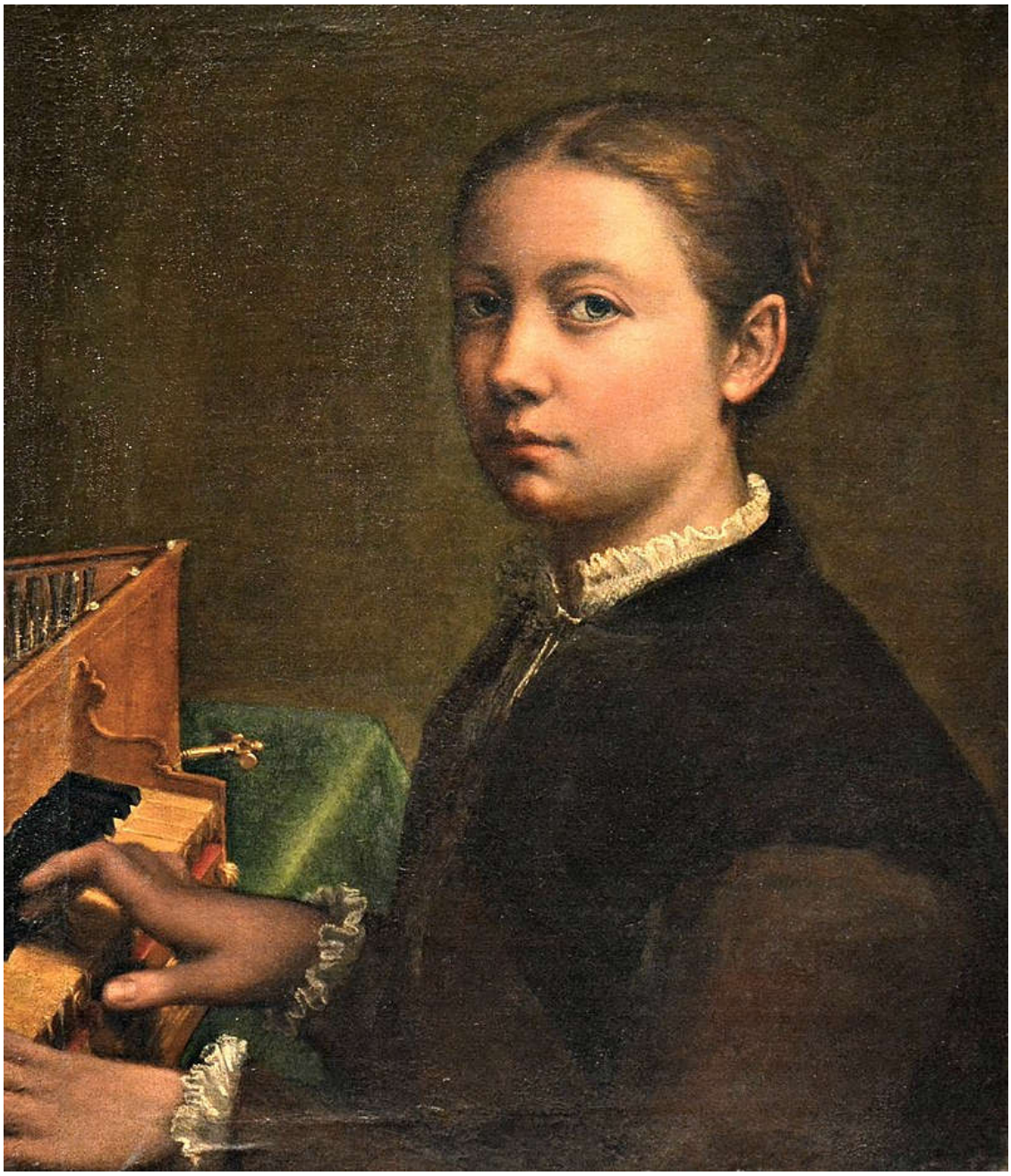
'Di Sofonisma nobile Cremonesa, Musica, Letterata, e sopra tutto rarissima Pittrice'

Naoko Akutagawa and Glen Wilson



Illus.1 Sofonisba Anguissola, 'Self portrait at a spinetta' (c.1555), National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples (Wikimedia commons)

In the autumn of 2019 a friend visiting Naples sent us a photograph of a painting he took at the Museo di Capodimonte. It showed a lovely girl at an Italian spinet with a tuning key lying beside it (illus.1). Our friend's caption said it was a self-portrait by a painter whom we had not yet come across, Sofonisba Anguissola. We went online and found to our shame that she had recently been the subject of much research because of expanded interest in female artists, and that the corpus of paintings attributed to her had skyrocketed to doubtful heights. They included not only a group of charming and technically brilliant family and self-portraits, but also some of the finest portraits ever produced of the court of Philip II of Spain. Moreover, there was another self-portrait at a spinet (illus.2).[1] We also found that the Prado Museum was soon devoting a major exhibition to Sofonisba and another outstanding woman painter of the same epoch, Lavinia Fontana. We travelled to Madrid in early January 2020 and were rewarded with the most comprehensive show of their works yet assembled, and an excellent catalogue on which the following biographical sketch is mostly based.[2]

Illus.2 Sofonisba Anguissola, ;Self portrait', from photo at Bibliothèque nationale de France of the cut-down version of the Althorp self-portrait with nutrice *(gallica.bnf.fr)*

The first thing that strikes one about Sofonisba is her name. The family, with branches of various noble rank scattered over northern Italy, were descendants of an 8th-century Byzantine general who gained a major victory over the Ummayad Caliphate. His shield bore the image of an asp (Latin *anguis*); when the Byzantines cried *Anguis sola fecit victoriam!* - the asp alone gained the victory - the family took the nickname 'Anguissola', which was eventually granted as a title of nobility by the emperor. But the family's ancestral claims went still further back, to ancient Carthage. Hence Sofonisba's father was named Amilcare, after Hannibal's father, and she and a sister were given Carthaginian names. Sofonisba was a princess who poisoned herself after the defeat by Scipio in 203

