

The rediscovery of Artemisia Gentileschi's *Susanna and the Elders*, painted for Queen

Henrietta Maria

A long-lost *Susanna and the Elders* by Artemisia Gentileschi (fig. 1a-b) has been rediscovered by Royal Collection Trust.¹ Likely painted for Queen Henrietta Maria during the artist's short stay at the English court, the work has been a part of the Royal Collection since 1639 (excepting a brief absence during Commonwealth rule).² The painting lost its attribution to Artemisia in the eighteenth century and, much dirtied and worn by decades above fireplaces, was transferred to a picture store in the nineteenth century, where it remained, unidentified, until recently.

New research into the *Susanna* presented here will shed light on Artemisia's creative process, her time in England, as well as the painting's eventful afterlife. Artemisia is thought to have been in the country for a relatively short period between 1638/39 and the beginning of the 1640s. Her father, Orazio Gentileschi, and her three brothers had already been in London from 1626, employed by the English court; there Orazio executed numerous paintings for Charles I and, especially, for Henrietta Maria.³ Artemisia is known to have been present on 16th December 1639 when she wrote from London to Francesco I d'Este, Duke of Modena

¹ R. Ward Bissell: *Artemisia Gentileschi and the Authority of Art. Critical Reading and Catalogue Raisonné*, University Park, 1999, pp.387-88, no.[L-103].

² The present (and roughly original) measurements are 188.9 x 143.2 cm. Until recently the picture was 200.9 x 157.8 cm due to later additions along the left and lower edges. Conservation treatment on the Royal Collection *Susanna* has not revealed a signature, though the area at the bottom left around the fountain, in the vicinity of which it might be expected to feature, is the most worn and obscured area of the canvas. On the placement of signatures in Artemisia's *Susanna* paintings, see J. Mann, 'Identity signs: meanings and methods in Artemisia Gentileschi's signatures', *Renaissance Studies* 23.1 (2009), p.74.

³ On Orazio's career in London, see G. Finaldi, ed: *Orazio Gentileschi at the Court of Charles I*, London, Bilbao and Madrid, 1999.

and Reggio, offering several paintings to secure his patronage and a place at the North Italian court.⁴ Though possible that the *Susanna* was brought by Artemisia to London or delivered previously, this article will argue for a date towards the beginning of the painter's "English period", based on visual, technical, and documentary indications.

A female protagonist for an early modern female patron, painted by one of the most revered artists of the era—also female—this is a work of clear historical significance. The *Susanna* was most likely commissioned by Henrietta Maria and adorned the walls of subsequent Queens and Queen Consorts, a detail that enriches our understanding of the significant feminine patterns underpinning Artemisia's patronage and early display. But beyond the commission, it is a work of stature and sophistication. Its elaborate composition was a challenge set by Artemisia for herself: in a new studio, in a foreign land, and without access to her usual Neapolitan collaborators. Close links to works preceding and postdating her brief stay at the court also provide crucial insights into the evolution of her oeuvre.⁵ That Artemisia considered the *Susanna* especially successful is proven by her revisiting aspects of the protagonist's pose in the decade following its completion.

Perhaps most importantly of all, the *Susanna* helps illuminate a critical blind spot in Artemisia's career, for which we have only a few surviving possible examples.⁶ Until now

⁴ F. Solinas, ed.: *Lettere di Artemisia: edizione critica e annotata con quarantatre documenti inediti*, Rome, 2011, pp.121-22 (letter 51). (N.B. an expanded edition of the letters came out in 2021, also edited by Solinas, but the 2011 edition will be cited here due to difficulty of availability.)

⁵ For example the 1640s return to Naples, seen by some as 'possibly the most problematic [decade] to decipher' of her entire career: see J. Mann: 'Artemisia and Orazio Gentileschi', in K. Christiansen and J. Mann, eds: *Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi*, New York, 2001, p.259.

⁶ One of the authors (Munz) is preparing a separate study on the works and references associated with the painter's English oeuvre; hence this essay does not pursue a detailed account of Artemisia's English period.

the famous *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (fig. 2) was the best documented and most definitive remnant of her London stay. In fact, as will be shown, the *Susanna* is the more valid representative. The *Self-Portrait* first appears in royal inventories only in October 1649, at the sale of the King's collection ten years or so after Artemisia's English period; hence the dates of the painting's entry into the Royal Collection and of its execution are considerably more difficult to refine.⁷ Artemisia is also said to have helped her ailing father, Orazio, complete his *Allegory of Peace and the Liberal Arts* (c.1635-38; Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 408464-72, on long-term loan to Marlborough House), a series of ceiling canvases commissioned for the hall of the Queen's House, Greenwich; various figures are often attributed to Artemisia's hand. The degree of prior damage and subsequent overpaint, however, makes the appraisal of Artemisia's involvement extremely challenging and fraught with uncertainty.⁸ The *Susanna* consequently provides the most reliable example of this pivotal career moment at the end of the 1630s, which has remained, until now, something of an art historical mystery.⁹

⁷ Confusingly, two entries among the pictures appraised at Hampton Court on 3rd, 4th and 5th October 1649 appear to record the *Self-Portrait*: an 'Arthemesia gentelisco. done by her selfe' and 'A Pintura A painteinge: by Arthemesia': O. Millar, 'Inventories and valuations of the King's goods 1649-1651', *Walpole Society* 43 (1970-72), p.186, no.5, valued at £20, and p.191, no.97, valued at £10, respectively. Hampton Court was not covered in the earlier c.1639 inventory of Charles I's collection by his surveyor Abraham van der Doort, and so, even though the *Self-Portrait* may well have already formed part of the collection (in 1639 or earlier), we cannot be certain. For divided opinions on whether the *Self-Portrait* was painted in England or earlier, and on the problem of the two inventory references, see L. Whitaker and M. Clayton, eds: *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection: Renaissance & Baroque*, London, 2007, pp.301-02, no.106.

⁸ In consideration of the documentation on the ceiling's 1960-61 treatment (Pictures Office, York House). On the ceiling, see Finaldi 1999; Orazio died in England in February 1639. On works acquired for the Queen's House by Henrietta Maria, see J. Bold: *Greenwich: An Architectural History of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Queen's House*, New Haven and London, 2000, pp.63-76. For a recent argument attributing elements of the ceiling to Artemisia, see M. Garrard: *Artemisia and Feminism in Early Modern Europe*, London, 2020, pp.227-51.

⁹ On the 'mystery' of Artemisia's English period, see C. Terzaghi: 'Artemisia Gentileschi a Londra', in F. Baldassari, J. Mann, and N. Spinosa, eds: *Artemisia Gentileschi e il suo tempo*, Milan, 2016, p.69.

The *Susanna*'s lifespan can be reconstructed through various inventory references. It is first recorded in 1639, above the chimney in the Queen's Withdrawing Chamber at Whitehall Palace: 'done by Artimi=sio Gentellesco / [no.] 34 Item in the Queens withdrawing chamber above the Chimney A Suzanna with 2 eldrs'.¹⁰ Following the King's execution, it is valued at £20 and sold at the dispersal of the collection in October 1651, as part of a group of pictures transferred from locations in Somerset (Denmark) House and Whitehall Palace: 'Susanna done by Arthemysia at 20..00..00. Sold to Houghton a/o 23 Oct. 1651'.¹¹ Its position within this Sale Catalogue implies that it retained its Whitehall location throughout the 1640s.

The *Susanna* then reappears during the Interregnum, now valued at £30, in a list of pictures taken on 23rd December 1659 by Ralph Bankes at the Inns of Court (of which he was a member) entitled, 'A noate of my Pictures att Grayes Inn/& wt thay Cost. Xber ye 23rd 1659': [No. 2] 'A Susanna On A whole length of Gentilesco's/Daughter CR Mr Bates [?] £30:00:00'.¹² Perhaps Bankes perceived a legal resonance in the subject: because of Daniel's judgement at the end of the biblical story, Susannas had a history of adorning the

¹⁰ MS. Ash. 1514, f. 178; O. Millar: 'Abraham van der Doort's catalogue of the collections of Charles I', *Walpole Society* 37 (1958-60), p.177. On the dating of this first record and the inventory more generally, see below. Millar's publications of Charles I's inventories will be cited throughout this article, but note that the authors rely on the new research and digital modernised transcriptions published online as a work in progress in: N. Munz, ed: *The Lost Collection of Charles I* (2019), <https://lostcollection.rct.uk/>.

¹¹ Millar 1970-72, p.312, no. 223.

