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# Laura Battiferra: An Open Book

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Bronzino's portrait of the poetess Laura Battiferri has received attention by the critics for the unusual form of the artist's portrait, for the depiction of a female model in a profile pose and for being the most abstracted of all Bronzino's portraits. Charles McCorquodale has suggested that "her figure, her prominent nose, her distorted neck and shoulders give her the appearance of a haughty reptile entirely devoid of human qualities."<sup>1</sup> Although the pose and demeanor of the model initially attract the gaze of the viewer, it is the perpendicular axis of her stiff posture that meets Battiferra's hand which leads the viewer's eye to the object that hold us in thrall, the barycenter of the painting: the open book. Borrowing the term *barycenter* from the physics sphere, the open book in the plane of the canvas is the point in which all the weight of a system, all the intensity of the painting, is concentrated; this perspective constitutes the main focal center in the portrait's plane.<sup>2</sup> The book therefore becomes the essential point of analysis, and it prompts us to ponder Battiferra's exchange of poems with her portraitist and other poets of her circle. For these reasons a strong emphasis will be given to both the sitter as a poet and her relationship with other poetic traditions that are brought to light through Bronzino's portrait.

A number of scholars have investigated and confirmed that a closer examination of the pages in the book depicted reveals that the words do not belong to a collection of Battiferra's own poems, but rather to Petrarch's. Image and text combine to identify Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati and to allude to her status as a poet, as Victoria Kirkham has noted.<sup>3</sup> The atypical form of the profile and the portrait style serve as an invaluable stepping stone towards a more complete understanding of the painting. Often compared to a similar portrait by Andrea del Sarto depicting the piercing glance of a young woman holding a volume of Petrarch, Battiferra appears by contrast to be both remote from the spectator and distant from the sonnets.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, as Graham Smith and McCorquodale have pointed out, Battiferra's particular pose

distances her gaze from the viewer and from the volume she is showing.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, it is through the book in her hands that Battiferra establishes the most important eye contact with the viewer.

It is not known who might have commissioned Laura's portrait, although there are speculations that her patron was her second husband Bartolomeo Ammannati or her mentor Benedetto Varchi, which, if true, could justify the revert to the "archaic profile pose" during the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Traditionally, in fact, women profile painting dates back to the Quattrocento, as an object of the male gaze, painted by male artists for male patrons. Smith has suggested that "the profile portrait allowed the suitor to explore his lover's face ardently, while simultaneously attesting to the woman's chastity and female virtue."<sup>7</sup> Bronzino's Laura was the most eminent woman of letters in Florence during the second half of the sixteenth century. She published *Il primo libro dell'opere toscane* in 1560, a collection of 187 poems. Of these, 146 are by the poetess and 41 are by her male correspondents such as Benedetto Varchi, Anton Francesco Grazzini (known as "il Lasca") and the artist who portrayed her, Agnolo Bronzino.<sup>8</sup> The two poems she is displaying in the painting are not contiguous in the edition written by Petrarch; poem 64 occupies the left folio verso, while the right folio verso does not contain the expected 65, but the distant sonnet 240. Because of the well-known fact that Battiferra's poetry mirrors that of Petrarch, this significant clue shows that the sitter could have copied these sonnets by hand herself to show her reverence for the model of her poetic inspiration. By choosing to depict Laura with "an arresting profile pose" and holding a book, Bronzino draws our attention to the texts of the sonnets.<sup>9</sup> To understand the true meaning of the portrait, the recognition of the sonnets is vital.

At the simplest level, the volume is used as a pun to represent the sitter's name. One of the central images in Petrarch's Rime is the Ovidian myth of Daphne fleeing from an enamored Apollo and being transformed into a laurel. Petrarch continuously evokes this myth by playing with a wide range of referents: "laura," "l'aura," "alloro" and derivatives such as "piana," "fronda," "arbor," terms that are all connected to "laurel."<sup>10</sup> Battiferra's *Primo Libro* is saturated with these allusions; other sonnets written by Battiferra and the poems of her correspondents are full of allusions to Petrarch's work.<sup>11</sup> Particularly, Petrarch's sonnet "l'aura che 'l verde lauro et l'aureo crine" constitutes one of the most complete models by which Battiferra's poetic

circle seems inspired.<sup>12</sup> Bronzino's Laura and Petrarch's Laura share more than the same name. Petrarch's muse was the reason as well as the inspiring force of his *Canzoniere*, and Laura Battiferri acts for Bronzino both as a muse in his painting and as a muse for his poetic production. By depicting her, Bronzino transposes the duality of her significance onto canvas, but the painter does not stop here. We know that Battiferra aspired to Petrarchan heights and, as Kirkham has suggested, "she also identifies herself as a follower of Dante."<sup>13</sup> In one of his sonnets, Bronzino extended the double analogy which associates Battiferra with Dante and Petrarch one step further, adding the superiority of his muse to both "Oretta" and "Bice" – Laura and Beatrice. By examining Bronzino's poetry, we learn about the excellence of Laura's poetry and we see that he held her in high regard.