BC rather than submit to Roman slavery. She was the subject of the first classical-style tragedy in Italian, by Gian Giorgio Trissino.[3]

The more highly-placed members of the wider Anguissola family provided many services for the Habsburg empire. Most notoriously, two Anguissola brothers assassinated the Duke of Parma and Piacenza in 1547 with their own daggers. Sofonisba's immediate family was established in Cremona. The duchy of Milan, of which Cremona was the second largest city, was Spanish territory, and Amilcare had been rewarded with membership of the city council and other positions which kept his immediate family somewhat above the level of genteel poverty. The city was still on the eve of its greatest musical efflorescence. M. A. Ingegneri arrived there shortly after Sofonisba left in 1559, and Monteverdi was only born in 1567; but Cremona was already a major centre of instrument building at the time of her birth. Andrea Amati had set up shop there by 1530, and it was a major center of organ building, of which harpsichords were usually a by-product.[4]

Amilcare gave his children - including, unusually for the time, his daughters - an exemplary humanistic education. Sofonisba also received early training in drawing and music,[5] and in painting with local artists who were obliged to her father, who was one of Cremona's inspectors of church decoration. By the time she was a teenager Sofonisba had established a reputation at a portraitist in oils, and was the family's most important potential financial asset. In 1550 the bishop of Cremona referred to her as 'among the distiguished painters of our time'. Amilcare sent an example of her work to Michelangelo, who was impressed and set her an assignment; the result, accompanied to Rome by a humble letter from Sofonisba, impressed him even more. Vasari visited her in Cremona and later lauded her in the second edition of his *Lives* as the best female artist alive.[6]

Vasari also reports that her skill in painting was considered 'miraculous' at the Spanish court. When Philip II became engaged to Eizabeth of Valois (1545-68), daughter of King Henry II of France and Catarina dei Medici (and sister-in-law of Mary Queen of Scots), he set about looking for ladies-in-waiting for his bride who could function as instructors in the feminine accomplishments of the time. Recent research has revealed the extensive contacts of the many-branched Anguissola family with other noble Italian and Italo-Spanish families.[7] These connections, along with her father's vigorous promotion, resulted in Sofonisba's work and her reputation as a model of virtue and modesty being brought to the king's attention. The Duke of Alba himself made the decisive recommendation. She was engaged to join the royal entourage, and left for Spain in November 1559.

By all accounts, Sofonisba took her sudden elevation from regional artist of some repute to intimate of the most powerful court in the world in her stride. Elizabeth, on the insistence of her domineering and ever-intriguing mother, had brought a large suite of French servants along to Spain, but these were eventually sent back home after endless squabbles over precedence with the Spanish ladies whom Philip and public opinion preferred. Sofonisba remained untouched by the turmoil, and became a highly valued friend and teacher to the queen, who is reported to have made excellent progress under her instruction. Philip was so pleased by Sofonisba's portrait of his wife that he posed for her himself. The series of near-life-sized portraits she produced, long attributed to the court painters Juan Pantoja de la Cruz and Alonso Sánchez Coello, can stand comparison with anything being produced in Europe at the time. Sofonisba even managed to win the esteem and cooperation of Coello, Philip's official portraitist. Anyone who knows something about jealousy among artists will regard this as a near miracle.

Elizabeth, the only one of Philip's four wives to whom he was sincerely devoted, died in childbirth at the age of 33. The French ambassador reported back to her mother that 'the lamentations were incredible; for there is not one person great or little who does not weep for her majesty's loss; and affirm that she was the best, and most gracious queen that had ever reigned in Spain'.[8] According to a letter sent to Italy at the time (cited by Gamberini, 2016), Sofonisba lost the will to live. The devastated king took care to provide for her ladies, but was especially solicitous of Sofonisba's welfare. Her salary was guaranteed for her lifetime and she was given parting bonuses and gifts. It was customary to arrange marriages for pensioned ladies-in-waiting who did not wish to enter a convent, and Sofonisba was lucky in the choice eventually made for her. After an unhappy time in limbo at the court, during which she was involved in some serious pranks, she was married by proxy in Madrid and returned to Italy in 1573 to live with Fabrizio de Moncada, a nobleman of Palermo. He was killed in a pirate attack off Naples five years later. In 1580 she married again, notably without asking permission either of her provider the King of Spain or of her brother, who was her legal guardian. She lived with the Genoese sea captain Orazio Lomellini in Pisa, Genoa, and from 1615 in Palermo. On 12 July 1624, Anthony van Dyck visited Sofonisba there, and included a record of the interview and an ink drawing of her in his *Italian Sketchbook*. He later worked the drawing up in oil on canvas.

> Portrait of the painter Sofonisba, made from life at Palermo in the year 1624 on 12 July, when she was 96 years old and still preserved her memory and great sharpness of mind, being most courteous, and despite her failing eyesight due to old age she nevertheless liked to place the paintings in front of her and, very attentively, pressing her nose up close to the picture, was able to make out a little of it and derived great pleasure from doing so. When I did her portrait, she gave me several pieces of advice on not to raise the light too high so that the shadows would not accentuate the wrinkles of old age and many other good suggestions, and she also told me about part of her life, from which it is apparent that she was a miraculous painter from life, and her greatest torment was not being able to paint anymore because of her failing sight, though her hand was still steady and untrembling.[9]

She died a little more than a year later and was buried under a marble tombstone inlaid with semi-precious stones, still to be seen at the church of San Giorgio dei Genovese in Palermo. The Latin inscription reads:

> To his wife Sofonisba, of the family of Anguissola, who through her noble character, her beauty and her extraordinary natural gifts is counted among the famous women of the world, and who in the representation of the human figure was so outstanding that nobody in her time was reckoned her equal, Horatius Lomellinus, plunged in deepest grief, dedicates this last tribute, which, although too small for such a woman is great for a mortal.