¹² A. Laing: 'Sir Peter Lely and Sir Ralph Bankes', in D. Howarth, ed: *Art and Patronage in the Caroline Courts: Essays in Honour of Sir Oliver Millar*, Cambridge, 1993, p.122 (Appendix: Document 3). Note that Bankes states the picture came from a 'Mr Bates' rather than Houghton, to whom it was sold at the Sale. Possibly 'Mr Bates' designated George Bate (1609-1669, also spelled Bates), personal physician successively to Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, and Charles II. Bate[s] remained a royalist sympathiser during the Commonwealth: L. J. Bruce-Chwatt: 'George Bate—Cromwell's Devious Physician', *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of London* 17.2 (1983), pp.144-46.

collections of legal professionals and places of justice.¹³ The painting appears again in another of the same Bankes' lists ('Susanna 30:00:00').¹⁴ Entitled, 'The Value of my Pictures', and undated, this is clearly a repetition of the first list but with occasionally different prices. Bankes, a friend of Peter Lely and a royalist, is careful to record the 'CR' brand on the back of the *Susanna* and four other works then in his possession.¹⁵ This same brand was in fact uncovered during the recent relining of the canvas, verifying the work's early history (fig. 3).

Clearly aware of the provenance, Bankes must have returned these possessions almost immediately after the Restoration.¹⁶ Though the *Susanna* features in neither of the inventories of Charles II's collection (the first taken at c.1663, the second at c.1666), we can be confident of an early return because Bankes' other 'CR' paintings are already hanging in royal palaces in the 1660s.¹⁷ As Charles II's inventories only spanned Whitehall and Hampton Court, the

¹³ See E. J. Olszewski: 'Expanding the litany for *Susanna* and the Elders', *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 26.3 (Spring 2007), p.46. The story is dealt with below.

¹⁴ Laing 1993, p.124 (Appendix: Document 4).

¹⁵ Bankes later became a knighted member of Charles II's restored Privy Chamber. On 'CR' brands, which feature on the reverse sides of many panels and canvases once in Charles I's collection, see Munz 2019, <https://lostcollection.rct.uk/about-project/identifying-charles-i-painting>.

¹⁶ On the restoration of the art collection see A. Barclay, 'Recovering Charles I's art collection: some implications of the 1660 Act of Indemnity and Oblivion', *Historical Research* 88.242 (2015), pp.629-49.

¹⁷ The other four Charles I pictures cited in Bankes' two lists (Laing 1993, pp.122-25) are: 'A Venus of Rous or Bronzino on a thick/board CR bought of m^r Harrison 26:00:00', identical with 'Venus 60:00:00'; 'A Head of Tintoret on A board knee cloth/size CR of m^r De Creets 5:00:00', identical with 'Tinturets Head 20:00:00'; 'Cornelius Agrippa Head on A board C.R/ m^r Harison 6:00:00', identical with 'Agrippa Head 20:00:00'; and 'A Boyes head – C.R. from Mantua Harison 3:00:00', identical with 'A Boyes Head of ye Kings 5. _ _'.

Respectively, these may be associated with the following extant works and royal references. The first: Millar 1958-60, p.183, no.23; Millar 1970-72, p.193, no.122; *An Inventory of all his Ma^{ties} Pictures in Hampton Court* (c.1666; MS. in Pictures Office, York House), no.76; it survives as: After Alessandro Allori, *Venus and Cupid*, Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 405713. The second: Millar 1958-60, p.46, no.25; Millar 1970-72, p.298, no.12; *An Inventory of all his Ma^{ties} Pictures in White-hall* (c.1666; MS. in Pictures Office, York House), no.25.

Susanna was likely then placed in an uninventoried residence.¹⁸ For the work's next firm record is in Somerset House's Privy Chamber in Queen Anne's inventory of c.1704-10, where, just as in Henrietta Maria's time, it hangs above a fireplace: 'In the Privy Chamber... no. 5 Arems^a Gentilesco Susanna and the 2 Elders over the Chimney'.¹⁹ During the reign of Charles II, the *Susanna* was possibly already hanging in Somerset House, then used by Catherine of Braganza and afterwards by Anne Hyde and Mary of Modena. All three were likewise (like Henrietta Maria) Catholic consorts and of course women—affinities that should be emphasised in view of the painting's subject matter, painter, and the probable circumstances of its commission.²⁰

The third is probably: Millar 1958-60, p.11, no.17; Millar 1970-72, p.267, no.176; *An Inventory of all his Majesties Pictures in Hampton Court*, no.191; it survives as: Style of Adriaen Key, *Portrait of a Man*, Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 402827. The fourth is possibly: Millar 1970-72, p.198, no.209; *An Inventory of all his Majesties Pictures in Hampton Court*, no.190. The mentioned earlier inventory of Charles II's collection, dated theoretically to c.1663, appears in portions of the so-called 'Hawley List' (British Library Add. MS. 17916); one of the authors (Munz) is currently preparing a transcription of this inventory for publication in the *Walpole Society*.

¹⁸ The *Susanna* is most likely not the work featured in an inventory made for James II at Whitehall Palace (with other residences): 'INVENTORY OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOODS 1688... In Store above staires over the New Lodgings' (BL Harley 1890, fol. 67): no. 427: 'Susanna with the two elders'. As there are several depictions of *Susanna* in the collection at that time, and in view of the painting's next firm location, this entry more likely refers to another picture, probably the *Susanna and the Elders* on panel attributed to a Follower of Willem Key (c.1570-1600; Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 406921).

¹⁹ *A LIST OF HER MAJESTIES PICTURES IN KENSINGTON* [sic] *HAMPTON COURT AND WINDSOR CASTLE* (c.1704-10; MS. in Pictures Office, York House), fol.60: 'Pictures in Somerset House...' Cited below and illustrated (fig. 6), the work's 'Redgrave sheet' (signed 1862) records: 'On the Back in chalk, "Privy Chamber Chimney piece"'. This chalk marking, not found during the recent relining, evidently refers to the Queen Anne location.

²⁰ On the gendered associations of Artemisia in the seventeenth century, see S. Barker, 'The muse of history: Artemisia Gentileschi's first four centuries of immortal fame', in Treves 2020, p.82, who notes that most of Artemisia's pictures in the Medici grand ducal collections had by the painter's death interestingly made their way into the women's apartments of the various Medici residences. And see below on the Catholic resonances of *Susanna* iconography.

At some point before 1818, possibly even during Queen Anne’s reign or earlier, canvas strips are added at the left and lower edges to enlarge the painting for a new location. “Integration” of these additions leads to a wholesale overpainting of many parts of the background, sky and foreground. The *Susanna*’s material decline mirrors the waning reputation both of Artemisia and of seventeenth-century Italian painting more generally. It becomes more difficult to follow the work’s progress during the eighteenth century.²¹ Perhaps revealing of this, George Vertue’s transcription of the catalogue of Charles I’s collection (published by Bathoe in 1757) carelessly omits van der Doort’s original 1639 ascription of the work to Artemisia, leaving it unattributed.²²

Without an attribution, the *Susanna* re-emerges during the era of the Prince Regent. It is inventoried in Kensington Palace in 1818, along with its (now larger) measurements which include the additions.²³ It appears enlarged, and with an eighteenth-century Carlo Maratta frame, in a watercolour of the hang of paintings in the Queen’s Bedchamber at Kensington Palace in 1819 (fig. 4a-b), for William Pyne’s illustrated *History of the Royal Residences*.²⁴

²¹ Perhaps the absence of a signature—or its accidental removal or obscuring during overpainting at the time of the enlargements—hastened the *Susanna*’s loss of attribution.

²² *A Catalogue and Description of King Charles the First’s Capital Collection*, London, 1757, p.171, no. 21. Based on MS. Ash. 1513 and MS. Ash. 1514 (Bodleian Library). On Vertue’s many errors, see Millar 1958-60, pp.xxi-xxii.

²³ *Catalogue of the Pictures in the Palace at Kensington. 1818* (MS. in Pictures Office, York House): ‘The Queen’s Bed Chamber... no. 417 Susannah and the Elders Canvas 6-6. 5-1’. *CATALOGUE OF HIS MAJESTYS PICTURES* [George IV and William IV at Kensington, Buckingham Palace, St James’s, Kew and Hampton Court] (1824, with notes from 2nd October 1828 to 22nd September 1838; MS. in Pictures Office, York House), fol. 85: ‘Kensington Palace... no. 417 (delivered to Hampton Court Palace 19.12 1835)’. It is unclear whether the latter note in brown, presumably added in 1835, should be linked to Artemisia’s *Susanna*, as there were potentially several *Susanna* paintings at Hampton Court in the 1800s.

²⁴ W. H. Pyne: *The History of the Royal Residences of Windsor Castle, St. James’s Palace, Carlton House, Kensington Palace, Hampton Court, Buckingham House, and Frogmore*, London, 1819, vol. 2, unnumbered fig. (Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 922159).

