'Beauty adorns virtue'

Dijk, S.J. van

Citation

Cover Page

Universiteit Leiden

1. Dress in Florentine profile portraits of women c. 1440-1475

This chapter deals with dress in Florentine female portraiture in the decades before Leonardo's first recorded portrait, the *Ginevra de' Benci*, painted c. 1475-1480 (figs. 1-2). The earliest extant autonomous portraits of women commissioned in Florence date from around 1440. Two important features that characterize the Florentine portraits painted between c. 1440 and 1475 are a profile view and elaborate costume. An analysis of the sitters' dress in particular will provide the reader with the necessary understanding of the appearance and development of Florentine fashion in these decades and the leading conventions in Florentine portraiture of women at the time of Leonardo's earliest activity as a painter in the mid-1470s.

Although Florentine Quattrocento female portraiture has attracted considerable scholarly attention over the past two decades, especially in the form of exhibitions, it is important to realize that our knowledge of the subject is necessarily limited.[1] First of all, the absolute number of surviving portraits is fairly small.[2] It is impossible to establish the numbers of portraits that were ever painted during the fifteenth century due to a lack of written evidence. Thus, we cannot be sure whether the extant portraits are representative of the total production.[3] Secondly, the authorship of most of these rare extant portraits is less than certain, with attributions that frequently change and are often based on shaky ground, such as comparisons with other portraits that have not been securely ascribed themselves.

The identification of the largely anonymous sitters proves even more difficult as there are usually no clues that would enable research. In several ground-breaking studies, Elizabeth Cropper has convincingly shown that portraits of women in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy are no mere physical likenesses, but rather representations of an ideal woman, influenced by Petrarchan love poetry and the neo-platonic paradigm that outer beauty is a sign of inner virtue.[4] All the portraits therefore convey a similar notion of female beauty, characterized by features such as blond tresses, elongated necks, rose-red lips and perfect white skin. This makes identification based on physical resemblance extremely difficult. Furthermore, archival references regarding Florentine portraiture, both male and female, are scarce. Of the vast majority of the extant portraits, neither the sitter nor the patron are known, let alone the occasion for the commission.

All portraits up to the early 1470s show lavishly dressed women in profile view. Since nothing is known about the sitters or their patrons, the sitter's dress often provides the only clue for the art historian. The aim of this chapter is to assess these portraits against the written sources on dress and jewellery, in order to establish which classes of Florentine society had their

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[1] Three major portrait exhibitions were: Washington 2001; London 2008; Berlin / New York 2011.
[2] The exact number of extant portraits is difficult to establish. The first overview of fifteenth-century Florentine profile portraits (both male and female) was made by Lipman 1936, p. 101-102. Since 1936, several of the portraits included by Lipman have turned out to be forgeries and many attributions have changed. For a more recent overview of Quattrocento female portraits, based on Lipman, with references to literature, see: Craven 1997, p. 211-311. Craven counted thirty-six extant portraits and also included a list of ten lost works, see: Craven 1997, p. 322-332.
[3] Pope-Hennessy roughly estimated that we may be left with only five to ten percent of the original production, warning that it is risky to draw conclusions on statistical grounds. Pope-Hennessy 1966, p. 59.
[4] Cropper 1976, p. 374-394; Cropper 1986, p. 175-190.

portraits painted. The chapter starts with a survey of extant Florentine portraits of women from the 1440s up to the mid-1470s, and continues with a description of the Florentine women's fashion of these decades identifying the various garments and jewels depicted. Next, the sitters' dress is compared with written sources, mainly trousseaux and counter-trousseaux, reviewing the prevailing hypothesis that this attire indicates a betrothal or a wedding. After examples are given to illustrate the importance of the painter's workshop practice, an analysis is made of how the depicted dress contributes to the function of portraiture in the context of the *familia*.

1.   Survey of extant portraits of women before c. 1475

Fifteenth-century archival references regarding portraiture are rare and usually not very informative. In his study on art in the Renaissance *palazzo*, Lydecker noted that if portraits are listed in household inventories, they are usually described rather generically as 'head of a woman' or 'head of a man'.[5] Identifications of the sitter are seldom given and only one example is known in which the artist's name is mentioned, namely 'a painting with a rounded top with two shutters depicting the bust of a woman by Domenico Veneziano' in the Medici inventory of 1492.[6] Ironically, none of Veneziano's portraits seems to have survived. Only thirteen Florentine portraits of women dating before or around 1475, all in profile view, have come down to us.[7] They are all discussed here in chronological order, as established in recent scholarship. As this survey shows, dating and attributions are often based on connoisseurship solely.

The earliest profile, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is securely attributed to Fra Filippo Lippi and shows a woman in an interior facing left towards a man at the window (fig. 15). Through a second window behind the sitter, a view on a landscape is offered. It is the only portrait that offers a clue enabling a hypothetical identification of the sitters. The coat of arms on the windowsill is probably that of the Scolari family. As a result the sitters are usually identified as Lorenzo di Ranieri Scolari and Angiola di Bernardo Sapiti.[8] The portrait may have been painted to commemorate their marriage, which must have been celebrated between 1436 and 1444, or, as Pope-Hennessy suggested, to celebrate the birth of their first child in 1444.[9] Given the inscription on the sleeve of the lady, which reads 'lealtà' (loyalty), a marriage portrait seems most likely. On the basis of these dates and on stylistic grounds, the portrait is usually

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[5] Lydecker only found ten portraits (five paintings, three terra cotta busts and two portraits of unidentified form) with an identified sitter in inventories, all dating to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Four of these were women, including the extant portraits of Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Giovanna degli Albizzi (figs. 42, 61). Lydecker 1987, p. 66-67.

[6] 'Uno colmetto con dua sportelli, dipintovi dentro d'una dama, di mano di maestro Domenico da Vinegia', Spallanzani and Gaeta Bertelà 1992, p. 72, fol. 38v.

[7] I have omitted the *Profile Portrait of a Lady* in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (inv. no. 1541-4), that was catalogued by the museum as Florentine and included by Craven in her overview of Florentine female portraits, see: Hoff 1995, p. 167; Craven 1997, p. 241-242, cat. 10. Its dating is problematical and the style unusual for Florence. Moreover, it is not certain whether or not the sitter is a Florentine woman, especially since her dress and hairstyle show strong similarities to the portrait medal of Isotta of Rimini. See: Hudson 2008, p. 327-328. A Ferrarese origin of the panel has been suggested by: Toledano 1987, p. 153, no. A11.

[8] The identification was first proposed by: Breck 1914, p. 49.

[9] There is some discussion on the date of the marriage. Most scholars state the couple was married in 1436, but there is evidence they were still unmarried by 1439, see: Berlin / New York 2011, p. 96. Regarding the suggestion that the portrait was painted to commemorate a birth, see: Pope-Hennessy and Christiansen 1980, p. 57.

dated between 1440 and 1444.[10] Recently, Katalin Prajda proposed a different identification, suggesting the coat of arms does not refer to the groom's family, but to the bride's, since it is part of the interior space she inhabits. The only Scolari girl of marriageable age in the 1430s and 1440s was Francesca di Matteo Scolari (c. 1424-after 1481), who married Bonaccorso Pitti in 1444. Prajda convincingly argues it is unlikely that Lorenzo Scolari could have afforded the rich attire of Lippi's sitter. Angiola's dowry consisted of a meagre 340 florins, whereas Francesca Scolari received no less than 4,500 florins. Moreover, Francesca's father-in-law, Luca di Bonaccorso Pitti, was an important patron of the arts.[11] Since portraits were still a novelty in the 1440s, it seems reasonable to connect Lippi's double portrait with the wealthy and art-loving Pitti family.

Another portrait by Lippi is now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (fig. 16). It shows a young woman facing left, in an interior setting with a view of the blue sky through a window. The sitter's right hand is raised to her chest, touching her veil, and she holds her right sleeve between the fingertips of her left hand, subtly pointing out the different textures of the materials. The reverse of the panel is painted as well, showing a marble imitation. The date of this portrait has long been a subject of debate, with suggestions ranging from c. 1430 to c. 1460-1470, but on the basis of comparison with the Metropolitan portrait, it is now dated to the mid-1440s.[12] The overall look of the sitter's costume is now rather plain, but originally it was highly ornamented. The cuff, headdress, girdle, and rings all show shallow holes into which precious materials, most likely gold, would have been inserted. This rare form of decoration must have given the panel an extraordinary precious look.[13]

The most enigmatic portrait from this period is a profile of a woman now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (fig. 17) The sitter is surrounded by three walls without roof, above which the sky is visible. The latter part has been heavily retouched, but the panel is in otherwise good condition. The light comes from above and creates strong shadows on the sitter's face. She is dressed rather plainly in a black overgarment with slit, dagged sleeves, revealing the red sleeve of the garment beneath. Her hair is bound up in a tight role twisted with white ribbon around the head. Generally dated between 1440 and 1450, its authorship is less certain. Stylistically, the anonymous painter seems to have been influenced by masters such as Filippo Lippi, Domenico Veneziano, and Paolo Uccello.[14]

As David Alan Brown has aptly noted, several female profiles painted during the 1450s and 1460s stand out for their rather flat treatment of the subject. The emphasis on the sitter's high forehead and elongated neck, the decorative display of dress, made of precious fabrics, and the jewellery is characteristic of these portraits.[15] Two portraits of this group are now in the

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[10] The style of the portrait is close to the *Annunciation* in the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Rome. Some scholars, however, have dated the Metropolitan portrait earlier, to c. 1435-1436, see: Ruda 1993, p. 385.

[11] Prajda 2013, p. 73-80. Francesca's first husband was Tommaso di Neri Capponi, whom she married in 1438. The marriage did not last long, as he died in 1442.

[12] For the most recent ideas on the portrait's date and reference to earlier opinions, see: Berlin / New York 2011, p. 100-101.

[13] Apart from the losses of the inserted materials, the condition of the panel is very good. Ruda 1993, p. 412. No other examples of this technique in portraiture, within Italy or beyond, are known to me. However, Lippi's oeuvre includes examples of the use of gold ornaments on altarpieces, for instance the *Coronation of the Virgin*, now in the Uffizi (inv. no. 8352).

[14] It is sometimes suggested that this portrait is a forgery, but technical analysis has not confirmed this. For the attribution, which still remains open, results of technical research, and references to earlier literature, see Keith Christiansen in: New York 2005, p. 178.

[15] David Alan Brown in: Washington 2001, p. 112.

Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston (figs. 18-19).[16] Their attribution has shifted over time, both having been credited to Paolo Uccello, Domenico Veneziano and the Master of the Castello Nativity. The Metropolitan portrait is now generally ascribed to the latter. The so-called *Young Lady of Fashion* in Boston is still often attributed to Uccello, but is more likely to have been painted by the Master of the Castello Nativity as well. Unfortunately, both portraits were overcleaned in the past and suffered extensive losses in the ornamentation of the costumes. In the case of the *Young Lady of Fashion*, the original gold brocade motifs can only still be seen on the sleeve.[17] This of course complicates a correct attribution and precise dating.