Orazio's natural son named his daughter Sofonisba.

But since we are both harpsichordists, it was the two self-portraits with Italian spinets that got us interested in Sofonisba the painter. They have a likely direct predecessor in Catharina van Hemessen's portrait of a girl at a Flemish virginal from around 1550, a pendant to her self-portrait and almost certainly depicting her sister Christine, now at the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne (illus.3).[10] A copy of the portrait found its way to Italy. The general impression created by all three works is very similar: a modest girl with a somewhat inquisitive facial expression in front of a dark background. There are musical connections between the two women as well. Van Hemessen's home

city of Antwerp was, of course, the centre of the so-called Flemish school of harpsichord building,[11] and artistic and commercial contact with Milan and Cremona became lively after acquisition of the duchy by the Habsburgs after the battle of Pavia in 1525.[12] Catharina's husband Kerstiaen de Moryn was organist of Antwerp cathedral. The famous *Descrittione di Lodovico Guicciardini patritio fiorentino di tutti i Paesi Bassi altrimenti detti Germania inferiore* of 1567 states that he was 'an excellent player of the *buon'accordo* [an obscure term, variously described in 18th-century sources as a harpsichord, clavichord or 'small espinette', here most likely the very type of polygonal virginal Christine is shown playing] and other instruments'. The couple was called into the service of Maria of Hungary when this sister of Charles V stepped down as governor of the Low Countries and returned to Spain in 1555.

Illus.3 Catharina van Hemessen, 'Self-portrait' (1548), Museum Wallraf-Richartz, Cologne (Wikimedia commons)

Catharina was the prototype of a female painting instructor/lady-in-waiting at a Habsburg court. When Maria died in 1558, two years before Sofonisba arrived in Spain, the couple returned to the southern Netherlands, where Kerstiaen eventually took a job as organist of the Illustrious Brotherhood of our Blessed Lady in 's Hertogenbosch, a confraternity of monks and laymen whose most famous members were Hieronymus Bosch and William the Silent.[13] Four instruments of the harpsichord family (*clavicordios*) passed from Maria's estate to Philip's sister Princess Juana of Austria, dowager Princess of Portugal, who was regent of Spain while Philip was in England and the Low Countries, and with whom Sofonisba was on excellent terms. She painted the princess' portrait,

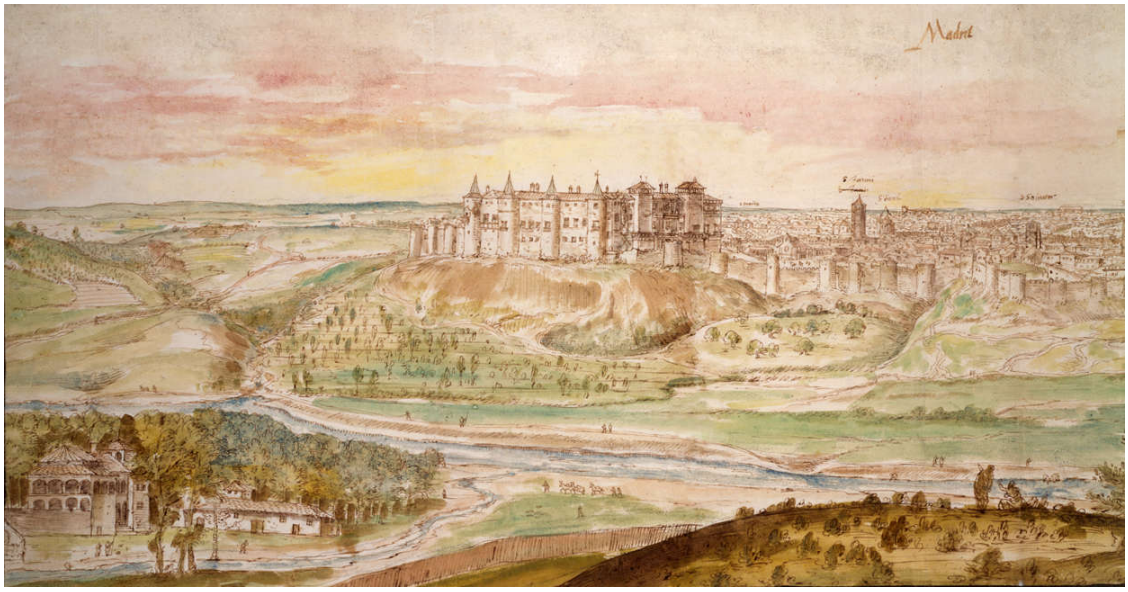
which has not as yet been securely identified. A portrait of Juana sold at auction in Vienna in 2011 and now in a private collection has been attributed to her, but it may be one of the numerous copies of such works produced for friendly courts.

The moment we found out about Sofonisba's stay at the court of Philip II, we wondered if she had known *el ciego tañedor*, the blind keyboardist Antonio de Cabezón. From 2010 to 2013 one of the authors was intensely involved with Antonio, his brother Juan and his son Hernando in connection with three CDs of their works and the extensive revision of the original numerical tablatures the project involved. We will say at the outset that our research has revealed no proof of any direct contact, but it is beyond question that the two often met, and that Sofonisba frequently heard the great master perform.

