the white satin over-garment. This element can therefore be interpreted in the light of Cesare Vecellio's description which emphasises the chromatic contrast in bridal dresses between the upper part in white and the lower part in black.

Moreover, the presence of black in wedding dresses was common in Venice even for brides-to-be, who, as again Vecellio describes, had to wear a black silk veil to cover their faces but leave their chests uncovered, with the "bodice and sleeves coloured, mostly in white silk [...] girded with a jewelled gold belt down to the ground, and the rest of the dress black and long, down to the ground"[111]. On Isabella Ruini's breast, a precious perfume holder attached to the long pearl necklace is brought to the fore. Large pearls, writes Vecellio, adorn chest, neck, ears and head, all jewels worn by Isabella Ruini and which characterise her; in particular, the head-piece, to which the veil is attached, which ends with a cluster of pearls above her right ear. This jewel identifies Isabella Ruini, who is ready to become a bride and wed, as emphasised by the lilies of the valley, orange blossoms and red carnations in the vase on the table beside her.

Isabella marries wearing the jewels that distinguish her, the only ones she will never remove and with which she will always be depicted from then on by Lavinia Fontana. In *Portrait of Isabella Ruini Angelelli with her lady-in-waiting*, it matters little whether she is removing or putting away her jewels in the casket; the allusion to an important passage in married life remains, as do the earrings and the cluster of pearls that embellish her headdress.

[1] I would like to thank Raffaella Morselli for involving me in this project, and Maria Teresa Cantaro and Valentina Vico for welcoming me. Special thanks go to the staff of the Biblioteca del Centro Studi di Storia del Tessuto e del Profumo in Palazzo Mocenigo in Venice, and to the staff of the Biblioteca Fiamma Lanzara of the Accademia di Costume e Moda in Rome, for supporting me in my research.

[2] For this hypothesis, see the contribution by Raffaella Morselli in this volume.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] LURATI 2015, p. 17.

[5] «Item che in le mobilie nuptiali delle spose circa li panni così di oro, di argento o di seta, come di lino o dilana e circa li apparati, scrigni overo forcieri e altre simili cose, non si possa spendere dal canto delli suoi di qualunque dignitade, grado o conditione si siano più di quanto sia il terzo della dota che serà data o promessa.» With regard to sumptuary legislation, reference has been made to the critical edition of the sumptuary laws of Emilia-Romagna published by the Direzione Generale per gli archivi: MUZZARELLI 2002, p. 174.

[6] "Si prohibiscono ancora che non si possano fare né far fare casse, forcieri o coffani, piccoli o grandi o mezzani, coperti di veluto, o dorati, o argentati così sopra il legno come sopra ferro o rame, né quelli dare alle spose o usare in modo alcu-

