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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Love, Beauty, and Memory: An Examination of Fra Filippo Lippi's Double Portrait

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

Victoria I. Bonato

September 2022

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Love, Beauty, and Memory: An Examination of Fra Filippo Lippi's Double Portrait

by

Victoria I. Bonato

Master of Arts, Graduate Program in Art History
University of California, Riverside, September 2022
Dr. Jeanette Kohl, Chairperson

This thesis will examine Quattrocento Italian Renaissance portraiture, specifically looking into the image type of double portraits. It assumes Fra Filippo Lippi's *A Man and a Woman at a Casement* in the Metropolitan Museum, the first dual portrait, as its focal point. In this project, I seek to go beyond most scholarship on the subject by focusing on discussions of gender, costuming, and the bridal body and its embodiment of ideals and signs. The portrait itself is unique and enigmatic with an unusual asymmetry when it comes to its portrayal of gender: the man, seemingly peering in through a window towards the woman standing in the center, is considerably less prominent and smaller in scale than his female counter part. A closer examination of the vacuous gazes between sitters complicate things further, as they seem to narrowly miss one another despite their being in close proximity with one another. The lack of distinguishable features adds another level of ambiguity, as neither the man nor woman have any natural characteristics that point to any one individual. The painting's atypical composition and depiction of gender makes it unique among other double portraits of the time, which typically portray

couples in separate, yet equally proportioned profile images. When we re-examine Lippi’s 1440 portrait with these conventions in mind, we see an unusual set of representational choices. It is an examination into the how and why of these ambiguous choices that will form the basis of this thesis. I will be examining this portrait from a gendered perspective, wherein I argue that the female figure represents what the ideal Florentine elite woman should look like and her role in society. A close examination of the uncommon format, iconography, and mirroring between the male and female portraits raises an array of interesting questions about the social lives of Quattrocento couples, idealization vs. realism, early modern standards of representation—specifically how images such as Lippi’s use them, or depart from them—interior vs. exterior, and gendered spaces.

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Introduction: From Obscurity to Fame, Lippi's Portrait Rediscovered and Reconsidered

It was 1829, Reverend John Sanford—today lauded as one of the leading English collectors of Italian portraits in the first half of the 19th century—was roaming Florence in search of suitable artworks for his collection.[1] Whether or not he knew this, Sanford happened to have arrived to the famous city at the perfect time. Rather, perfect for him as the collector, unfortunate for the old Florentine families who were forced to part with their collections due to financial stress. Regardless, one cannot help but ponder Sanford and his decision to purchase early Italian Renaissance works alone when Baroque or Flemish paintings were just as readily available. According to Benedict Nicholson's article "The Sanford Collection", the Reverend was not particularly interested in Baroque art or the works of Northern Masters, rather, the English collector was enchanted by Italian 'primitives', as he called them. Among his massive haul was the small, strange portrait we come to know as Fra Filippo Lippi's *A Man and a Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1). According to Nicholson, the Reverend did not muse much on the painting aside from an initial attribution to Uccello. Little did he know just how important this unusual portrait—which sports an awkward composition of a man looking toward a woman through a window—would be for the field of early modern art history, specifically the study of Quattrocento portraiture.

As the title suggests, this thesis is largely concerned with reconsidering the social and historical approaches to Fra Filippo Lippi's *A Man and a Woman at a Casement*.

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[1] See Benedict Nicholson's "The Sanford Collection." *The Burlington Magazine* 97, no. 628 (1955): 207–14

Through this project, I seek to evaluate the scholarship surrounding the famed Metropolitan portrait and offer new insights on the portrait's more unconventional qualities. I am particularly drawn to this painting in part for these unusual moments, and partly because of its status as the first double portrait. This image, despite its awkward composition, establishes an image convention, one whose elements were largely incorporated in later attempts at the genre. Lippi's use of dual profile portraits created a standard composition—albeit incorporated into separate, equally sized images—as seen in Piero della Francesca and Ercole de'Roberti's respective portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino (Figure 2) and Giovanni II Bentivoglio and his bride, Ginevra Sforza (Figure 3). More importantly, as this thesis will demonstrate, Fra Filippo Lippi's seminal portrait helps us think about larger issues in Renaissance art such as the role of the bride, the adornment of the female body, conventions of marriage, standards of patronage, materiality through costuming and appearance, poetic and societal standards of beauty, the function of portraiture as a preserver of public memory and commemoration, and much more. Additionally, the enigmatic qualities of this portrait, these being: the uncertainty of the gaze between viewers, the atypical standards of representation through the diminished appearance and size of the male figure, the grandiose proportions and centrality of his female counterpart, the mystique of the figures themselves and, lastly, the circumstances that lead to the portrait's creation, leave so many questions open for further deliberation and reflection. In order to discuss these aspects further, one must familiarize his or herself with the portrait and its formalities through image analysis, one which I provide here and at the beginning of every chapter. Of course, this image analysis is but a general description that serves as an introduction to the portrait and its key moments. In later chapters, I will provide a more detailed analysis, focusing on points of interest as they relate to the chapter, its themes, and ambitions.

Hanging in Gallery 602 of the Metropolitan Museum is a small tempera painting nestled within a wooden frame comprised of two Corinthian column in the form of sculptural reliefs. The double portrait stands eye-level with the viewer at only 64.1 centimeters in height and 41.9 centimeters in length. Painted by Fra Filippo Lippi in 1440, the painting—titled *A Man and a Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1)—depicts a couple in an indoor setting. The man peers in through a window in order to gaze at a woman--who returns his gaze with a soft smile--standing in the center of the room. Both are depicted in profile, with the woman standing slightly higher and closer to the viewer in the perspectival plane than the man, her body shown from the hips up and her hands clasped together neatly over the illustrious folds of her gown. In contrast, the man's face is only shown just barely jutting out of the window which cuts his profile in half, the only suggestion of a body being his hands which rest neatly on the window sill lightly gesturing toward a piece of cloth depicting a family crest. Within the painting, there are a few points of interest that I will introduce lightly as they will be explored in greater detail in later chapters. First, we have an unusual arrangement of the couple through perspective and scale. This display wherein the man is placed seemingly farther back and higher than the woman standing in the room, creates a strange scene where it appears the couple might be exchanging glances at first, but the different planes in which the sitters occupy complicate things; the man and woman's eyes seem to create an obscure, vacuous gaze at best, or, they seem to completely miss one another. Another interesting element is the seemingly asymmetrical representation of gender through prominence and scale. The man is depicted much smaller than the woman and occupies only a small section on the pictorial plane. Moreover, his profile is cut off, with his face just barely peering in through the window. In contrast, the woman appears in larger-than-life proportions, seemingly chafing against the small confines of the window bay or alcove in which she stands. The viewer can not only see her profile clearly, but also much of her body. While both sitters are dressed in fine clothing, the woman immediately draws the viewer's attention as she appears swathed with fine jewels and bright, beautiful colors. She wears a large, pearl-encrusted horned headdress on her fair head, her neatly combed blonde hair just barely peeking out underneath. As for the gown itself, she's depicted wearing a mauve, fur-lined overdress or *giornea* over her black and golden gown or *cioppa*. Embroidered into her sleeve is the phrase 'lealta' or loyalty, likely part of a family motto. Her stunning appearance is complete with a gleaming pearl brooch, white gloves, and multiple rings, likely comprised of red rubies and dark blue sapphires, on her ring, middle, and index fingers. The man, from what we can see, wears a crimson red cap, a red shirt, and a delicate ring on his right hand. Both hands rest on the window sill, lightly touching a piece of cloth, which shows a coat of arms sporting black and golden stripes. The sitters occupy a very dull, empty room which sports two windows. The first appears on the portrait's left-hand side, this is the window from which the man is peering outside in; the second window appears on the rear wall behind the woman which reveals the banks of a river or canal and the red-tiled rooves of nearby suburban buildings.

Among art historians and collectors, Fra Filippo Lippi’s double portrait maintains an aura of mystery and intrigue. When compared with later double portraits which prioritize the separation of couples into equally proportioned busts, this early attempt by the friar-turned-painter appears strange indeed. Since its re-discovery by art collector Reverend John Sanford in 1829, scholars have grappled with issues of identification and an incomplete provenance, both of which are responsible for the portrait’s mysterious reputation. As such, much of the scholarship surrounding Lippi’s portrait is largely concerned with the identity of the sitters and the reasons behind its patronage. Other, more modern approaches have emphasized the portrait’s other enigmatic qualities such as the ambiguous eye contact between sitters and the unequal depiction of gender through scale, detail, and prominence. Also, considering the great deal of detail and care given to the woman’s clothing and appearance, a portion of the scholarship specifically addresses the importance of costuming, ornamentation, and beauty in women’s portraiture of the Quattrocento. In the next chapter, I will discuss the scholarship surrounding Fra Filippo Lippi’s *A Man and a Woman at a Casement* in which I will briefly present the three camps that are most relevant to this thesis and its goals, these being: the pioneers, the gaze discourse, and gendered perspectives. While these camps are the most important, I feel it is important to mention that there are, of course, some outliers which I will also briefly mention here and in my footnotes. These sources typically follow a more traditional approach which prioritize monographic, artistic oeuvres, something that this thesis will not cover. As we lay out the arguments and discourses surrounding this portrait, I urge the reader to keep the last two camps in mind as we discuss the role of gaze, gender, and costuming in later chapters.

Chapter 1: A Critical Historiography of Fra Filippo's Double Portrait

In order to discuss Fra Filippo Lippi's *A Man and a Woman at a Casement* in depth, one must acknowledge the pre-existing scholarship on the friar-turned-painter and his unusual portrait.[2] This extensive scholarship is marked by three distinct camps, the first group involving the 'pioneers' or the earliest publications, which focus largely on questions of connoisseurship, style, and identification. Most noteworthy are the works of Bernhard Berenson, Joseph Breck, Jean Lipman, and John Pope-Hennessy.[3] The next group implements a more contemporary approach, typically focusing on questions of 'meta-portraiture,' poetic connotations, visual metaphors, discourses of artistic intent, and its expression in formal solutions; these include the works of Robert Baldwin, Barnaby Nygren, Russell Sale, and Patricia Rubin.[4] The third and final group addresses topics of gender including conventions of representation within female portraiture, marriage and ritual, female beauty, clothing, and the bridal body as a bearer of signs. Important essays in this category include those of feminist art historians such as Paola Tinagli and Allison Wright.[5] In summarizing these various angles of scholarship, I will begin with the earliest publications and finish with the most recent contributions in each of the groups, thereby establishing timeline and creating a comprehensive map of the themes and discourses that will serve as the basis for this thesis' inquiry.

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[2] Much has been written on Fra Filippo Lippi's double portrait. For further reading, see Everett Fahy, Patricia Nuttal, and Jeffery Ruda. Everett Fahy's 1971 catalogue entry "Florentine Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum: An Exhibition and a Catalogue," for the Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin 29 summarizes the work of Joseph Breck and Dr. Zerri who attributed the portrait to Lippi's workshop. Patricia Nuttal's 2004 book *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting, 1400–1500* examines the work from a Flemish stylistic perspective as she notes Flemish influences in Lippi's portrait, from his use of fine detail, the proportions of the interior, to the woman's courtly attire in which she wears a Flemish horned headdress, as was the fashion of the time. Finally, Jeffery Ruda's 1993 catalogue *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue* discusses the artist's life and work from an archivist standpoint as Ruda utilizes letters and receipts to piece together the artist's biography and corpus of artworks. When it comes to the Metropolitan portrait, Ruda does an excellent job of summarizing the previous scholarship surrounding the painting but does not offer much in terms of possible interpretations or offering his own perspective regarding scholarly discourses.

[3] See Bernhard Berenson's *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*. New York, 1896, p. 126, Joseph Breck's "A Double Portrait by Fra Filippo Lippi." *Art in America* 2, 1913, pp. 44–55, Jean Lipman's "The Florentine Profile Portrait in the Quattrocento." *The Art Bulletin* 18, no. 1 (1936): 54-102, John Pope-Hennessy's *The Portrait in the Renaissance*. Princeton, 1966, pp. 41, 44, 48, 59, 309 n. 63, and John Pope-Hennessy, John et. al, "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57, 59–61

[4] See Robert Baldwin's "A Window from the Song of Songs in Conjugal Portraits by Fra Filippo Lippi and Bartolomaeus Zeitblom", in: Source 5, no. 2, 1986, pp. 7-14, Robert Baldwin's "'Gates Pure and Shining and Serene': Mutual Gazing as an Amatory Motif in Western Literature and Art." *Renaissance and Reformation*, n.s., 10, no. 1 (1986), pp. 30, 33, 35, 46, Barnaby Nygren's "'We first pretend to stand at a certain window': Window as Pictorial Device and Metaphor in the Paintings of Filippo Lippi." *Source:*

Our chronology begins with Bernard Berenson's 1896 book *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*. In it, Berenson briefly mentions Lippi and a few noteworthy paintings as part of a larger categorization of artists who fall under the Florentine school of art.[6] Within the book, Berenson hardly mentions Lippi except for a small comparison between the friar's artwork and that of his contemporary, Sandro Botticelli. Here, the author asserts that the latter artist maintained a more graceful style than that of the former. In regards to the famous portrait, Berenson attributes the work to Paolo Uccello, a mistake that would be resolved a little more than a decade later by a former Metropolitan Museum curator, Joseph Breck. Within this chronology, Berenson's work is important as the author's desire to categorize Florentine artists and their works would

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Notes in the History of Art 26 (Fall 2006), pp. 16, 20–21, Russell Sale's "Protecting Fertility in Fra Filippo Lippi's 'Portrait of a Woman with a Man at a Casement'." *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 51 (2016), pp. 65–83, and Patricia Rubin's *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*. Exh. cat., Bode-Museum, Berlin. New York, 2011, pp. 96-101

[5] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53 and Allison Wright's "The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, 2000

[6] See Bernhard Berenson's *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*. New York, 1896, p. 126

provide at the least a foundation for later scholars who expressed interest in the painter and his many artworks. However, this source is quite problematic for this thesis and its goals as Berenson prioritizes now-outdated art historical methods and criteria which are rooted in connoisseurship. The emphasis on style and establishing an ‘artist’s hand’ are no longer the only acceptable means through which an art historian must judge the quality or significance of an artist and his oeuvre. In this sense, Berenson’s work does little else than to establish a focal point or source from which other, more rhetorically impactful scholarship has emerged from.

A decade later, Joseph Breck’s article, “A Double Portrait by Fra Filippo Lippi”, would go on to become one of the most pivotal and heavily cited works on this list. Breck, a former curator for the Metropolitan Museum, argued in his 1913 article that the work came from Fra Filippo Lippi’s workshop, not Uccello’s as previously established by Berenson.[7] In addition, he tentatively identified the sitters, based on the coat of arms pictured under the man’s hands, as Lorenzo di Ranieri Scolari and Angiola di Bernado Sapiti. In doing so, Breck laid the foundations for the acceptance of the portrait as a work by Lippi and his team of apprentices as well as the couple’s identity as Lorenzo and Angiola Scolari, an attribution which would become universally accepted by later scholars.