In one of the sonnets to his beloved friend Battiferra, Bronzino writes:

Io giuro a voi, per quella viva fronde  
 Di cui fuste al sacro fonte pianta,  
 E per quella di lui, cortese e santa  
 Fiamma, che regge il ciel, la terra e l'onde,  
 Ch'alla sua felice ombra in sì gioconde  
 Note ho veduto tal ch'onestà canta  
 Ch'io tegno a vile omai qual più si vanta,  
 E dolcezza maggior non viemmai altronde;  
 Ché se le fortunate Oretta e Bice  
 Onora il mondo, all'altrui senno e opra  
 Si dee non men ch'a i lor meriti dar vanto:  
 Voi per proprio valor Laura e Beatrice  
 Vincete e sete a i lor pregi di sopra,  
 E forse a i loro amanti in stile e canto.<sup>14</sup>

I swear to you by that living bough, whose  
 Plant you were at the sacred font, and by that flame  
 Courteous and holy, of him who rules the heaven  
 Earth, and waves,  
 That in its happy shadow I saw such a one  
 Singing of purity in so joyous notes that I now hold  
 Base whoever most vaunts himself, and nowhere  
 Else does greater sweetness ever come to me;  
 For it the world honors the fortunate Oretta  
 And Bice, we should give vaunt to another's wisdom  
 And work no less than to the ladies' merit:  
 You, through your own valor, vanquish  
 Laura and Beatrice, and you are above them in  
 Worth, and perhaps their lovers in style and song.<sup>15</sup>

The "gioconde note" (joyous notes) described by Bronzino suggest the idea of the pleasant music of Battiferra's poetry. Her words allow the poet to see how "onestà canta" (purity sings). Bronzino clearly weaves echoes of the dolce stilnovo into his poetic fabric with his choice of the term "onestà" (purity), but also with "dolcezza" (sweetness), in which he personifies Battiferra. A similar and more defined reference to other stilnovistic elements is found in the sonnet which Anton Francesco Grazzini composed on the portrait:

Angelo esser doveva, se non che 'nvano  
Era ogni sua fatica, ogni opra, ogni arte;  
Non può cosa divina in nulla parte  
Esser ritratta mai da mortal mano.

Dunque voi, spirito angelico, e sovrano,  
Potete sol piangendo a parte a parte  
Ritrar le Grazie in lei diffuse, e sparte,  
Ove ogni altro pennel sarebbe vano:

Come gli occhi sereni, e 'l santo viso,  
Occhio terren saria stato possente  
Poter mai rimirar intento e fiso?

Beato voi, cui solo il Ciel consente  
Il senno, e la beltà di Paradiso  
Far conta, e dichiara la futura gente.

It must have been an Angel, otherwise its every effort  
Every work, and every art would have been in vain;  
No divine thing in any way  
Can be portrayed by mortal hand.

You alone then, angelic and sovereign spirit,  
Painting only weeping part by part can portray  
The Graces diffused and scattered in her,  
Where every other paintbrush would have been useless.  
How could earthly eye have ever had the chance

To gaze intent and fixed on her serene eyes and  
Her holy face?

Blessed are you, to whom alone Heaven allows  
The wisdom, and to make known and public to the  
Future people the beauty of Paradise.<sup>16</sup>

Battiferra is described with the attributes of the stilnovistic “woman-angel” and “divine thing.” For poets of the dolce stilnovo – above all for Dante and Guinizzelli – the woman was considered the mediator between the poet and God, and she was the poet’s guide in realizing his creative abilities. Through Grazzini’s verses, we see this recurrent poetic description of a woman, Laura, and at the same time, we perceive her as the ultimate result of what her portraitist intended to capture, the “spirito angelico” (angelic spirit). As Deborah Parker has noted:

Punning on Bronzino’s first name of Agnolo, a Tuscan variant of ‘angelo,’ Grazzini declares that this ‘angelic spirit’ has [...] captured this ‘cosa divina’ miraculously providing viewers with a glimpse of the ‘beauty of Paradise.’<sup>17</sup>