The first opportunity occurred when Philip, then crown prince, visited his future domains in Italy and the Netherlands in 1548-49.[14] The prince's convoy of some 100 ships landed in Genoa, where Cabezón's performance during Mass at the cathedral gives us the only direct description of his playing to have come down over the centuries. The chronicler of the journey says that all admired the 'smoothness and singularity' (*suavidad y extrañeza*) of the music of 'the unique (*el único*) Antonio de Cabezón, a new Orpheus of our time, foremost in this kind of music'.[15] From 19 December 1548 the party spent 19 festive days in Milan, the capital of the most prosperous of the Spanish Habsburgs' widespread Italian territories. Given his position in Cremona's local government and family connections, it seems possible that Amilcare made the 80km trip to the capital of the duchy to pay his respects. If his gifted daughter accompanied him, she could have met Titian there.[16] Be that as it may, on 7 January 1549 Philip sent some of his party ahead to Trent to wait as he made a quick swing southeastwards, then back up through Venetian *terra firma*, bypassing the *Serenissima*, where Adrian Willaert was San Marco's *maestro di capella* and Jacques Buus was organist. After three overnight stops, the prince and half his court arrived in Cremona, where he was met by more than 200 noblemen of the city, among them undoubtedly Amilcare Anguissola. Cabezón's presence on this leg of the journey is not documented, but Kastner thinks - and I would concur - that the king would not have allowed his highly-prized *tañedor*, who was always called upon to exhibit his talent wherever Philip appeared, to wait idly for him until 24 January in Trent. It was customary to attend a service at the chief church in all stopping points, but the *Felicissimo Viaje* makes no mention of anything but a grand reception at the palace. It is hard to imagine that the highly musical and naturally curious Sofonisba would not have found a way to hear Antonio if he did play at the palace chapel, in Cremona's *Duomo* or in the kind of smaller setting where Antonio would perform on his positive organ or clavichord for privileged guests; but this is idle speculation.

In Spain itself, the peripatetic court's main residence was the Alcázar of Toledo until Philip, King of Spain and its vast empire since 1556, moved the court to the Alcázar of Madrid (illus.4) in 1561. The move was made in anticipation of the completion of his greatest building project, the combined monastery, seminary and royal residence/mausoleum of San Lorenzo de El Escorial.[17] Philip had taken over Cabezón from his mother Isabella, the widow of Charles V, upon her death. Throughout the years of his service, Antonio was treated more like a friend than a lackey.[18] As the court progressed through Spain and foreign countries,[19] Cabezón was always close to Philip, and during the king's brief marriage to Elizabeth of Valois, the two households stayed together whenever possible. The king and queen usually spent some hours together in the afternoon, and often shared meals. Cabezón was sometimes invited to play for them, and the queen's ladies-in-waiting would have been present on many occasions. In addition, during the extensive periods of the year when Antonio was required to serve the king he was organist for church services wherein the organ played

a major role, which the entire court was required to attend, and during which even the fanatic Catholic Philip occasionally fell asleep.



Illus.4 Anton van der Wyngaerde, 'The old Alcázar of Madrid' (c.1565) (Wikimedia commons)

Antonio died suddenly on 26 March 1566, after six years during which he enriched Sofonisba Anguissola's musical life to a degree about which one can only ruminate.[20] His shadowy brother Juan, a distinguished keyboard player in his own right who aided Antonio for most of his life, died a few weeks later, as if his *raison d'être* had been extinguished. Antonio's brilliant son Hernando (1541-1602), who published his father's works posthumously, had begun to deputize for him in 1559.

There may be no tangible proof of contact between the Cabezóns and Sofonisba, but there is considerable documentation about other musical aspects of Sofonisba's life in Spain. It begins upon her first meeting with her new patroness on the occasion of Elizabeth's marriage to Philip. After her proxy wedding in Notre Dame de Paris, with the Duke of Alba standing in for the king, the beautiful 24-year-old Elizabeth crossed the Pyrenees in the dead of a bitter winter on horseback and in litters, and met her future husband at the palace of the powerful Mendoza family in Guadalajara, where the king had gone ahead from Toledo to meet her. The palace, with its splendid arcaded courtyard, is one of the most beautiful late-Gothic civil edifices in Europe. It was recently restored after heavy damage in the Spanish Civil War. A pamphlet published in Seville[21] shortly after the ceremony on 29 January 1560, one of several chronicles of the event, describes in detail an incident that occurred at the ball which took place in the main hall on the evening of the union:

> This dance being concluded [the musicians] continued playing for awhile; and Don Diego de Córdova emerged with the torch and chose [as his partner] *doña* Ana Fajardo and *doña* María de Aragón and gave the torch to the latter; and she chose the Marquess de Cenete and the Prince de la Rocha and gave him the torch; and he went to select *doña* Leonor Girón, daughter of the countess of Uraña, who refused to come out, and he chose the Italian and gave her the torch; and she chose the Duke of the Infantado [the host of the occasion, the 4th duke Iñigo Lopez de Mendoza y Pimentel] and gave the torch to his majesty the king,

> and [the king] acknowledged her with a very low bow [*quitóla la gorra*]; and then he chose the queen and went up for her [to the dais] and they danced a little, and he chose the Princess [Margaret] without going up for her as he did for his wife, her highness came down, and they handed off the torch and went in to supper in another room.

This was the famous 'Torch Dance', at which Elizabeth's brilliant and wayward youngest sister Marguerite (*la Reine Margot*) was said to be especially proficient.[22] This courtly branle, best known from Praetorius' arrangement, was long traditional at wedding feasts.[23] Arbeau[24] gives the same tune, which is based on the *passamezzo moderno,* and describes the dance as follows:

> The Candlestick Branle: This branle, otherwise known as the Torch branle, is danced in a moderate duple time like the Alman and with the same steps. Those who wish to dance it take a candlestick with a lighted candle, or a torch or a link, and make one or two turns around the room walking or dancing forwards and looking to right and to left the while for the partner of their choice. Each selects the damsel he fancies and they dance together for a little while, after which he disposes her at the end of the hall and making a *révérance* hands her the lighted candlestick or torch or link and retires dancing to his place. The damsel holding the candlestick then repeats what she has seen the young man do and dances off to choose another partner. In due course they change places, when she hands the candlestick to him, and in this manner all are invited in turn to join in the dance.