Two decades after Breck’s groundbreaking contribution, Jean Lipman mentions the portrait in his article on Florentine portrait painting.[8] Much like Berenson before him,

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[7] See Joseph Breck’s "A Double Portrait by Fra Filippo Lippi." *Art in America* 2, 1913, pp. 44–55

[8] See Jean Lipman’s "The Florentine Profile Portrait in the Quattrocento." *The Art Bulletin* 18, no. 1 (1936):

Lipman was concerned with questions of style, the artist's hand, and establishing an artistic canon by assessing possible cultural and social influences that could 'explain' the birth of the Florentine Renaissance. Lipman then goes on to investigate the significance and predominance of the profile portrait in early Renaissance Florentine culture. According to the author, the profile implies a division between spectator and painted subject, hence profile paintings were seen as objects that were to be looked at and observed, measured and judged by the degree of their likeness, while also playing up a decorative abstraction of the silhouette. In Fra Filippo's Berlin portrait as well as his portrait in the Metropolitan Museum, Lipman asserts that this flatness of the low-relief enhances the silhouette. In addition, Fra Filippo's portraits are also a great example of the "rhythmical-decorative" use of line (Lipman, "The Florentine Profile Portrait in the Quattrocento", pp. 54-102). In these images, the line has been isolated from the background to form a continuous linear "arabesque", acting as a separate, rhythmic entity (Lipman, pp. 54-102). Overall, Lipman's article reflects an early twentieth-century formalist approach to painting. It is also worth mentioning the author's assessment of Lippi's use of bright, vibrant colors, seen in both his Berlin and Metropolitan portraits, as a staple of Florentine portraiture, with its ample use of vermillion, ultramarine, crimson, and gold. Lipman also muses over the portrait's unusual use of light; in nature, the light would have come in from the side window, however, the entire room and the figures occupying it seem to glow from an unseen source.

54-102

Writing from the 1960's and 1980's, John Pope-Hennessy pivots slightly from the traditional questions established by Berenson and Lipman, opening up new observations and questions that would become integral to later scholars such as Robert Baldwin. Unlike his predecessors, Pope-Hennessy was not exclusively interested in questions of style and, like Breck, shifted his focus toward questions of identification as well as the historical context surrounding Lippi and his famous portrait. Yet where Breck focused on identifying the artist to the artwork, Pope-Hennessy, in his seminal publication *The Portrait in the Renaissance* of 1966, was fascinated with representations of familial pedigree present in Lippi's portrait.[9] He specifically identifies the piece of cloth representing the man's family coat of arms and the presence of an embroidered phrase on the woman's sleeve which reads 'lealta' or the French word for 'loyalty'. He was the first to assert that the embroidery on the woman's sleeve was likely connected with a family *impresa* or motto since the second figure, the man peering in through the window, pushes a piece of cloth onto the window sill which displays the distinctive heraldic sigil of the Scolari family. He also attributes the double portrait as the first of its kind, unique in its formal solutions – which will become an important basis for subsequent scholarship and informs key questions raised in this thesis. Moreover, he identifies that the two sitters are situated in what appears to be a semi-realistic architectural setting that draws from the architectural interiors of Lippi's religious paintings. In his 1980 essay for the Metropolitan Art Bulletin, Pope-Hennessy further discusses the Renaissance ideals of family as reflected in birth trays, cassoni, and portraiture. He also emphasizes the commemorative and documentary function of Quattrocento portrait paintings.[10] When it comes to Lippi's *A Man and a Woman at a Casement*, Pope-Hennessy was the first to admit that the significance of the Scolari commission had never been properly investigated, citing that the work was likely commissioned for some momentous occasion though the author himself is unsure of what exactly that might be. This is an important admission, as the mysterious circumstances that led to the painting's creation has sparked debate among later scholars such as Jeffery Ruda and Paola Tinagli.[11] I urge the reader to keep the ambiguity surrounding the Metropolitan portrait in mind, as it will become an important topic in later chapters.[12] Moving forward, Pope-Hennessey builds from his previous claim in his 1966 publication, asserting that Lippi's painting should be regarded as a family manifesto rather than an individual portrait – in the modern sense of 'individuality'—due to the distinct emphasis on family sigils and impresa. In addition, he highlights some of the portrait's more unusual features, namely how very few female profile portraits in the mid-15th century were as complex as Lippi's double portrait. This complexity manifests through the presence of family sigils and mottos (the embroidered sleeve plays an important role here), the smaller male sitter at the window, the uncertainty surrounding the sitters' gazes, the use of an indoor setting with multiple windows and perspectival planes, and the separation of the couple through the back wall and open window, which reveals an urban scene. According to Pope-Hennessy, the majority of single female portraits were not nearly as complex as they usually involved a simple flat silhouette contrasted with a dark background. Moreover, the woman, due to her centrality and scale, seems to be the portrait's protagonist. Meanwhile, her male counterpart appears to be inserting himself into the female 'picture space' as well as the interior space in which she inhabits. He literally peeks into her alcove or chamber from the outside. However, exactly what this 'outside' space entails or how it manifests on the perspectival plane remains unclear. I urge the reader to keep Pope-Hennessy's words in mind as we investigate issues surrounding the atypical depiction of gender, the portrait's intended protagonist, as well as Lippi's unusual proportions and perspective in later chapters.

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[9] See John Pope-Hennessy's *The Portrait in the Renaissance*. Princeton, 1966, pp. 41, 44, 48, 59, 309 n. 63

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[10] See John Pope-Hennessy, John et. al, "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57, 59–61

[11] Jeffery Ruda's *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue*. London, (1993), p. 385 and Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53

[12] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53

Now that we have established our pioneers, let us turn to the second group of scholarly writings on the portrait of *A Man and a Woman at a Casement*, beginning in the 1980s. This new generation of scholars tends to focus more on potential textual sources for the painting, perhaps as a result of the strong influence of literary theory on art history since the 1970s. Many of those writings are also more theoretically informed. Poetic references, literary ideals, the metaphor of the window, ideas of the 'male gaze' and the exchange or lack of eye contact figure prominently. Robert Baldwin was one of the first to fully articulate Lippi's use of visual metaphors as they relate to late medieval and early modern poetic conventions. Two such metaphors are the eye and the window. In his 1986 article, "A Window from the Song of Songs," he delves into cultural and religious discourses surrounding eye contact, the separation of female and male body, and the different picture planes they are assigned in Lippi's painting.[13] Baldwin examines both pictorial and literary sources that focus on the motif of mutual, conjugal gazing through windows, asserting that this tradition likely emerged from the well-known commentary on the biblical "Song of Songs" which had become the basis for imagery of love during the Medieval and Renaissance. Here, Baldwin seeks to understand how the biblical "Song of Songs" contextualizes the artist's decision to separate the painted couple through the addition of a window and wall. He also asserts that Lippi intended for the sitters to gaze at one another; by establishing the visual motif of a window, the artist sought to emphasize the poetic and spiritual evocations surrounding matrimony as presented in the biblical passage. In a second article, "'Gates Pure and Shining and Serene': Mutual Gazing as an Amatory Motif," Baldwin again places the painting's use of poetic imagery within a greater literary context, this time drawing from similar amatory motifs found in ancient Greco-Roman poetry.[14] In Lippi's portrait, the Platonic idea of eyesight is especially important, wherein sight was thought to entail a sort of beaming back and forth from mirror-like eyes. This idea was well-known in Medieval literature and re-interpreted for a Christian context where sight was considered the most spiritual of the five senses. According to Baldwin, this tradition of mutual, spiritual gazing in which hearts could intertwine between mirroring eyes seems to be reflected through the mutual gaze shared between the couple. Ultimately, Baldwin’s interpretation of Lippi’s portrait as a form of painted, visual poetry– based on the idea of the conjugal bond established through a form of mutual, spiritual gazing– emphasizes the spiritual nature of matrimony. The wall between the man and woman, their different positions inside and outside of that wall, inhibits physical embracing, thus adding a poetic and erotic tension as well as an emphasis on the form of connection that they *can* have, by means of eye contact.

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[13] See Robert Baldwin's "A Window from the Song of Songs in Conjugal Portraits by Fra Filippo Lippi and Bartolomaeus Zeitblom", in: Source 5, no. 2, 1986, pp. 7-14

[14] See Robert Baldwin's "'Gates Pure and Shining and Serene': Mutual Gazing as an Amatory Motif in Western Literature and Art." *Renaissance and Reformation*, n.s., 10, no. 1 (1986), pp. 30, 33, 35, 46

Following Robert Baldwin, other art historians increasingly focused on the visual exchange between the man and the woman in the painting, and they discovered a dilemma: both profile portraits, while facing one another, are placed on slightly different levels, the man being lower than the woman, with the somewhat odd result that their eyes seem to miss one another. While Robert Baldwin largely argued for a painterly error on Lippi’s part, other early modernists were not so convinced[15]. Hence, themes surrounding poetic references, spiritual gazes, and the window as trope and metaphor have been hotly debated by subsequent scholarship.

Barnaby Nygren, along with Russell Sale and Patricia Rubin, has argued for a different interpretation of the imprecise gaze and multiple perspectival planes found in Lippi’s *A Man and Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1). In his 2006 publication, “Window as Pictorial Device and Metaphor in the Paintings of Filippo Lippi,” Nygren discusses the multiple perspectival windows present in Lippi’s portrait, these being: the painted window through which the man peaks into the female space; the window showcasing the urban scene between the couple; and the picture plane itself.[16] This is particularly emphasized through the unusual, architectural frame surrounding the painting, creating an implied window through which the viewer examines the painted scene. While Baldwin saw a visual reference to love poetry and matrimony, Nygren suggests that the window serves as an Albertian exercise in perspective. Alberti defines a painting as an illusionistic space that creates a second reality by following certain perspectival principles.[17] In addition, Lippi's painted scene appears to unfold in front of our eyes as though we were looking through an open window. Here, the author understands the portrait's pictorial conception as a pictorial meditation on the nature of Albertian perspectival fiction. The work not only features a secondary window that doubles as a frame for an urban scene in the background, but also includes an additional window on the side wherein the male sitter peers through. According to Nygren, the permeability of the side window suggests the permeability of the Albertian pictorial window, wherein Lippi is perhaps commenting on the perspectival metaphor of the open window.

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[15] See Robert Baldwin’s "'Gates Pure and Shining and Serene': Mutual Gazing as an Amatory Motif in Western Literature and Art." *Renaissance and Reformation*, n.s., 10, no. 1 (1986), p. 30

Patricia Rubin similarly advocates for new interpretation of the uncertain gaze shared between figures. In an untitled article entry, which is featured in the catalogue *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini,* she reaffirms Pope-Hennessy's description of the portrait as the earliest surviving double portrait.[18] However, she also notes that the portrait is the first to place a woman in a defined interior space and the first to include a landscape of some sort in the background. In addition, Rubin notes there is the possibility that the portrait was commissioned to celebrate the birth of a child, as the opulent clothing and jewelry worn by the woman would have been appropriate for a bride.[19] The male is also expensively garbed in red and wears a hat designating his high social rank; his costuming is not insignificant, as similar garb would have been worn by rulers such as Federico da Montefeltro, Ludovico Gonzaga, or members of the Florentine elite. However, Rubin's most important contribution is her examination of an infrared scan of the painting. Infrared analysis shows that there was at least one edit made to the portrait regarding the hand placement of his sitters; the woman's hands were placed one grasping the other as a supposed sign of modesty the man was initially painted with one hand raised below his chin before Lippi changed the to emphasize the heraldic family sigil laying on the windowsill.

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[16] See Barnaby Nygren's "'We first pretend to stand at a certain window': Window as Pictorial Device and Metaphor in the Paintings of Filippo Lippi." *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 26 (Fall 2006), pp. 16, 20–21

[17] See Barnaby Nygren's "'We first pretend to stand at a certain window': Window as Pictorial Device and Metaphor in the Paintings of Filippo Lippi." *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 26 (Fall 2006), pp. 20-21

[18] See Patricia Rubin's *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*. Exh. cat., Bode-Museum, Berlin. New York, 2011, pp. 96-101

Five years after Patricia Rubin's publication, Russel Sale discusses the 'gaze' discourse surrounding Lippi's portrait in his 2016 article, "Protecting Fertility in Fra Filippo Lippi's 'Portrait of a Woman with a Man at a Casement'".[20] However, Russell Sale deviates from other scholars in his examination of the famous painting and its allusions to classical history and fertility. While he recognizes that he is far from the first to articulate these topics, his article differs drastically from his predecessors. Where other scholars, including Baldwin, seem to hone in on Lippi's use of mutual viewing and its poetic connotations, Russell Sale focuses on an element that has long been overlooked: the significance behind man's hand gesture. Sale's article proposes that this gesture is a discrete Roman gesture, the *mano cornuta* or the horned-hand gesture, which connotates a desire to promote fertility. To make his claim, Russell Sale summarizes the portrait's historiography, focusing on publications that discuss the different planes the two occupy as well as their vacuous, un-meeting gazes. While the author does not take a definitive stance in the gaze discourse, he does seem to be in agreement with Robert Baldwin that the figures' ambiguous line of sight was probably part of a perspectival error.

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[19] See Patricia Rubin's catalogue entry in *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*. Exh. cat., Bode-Museum, Berlin. New York, 2011, p. 96

[20] See Russell Sale's "Protecting Fertility in Fra Filippo Lippi's 'Portrait of a Woman with a Man at a Casement'." *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 51 (2016), pp. 65–83

After Robert Baldwin's publications, in which he emphasizes Lippi's use of eye contact and its poetic evocations, feminist art historians have taken a gendered approach to the painting, noting the unequal representation of the man and woman as first articulated by John Pope-Hennessy.[21] Elizabeth Cropper's 1976 publication outlines the many, often contrarian, beauty standards that informed the 'ideal' Renaissance woman.[22] Her essay would go on to inform other feminist art historians like Paola Tinagli and

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[21] See John Pope-Hennessy, John et. al, "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57, 59–61

[22] I credit Elizabeth Cropper and Mary Rogers as two pioneers in the study of Renaissance literature, women's portraiture, and gender; while they do not discuss Lippi's double portrait, they have certainly laid the groundwork for a gendered analysis of the two sitters which will be explored through Paola Tinagli, Patricia Simons, and Allison Wright's contributions in this chapter and again when discussing the asymmetrical representation of Lippi's sitters in Chapter 2, and again when examining women's decorum and the bridal body in Chapter 3. To learn more about Elizabeth Cropper and Mary Rogers' contributions to the study of feminist art history, gender, and literature in the Italian Renaissance, please see Elizabeth Cropper's "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style." *The Art Bulletin* 58, no. 3 (1976): 374–394 and Mary Rogers' "The Decorum of Women's Beauty: Trissino, Firenzuola, Luigini and the Representation of Women in Sixteenth-Century Painting," in: Renaissance Studies 2, no. 1, 1988, pp. 47-88

Allison Wright who sought to contextualize the unusual depiction of gender as seen in Lippi's double portrait in addition to the sitter's very specific, idealized appearance.[23]

Paola Tinagli would move beyond Cropper in order to apply a deeper gendered analysis of Lippi's painting in her essay, "Women and Portraiture".[24] However, Tinagli differs sharply from her predecessors, Cropper and Rogers, by stressing the importance of family lineage in women's portraiture. Tinagli additionally identifies the female profile as a sign of feminine virtue, decorum, and beauty. Here, the author asserts that the desired traits of the ideal feminine beauty during the fifteenth century might have been developed with the profile in mind: artists preferred a long, sinuous line that ran continuously from a high forehead revealed by neatly pinned back hair, to the base of the neck. In addition, heraldic images were often embroidered into the woman's clothes to denote her familial lineage—either her own family's or that of her husband—the richness of her clothes and jewelry signaled her social standing/wealth. Tinagli also reminds us that, in many ways, the Renaissance was a "display culture" where authority, respect, moral and political influence were gained through one's dress which was often imbued with symbols pointing to their nobility and, therefore, virtue. As such, women's dress was one of the ways that publicized her family's wealth and demonstrated their social status since they could not participate in the political sphere. Tinagli then pivots to examine how these ideas manifest in Fra Filippo Lippi's *Portrait of a Man and Woman at a Casement,* focusing on the centrality of the woman and her clothing, specifically the embroidered phrase on her cuff. Here, she asserts that the portrait is not an exploration of the woman's character nor her relationship with the man at the door; rather it is likely a representation that commemorates a woman while also stressing the importance of family lineage. Tinagli also reaffirms Joseph Breck's attribution of the coat of arms placed on the windowsill as belonging to the Scolari family, with the couple being Lorenzo di Ranieri Scolari and Angiola di Bernado Sapiti.