Bronzino interiorizes the divine qualities of the woman of his artistic creation and reveals them on the canvas, “[succeeding to represent] Battiferri’s character as well as her external countenance,” as Parker has suggested.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, borrowing David Summers’ definition of the term “Grace,” intended in the sixteenth century as “the evidence of the perfection of the intellectual virtues her spiritual and intellectual beauty,” it is possible to see a direct correspondence between the artistic and intellectual “wisdom” of Bronzino and “The Graces” diffused in Battiferra.<sup>19</sup> He is therefore able to produce a work of art which embodies both his sitter’s inner character and her physical appearance. In his closing verses, Grazzini stresses the uniqueness of Bronzino’s ability as the only one blessed by Heaven to have the privilege to create a work of art, a heavenly creature, which will function as an exemplum of celestial beauty and of wisdom for posterity. Her eyes are “sereni” (serene)

and her visage is “santo” (holy), both celestial attributes that Battiferra embodies. With his mastery, the angel-painter Bronzino captured and incorporated all of Battiferra’s qualities on the canvas by placing an open book in Battiferra’s hand which will illuminate “the future people” of the sitter’s celestial qualities and poetic intellect.

Bronzino’s *risposta* to his friend Grazzini’s sonnet furnishes other remarkable details which are vital to find light in his painting:<sup>20</sup>

Lasca gentil, l’alto favor, che ‘n mano  
Lo stil mi pose, onde a vergar le carte  
Vi trae cortese e caldo affetto, e ‘n parte  
Del ver, per troppo amor, vi fa lontano;  
Non perch’io degno, o che forse altro umano  
Miglior di me ne fosse, a me comparte  
Dono intero di lui, non merito o d’arte,  
C’ha d’ogni grazia a pien l’arbitrio in mano.  
Ei sol mi guida, e se da me diviso  
Non sia, ma regga e la mano e la mente  
Fin ch’io giunga felice al fin prefisso,  
Vi giuro, che per mio valor non sente  
D’alzarsi l’alma a sì grand’opra assiso,  
Se non d’umil seguirla, e reverente.<sup>21</sup>

Kind Lasca, the favor from on High that put the stylus  
In my hand, so that courteous and warm affection impels  
You to set pen to paper and makes you stray in part from  
The truth because of too much love,  
Is apportionated to me not because I am worthy. Or  
Because there might not be another human better than I,  
Not by merit or art, but as a gift wholly from Him, who  
Holds all grace at his full disposal.  
He alone guides me, and so may He never be divided  
From me, but sustain my hand and my mind until I happily  
Reach the preordained end,  
But this I swear to you, seated before so great a work,  
That of my own power my soul feels incapable of arising,  
But can only follow it humbly and reverently.

In the first quatrain Bronzino explicitly acknowledges the loving compliment and appreciation that his friend Lasca has addressed to him. Bronzino reveals his identity of being nothing but a simple man, with no merits and no exceptional human qualities. The origin of the angelic rendering of his work of art lays only in the virtues of God who possesses all the virtues and who guides the mortal hand of the painter. According to Parker, the grace to whom the end of the last quatrain alludes is the spiritual and intellectual virtue of God. God both illuminates the artist’s mind and leads his hand, moving the latter to create what the former envisions.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Bronzino’s paintbrush on the canvas leads the viewer through Battiferra’s hand to envision the emblem of her “Graces:” the open book held in her hands. Battiferra’s pose not only strongly encourages the viewer to examine the displayed sonnets, but it also encourages the examinations of the other sonnets she exchanged with Bronzino. Through such examinations, the cognizant reader will realize that the exchange of sonnets on the painting had been made during the work in progress. The sestet represents a request to “Him” not to abandon Bronzino–painter until the completion of the portrait. In fact, a curious image evoked by these verses is that of the artist facing his portrait *in fieri*. He is aware of the “sì grand’opra” (so great a work)

he is creating but his humble spiritual value does not “arise” in self-praise. Instead, he is willing to modestly and reverently let his hand be “sustained” by God.