A related portrait that has retained much more of its original ornamentation is a profile attributed to Lo Scheggia, now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (fig. 20). There is some wear throughout the painted surface and several areas have been repainted, most notably the eyebrow and the shadow below the nose. The sitter's dress, however, seems to be in reasonably good condition, showing intricate patterns of dots on the bodice that were originally gilded. Along the upper edge of the portrait the letters 'G P I' are legible, which possibly refer to the sitter's initials. Strehlke supposed the crossed P should be read as Pro, Per or Par. The I being the last syllable, this could refer to the Parenti or Peruzzi family. It remains impossible to identify the lady with full certainty, nor is the meaning of the symbols between the letters clear.[18] In style and outline the portrait is very close to the previous two and in consequence is similarly dated to the 1450s or 1460s.[19] The Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris owns another portrait that is attributed to the same master and dated to c. 1460. Again, the outline of the profile is very similar, although this time the sitter is placed before a window, dressed in less ornamental fabrics (fig. 21). Her black dress has a plunging neckline at the back and her hair is bound with several ribbons and covered with a transparent veil.[20]

Another portrait dated to the 1460s is the so-called *Portrait of a Lady in Yellow* by Alesso Baldovinetti that is now in the National Gallery in London (fig. 22). The sitter is shown against a blue background. The V-shaped neckline of her dress, both at the front and the back, emphasizes her elongated neck. The face and the pleats of the dress and its sleeve have been carefully modelled. The dress now appears to be yellow, but may originally have been cream coloured. The dots on the sleeve are traces of the original gilding. The sleeve is furthermore decorated with an emblem consisting of three palm leaves with a feather on either side, tied

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[16] A third portrait sometimes associated with this group is now in a private collection. It is ascribed to the Master of the Castello Nativity and dated to the 1460s. It deviates from all other extant Florentine profiles, since the sitter faces right. Its surface is seriously damaged and the panel is only known through a black and white photograph in the literature, see: Lachi 1995, p. 71-75, 118-119, cat. 36; Washington 2001, p. 112. Since the condition cannot be properly judged, I have not included the picture in this overview.

[17] On the condition and the attribution to Uccello of the *Young Lady of Fashion*, see: Hendy 1974, p. 267-268, endorsed by David Alan Brown in: Washington 2001, p. 112. However, Pope-Hennessy 1969, p. 151 stated there is no ground for this attribution. For the attribution of both portraits to the Master of the Castello Nativity, see: Lachi 1995, p. 119-121, cat. 37 and 38; Hudson 2008, p. 325, cat. 56; p. 328-329, cat. 60.

[18] The gilding of the sitter's undergown is a later reconstruction. Strehlke mistook this garment for the sitter's chemise and supposed the gilding does not reflect the original state. It is however very well possible that the undergown was originally gilded as well. Strehlke 2004, p. 379-380.

[19] Opinions on the dating differ only slightly, all authors placing it between 1450 and 1470, see: San Giovanni Valdarno 1999, p. 82-83, cat. 22 (1450s or 1460s, on the basis of dress and hairstyle); Strehlke 2004, p. 382 (c. 1460).

[20] Altenburg 2006, p. 28, cat. 5; Florence 2013, p. 74, cat. 5.

16

together with a ribbon. This emblem has not been identified yet, but may refer to the sitter's husband. The panel is still mounted in its original frame.[21]

The National Gallery owns a second portrait dated to this period, known as the *Portrait of a Lady in Red* (fig. 23). In the past, it has been attributed to a host of artists, including Piero della Francesca and Domenico Veneziano, as well as to the school of Antonio Pollaiuolo, but none of these attributions seems truly convincing, so the issue of authorship remains inconclusive. The sitter is lavishly dressed in gold brocade, patterned velvet and a pearl studded cap with a transparent veil, all of which have been carefully rendered by the painter. The neckline, which is rather low at the back, leaves bare a fair amount of skin. The painting is in good condition, with minor retouches in the face and the background.[22]

Finally, there is a group of four portraits that are associated with the Pollaiuolo brothers. Antonio del Pollaiuolo, the eldest of the two, was trained as a goldsmith, but ultimately also worked as a sculptor and a painter. According to Vasari, it was his younger brother Piero who had taught him the craft of painting.[23] Although there are no contemporary references to female portraits by their hand, several are usually ascribed to them on stylistic grounds.[24] Datable to c. 1460-1465, the earliest is the *Portrait of a Young Woman*, now in Berlin (fig. 24). The sitter, lavishly dressed in velvet and gold brocade, is shown up to the waist, placed before a blue sky and a marble balustrade encrusted with porphyry disks. The girl's dress is high-necked at the front and plunges down at the back, drawing attention to the elegant curve of her bare neck. A profile in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan shows a young woman with an intricate hairstyle, precious jewellery and a sleeve of gold brocade (fig. 25). The portrait is well preserved and since the technique of representing the gold brocaded fabric is very similar to the Berlin portrait, it is usually dated to same period.[25]

Two later portraits, dated to c. 1475 and now located in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Galleria degli Uffizi respectively, are given to the Pollaiuolo brothers as well (figs. 26-27). The two profiles are very similar, showing the sitters against a blue background, both wearing a dress with low necklines at the front and the back, a sleeve of gold brocade, a pearl necklace with a pendant and a similarly shaped brooch on the chest. The Uffizi portrait has retained its original frame. Debate is ongoing as to whether to attribute these portraits to Antonio or Piero, but it is almost impossible to distinguish their individual hands from each other, especially since the surfaces of both paintings are quite worn and have been extensively repainted.[26]

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[21] The attribution to Baldovinetti has not been doubted since it was first proposed by: Fry 1911, p. 311-312. For technical notes on the panel, see: London 2008, p. 90. The sitter is sometimes identified as the countess della Palma from Urbino, see: Rowlands 1980, p. 624, 627. This identification should however be doubted, because the resemblance of the emblem is not convincing.

[22] Davies 1961, p. 183-184.

[23] For a detailed account of the lives of Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo, see: Wright 2005, p. 7-23.

[24] Antonio Pollaiuolo was however praised by Marsilio Ficino for his portrait of the Venetian ambassador Pietro da Mulino. See: Wright 2005, p. 115.

[25] Wright 2005, p. 119-124; Berlin / New York 2011, p. 101-102. Recently, Andrea di Lorenzo proposed a later date of c. 1470-1475 for the Poldi Pezzoli portrait on stylistic grounds. See: Milan 2014, p. 246. This is however unlikely, for exact parallels of the sitter's hairstyle can be found in portrait busts of the early 1460s, such as Desiderio da Settignano's bust of a woman, sometimes identified as Marietta Strozzi, in Berlin (fig. 59).

[26] For some recent different opinions on the attribution with further references to older literature, see: Poletti 2001, p. 205 (Piero); David Alan Brown in Washington 2001, p. 115 (Antonio); Wright 2005, p. 125-127 (Antonio); Stefan Weppelman in Berlin / New York 2011, p. 102-103 (Piero); Cecilia Martelli and Aldo Martelli in Milan 2014, p. 248-252, cats. 26-27 (Piero).

As already mentioned, it is impossible to determine to what extent these thirteen portraits are representative of the total production up to 1475. However, it is clear that portraits still must have been a rarity in Florence in this period. Compared to chests, or at least their painted panels, *spalliere* (wainscoting panels), and paintings of religious subject matter for the domestic realm, all of which have survived in large quantities, the number of extant portraits is extremely small. This incongruence is reflected in contemporary written sources. The workshop book of Apollonio di Giovanni with a list of commissions starting in 1446 is a case in point. Only one portrait is mentioned as opposed to 172 painted *forzieri* (chests).[27] The average chest had a price of thirty to forty florins. With a value of only two florins, this portrait was relatively cheap. Other similar artist's sources, like the *ricordi* of Alesso Baldovinetti covering the years 1449 to1491, list no portraits at all.[28]

If the focus is shifted from the artist to the patron, sources are equally scarce, but it is striking that all of the three references to female portraiture before c. 1475 that I was able to find involve the Medici.[29] The painted bust of a woman by Domenico Veneziano in the 1492 Medici inventory has already been mentioned.[30] The same inventory lists another panel portrait of a woman: 'a little panel on which is painted the portrait of Madonna Bianca', with a value of one florin.[31] This portrait most likely dates to the period under discussion here. Bianca de' Medici (1445-1488) was the daughter of Piero il Gottoso and married Gugliemo Pazzi in 1458. A third example is the portrait of Lucrezia Donati (d. 1501), who in 1465 became the mistress of Lorenzo de' Medici. This panel appears on a list of works by Verrocchio for which the Medici never paid, made up several years after the painter's death by his brother and heir Tommaso. The portrait is described as 'a wooden panel with the figure of the head of Lucrezia Donati'.[32]

Both painter's *ricordi* and family inventories suggest that portraits were still very rare in the mid-fifteenth century and were only commissioned by the most influential and wealthy families, like the Medici. The dress represented in these portraits points towards this layer of Florentine society as well. All thirteen portraits discussed here show sitters dressed in lavish attire. Even if the paint surface is sometimes damaged, the overall impression is still one of elegance and luxury. The scarcity of documentation on the sitters renders a study of their

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[27] The workshop book is published in full in: Callman 1974, p. 76-81, app. 1. For the portrait, see p. 78, no. 73: 'Apollonio fa il ritratto al naturale, in su la cartapecora, de Giovanni di Bartolomeo Quaratesi per f.2'.
[28] Baldovinetti's *ricordi* are published in: Wedgwood Kennedy 1938, p. 236-238. Commissions comprise religious panel paintings and frescoes, designs for windows, chests, wainscoting panels, and restoration work on mosaics.
[29] The number of references to portraits slightly increases in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, see: Lydecker 1987, p. 66-67. Further systematic research of inventories, for instance in the ASF Archivio dei Pupilli, may shed more light on this subject. This is however beyond the scope of this dissertation.
[30] 'Uno colmetto con dua sportelli, dipintovi dentro d'una dama, di mano di maestro Domenico da Vinegia', Spallanzani and Gaeta Bertelà 1992, p. 72, fol. 38v.
[31] 'Una tavoletta, dipintovi la testa di madonna Biancha', Spallanzani and Gaeta Bertelà 1992, p. 80, fol. 48r; Stapleford 2013, p. 157. A third female panel portrait is listed on fol. 42r: 'Un quadro suvi ritratto al naturale la testa di Madonna Alfonsina', appraised at one florin together with a Flemish painting of the heads of Christ and Mary. Alfonsina Orsini (1472-1520) married Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici in 1488 and her portrait must therefore date to the last quarter of the century. On both portraits, see also: Langedijk 1968, p. 7-8, 12-13.
[32] 'uno quadro di legname drentovj la fighura della testa della Luchrezia Donatj', Von Fabriczy 1895, p. 5, no. 7. Tommaso drew up the list in January 1496, after the Medici were exiled, hoping he could reclaim some of the money.

costume all the more urgent. The next section discusses Florentine fashion of the years 1440-1475, with a focus on the sumptuous dress worn by the sitters of these portraits.

2.1. Florentine fashion

To fifteenth-century Florentines, dress was an important matter. In his *zibaldone* Giovanni Rucellai (1403-1481) included a chronicle of the city from 1400 to 1457. He recorded Florence as a city full of beautiful buildings and important artisans and artists; sculptors, painters and extraordinary draughtsmen. Interestingly, he considered embroiderers and goldsmiths to be of the same order and explicitly praised the Florentine fashion of the time: 'The women and men were never dressed better with rich garments, well made and clean, and the women are adorned with brocades, embroidery, jewels, pearls and headdresses in the French manner that cost 200 florins each or even more.'[33] Obviously, rich and beautiful dress was as important to civic pride as art and architecture were.

In 1924 Egidia Polidori Calamandrei established our basic knowledge of Florentine women's dress, drawing from a wide variety of sources pertaining to the higher classes.[34] She ascertained that women usually wore three layers of clothing: a simple shift, the *camicia*, a dress and a more ample overgarment, with or without sleeves. *Camicie* were made of white linen, *pannolino*, or the finest quality of linen produced in northern France and named after its city of origin: *tela di rensa* (Reims) or *tela di Cambrai*.[35] Polidori Calamandrei noted a steady increase in the number of *camicie* listed in inventories in the course of fifteenth century.[36] Indeed, numerous shirts appear in trousseaux in the second half of the fifteenth century. Bartolomea Dietisalvi received twelve upon her marriage in 1459 (app. 3B, no. 45), just like Ginevra d'Ugolino Martelli when she married Cino di Filippo Rinuccini in 1460.[37] Six years later, in 1466, Nannina de' Medici had sixteen *camicie* in her trousseau (app. 3C, no. 27).