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[23] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53 and Allison Wright's "The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, 2000

[24] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53

In her article, "The Memory of Faces," Allison Wright discusses Quattrocento Renaissance portraiture, specifically examining the role of likeness and memory in the painted portrait.[25] According to the author, portraits were often created with remembrance in mind as established by Catholic doctrine and practice. Portraiture also drew from the classical notion that one must pay homage to deceased relatives by displaying their likeness to friends and family, hence, portraits were hung in rooms where they would be seen by the public. Wright asserts that these sentiments were the driving forces behind Quattrocento portraiture, in addition, these portraits were often commissioned with the belief that the sitter was worthy of familial and public commemoration. When it comes to portraits of women, most depictions seem to capture women at the time of their betrothal or marriage. This could be partly because artists were typically instructed to capture their subjects the moment they reached political maturity. Many of these works also could have been commissioned by the family into which a woman was marrying as part of the large sum of materials and items she would be gifted in the exchange. Wright also reiterates Tinagli's claim that portraits of women in the Quattrocento utilized the profile as an emblem of virtue.[26] Pivoting her discussion to Fra Filippo Lippi's double portrait, the author claims that while some have argued that the profile was used in this case to promote a demure feminine virtuosa, she asserts that this technique was most likely used to emphasize the painted woman's family; here the profile gives the viewer an unobstructed view of the woman's clothing, primarily her sleeve which spells out her family motto or impresa. The sleeve, through ornate design or embroidery, would have likely alluded to her family's social standing. However, when it comes to the painting's commemorative meaning and the importance bestowed to the sitters, Wright deviates considerably from the assertions of Pope-Hennessy and Tinagli, who insist that the woman is meant to be the portrait's protagonist.[27] Instead, she argues that the portrait's emphasis is meant for the man, not the woman. In order to substantiate her claim, Wright draws upon the space allotted between the couple and the framing device that separates the two as her evidence, articulating that the positions the two occupy are inherently gendered: the woman is placed into the domestic sphere while the man peeks in from the public sphere. Hence, Wright argues that the portrait was likely made to commemorate the man's family and not the woman across him.

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[25] See Allison Wright's "The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, 2000

As this chronology has shown, the scholarship surrounding Fra Filippo Lippi's *A*

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[26] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53

[27] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53 and John Pope-Hennessy, John et. al, "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57

Man and Woman at a Casement (Figure 1) is rich and varied. Art historians have approached the unusual portrait from varying angles, implementing different methodologies which result in fascinating discourses and themes. The most important themes include: poetic references, specifically the window and gaze motifs as first articulated by Robert Baldwin and developed and expanded by later art historical discourses; the atypical emphasis and scale given to the woman figure alone; and, finally, women's decorum and representation[28]. These themes form the basis of my thesis' inquiry in which I will further examine the discourse of the gaze and window, the unusual arrangement of the depicted couple, and, lastly, the importance of dress, ornamentation, and the profile in Quattrocento women's portraiture. In the next chapter, I will discuss the controversy surrounding the figures' ambiguous line of sight, its place in Lippi's portrait, and its relationship to the window as a poetic framing device.

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[28] See Robert Baldwin's "A Window from the Song of Songs in Conjugal Portraits by Fra Filippo Lippi and Bartolomaeus Zeitblom", in: Source 5, no. 2, 1986, pp. 7-14

Chapter 2: An Unusual Portrait: Examining Gender in Fra Filippo's Double Portrait

This second chapter is concerned with the paining's more puzzling aspects regarding structure and formal design, such as the ambiguous 'eye contact' shared between figures and the portrait's unconventional depiction of gender. Before I further discuss the possible implications of these 'problems', it is necessary to take a closer look and familiarize the reader with the portrait through detailed visual analysis.

As the title implies, Lippi's double portrait (Figure 1) depicts a man and woman within an unspecified indoor setting. Aside from the plain off-white walls, there are three windows which surround the couple: a window on the left through which the man peers in toward the woman, a window on the adjacent wall behind the woman which opens to reveal what looks like a suburban landscape, and, lastly, an implied third 'window' through which the viewer looks onto the picture plane in order to observe the two figures and the room they occupy. The emphasis on windows and the act of peering through them has perplexed scholars for decades. What has been especially puzzling for art historians is the ambiguous line of sight shared between our painted couple, as it is unclear whether or not the man and woman's eyes meet. Considering that the two are facing one another in profile and that the man seems to quite intentionally look into the room, it would appear that the two are meant to be gazing into one another's eyes. However, as noted by several authors, if one traces the sitters and their line of sight, they distinctly miss one another.

The discourse surrounding this somewhat vacuous gaze segues into another, equally unusual, aspect of the portrait: the dimensions and arrangement of the couple and the exterior landscape in relation to the interior. The woman appears front and center, standing much closer to the viewer than the man. Additionally, the two differ greatly in size and prominence on the picture plane. Here we see a female half-portrait with her body shown from the hips up and her hands clasped together neatly over the illustrious folds of her gown. In contrast, the man's face is shown just barely jutting out of the window, which cuts his profile in half. The only references to the male body are his hands, which rest on the window sill, and even they are not shown entirely: there is an emphasis on the fingers, which subtly gesture toward a piece of cloth folded over the window sill, most likely depicting his family crest. Considering the perspective onto the outside scenery, it appears that the room is high up, perhaps on the second or third floor of a family palazzo. Through the window behind the woman, we look down onto the banks of a river and the red roofs of the neighboring buildings. With this in mind, it appears that our male visitor would have had to climb up a ladder in order to peer through the window bay or alcove in which our female figure stands. The woman on the other hand barely fits into the narrow confines of her room—her great horned headdress scraping the ceiling, the walls seemingly closing in around her finely dressed body.

The painting's unrealistic mix of scales and perspectives appear especially strange if we take conventional aspects of gender relations and their representations in Quattrocento paintings into account. The man is depicted as a secondary character, leaving the stage almost entirely to his female companion, drawing the viewer's attention to her as the protagonist. She is what one might call a Quattrocento female archetype. Her smooth features represent the female beauty conventions of the Italian fifteenth century: fair skin, blond hair, rosy cheeks, a high forehead, neatly combed hair pulled back into a headdress, and extravagant clothing and jewelry. Her upright and calm posture conveys virtue and control. Meanwhile, not much can be discerned of the male figure, as his smaller stature and diminished profile make it difficult to glean any major details. We see a bright red cap, a tiny sliver of a bright red gown on his left shoulder or chest, and two gesticulating hands cut off by a window frame just beneath the fingers. His proper right-hand sports an expensive golden ring, indicating his social status (and perhaps hinting at a betrothal to the woman across from him). His smaller size and rudimentary presence are quite atypical compared to similar depictions of men at the time. The man is portrayed with a pale and youthful complexion, similar to that of the woman standing across from him. His tawny, shapely eyebrows, brown eyes, heavy lids, and rosy, small lips also mirror the same features found on the woman. By Quattrocento standards, this slightly vague and effeminate rendering of facial features is quite uncommon, as it maintains several similarities with the idealized portrayals of Renaissance women. Moreover, the painting's overall design places a greater emphasis on the woman at the expense of the man, who very likely would have provided the room in his family palazzo as well as the clothing and jewelry the woman is wearing. However, I argue that the delegation of the male to the outdoors and the female to the interior of the home is intentional and follows Quattrocento ideas of gendered spaces, an idea that I will further explore in this chapter.

With this in mind, I will consult a series of other Renaissance double portraits of married or betrothed couples in order to highlight the Metropolitan portrait's unconventional aspects. By the late 1400's, the conventions of double portraiture had changed sharply from Lippi's. Instead of a single portrait of two sitters, artists transitioned into the more popular image type of separate paintings for each figure—two images matching each other in size and structure. However, this image type did not appear until later in the century. When Fra Filippo took on the commission for his famed portrait, there was—as far as we know—no convention in place yet. In fact, it seems to be the first of its kind.[29] This is a significant detail, one that I argue is imperative when considering the figures and their unique arrangement. In order to understand Fra Filippo Lippi's painting, we must consider the difficult task that the artist undertook. Despite having no other artistic precedence, medieval or classical, Lippi created something new and unprecedented in the medium of panel painting. It was a pioneering task, and the Florentine friar had to invent a solution for his client in a timely matter. This solution subsequently underwent various transformations by other artists who created new pictorial solutions, the end result being two separate panels facing one another. The most prominent example of this type is Piero della Francesca's portrait of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino – Federico da Montefeltro and his wife Battista Sforza (Figure 2). Another example is Ercole de'Roberti's marriage portrait of Giovanni II Bentivoglio and his wife Ginevra (Figure 3). In both images, one figure mirrors the other in size and position. For an added sense of connection between the painted couples, both Piero della Francesca and Ercole de'Roberti designed a background that can only appear as one whole when both portraits are hung side by side. Even though they are depicted in separate paintings, the figures appear to occupy the same space, or territory, looking directly at one another even across the distance of their different picture spaces. While these new innovations may appear to place Fra Filippo Lippi's painted work as a dated attempt whose novel composition was discarded by later artists and patrons, I argue that the opposite is true. The use of double profiles facing each other and the role of the continuous landscape or domestic interior evoke and reinterpret a pictorial idea first established by Lippi's *A Man and A Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1). His painting clearly acts as a precursor for the others. Moreover, I argue that Lippi's idea of combining two profiles in one painting might have had similar origins in the key role that commemorative medals, of both men and women, played in the representation of important families and their alliances through marriage since the late Trecento.

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[29] The attribution of Fra Filippo Lippi's double portrait as the earliest attempt was first articulated by John Pope-Hennessy in "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57, 59–61and later accepted by art historians such as Jeffery Ruda, Patricia Rubin, Paola Tinagli, etc.

Considering that Fra Filippo Lippi's double portrait is likely the first of its kind, any compositional and architectural inconsistencies present in the portrait should, I suggest, be read as an initial attempt to fit both the man and woman into the same picture where no such convention existed prior. I argue that it is also possible that the man was placed as an afterthought, inserted at the behest of the patron after the painter had completed the female portrait.[30] In later attempts at the genre, most artists seem to have forgone Lippi’s composition of a man looking into a female space. Instead, they opted to clearly separate the man and woman by placing them into two equally-sized, complimentary portraits. This idea of a mirroring of equals, albeit divided by two panels, seems to have taken hold. By contrast, the perspectival plane and formal structure of the portrait by Lippi are not as clear, and the figures belong to different spaces that do not form a whole. The positioning of the man at the far-left side of the panel and lower than the woman creates the effect that she is looking past the man or over his head, clearly missing his gaze. In sum, Lippi’s *A Man and Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1) appears to be uncharacteristic among the scores of equally proportioned marriage portraits of later decades. However, we must consider that the Florentine friar’s portrait serves as a very early pictorial attempt, one which answers the question of how to depict a wedded pair in one image together. His is a new image type in which the artist must not only consider the representational and perspectival needs of one sitter, but two. There was no convention yet at that point, and no known painted examples from antiquity.[31] In addition, according to Paola Tinagli, Lippi’s 1440 portrait even predates the advent of

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[30] While no author has made the connection that the man might have been painted as an afterthought, many art historians such as John Pope-Hennessy, Jeffery Ruda and Paola Tinagli agree that the double portrait centers the woman as its protagonist. I aim to elaborate on this claim, further arguing that the man was

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probably placed later due to his diminished role and awkward placement on the portrait’s far left side. If we were to take the man out completely from this portrait, we would not lose much as, structurally speaking, the woman appears as the portrait’s central focus. To learn more, please see John Pope-Hennessy, John et. al, "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57, Jeffery Ruda’s *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue*. London, (1993), p. 385, 59–61, and Paola Tinagli’s *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45

[31] See John Pope-Hennessy, John et. al, "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57, 59–61

double profile medals depicting husbands and wives, thus further cementing his role as the progenitor of the double profile.[32]

Now that we have addressed the portrait's structural inconsistencies and the pictorial challenges Lippi likely faced as the father of dual profile portraits, there remains the question of the man and the unconventionality of his diminished role. Other art historians such as Pope-Hennessy, Jeffery Ruda, and Paola Tinagli have argued that the woman was simply the portrait's intended focus, a claim I will elaborate later on in this chapter.[33] While the specific reasoning behind Lippi's awkward composition has not been addressed at length, at least one scholar has speculated that the artist might have been inspired by an illustration from the Lovell Lectionary. In her book *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting*, Patricia Nuttal examines famous Italian artworks and the identifies the origins of potential Flemish stylistic influences.[34] Here, she argues that the portrait might have been modeled after a miniature found in the Flemish Lovell Lectionary dated before 1408, for the illustration "…shows the painter at a window in a low-ceilinged room, presenting the book to his patron," (p. 212). Here, Nuttal suggests that, "Lippi may have seen a similar miniature in a monastic library," (p. 212) and thus modeled his portrait after the Lovell Lectionary's illustration of Lord

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[32] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45

[33] See John Pope-Hennessy, John et. al, "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57, Jeffery Ruda's *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue*. London, (1993), p. 385, 59–61, and Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45

[34] See Patricia Nuttal's "Pictorial Conquests", in *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting, 1400–1500*. New Haven, 2004, pp. 22, 212, 288

Lovell and John Siferwas (Figure 4). In addition, Patricia Nuttal suggests that, "the somewhat cramped proportions of the figures relative to the picture-space recall Netherlandish portraits such as those of Van Eyck or Petrus Christus," (p. 212). However, I would like to suggest additional possibilities. Perhaps the man represented in the painting was the patron, or maybe it was his family, and he wanted a portrait of the bride. He could have died before the marriage took place, and, in order to commemorate the unconsummated union, his family might have commissioned that the deceased man be painted in, converting the image to a double portrait. Or perhaps the groom's family wanted a painting of dual profile portraits but only the bride could complete the necessary sit in Florence, meaning that Lippi and his workshop did not know how the groom looked and thus inserted him later. Or, more intriguingly, perhaps this couple had already married and the man commissioned a painting of his beautiful wife when she suddenly died young, upon which the bereft widower wanted his portrait inserted to commemorate them both as a couple.

While the specific set of circumstances that led to the portrait's creation are unknown, one motivation remains clear: the commemorative sentiment present within the work. Considering the history of portraiture and its significance as a preserver of memory, Lippi's portrait, with its emphasis on both of the figures and their respective family lineages, was likely created to honor someone or some event. However, the stubborn question still remains: whom did this portrait aim to celebrate, and under what circumstances? This question may never have a straightforward answer. However, some art historians such as Paola Tinagli and Jeffrey Ruda seem to agree that the most convincing theory is one where the portrait commemorated the woman's death, given the lack of wedding portraits at this point in time.[35] According to Jeffrey Ruda, the spatial separation between man and wife found in *A Man and Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1) is uncommon in marriage portraits at the time; instead, he asserts that the portrait likely commemorated another, equally important event, perhaps the woman's death.[36] Similarly, Paola Tinagli argues that Lippi's portrait is exceptional due to its depiction of a couple within an intimate, interior setting.[37] Another interesting aspect is the portrait's visual and spatial emphasis on the woman; however, Tinagli is quick to point out that this portrait is not an exploration of her character nor her relationship with the man across from her, but rather a commemoration of the woman which emphasizes the importance of lineage.