no", *Ibid.*, p. 215.
[7] GORETTI 1996, pp. 117- 137.
[8] VECELLIO 1590, ed. 2016, p. 286.
[9] See the text by Maria Teresa Cantaro in this publication.
[10] RUIZ GÒMEZ 2020, pp. 184- 185. TANZI 2021, p. 174.
[11] ORSI LANDINI, NICCOLI 2005, pp. 95-97.
[12] "Iritratti di persone di grado e dignità,dovriano i patroni procurare che fossero espressi con la gravità e decoro che conviene alla condizione loro, e non con cagnoli, ò fiori, ò ventarole in mano, non con uceletti, ò pappagalli, ò bertuccie appresso, non con habiti poco lodevoli" Cited in: GHIRARDI 1990, p. 259.
[13] DE BUJANDA 1992, pp. 49-70.
[14] DE CAPRIO 1983, pp. 299- 362. INFELISE 2014.
[15] ORSI LANDINI, NICCOLI 2005, pp. 84-85. LEVI PISETZKY 1966, p. 18.
[16] DAVANZO POLI 2001, p. 69.
[17] GORETTI 1996, p.127
[18] A permitted colour, together with "white, *berrettino*, peacock blue and black", in the Bolognese proclamations of 6, 7 and 9 April 1575. MUZZARELLI 2002, p. 240.
[19] The same colour is used by Cesare Ripa to describe the virtue of Fortitude. Although the attribute of fortitude is a column, it seems appropriate to point out the similarity between a column and a tower, the heraldic symbol of the Ruini family, which is also clearly expressed in Passarotti's volume on lace "Fortitude, a woman armed and dressed in lion colour, which signifies fortitude, as it resembles that of the lion; this woman leans on a column, because of all the parts of the building, this is the strongest, supporting the others [...]" ("Fortezza, donna armata, e vestita di color lionato, il qual color significa fortezza, per essere somigliante a quello del leone; s'appoggia questa donna ad una colonna, perché delle parti dell'edifizio questa è la più forte, che l'altre sostiene […]" Citation taken from RIPA 2012, p. 203.
[20] ORSI LANDINI, NICCOLI 2005, p. 85.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[24] DESSÌ 2017, pp. 124-127. ORSI LANDINI 2024, p. 210.
[25] ORSI LANDINI, NICCOLI 2005, p. 85.
[26] "All embroidery and trimmings made on a loom or with a needle, in designs of any kind, are totally prohibited, both in clothing, trousers, doublets, blankets and furnishings for carriages and carts, and in general in everything else", MUZZARELLI 2002, p. 200.
[27] "All embroidery and trimmings made on a loom or with a needle in designs of any kind, i.e. figures, works, foliage and reverses, whether on clothing, capes, coats, breeches, doublets, blankets and furnishings for carriages, carts and horses, or generally on anything else for the clothing and adornment of men and women, are totally prohibited" *Ibid.*, p. 205.,
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 214, 220, 224, 239, 248, 260.
[29] WELCH 2000, pp. 101- 115.
[30] ORSI LANDINI, NICCOLI 2005, pp. 86, 87.
[31] MUZZARELLI 2002, pp. 175-176.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] ORSI LANDINI, NICCOLI 2005, pp. 86, 87.
[34] I would like to thank Professor Roberta Orsi Landini for suggesting this colour combination.
[35] SCHOENHOLZER NICHOLS 2007, pp. 18, 28.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[37] FACCHINETTI and GALANSINO 2023, p. 298.
[38] CANTARO 1989, pp. 117-120. MURPHY 2003, pp. 117-136; GRAZIANI 2006, pp. 210-212.
[39] MURPHY 2003, p. 110.
[40] LEVI PISETZKY 1966, p. 199.
[41] «Sopra portano un manto di buratto di seta, ò di ferandina all'usanza di Lombardia». C. VECELLIO 1590, ed. 2016, pp. 434- 435.
[42] ORSI LANDINI, NICCOLI 2005, p. 125. LEVI PISETZKY 1966, p. 76.
[43] MOTTOLA MOLFINO 1986, pp. 286- 288.
[44] O'REILLY 2023, p. 34.
[45] DINI 1993, p. 100.
[46] MOLÀ 1993, pp. 435-444.
[47] TOSI BRANDI 2014, p. 290. The scholar cites the following reference for this date: Bologna State Archives (ASBo), Capitano del popolo, Società di popolo, Arti, b. VI, Società dell'Arte della Seta, Statuti, n. 158, illuminated manuscript 14 (1372), no. 154, illuminated manuscript 21 (1380), no. 158, illuminated manuscript 29 (1398), no. 159, illuminated manuscript 34 (1410), no. 160, illuminated manuscript 59(1424-1589).
[48] PONI, 1990, pp. 93- 167.
[49] *Bologna città protoindustriale nei secoli XVI- XVIII*, Museo-laboratorio Aldini- Valeriani (ed.), "Scuolaofficina", 2, 1988, p. 20.
[50] TOSI BRANDI 2014, pp. 291-292.
[51] ORLANDI 2014, p. 311.
[52] GIUSBERTI 1989, pp. 116-118.
[53] TOSI BRANDI 2014, p. 304.
[54] In her contribution, the scholar reports: ASBo, Miscellanea delle Corporazioni d'Arti, II, 142, Arte della seta, provvisioni e partiti, 1577-1606, c. 74v. (announcement of 1589).
[55] BENATI 2002.
[56] BENATI 2002, p. 60.
[57] LORENZINI 2002, pp. 89-98.