The sumptuary law of 1464 limited the use of decoration on 'tight undergarments', that is the dresses that were worn directly on top of the *camicia*. The listing of these garments gives an idea of the terminology used in Florence: '*cotte* made of silk or *gamurre, saie* or *rascie,*'.[38] The *gamurra* is a simple dress made of woollen cloth frequently found in inventories and bridal trousseaux.[39] In 1439, women were allowed to have as many *gamurre* as they pleased, as long as they were made of woollen fabrics and not dyed crimson or decorated with embroidery.[40] None of the surviving portraits before c. 1475 shows a woman dressed in this undergarment, which usually remained hidden under an overgarment. In narrative fresco cycles, however, the garment is often worn by servant girls. For example, Paolo Uccello depicted a maid in a *gamurra* descending a staircase and carrying a bowl of porridge in the fresco *The Birth of the Virgin* in the

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[33] 'Le donne e gli uomini non vestirono mai meglio di vestiti ricchi, ben fatti e puliti, e le donne molto ornate di brocchati, richami, gioie, perle e chapucci alle franzese di costo di f. 200 l'uno e più.' Rucellai 1960, vol 1, p. 60-61.

[34] On Polidori Calamandrei, see: Introduction, p. 6.

[35] For instance 'camice da pannolino nostrale' and 'camice di rensa' from the 1493 trousseau of Maria di Piero Bini, published by Biagi 1899, p. 15.

[36] From the cited examples it can be deduced that the average number of camicie in the first half of the fifteenth century was about ten. In the early sixteenth century this number rose to thirty. Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 101.

[37] Ginevra Martelli's trousseau is published in: Rinuccini 1840, p. 255-256.

[38] 'vestire stretto per di sotto'; 'cotte di seta o ghamurre, saie, o rascie', Mazzi 1908, p. 45, no. 8.

[39] As Polidori Calamandrei has pointed out, exceptions can always be found. For instance, a rather fanciful *gamurra* is described in the inventory of Nannina de' Medici's trousseau of 1466: 'una ghamurra paonnazza rosina con oro, ariento e perle' (app. 3C, no. 6). See: Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 37-38.

[40] Morelli 1881, p. 13; Rainey 1985, p. 447.

cathedral of Prato, nearby Florence (fig. 28).[41] The bodice of the girl's dress has a rather high waistline and is tight-fitting, as are the sleeves. A pleated skirt that reaches down to the ankle is attached to the bodice. The *saia* and the *rascia* probably had a similar cut and were named after the fabric they were made of, respectively a light woollen or silken twill and a coarse woollen cloth.[42]

The *cotta* was the most expensive type of underdress. Again, the cut was similar to the *gamurra*, but *cotte* were usually made of costly silk fabrics, which the 1464 sumptuary law allowed for.[43] In his *Diario*, Luca Landucci noted the cost of the fabric and haberdasheries to have a *cotta* made for his bride, Salvestra Pagnia, in 1466. He spent a considerable amount of money, buying fine crimson silk for 26 gold florins and 6 *soldi*, an amount roughly comparable to the annual income of an unskilled labourer. He further needed eyelets, fringes, gold ribbon and ermine skins, as well as several other fabrics like linen, plain silk (*valescio*) and fustian to line the dress.[44] Two far more expensive examples, belonging to Lucrezia Tornabuoni, are listed in the Medici inventory of 1456: a 'silk *cotta* of blue satin brocaded with silver with sleeves of silver cloth' and a '*cotta* of crimson pile-on-pile velvet with sleeves of gold brocade' (app. 3A, nos. 6-7). The latter can be compared with the *cotta* worn by the sitter of the anonymous *Lady in Red* (fig. 23). The lady is shown wearing a *cotta* of red purple velvet with similar sleeves of gold brocade.

Cotte could be worn on their own, but were usually combined with an overdress, as is confirmed by the sumptuary law of 1456. That year the Florentine government limited the number of silk garments a woman was allowed to have to two: 'Women can have two dresses of silk for their own use and to wear as an outer garment, only one per season, one for winter and the other for summer, *cioppa* or *giornea* as they please, and one *cotta* for underneath'.[45] The *cioppa* was an overgarment with sleeves, worn especially during winter, whereas *giornee* are never recorded with sleeves and were worn during summer. Lippi's portrait in Berlin shows the sitter wearing a green *cioppa*, lined with grey fur (fig. 16). The long sleeves could cover the sitter's hands completely.[46] A more luxurious example is worn by the female sitter of Lippi's Scolari double portrait (fig. 15). The red *cioppa* is lined with white fur, possibly ermine, which was the most expensive kind and therefore prohibited in the sumptuary law of 1449.[47]

Lippi's double portrait shows two popular types of sleeves. The *cioppa* has a wide sleeve, known as the *manica a gozzo*, which has a large opening that reveals the gold brocade sleeves of the dress worn underneath. The latter sleeve is full at the top, gathered at the elbow and tight-fitting around the underarm. The sitter of Pollaiuolo's portrait in Berlin wears a dress with similarly cut sleeves (fig. 24). This model was fashionable up until the 1460s, when it was replaced by a sleeve that was more closely fitting from the shoulder downwards.[48] The two

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[41] Fiorentini Capitani and Ricci 1992, p. 58-59.

[42] On the *gamurra*, *saia* and *rascia*, see: Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 36-38, 44, 53.

[43] 'Anchora possino avere due cotte di seta...', Mazzi 1908, p. 45, no. 7. On the *cotta*, see: Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 41-42, 46-47.

[44] For an overview of the average income of different professions in fifteenth-century Florence, see: Frick 2002, p. 97. Landucci noted the price of the silk, the costliest component, in gold florins, whereas the other amounts spent were listed in *fiorini piccoli*. Landucci 1985, p. 7-8.

[45] 'Le donne possono avere insino in due robe di seta per loro uso e per di sopra solamente a uno tempo, l'una pel verno, l'altra per la state, cioppa o giornea a loro piacimento, e una cotta per di sotto', cited from: Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 44.

[46] In 1415 the use of sleeves hiding the hands was forbidden, an indication this style was actually very popular. Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 58.

[47] 'Non possino portare in fodere di maniche [...] ermellini', Florentine sumptuary law enacted on 28 April 1449. Cited from: Rainey 1985, app. 11, p. 766.

[48] For an overview of the development of the sleeve, see: Birbari 1975, p. 19-22.

previously mentioned *cotte* from the Medici inventory are examples of the preference for sleeves made of a contrasting fabric. Sleeves were usually a separate part of a garment, attached to the bodice with hooks and eyelets or laces. This not only created the possibility of playing with different colours and textures within one garment, it also allowed combining a relatively modest garment like the woollen *gamurra* with more costly sleeves. The cheaper parts of the dress probably remained hidden under the *cioppa*, whereas the sleeves were visible through slits, as is the case in Lippi's double portrait.

In the sumptuary laws issued during the first three quarters of the fifteenth century, a steadily increasing tolerance towards costly sleeves can be observed. In 1415, *gamurre* with sleeves of velvet or any other kind of silk were forbidden altogether. The 1439 law forbade all trimming and embroidery in gold, silver or silk on *gamurre*, except for the sleeves, which was revoked in 1449, when all decoration was limited to the cuffs of the sleeves. In 1456 however, one pair of sleeves of gold or silver brocade was allowed and in 1464 this was extended to two pairs of any colour, one brocaded with gold and the other with silver, or two pairs of mixed gold and silver brocade.[49] Indeed, many examples of *gamurre* with sleeves of brocade, velvet or other silk fabrics can be found in inventories. For instance Salvestra Pagnia received 'a purple *gamurra* with sleeves of brocade' in her trousseau.[50]

Besides the popular combination of *gamurra* and *cioppa*, the *cotta* and the *giornea* often figure together. The sleeveless *giornea* was often open at the sides, revealing large parts of the dress underneath. It was therefore usually combined with the luxurious silk *cotta*.[51] Most extant Florentine profile portraits present women with this type of sumptuous clothing. The sitter of the *Young Lady of Fashion* wears a blue, sleeveless *giornea* with a typical plunging neckline at the back on top of a *cotta* with sleeves of gold brocade (fig. 19). Although the surface has been badly damaged and partly repainted, it is still clear her clothing must have been very costly. Her face and headdress, consisting of a head brooch and several pearl rosettes, are actually the best-preserved parts of the painting.[52] The other female portraits that are stylistically closely related to this panel, the Metropolitan portrait by the Master of the Castello Nativity and Lo Scheggia's *Portrait of a Woman* in Philadelphia, show similar dress and jewellery (figs. 18, 20). Another striking example of the combination of a *cotta* with a *giornea* is Pollaiuolo's *Portrait of a Young Woman* in Berlin (fig. 24).

In the vast majority of the portraits painted, the ladies wear their hair bound up, decorated with ribbons or a little cap, sometimes covered with a light veil (figs. 16-27). Veils, ribbons and laces figure in large quantities in trousseaux, like the 'ribbons of various materials to

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[49] Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 60; Rainey 1985, p. 446-452. This ongoing liberalization has sometimes been interpreted as a sign of the failure of the city's government to enforce its laws. Rainey, however, noted that the legislators themselves regarded these new laws as willing attempts to concede women some necessary ostentation of affluence that could contribute to the city's prestige as well. He noted a similar growing tolerance of the use of jewellery, especially rings, and the permitted quantities of pearls in these years, see: Rainey 1985, p. 435-440.

[50] For Salvestra's 'gamurra pagonazza, con maniche di broccatello', see: Landucci 1985, p. 6. Further examples of woollen *gamurre* with silk sleeves may be found in the Pucci inventory of 1449: Merkel 1897, p. 171, no. 6, p. 177, nos. 6 and 7, p. 180, no. 3, p. 186, no. 22. For many more examples, see: Baldi 2006, p. 290-291.

[51] This is also confirmed by a letter from Alessandra Macinghi, who wrote to her son that his wife Fiammetta needed a new *giornea*, because it was not the time of year to wear *cioppe*: 'E la mi dice la Fiammetta ch'io ti scriva ch'ella vorrebbe farsi una giornea di saia nera milanese per questo San Giovanni [24 June], […] e invero ella n'ha bisogno che non è tempo allora di portare le cioppe, e poi potrà portare la cotta'. Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 41-44. On the *giornea*, see also: Levi Pisetzky 1964-69, vol. 2, p. 249-251.

[52] Washington 2001, p. 112.

bind around head' in that of Bartolomea Dietisalvi (app. 3B, no. 53). A wide variety of caps can be found, like the *berretta*, *cuffia*, *cappello* and *cappellina*. The differences between these various headdresses are, however, difficult to establish and it remains unclear which name belongs to which shape.[53]

In the sumptuary law of 1449, the Florentine government noted the rise of foreign headgear and resolved to ban it from the city: 'They [Florentine women] cannot wear on their heads headgear of any material, jagged or not, with *corne* (horns) or *selle* (sadles) or caps or other things with similar names in a foreign style.[54] The ban was repeated in 1456: 'they cannot wear headdresses and caps, neither *corna* nor *selle* in the French and Flemish manner or in any style that is usually indicated as foreign'.[55] The *corna* was a headdress shaped in the form of two horns, as can be seen on a *spalliera* (wainscoting panel) depicting a wedding scene by Lo Scheggia, now in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence.[56] A detail shows two of the guests wearing *corne*, notably the seated lady on the right and the dancing lady on the right (fig. 29). 'Two pairs of *corne*', appraised at 200 florins, were part of Nannina de' Medici's wedding gifts from her husband (app. 3C).