While the significance of the figures and the reasons behind the Metropolitan portrait's existence may never be fully understood, I argue that an examination of the role of portrait medals might partially explain the unusual arrangement of sitters that we see here. Perhaps Lippi was in some ways inspired by the seamless integration of text and image found in these abundant medals, as seen in his decision to render the embroidered phrase 'lealta' on the woman's sleeve. Moreover, there is often a personal, commemorative sentiment in the planning and execution of portrait medals; perhaps there were similar sentiments at play here wherein Lippi and his patron may have wanted to immortalize the couple's intimacy and friendship through a double portrait. Moreover, the act of two figures, specifically a man and woman, facing one another is not insignificant, despite the uncertainty surrounding their specific gazes. It is also not insignificant that the portrayal of couples facing one another became a staple of marriage portraits following Lippi's. One can see why: the gesture is an affectionate one, perhaps an indication of courtship or even friendship between married or betrothed couples. According to Stephen Scher, the portrait medal was one of the primary vehicles of memory preservation and commemoration in the Quattrocento.[38] In the introduction to his book, *Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal*, he describes the portrait medal as not only having the potential to be extremely private and personal, the medal also, "…achieved its purpose in giving immortality to a large number of men and women who might otherwise have disappeared from the stage of history," (Scher, p. 6). In addition, the act of representing a loved one or friend through a commemorative medal, "celebrated their power and beauty; their successes and intellectual accomplishments, their family status and dynastic links, their personal skills…their most valued attributes, significant events in their lives…their religious and philosophical beliefs," (Scher, p. 6). In sum, the portrait medal expressed many complex ideas and artful forms within a small and portable medium. There was also the added benefit of merging text to image which provided rich biographical and historical information. In addition to the profile portrait, there was the detailed “back” or *impresa*, which might contain text, images, or heraldic sigils that lauded the person portrayed, their familial ties, and/or their achievements.[39] According to contemporary accounts such as that of Paolo Giovo, the *impresa*, a kind of emblem or motto that often accompanied the backs of portrait medals, bordered ambiguity and clarity in its messaging. Scher quotes Giovo saying that “the impresa must not be so obscure that it needs a sibyl to interpret it, but at the same time, it should not be so clear that every pleb can understand it,” (Scher, p. 76). Impresas typically used symbolism to convey their messaging. For example, in the portrait medal of Cecilia Gonzaga by Pisanello (Figure 5), a unicorn lies in the lap of a young maiden under a moonlit sky. Both unicorn and the moon serve as an allusion to the Marquis’ daughter and her choice to become a Clarissan nun. The impresa invokes the image of a unicorn, a mythical creature that could only be tamed by a virgin maiden, and the moon, which is associated with the Greco-Roman virgin goddess Diana, as a way to convey the woman’s purity and her proficiency as a classical scholar. In another medal by Pisanello, (Figure 6) a singing lion serves as a pun on the patron’s name, Leonello d’Este, which means little lion. A putto or winged child presents a scroll to the lion, signifying the Marquis’s commitment to education and culture. Perhaps it was the ambiguity of meaning through symbology as well as the commemorative nature of portrait medals that inspired the same qualities in Lippi’s own work.

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[35] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45 and Jeffery Ruda's *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue*. London, (1993), p. 385

[36] See Jeffery Ruda's *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue*. London, (1993), p. 385

[37] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45

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[38] See Stephen Scher's Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance (S.K. Scher, Ed.) (1st ed.) (1999), pp. 6-8

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[39] See Stephen Scher’s Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance (S.K. Scher, Ed.) (1st ed.) (1999), p. 76

As for the use of the double profile, not much can be said outside the realm of speculation, as Lippi's painting supposedly predates the advent of double profile portrait medals as well as painted double portraits.[40] I suggest that due to the popularity of the medium and its abundance, there is a distinct possibility that the friar saw a pair of medals that happened to be lying side by side and appeared to face one another. Perhaps it was here that Lippi developed the concept for his mirror-like profile portraits. Or perhaps when instructed to add the male sitter to the image, Lippi could not arrange an in-person sitting and instead based the image on a portrait medal of his intended subject.

Regardless of the specific circumstances, the mystery surrounding Lippi's invention of the double portrait and the iconographic difficulties that surround its creation remain a testament to the struggles of the early Quattrocento. According to Stephen Scher, even the portrait medal was considered a difficult medium that required much experimentation, as the small dimensions, integration of text and image, and desire for an academic and/or poetic ambiguity spurred early Quattrocento artists to rethink their own iconographic strategies.[41] The medieval modes of representation which were deemed unsuitable for the aspirations of Quattrocento artists, and the desire to emulate antique models which were rare and often yet to be discovered, created a dilemma for early Quattrocento artists. It can be said that one of the biggest problems facing artists of the early 15th century was "how" to depict certain figures and concepts. When it comes to

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[40] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45

[41] See Stephen Scher's Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance (S.K. Scher, Ed.) (1st ed.) (1999), pp. 6-8, 76

Lippi and his connection to portrait medals, this conflict is one of the clearest signs of collaboration, although perhaps unintentionally. Perhaps it is better to read Lippi's work as part of a collective attempt to render classically-inspired, graceful figures and compositions while simultaneously aiming to establish a uniquely "modern" artistic identity.

Much like Fra Filippo Lippi's unusual arrangement of gender and the somewhat striking mismatch of mutual glances, questions of the gaze must be carefully pondered when analyzing the artist's famous portrait. In his article "A Window from the Song of Songs in Conjugal Portraits by Fra Filippo Lippi and Bartolomaeus Zeitblom," Robert Baldwin was the first to point out that the indirect viewing between figures as well as their separation in the picture space—inside and outside of a room—are among the portrait's more puzzling qualities.[42] In order to address these enigmatic moments, Baldwin turns to pictorial and literary sources that focus on mutual, conjugal gazing through windows. This visual and literary tradition likely emerged from the extensive commentary on the biblical Song of Songs, specifically verse 2:9, an important and well-known source on love that became the basis for many depictions of love and marriage during the Medieval and Renaissance periods. [43] For context, the passage reads:

> "Behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice," (Baldwin, p. 7).

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[42] See Robert Baldwin's "A Window from the Song of Songs in Conjugal Portraits by Fra Filippo Lippi and Bartolomaeus Zeitblom", in: Source 5, (1986), pp. 7-14

[43] For further reading, see George Scheper's "The Spiritual Marriage: The Exegetical History and Literary Impact of the Song of Songs on the Middle Ages" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1971)

In his essay, Baldwin seeks to understand how this passage from the biblical "Song of Songs" contextualizes Lippi's decision to separate the couple depicted in his famous portrait through the addition of a window and wall. He assumes without question that due to this arrangement, Lippi intended for the couple to look at one another, and used the motif of a window in order to emphasize the poetic and spiritual evocations surrounding matrimony as established by the biblical passage. While his argument is well researched and has its merits, Baldwin bases his claim on the presupposition that the unclear viewing between figures is a result of an artistic error, an assumption I cannot accept. Rather, the portrait's perspectival errors likely stem from the man having been painted later in the scene. We will later discover, by examining infrared scans of the famous double portrait, that Lippi edited the arrangement of the figures at least once before completing the final version.[44]

In a later article, "'Gates Pure and Shining and Serene': Mutual Gazing as an Amatory Motif in Western Literature and Art," Baldwin elaborates on his previous article, moving beyond the motif of mutual gazes and their associations with the "Song of Songs." In Renaissance love scenes, most poetic associations model themselves after classical literature, with some of the most popular depictions focusing on mutually affectionate couples such as Venus and Adonis or Venus and Mars. In such love scenes, the goddess is shown laying in her lover's lap while the two look deeply into each other's eyes.[45] Considering these images often portrayed couples in an amorous embrace while maintaining mutual eye-contact, one can see why Baldwin asserts that these works represent a reciprocal and non-violent love, wherein the observer does not need to use force or trickery to obtain his beloved. This is in direct contrast with other, more violent mythic couplings such as Apollo and Daphne or Zeus and his many mortal conquests. Images which prioritize mutual gazes are also free from the devastation of eros as seen in the more common literary motifs of one-sided glances such as Titian's *Venus and the Organist* (Figure 7) and Jan Saenredam's engraving *Sight* (Figure 8), which feature men looking at beautiful women who do not return their affectionate gazes.[46] The common underlying message of images that involve mutual glances between lovers is one wherein love enters through the eyes (the contemporary notion of "love at first sight" demonstrates the resonance of this concept).

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[44] See Patricia Rubin's catalogue entry in *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*. Exh. cat., Bode Museum, Berlin. New York, (2011), pp. 96, 101

This idea of love functioning primarily through the eyes stems from ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and literature. The motif of mutual and erotic eye-contact appears prominently in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura,* in which Mars rests his head in the lap of Venus and looks at her.[47] Lucretius likely utilized the mutual gaze between Venus and

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[45] According to Baldwin, a fresco of 'Venus and Adonis' by Guilio Romano (Vatican, Loggie) engraved by Marc
Antonio Raimondi (Metropolitan Museum, Manhattan), established the popular pictorial motif of lap-lying lovers. appearing again in a painting of "Two Couples with Cupid" by Garofalo (National Gallery, London) and in Poussin's 'Venus and Adonis' (Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth)

[46] See Robert Baldwin's "'Gates Pure and Shining and Serene': Mutual Gazing as an Amatory Motif in Western Literature and Art." *Renaissance and Reformation*, (1986), pp. 30-35, 46

[47] For further reading, see Lucretius' The Nature of Things Bk. 1, lines 32-37, trans. Frank Copley (New York 1977)
l. 'Mars the war lord. . . Often throws himself into your arms, faint with love's deathless
wound, and there, with arching neck bent back, looks up and sighs, and feeds a lustful eye on
you, and pillowed, dangles his life's breath from your lips.'

Mars as a metaphor to explain his Epicurean philosophy, in which love or a life devoid of anxiety conquers war and human suffering. According to Baldwin, this passage inspired Renaissance and Baroque depictions in which lovers lay their heads in their beloved's laps and gazed into one another's eyes, such as Giulio Romano and Marcantonio Raimondi's respective iterations of the mythic *Venus and Adonis* (Figures 9 and 10) the works of Annibale Caracci's *Reciprocated Love* (Figure 11), and Jan Saenredam's *Touch* (Figure 12), all of which feature mythical or allegorical couples. According to Baldwin, the most influential of the ancient Greek texts on love is Plato's *Phaedrus,* where we find a discussion of romantic and spiritual sight. According to Plato, a

> …flood of passion, pours in upon the lover, and part of it is absorbed within him, but when he can contain no more, the rest flows away outside him: and as a breath of wind or an echo, rebounding from a smooth hard surface, goes back to its place of origin, even so the stream of beauty turns back and re-enters the eyes of the fair beloved . . . whereby the soul of the beloved in its turn is filled with love, (Donaldson-Evans, *Love 's Fatal Glance: A Study of Eye Imagery in the Poets of the 'Ecole Lyonnaise'*, p. 17).

This notion of the beloved's eyes, face, or soul as a mirror would then become a popular topic in medieval and Renaissance poetry, with similar motifs appearing in love images and marriage portraits.[48]

Robert Baldwin's argument that Fra Filippo Lippi's portrait, in its depiction of a man peering in through a window at a woman, could in fact be a representation of this tradition of mutual, spiritual gazing, is an important one. However, there remains the issue of the uncertain eye contact and spatial incongruence between the persons portrayed.[49] When it comes to this issue, I, unlike Baldwin, cannot accept the possibility that Lippi's unusual composition was caused by a lack of artistic skill or precision. This painting was in all likelihood a significant commission by an important family who knew exactly what they wanted in such a commemorative double portrait, which makes the possibility that the male portrait was added later more plausible. And yet, considering the painting's emphasis on two closely aligned figures, the question remains: is there more to the imprecise glances shared between sitters? More precisely, does Lippi's painting of a man and a woman at a casement use the window gazing motif in order to emphasize the spiritual nature of matrimony?

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[48] See Martin Porter's *Windows of the soul: Physiognomy in European culture 1470-1780*. Oxford University Press, 2005

According to Jeffery Ruda's catalogue of Lippi's works, the Metropolitan portrait fits with other depictions of the relationship between husband and wife in late medieval Europe, an alliance more often determined by authority and possession than by poetic evocation, as Robert Baldwin suggests.[50] Ruda posits that the placement of the man's coat of arms – he points at it with his proper left hand – and the act of peering into his wife's chamber from outside the home are part of an authoritative gesture, with the conceptual window creating and emphasizing a spatial and emotional distance between the two figures. Moreover, the painting's atypical formal solutions—particularly the separation between the couple through the wall or window from which the man is peering in—might be the result of unusual circumstances, such as the commemoration of the woman's untimely death or some other form of separation. On the other hand, some art historians such as Russel Sale and Barnaby Nygren seem to support Robert Baldwin's idea of mutual gazing through artistic imprecision, albeit in different ways. Russel Sale fully supports Baldwin's assertion of artistic error, claiming that Lippi was often imprecise when depicting his figures' gazes.[51] Meanwhile, Nygren takes a completely different stance in the 'gaze' discourse, arguing that the different perspectival planes were intentional, but that they were merely an exercise in Albertian theory wherein painted perspective should act as a window from which the viewer gazes in.[52] I find this contention to be an interesting addition, however, one that seems too theoretical and divorced from the historical and social factors that contributed to the portrait's creation. At the very least, this argument is outside the scope of this essay, as it would deviate drastically from this thesis' goals of consulting existing scholarship and offering new interpretations based on historical and social evidence.

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[49] See Robert Baldwin's "A Window from the Song of Songs in Conjugal Portraits by Fra Filippo Lippi and Bartolomaeus Zeitblom", in: Source 5, (1986), p. 7

[50] See Jeffery Ruda's *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue*. London, (1993), p. 385 and See Robert Baldwin's "A Window from the Song of Songs in Conjugal Portraits by Fra Filippo Lippi and Bartolomaeus Zeitblom", in: Source 5, (1986), pp. 7-14

Moving forward, this 'gaze' discourse has seemingly been put to rest thanks to Patricia Rubin and the Metropolitan Museum's opulent catalogue *The Renaissance*

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[51] See Russell Sale's "Protecting Fertility in Fra Filippo Lippi's 'Portrait of a Woman with a Man at a Casement'." *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 51 (2016), pp. 65–83; Here Sale claims that Fra Filippo Lippi was often imprecise when directing his figure's gazes. This is a bold assertion; however, he does not elaborate which works display this 'imprecise' gaze. I have included him in the general discourse about Lippi's indirect gaze as it appears in *A Man and a Woman at a Casement* however, I cannot elaborate or support his claim. Instead, I merely seek to present his perspective in this discourse in order to draw my own conclusion.

[52] Nygren, Barnaby. "'We first pretend to stand at a certain window': Window as Pictorial Device and Metaphor in the Paintings of Filippo Lippi." *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 26 (Fall 2006), pp. 16, 20–21

Portrait from Donatello to Bellini.[53] In her important contribution, she discusses recent examinations of the painting performed through infrared technology. The results reveal that Lippi must have changed the couple's arrangement—specifically their hand placements—at least once. For the woman, the artist settled on a position in which one hand rests over the other, to achieve a more demure and graceful pose, as was believed befitted a woman. More importantly, the man was initially to be shown with one hand raised below his chin, actively placing him as an interlocutor. This discovery confirms scholarly suspicions that Fra Filippo Lippi may have been initially playing with the idea of mutual gazing, or at least a one-sided viewing in which the man, through this specific hand gesture, plays the role of the active suitor who admires his betrothed from afar. More importantly, however, is the clear evidence that Lippi undertook at least one revision during the painting process, thus supporting my suggestion that the male sitter might have been placed at a later time. Suppose we take the man out of the picture entirely; the woman appears quite naturally as the portrait's central focus. If we take into consideration the rules of one-point perspective, there is little doubt that the woman herself, or perhaps a spot near her neck, would represent the portrait's vanishing point from which all other angles and lines stem. Considering the man is placed off to the side and at an awkward angle, it wouldn't be a surprise if Lippi placed the man later or simply had to reference another sketch or image of the man due to time constraints. If we consult Rubin's expertise, the Scolari couple were married in 1439, about a year prior to the portrait's completion.[54] Considering the portrait was completed around 1435-1440, this makes it very likely that Fra Filippo Lippi was commissioned to complete the painting to commemorate the couple's matrimony and the alliance of the two families, either around the time the two were wed or a few years later.