Note that the watercolour depicts the painting leaning on the wall rather than hung and with another picture, a landscape, stacked in front of it (as well as a desk edge), covering up the bottom third of the *Susanna*. Pyne's commentary lists 'a composition of Susannah and the Elders'. He elaborates:

The pictures which cover the walls of this apartment are of a character so questionable, that it would in most instances be difficult to assign them to the hands of any particular masters; although many possess considerable merit, being, we may presume, the works of the minor artists of the great schools: some indubitably are copies, and others duplicates...²⁵

In fact, Pyne is slightly misleading. Almost every Italian painting inventoried in 1818 at Kensington Palace is assigned an artist's name (whether correctly or otherwise).²⁶ Hence the *Susanna's* lack of attribution is highly unusual.²⁷

During Queen Victoria's reign, the *Susanna* transfers to Hampton Court, where it is recorded variously between 1861 and 1880 (and also later in 1941). In most of the registers it remains unattributed. At this point, the wonderfully extensive survey of the Royal Collection, initiated by Prince Albert, was being conducted by the Surveyor of Pictures, Richard Redgrave, a Royal Academician and the first Keeper of Paintings at the South Kensington Museum. Redgrave and Albert were early pioneers of the use of photography in art historical study,

²⁵ Pyne 1819, vol. 2, p.84.

²⁶ Very few lose their attribution (one exception is the *Portrait of a Man* by Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli of c.1530, Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 402880). The authors are grateful to Desmond Shawe-Taylor for this information.

²⁷ The Royal Collection *Self-Portrait*, for example, retains its attribution to Artemisia from the seventeenth century to the present day; though this may be partly due to the visibility of the signature.

and the *Susanna*'s 'Redgrave Sheet' (fig. 5), a working document begun in 1862, is illustrated by an antiquated gloomy photograph.²⁸ The picture had evidently already lost its eighteenth-century frame (Redgrave records 'no frame'). Here, from the quagmire of references, crisscrossed with a number of other royal collection *Susannas*, it is clear the painting caused the Surveyor some confusion—not helped of course by Vertue's earlier omission of the attribution in his transcription of the Charles I inventory, which entry Redgrave correctly associates with the work. The Surveyor also assigns the painting a new attribution, to Benedetto Gennari II, inspired by a mistaken correlation with an entry to a *Susanna* in James II's inventory.²⁹ Perhaps due to a lack of certainty, this new appellation seems not to translate to other inventory registers of the Victorian period which include the *Susanna*.

'Full of holes [and] wants relining / Very much cracked and in a bad state', the painting is sent for restoration in 1880 without further information.³⁰ Nothing about the 1880 treatment

²⁸ *Pictures in the Royal Collections*, fol.3357: 'Hampton Court Palace 1126' (this sheet signed and dated 29th May 1862, in the section III on Hampton Court Palace executed between February 1858 and 23rd November 1876 with a fair copy bound in 1872, with continuously added annotations by later Surveyors; see fig. 6 and appendix for full transcription).

²⁹ This picture is first inventoried in Windsor Castle in James II's inventory, 'INVENTORY OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOODS 1688... In the Princesses Presence [Chamber]' (BL Harley 1890, fol.82v): 'no. 1099 Gennaro, Susanna with the two elders'. Note that all items in this section of the inventory are specified as 'not the late King's [Charles II]', i.e. newly bought by James II (fol.82). The picture then continues to hang in the Windsor Castle Lower Apartments, always attributed to Gennari, with its last mention apparently around 1720 (as an overdoor, now called David looking at Bathsheba naked).

³⁰ *Inventory Catalogue of Her Majesty's Pictures at Hampton Court Palace (1861) with space for entries of removals* (MS. in Pictures Office, York House): '1126 Susannah & the Elders / for repairs to Mr Buttery / R. Redgrave esq. [returned] 9th Nov 1880' / at H. C. 1941'. *The Crown Surveyors Office for the use of the Care-taker of pictures at Hampton Court Palace*: 'Register No. 1126 Susanah (*sic*) and the Elders sent to Mr Buttery to be repaired 19 July 1880 / Mr Redgrave / 9th Nov 1880 [returned] / In Store room / x [in red]'. Note that '19/7/80 Mr Buttery' is visible on the painting's stretcher.

survives, but additional layers of varnish and overpaint are likely applied at this point, further frustrating assessment of its attribution. The *Susanna* languishes in storage until it is rediscovered in the late 2010s in a group of unattributed works assigned to the seventeenth-century French school.

A major conservation treatment has, however, extensively resuscitated the work. The painting has undergone full cleaning and structural treatment, including a painstaking removal of multiple non-original paint layers to reveal the original composition. The painting was relined and two non-original canvas additions were removed to restore the integrity and balance of Artemisia's composition; old damages have been filled and retouched (fig. 1a-b). Now Artemisia's consummate artistry can be appreciated again for the first time in centuries.

Artemisia paints a young nude woman descending stone steps; two older men hover menacingly above, with only a low wall separating them from her. The life-size central figure exerts an impressive physicality as she steps downwards and outwards, towards the viewer. There is an intensive focus on the body of the central protagonist. Despite its large scale, the picture plane feels tight and pressured. The work's vertical format accentuates oppositional forces of gesture and movement, passing both up and down, high and low. These striking characteristics invite comparison with two prior works in the artist's oeuvre depicting the same subject: the *Susanna and the Elders* now at Schloss Weissenstein in Pommersfelden (1610) (fig. 6) and another now in Stamford's Burghley House (1622) (fig. 7) (although these earlier pictures position the figures even closer to the picture plane). Unlike the majority of other known renditions of the Susanna iconography by Artemisia, all three works seem to

have been produced with minimal collaboration from other painters (in the landscape or architecture) and as stand-alone pictures exclusive of companion pieces.³¹

Like its 1610 and 1622 forebears, the Royal Collection work displays one moment from the biblical story of Susanna, a narrative about two men's insatiable *concupiscentia* (desire), a woman's virtue, and the importance of visual truth in law and testimony. The story was appended as chapter 13 to the Old Testament Book of Daniel in Roman Catholic editions of The Bible, but in the 1611 King James version it was moved to the Apocrypha.³²

³¹ On the 1610 *Susanna*, see Christiansen and Mann 2001, pp.296-99, no.51; on the 1622, see L. Treves, ed: *Beyond Caravaggio*, London, 2016, pp.102-04, no.22 and Christiansen and Mann 2001, p. 355-58, no.65. More detailed documentation on the 1610 and 1622 *Susannas* is cited later in this essay. Payments to Artemisia dated 5th May 1636 are recorded for another (now lost) *Susanna* for Prince Karl Eusebius von Liechtenstein, on which see Ward Bissell 1999, p.38, no.37. As this was an extremely large work (c.3.04 m high) and part of a series with companion pieces depicting Bathsheba and Lucretia, it likely did not have had such a close compositional relationship with this particular series of Susanna depictions (1610; 1622; 1638-39). A Susanna thought to have been painted during the first Neapolitan period in the 1630s has recently surfaced on the art market, sold at Sotheby's New York in January 27th 2021 (lot. 40); now in a London private collection, it is thought to be the same picture seen hanging in the mid-eighteenth century alongside a pendant of *David and Bathsheba* (also by Artemisia, now in Columbus Museum of Art, dated c.1636-37) in the collection of Luigi Romeo, Baron of San Luigi: on these, see A. E. Denunzio and G. Porzio, eds: *Artemisia Gentileschi a Napoli*, Milan, 2022, pp.198-2001, no.37 and Letizia Treves, ed.: *Artemisia*, London, 2020, pp.214-16, no. 33. For a later (dated 1649) *Susanna and the Elders* by Artemisia (Mrovska Galerie, Brno, no.M246), see Christiansen and Mann 2001, pp.424-26, no.83; a further later *Susanna* is described by Alessandro da Morrona (1741-1821) as in the collection of Averardo de' Medici (d. 1808) in the late eighteenth century (J. Locker: 'An Eighteenth-century biography of Artemisia Gentileschi', *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 29.2 (2010), p.30), considered to be the *Susanna and the Elders* (signed and dated 1652; Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, no.6320), on which see A. Modesti: 'A newly discovered late work by Artemisia Gentileschi: Susanna and the Elders of 1652', in S. Barker, ed: *Women Artists in Early Modern Italy: Careers, Fame, and Collectors*, Turnhout, 2016, pp.135-49; Treves 2020, pp.222-23, no. 36; Denunzio and Porzio 2022, pp.182-83, no.30. On the importance of Susanna iconography for Artemisia, see especially M. Garrard: *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art*, Princeton, 1989, pp.183-209 and *idem.*: *Artemisia Gentileschi around 1622: The Shaping and Reshaping of an Artistic Identity*, Berkeley, 2001.

³² For the Susanna story, see L. Hartman: *The Book of Daniel*, Garden City, 1978. The King James Bible's Apocrypha appeared between the Old and New Testaments. On Susanna iconography in the Counter

Susanna, a beautiful young wife, is desired by two older men. Inflamed with lust, they hide in her husband's orchard, where Susanna walks every day, watching her. Just as she is about to bathe, the two men emerge, demanding that Susanna fulfil their desires, and threatening that they would publicly accuse her of adultery, punishable by death, if she disobeyed. Susanna resists, and so they make the accusation (both happen to be judges). But Daniel intervenes, questioning these elders separately. Their subsequent accounts differ. One claims the crime took place under a mastic tree, the other under a holm oak. Found guilty of false witness and lustfulness, they are put to death.