[58] MAZZI 1900, pp. 229-233. ORSI LANDINI 2023, pp. 216-217.
[59] VECELLIO 1590, ed. 2016, pp. 295-296.
[60] GORETTI 1999, p. 62, pp. 73-90.
[61] BUTAZZI 2002, p. 48.
[62] ORSI LANDINI, NICCOLI 2005, p. 139.
[63] ZAMBON 1975, pp. 80-81.
[64] MALAGUZZI 2024, pp. 163- 164.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] GINZBURG 2023, pp. 135-155.
[67] MUZZARELLI, MOLÀ, RIELLO 2023, p. 60.
[68] MUZZARELLI 2002, p. 196.
[69] 'It is expressly forbidden to wear jewellery or pearls in any way, especially in the ears or in other head ornaments, nor necklaces, crowns, belts, handles or bracelets of gold or silver, whether hammered or spun, nor enamel or amber and musk paste or perfumes. Except for brides, who, two years after being with their husbands, are allowed to wear a string of pearls and two pendants," ("Si prohibisce espressamente di portar gioie né perle in modo alcuno et massime nelle orecchie né in altro ornamento del capo, né collane, corone, cinture, manigli o brazzaletti d'oro o d'argento battuto né filato, né di smalto né di pasta d'ambra et muschio o profumi. Eccettuando le spose, alle quali atiam per dui anni doppoche seranno state col marito sia lecito portare un vezzo di perle et dui pendenti") *Ibid.*, p. 200.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 216.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[72] "Si prohibisce ancora ogni sorte di perle, le quali si levano in tutto et per tutto senza alcuna riserva", *Ibid.*, p. 260.
[73] TANZI 2021, p. 166.
[74] PASSEROTTI 1591, p. 16.
[75] MALAGUZZI 2024, p. 167.
[76] PAGE 2004.
[77] I would like to thank Don Giovanni Gusmini for bringing this find to my attention, and Dr Maria Noris for suggesting the relevant bibliography.
[78] FORTUNATI, UBOLDI 2019, pp. 220-224.
[79] ZECCHIN 2010, pp. 121-125.
[80] LURATI 2015, p. 116.
[81] MALAGUZZI 2024, pp. 142-147.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
[83] VENTURELLI 1996, pp. 141-142.
[84] TANZI 2021, p. 165. Tanzi also rightly recalls the dog-shaped ring described in Gozzadini's ledger recording Gozzadini jewels, which was purchased, however, from Girolamo, a goldsmith from Milan, who is a different person from Girolamo Allè, the goldsmith referred to earlier in the same text. *Ibid.* GOZZADINI 1882/1883, pp. 2-3.
[85] FACCHINETTI, GALANSINO 2015, p. 298.
[86] MALAGUZZI 2024, p. 147.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 135- 136.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
[90] HACKENBROCH 1979, pp. 44- 46.
[91] BOHN 2023, p. 16, no. 36.
[92] SABBADINI SODI 2005, pp. 152-153. CONTU 2003, p. 156.
[93] VENTURELLI 2002, pp. 177-187.
[94] SABBADINI SODI 2005, p. 156.
[95] MALAGUZZI 2024, p. 165.
[96] BENATI 2009, pp. 115-121. Gozzi 2019, pp. 214-215.
[97] DAL POZZOLO 2019, p. 27.
[98] *Ibid.*
[99] We reserve the right to explore this topic in greater depth elsewhere.
[100] DAVANZO POLI 1990, p. 35.
[101] VERGARA 2021, pp. 126- 128.
[102] DENNIS 2006, pp. 240- 242.
[103] MORSELLI 2022, p. 50.
[104] LURATI 2015, pp. 34-35.
[105] See the contributions by Raffaella Morselli and Maria Teresa Cantaro in this volume.
[106] MAAZ, KOCH, DIEDEREN 2014, pp. 124-125.
[107] ZAMPERINI 2023, pp. 43-47.
[108] MALAGUZZI 2024, pp. 166-167.
[109] VECELLIO 2016, pp. 464-465.
[110] "In questi giorni si spieghino le ricchezze delle più grosse perle, e dell'altre più pretiose gioie, delle quali rendonoornate l'orecchie, le trecce, e'l collo, e'l petto, risplendendo d'oro, e di gemme fino a i baveri delle spalle, ornatede' più ricchi fregi, che fra loro sieno in uso: onde quasi maravigliose à se stesse, sono contemplate da gli altri,a' quali sono un ritratto di quanto può la natura, e l'arte mostrar di vago, e di dilettevole, à gli occhi altrui. Cosìcaminano per la Sensa, facendo sentire i grati odori, che portano addosso non meno che veder le pompe dellabellezza loro. Portano le vesti di raso bianco, ma scoperti i busti e le maniche con tutti gli orli, e estremitàarricchite d'oro, e centi d'oro con molta fattura intraversati, e tramezzati con gioie. […] Il resto delle vesti disopra è dal busto in giù nera di seta leggiera, chi à opera, chi semplice con lo strascico, come si vede: e in manoportano un ventaglio tessuto d'oro, e di seta, con bel disegno con il manico d'argento. "*Ibid.* pp. 291-293.
[111] «busto, e le maniche di colore, e per la maggior parte di seta bianca […] vanno cinte di centura d'oro gioiellata fino à terra, e tutto il resto della vesta è nero e lungo fino in terra». *Ibid.* pp. 291-293.

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