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[53] See Patricia Rubin's Catalogue entry in *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*. Exh. cat., Bode Museum, Berlin. New York, (2011), pp. 96, 101

When viewed in this way, Lippi's solution might in fact have been based on, or at least inspired by, conventions of biblical love poetry. This would identify the painting's topic as a poetic evocation rather than a commemoration of a betrothal, marriage, or birth.[55] I argue that it was both. Given the information we have concerning the portrait's commission and patrons, it is clear that the portrait had a commemorative function. In addition, the use of windows as well as Lippi's choice to position the couple facing one another are likely imbued with at least some poetic and literary motifs, be they biblical or classical, that would have been recognized by the Renaissance connoisseur. However, there remains another unusual aspect which sets *A Man and a Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1) apart, this being the size difference and unequal attention allotted toward the woman at the expense of the man and, additionally, the 'dual gaze' it creates for the viewer; here the man is not simply viewing his bride, but also inviting others to contemplate her visage as well.[56]

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[54] See Patricia Rubin's Catalogue entry in *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*. Exh. cat., Bode Museum, Berlin. New York, (2011), pp. 96, 101

[55] See Patricia Rubin's *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*. Exh. cat., Bode-Museum, Berlin. New York, (2011), pp. 96-101

[56] See Patricia Rubin's *The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini*. Exh. cat., Bode-Museum, Berlin. New York, (2011), pp. 96-101

In paintings such as Piero della Francesca's double portrait of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino (Figure 2) and Ercole's de' Roberti's portraits of Giovanni and Ginerva Bentivoglio (Figure 3), the man and woman not only face one another, but meet one another's eyes across the picture planes. This mutual gaze appears as a staple of marriage portraits, not simply because eye-contact between men and women was often associated with erotic and romantic sentiments as seen in Renaissance love images of Venus and Adonis. Within the context of matrimony, however, as seen in these portrayals of married couples (or at least betrothed couplings), mutual gazing transcends beyond its erotic context, instead becoming an intimate activity between husband and wife. Because of this transcension through marriage, erotic and romantic subtext that would otherwise imbue the image with a kind of hedonism is instead elevated into a sanctified, spiritual connection between a man and his wife.[57]

However, Lippi's portrait still stands out as a strange example due to the female figure's incongruent size and centrality as compared with her male counterpart. There is also an unclear correlation between the figures through eye contact, as well as the omission of detail which makes it difficult to make any definitive statements regarding its enigmatic moments. I will continue my investigation by segueing into the unique gendered representation in Lippi's famous portrait, in which the man and woman seemingly mirror one another in features and idealization, an unusual choice given the different standards typically found in men's versus women's portraiture.

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[57] See Robert Baldwin's "'Gates Pure and Shining and Serene': Mutual Gazing as an Amatory Motif in Western Literature and Art." *Renaissance and Reformation*, (1986), pp. 30-35, 46

In my examination of the unique gendered representation as seen in Fra Filippo Lippi's double portrait, I will delve into a discussion of the differences in the pictorial conventions seen in men's portraits versus those found in women's during the Quattrocento. Typically, portraits of men are more naturalistic. The artist typically focuses on representing physical features that will identify the male sitter such as scars, moles, or age lines. Women's portraiture, on the other hand, tends to emphasize idealized features. This is seen in a lack of distinguishing characteristics or imperfections, with profiles maintaining nearly identical features such as a broad forehead, arched brows, blonde hair, pale, smooth skin, etc.[58] These conventions can clearly be seen in the marriage portraits of Federico da Montefeltro and Giovanni Bentivoglio, wherein the men are depicted in a naturalistic manner while the women are shown with idealized features. The differences are even more clearly seen in the portrait of Federico and his wife, Battista, wherein Federico is shown with a hooked nose, several moles, age lines around his mouth and on his forehead, and a stern, weathered expression. Meanwhile, Battista is shown with smooth, unblemished, youthful skin, and a small, shapely mouth with a friendly yet demure expression. When juxtaposed with Lippi's work, we see an atypical convention where the man is depicted with no real distinguishing features that stand out to the viewer. Instead, he seems to mirror the idealistic features of the woman across him, sporting a conventionally handsome and youthful face.

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[58] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, (1997), pp. 52–53

In order to properly explain this strange choice, we must discuss the history of the profile and its gendered connotations. Prior to 1440, men were the predominant subjects for profile portraits aside from the occasional inclusion of women in donor portraits.[59] From c. 1440 on, however, pictorial conventions changed within Florentine profile portraits, in which women then became the primary subject and men graduated to the three-quarter view.[60] According to Patricia Simons in her article "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture," due to the prevalence of female subjects, we must view the profile portrait as a construction of gendered norms and customs. In accordance with the function of the gaze in Florence's display culture during the 15th century, the profile, in its presentation of an averted eye and face available for guiltless observation, was well-suited for the representation of an orderly, chaste, and decorous object. This idea is reflected in the historical record, where women were confined to the profile until the 1470's, at which time portraits of women began to follow the conventions of those of men, shifting away from the profile and turning their faces in three-quarter view. As per the Renaissance's display culture, wherein elite people were expected to perform or project an ideal image for the public, the portrait was also meant to display one's lineage, social prestige, and visibility within the public sphere. For women, profile images were painted and commissioned by men. As such, images depicting women were created as an exemplum of ideal feminine behavior for upper class women, these qualities being: a demure nature, adherence to specific beauty and fashion conventions, etc. In short, a woman's role was to be put on display for the public gaze, for her perception and reputation stemmed from public scrutiny, which then defined her personhood. Moreover, an elite woman would only have been seen at specific moments during this time; typically, this was either through a physical window or the metaphorical window of the canvas as a representation. As a representation, the desired traits of the ideal feminine beauty were developed with the profile in mind, as artists preferred a long, sinuous line that ran continuously from a high forehead revealed by neatly pinned back hair, to the base of the neck.[61] Thus, when making the case that there exist different representational standards between men and women in marriage portraits, one must examine the features of the sitters themselves.

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[59] See Patricia Simon's "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture." *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*. Ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York, (1992), pp. 43, 50, 54

[60] See Patricia Simon's "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture." *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*. Ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York, (1992), p. 43

Considering the history of women and the profile, the same beauty conventions in which the female sitters are idealized are expressed in all three portraits, including the double portraits by della Francesca, Ercole, and Lippi. However, when we look at the male sitters, we see a split between the conventional portraits of the Duke and Giovanni Bentivoglio, and the unusual portrait by Fra Filippo Lippi. In the former, the men maintain natural, distinguishing features that would render them recognizable by the viewer. This is an important aspect of their representation, as these men would have held land, titles, and power in their respective cities. We must remember that the value of

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[61] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, (1997), pp. 52–53

Quattrocento portraits did not depend on whether or not the image was a near perfect replication of the original sitter. However, such portraits *were* concerned with recognizability.[62] The portrait attempted to substitute the mental image of a person with something more stable and subject to public control, hence portraits were largely made to commemorate illustrious public figures such as the men seen in these double portraits. Ergo, idealization was not typically used for men, for their importance lay in their virtue, deeds, and titles, not in their appearance. Thus, a recognizable, naturalistic depiction was typically utilized for the male when painted in profile. Meanwhile, a woman's role and social standing depended on her family, chastity, and demure virtue. The wives present in these image types are typically extensions of their male counterparts. They are depicted alongside these powerful men solely through marriage. Therefore, the appearance of a woman through idealization was essential, for her appearance was subject to public scrutiny and often tied to her husband's wealth, social standing, and reputation.

Considering the gender conventions and their depiction in portraits, Fra Filippo Lippi's choice to depict the male figure as an idealized youth in profile alongside his equally idealized wife remains unconventional. Perhaps we might read this decision as proof, yet again, that this portrait was intended with the woman, Angiola Sapiti, as its central focus, with the man placed later. Perhaps it suggests, again, that this portrait of a married or betrothed couple is a posthumous depiction of a woman who might have died shortly after the birth of her son. Perhaps her husband and the father of their child,

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[62] See Alison Wright's "The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, (2000), pp. 86-88

Lorenzo Scolari, commissioned the portrait as a means to commemorate and celebrate the close bond between the newlywed couple. And perhaps the choice to show the woman in the most exquisite clothes and with a clearly legible reference to her family motto should be read as an affectionate gesture from a man who genuinely felt a deep sense of friendship for his late bride. Moving on to the final chapter of this thesis, we should keep these pieces of interpretation in mind as we turn our attention toward the woman sitter, Angiola Sapiti.

Chapter 3: Dress, Beauty, and Virtue

In the first two chapters, we have discussed the scholarship on Lippi's *A Man and Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1) and we have examined the image's unusual composition, specifically the imprecise "gaze" between both sitters and its unconventional portrayal of gender. When compared to later portraits, these representational choices appear strange indeed. However, we have established that this is probably due to Lippi's pioneering advent of the double portrait, an artistic feat created without a precedent in painting. In addition, I have suggested that Lippi's portrait might better be seen as a manifestation of originality that inspired later artistic attempts than the result of painterly deficits.

As art historians such as John Pope-Hennessy, Paola Tinagli, and Jefferey Ruda have proposed, the painting was likely commissioned in order to commemorate an important event, in all likelihood the death of the woman portrayed, Angiola Sapiti.[63] When read this way, the patron, either Lorenzo Scolari himself or perhaps his family, has chosen to represent his wife dressed in the sumptuous clothing fitting for a bride or spouse—a convention of female profile portraiture in the Quattrocento—but perhaps also an affectionate gesture that goes beyond such standards. We will move on by examining the significance of the female sitter's clothing, Renaissance notions of beauty, and the role of the bridal body in rituals and representations of family and marriage.

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[63] See John Pope-Hennessy, John et. al, "Secular Painting in 15th-Century Tuscany: Birth Trays, Cassone Panels, and Portraits." *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 38 (Summer 1980), pp. 56–57, 59–61, Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, and Jeffery Ruda's *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue*. London, (1993), p. 385

One of the most eye-catching aspects of Lippi’s Metropolitan portrait is the artist’s use of fine detail on the figures and their clothing. The female body in its opulent costume is quite literally dripping with fine, gleaming pearls. On top of her golden blonde hair sits a large Flemish headdress with deep red tassels and lined with pearl. Her pale, elegant neck displays a mother-of-pearl necklace; her dark brown gown or *cioppa* is woven with golden threads, which shine with a gleaming contrast against the dark color of the *cioppa*. An embroidery on her left sleeve reads ‘lealta’ or loyalty, likely a reference to a personal or family motto, perhaps related to the coat of arms on display on the windowsill. She also wears a mauve, fur-lined overdress or *giornea* over her dark *cioppa*, complete with a pearl brooch and white gloves. We see multiple rings, potentially made up of red rubies and dark blue sapphires, on her index, middle, and ring fingers. Despite the male figure being shown only partially, the viewer can discern some of his appearance and outfit, which is only slightly less ornate than the woman standing across from him. The man sports a bright, scorching red cap and what appears to be a similarly colored shirt. When looking at his two gesticulating hands, we find a single, delicate ring on his proper right hand. Given the care and attention paid to the costuming of both the man and the woman, it is clear that for the Scolari couple (if this is, in fact, them), a curated and finely decorated appearance was of the utmost importance. In order to understand the intent and desired effect of this constructed public persona, I will discuss the gendered cultural and social significance of dress and jewelry in early Quattrocento Florentine society. This discussion will set up the historical and cultural context surrounding early modern clothing as represented in *A Man and Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1). In order to better understand the representational choices surrounding elite clothing, I will mainly draw from publications by Carole Collier-Frick, one of the leading experts on clothing and its role in Renaissance society and culture.

In her book, *Dressing Renaissance Florence,* Collier-Frick emphasizes the relationship between honor and clothing within Florentine society.[64] In the chapter "Tailoring Family Honor," she discusses the significant and often inseparable relationship between honor and one's appearance in 15th century and the different standards for men's dress and women's dress. For Florentine men, honor was achieved through many sources, such as: family reputation, wealth, ancestry and lineage, and high offices and public positions; these aspects combined gave one an honorable reputation and, in turn, respect among peers. In order to retain honor, it needed to be demonstrated continually and, if possible, on public occasion. In a social climate of both male competition and male alliances, a Renaissance man of *virtú* was always on the public stage, performing his honor in order to gain and maintain approval and recognition. Because he was under the watchful eye of the community, accruing honor and avoiding shame was crucial. In addition, a man must not only act his best, but also dress his best as it was thought virtue was best accentuated through fortune and ornamentation.[65] Male honor was expected to be matched by female virtue. Women of the Renaissance elites, both republican and aristocratic, lived within a system of expectations based on the core moral expectation of female virtue that was largely established, enforced, and regulated by men. A woman's most valuable commodity was her flawless appearance, which was believed to hint at her moral qualities and the attention paid to herself. The demonstration of such virtuous and beautiful appearance was closely scrutinized by her peers. Elaborate clothing was essential for women in order to recharge their continual task of visualizing not only their own *virtú*, but that of their family. Honor based on demonstration of virtue was, according to Carole Collier-Frick, constantly in danger of being diminished as one faux pas could undo months of accruing public favor. Moreover, the clothing of elite women depended strongly on the largesse of men. The only goods that a woman received honorably were her paternal dowry and trousseau. However, according to Adrian Randolph in his article "Performing the Bridal Body", the strong emphasis placed on a woman's appearance—particularly the bride's—served essential social and political functions in Florentine society: social in its advertisement of familial wealth, virtue, and social standing, political in the securement of capital and alliances of interests through marriage.[66] We almost certainly see these ideas at play in Lippi's Scolari portrait. There are clear allusions to the family motto and the material wealth of the woman sitter through her embroidered sleeve and lavish clothing. The sleeve is particularly significant as it signals the social role of the betrothed female figure as a liaison in the transfer of capital and formation of political bonds between families. Moreover, at this time, a woman's 'value' was based on her virtue, which in turn was documented and displayed through clothing, jewelry and strict codes of conduct.[67] From her clothing to the lengths her father might go for securing her marriage to the wedding ceremony itself—all these aspects demonstrate that a Renaissance woman was an adorned 'other' who must take on the social standing of whoever she was associated with. A woman at this time was utterly defined by her relationships, both marital and filial, as well as her outward appearance. According to Paola Tinagli, it was also chiefly through these qualities: the sitter's elegance and body language, her clothes, ornaments, jewelry, etc. that portraits such as Lippi's conveyed a similar message to the viewer.[68] Heraldic images were often embroidered into the woman's clothes to denote her familial lineage—either her own family's or that of her husband's. The richness of her clothes and jewelry signaled her social standing and wealth. Here, Tinagli reminds us that, in many ways, the Renaissance was a "display culture" where authority, respect, moral and political influence were gained through one's attire and outward appearance. Clothes were often adorned with symbols pointing to nobility and in the case of women virtue. A woman's dress was a way to display her family's wealth and status. Allison Wright, in her exploration of the commemorative and public intent behind portraiture, is in agreement with these historical interpretations in which a woman's appearance, clothing, and familial ties were her most important qualities.[69] According to Wright, when it comes to women and portraits, most depictions seem to capture women at the time of their betrothal or marriage. Portraits such as Lippi's would be commissioned by the family a woman was marrying into as part of the large sum of materials and items that would be exchanged between the parties.

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[64] See Carole Collier-Frick's *Dressing Renaissance Florence: families, fortunes, & fine clothing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. pp. 77-94

[65] See Carole Collier-Frick's *Dressing Renaissance Florence: families, fortunes, & fine clothing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. pp. 78-83

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[66] See Adrian Randolph's "Performing the Bridal Body in Fifteenth Century Florence", in: Art History 21, no. 2, June 1998, pp. 182-200

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[67] See Patricia Simons' "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture." *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*. Ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York, 1992, pp. 43, 50, 54 n. 37, fig. 3.