As has been argued, the Susanna story may have had a profound personal resonance for Artemisia, given that she endured a juridical trial as a result of her rape in 1611-12 by the painter Agostino Tassi, a collaborator of Orazio. Artemisia returned to this particular biblical theme many times throughout her career.³³

The moment depicted in the Royal Collection work is when the elders, one balding the other sporting a turban, surprise an undressed Susanna on her way into the bath, illustrated by the fountain. The balding elder's outstretched arm is aggressively foreshortened (in a Michelangelesque flavour, recalling the treatment of God in flight throughout the Sistine Ceiling) to intensify the threat. Susanna adopts a pose of some contortion to twist herself away to the viewer's left while looking back cautiously over her left shoulder, her left

Reformation, see Olszewski 2007 and P. Simons: 'Artemisia Gentileschi's Susanna and the Elders (1610) in the context of Counter-Reformation Rome', in S. Barker, ed: *Artemisia Gentileschi in a Changing Light*, London, 2017, pp.41-57. A recent exhibition at the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, offered a broad survey of Susanna iconography: see R. Krischel and A. Ševčík, eds: *Susanna: Bilder einer Frau vom Mittelalter bis MeToo*, Petersberg, 2022.

³³ See Garrard 2020, pp.69-94; Garrard 2001; Garrard 1989, pp.183-209.

forearm holding a thin white tasselled shawl to her right breast, as if rapidly and awkwardly to shield her nudity from an unforeseen, unwelcome intrusion.

The painting also references other parts of the narrative. The elders look down upon Susanna, whereas she looks slightly upwards. Towards the beginning of the story, the men's lust causes them to 'decline' their eyes—deliberately angled by Artemisia towards Susanna's body, not her face—so that they might not see heaven, nor remember justice (13:8). Only Susanna can turn her face towards God. Susanna is also scantily clad both because she is about to bathe and because later, at the trial, the elders ask for her beautiful, delicate person to be uncovered (13:32) (translations such as the King James version often give "face", but the Vulgate does not actually specify a body part). Perhaps, too, the vertical format helps spatially to convey the moment when Susanna says: I am straightened (*angustiae*) on every side (13:22). The composition is orchestrated by strong interlocking, superimposing arcs: Susanna, elders, tree, sky. Coming between Susanna and heaven, the tree looms over the nude, recalling the elders' contradictory testimonies.³⁴

An elaborate fountain occupies the picture's left-hand side, energetically spurting water aloft. Due to severe abrasion, alteration and darkening of this area, only some decorative features are perceptible. A curled volute juts from the shell-like basin, complementing the curvature of Susanna's body. A Triton-like figure appears beneath with wild straggly hair, twisted in extreme contrapposto—much like Roman fountains Artemisia might have seen; a jet pours downwards out of his mouth while his arms bear the basin with the spout in the middle. If this fountain had actually existed, it would presumably have featured another Triton-like

³⁴ The dappled leaves perhaps recall Artemisia's *Corsica and the Satyr* (mid-1630s, Private Collection): see Christiansen and Mann, pp.397-98, no.74.

figure off to the left. The structure appears raised on an architectural mound with grotto-like features, over which one of the Triton's legs dangles; it seems also to incorporate other, less distinct forms, possibly animals (seventeenth-century *Susannas* often feature carved dolphins).

Similar to examples found in other early seventeenth-century *Susannas* (e.g. fig. 7), the fountain is probably not based restrictively on any real-life model.³⁵ X-radiography (fig. 8) suggests that a large bowl shape perhaps more similar to the Burghley House fountain (fig. 7) and Artemisia's Neapolitan *Susannas* might have initially occupied the canvas' left-hand side.³⁶ Infra-red reflectography (IRR) (fig. 9a) discloses many more revisions made to this area: a curved, scroll-like form above the satyr's head (fig. 9b), a tall pinnacle or water-spurt at the canvas' top left (fig. 9c), and (to the right of this "pinnacle") vertical architectural lines, possibly part of a wall, abandoned at an earlier stage in the background's development.³⁷

³⁵ Many examples illustrated in Krischel and Ševčík 2022. Cf. also the bronze statue with a Cupid and dolphin in the *Cleopatra* attributed to Artemisia (c.1630-35, Société Labatut & Cie., Paris, 1997). Though it is worth mentioning that Hubert Le Sueur's 'Mercury Fountain' (no longer extant) was installed in Somerset House (the Queen's residence) in or before February 1639 and described thus at the Sale: '4. shells of brass 4. sea monsters. 4. boys wth Dolophins 3 Certouses [cartouches]. and ye great sta[t]ue. on y^e fontaine wth y^e figure of. Mercure in brass w^{ch} did belong to. y^e upp^r ground vallued alltogeather at 500 00 00' (Millar 1970-72, p.136, no.19). See C. Avery, 'Hubert le Sueur, the "unworthy Praxiteles" of King Charles I', *Walpole Society* (1980-82), pp.151-52.

³⁶ On the substantial revisions to the Burghley House fountain, see Garrard 2001, p.89. Compare the bowl shapes and the cascading and spurting water to Artemisia's *Susanna* of 1652 in Bologna (Treves 2020, pp.222-23, no.36; Denunzio and Porzio 2022, pp.182-83, no.30), and that of c.1636-37 in a London private collection (Denunzio and Porzio 2022, pp.198-2001, no.37)—both works are mentioned above.

³⁷ Shadowed architectural structures are also seen in Artemisia's *Christ Blessing the Children* (c.1625-26, Arciconfraternità dei Santi Ambrogio e Carlo della Nazione Lombarda, Rome) and *Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (fig. 15a). On Artemisia's habit of changing her mind multiple times and fundamentally reworking compositions, see K. Christiansen: 'Becoming Artemisia: afterthoughts on the Gentileschi exhibition', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 39 (2004), pp.108-09.

These elements were eventually replaced by a substantially different fountain: the one now visible.

The painting is almost a single-figure celebration of Susanna. Delicately, like a sculpture wandering off its plinth or an elevated Virgin disrobing and descending from her pedestal, the protagonist steps as if to move out of the painting. The orchestration of stairs and figure is sophisticated; and conservation has revealed further virtuositities in the modifying effect on Susanna's strong shadow. Hung above the chimney, these foreshortened dynamics must have seemed theatrical and illusionistic: the mantelpiece ledge offering a continuation of the steps' gradations, and the pictorial water appearing to douse the real flames below.³⁸

The shape and solidity of Susanna's body appear on the edge of distortion. Although our eyes seem roughly in line with the figures' heads, looking down upon the steps, the drama of the painting is particularly effective from a low vantage point, as if to suit its initial position over a fireplace. The pale central figure descends amidst the chiaroscuro of the darker masses around and above her. The likelihood that the suitability is more than coincidental, and that Artemisia designed the ensemble with the hanging position in mind, is discussed later.

Dramatic lighting comes from the left. The fabrics glow: whereas Susanna's white shawl reflects her clear conscience, the elders blaze in red, golden yellow, rich purple and deep green, the latter two now somewhat faded. The elders' richly rendered garments—especially their sleeves—find parallels in the attendant figures of *The Birth of John the Baptist* of

³⁸ Note that the Burghley Susanna also hung above a mantelpiece at least as early as the eighteenth century: 'The bedchamber... over the chimney Susanna & the two elders' (Burghley House Inventory, 1763), see <https://collections.burghley.co.uk/collection/susannah-and-the-elders-by-artemisia-gentileschi-1593-1652/>.

c.1635 (fig. 10).³⁹ The radiating quality of these cloths (particularly belonging to the balding man) brilliantly communicates the elders' 'inflamed' desire, referred to in the Biblical narrative (13:8). There is also perhaps an alchemical difference alluded to between water (feminine) and fire (masculine), intensified by its hanging position.⁴⁰

The picture is comprised of distinct areas treated piece by piece. But it does not betray quite the same disjunctive quality of her Neapolitan collaborations, where the different contributions often feel awkwardly distanced from one another, with the landscape and architectural portions are allowed more room for elaboration. Instead, the *Susanna*'s separate ingredients are placed in compressed proximity. Due to wear and overpainting the background should only be interpreted with caution, but the abbreviated contextual forms (the steps, the fountain, the tree) seem in keeping with Artemisia's own pictorial habits. They suggest her working alone, striving to make the parts work in unison, and revising constantly. The several adjustments and hesitations in the fountain area, revealed by X-ray (fig. 8) and IRR (fig. 9a-c), attest to such a scenario.

As revealed by conservation, the adjacent pictorial forms all appear to emanate from the protagonist outwards, progressively losing their solidity in departing from the central form.

³⁹ Cf. also the sleeves in Artemisia's *Self-Portrait* (fig. 2), *Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (fig. 15a), and *Esther and Ahasuerus* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, no.69.281)—the latter dated and redated with some uncertainty to either the late 1620s, early 1630s, or even the English period in c.1639-40.