A more astoundingly bold act by a newly-arrived, unknown lady-in-waiting would be difficult to imagine. The king's remarkable response shows that he must have admired Sofonisba's dancing, her aplomb, and possibly her considerable beauty. He had been a notorious philanderer until then, but was reportedly faithful to Elizabeth as long as their unusually happy dynastic marriage lasted.

This was not the only instance of Sofonisba's self-confidence on that memorable evening. The same pamphlet says she danced the galliard with another Italian. This is confirmed in more detail in a description of the wedding of 8 February 1560 sent by Girolamo Neri, ambassador to Spain of the Duke of Mantua, to his master:

> In the evening after the marriage ceremony, his majesty having desired that the galliard be danced but there being at first nobody who wished to commence, Sig. Ferrante Gonzaga finally invited the Cremonese woman who paints and who has come to be with the queen, and they cleared the way for many others who danced after them.[25]

Gonzaga (not to be confused with the famous *condottiere* and viceroy of Sicily who died in 1557 after the battle of St Quentin) was a cousin of Sofonisba's, part of the extensive network of family connections that advanced her career. He was probably one of her two male escorts from Milan to Guadalajara.

It is not known whether Cabezón was present in Guadalajara. Kastner conjectures that he was, but Philip may have spared his *tañedor* the rigors and crowded quarters of the winter journey. If the dance band was Spanish it was likely an *alta* - the loud variety, consisting of double reeds and/or cornetts and trombones; but Elizabeth had also brought along her own band of eight strings from France, called *Biolines* in a payroll document. This is one of the earliest mentions of a French royal band of the violin family, which became the preferred accompaniment for the French obsession

with dancing. The four-stringed instrument is already discussed and illustrated for the first time in print in Jambe de Fer's *Epitome musical* (Lyons, 1556, facs. ed. Marc Fuzeau).

Sofonisba's new home, the household of Queen Elizabeth, resounded with music at all hours - at meals, during frequent church services, while rest was taken in the afternoon and when entertainment and dancing was called for in the evening. At the head of her *capilla* was the famous master of the *viheula de mano,* Miguel Fuenllana, who was, like Cabezón, blind. Many documents in the archives at Simanca[26] refer to transportation of the queen's organ and acquisitions of or repairs to instruments. One records eight cases made for the instruments of her string band; another from 1565, of particular interest regarding Sofonisba, notes payment for transportation from Paris of a *clavicordio*, which according to John Koster[27] means a quilled keyboard at this time, not a clavichord. According to the account book it was 'for the service of her majesty, and is in her chamber'. Elizabeth's biographer says its price of 196 *reales* was 'incredible'. Edmond van der Straeten's *La Musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siècle* (vol.7, p.254) contains an entry from the inventory of the queen's possessions after her early death in childbirth:

> Item, a *clabicordio*, kept in a black box, covered in leather, valued at 10,200 *maravédis.*

This was the instrument imported from France, undoubtedly an *espinette*, the rectangular member of the harpsichord family known as a virginal in the Low Countries, which was the French form of choice in the 16th century. Leather-covered instruments are known to have been produced there. Sofonisba undoubtedly often sat at the queen's *clavicordio*, both for her own entertainment and that of her mistress, and the Cabezóns probably did too. The inventory of Philip's vast estate, finished in 1602, lists eight *clavicordios*, one of which formerly belonged to Maria of Hungary and, most extraordinarily, two claviorgana, one of which had pedals and was a gift to the king from his half-brother, Don Juan of Austria, the victor of Lepanto. It also mentions a positive organ formerly belonging to Maria of Hungary, so at that time two instruments which had been played by Kerstiaen de Moryn still existed.[28]

Sofonisba was a great favourite with the queen, whose progress in painting under her instruction is reported to have been remarkable.[29] She accompanied her mistress to the momentous conference at Bayonne of 1565. Elizabeth's mother had maneuvered for years for this meeting between her young son Charles IX and her son-in-law Philip for the purpose of obtaining Spanish support in her struggle against the Huguenots. Philip ultimately sent Elizabeth as his representative instead of coming himself, and she defended his interests nobly in meetings with her brother,[30] to Catherine's frustration. The prolific writer Pierre de Bourdeille, Seigneur de Brantôme, met Sofonisba there and calls her 'demoiselle cremonese, belle et honneste fille et douce, qui avait tout plein des vertus, et surtout qui savait bien peindre'.[31] The accounts of the festivities, in which both sides vied to outdo each other, tell of a very great deal of music for balls, plays, boating parties on the Adour and other occasions.

This article's title comes from the most extensive contemporary biographical note on Sofonisba. In 1609, the year of her death, a Spanish canon of San Giovanni in Laterano, Pedro Pablo de Ribera, published *Le glorie immortali de' trionfi, heroiche imprese d'ottocento quarantacinque donne illustri antiche, e moderne, dotate di conditioni, e scienze segnalate.*[32] In his article about 'Sofonisma Angosciola' (one of several variant spellings), he says, 'And because this Signor Amilcare was a lover of the sciences and accomplishments (*virtù*) he wanted his daughters to learn something of them as well, Sofonisba attending to several of them, in particular to music, letters, and indeed especially to painting...'. He

continues with a long and detailed description of her extraordinary career and the many rewards she received. Seen in a larger context, Ribera's paean is the culmination of a literary trend in praise of females. As early as 1374, Giovanni Bocaccio assembled his list of eminent women of antiquity, *De mulieribus claris*; Christine de Pizan's *Cité des dames* (1403) advocated women's education to put an end to gender inequality. In Italy an extensive literature discussing the appropriate role of women in society developed, mostly emphasizing traditionally modest and supportive roles; yet Castigione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528) states, 'I say that women can understand all things men can understand and that the intellect of a woman can penetrate wherever a man's can'. In the late 16th century the Spanish Dominican Alfonso Chacón worked towards compiling a gallery of self-portraits for Archduke Ferdinand of Austria inspired by Plutarch, which included one by Sofonisba and was to contain equal numbers of works by male and female artists.