[68] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45

In fifteenth-century Florence, all public events required special outfits, but there were only three specific categories for which specially made clothes were warranted: religious holidays, officeholding, and rites of passage such as marriage, baptism, and funerary ceremonies.[70] In public office, members of the male Florentine elite were expected to wear elegant yet restrained clothing. A man's clothing should be refined enough to impress, but not too much so as to appear flashy or gaudy to the public. For women, the clothes worn at public events such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals were often ornate and extravagant in order to display their husbands' and the family's wealth, while their public demeanor was expected to be quiet, chaste, and reserved. Because women did not hold public office, they carried out their duties within the private home, or palazzo[71]. Ultimately, a woman needed to understand that she was meant to play a specific set of roles at home, as a wife, mother, and homemaker, and a more decorative role when she appeared in public with her husband or family. Regarding certain rites of passage such as weddings and funerals, these events were treated as personalized public statements of honor, and, as such, were considered the most important and expensive events for which new clothes were ordered and made[72]. A woman's wedding was the most important and decorative event in Florentine public life, thus no expense was spared in securing the most luxurious outfits and adornments[73]. In contrast, both men and women were not to be dressed too lavishly in death. Men and women alike wore plain, white linens on their deathbed.

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[69] See Alison Wright's "The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, 2000. pp. 86-88; 90-96

[70] See Carole Collier-Frick's *Dressing Renaissance Florence: families, fortunes, & fine clothing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. pp. 77-94

[71] See Carole Collier-Frick's *Dressing Renaissance Florence: families, fortunes, & fine clothing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. pp. 77-94

Let us now return to Fra Filippo's double portrait. Here, as with other portraits of the period, clothing plays an essential role as a signifier of social standing, gender, and family reputation. Because of the historical distance, modern viewers easily forget that the sitters pictured in the small portrait once lived their lives in a similar way, possibly fretting over obtaining the latest fashion in order to impress their peers and demonstrate their family's honor. It is here, I argue, that one of the most important and tangible threads that connect us to the world of Angiola and Lorenzo Scolari are, in fact, the material items on display. They bear important clues for an interpretation that also takes into account the poetic and social ideals expressed in this portrait. It is very likely that the couple, or their families, would have spent hundreds of soldi ordering custom-made clothing for specific public events. It is no wonder, then, that the Scolari couple and their families would have carefully planned their commission of a portrait by Fra Filippo Lippi that would have shown the two in an idealized manner and finely dressed. This idea of an enduring public image created through portraiture adds yet another commemorative dimension to the Renaissance ideal of "likeness" in a portrait—in fact, both overlap one another. As Allision Wright puts it in her article "The Memory of Faces," [74]:

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[72] See Carole Collier-Frick's *Dressing Renaissance Florence: families, fortunes, & fine clothing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. pp. 77-94

[73] See Carole Collier-Frick's *Dressing Renaissance Florence: families, fortunes, & fine clothing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. pp. 77-94

> "…Renaissance portraiture was, I would argue, equally concerned with a more public construction of memory, which made a less obvious call on personal sentiment, even though the power of the image to arouse desire, especially the desire to emulate, may still be important. While independent portraits were frequently hung in bed chambers, *camere*, in the patrician *palazzo*, the bedroom was much more of a public room in the period than it is now. Private collections of furniture, paintings, and other objects…were also intended to be shown to others for admiration. Thus, in considering the context of much fifteenth-century portraiture we need to address not so much the act of memory per se as that of commemoration, with its connotations of a shared activity within groups such as the family and its descendants and with a concrete function in society as a whole," (p. 88).

The role of the Renaissance portrait in emphasizing and commemorating the family and its rites of passage was not merely private. It was always additionally 'public' – meant to be viewed by others outside of the close ties of family. Images such as Lippi's Scolari portrait, thus, must be understood as both commemorative tools, activators of family memory, and as public-facing societal statements. Fra Filippo Lippi would have been instructed and would have chosen carefully how to render the woman's appearance in order to demonstrate a family's standing and draw attention to both her social status and her virtuous beauty. While the portrait has some incongruencies and moments that cause us to pause and reflect, there are other aspects that can be 'read' with some certainty, such as the painting's attention to realistic detail in the woman's clothing and adornment.

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[74] See Alison Wright's "The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, 2000. pp. 86-88; 90-96

We also detect this, although to a lesser degree, in the man’s dress and appearance, with his fine red shirt, red cap, and the small, golden ring on his right hand. Overall, our male sitter is dressed quite typically for a wealthy Florentine man who was expected to look elegant, yet sensible.[75]

Without straying from the overarching themes of appearance, costume, and the curated public image, I would now like turn our discussion toward the poetic and aesthetic concerns at play here, specifically how these ideas manifest in our female sitter. Within her idealized appearance—i.e. her high forehead, blonde hair, pale complexion, long neck, and smooth skin—Lippi seems to be drawing from contemporary notions of beauty in which a woman of a certain standing in society must maintain the same aforementioned features. Petrarchan poetic ideals—in which poet and artist alike focus on and laud a beautiful woman’s body parts—in particular had become the primary litmus test of Quattrocento female beauty standards.[76] According to these ideals, a woman should have: gleaming teeth that shine like pearls, lips like coral, blonde hair, a long, elegant neck, a high forehead, smooth, blemish-free skin, and a pale complexion. A woman’s beauty and her family lineage were considered part of her womanly virtue. These conventions can be seen directly in the woman portrayed in Fra Filippo Lippi’s double portrait, especially in the woman’s profile, idealized features, and her adherence to family ties through the embroidered family motto on her sleeve.

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[75] See Carole Collier-Frick’s *Dressing Renaissance Florence: families, fortunes, & fine clothing*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. pp. 77-94

[76] See Victoria Kirkham’s “Poetic Ideals of Love and Beauty” in Brown, David Alan. 2001. *Virtue & beauty: Leonardo's Ginevra de' Benci and Renaissance portraits of women*. Washington: National Gallery of Art. p. 57

Poetic conventions and ideals were paramount for Quattrocento representations of female beauty; Petrarchism especially had a profound effect on Quattrocento representational beauty standards. In order to discuss these ideas and how they manifest in 15th century portraiture, Elizabeth Cropper, in her article "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style," provides essential information and context.[77] Here, Elizabeth Cropper discusses art guidebooks which often drew inspiration from Petrarch's poetry where he lauded his beloved Laura's beautiful features. Following the poet's descriptions, these guidebooks produced several sets of measurements and features that would go on to serve as a kind of ideal matrix that many artists in the Renaissance followed closely. In addition, many of these books provided sketches of features that the author considered the most beautiful on a woman. However, the diagrammatic nature of these sketches made it clear that these were not intended to be criteria for academic models nor were they drawn from nature. Instead, these acted as brief aids for artists. Even so, these guidebooks drew upon literary and poetic conventions; over time, artists became not only concerned with the ideal woman's features, but her proportions, colors, and elusive and internal qualities such as her *grazia*. While these artistic treatises and guidebooks were intended to capture a generalized concept of the ideal beauty, in actuality, her specific features were never agreed upon by the masses. The ideal woman often changed from person to person, from Raphael's dark beauty to Botticelli's golden one, and so on. In the end, it was the Virgin, with her golden hair, rosy complexion, thrusting breasts, and soft female body, that remained as the universal feminine standard.[78]

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[77] See Elizabeth Cropper's "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style." *The Art Bulletin* 58, no. 3 (1976): 374–394

In summary, Quattrocento artists like Fra Filippo Lippi often sought to create a close affinity between the ornaments of painting and poetry in order to create women who were the most perfect embodiments of ekphrastic descriptions of beauty and/or the Petrarchan lyric vernacular of beauty. As we see with our female sitter, she exemplifies these poetic standards with her golden hair, pale, flawless complexion, coral lips, long neck, and high forehead. Moreover, we also see some of her more allusive qualities on display, which are similarly inspired by Petrarch's poetic descriptions, these being: her highly decorated clothing, the pleasant smile aimed toward her betrothed, and adherence to family lineage through her embroidered sleeve.[79] These features and the prominent way in which they are displayed not only show Fra Filippo Lippi's commitment to creating an artistic 'ideal' out of the female figure's physical attributes, but an additional, deeper commitment to showing her hidden, yet equally prized qualities i.e. her *grazia* and excellent pedigree.[80] To conclude, the woman pictured in *A Man and Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1) demonstrates that Lippi—or perhaps the family who commissioned the painting—was extremely well-versed in Petrarchan ideals of beauty and decorum as the friar-turned-painter has successfully created a woman who both externally projects and internally embodies these poetic standards.

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[78] See Elizabeth Cropper's "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style." *The Art Bulletin* 58, no. 3 (1976): 374–394

[79] See Elizabeth Cropper's "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style." *The Art Bulletin* 58, no. 3 (1976): 374–394

[80] See Elizabeth Cropper's "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style." *The Art Bulletin* 58, no. 3 (1976): 374–394

In returning to Lippi's seminal portrait and the ways in which the work embodies poetic and societal standards of beauty, it is important to note again that it is a painting that combines two portraits in strict profile. Patricia Simons discusses the role of the profile in Quattrocento portraits of women in detail in her essay on "Women in Frames."[81] While both male and female profile portraits mark the beginnings of secular individual portraiture in fifteenth-century Italy, they remained longer in fashion for women than for men. Through the lens of early modern gender studies, Simons seeks to reexamine both the difference between the sexes in such portraits and the related power hierarchies in Quattrocento Italy. With an emphasis on the role of the beholder and gender norms, she focuses on strategies of display of the female face and body and the role of the male beholder in front of female portraits. Simons operates with Foucault's concept of the gaze as a critical instrument for her interpretation of 'gendered' portrait paintings. She looks at the cultures of display of femininity during the 15th-century in Italy, and she investigates the ways in which the profile portrait invites and is constructed along the parameters of the male gaze. According to Simons, female profile portraits, which gained tremendous popularity for the most part of the 15th century, established a passive presence by averting the eye and face, turning the female sitter into an object available for guiltless male observation. As such, the image type, which quickly gained popularity in the first half of the century, was well-suited for the representation of orderly, chaste, and decorous femininity. Before the middle of the fifteenth century, male profile portraits were likewise common, yet that changed quickly in the second half of the century. After circa 1450, men were shown mostly in three-quarter view, then frontally. Women, meanwhile, remained confined to the profile for some time. It was only in the last quarter of the Quattrocento that portraits of women followed the conventions of men, shifting slowly away from the profile and turning their faces towards the viewer. Profile portraits that were commissioned (and painted) by men were often created as an exemplum of ideal feminine behavior for women of higher social standing—a demure nature, adherence to specific beauty and fashion conventions, loyalty, fidelity, etc. A woman's role was to be put on display, and the perception and reputation that stemmed from this public scrutiny quite literally defined her. Of course, such observation was managed by the parameters of propriety, display, and, according to Simons, "impression management" (p. 8).

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[81] See Patricia Simons' "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture." *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*. Ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York, 1992, pp. 43, 50, 54 n. 37, fig. 3.

Simons is correct in her gendered understanding of the profile portrait with its implied passivity and allowance for an unperturbed voyeurism by the viewer, as a messenger of Quattrocento ideals of female virtue and beauty. However, I find her assertion that profile images of the early 15th century were inherently gendered and chosen to convey these ideals also somewhat limiting. Simons' argument does not take into account images such as Fra Filippo Lippi's double portrait which portrays both male and female sitters in a profile portrait that confront one another in one picture space.

Moreover, if Lippi is truly the author of the double profile portrait, Simons also overlooks later paintings which show a similar image type of conjugal, mirror-like profile images of couples. Simons's approach places the profile versus the three-quarter view into a rather rigid gender binary. Yet there seem to have been intermediary types as well, such as Fra Filippo Lippi's painting of *A Man and Woman at a Casement* from circa 1435 /1440, which prominently displays both a man and a woman in profile. Following his example, later portraits such as Piero della Francesca's *Duke and Duchess of Urbino* (Figure 2) and Ercole de' Roberti's *Portrait of Giovanni II Bentivoglio and Ginevra Sforza Bentivoglio* (Figure 3) depicted couples similarly by representing men and women alike in profile. An important contribution to understanding the 'visibility' – or lack thereof – of women in Quattrocento Italy is Patricia Simons's description of specific moments in which a noblewoman could be seen:

> "The gaze, then a metaphor for worldliness and virility, made of Renaissance woman an object of public discourse, exposed to scrutiny and framed by the parameters of propriety, display and impression management. Put simply, why else paint a woman except as an object of display within male discourse? Only at certain key moments could she be seen, whether at a window or in the 'window' of a panel painting, seen and thereby represented," (Simons, "Women in Frames", p. 8).

These ideas, it seems, are at play in Lippi's portrait and the marriage portraits that would follow its precedent in the mid-to-late Quattrocento. Moreover, Simons is not the only one to point out the use of the female profile as a sign of feminine virtue, decorum, and beauty in Quattrocento portraits. In fact, according to Paola Tinagli, the desired traits of the ideal feminine beauty during the fifteenth century might have been developed with the profile in mind: artists preferred a long, sinuous line that ran continuously from a high forehead revealed by neatly pinned back hair, to the base of the neck.[82] Such portraits stressed head jewels, complicated headdresses, and, especially, twisted and plaited hair that would not obfuscate the face and profile. Thus, while Simons is right to point out that the sitter might have lost some of her autonomy and individuality through the typology of the fashionable beauty, her assessment does not take into consideration the importance of 'likeness' in Renaissance portraiture. According to Tinagli, the artist typically focused on individual details and peculiarities as well as different hairstyles, headdresses, jewelry, and other forms of decoration in order to preserve the sitter's identity. Hence the creation of an image that resembles the 'likeness' of the person portrayed while simultaneously promoting a representational 'ideal' image for the public.

As we have established, early 15th century artists (and society at large), by modern standards were quite preoccupied with what the ideal woman should look like and behave. Within portraiture, poetic conventions strongly informed many of the features we see in portraits of women, these being: a high forehead, pale skin, a long, elegant neck, light hair, lips the color of coral, a lean figure, etc.[83] The ideal "Petrarchan" lady would be represented as what one might call a hybrid of naturalistic features blended with artistic visualizations of those ideal features. Portraits following this ideal are best read as half 'real' and half 'imagined.' We also see how these ideals were best embodied through the profile as the lack of eye contact between sitter and viewer allows for uninterrupted contemplation and guiltless adoration, or gazing.[84] Moreover, the profile allows the artist to better place the ideal woman and her beauty on display. It also guaranteed recognizability, by virtue of the outline.[85]

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[82] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45

[83] See Victoria Kirkham's "Poetic Ideals of Love and Beauty" in Brown, David Alan. 2001. *Virtue & beauty: Leonardo's Ginevra de' Benci and Renaissance portraits of women*. Washington: National Gallery of Art. p. 57

Regarding Lippi's seminal portrait, it is clear that the woman pictured exemplifies the ideals of beauty and decorum dictated by poetic conventions and societal expectations. This representation of a noble woman—which is in all likelihood a likened image of the real sitter—portrays its subject in her absolute best, decorated with pearls and gorgeous gowns, all sewn together with gleaming golden threads. Hers is a portrait of a woman at her political and social prime, either during her betrothal or her wedding day in which no expense or stitch of sumptuous gown or jewels would have been spared.[86] And yet, her stunning appearance would not have been limited to her own rite of passage or personhood. Rather, we must remember that the woman figure we see before us would have been representing her family and her husband's wealth and pedigree above herself.[87] Thus, we see a woman who is not only dressed her best, but acting her best as the liaison in the transfer of capital and alliances through the rite of marriage.[88] When taking a final look at Fra Filippo Lippi's *A Man and a Woman at a Casement,* we recognize that the woman might well have been seen as a mere extension of her family and husband. And yet, she is so clearly showcased as the portrait's protagonist. Her presence is significant, as is her body – a vehicle that displays wealth and signals virtue. Her spouse is in the picture, and yet he is 'small.' Is this an additional tribute to her beauty and virtue in the service to gendered family politics? Or is this a humble gesture of commemoration, of being 'there' with her? Regardless, what is on display is precious. The beauty and luxury of the material items and the iconography of the coat of arms and the motto on her sleeve connect us, in striking ways to a world in which the female body was a bearer of signs, of alliances, of pedigree and wealth.[89] The detail and painterly attention given to the woman's overall *grazia* and her costuming was intended to project a virtuous image to the public.[90] The woman in this painting was meant to be admired. Even after such a thorough evaluation of the literature, it is impossible to identify or describe any emotional motivations or the psychological realities that might have bound this couple together. What we can say with relative confidence, though, is the following: if the double portrait was indeed commissioned by Lorenzo Scolari or his family—and much is to be said in favor of this hypothesis—then the decision of honoring a recently deceased young wife and daughter-in-law was probably also a gesture of affection. Here we see an image of a woman who stands tall, her head held high, in all her beauty, as she proudly displays her family impresa on her sleeve. It is a powerful message, and a powerful portrait that up until today fascinates the viewers precisely because it escapes the typical conventions of marriage portraits.