⁴⁰ On this theme, compare Anthony van Dyck, *Cupid and Psyche* (c.1639-40, Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 405571), and cf. D. Shawe-Taylor: 'The "Act and Power of a Face": Van Dyck's Royal Portraits', in P. Rumberg and D. Shawe-Taylor, eds: *Charles I: King and Collector*, London, 2018, p.130.

Susanna's nude body is the ultimate focus. Pale and gleaming, the subtle pliancy of the flesh typifies that carnal *morbidezza* (tenderness) for which Artemisia would be remembered.⁴¹

The painted figures are not strictly inventions for the *Susanna* but rather 'exquisite corpses', reworkings of types and motifs from across Artemisia and Orazio's oeuvres. The graceful arc of Susanna's steeply inclined body and the positioning of her legs—one lowered and extended, the other on a higher level bent at the knee by significant foreshortening—recall a much earlier work: the *David and Goliath* by Orazio (c.1610-12; Palazzo Spada; 173 x 142 cm, a work with comparable measurements and a similar format) (fig. 11).⁴² The two canvases' protagonists, however, have different scales: Susanna is considerably smaller than David.⁴³ Most likely, the stances are based on the same or similar "type", rather than a shared, directly transferable drawing or tracing. Artemisia significantly narrows the interval

⁴¹ Cf. Averardo de' Medici, *Memorie istoriche di più uomini illustri pisani*, ed. Angelo Fabroni, Pisa, 1790-92, vol. 4, p.457. Translated in Locker 2010, p.30: 'the other [painting], showing Susanna as she leaves her bath, a work of which I am the fortunate owner, is painted with such mastery, delicacy, and softness [pastosità] of colouring, that I would be tempted [to] say that [it] is almost possible to feel the tenderness [*morbidezza*] of the soft flesh [*bel carnato*] with the hand. This evokes wonder in spectators, who are awestruck by the incredible artistry...'

⁴² The canvases have similar measurements; the *David* would be almost the same size if, as is supposed, Orazio's picture used to be somewhat larger; see Christiansen and Mann 2001, pp.101-04, no.18 and pp.105-07, no.19. There are several versions of this work, both by and after Orazio: for example, one is in the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, while another (reduced; on lapis lazuli) is in a private collection. See M. Kindl and J. Zapletalová, eds: *Artemisia Gentileschi. David rozjímající nad Goliášovou hlavou. Restaurování 2011–2012*, Olomouc, 2013, pp. 9–26. Now truncated at the bottom edge, the Spada painting must (also in view of the *Susanna*) have originally featured a full-length figure like the reduced version in Berlin on copper.

⁴³ Revealed through a tracing of the *Susanna* recently overlaid on top of the *David and Goliath* attributed to Artemisia in Kroměříž Castle (on which see below), whose figure of David is almost exactly equivalent to the Spada original. We thank Dr Jana Zapletalová and Kroměříž Castle for their very helpful collaboration.

between the legs; now, even more intensely foreshortened, Susanna's knee bends (further) forwards rather than sideways. David's leg is also exposed right up to the runner's girdle, while Susanna's leg is partly covered by the white shawl. Inverting the stance, Artemisia also wholly transforms the emotional effect. Instead of David's relaxed arrogance, brooding wide-legged following his triumphant exertions, Artemisia conveys Susanna's mixture of shyness and aversion in gingerly avoiding the elder's grasping hand.⁴⁴

Perhaps Artemisia felt an artistic investment in this particular type, because she worked with Orazio at the time of the *David's* execution, or drew the same life model, or even because she helped her father produce the finished work.⁴⁵ This was the moment when father and

⁴⁴ Orazio used the same or similar poses to produce remarkably different effects in his *Danaë's* (c.1623, Cleveland Museum of Art, no.1971.101) transformation into the *Penitent Magdalene* (c.1622-28, Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, no.179), and his *Judith* (c.1610-12, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, no.1942.52) into a *Young Woman with a Violin or Saint Cecilia* (c.1612, Detroit Institute of Arts, no.68.47). Artemisia metamorphosed her (or her father's) *Death of Cleopatra* (c.1610-12, Etro Collection) into a *Danaë* (c.1612, Saint Louis Museum, no.93:1986) much scaled down and on copper. See C. Korkow and M. Steele: 'Variations: The Reuse of Models in Paintings by Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi', The Cleveland Museum of Art (March 25, 2021), <https://www.clevelandart.org/research/in-the-library/collection-in-focus/gallery-guide—variations-reuse-models-paintings-orazio-and-artemisia-gentileschi>. Such formal fluidities between sacred and secular subject matter were also instrumental to the way Charles I visually and syncretically interpreted and hung his collection, for instance in the First Privy Lodging Room where the dead Christ in Titian's *Entombment* would have cleverly echoed the nude reclining *Venus* also by Titian. See N. Munz, 'First Privy Lodging Room', in Munz 2019, <https://lostcollection.rct.uk/rooms/first-privy-lodging-room>.

⁴⁵ Cf. Artemisia's reworkings of Orazio like the *Death of Cleopatra* (c.1610-12, Etro Collection)—discussed in the footnote immediately above. Of possible significance, therefore, is a little-known version of *David and Goliath* at Kroměříž Castle, relatively recently reattributed to Artemisia and measuring 152.5 x 142 cm (though originally somewhat longer and a little wider). J. Zapletalová: 'Artemisia Gentileschi: a newly attributed painting', *Arte Cristiana* 101.877 (2013), pp. 251–258; Kindl and Zapletalová 2013. In what is apparently pure coincidence, like the Spada painting the Kroměříž version has also been cut down so that it ends below the knee of the lower leg but showing slightly more of the calf muscle than the original version. Note that this version's earliest documentary link to Artemisia dates from 1691 (nearly forty years after her death) and its reattribution has yet to be widely evaluated.

daughter worked together in Rome c.1610, when the two painters' styles and compositional habits seem to have closely elided. Indeed, Orazio's *David* and Artemisia's early *Susanna and the Elders* (fig. 6) are often judged particularly visually comparable.⁴⁶ A more direct example of Artemisia re-using her father's design is the *Judith and her Maidservant* of c.1614-15 in Palazzo Pitti, Florence, which is closely related to Orazio's painting in Oslo executed c.1608 (when Artemisia was in his studio).⁴⁷ In this instance the delay between original model and later re-use is around six or seven years; there is also a geographical distance between Rome (father's painting) and Florence (daughter's execution). But Artemisia's later, thirty-year art historical leap to revive a c.1610 model is harder to explain without taking into account her London re-encounter with Orazio's work (presumably also the contents of his studio) at this particular career moment (1638-39). Seemingly, at the beginning of the English visit Artemisia was reminded of this formative period when father and daughter, teacher and pupil, worked side-by-side.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See Christiansen 2004, pp.102-05 and 111-12. The *David* seems also to have been collected, along with several works from Artemisia, by Alessandro Biffi. Including Artemisia's first *Self-Portrait as an Allegory of Painting* (1608-09; location now unknown), *Madonna and Child* (c.1610-13), and *Saint Cecilia Playing a Lute* (c.1620). All four are first recorded in the collection of Alessandro Biffi in his inventory on 22nd December 1637 before being consigned to the Veralli family in the same year, and then passing to the Spada family through inheritance probably after 1643, all apart from the *Self-Portrait* remaining today in Palazzo Spada. On the provenance of this group, see M.L. Vicini: 'L'eredità Veralli e Rocci', in R. Cannatà, ed.: *Palazzo Spada, arte e storia*, Rome, 1992), pp.43-45; R. Cannatà and M.L. Vicini, ed.: *La Galleria di Palazzo Spada: Genesi e Storia di una Collezione*, Rome, 1992), pp.93-94, 103; Christiansen and Mann 2001, pp.101-04, 299-302, 350-52, no.18, 52, 63. Interestingly, copies of Orazio's *David* and Artemisia's *Judith* (both c.1650, on touchstone, Galleria dell'Arcivescovado, Milan) appear to have once formed a pendant pair: see Christiansen and Mann, pp.105-07, no.19.

⁴⁷ See, respectively, Treves 2020, pp.132-33, no.8 and pp.110, no.1.

⁴⁸ Though noting Bissell's opinion (1999, p.87) on the apparent 'enervation' of Artemisia's later style through this encounter.

Might Artemisia have scaled a drawing or similar of David's legs to suit Susanna's smaller frame, and making the stance more appropriate for the tenor of the Susanna iconography?⁴⁹ Technical evidence shows that Artemisia once used the same tracing to create at least three separate portrait-format works between c.1615 to c.1620.⁵⁰ Orazio typically shifted a tracing as he worked, using particular contours and adjusting episodically, rather than copying complete forms.⁵¹ Doubtless, both Artemisia and Orazio were similarly proficient at adjusting the scale of replicated figures; yet the two figures' sizes—and also dates—differ so substantially.⁵² As a result, it remains difficult to ascertain whether the David is specifically or consciously adapted, or more gently evoked to provide a rough foundation for Susanna's lunging posture.