The *sella* is also worn on Lo Scheggia's *spalliera* panel (fig. 29, middle dancing lady). It consists of padded roll of fabric shaped like a horse saddle, hence its name, mounted on a cap. On either side of the head a piece of the fabric flows freely, one extending further down than the other. Lippi's Scolari portrait provides us with an example that can be observed in more detail (fig. 15). The sitter's cap is decorated with a row of small pearls. The padded role on top is made of a deep red fabric, richly embroidered with gold thread, sequins and seed pearls, edged with gold fringes. Polidori Calamandrei stated the *sella* was fashionable in Florence between 1450 and 1470.[57] Its ban in the 1449 sumptuary law, however, indicates it became popular somewhat earlier, during the 1440s. Since it was difficult to keep up with fashion developments, lawmakers were usually behind the times, imposing bans only after a new fashion was well established. The rise of French and Flemish headdress in Florence therefore seems to have taken place between the sumptuary law of 1439, in which foreign influences are not mentioned yet, and 1449.[58] This provides a *terminus post quem* for Lippi's portrait, confirming the date of c. 1440-1444.[59]

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[53] Polidori Calamandrei made a distinction between the *berretta*, a simple coif, and the *cuffia*, a cap with triangular extensions on either side that reached down to the shoulders or the breast. It is not clear, however, on which criteria she based this distinction. See: Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 79-80.

[54] 'Non possino portare in capo cappuccino d'alcuna ragione, frastagliati o non frastagliati, con corna o vero selle o chappelletti o altre cose di che vocaboli si sieno intorno acciò alla di là', Rainey 1985, app. 11, p. 768, no. 17.

[55] 'non possino portare cappucci, cappelletti, nè corna, nè selle alla fiamminga e alla francese in alcun modo che volgarmente si dice alla di là', cited from: Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 84.

[56] This *spalliera* panel depicts a contemporary Florentine wedding with people in fashionable dress. It is important, though, to be cautious when using *spalliere* and *cassoni* as a visual source for the history dress, especially when mythological scenes are depicted. For an analysis of the 'sartorial message' of several panels representing the story of the Sabine women, in which contemporary features have been mixed with exotic features, see: Campbell 2000, p. 137-145. On this particular panel, see: San Giovanni Valdarno 1999, p. 58-61, cat. 13.

[57] Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 83-84, repeated by Levi Pisetzky 1964-69, vol. 2, p. 290.

[58] In France the horn-shaped headdress, both with and without the padded roll, was named *hennin* and was worn from the early fifteenth century onwards. See: Buren 2011, p. 317-318. The Florentine sumptuary law of 1439 is published by: Morelli 1881, p. 13-16. On the struggle of governments to stay abreast of fashion changes, see: Kovesi Killerby 2002, p. 160-161.

[59] Some scholars tend to date the portrait earlier, most notably Ruda 1993, p. 385-386. He states the headdress appears as early as the late 1430s on cassone panels by Apollonio di Giovanni, although he

Bernardo Rucellai's wedding gifts to his bride Nannina de' Medici are representative of the type of jewellery worn in mid-Quattrocento Florence (app. 3B). He gave her two necklaces; one that is described as 'rich' consisted of diamonds, rubies and pearls and had a total value of 1,200 florins, the other was made of large pearls with a point-cut diamond pendant. Another showpiece was the 'brochetta di spalla', a shoulder brooch with a balas ruby and pearls that had cost him 1,000 florins. A second brooch was to be worn on the head. This combination of necklace, head and shoulder brooch is often represented in portraits of women. Lippi's Scolari bride wears a necklace with large pearls and a brooch with a gemstone encircled by pearls on her shoulder (fig. 15).[60] A head brooch is fastened in the middle of the padded roll of her *sella*. Head brooches also figure in portraits ascribed to the Master of the Castello Nativity, Lo Scheggia and by Baldovinetti (figs. 18-20, 22). Three Pollaiuolo sitters wear head brooches combined with strings of pearls that have been intertwined with their hair (figs. 25-27). These strings, known as *frenelli*, were very popular as well. Nannina received one that consisted of large pearls, appraised at 500 florins.[61]

Nearly all fifteenth-century jewellery is lost, but there are some rare pieces from the Franco-Flemish region that are very similar to the jewels in the Pollaiuolo portraits in New York and Florence. Both ladies wear a more or less identical shoulder brooch, consisting of a winged figure holding a ruby encircled by pearls and other gems (figs. 26-27). A gold brooch, now in the British Museum, found together with two smaller brooches in the river Meuse in the nineteenth century, has a similar shape (fig. 30).[62] The smaller pieces resemble the jewels worn in the hair by the sitter of the New York portrait.

2.2. Florentine fabrics

Giovanni Rucellai not only praised the Florentine fashions of his day. He also showed great admiration for the city's textile business:

The silk industry never produced more textiles than in these days, and never has richer cloth of gold been produced or silk of a better price than now. And in this period the production of gold thread started in our city, which today is better and more beautiful than anywhere else; and the same is being said of fustian.[63]

In a similar eulogistic vein, Benedetto Dei stated in his chronicle that 'beautiful Florence has eighty-three magnificent and highly esteemed silk shops' and he further listed several expensive fabrics, like gold and silver brocade, that were produced in Florence and exported to all the

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does not mention any examples. Moreover, the chronology of Apollonio's work has not been established with certainty and is based on only two securely dated works, the earliest having been made in 1442, see: Callman 1974, p. 16.

[60] Prajda tried to identify this shoulder brooch as the jewel listed in an inventory of the Scolari palazzo dated 1424. The jewel belonged to Francesca di Scolari's mother and is described as consisting of a yellow balas ruby and three pearls, valued at 300 florins. See: Prajda 2013, p. 76. However, the brooch represented does not resemble this description at all, since it is made up of one balas ruby and four pearls, the fourth being just visible behind the large central balas ruby.

[61] On the *frenello*, see: Polidori Calamandrei 1924, p. 81.

[62] For a technical description and similar pieces, see: Brown 1992, p. 415-418.

[63] 'Il mestieri della seta non lavorò mai tanti drappi quanto in questo tenpo, e mai si feciono i più ricchi drappi d'oro e di seta di maggiore pregio che al presente. E in questa età si principiò fare nella nostra città l'oro filato, che al dì oggi si fa migliore e più bello che in niun altro luogo; e il simile si dicie di fustani.' Rucellai 1960, p. 61.

important European trading cities.[64] Indeed, Florence was an important centre for the production of various fabrics, notably high-quality woollen cloth and luxury textiles made of silk.[65] The most important types of silk fabrics that often figure in inventories will be briefly discussed here. The reader should bear in mind that the terminology used for fabrics in the fifteenth century can be ambiguous and while some terms will be clear to the modern reader, others will not. This survey is therefore not exhaustive, nor does it go into the technical details of the production process, as these are beyond the scope of this research.[66]

One of the most popular types of silk fabric was satin, named *zetano* or *raso* in fifteenth-century Italy. The satin weave creates a smooth fabric with a shiny effect, which is further enhanced by the natural gloss of silk. Nannina de' Medici for example had a *giornea* and a *cotta* of satin (app. 3C, nos. 3, 7). Also often used is damask or *domaschino*, named after the city of Damascus. It is a fabric in which a pattern is created by alternating a satin weave with another type of weave. Damask could be monochrome or two-toned, with a weft and warp in different colours. It was used for a multitude of dress items. Nannina's trousseau for instance lists a '*giornea* of white and crimson damask with fringes and pearls', a *saia* with 'sleeves of white and red damask' and a 'nightcap of floral damask' (app. 3C, nos. 4, 9, 42). In 1461 Ginevra Martelli received three damask dresses: a *cioppa* and a *giornea* of crimson damask decorated with pearls and fringes and a *cotta* of *alessandrino* (deep-blue) damask with sleeves with floral motives.[67]

Satin and damask could be further enhanced by brocading, i.e. adding gold or silver threads to the weave to create a pattern.[68] Numerous examples can also be found in inventories. Nannina was given several lengths of brocaded fabrics: '22 *braccia* of brocaded green damask', '15 *braccia* of brocaded blue damask in one piece' and '1¼ *braccio* of crimson gold brocade' (app. 3C, nos. 19, 20, 23). Lucrezia Tornabuoni had a '*cioppa* of black velvet brocaded with gold', a '*giornea* of crimson damask brocaded with gold', a '*cioppa* of purple pile-on-pile velvet, lined with green brocade', and a '*cotta* of blue satin brocaded with silver' (app. 3A, nos. 1-3, 6). The use of brocades was especially popular in sleeves. An example is the '*cotta* of crimson damask, with brocaded and embroidered sleeves of crimson damask' that Bernardo Rinieri gave to his spouse Bartolomea Dietisalvi (app. 3B, no. 2). In her trousseau, provided by her father, Bartolomea also received a 'purple *gamurra* with sleeves of *baldacchino*' (app. 3B, no. 23). *Baldacchino*, a name that probably derives from Baldacco, Italian for Baghdad, is a type of lampas silk that could be executed in one or more colours with additional brocading of gold or silver threads.[69]

Velvet or *velluto*, a silk fabric with a cut pile, was also often used for dress. Besides plain velvet there were several forms of figured velvet. Polychrome figured velvets were known as *velluti appiciolati*. Pollaiuolo's portrait of a girl in Berlin provides a stunning example of a *giornea* made of this kind of fabric (fig. 24). A *velluto raso*, or voided velvet, is a kind of velvet in which part of the ground is left free of the pile to create a pattern. This can be seen in the *Lady in Red*,

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[64] 'Florentie bella à 83 botteghe d'arte di seta, magnifiche e di gran pregio', Dei 1984, p. 82.

[65] I will not elaborate on Florentine cloth production here, because it is of less importance to the dress depicted in female portraiture up to the 1470s. On this subject, see: Hoshino 1980, p. 153-303.

[66] On the problem of textile terminology, see: Monnas 2009, p. 13. Descriptions of fabrics are based on Monnas 2009, p. 295-303, app. 1 'Looms, Textile Types and Historic Terminology', to which I also refer for more technical descriptions, including weave diagrams.

[67] Rinuccini 1840, p. 255.

[68] Brocading is not necessarily limited to metal threads, but was also done with coloured silk. Alternatively, gold or silver threads could be added as a supplementary weft (lampas), which was less labour intensive, but more expensive, because it required a larger amount of gold or silver.

[69] Lampas is a category of silk fabrics with a pattern created by one or more additional wefts. Although the term came into use in the fourteenth century, its current use dates from the nineteenth century, see: Monnas 2009, p. 298.

whose bodice is made of voided velvet (fig. 23). Since the ground was often in satin weave, this type of velvet was also indicated as *zetano vellutato*. A pattern could also be created through variations of pile height, a so-called *velluto alto e basso* or pile-on-pile velvet. Lucrezia Tornabuoni had no fewer than three garments of this costly fabric, a *cioppa*, a *giornea* and a *cotta* (app. 3A, nos. 3, 4, 7).

Velvet could be brocaded as well, or little loops of gold thread could be woven into the fabric, a technique that was developed in the 1420s. Single loops could be added every now and again amidst the pile, an effect that was known as 'alluciolato', or loops could be grouped to create a pattern, which was called 'arriciato'. These two forms are combined in the sleeve of the *Lady in Red*, where floral patterns in gold loops are alternated with little loops scattered on a red pile (fig. 23). The most luxurious kind of gold looping, 'ricco sopra riccio' (loop over loop), consisted of a combination of loops of different heights forming a pattern. This cloth of gold was by far the most expensive fabric in the fifteenth century.