The poetic correspondence continues with Battiferra’s *risposta* to the sonnet on her own portrait. It is particularly striking to read the sitter’s own description of her portrait and to find that even her sonnet plays an important role in the understanding of the meaning that both painter and sitter agree to convey:

Così nel volto rilucente e vago  
 La Pastorella tua, caro Crisero,  
 Quanto brama il cor casto, e sincero  
 Ti mostri aperto, e sii contento e pago,  
 Come la propria mia novella imago,  
 Della tua dotta man lavoro altero,  
 Ogni mio affetto scuopre, ogni pensiero,  
 Quantunque il cor sia di celarlo vago.  
 E così l’Arboscel, ch’ami cotanto,  
 Degno rival d’Apollo, in fino al cielo  
 Colto da te, mai sempre verde, s’erga.  
 Com’io la tua mercè, di doppio vanto  
 Cingo al mio basso oscuro umile stelo,  
 Perch’Austro, od Aquilon non lo disperga.<sup>23</sup>

Just as your shepherdess, in her shining and vague<sup>24</sup> face  
 Openly shows you, bright Crisero,  
 All that her chaste and sincere heart desires,  
 Be you then content and satisfied.  
 As my own new image, lofty work of your skilled Hand,  
 discloses my every affection and every thought,  
 However my heart would  
 Prefer to keep them hidden.  
 And thus may the sapling, which you love so much,  
 Worthy rival of Apollo, tended by you, grow high and Ever  
 green up to the sky.  
 Just as I, thanks to you, gird with double honor my Lowly,  
 little-known, humble stem, so that South Wind or North  
 Wind may not blow it away.<sup>25</sup>

Battiferra’s consideration of herself in the opening quatrain is somewhat similar to that of Bronzino: she appears as the humble figure of a shepherdess. Through her verses we find ourselves in front of a revealing portrait which, speaking “openly,” describes her qualities: the “volto rilucente e vago” (shining and fair face) openly shows what her “cor casto e sincero” (chaste and sincere heart) desires.<sup>26</sup> In the second quatrain and the first tercet Battiferra “underscores the shift from painting to poetry by comparing herself to a young laurel tree cultivated by her friend Bronzino–Apollo,” as Parker has noted.<sup>27</sup> Although Battiferra’s heart would rather hide her affections and her thoughts, Crisero’s “dotta mano” (skilled hand) reveals them in such a superb work of art. In a similar way, in the first tercet, the sitter-poetess is aspiring to raise her poetic production to the highest sky, to such a noble and austere level as Bronzino did with his work of art. She claims that the “arboscel-Laura” (sapling), although young and never had the chance to be a “sempre verde” (ever green), should grow high as a worthy rival of the classic god of poetry, thus implying her wish to gain a laurel crown as well. As Bronzino was able to create such a lofty image of Laura with his art, Laura similarly wants to achieve a noble level of excellence with

her poetic production, of which her displayed open book represents a clear reference. In the closing tercet, Battiferra concludes through the interesting word-play of opposite noun and adjective pairings, such as “doppio vanto” (double honor) and “basso umile stelo” (little humble stem), that she also desires to remain humble although she clearly has two reasons to be dually proud of herself: she has the honor to be the sitter of the painting and at the same time celebrated for her moral qualities. Another insight alluded to by Laura that requires consideration is the very close friendship that ties Bronzino poet-painter to Laura poetess-sitter. Furthermore, although there is no information about the commission of this painting, it could well be a praise of the moral and intellectual qualities of Bronzino’s Laura. In this last sonnet, there is a very plausible reference to a complete description and commentary of the “star of the show” and her pose in the painting. It lies in the first quatrain and it prompts us to a word-by-word commentary of the painting. Through her own words it is possible to find the reading of her pose. Her “volto rilucente e vago” (shining and vague face) depicts the “cor casto e sincero” (chaste and sincere heart) and discloses, or rather “un-veils,” “ogni [suo] affetto e ogni [suo] pensiero” ([her] every affection and every thought).<sup>28</sup> Battiferra’s verses are nothing but a transcription of the artistic image: an open book in Laura’s hands is the revelation of the vagueness of her gaze. And only by examining all the literary “forces” that revolve around the open book, is it possible to unveil such a compelling portrait.

Through the exchange of sonnets among the painter, the sitter and a close friend of both (Lasca), it is possible to trace a reoccurring theme on which, one after the other, the three poets reflect; this refers to the duality of the physical image of the hand and the intellect. In his sonnet on the painting, Bronzino writes: “sustain my *hand* and my *mind*;” in his verses, Lasca states: “make known the *wisdom* and *beauty* of Paradise” and Laura’s own sonnet mentions: “*lofty work* of your *skilled hand*.” With a pun, Bronzino skillfully transposes Battiferra’s leading hand towards the “container” of her intellectual beauties onto the canvas. Bronzino’s response to the sitter’s sonnet highlights his rendering of Battiferra’s virtue and beauty through his portrait and his personal hint to the ability of the “magician” to reveal the sitter’s “whole soul:”

Ed io che 'n lei, come l'alato Mago  
Vuol, son cangiato, altro non veggio, o chero  
Ch'onestate, e beltade, onde l'intero  
Scorger forse potrei vostr'almo.<sup>29</sup>

And I who am changed through her, as the winged  
magician Wishes, do not see or ask anything  
But virtue and beauty, whence I could perhaps  
Discern your whole soul.