Ribera's triad of 'musician, writer, and above all painter' is reflected in the self-portraits at a spinet and two others showing Sofonisba at her easel and holding a book.[33] It can be understood as a crescendo of importance regarding Sofonisba's occupations. She was obviously best known as a painter, but her writings were of considerable importance.[34] Lavinia Fontana, the other subject of the double exhibition at the Prado, united all three arts in her self-portrait at an Italian virginal (Rome, Accademia Nazionale di San Luca), which was obviously inspired by Sofonisba's self-portrait. Her easel stands in the background, and a long inscription demonstrates the artist's literacy. The paintings by van Hemessen, Sofonisba Anguissola and Fontana are among the earliest known showing women performing music. They were soon joined by a picture now in the Uffizi, traditionally thought to be a self-portrait by Tintoretto's daughter Marietta Robusti, and by a flood of others. Both Philip II and the Emperor Maximillian II invited Robusti to their courts, without success

No compositions by Sofonisba Anguissola have come down to us, and it is striking how little music is mentioned in research on her, or for that matter, in research about other Renaissance painters who were accomplished musicians. As a prominent musicologist once told one of the authors, 'Music is the stepchild of the arts; everybody knows who designed the dome of the Florence *Duomo*, but almost nobody knows who composed the dedicatory motet' (he didn't either at the time; it was Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*.) The concentration on Sofonisba's work as a painter is understandable, since the paintings are by far the most of what is still tangible in her legacy. But the two images she created of herself at a small harpsichord are testimony, as part of that very legacy, to the ephemeral sounds she loved so much. It is fortunate for those of her admirers who have ears to hear it that some of the music she may have heard and played still exists on paper, and can be revived in concert and on recordings.

Naoko Akutagawa and Glen Wilson, formerly student/teacher and now wife/husband, met at the Würzburg Musikhochschule, where Glen taught until his recent retirement and where Naoko took the Meisterklasse Diplom. She became a faculty member there in 1999, and has since made 7 CDs for Naxos, including world premieres of the 12 recently discovered suites by Gottlieb Muffat which Glen edited for Breitkopf & Härtel. Glen, born in the USA in 1952 and a Dutch citizen since 1988, looks back on a long and distiguished career as an early keyboard specialist, writer and editor, and was recently limited to the last two occupations by mild stroke. He is presently seeking a publisher for his biography of Eta Harich-Schneider (1894-1986), whose second career as a Japanologist made Naoko's collaboration on Japanese sources invaluable.

Notes

1 It includes the ghostly face of an old woman, probably Sofonisba's *nutrice*, who also appears in a family portrait. Some specialists think it is a portrait of sister Lucia. The original is held in the collection at Althorp of the 9th Earl Spencer.

2 Leticia Ruiz Gómez (ed), *A Tale of Two Women Painters, Sofonisba Anguissola and Lavinia Fontana*, Museo Nacional del Prado (Madrid, 2019). This wonderful book provided some of the information offered here which has gone unnoted, and the extensive bibliography put us on the trail of many of the other sources noted below.

3 *Sofonisba*, published 1524. She is also the probable subject of one of Rembrandt's greatest 'history' paintings; Judith and Artemisia are also candidates.

4 For Cremona's rich musical life in the 16th century, see the essay by Paolo Fabbri in the exhibition catalogue *I Campi*: *Cultura artistica cremonese del Cinquecento* (Milan, 1985), devoted to the family of one of Sofonisba's teachers.

5 Besides playing the harpsichord, a 17th-century source says Sofonisba was a fine singer. Filippo Baldinucci ed F. Ranalli, *Notizie dei professori di disegno da Cimabue in qua* (Florence, 1845-47).

6 Accessed at www.italianrenaissanceresources.com. He also quoted Ariosto's verse 'Le donna son venute in eccellenza / Di ciascun' arte ov' hanno posto cura'.

7 Information regarding Sofonisba's family and other relationships is found in various publications by Cecilia Gamberini, most notably 'Sofonisba Anguissola at the Court of Philip II', in Sheila Barker (ed), *Women Artists in Early Modern Italy* (Turnhout, 2016). My thanks go to Dr Gamberini for generously sharing her research with me.

8 Cited thus in Martha Walker Freer, *Elizabeth de Valois, Queen of Spain, and the Court of Philip II* (London, 1857), vol.II, p.256.

9 The original is in Italian. The translation is that found in the Prado catalogue as part of the essay by Alejandro Vergara. Van Dyck's Italian Sketchbook is kept at the British Library; the oil portrait is at Knole House. Sofonisba's birth year is disputed. Based on van Dyck's note, it is often given as c.1532. Later research places it nearer 1535.

10 For van Hemessen see Karolien De Clippen, *Catharina van Hemessen (1528 - na 1567) / Een monografische studie over een 'uytnemende wel geschickte vrouwe in de conste der schildereyen'* (Brussels, 2004).