Since the nineteenth century the characteristic patterns of brocaded fabrics and cloths of gold have been generally designated as pomegranate motifs. However, besides the pomegranate, the range of motifs also included thistles and pinecones.[70] Typical examples can be observed on the sleeves of various sitters, for instance of the *Young Lady of Fashion*, Lo Scheggia's *Portrait of a Woman*, and the *Portrait of a Lady in Red* (figs. 19-20, 23). The portraits by the Pollaiuolo brothers also showcase rich gold brocaded silks. In the Uffizi and Metropolitan portraits, the pattern on the sleeves is given great prominence (figs. 26-27). The sitter of their portrait, now in Berlin, wears not only sleeves with gold brocaded palmettes, but also a *giornea* of white silk with green and red thistle and leaf shapes (fig. 24).[71]

The price of a gold brocaded textile was highly dependent on the quality and amount of gold thread and on the complexity of the pattern. Crucial to the value of any fabric, however, was its colour. Dyestuffs, especially those used for certain shades of red and blue, could be extremely costly. Kermes (*chermisi*), a dye obtained from a variety of shield lice, was the most expensive. It was used for a variety of red hues, ranging from pink and purple to crimson and deep red.[72] Even more expensive than a fabric dyed with pure crimson, were mixed colours, such as *alessandrino* (deep blue), *paonazzo* (purple or violet) or *morello* (murrey), which required a great amount of skill to create because the dying process was so complex.[73]

Notwithstanding Giovanni Rucellai's abundant praise of the city's silk industry and the lavish dress of gold brocade, decorated with embroidery and pearls, research has actually shown that only a very small number of Florentine men could afford to dress their wives in silk and gold brocaded fabrics. Although Nannina de' Medici received several lengths of gold brocaded damask, she had only one *cotta* dyed *alessandrino* with brocaded sleeves. Yet with a dowry of 2,500 florins, more than twice as much as the average dowry of the Florentine ruling class, she

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[70] For various examples of extant fabrics with pomegranate designs, see: Milan 1983, p. 101-113, section 'Motivi decorative: cardo e melagrana'. Also compare the sections 'La composizione "a cammino"' on p. 70-83 and 'La composizione "a griccia"' on p. 84-100, which both figure numerous examples.

[71] The Museo del Tessuto in Prato preserves two pieces of figures velvet that, apart from the addition of small blue flowers, are remarkably similar to the fabric depicted in Pollaiuolo's Berlin portrait (Collezione Comune di Prato e CariPrato, inv. nos. 81.01.75-81.01.76), photograph in: Boccherini 1999, p. 40, cat. 11.

[72] On the different varieties of kermes and their use, see: Munro 1983, p. 15-18. The much cheaper madder was also used as a red dye, but its use tended to be limited to wool.

[73] Monnas 2009, p. 24-25. An important source for the price of silk fabrics is a fifteenth-century manuscript *Trattato della seta*, which describes the process of weaving and dying and lists the prices of dying different colours and many types of silk fabrics. Published by: Gargiolli 1868, p. 78-79, no. XLIX and p. 98-102, nos. LXV-LXVIII.

belonged to the wealthiest levels of Florentine society.[74] Rembrandt Duits compared the wages of Florentine entrepreneurs and skilled craftsmen with the prices of satin and gold brocade, concluding that a successful businessman could hardly afford enough gold brocade for a complete garment. Even the Medici, who owned more silk than any other Florentine family, could not live up to the huge spending power of the Burgundian or Italian courts, where the use of luxury textiles was much more common.[75]

3.1. Dress and marriage in Florentine *ricordanze*

An important and often used source for the history of Florentine dress are the numerous *ricordanze*, family logbooks. Although similar *libri di famiglia* were found elsewhere in Italy as well, they enjoyed particular popularity in Florence. Often serving as a means to show ancient ancestry or to underline social promotion, *ricordanze* could include genealogies, reports on important family events like marriages, births and deaths, accounts of the family business and other transactions, often copied from notarial documents or account books.[76] Especially of interest to the history of dress are the entries on marriage, which give a rare insight into the specifics of the bride's dowry, provided by her father, and the gifts she received from her husband, the counter-trousseau. The dowry consisted of an amount of money, part of which was given to the groom in cash, and the other part in the form of a trousseau, the *donora*, which included mainly clothing and some household utensils for the bride. An example is the trousseau of Bartolomea Dietisalvi, recorded in the *ricordanze* of her husband Bernardo Rinieri, a wealthy banker (app. 3B). As was the custom, it is divided into two parts: the *stimate* (appraised items) and the *non stimate* (unappraised items).[77]

In the months preceding the marriage, the groom provided his bride with gifts, usually clothing and jewellery, which made up the counter-trousseau. Traditionally, the jewellery was delivered at the bride's parental house in a small box, known as a *forzerino*.[78] Bernardo Rinieri noted these items as well (app. 3B, nos. 1-17).[79] He gave Bartolomea a *cioppa* of crimson damask embroidered with pearls, a *cotta* of crimson damask with brocaded and embroidered sleeves, a pair of knives, a head brooch, a shoulder brooch and two necklaces with *agnus dei* pendants. He delivered a *frenello* of pearls to her father's house in July 1458 and Bernardo further noted that he presented more ounces of pearls from October to January.

Other family books contain detailed accounts of the making of these garments. An often-cited example is that of the silk merchant Marco Parenti, who married Caterina Strozzi in 1447 with a dowry of 1,000 florins, half of which came in the form of the trousseau. Caterina came from one the wealthiest families of Florence and although the Strozzi were still banned in 1447, the marriage added considerably to Parenti's status. In his *ricordanze*, he first listed Caterina's trousseau, consisting among other items of a *cioppa* of white damask, trimmed with

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[74] For this analysis and other examples, see: Monnas 2009, p. 28.

[75] Duits 2008, p. 65-81, 91-97.

[76] Rubinstein 2000, p. 39. On *ricordanze* as a Florentine phenomenon, see: Ciappelli 2000, p. 27-30. I thank Laura Overpelt for sharing her ideas on the use of *ricordanze* as a source for art history research with me.

[77] For a general introduction on *donora* with references to earlier literature, see: Musacchio 2003, p. 177-179. A more thorough study, with particular attention for legal aspects and the type of objects usually given, is: Klapisch-Zuber 1989, p. 193-211.

[78] Klapisch-Zuber 1985, p. 219-220; Chabot 1994, p. 426-427. For the use of *forzerini* and several surviving examples, see: Musacchio 2008, p. 130-135.

[79] Although this part of Bernardo's *ricordanze* has been published, contrary to Bartolomea's trousseau, it is not very well known to historians of dress. Del Badia 1896, p. 190-191. On Bernardo Rinieri, see: Lydecker 1987, p. 96-97.

marten, two white woollen *cioppe*, a *gamurra* of white and blue *saia* with green velvet sleeves, another blue *gamurra* with velvet sleeves, sixteen *braccia* of red cloth, one *braccia* of white damask, seventeen *camicie*, thirty handkerchiefs, a necklace of coral beads and a girdle decorated with silver.[80]

Then Marco noted the purchases he made for more garments for Caterina. He started with 'a *giornea* of crimson voided satin velvet for the wife', followed by a *cotta* of the same fabric, supplied from his own shop. Every single purchase, from eyelets to lining fabrics, was noted as was the cost for the tailoring of the garments. A headdress in the form of a garland (*ghirlanda*) was made, decorated with roses of peacock feathers, enameled metalwork and pearls. Marco also bought a golden shoulder brooch with two sapphires and three pearls.[81] Lo Scheggia's *Adimari wedding* gives an impression of the richness of this type of dress (fig. 29). One of the wedding guests wears a *cotta* with a *giornea* and a *ghirlanda* of peacock feathers on her head. Caterina's mother, Alessandra Macinghi, was apparently delighted with Marco's purchases. In a letter to her son Filippo, living in exile in Naples, she announced the news of Caterina's engagement, exclaiming enthusiastically:

Oh and I have not told you about Marco yet, he's always saying to her "If you want anything, ask for it." When she was betrothed he ordered a gown of crimson velvet for her made of silk and an overgown of the same fabric, which is the most beautiful cloth in Florence. He had it made in his own workshop. And he had a garland of feathers and pearls made which cost eighty florins, the headdress underneath has two strings of pearls costing sixty florins or more. When she goes out she will have more than four hundred florins on her back. And he ordered some crimson velvet to be made up into long sleeves lined with marten, for when she goes to her husband's house. And he is having a rose-coloured gown made, embroidered with pearls. He feels he cannot do enough having things made, because she is beautiful and he wants her to look even more so.[82]

Another example is Francesco di Matteo Castellani, who agreed to marry Lena Alamanni as his second wife in November 1448. In December that same year, Francesco had several garments made for his future wife and in his *ricordanze* he kept close track of every order he placed with the tailor and the embroiderer. The showpiece was to become a *cioppa* made of 'alto e basso chermisi' (crimson pile-on-pile velvet) with gold and pearl embroidery on the bodice and sleeves representing a sun with golden rays, large and small, and an eagle rising towards these rays. Besides the magnificent *cioppa*, Francesco placed more embroidery orders, for two *cioppette* (small or short *cioppe*). Unfortunately, the crimson *cioppa* with the eagle and the sunbeams was never worn, because the embroiderer, master Giovanni Gilberti, died before finishing it. In July 1452, Francesco went to great lengths to retrieve all his pearls and gold

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[80] For the complete list, see: Philips 1987, p. 39-40; Muzzarelli 1999, p. 100.

[81] Marco Parenti's purchases are discussed at length in: Frick 2002, p. 123-128. See also: Philips 1987, p. 42-43.

[82] 'O! non ti dico di Marco, cioè il marito, che sempre gli dice: Chiedi ciò che tu vuogli. E come si maritò, gli tagliò una cotta di zetani vellutato chermisi; e così la roba di quello medesimo; ed è il più bel drappo che sia in Firenze; che se lo fece 'n bottega. E fassi una grillada di penne con perle, che viene fiorini ottantta; e l'acconciatura di sotto, e' sono duo trecce di perle, che viene fiorini sessanta o più: che quando andrà fuori, arà in dosso più che fiorini quattrocento. E ordina di fare un velluto chermisi, per farlo colle maniche, foderato di martore, quando n'andrà a marito; e fa una cioppa rosata, ricamata di perle. E non può saziarsi di fare delle cose, che è bella, e vorebbe paressi vie più [...]', Alessandra Macinghi to Filippo Strozzi, Florence, 24 August 1447. Macinghi Strozzi 1997, p. 30-31 (translation: Heather Gregory).

thread back from the workshop and in the end he had the *cioppa* dismantled.[83] In the case of Francesco Castellani, the *cioppa* was probably stripped down because it was never finished, but it was not unusual for finery purchased for a wedding to be sold or lent to others later.[84]

Florentines had good reasons to meticulously note all the expenses incurred for their weddings. The cost and splendour of the dress not only contributed to their family's status, there were legal considerations as well. Although the dress and jewellery were presented as gifts to the bride, officially they remained the property of the giver, that is the bride's father or her husband. If her husband died and the widow returned to her father's house, she would take only the sum of the dowry and her trousseau with her, leaving the counter-trousseau to her husband's heirs.[85] In order to avoid discussion afterwards, it was crucial to record the monetary value of the dowry and the bridal gifts.

On the basis of *ricordanze*, Adrian Randolph argued that the typical combination of head and shoulder brooch, increasingly replaced by a pendant later on in the fifteenth century, functioned as a visual sign of marriage. Besides the aforementioned counter-trousseau of Bernardo Rucellai for Nannina de' Medici, he cited the examples of Bartolomeo di Tommaso Sassetti, who listed a brooch valued at one florin among the wedding gifts to his bride in his *ricordanze*, as well as the counter-trousseau of Giovanni di Domenico Buoninsegni. In 1468 he gave his wife a balas ruby for a pendant, a gold brooch with a balas ruby and four large pearls, a pendant and a *frenello* made up of 240 pearls, with a total value of more than 103 florins.[86] Randolph further cited the sumptuary law of 1464, which allowed brides to wear exactly these ornaments up to a limited period after the wedding:

Moreover, they [Florentine women] may wear necklaces, veils and two brooches – one for the head and one for the shoulder. And these above mentioned things they may wear for three years from the day that they went to marriage, thus [also] for those who have already gone to marriage, as for those who will go. And after the said three years, they may wear the necklace alone and only one brooch for another three years, and after that it is entirely forbidden that they can wear any of the above said things.[87]

Randolph argued that in return for these material gifts, the bride gave her sexuality to her husband, an idea that is indebted to Marcel Mauss's anthropological theory of the reciprocity of gift giving. Thus, according to Randolph, in portraiture the bridal body is 'marked' as such by the jewellery.[88]

Randolph's theory has found wide acceptance in subsequent scholarship. Today, portraits of women with jewellery are generally regarded as wedding portraits and, subsequently,

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[83] Castellani 1992, p. 117-125, 161-163. The sections from Francesco's *ricordanze* regarding Lena's clothing have been previously published in: Carnesecchi 1906, p. 151-154. See also: Frick 2002, p. 117-122.