Yet further signs of reuse or adaptation of pre-existing models can be found in Artemisia's *Susanna*. Several elements of the Burghley House *Susanna* (fig. 7) seem to have been employed for the first laying-in of the Royal Collection *Susanna*'s composition.⁵³ A recent overlaid tracing shows that a pentiment of the 1638-39 *Susanna*'s back profile, prior to compositional adjustments, is the same as that seen in the earlier, Burghley *Susanna* (fig. 12a). In each, the motif of Susanna's arm shielding her chest also corresponds—but only

⁴⁹ On seventeenth-century tracing and transfer practices, see M. Beale: *A Study of Richard Symonds: His Italian Notebooks and Their Relevance to Seventeenth Century-painting Techniques*, New York, 1984, pp.198-202 and L. Bauer, 'Van Dyck, replicas and tracing', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 149 (2007), pp.99-101, with further references.

⁵⁰ See L. Keith, L. Treves, M. Melchiorre di Crescenzo, and J. Russell, 'Artemisia Gentileschi's Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria,' *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 40 (2019), pp.4-17 and esp. pp. 7, 12, 14 on Artemisia's pragmatism and re-uses more generally. The three paintings are in the National Gallery, London; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford; and Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

⁵¹ See K. Christiansen: 'The Art of Orazio Gentileschi', in Christiansen and Mann 2011, pp.20-31, at p.p.22.

⁵² See Korkow and Steele 2021.

⁵³ We are grateful to Jon Culverhouse and Burghley House for their generous collaboration.

when shifted (Artemisia likely moving a tracing around as she worked, just like Orazio) (fig. 12b); Susanna's left leg in the Royal Collection painting fits a leg pentiment in the Burghley work (fig. 12c).⁵⁴ Furthermore, the Royal Collection X-ray (fig. 8) indicates that Artemisia initially left a reserve for the middle elder to appear as in the 1622 version. The same technical imagery also suggests that Susanna's head formerly tilted upwards like the Burghley painting, but this seems to have been soon abandoned and reworked to its present oblique angle.

Susanna's head is equivalent to the saintly figure thought to represent *Saint Catherine* now in Stockholm (fig. 13a-b).⁵⁵ Their faces are identical, and so the motif must have been traced or transferred from the same drawing, though with minor adjustments satisfying the different iconographies. While Catherine looks confidently to the heavens, Susanna's glanced petition is more careful and more searching.

The elders in the Royal Collection painting are similarly linked to other works. The head of the turbaned elder already features as the female midwife in the Prado's *Birth of John the Baptist* from 1635 (fig. 10 and 14). Artemisia evidently transferred the face via a tracing or

⁵⁴ With the arm covering the breasts, both Susannas reference canonical classical sculptures of the Venus Pudica or Crouching Venus. Charles I then owned a celebrated version of the crouching type that still survives in the Royal Collection (no.RCIN 69746, on loan to the British Museum). On Orazio shifting his tracings, see above.

⁵⁵ With gratitude to Letizia Treves for this observation. The present date of St Catherine (1627-30) is debated, and some favour earlier (c.1615-20) or later (1630s), on which see Denunzio and Porzio 2022, pp.164-65, no.21 and C. Fryklund and Lena Dahlén: 'Artemisia Gentileschi's Saint Catherine of Alexandria', *Art Bulletin of Nationalmuseum Stockholm* 27:2 (2020), pp.13-22, at pp.16-17. Perhaps this figure is a *portrait historié* or disguised portrait, possibly of composer and singer Adriana Basile (c.1580-1640), whose portrait Artemisia is said to have painted: see Garrard 2020, pp.121-22. Cf. also the sitter in *Self-Portrait as Saint Catherine* (private collection, Pisa), on which see F. Paliaga, 'Una Santa Caterina di Artemisia Gentileschi', *Storia dell'Arte* 129.29 (2011), pp.56-63.

similar method (while the balding elder's head is based on Zechariah's, likewise from the Prado painting—probably also accomplished through some sort of tracing procedure, but with more shifting during the process). In the *Susanna*, the painter reverses and somewhat masculinises the midwife's face but retains the ear, neck and facial features.⁵⁶ The same facial type is then translated for the maidservant in Artemisia's *Judith and Holofernes* now in Oslo (dated to 1639-40 by stylistic means) (fig. 15).⁵⁷ In the *Susanna*, however, Artemisia subtly alters the tilt and glance of this facial composition to achieve the elder's ominous, unashamed gaze downwards, upon the nude body.

These identifications give an insight into Artemisia's pragmatic, flexible approach to painting. Rather than a comprehensive transfer of a resolved design, the various parts are knitted together on the canvas at an early stage, with areas left in reserve and adjusted as the composition evolved.⁵⁸ The many pentimenti, such as around Susanna's raised foot or her resting hand, show the painter's relatively free and exploratory approach (fig. 16). Perhaps the abundance of citations in this particular work has something to do with the new circumstances of the foreign environment (Artemisia presumably travelled to England with a specific stock of tracings or drawings). Perhaps, also, in view of the previous analysis, detection of a re-use need not (automatically) form the basis for dating one of her paintings, as Artemisia might sometimes renovate and recompose older motifs without chronological logic.

⁵⁶We are grateful to Inma Escheverría Elvira and Jaime García-Máiquez at the Museo Nacional del Prado for their collaboration.

⁵⁷ On this work, see Denunzio and Porzio 2022, pp.154-55, no.17.

⁵⁸ See L. Keith: 'Looking at Artemisia', in Treves 2020, pp.90-105, for a discussion about the patterns of evolution within Artemisia's multigure compositions.

At any rate, these recycled forms have much to teach us, for they demonstrate the formulae that Artemisia herself deemed most successful: such as the echo of the Royal Collection *Susanna*'s contrapposto some years later in a female water-carrier in Artemisia's renditions of *Bathsheba* (left-hand side), repeated across at least three versions (e.g. fig. 17).⁵⁹ As between the *David* and *Susanna*, the posture is flipped; the water-carrier has her back to the viewer, and the painter plays with the bent leg and accompanying foot that now appear to step ahead of the body, rather than lingering behind. Again, inversion and modification are important, for they conceal and camouflage—the more so by dressing the stance in heavy garments and truncating it using the edge of the picture plane.

The instances and varieties of adaptation demonstrate an acute premonitory sensitivity at work: Artemisia's concern for how posterity would judge her practices. At the root of all this re-use lies the plasticity of Artemisia's perceptual imagination: her remarkable capacity to perceive *in potentia* the contradictory characteristics of certain forms. In her canvases, seemingly trifling modifications can precipitate large transformations in meaning and effect. They anticipate Joshua Reynolds' (later also Aby Warburg's) observation that, depending on the context, the same gesture or action can 'with very little variation' seem to fulfil quite contrary, even directly inverse, 'passions'.⁶⁰ Artemisia's subjects or body parts might readily

⁵⁹ Versions at: Neues Palais, Potsdam; Pitti Palace, Florence; and that sold at Sotheby's Milan, Old Master Paintings, 14 June 2011, lot. 27. Some have supposed this figure to be also based on Orazio's *Apollo and the Nine Muses* (280 x 260 cm, previously in Lily Lawlor collection, New York), whose location is now unknown, on which see R. Ward Bissell: *Orazio Gentileschi and the Poetic Tradition in Caravaggesque Painting*, University Park, 1981, pp.190-191 and 214-15.

⁶⁰ J. Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. R. R. Wark, San Marino, 1959, pp.221-22: 'It is curious to observe, and it is certainly true, that the extremes of contrary passions are with very little variation expressed by the same action'. See also D. de Chapeaurouge, *Wandel und Konstanz in der Bedeutung entlehnter Motive*, Wiesbaden, 1974, pp.5, 8-9, with more general thoughts on the change or consistency of meaning throughout the borrowing and adaptation of art historical motifs and types. De Chapeaurouge perceives a fundamental, unresolved

metamorphose into categorical opposites: whether triumph to timidity, male to female, or vice versa.

The question arises of how we should judge such reiterations: whether to see them negatively, as ‘copies’, or more positively. Artemisia was renowned for her ‘from life’ drawing (*academia*) and in writing she famously denied repeating inventions, ‘not even one hand’.⁶¹ Though her statement is exaggerated to prove a point, such re-uses were possibly not (in her eyes) so culpable. For this practice of joining motifs also conformed to a Platonic, idealist (as opposed to naturalist) strain in contemporary Italian art theory. Known as the ‘election’ or ‘selection’ theory, it reached a crescendo in Giovanni Pietro Bellori’s *Idea* lecture (first delivered to the Roman Academy of St. Luke in 1664), which stated that a single body cannot be seamlessly beautiful because nature makes no single thing perfect in all its parts. Instead, just as Zeuxis made use of five different maidens to make the famous image of Helen, the most elegant parts should be judiciously selected to form new, more faultless wholes.⁶²

contradiction in discourses around artistic creativity, prevalent in the seventeenth century: on the one hand, that a painter’s genius arises from the imitation and revitalisation of venerable examples and, on the other, from the in-born talent to conceive forms never before seen or thought.