Thanks to the poetical contribution of Battiferra and her friends, the portrait has been illuminated through their exchange of poems, and it is only right to closely examine Petrarch's words in poem 64 on the left folio verso, displayed by Battiferra while seated against a plain background:

Se voi poteste per turbati segni  
Per chinare gli occhi o per piegare la testa  
O per esser più d'altra al fuggir presta,  
torcendo 'l viso a' preghi onesti et degni

Uscir giamai, o ver per altri ingegni,  
del petto ove dal primo lauro innesta  
Amor più rami, i' direi ben che questa  
Fosse giusta cagione a' vostri sdegni;  
ché gentil pianta in arido terreno  
par che si di sconvenga, et però lieta  
naturalmente quindi si diparte.

Ma poi vostro destino a voi pur vietat'essere  
altrove, provedete almeno  
di non star sempre in odiosa parte.<sup>30</sup>

If you could by any angry gestures  
By casting your eyes down or bending your head  
or by being more swift to flee than any other,  
turning my visage<sup>31</sup> at virtuous and worthy prayers

If you could ever thus or by any other stratagem  
escape from my breast where Love engrafs many  
branches from that first laurel, I would say that  
would be a just reason for your disdain;

For a noble plant clearly does not  
belong in arid ground, and therefore  
it is naturally happy<sup>32</sup> to depart from there:

But, since your destiny forbids you to be  
elsewhere, at least take care not to stay  
Always in a hateful place.<sup>33</sup>

The image of a strong-willed woman clearly gleams through these verses. The poet is similarly immovable in his verse: "poi che il vostro destino a voi pur vieta l'essere altrove." The immutability of Petrarch's interior situation is the same for the object-recipient of his love. No matter how she might reject him, "nothing can ever dislodge Laura from Petrarch's heart."<sup>34</sup> Considering that this sonnet is the handwritten left page in the portrait, a possible explanation for the atypical position of the sitter comes to light. Bronzino's Laura is not disdainfully lowering her head nor is she showing any "turbati segni" (troubled sign) which could justify the "giusta cagione a' suoi sdegni" (right reason to her contempt). Instead, she is "turning her neck" and she is staring forward, keeping an erect position.<sup>35</sup> Battiferra is not fleeing from Bronzino; rather she is departing from his sight, allowing the poet to portrait her in a profile pose, "lieta" (delighted) and as a "gentile pianta" (noble plant).

As Smith has reminded us, resemblance has been found between the profile of Bronzino's Laura and the profile of Dante in black chalk by the same artist.<sup>36</sup> This particular pose derives from a tradition of portraits of Dante in which he was depicted with shoulders facing forward but his head in profile (for example the famous depictions of Dante by Andrea del Castagno, Vasari, Raffaello, and Signorelli). An example can be made through a side by side analysis of the two profiles because of

the resemblance between the two aquiline noses, the constrained lips and the staring eyes, as Plazzotta has shown.<sup>37</sup> This approach would confirm the poet and painter's high consideration of Laura Battiferri as a poetess, which not only in the words (Bronzino's verses) but also in the artistic representation embodies an exceptional significance. With an additional revelation in the verses of Petrarch's poem 240, as Kirkham has pointed out, it is possible to find "the truth that [Battiferri's] decorous clothing, posture and expression all collaborate to assert."<sup>38</sup>

[...] Voi, con quel cor, che di sì chiaro ingegno,  
Di sì alta vertute il cielo allumina [...]