[84] For examples, see: Klapisch-Zuber 1985, p. 227-231.

[85] Klapisch-Zuber 1985, p. 224-227; Bestor 1999, p. 28-30.

[86] Randolph 1998, p. 187. Earlier, a similar idea was proposed by: Simons 1988, p. 9.

[87] 'Anchora possino portare collari o collane, vezi, et due brochette, una per in capo er una per la spalla; et queste sopra dette cose le possino portare tre anni dal dì che ne saranno ite a marito, così per quelle che per lo passato sono ite a marito come per l'avenire andranno: Et finiti i detti tre anni, possino portare la collana o vero collare solo et una brochetta sola per insino altri tre anni, et di poi sia vietato interamente loro el potere portare qualunque delle sopra dette cose.' Mazzi 1908, p. 44, no. 3. Translation: Randolph 1998, p. 189 (with the exception of 'potere', that Randolph translates as 'power'). Randolph erroneously regards this as the law of 1472, a mistake that has been often repeated.

[88] Randolph 1998, p. 193-196.

those without jewellery as representations of women before or several years after marriage.[89] Some scholars even went so far as to describe garments from the counter-trousseau as 'wedding dresses', as if they were visually recognizable as meant to be worn by the bride during the marriage celebration and their use limited to that occasion exclusively.[90] This concept of the wedding gown, however, dates back no further than the nineteenth century, when brides started to wear white exclusively.[91] There is only one fifteenth-century Florentine example of a pendant that was described as 'una pendetta da moglianza' (literally 'a wifehood pendant'). [92] In sum, there is no particular reason to assume that garments and jewellery were regarded as wedding finery in the modern sense of the word.

Although there is no doubt about the importance of lavish dress and jewellery in the context of marriage, Randolph's theory should be rejected. Gender studies have always presented marriage as the only occasion in a woman's life when she was physically adorned, stressing the selling of dress and jewellery within a few years after marriage.[93] However, *ricordanze* are not to be equated with account books, which as a rule are objective. The emphasis on dress and jewellery in connection to weddings in these books is sufficiently explained by its legal and financial implications as well as its importance to family history. Marriage was one of many occasions for dressing up and donning jewellery, and other sources shed more light on these aspects. Randolph for instance ignored passages of the sumptuary law allowing unmarried girls and women of rank to wear anything they wanted. The next section considers the meaning of wearing jewellery and moments in women's lives besides marriage in which sumptuous dress played an important role.

3.2. Dressing up before and beyond marriage

To be sure, the numerous *ricordanze* still testify to the connection of personal adornment and marriage, as does Alessandra Macinghi in a letter. When she believes a suitable wife has been found for her son Filippo, she writes in an often-quoted passage:

Get the jewels ready and let them be beautiful, because we have found you a wife. Being beautiful and the wife of Filippo Strozzi, she will need beautiful jewels. Just as you have honour in other things, she does not want to be lacking in this.[94]

It is perfectly clear from this passage that wearing jewellery is inextricably linked with the honour of the bride and thereby with the entire family. The discussion of expenditure on dress and jewellery found in *ricordanze* has already shown how valuable these objects actually were. Lydecker's analysis of the financial situation of the Florentine patrician Luigi Martelli confirms

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[89] See for instance: Woods-Marsden 2001, p. 65-68; Syson and Thornton 2001, p. 48; Wright 2005, p. 118; Tosi Brandi 2014, p. 103-117.

[90] For example Frick 2002, p. 115-132, who even named this chapter 'The Making of Wedding Gowns'.

[91] The nobility started the use of white and silver for wedding gowns in the seventeenth century, but white wedding dresses only became commonplace in the nineteenth century. It was not until well into the twentieth century that the cut of wedding dresses was distinguishable from contemporary fashion. See: Ehrman 2011, p. 23, 41, 131.

[92] Ricordanze of Niccolò Ferrucci, 28 February 1483, cited by Randolph 1998, p. 187.

[93] This happens often with a negative tone of voice, for instance Klapisch-Zuber 1985, p. 227, who calls the fact that Marco Parenti sells part of the pearls and gems bought for Caterina 'pitiless'.

[94] 'Metti in ordine le gioie, e belle, chè la moglie è trovata. Essendo bella, e di Filippo Strozzi, è di bisogno di belle gioie; chè come tu hai l'onore nell'altre cose, en questo non vuole mancare.' Alessandra Macinghi to Filippo Strozzi, Florence, 26 July 1465. Macinghi Strozzi 1997, p. 150-151 (translation: Heather Gregory, with minor adaptions).

this. In 1487, a year before his marriage, forty-three per cent of his property consisted of jewels, most of them inherited from his father.[95] Wearing this kind of expensive jewellery was a direct visual expression of a familial wealth and honour.

The 1464 sumptuary law offered families two possibilities to show off their wealth in the form of jewellery. Brides were allowed to wear necklaces and brooches up to three years after their marriage and, secondly, unmarried girls could wear almost anything they wanted:

Furthermore that none of the bans are meant for unmarried girls, who are exempted from the present law, except that they cannot wear more gold and silver brocade than married women are allowed, nor wear longer garments, [that is] a train, than the mentioned married women.[96]

There was nothing exceptional about this exemption, for already in 1449 the law allowed 'unmarried girls […] to wear any object and garment on their body or their head as they please', except for long trains, foreign headdresses and low necklines.[97]

The regularity with which preachers disapproved of the rich attire of daughters rather than brides or married women can be taken as further evidence that this was everyday practice. For instance Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419) condemned women who dressed up their daughters instead of teaching them good manners.[98] Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444) similarly exclaimed: 'When I think of your children, how much gold, how much silver, how many pearls, how much embroidery you have them wearing!'.[99] And by the end of the century Savonarola (1452-1498) especially called upon mothers to burn their daughters' finery: 'and you, mothers, who adorn your daughters with so many vanities and superfluities and hairstyles, bring them all here to throw them in the fire'.[100]

There are few sources that give exact details on jewellery worn by unmarried daughters, but the 1449 Pucci inventory indeed lists '1º frenello della Ginevra di perlle'.[101] Ginevra was Puccio Pucci's youngest daughter and was fourteen years old, unmarried and still living in her parental home at the time the inventory was compiled. In portraiture, unmarried girls wear jewellery as well, like Margherita Portinari, who is portrayed kneeling next to her mother on the Portinari altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes (fig. 31). The little girl wears a conspicuous necklace with a point-cut diamond pendant, two precious stones and a large pear-shaped pearl. Her French cap is adorned with a gold brooch with three pendant pearls. This jewellery is not, as Musacchio put it, 'seemingly inappropriate for her young age', but rather provides a faithful account of how even young girls were decked out.[102]

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[95] Lydecker 1987, p. 134.

[96] 'Anchora che alle fanciulle non maritate non si intende per loro alcuna prohibitione che pe' presenti ordini si disopne, eccetto che non possino portare brocchati d'oro o d'ariento, se non quanto è permesso alle donne maritate, nè portare vestiri più lunghi, la coda, che le dette donne maritate.' Mazzi 1908, p. 46, no. 18.

[97] 'le fanciulle non maritate […] sia licito e possano portare ogni cosa et vestimento in dosso o in capo come vorranno'. Rainey 1985, app. 11, p. 771, no. 27.

[98] Muessig 2002, p. 245.

[99] 'Quando io pongo mente pure a' vostri fanciulli, quanto oro, quanto ariento, quante perle, quanti racami lo' fate portare!', Bernardino da Siena 1853, p. 267.

[100] 'E voi madri, che adornate le vostre figliuole con tante vanità en superfluità e capellature, portatele tutte qua a noi per mandarle al fuoco', Savonarola 1952, p. 130-131.

[101] Merkel 1897, p. 187, no. 44. Ginevra lived in the same *camera* as her mother and her brother Dionigio. The inventory lists many garments in their room, but often it is not clear to whom they belong. The only dress designated to be Ginevra's is '1ª cioppa bigia co richamj, della Ginevra', worth 6 florins (no. 24).

[102] Musacchio 2008, p. 47. The Portinari triptych arrived in Florence in 1483, where it was installed in the Santa Maria Nuova, see: Nuttall 2004, p. 61.

A slightly later example, datable to c. 1485, of a young girl wearing jewellery is the portrait medal of the nine-year-old Ludovica Tornabuoni, who wears a beaded necklace and a pendant with three hanging pearls (fig. 32).[103] She was shown again wearing a pendant, this time in the frescoes adorning the family chapel in the church of Santa Maria Novella, painted between 1486 and 1490 (fig. 33). During that period, in 1489, Ludovica was betrothed to Alessandro Nasi. In her father's will, dated 26 March 1490, her dowry was settled at 3,000 gold florins. A list of the jewels she was to receive after the consummation of the marriage was also provided and included a 'croccettina' (little cross). After Ludovica's death, the jewels had to be returned to the Tornabuoni estate. According to Patricia Simons, this 'croccetina' is probably the pendant with which Ludovica was portrayed in the Tornabuoni chapel.[104] The cross shape, however, is difficult to distinguish, since the basic outline of the pendant is an oval encircled with pearls. Nevertheless, Simons was right not to characterize Ludovica, who was betrothed but still unmarried at the time, as a bride, but rather 'as a Tornabuoni woman, wearing [on her dress] their emblem and wealth'.[105]

Besides the exemption of unmarried girls, the sumptuary laws of 1449 and 1464 also granted more liberty to the wives of knights and doctors. In 1464 the law stated: 'Furthermore knights, doctors, both in civil and canon law and medicine, and foreigners, and their wives are allowed to wear anything they want'.[106] Clarice Orsini, who was of noble birth and married Lorenzo de' Medici in 1469, would certainly have been exempted from the sumptuary laws. A list of the dresses and jewellery she took with her on a trip to Rome in 1472 still exists. It is an impressive enumeration of many precious items, among which were various girdles with Medici devices, a necklace with forty-six large pearls and a pear-shaped pearl pendant, a gold necklace with a cross with five diamonds and three pearls, a shoulder brooch with a ruby, a table-cut diamond and two large pearls, another shoulder brooch with a table-cut balas ruby and many more jewels, pearls, gems and silver tableware.[107] In this case, the necklaces and shoulder brooches were certainly not meant to designate Clarice as a bride. The precious jewellery underlined the elevated status of the Medici, as is confirmed by the presence of Medici devices on the girdles.

Nannina de' Medici was given the opportunity to dress up after her marriage as well. In June 1468 she bore her husband a son, another event requiring costly gifts. Her father-in-law Giovanni Ruccellai noted everything she received, as he had done previously during the wedding. The new mother was given sixteen *braccia* of crimson satin for a *cotta* and one-and-a-half *braccia* of purple gold brocaded damask to make the sleeves. From various family members Nannina further received several pieces of silver tableware filled with sweets, a piece of white camlet (*ciambellotto*), an unspecified length of pink wool for a *gamurra*, six *braccia* of pile-on-pile

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[103] Ludovica's age is known because a second cast, preserved in the Berlin Müntzkabinett, is inscribed 'AN VIIII'. See: Washington 2001, p. 127-129, cat. 10.