⁶¹ In a letter to Don Antonio Ruffo of 13th November 1649. Solinas 2011, p.133 (letter 61). On her *academia* or life-drawing talents, see Joachim von Sandrart: *Academia nobilissimae artis pictoriae...*, Nuremberg, 1683, p.192. Artemisia also complained about the expense of hiring life models in several letters to Don Ruffo, for which see Solinas 2011, p.129 (letter 55), p.133 (letter 60), and R. Spear: ‘Scrambling for scudi: notes on painters’ earnings in early Baroque Rome’, *The Art Bulletin* 85.2 (2003), pp.314-15.

⁶² G. Bellori: *Le Vite de Pittori, Scultori et Architetti Moderni...*, Rome, 1672, pp.4-5: ‘Ma Zeusi, che con la scelta di cinque vergini formò l’immagine di Elena tanto famosa... Imperoche non pensò egli di poter trouare in vn copo solo tutte quelle perfettioni.... mentre la natura non fa perfetta cosa alcuna particolare in tutte le parti.’ For more on this theory, see the fundamental work E. Panofsky, *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory*, trans. J. J. S. Peake, Columbia, 1968. A view perhaps analogous to such theories can be detected in another of Artemisia’s letters to Don Ruffo, dated 12th June 1649, where she complains about the expense of models and says that the

A hint of this working philosophy is evident in the *Susanna*. Artemisia's habitual conflation of motifs based presumably on erstwhile life studies brought tenets of naturalism and idealism together. Such a Proteus-like nature remained, perhaps, among Artemisia's most professionally valuable ingenuities.

Based on a closer examination of the work's first known reference, it will be argued that the *Susanna* was painted after Artemisia's arrival in London.⁶³ Exactly when Artemisia travelled is still unknown, but documentary evidence provides a timeframe between November 1637 and, at the very latest, the end of 1639: she was already planning to leave England by December 1639.⁶⁴ The moment of Artemisia's return to Naples is also undocumented, but it is thought to have occurred c.1640-42.

The intricate details of Abraham van der Doort's famous inventory, conducted for Charles I at the end of the 1630s, help refine the *Susanna*'s dating and hint at the circumstances surrounding its commission. Numbered and written in the more formal hand of van der

painting on which she's working must display a variety of different kinds of beauty: Solinas 2011, p.129 (letter 55).

⁶³ It is unclear why it was recently stated that the *Susanna* and the *Fame* entered the collection before Artemisia's arrival in England: M. Garrard: *Artemisia Gentileschi and Feminism in Early Modern Europe*, London, 2020, p.293, no.3.

⁶⁴ On Artemisia in London, see Terzaghi 2016, pp.69-77; *idem*: 'Notes on Artemisia in London', in *Artemisia Gentileschi. Cleopatra*, Paris, 2014, pp.31-45; *idem*: *Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi. Between Paris and London*, Milan, 2018. See also G. Finaldi: 'Orazio Gentileschi at the Court of Charles I', in Finaldi 1999, p.35, note 35. N.B. letter written on 16th December 1639 from Artemisia in London to Francesco I d'Este: Solinas 2011, pp.121-22 (letter 51).

Doort's amanuensis, the *Susanna*'s entry is clearly a constituent part of the official record (rather than a supplementary annotation in the Surveyor's less lucid hand, like much other information from van der Doort's Queen's Side sections).⁶⁵ The date 1639 adorns the covers of all four surviving original volumes of the inventory: the working draft (i.e. "master document") of the entire register, in which the *Susanna* appears, and three "fair copies" of specific rooms.⁶⁶ In view of other dates scattered throughout, the working draft seems to have been executed between c.1637 and c.1639, with much of the inventory's activity occurring apparently during 1638 and 1639 (though continuing to be added to in c1640). Production of the three (extant) fair copies seems to have been completed by November 1639; this must mark a significant point in the whole process, a date when the stock-taking was considered largely finished—enough to create lavish presentation copies.⁶⁷

The ordering of the working draft's official (non-note) components seems to possess a vague sense of chronology. The *Susanna*'s placement suggests that it was inventoried in the later stages of the working draft or "master document". The painting appears in a self-contained list late in the original manuscript that stretches back through various locations.⁶⁸ A variant version of the beginning of the same list directly follows, written in more unofficial, note form; this second, shorter list (ending before the Queen's Side sections) is dated 22nd

⁶⁵ Rather than the less-comprehensible scribbles and additions of van der Doort.

⁶⁶ Portions of the inventory were transformed into fair copies (not working documents but finished volumes, lavishly bound for private royal use and presumably also as records for posterity). The working draft is MS. Ash. 1514 (Bodleian Library). For more information, see Millar, p.xx and Munz: 'The Inventories' in Munz 2019, <https://lostcollection.rct.uk/charles-i/inventories>. The King's precise reasons for ordering this phenomenally exacting and ambitious inventory, seemingly at such an untimely, arbitrary moment in the reign (neither the beginning nor the end), remain unknown.

⁶⁷ Millar p.xx, with a note on the problem of Old Style and New Style in determining the inventory dates.

⁶⁸ Beginning on Millar 1958-60, p.171.

November 1639.⁶⁹ Assuming that van der Doort compiled this second list at a slightly later date, the *Susanna* is likely inventoried in 1639 but before 22nd of November. This date is the *Susanna*'s terminus ante quem.

The display provides clues as to why the picture might have been commissioned soon after Artemisia's arrival. Van der Doort pays special attention to the arrangements of the neighbouring items on the Queen's Side, recording that copious paintings have been moved there and positioned on purpose, regularly by 'the King himself'.⁷⁰ Such comments are peculiar and encountered infrequently in the rest of the inventory. But, as if explaining this emphasis, van der Doort simultaneously points to Henrietta Maria's 'second, new bedchamber' as the location 'where her Majesty last gave birth'.⁷¹ This must designate the sixth royal child Princess Catherine, who was born at Whitehall Palace on 29th January 1639 (and died on the same day, directly after her baptism). All Henrietta Maria's children from the Prince of Wales (later Charles II) onwards had been born at St James's Palace, but the Queen's mother Marie de Médicis' arrival at the end of the 1630s and subsequent occupation of the residence may have necessitated the change of location.⁷² Whatever the cause of Henrietta Maria's change of residence, it seems plausible, in view of the unusually deliberate

⁶⁹ Millar 1958-60, p.179.

⁷⁰ Millar 1958-60, p.175-76: 'tis follwit alte piturs ate quin sijd ate king ramuffing'; 'itm a not auff alte piturs dat ar ate qin sijd plast'; 'plast bij te king himselff'.

⁷¹ Millar 1958-60, p.176: 'Item the Queens Second nuw beddchamber Wr har M last lain chijd'.

⁷² The Prince of Wales was born on 29th May 1630, Princess Mary on 4th November 1631, the future James II on 14th October 1633, Princess Elizabeth on 28th December 1635, and Princess Anne on 17th March 1637. Perhaps for superstitious reasons, Henrietta Maria's next child Henry, Duke of Gloucester, was born at a different location, at Oatlands Palace on 8th July 1640. The Queen's mother arrived in London on 28th October 1638 and was given apartments at St James's Palace, whose redecoration c.1638-39 Henrietta Maria seems to have overseen; on which, see T. Osborne: 'A Queen Mother in Exile: Marie de Médicis in the Spanish Netherlands and England, 1631-41', in P. Mansel and T. Riotte, eds: *Monarchy and Exile: The Politics of Legitimacy from Marie de Médicis to Wilhelm I*, Basingstoke, 2011, pp.29-38, esp. 30-33.

royal curatorial participations, that the paintings in the Queen's Whitehall apartments were hung at least partly in anticipation of Henrietta Maria's pregnancy, birth, and consequent 'lying in' period.⁷³

Although the *Susanna* is not hanging in Henrietta Maria's bedchamber, it is in a neighbouring space and very much part of the same apartment of rooms.⁷⁴ Might the flurry of antenatal curatorial activity on the Queen's Side have also formed the context for its commission? This would set the *Susanna*'s date even more precisely, at prior to the January 1639 birth.⁷⁵

Possibly also with some connection to the pregnancy, this was a period of great transformation for the Queen's Lodgings. The Accounts of the Works indicate substantial

⁷³ See E. Griffey: *On Display: Henrietta Maria and the Materials of Magnificence at the Stuart Court*, London, 2015, pp.115 and 128-32. Note the themes of the hangs of paintings adorning Charles I's Privy Lodging Rooms at Whitehall Palace: the First Privy Lodging Room demonstrating the bodily aspects of erotic and religious works; the Second featuring pagan and biblical births; the Third showing scenes of family and upbringing: see N. Munz 'First Privy Lodging Room'; 'Second Privy Lodging Room'; 'Third Privy Lodging Room', in Munz 2019, <https://lostcollection.rct.uk/rooms/first-privy-lodging-room>; <https://lostcollection.rct.uk/rooms/second-privy-lodging-room>; <https://lostcollection.rct.uk/rooms/third-privy-lodging-room>. For the early seventeenth-century belief that hanging nude and erotic pictures close to the bedroom could positively impact the production of healthy offspring, present in Giulio Mancini's writings, see F. Gage: *Painting as Medicine in Early Modern Rome: Giulio Mancini and the Efficacy of Art*, University Park, 2016, pp.87-92.