11 Antwerp was actually a free Imperial city in the duchy of Brabant.

12 See Bert W. Meijer's essay in *I Campi* (1985).

13 The Dutch royal family are brothers to this day (female members, such as the former Queen Beatrix, are referred to as brothers). The Brotherhood had a chapel in the cathedral as big as a village church, with its own organ. Pierre de la Rue, Clemens non Papa and other masters had composed for it. See the website of the Brotherhood's museum, www.zwanenbroedershuis.nl. Mariano Soriano Fuertes, in his *Historia de la Música Española...* (Madrid/Barcelona, 1856), p.178, basing himself on a manuscript by his 18th-century predecessor José de Teixidor, says the picaresque novelist Vicente Espinel heard 'the excellent harpsichordist', 'maestro Cristiano' who had been in the service of Maria of Hungary. Since Espinel was 8 years old when the former queen and governess died, the encounter (if it

happened; both of the pioneering Spanish musicologists are noted for their many errors) must have occurred some time after Kerstiaen and Catharina disappear from the historical record in 1567. I have not been able to find any reference to Kerstiaen in the works by Espinel available online, which include his famous *Relaciones de la vida del Escudero Marcos de Obregón* (1618).

14 Biographical information on Cabezón is mostly taken from Macario Santiago Kastner, *Antonio und Hernando de Cabezón, Eine Chronik dargestellt am Leben zweier Generationen von Organisten* (Tutzing, 1977). Kastner remarks that Cabezón's *Galliarda Milanese* and *Pavana Italica* could be relics of this journey. Northern Italy was, of course, swarming with outstanding keyboard artists while Sofonisba was a girl in Cremona, and the harpsichord, as opposed to the organ, played a far greater role than is generally recognized. See Glen Wilson's notes to *M. A. Cavazzoni, Complete Works*, Naxos 8.572998, at www.glenwilson.

15 Juan Christóval Calvete de Estrella, *El Felicissimo Viaje del muy Alto y muy Poderoso Principe Don Phelippe...* (Antwerp, 1552), transcription and commentaries by Paloma Cuenca (Madrid, 2001). Cabezón is also included in the introductory list of members of Philip's entourage who were 'por su ingenio, letras y habilidad celebrados'. Calvete de Estrella also mentions the embarcation of members of Philip's chapel, 'muy excelentes cantores y músicos los más escogidos que hallarse podrían'. The immense trouble taken to include these artists on such an extensive journey strikingly illustrates the propaganda value of music in Philip's eyes.

16 This meeting between Philip and Titian may have been the origin of that version of Titian's paintings of Venus with a musician, which shows a young Philip at a small organ, kept at the *Gemäldegalerie* in Berlin. It is thought that it was sent to Charles V to prove that his son was on the hunt for a wife. Philip and Titian corresponded for years after that first meeting. Could Titian's organ have been inspired by Cabezón's traveling instrument? One of several positives owned by the Spanish court accompanied the long journey, along with a tuner. Philip later owned one which followed him whenever he went to Mass in a church other than one of his own chapels. A positive, built before 1580 by a member of the Brebos family, who began arriving in Spain from Antwerp in the 1570s, survives at El Escorial in the apartment which once belonged to Elizabeth's daughter Isabella. Since two organs by Gilles Brebos were already brought to Spain in 1562 in consequence of an order from Antonio de Cabezón, it is conceivable that *el ciego tañedor* played this little survivor in Sofonisba's presence. The instrument is similar in layout to the *Baldachinorgel* illustrated in Praetorius' *Syntagma Musicum, De Organographia,* plate IV. A positive of the same type, with silver pipes and covered in ornamental gilded silver, said to be 'of sweetest consonances', was given to Philip by the emperor's brother Ferdinand, then 'King of the Romans' and Charles' eventual successor. A legend grew up that it had originally belonged to Charles himself. Philip later handed it over to the Hieronymite monks at his new establishment in El Escorial. It was still in use for processions there as late as 1784, but did not survive the Peninsular War. The gorgeous little organ is pictured in Claudio Coello's huge altarpiece of 1685-90, celebrating a miraculous host and now in the monastery's sacristy. John Koster has shown that such instruments are meant to be played in a kneeling position, as in Coello's painting. See his 'The Lyra Celi by Raymundo Truchado, 1625', *Early Keyboard Journal* (2012). See also Michael Noone, *Music and Musicians in the Escorial Liturgy under the Habsburgs, 1563-1700* (Rochester, NY, 1998), pp.170-172, and especially *Aspectos de la cultura musical en la Corte de Felipe II* (Madrid, 2000). Information on organs and inventories has been taken from Cristina Bordas Ibáñez' contribution to this valuable book.

17 Ironically, the monastery of San Lorenzo was thus named to commemorate Philip's victory at St Quentin (1557) over his new wife's father on the saint's name day; the marriage was part of an effort to seal an alliance between the old enemies. The large and unusually elaborate portrait of Cabezón by

Coello, commissioned by Philip, was consumed in the fire of 1739 which destroyed the Alcázar. The baroque Palacio del Oriente, which houses Tiepolo's last masterpiece, stands on the site overlooking the valley of the Manzanares, near remains of the original Moorish walls. The church of San Francisco where Cabezón was buried was razed and replaced by the present baroque edifice, but not before an antiquarian recorded his epitaph.

18 Noone (1998) offers a salubrious dose of scepticism regarding the nationalistically-tinged enthusiasms of Higinio Anglés and other Spanish musicologists, but the passage in Hernando's *Proemio* to Cabezón's *Obras de música* which says that Philip 'loved and esteemed' his father 'as much as any musician ever was loved by any king, in testimony whereof he had his portrait made and keeps it to this day in his royal palace' is not to be dismissed lightly.

19 The momentous journey to England for Philips marriage to Queen Mary, where the combined Spanish and English chapels (the latter including a musician named William Byrd) performed together several times, cannot be recalled often enough.