[104] Simons 1985, vol. 1, p. 139; repeated in: Simons 1988, p. 9-10 and most recently Simons 2011-12, p. 126. The will of Ludovica's father, Giovanni Tornabuoni, is published in: Cadogan 2000, p. 369-372. Alessandro Nasi signed for the receipt of the dowry in 1493. Eleonora Luciano argued that the portrait medal is an earlier portrayal of the same *crocettina*, even though it is obviously less rich, see: Washington 2001, p. 127.

[105] Simons 1988, p. 9.

[106] 'Anchora cavalieri, dottori, così in ragione civile come in ragione canonicha, et medicina, et huomini forestieri et loro donne, sia lecito portare tutte le cose che a loro parrà.', Mazzi 1908, p. 46, no. 19. For the exemptions in the 1449 law, see: Rainey 1985, app. 11, p. 771, no. 27.

[107] Published in Florence 2003, p. 178-179.

velvet to dress the baby, and sixteen *braccia* of *alessandrino* (deep blue) satin for a second *cotta*.[108] These gifts reflect common Florentine practice.[109]

Another example of dressing up after marriage can be found in the letters of Alessandra Macinghi. In May 1469 she wrote to her son Filippo Strozzi, who was in Naples for business. His wife, Fiammetta Adimari, had received an invitation for the wedding of Lorenzo de' Medici and Clarice Orsini. At first they declined, because Fiammetta was pregnant and might be giving birth around the time of the festivities. However, the baby was born well in time before the wedding was to take place and the invitation to Fiammetta was renewed. Although the young mother did not feel like going, Alessandra realized they could not decline the Medici. In her letter, she expressed her worries about the cost for Fiammetta's dress:

if she does go we will have to spend several hundred florins. I must tell you that they are having a lot of brocade *robe* and *cotte* made, and we would have to have them made for her as well, and she does not have much jewellery. So now you know; let me know what you think. They have invited her for the fourth of June but they say it will go on till St. John's Day [24 June], which is a long time to provide enough clothes for her.[110]

We learn that Fiammetta indeed attended the wedding from a description of the festivities, probably written for Filippo by Marco Parenti, their brother-in-law, who describes the wedding procession, in which participated: 'thirty girls and young women, among whom was your Fiammetta'.[111] When mass was celebrated on the last day, all the guests would have been wearing their most beautiful garments. After a description of the precious jewels worn by some of the male guests, Marco Parenti continues: 'Not to mention the women: so many *cotte* and *giornee* of brocaded silk embroidered with pearls and quite a lot for each for them'.[112] Again Lo Scheggia's depiction of the Adimari-Ricasoli wedding may serve as an example of the extravagant dress, not only of the bride, but also of the numerous guests (fig. 29).

Expenditure on weddings other than one's own, as in this example, is less likely to be found in *ricordanze*, because it did not contribute directly to the honour of one's own family, nor was there a legal necessity to note these expenses. When a wider range of sources is consulted, it becomes clear that dressing up was not limited to brides, especially among the wealthiest levels of Florentine society. Both unmarried girls and married women could dress splendidly on a variety of occasions. Lavish dress should therefore not be strictly associated with marriage. This has implications for our understanding of the portraits under discussion here as well. Although these portraits show young women in their most representative dress and jewellery, it is not necessarily their wedding finery. On the other hand, the unidentified sitter without any jewellery

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[108] Rucellai 1960, p. 35.
[109] For two more examples of gifts made to new mothers, see: Musacchio 1999, p. 46.
[110] 'che s'ella v'andassi, bisognerebbe espendere parecchi centinaia di fiorini. Avvisandoti che si fa assai robe e cotte di broccato; che così si richiederebbe fare ancora a lei: e poi delle gioie è mal fornita. Sì che tu ha' 'nteso: avvisa che ti pare. Envitorono pe' 4 dì di giugno; ma dicono che prolungheranno insino a San Giovanni: sicché ci è tempo assai, chi s'ha a vestire.' Alessandra Macinghi to Filippo Strozzi, Florence, 8 May 1465. Macinghi Strozzi 1997, p. 212-215 (translation: Heather Gregory).
[111] 'erano 30 fanciulle e giovane olto adorne fra lle quali era la Fiametta tua', Marco Parenti to Filippo Strozzi, undated sheet. Parenti 1996, p. 247. The wedding description was first published by Milanesi in 1870, who believed it was written by Marco's son Piero, see: Parenti 1870, p. 7. However, Marrese ascribed the sheet to Marco and concluded it must have been added to one of his letters to Filippo, see: Parenti 1996, p. XXXI.
[112] 'Delle donne non ti dico nulla: tante cotte e giornee di broccato di seta ricamate di perle e parecchi per ciascuna', Marco Parenti to Filippo Strozzi, undated sheet. Parenti 1996, p. 250.

in Pollaiuolo's Berlin portrait is not necessarily an unmarried girl, as Alison Wright thought her to be (fig. 24).[113] Marriage may have been an occasion to order a portrait, but there is no justification for labelling all portraits of women depicted wearing precious jewellery as wedding portraits, nor for regarding sitters without jewellery as unmarried girls.

4.   Workshop practice

Although the garments and jewellery in portraits of women reflect the representative dress worn by the Florentine ruling class, caution is always required when discussing dress in painting. Randolph assumed a one-on-one relation of dress worn for a particular occasion and portraiture. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that the painter added particular details to the dress or completely changed a sitter's attire. A patron, for instance, could have asked to have someone portrayed with sumptuous jewels that he could not actually afford.[114] Again, it should be stressed that our knowledge of the practice of painting portraits in the fifteenth century is fragmentary.

Only one Florentine preparatory cartoon for a portrait of a woman has survived, probably because it was once thought to be by Leonardo (fig. 34).[115] It now remains anonymous and is dated to c. 1470-1480. The cartoon shows a woman in strict profile facing right. The contours have been pricked as have details in the coiffure, that are now faded. A *pentimento* at the chest can be regarded as an indication that the profile was done from life. Of the sitter's dress only the outline has been indicated, without any further decoration or pattern, and the complete absence of jewellery is also striking. It has been suggested that the artist did not find it necessary to dwell on such details at this early stage.[116] If it was indeed common to draw the sitter's facial features during a live sitting and to add details of dress and jewellery only afterwards, we may wonder how realistic the costume in these portraits is. Were sitters portrayed wearing their own dress or did the painter make something up, possibly on request of the sitter or patron?

Two female portraits from the Pollaiuolo workshop, currently in Florence and New York, indeed suggest the use of workshop props (figs. 26-27). Both sitters, whose features are clearly not identical, are shown with the exact same jewellery: a pearl necklace with a pendant consisting of a ruby with three suspended pearls, a brooch in the form of an angel and in their hair a *frenello* made up of many pearls and a head brooch. The re-use of the same pieces of jewellery was no exception in the Pollaiuolo workshop. In an altarpiece, originally for the San Miniato and now in the Uffizi, the brothers depicted the same gold chain with alternating blue and red stones twice, once as a collar worn by Saint Eustace and again as jewelled band around the hat at the feet of Saint James (fig. 35). The chain appears again in *Tobias and the Angel*, where Tobias is wearing the same jewelled hatband (fig. 36).[117]

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[113] Wright 2005, p. 120.

[114] Dress in Renaissance painting is often believed to be exceptionally realistic. Elizabeth Birbari strongly promoted this view, stating that the renewed interest in depicting nature also led to a true-to-life depiction of dress. Birbari 1975, p. 3-5. See also the introduction of this thesis, p. 6. For a more critical view towards dress and accessories in portraiture, see: Campbell 1990, p. 139.

[115] The cartoon was part of the collection of Francesco Melzi, who inherited Leonardo's notes and many of his drawings after the artist's death. For the rejected attribution to Leonardo, see: Popham and Wilde 1949, p. 178, cat. 32.

[116] Neville Rowley in: Berlin / New York 2011, p. 105-106.

[117] Florence 1977, p. 304-305, cat. 204; Wright 2005, p. 127, 453, note 166. Wright points out jewels were often lent to friends and family members and suggests the possibility that two girls were portrayed with borrowed jewellery. Because the practice of using the same jewel more than once appears in in the religious paintings of the Pollaiuolo as well, they are more likely to be workshop props.

Antonio del Pollaiuolo was originally trained and remained active as a goldsmith when he started to paint. He is known to have made exactly those types of precious accessories that we find in trousseaux and female portraiture. For instance in 1461 he delivered niello decorations and pierced silver for a woman's girdle to the wealthy merchant Cino Rinuccini. Another example is a gilded silver tassel that the patrician Lorenzo Morelli ordered in 1472 for his bride.[118] The Pollaiuolo brothers thus had costly ornaments at hand and naturally may have used them as workshop props. Another possibility that could explain the occurrence of the same jewel twice is the use of design drawings that may have circulated in the workshop. Although no fifteenth-century examples have survived, they must have been rather common.[119]

Many Florentine painters, including Verrocchio, Botticelli and Ghirlandaio, started their career as a goldsmith. An apprenticeship in a goldsmith's workshop would have provided future painters not only with a thorough knowledge of jewellery design, but also a thorough training in draughtsmanship. Rubin and Wright pointed out that this might explain the taste for the lifelike rendering of precious jewels and silk fabrics woven with gold in Florentine painting.[120] This careful representation of materials in portraiture reached its peak in the 1460s and 1470s, most notably in the work of the Pollaiuolo brothers.

Before that time, many painters used gold leaf to imitate fabrics brocaded with metal threads. Tempera alone was not suited to render the shine of these fabrics. An example is Lo Scheggia's *Portrait of a Woman* in Philadelphia, where the dots on the bodice creating a pattern are traces of the original mordant gilding, a technique of applying gold leaf on the painted surface with an adhesive (fig. 20). Because this was done after the painting was finished, it was especially suited for applying smaller decorations. Baldovinetti has used the same technique in the *Portrait of a Lady in Yellow*, where the dots in the sleeve were originally gilded as well (fig. 22). Lippi's way of imitating the brocaded sleeve in the Scolari double portrait with paint instead of actual gold was more modern, but not entirely realistic yet, since the pomegranate pattern does not follow the creases of the fabric (fig. 15). This might be an indication that the painter did not have the actual garment at his disposal as a model.[121]

From the 1460s onwards the lifelike depiction of luxury fabrics started to flourish. Beautiful examples are the anonymous *Portrait of a Lady in Red* and the portraits by the Pollaiuolo brothers (figs. 23-27). This development was greatly influenced by Flemish painting, in particular the use of oil paint, which permitted a closer imitation of glimmering jewellery and gold brocades. Paula Nuttall analysed the San Miniato altarpiece by the Pollaiuolo brothers, showing how they combined egg tempera with oil paint, creating a Northern effect both in colour and texture (fig. 35). However, their handling of the paint, which was applied thickly in one layer, differed from their Flemish counterparts and showed an unprecedented free handling of the new medium. Nuttall noted the use of the same technique in their portrait of a woman now in Milan (fig. 25). The Berlin portrait is painted more precisely and therefore resembles the Flemish examples more closely (fig. 24).[122]

It has sometimes been suggested that painters were involved in textile design, which would explain their knowledge of the intricate patterns. However, Lisa Monnas has shown this

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[118] Wright 2005, p. 12, 55. Cino Rinuccini listed the purchase in his *ricordanze*, published in: Rinuccini 1840, p. 251.

[119] For several examples of sixteenth-century jewellery designs, see: Florence 2003, p. 96-97, cats. 31-33; p. 111, cat 52.

[120] Rubin and Wright 1999, p. 79, 86.

[121] For a more in-depth discussion of the depiction of foreshortened gold brocade patterns and the imitation of glittering gold thread, see: Martin and Bergeon 1997, p. 41-54; Duits 2008, p. 49-56.