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[84] See Patricia Simons' "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture." *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*. Ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York, 1992, pp. 43, 50, 54 n. 37, fig. 3.

[85] See Paola Tinagli's *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity*. Manchester, 1997, pp. 52–53, fig. 14, as attributed to Lippi, about 1435–45.

[86] See Alison Wright's "The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, 2000. pp. 86-88; 90-96

[87] See Patricia Simons' "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture." *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*. Ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York, 1992, pp. 43, 50, 54 n. 37, fig. 3.

[88] See Adrian Randolph's "Performing the Bridal Body in Fifteenth Century Florence", in: Art History 21, no. 2, June 1998, pp. 182-200

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[89] See Adrian Randolph's "Performing the Bridal Body in Fifteenth Century Florence", in: Art History 21, no. 2, June 1998, pp. 182-200

[90] See Alison Wright's "The Memory of Faces: Representational Choices in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraiture." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, 2000. pp. 86-88; 90-96

Conclusion

In conclusion, this assessment of Fra Filippo Lippi's *A Man and a Woman at a Casement* (Figure 1) has revealed much about the portrait and its points of interest. Throughout this thesis, we have examined the portrait's scholarship, its enigmatic qualities, and its impact on both Quattrocento double portraits and the study of early modern art history. By reevaluating existing scholarship as well as the painting's formal qualities, we have opened up many questions surrounding the portrait's representation of gender, its unusual composition, the discourse surrounding the 'gaze', gendered standards of representation, poetic and societal standards of beauty and how they manifest in women's portraiture, the significance of clothing and appearance, the bridal body as a bearer of signs, as well as a woman's role in marriage and society at large. While there remain, still, several questions that may never be definitively answered, I argue that the most important take away from Lippi's Metropolitan portrait is its message surrounding matrimony as well as its commemorative sentiments. Here is a powerful portrait that not only established an artistic precedent, but also sought to preserve the memory and legacy of a betrothed couple and their family lineages. In addition, the portrait's emphasis on the man peering in to view his monumental and well-decorated wife appears as an affectionate gesture, perhaps even as a token of friendship. While we as modern viewers may find the pomp and seemingly detached formality of the Quattrocento foreign and outdated, this portrait of an arranged betrothal gives us pause. Perhaps it is in part the unconventionality of its proportions and figures that intrigue us. Or perhaps it is more so the powerful act of love that imbues the desire to preserve a single, fleeting, yet monumental moment in a young couple’s life that keeps us so transfixed.

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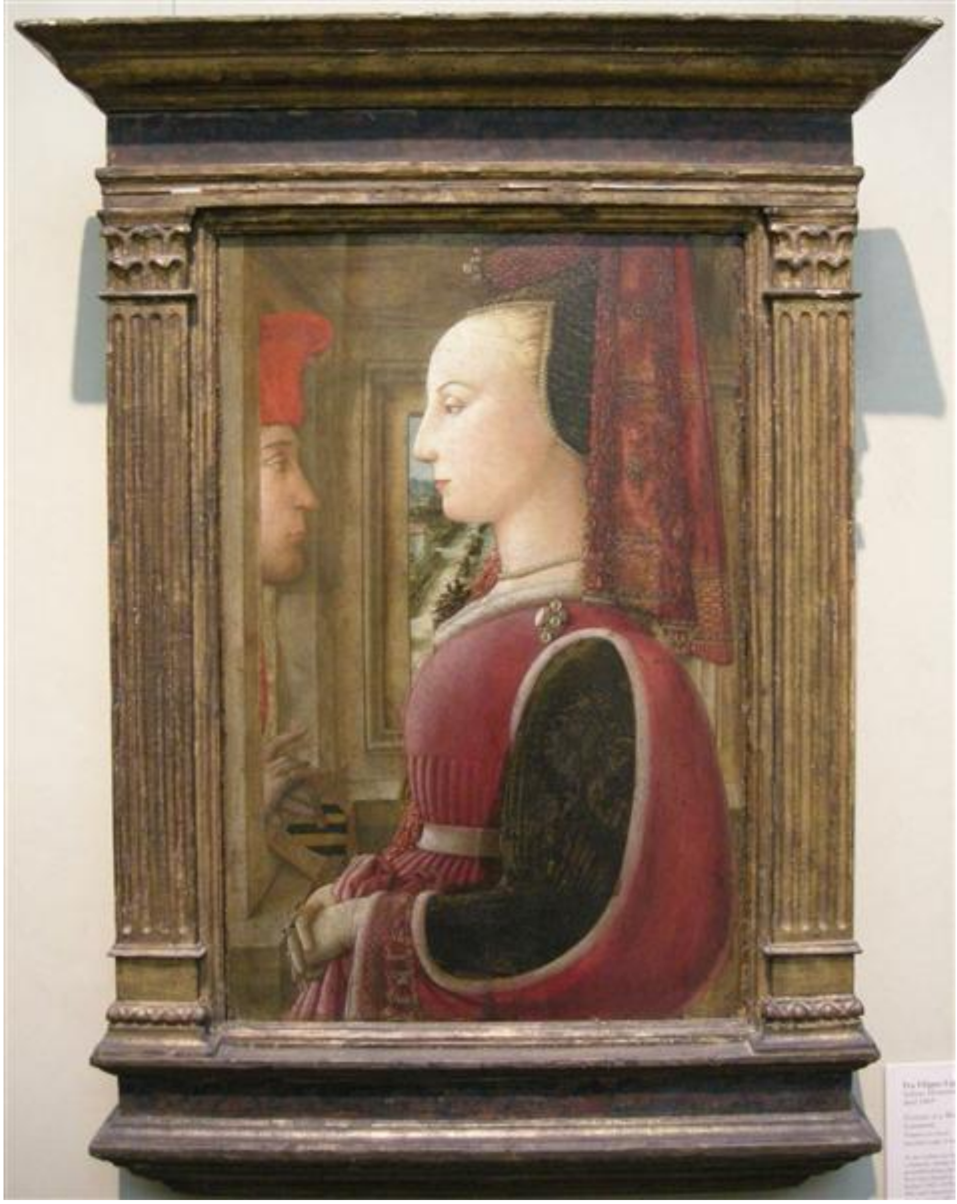
Appendix

1.



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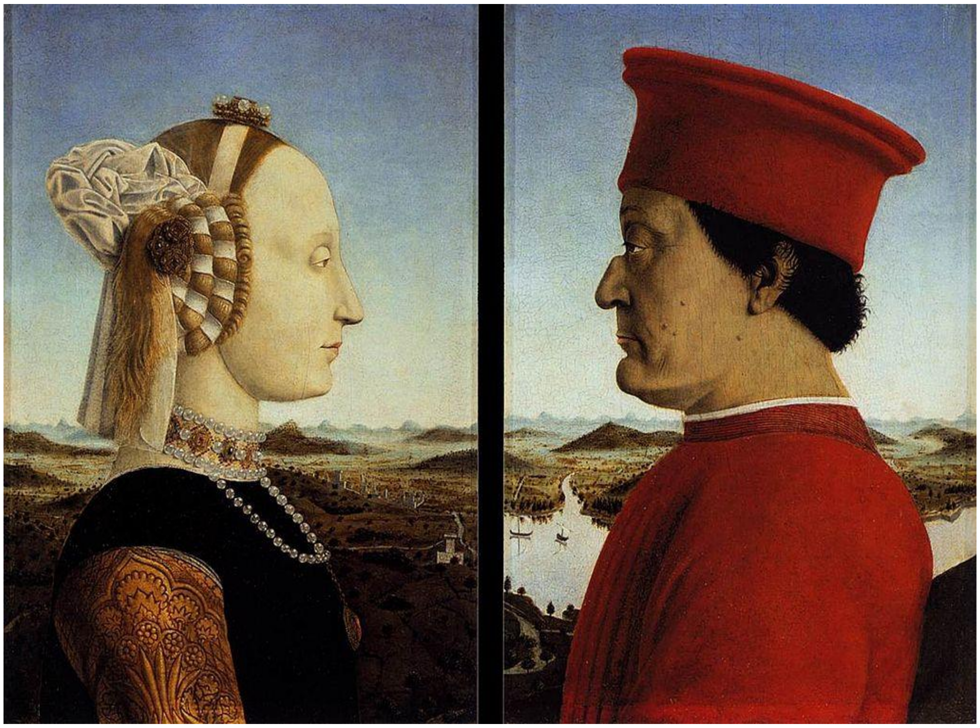

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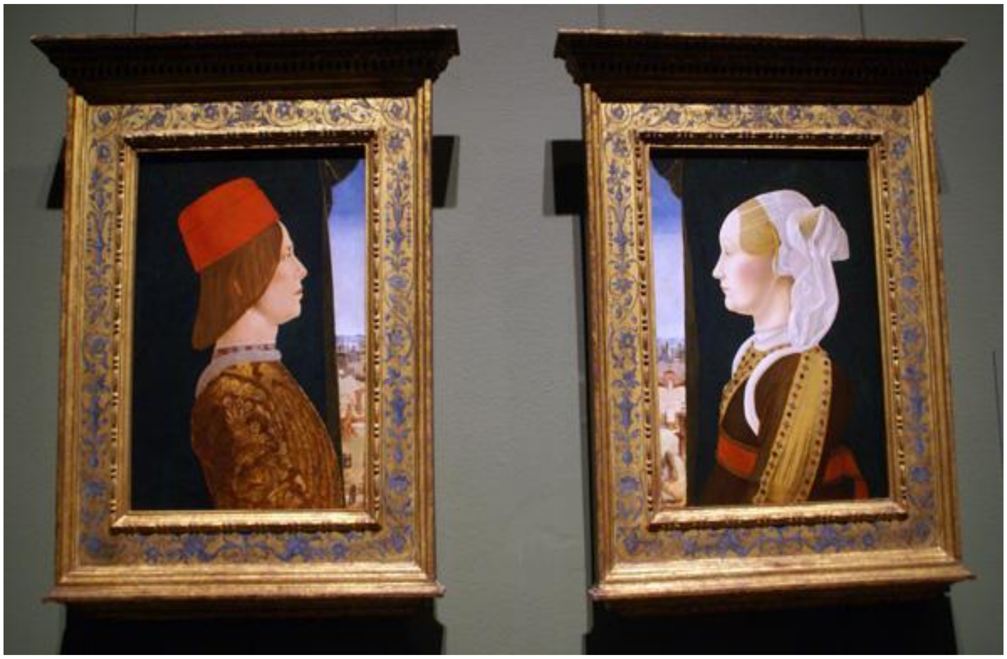
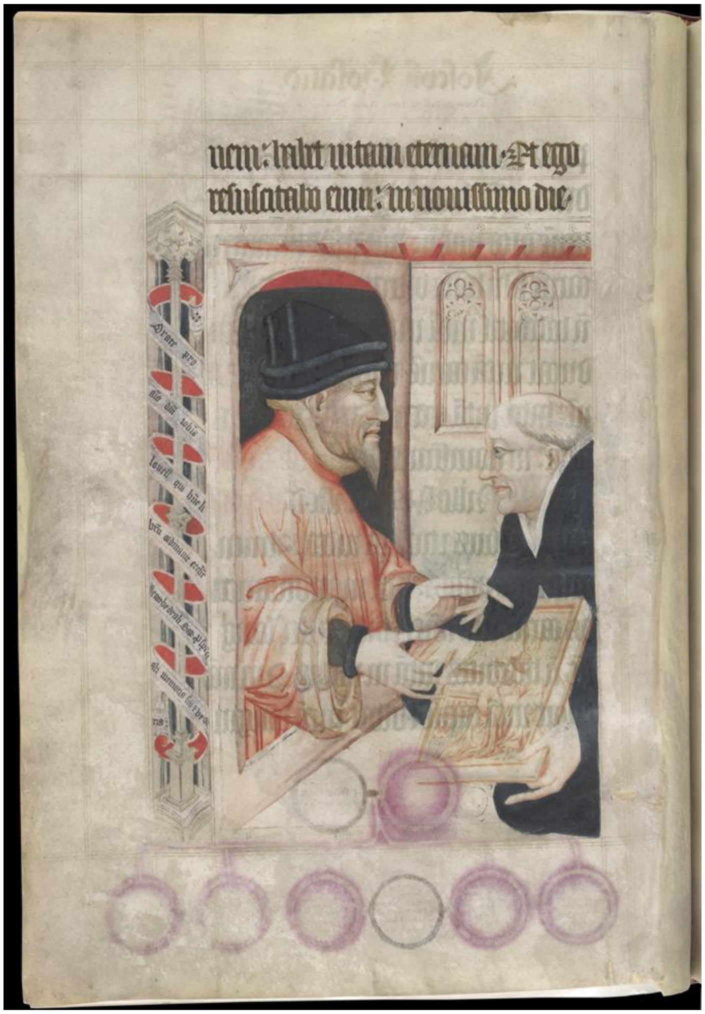
3. 

Ercole de' Roberti, *Portrait of Giovanni II Bentivoglio and Ginevra Sforza Bentivoglio*, Tempera and oil on panel, 53.9 cm x 38.7 cm each, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

4. 