You with that heart that heavens make bright  
with so clear an intellect, with such high virtue<sup>39</sup>

By transferring the moral connotation of Petrarch's Laura to Bronzino's Laura, it seems that Battiferri, with her Dante-like pose, is also evoking Dante's conception of poetry. In his *Divina Commedia*, Dante declares that he (poet) is a mean of Amore; the poetry originates as an autonomous voice of Amore by itself: "I' mi son un che, quando Amor mi spira, noto, e a quel modo ch'è ditta dentro vo significando" (Purg. 24 v.52–54). As Kirkham has so sharply noted, "words can not be enunciated by a woman effigied on a painted wood," but by the combination of both Petrarch's and Dante's influence, it is then possible to find a plausible reading of Laura Battiferri's image, which appears to be as legible as an open book.<sup>40</sup> A volume in the model's hands, elegantly displayed to the viewer by her left and right hands, holds the power of her compelling representation. The examination of Bronzino and Battiferri's exchange of poems and the sonnets by Petrarch are essential elements which lead to a more complete understanding of Bronzino's work of art. The emblematic intensity achieved with the particular pose of the book in the sitter's hands is the revelation of the purity, the angelic spirit and the holy visage of Laura Battiferri.

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Bronzino, *Portrait of Laura Battiferri*, 1555–1560. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Photo: Art Resource, New York.

## Notes

1. McCorquodale, Charles. *Bronzino*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981. 140.
2. For the definition of “barycenter:” Oxford English Dictionary online.
3. Kirkham, Victoria. “Dante’s Phantom, Petrarch’s Specter: Bronzino’s Portrait of the Poet Laura Battiferra.” *Visibile parlare: Dante and the Art of the Italian Renaissance*. Ed. Deborah Parker. *Lectura Dantis* 22–23 (1998): 63–139.
4. Smith, Graham. “Bronzino’s *Portrait of Laura Battiferri*.” *Source* 15 (1996): 33.
5. McCorquodale 140. Also Smith 30–38.
6. Simons, Patricia. “Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture.” *History Workshop: Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians* 25 (1988): 4–30.
7. Smith 33.
8. Plazzotta, Carol. “Bronzino’s Laura.” *Burlington Magazine* 140 (April 1998): 251–263.
9. Kirkham 63.
10. Plazzotta 256.
11. For the Italian edition: Petrarca, Francesco. *Canzoniere*. Intro. Ugo Foscolo. Note di Giacomo Leopardi. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2006.
12. *Ibid*, sonnet CCXLVI. 236.
13. Kirkham.
14. Sonnets concerning the portrayal of Laura Battiferri, written by Bronzino, Benedetto Varchi Anton Francesco Grazzini (Lasca), Laura Battiferri and Gherardo Spini are included in the codex *Delle Rime del Bronzino Pittore: Libro Primo* (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Codice Magliabechiano II, IX.10). Here is reported the reprinted version by Plazzotta.
15. For the English translation: Parker, Deborah. *Bronzino: Renaissance Painter As Poet*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
16. For the Italian text and for the English translation of this sonnet see Kirkham 74. Note the different translation for the last tercet, where I intended the meaning in a different way.
17. Parker 99.
18. *Ibid*. Although I have distinguished between “Battiferra” and “Battiferri,” I have chosen to keep this quote intact as originally written.
19. Summers, David. *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981. 287–288.
20. See Parker 87 for the definition of the terms “proposta” and “risposta.”

21. Kirkham 75.
22. Parker 100.
23. See Appendice in Plazzotta 262.
24. Although Kirkham's translation of "fair" is accurate, I have chosen to render "vago" into a more literal translation.
25. For the English translation: Kirkham 77.
26. Ibid 78.
27. Parker 101.
28. Interesting to note is the rendering of "svelare" (unveiling), which could be seen in the veil that the sitter is wearing. This element could well relate to the possible commission of the portrait in occasion of her second marriage with Ammannati.
29. For the Italian and English text see Parker 101.
30. Texts of the two sonnets by Petrarch reproduced in Bronzino's portrait of Laura Battiferri are here reprinted from Petrarca's *Rime, Trionfi e Poesie Latine*. Ed. F. Neri et al. Milan and Naples, 1951.
31. For the same reason as n.24, I have decided to substitute "frowning" with a more literal translation.
32. For the same reason as above, I have chosen to render the Italian "lieta" with the English translation "delighted."
33. For the translation of this sonnet see Kirkham. Originally quoted from: Petrarca, Francesco, and Robert M. Durling. *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime Sparse and Other Lyrics*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976. 142.
34. Ibid 69.
35. See above n.24 on the particular English translation of a few terms in the sonnet.
36. That Bronzino's portrait of Battiferri was intended to evoke the profile of Dante was suggested by Luciano Bellosi in "Il Ritratto fiorentino del Cinquecento." *Firenze E La Toscana Dei Medici Nell'Europa Del Cinquecento: Il Primato Del Disegno*. Florence: Edizioni Medicee, 1980. Here it is reported through Smith 37.
37. Plazzotta 258.
38. Kirkham 71.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.