[122] Nuttall 2004, p. 174-176 (San Miniato altarpiece), p. 212, 288, note 87 (portraits).

was not the case. Drawings of textile motifs such as the famous examples by Pisanello that were previously regarded as designs, are more likely to be studies for actual paintings (fig. 37). Painters lacked the technical knowledge of weaving that was required of a pattern designer. This explains why famous painters such as Botticelli or indeed the Pollaiuolo brothers made designs for tapestry and embroideries, but never for woven fabrics.[123] However, in a city with a thriving textile industry, luxury fabrics were never far away. For instance, Botticelli's younger brother Antonio was a *battiloro*, a craftsman who produced beaten gold strips needed for gold thread.[124] Trained as goldsmiths, many painters must have had similar connections.

The emphasis on the representation of dress and jewellery in Florentine female portraiture may have been influenced by the painter's interest in the depiction of these materials. According to David Alan Brown, they shared this preference with their patrons. He suggested that the Florentine audience especially admired the careful depiction of sumptuous fabrics, not only because of their intrinsic beauty and value or the skill of the painter, but also because the production of these fabrics played a crucial role in the prospering Florentine economy. Thus, they also appealed to civic pride.[125]

5.   Family honour and virtuous display

This chapter began with a survey of the Florentine portraits of women before 1475 that have come down to us. Due to the lack of written evidence it is impossible to determine when and why these portraits were ordered. Of the thirteen portraits discussed here, only Lippi's Scolari double portrait offers clues for the identification of the sitters and the occasion for the commission (fig. 15). The prevailing hypothesis that most portraits of women were painted to commemorate a marriage cannot be sustained. *Ricordanze* list many purchases around the time of the marriage, such as dress, furniture, painted wainscoting panels (*spalliere*) and devotional paintings, but portraits are never mentioned.[126] More importantly, this chapter has shown that costly dress and jewellery do not denote marriage per se.

Although the sitters remain unidentified and the occasions for their portrayal unknown, it is possible to say something about the function of portraits in fifteenth-century Florence. Alison Wright has convincingly argued that commemoration was the main purpose of portraits. She drew attention to the ancient source on portraiture that was most popular in the fifteenth century, the Roman writer Pliny the Elder.[127] Pliny described how in the old days people would put up portraits of their ancestors. Regretting the loss of this tradition, he explained:

The painting of portraits, used to transmit through the ages the extremely correct likenesses of persons, has entirely gone out. […] In the halls of our ancestors it was otherwise; portraits were the objects displayed to be looked at, not statues by foreign artists, nor bronzes nor marbles, but wax models of faces were set out each on a separate side-board, to furnish likenesses to be carried in procession at a funeral in the clan, and always when some member of it passed away the entire company of his house that had ever

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[123] Monnas 1987, p. 416-424; Monnas 2009, p. 49-53. As a court artist, Pisanello must have had ample opportunity to study expensive dress and textiles. Besides drawings of fabrics, several sheets with costume studies by Pisanello are still extant, see: London 2001, p. 70-74.
[124] Antonio Botticelli also produced gold leaf for painters. See: Cecchi 2008, p. 18-19.
[125] Brown 1998, p. 12-14. A similar point is made by Wright 2005, p. 122.
[126] On the patterns of acquisition around the time of marriage, see: Lydecker 1987, p. 145-165.
[127] On Pliny, family memory and portraiture, see: Wright 2000, p. 88.

existed was present. The pedigrees too were traced in a spread of lines running near the several painted portraits.[128]

Pliny regarded this practice as an excellent way to commemorate one's achievements and lineage. For the Florentine elite, portraiture fulfilled a similar function. Wright characterized Quattrocento Florentine portraits as an expression of family honour and the *virtus* of the sitter. Portraits might therefore have served as a stimulus for good conduct and fulfilled an exemplary function.[129] Might the dress represented in these portraits be related to this function?

As we have seen, portraits were probably still rare in Florence in the mid-fifteenth century and the few references in documents all relate to families from the highest level of society. The sumptuous dress of the female sitters is yet another indication of their status. Like the references to portraiture, the sources on dress discussed in this chapter concern families such as the Castellani, Rinieri, Parenti, Rinuccini, Rucellai, Strozzi and the Medici that all belonged to the ruling class.[130] The early Florentine portraits of women show the precious textiles, pearls and jewellery that only they could afford, even if the painters occasionally used workshop props or more costly textiles than a sitter truly owned.

The lush voided velvet of the bodice and gold-brocaded sleeves shown in the *Portrait of a Lady in Red* is an example (fig. 23). The dress worn by the sitter of the Pollaiuolo brothers' portrait in Berlin is of comparable richness (fig. 24). She wears a combination of a coloured silk *giornea* with a crimson gold-brocaded *cotta* underneath. Similar velvet garments are found in inventories of Medici women. From her husband, Nannina de' Medici received an overgarment of 'voided pile-on-pile velvet, with very rich fur and of a nice colour' (app. 3C). Lucrezia Tornabuoni, wife of Piero de' Medici, owned several velvet garments, often with a lining or sleeves of gold brocade (app. 3A, nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, 7). Even to the standards of the ruling class, these garments were exceptionally rich and therefore must have been a sign of truly high standing. In 1449, Lena, the wife of Antonio Pucci, had only one '*cotta* of voided red velvet on a white ground with little flowers', appraised at 25 florins.[131] More common were *cotte* and *gamurre* with brocaded sleeves, like the 'cotta of crimson damask with embroidered and brocaded sleeves of crimson damask' of Bartolomea Dietsalvi (app. 3B, no. 2). This type of sleeve figures in portraiture as well, for instance in the *Young Lady of Fashion* and Lo Scheggia's *Portrait of Lady* (figs. 19-20).

One portrait, Badovinetti's *Lady in Yellow*, even shows the sitter with a sleeve bearing a family emblem (fig. 22). Unfortunately, the emblem with three palm leaves and a feather on either side has never been convincingly identified. It is striking to find a portrait with such a device in Florence, because the use of family emblems is associated with courtly society rather

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[128] 'Imaginem quidem picture, qua maxime similes in aevum propagabantur figurae, in totum exolevit. […] aliter apud maiores in atriis haec errant, quae spectarentur; non signa externorum artificium nec aera aut marmora: expressi cera vultus singulis disponebantur armariis, ut essent imagines, quae comitarentur gentilicia funera, semperque defuncto aliquot totus aderat familiae eius qui umquam fuerat populous. Stemmata vero lineis discurrebant ad imagines pictas.' Plinius 1995, p. 262-265, book XXXV, II, 4 and 6.

[129] Wright 2000, p. 88. On the portraits as exemplum, compare also: Simons 1995, p. 270-271.

[130] In his study on fifteenth-century marriage alliances, Molho made a meticulous analysis of the Florentine ruling class, taking into account social, economic and political factors. He also included a list of families that belonged to this level of society, with an indication of their status. All of the families discussed here enjoyed high status. Molho 1994, p. 193-214 and appendix 3 'The Florentine Ruling Class', p. 365-410.

[131] '1a chotta di vellutato chermisj canpo biancho fiorini', Merkel 1897, p. 180, no. 1. Antonio Pucci was the eldest son in the household and he and his wife owned the most precious dress and jewellery of the household.

than republican Florence. However, it recalls the lavish embroidery on the sleeve of a *cioppa* ordered by Francesco Castellani, representing an eagle flying towards the sun, which may be a heraldic motif as well. Moreover, several pieces of a gold brocaded voided velvet with the Medici *palle* still survive (fig. 38).[132] Apparently, the Florentine ruling class adopted the aristocratic use of heraldic devices.

The amount of pearls shown in portraits, like those attributed to the Master of the Castello Nativity or Pollaiuolo's portraits in Milan, Florence and New York, is yet another indication of the wealth of the sitters (figs. 18-19, 25-27). These sitters all wear necklaces and hair ornaments with pearls of varying sizes. This calls to mind the gifts to his future wife Bartolomea that Bernardo Rinieri noted in his *ricordanze*.[133] In July 1458 he gave her a *frenello* with 274 pearls that cost more than 96 gold florins. In October he donated another 101 pearls for the same head ornament with a value of more than 37 florins (app. 3B, nos. 10-11). Over a time span of several months, he sent her many more ounces of small pearls to be used for embroidery and another, smaller *frenelluza* (app. 3B, nos. 12-17).[134] The richly embroidered cap of *The Lady in Red* is a beautiful example of the use of these seed pearls. Even the light veil worn over this cap is edged with small pearls. Bartolomea owned a comparable cap, described as a 'damask *berettina* trimmed with crimson and many pearls' (app. 3B, no. 32).

As these examples demonstrate, most portraits show the sumptuous dress and jewellery that we encounter in trousseaux and inventories of the leading Florentine families. Even the anonymous portrait now in the Metropolitan Museum that looks rather plain at first glance still shows two fashionable characteristics that were regarded as extravagant: dagged sleeves and pleats (fig. 17). Dagging was severely limited and pleating even prohibited all together in sumptuary law.[135] Early in the century, the Venetian humanist Francesco Barbaro had already expressed his approval of women wearing precious finery like gold and pearls. When Lorenzo de' Medici, the younger brother of Cosimo the Elder, married Ginevra Cavalcanti in 1416, Barbaro wrote a treatise on wifely duties as a wedding gift, entitled *De re uxoria*. On the subject of jewellery he wrote:

Yet I think we ought to follow the custom – for good mores have so decayed – that our wives adorn themselves with gold, jewels, and pearls, if we can afford it. For such adornments are the sign of a wealthy, not a lascivious, woman and are taken as evidence of the wealth of the husband more than as a desire to impress wanton eyes.[136]

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[132] Besides the two fragments in New York that are depicted here, other pieces are now in in the Art Institute in Chicago (made into a chasuble), the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Bargello in Florence, the Museo del Tessuto in Prato and the Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts in Brussels. See: New York 2008, p. 123, cat. 51.

[133] In his *ricordanze*, Cino Rinuccini recorded similar types of gifts, including large amounts of pearls and costly jewellery, for his future wife Ginevra d'Ugolino. See: Rinuccini 1840, p. 252-255.

[134] Seed pearls, probably meant for embroidery, are found in many more documents. For instance the 1449 Pucci inventory lists many more than 14 ounces of pearls with a value of 125 florins in the room of Antonio Pucci. Merkel 1897, p. 181, no. 22.

[135] Morelli 1881, p. 15 (law of 1439 banning dagging, except on the '*cholaretto*', or neckband). Rainey 1985, app. 11, p. 776, no. 5 (law of 1449 forbidding pleating), p. 768, no. 16 (law of 1449 limiting dagging); Bridgeman 1986, app. 1, p. 284 (law of 1459 prohibiting dagging).

[136] 'Illud tamen, quandoquidem eo delapsi mores sunt, ex consuetudine imitandum extimo, ut, si res nostra patiatur, auro, gemmis et margaritis apparentur. Talia enim magis abundantis, quam luxuriosae mulieris insignia, potius amplitudinem viri tuentu, quam procaces aucupentur oculos.' Barbaro 1915, p. 79, lines 19-23. Translation: Kohl and Witt 1978, p. 208. For an analysis of Barbaro's treatise, see: Frick 2004, p. 193-205.

It is obvious that in the first decades after the introduction of the genre in Florence portraits were exclusively being commissioned by the highest strata of society: the Florentine nobility and the richest merchants and bankers. Their dress is shown and their tastes are reflected in the surviving portraits. Dress in these portraits denotes status rather than marriage, in the form of material wealth, family jewellery and sometimes family emblems. This does not necessarily mean that the actual garments and accessories of the sitter were faithfully portrayed. As we have seen, painters may have used workshop props or design drawings, and they were familiar with luxury fabrics such as gold brocades. They employed these elements to create an image that conveys the status befitting the sitter's rank. Just like the honourable expenditure for family weddings was highlighted in *ricordanze*, portraits showcased the type of representative dress that directly contributed to family honour.