John Siferwas, *Lord Lovell Presenting the Lectionary to a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral* in. The Lovell Lectionary, ca. 1400-1410, Illuminated Manuscript, 47.5 cm x 31 cm

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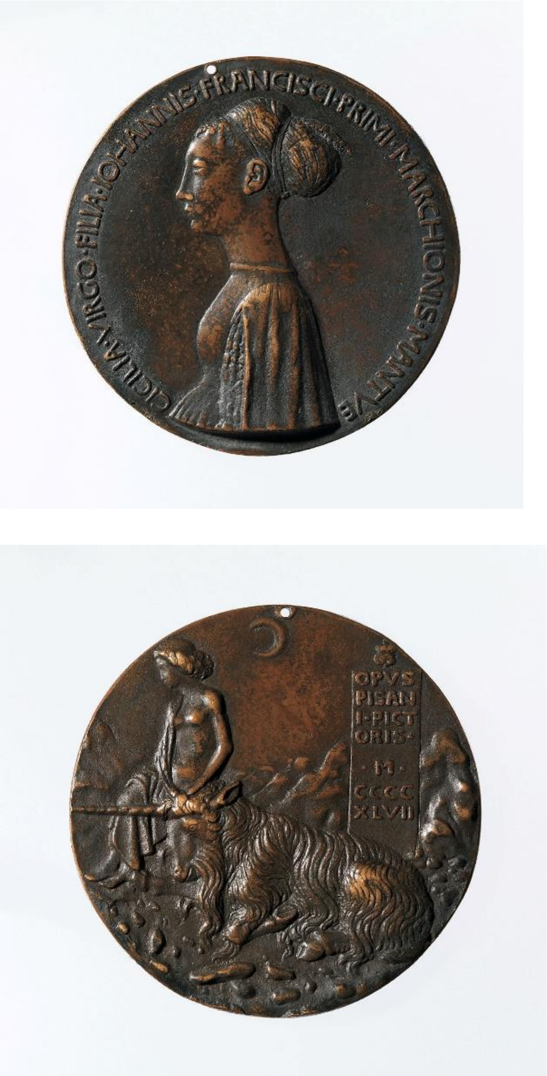
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Pisanello, *Portrait of Cecilia Gonzaga* (obverse); *Innocence and a Unicorn in a Moonlit Landscape* (reverse), ca. 1447, Bronze, Diam. 8.4 cm, The Metropolitan Museum, Manhattan

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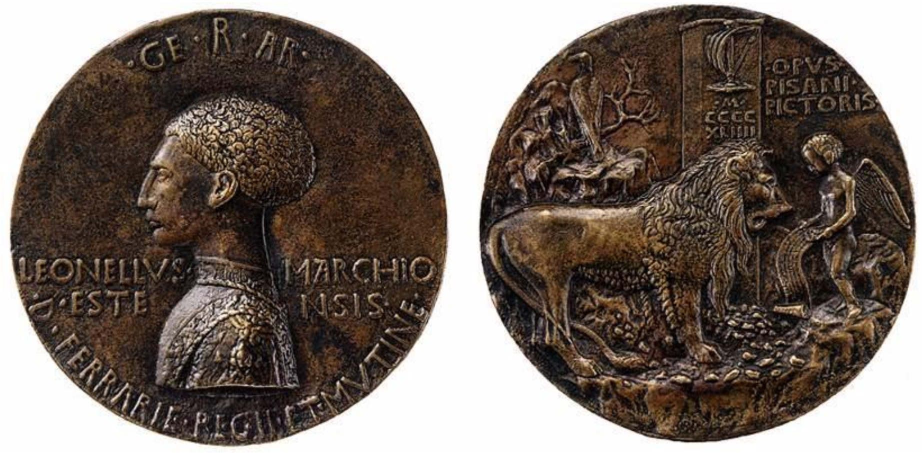
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Pisanello, *Portrait of Leonello d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara* (obverse); *Lion Being Taught by Cupid to Sing* (reverse), ca. 1444, Bronze, Diam. 10. 08 cm, The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

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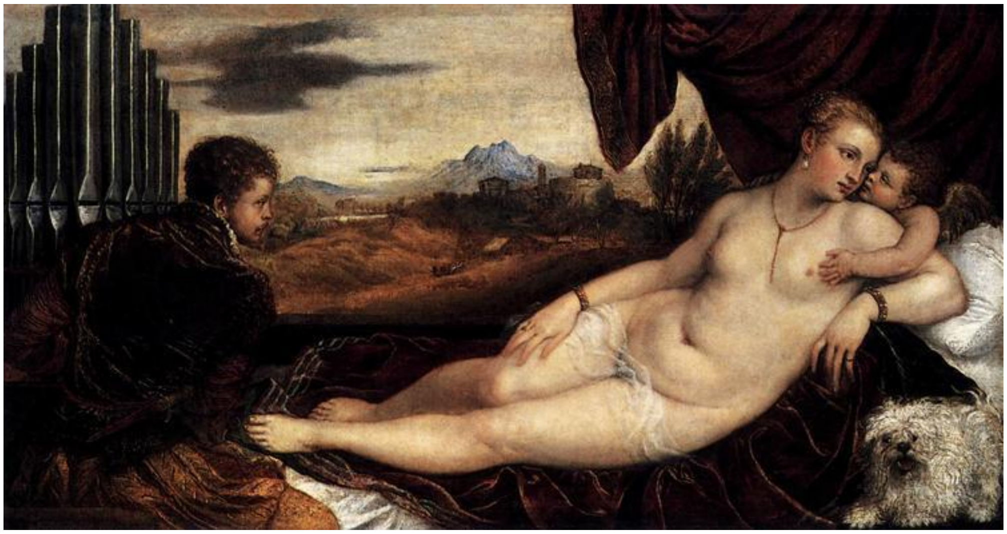

Titian, *Venus and the Organist*, ca. 1550, Oil on canvas, 115 cm x 210 cm, Gemäldegalerie Berlin, Berlin

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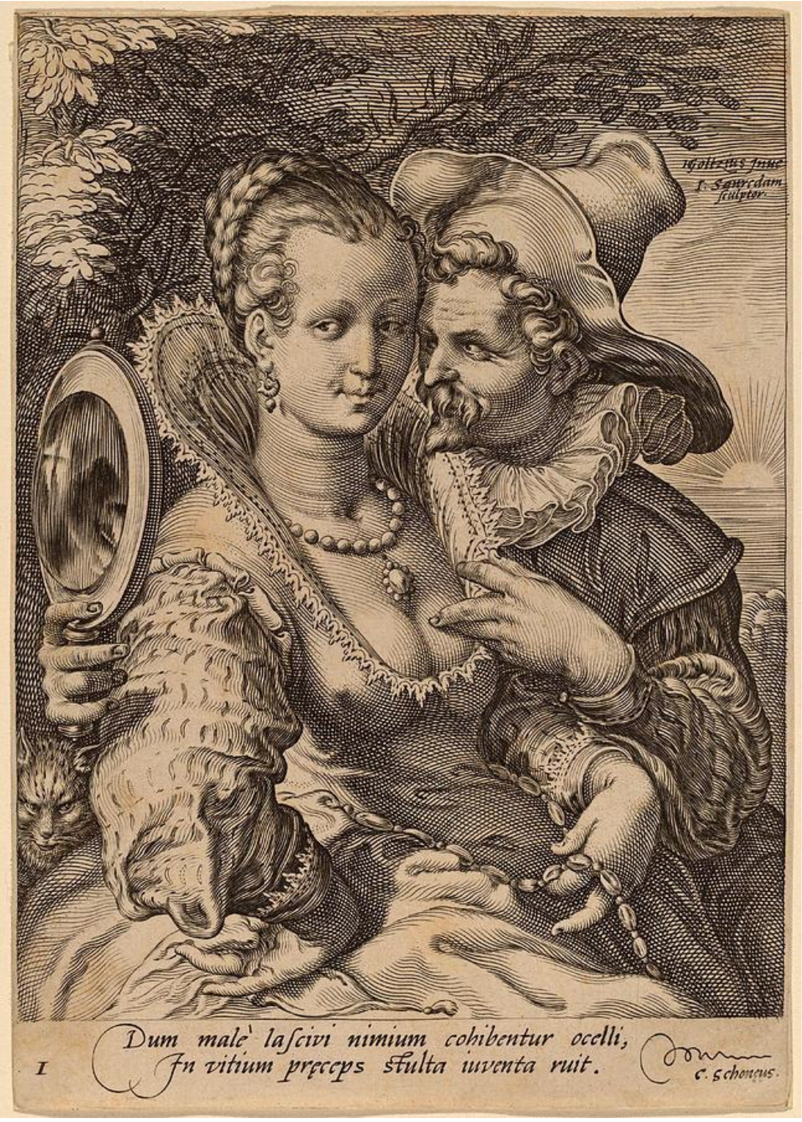
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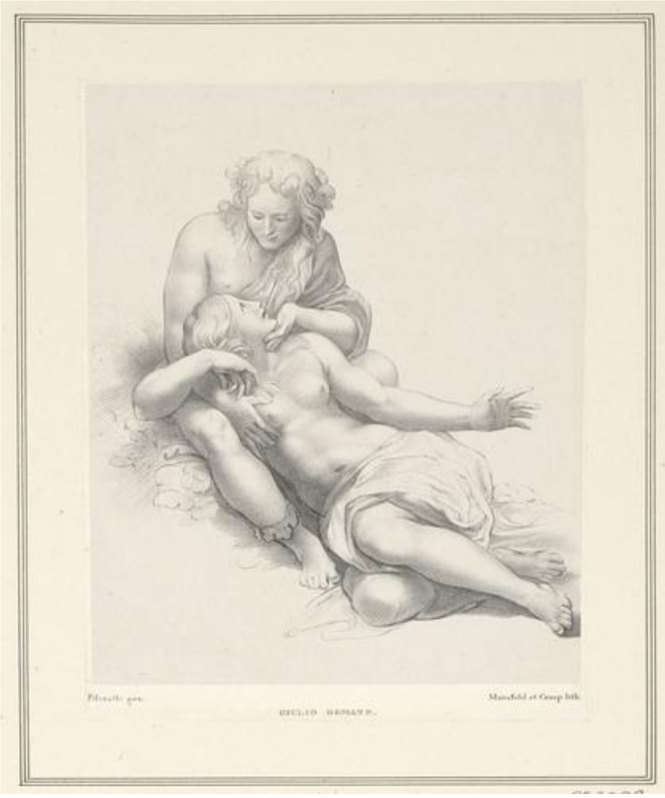
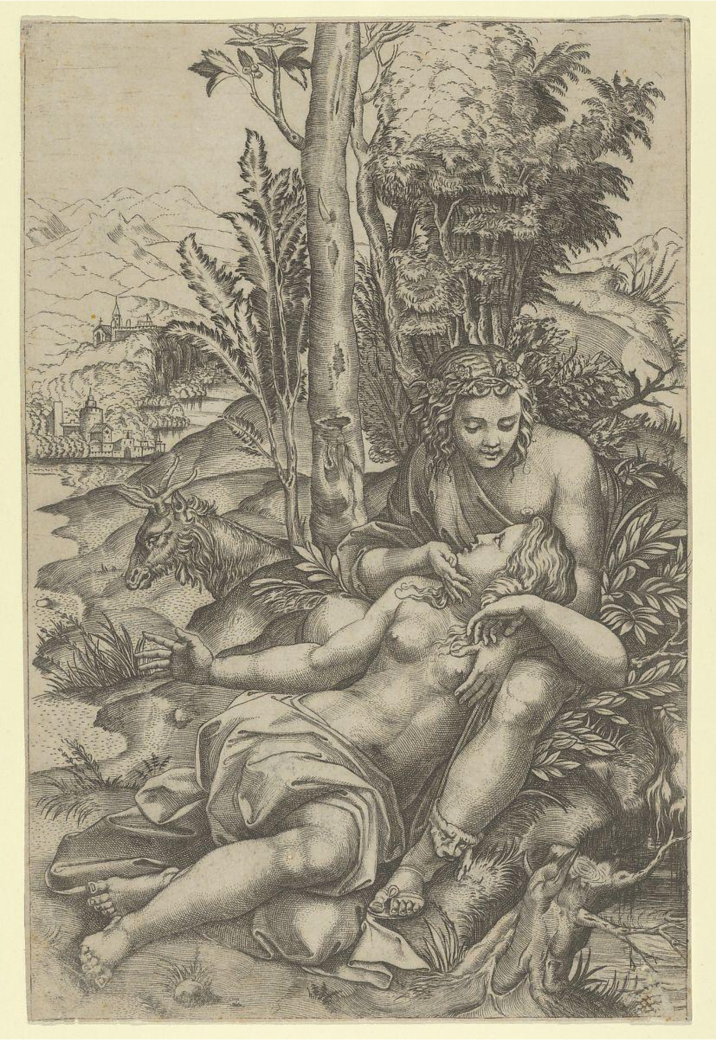
In vitium pręceps ſtulta iuventa ruit.
I
C. Schoneus.

Jan Saenredam, *Sight*, 1565-1607, Engraving, 15.9 cm x 12.3 cm, Royal Academy of Arts, London

9.

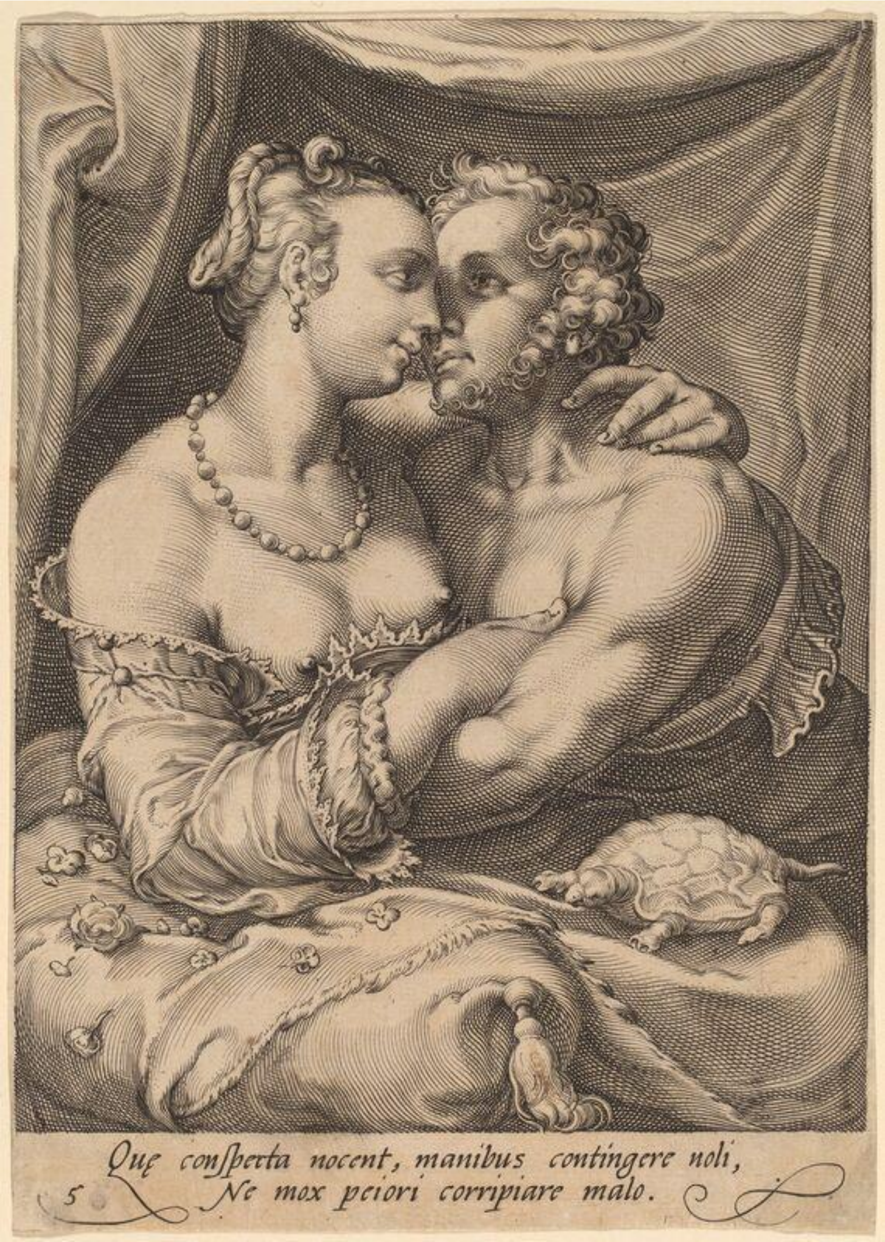

Mansfield et Comp lith
GIULIO ROMANO.

Giulio Romano, *Venus and Adonis*, c. 1516, Lithograph, 23.4 cm x 18.5 cm, Royal Collection Trust, London

10. 

Marcantonio Raimondi, *Venus and Adonis Embracing*, ca. 1500-1534, Engraving, 26 cm x 18 cm, The Metropolitan Museum, Manhattan

11.


Quę conſpecta nocent, manibus contingere noli,
5 Ne mox peiori corripiare malo.

Jan Saenredam, *Touch*, 1565-1607, Engraving, 17.5 cm x 12.5 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.