20 At the time Elizabeth was pregnant with her first child, Isabella Clara Eugenia, later co-regent of Spanish Netherlands in its 'golden age', when Cornet and Philips were in Brussels and Bull was in Antwerp. Frescobaldi visited Brussels in 1507-8 with his patron, the papal nuncio Bentivoglio. See Frederick Hammond, *Girolamo Frescobaldi: An Extended Biography* at girolamofrescobaldi.com. Ribera (see n32 below) states that the infant Isabella was entrusted to Sofonisba's care 'for some years'. Her husband, the Austrian archduke Albrecht, had to be released from his position as cardinal-archbishop of Toledo to marry her. At the ceremony in 1598 in Ferrara, the famous Habsburg double wedding, she was represented by a proxy; the pair was overshadowed by their royal counterparts, Isabella's half-brother Philip III (also absent) and his new queen, Margaret of Austria. The fabulous celebrations were a last flowering of Ferrara's glory, marking its devolution to the Papal State. See Bonner Mitchell, *1598, A Year of Pageantry in Late Renaissance Ferrara* (Binghamton, NY, 1990). Isabella was the only child Philip ever permitted to work closely with him on state documents; she tended him in dire circumstances during his last three bedridden years at the Escorial monastery. Philip II's will directed his son to 'take care of your sister so dearly beloved by me; for she was my joy and the very light of my eyes'.

21 *Relación verdadera de algunas cosas que han acontecido en las bodas de nuestro muy alto y muy poderoso Señor Don Felipe* (Seville, 1560).

22 Marguerite, wife of Henry IV until he divorced her for another Medici daughter, was a composer and an excellent lutenist. Her 'memoirs' are a political history, tinged with humanist philosophy, of the years 1565-82. They were written as a corrective to Brantôme's superficial and overly-flattering portrait of their author.

23 Michael Praetorius, *Bransle de la Torche* in *Terpsichore, Musarum Aoniarum Quinta* (Wolfenbüttel, 1612).

24 Thoinot Arbeau (Jehan Tabourot), *Orchesographie*..., ff.86 and 87r, *Branle du chandelier* or *Branle de la torche* (Langres, 1589 and 1596).Translation by Mary Stewart Evans in her edition *Orchesography* (New York, 1948), accessed in the revision by Julia Sutton (New York, 1967). Antonio Valente published seven variations in his *Intavolatura di Cimbalo* (Naples, 1576), a copy of which could well have come into Sofonisba's hands when she was living in the other of the 'two Sicilies', which were under Spanish rule. The ultra-conservative court of Prussia was the last to honour the old tradition of torch dances at royal betrothals and weddings. Giacomo Meyerbeer became its *Generalmusikdirektor* in 1842. From 1844 he supplied four *Fackeltänze* which were arranged for 130 trumpets and trombones and performed as the Prussian courtiers went through their version of the old ritual. The music,

however, had nothing to do with the old tune, and they were in fact heroic polonaises. See Robert Ignatius Letellier (ed), *Giacomo Meyerbeer, Orchestral Works* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009). The original lives on in the third movement of Rodrigo's *Fantasía para un Gentilhombre* for guitar and orchestra.

25 Cited in Carl Justi, *Miscellaneen aus driei Jahrhunderten Spanischen Kunstlebens*, Band II (Berlin, 1908).

26 Much of the information about the queen's music is taken from the most extensive biography of her to have yet appeared in Spanish, Agustín G. Amazúa y Mayo, *Isabel de Valois, Reina de España (1546-1568)* (Madrid, 1949).

27 email communication of 6 February 2020. My thanks go to Prof Koster for this confirmation, as well as for the following quote from van der Straeten.

28 See *Aspectos de la cultura musical* (2000).

29 'Elle passe son temps la plus part a peindre, a quoy elle prend grand plaisir, de sorte que je pense, devant qui soit ung ans, qu'elle sera si bonne maîtresse que celle même qui l'apprend, qui est du meilleures du monde'. Letter of Madame de Vineux to Catherine de' Medici (30 September 1561), Bibliothèque national de France, fonds français, vol.6.614, f.58.

30 Charles was, of course, the recipient of the set of Amati strings ordered by Catherine and produced from 1560 in Sofonisba's home town; hence Sofonisba may have heard some of them at Biarritz.

31 *Discours d'aucunes Rodomontades et Gentilles Rencontres et Parolles Espaignolles*, in *Oeuvres Complètes...*, vol.7 (Paris, 1883).

32 Accessible at Internet Archive, www.archive.org, p.314.

33 The two last are at Museum-Zamek w Łańcucie and Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien respectively. Leonardo da Vinci, as part of a long line of similar discussions going back to Plato, famously compared these three arts and others in his *Paragone*, collected and ordered from his notes by his student Francesco Melzi. Leonardo is out to claim primacy for painting. His first sentence on the subject reads, 'Music cannot be called otherwise than the sister of painting, for she is dependent upon hearing, a sense second to sight, and her harmony is composed of the union of its proportional parts sounded simultaneously, rising or falling in one or more harmonic rhythms...But painting ranks higher than music, because it does not fade away as soon as it is born, as is the fate of unhappy music...And if you say that there are vile painters, I reply that music also can de spoiled by those who do not understand it'. Translation from Irma A. Richter, *Paragone, A Comparison of the Arts by Leonardo da Vinci* (Oxford, 1949).

34 Francesco Agostino della Chiesa included Sofonisba in his 1620 *Theatro delle donne literati*, and says on p.285, 'ma essa Sofonisba non solo hà col penello fatto cose rarissime, e bellissime, ma hà voluto anco con la penna (come quella ch'era dottissima) scriver alcune cose, che sono molte lodate, e tenuto in conto da' virtuosi'. Accessed at gallica.bnf.fr.