⁷⁴ Orazio also seems to have provided a suitable work to hang in these rooms: a copy of the *Flight into Egypt* (Millar 1958-60, p.176).

⁷⁵ Scholars often suggest that Orazio's *Finding of Moses*, painted for Charles I and Henrietta Maria in the early 1630s (National Gallery, London, no.NG6684), was commissioned in conjunction with the birth of the Prince of Wales, the future Charles II, on 29th May 1630: see A. Weston-Lewis, 'Orazio Gentileschi's Two Versions of the Finding of Moses Reassessed', in Finaldi 1999, pp.47-49.

renovations taking place, including in the Withdrawing Room where the *Susanna* was located.⁷⁶

A more exact date is difficult to determine, but at some point during 1639-40, possibly even just before, the Withdrawing Chamber's floor, ceiling and walls are significantly altered.⁷⁷

The fireplace is also completely redone at around the same time (again the date is hard to refine): the accounts record £40 paid to the sculptor and architect Nicholas Stone 'for making & setting... one chimney piece of white marble in the Qu: withdrawing roome being wrought with a diverse mouldings & a comptiment [compartment] sheild in the middle with the Qu: Cipher in it, a footpace & border likewise of white marble by agreem^t'.⁷⁸ Another new white marble chimney-piece by Stone is installed around the same time in the New Bedchamber, where the birth took place (£24, so presumably a little less elaborate).⁷⁹

The Withdrawing Chamber's fireplace has a history traceable within the royal accounts.

Henrietta Maria's new decorative chimney directly replaces the designs and insignia of the former Queen. In 1616-17 when Anne of Denmark was Queen Consort, the room's chimney-piece was painted and gilded for £6 by the Serjeant-Painter John de Critz the Elder 'wth the

⁷⁶ For the Queen's Lodgings from the time of Anne of Denmark onwards, see H. M. Colvin et al.: *The History of the King's Works*, London, 1982, vol. 4:2, pp.326, 337-39 and S. Thurley: *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural History of the Royal Apartments*, New Haven, 1999, pp.75, 91.

⁷⁷ TNA AO1/2429/71 (1639-40); TNA LC5/134, p.403: 'A warrt to the survayr to give order for the altering of the Queens mats withdrawing chamber at whitehall and raying the roof higher & making the wall towards the cham^{br} of bricke...' (warrant undated but between entries from 6th and 23rd June 1640).

⁷⁸ TNA AO1/2429/71 (1639-40).

⁷⁹ TNA AO1/2429/71 (1639-40). The Queen's Old Bedchamber had in 1638-39 been given a new white marble chimney, also by Nicholas Stone, for a cost of £24 5s, and a newly plastered ceiling by Joseph Kinsman 'wrought wth ovalles and squares garnished wth Garlands and ffestones and other enrichments' (TNA E351/3272 (1638-39)).

Queenes armes rought in the midle with fine gold supported with twoe angelles to the life and garnished with a compertiment and crest about it in stonewoorke'.⁸⁰ The fireplace was also updated at an earlier stage by Henrietta Maria, in 1635-36. Then, as well as the room being fitted with four modern windows, the chimney-piece was restored by Nicholas Stone, while a picture-frame above was painted and gilded by de Critz and Pearce ('for painting distemp in a sadd cullo^r a picture frame with a cornice over it and guilding a little fillett y goeth about it... over the chimney in the Queens withdrawing chamber').⁸¹ Frustratingly, the picture inside the frame receiving the decoration in 1635-36 is not mentioned.

A solid chronology is difficult to extract from the various pieces of circumstantial evidence given above. If the *Susanna* is finished after Artemisia's arrival and before Princess Catherine's birth in January 1639, then a dating around the end of 1638 and start of 1639 seems appropriate. The work is completed at the very latest before the inventory reference, which is datable to 1639—and in view of the previous analysis most likely at some point before November 1639. 1638-39 therefore seems fitting for the painting's execution.

Might this whole project—the wider renovations including the Queen's Withdrawing Room, the new stone chimney piece, the commission of Artemisia's painting to fit above the mantle—have been carried out in 1638-9, in time for Van der Doort to list the *Susanna* in situ during 1639? The records might not, however, quite align with this chronology. Though imaginable that the fireplaces in the New Bedchamber and Withdrawing Room are changed in anticipation of the birth (in the New Bedchamber), a warrant for at least some of the 1639-

⁸⁰ TNA E 351/3251

⁸¹ TNA E 351/3269

40 works cited above is datable to June 1640.⁸² With the 1638-39 dating in mind, the painting may possibly have already occupied the location before the new chimney-piece was installed, and the separate events—the painting’s execution, its placement, the hang, the birth, and the chimney-piece—are not necessarily all relatable, even though their adjacency is highly suggestive.

A number of presently unanswerable questions linger. When exactly is the unspecified picture above the chimney in 1635-36 changed (if at all)? For there is of course a possibility that the picture-frame referred to in 1635-36 belongs to the *Susanna*, and it already hangs in this position, having been sent to England in advance of the painter’s stay at court. Did the hanging of the *Susanna* precipitate, or have any relation to, the decision to transform the fireplace—or vice versa? And perhaps most important: would the painting have been intentionally commissioned for this particular position, designed as it is with a convenient format and suitable pictorial effects? Chimney-pieces of this era were usually large affairs, with connected superstructures ascending often to ceiling height.⁸³ Most likely the painting was not simply hung but physically inset within the chimney ensemble. There is also no requirement for the dates of the new fireplace and the *Susanna*’s commission or execution to “match” exactly in order to be connected events.

⁸² See above under TNA LC5/134, p.403. Note that this warrant seems to refer to the structural works and does not necessarily indicate an exact date when the works were carried out.

⁸³ For Inigo Jones’ fireplace designs for the Queen’s House, Greenwich, see the reproductions in Bold 2000, pp.63-64, and note the existing late-1630s fireplaces in Ham House, Richmond, such as in the North Drawing Room. For numerous records of chimney pieces by Nicholas Stone, see W. L. Spiers, ‘The note-book and account book of Nicholas Stone’, *Walpole Society* 7 (1918-19), pp.1-200. Henrietta Maria seems to have favoured white marble for her chimney-pieces.

At any rate, the painting's location is indicative of the manner in which it was originally viewed. The Queen's Withdrawing Room was a relatively small, private, warm chamber for eating and relaxing in comfort.⁸⁴ And we can envisage, at least, the setting after the works were carried out. Above a newly made, elaborately moulded white marble chimney-piece, emblazoned with the Queen's cipher 'HMR' (standing for Henrietta Maria Regina) upon a shield, appeared the life-size *Susanna*.⁸⁵

In this heavily annotated section of van der Doort's inventory, the lack of a note detailing the King's placement of the *Susanna*, or similar, also suggests that the painting's commission came from Henrietta Maria.⁸⁶ The Queen was actively enlarging her collection around this date, with her stock of pictures beginning to be managed as a separate curatorial entity with a distinct personality.⁸⁷ Indeed, in 1640 Daniel Soreau was appointed to attend the Queen in 'keeping, looking into, repairing, and amending all her Majesty's pictures whatsoever in any

⁸⁴ The King's Withdrawing Room at Whitehall Palace, also known as the Breakfast Chamber, featured a clearly deliberate (and personal) arrangement of two paintings: Anthony van Dyck's *Five Eldest Children* and Workshop of Giulio Romano's *Mermaid Feeding her Young*, an allegory of Charity (Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 404405 and 402918; Millar 1958-60, p.35, no.1, 2, and p.37 for the equation of the Withdrawing Room and Breakfast Chamber). Rubens' large *St George*, featuring allegorical representations of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, was added soon afterwards (Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 405356; Millar 1958-60, p.171, no.1: '... plist a while sins inde kings breakfast chamer').

⁸⁵ For surviving examples of the 'HMR' emblem, see two of the silver plaques with embossed foliate decoration fitted into *Two cabinets-on-stand* (1660-69; Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 35297).

⁸⁶ Charles had shown relatively little interest in Orazio's work for a number of years: see G. Finaldi and J. Wood: 'Orazio Gentileschi at the Court of Charles I', in Christiansen and Mann 2001, p.227.

⁸⁷ For evidence of Henrietta Maria's purposeful commissioning of works around this date, note the marks made by the King on Van Dyck's bill of pictures of 1638 indicating that the Queen is expected to pay for certain works (W. Hookham Carpenter: *Pictorial Notices, Consisting of a Memoir of Sir Anthony Van Dyck*, London, 1844, p.67). For more on the Queen's active patronage, see Griffey 2015, pp.118-25 and C. Hibbard: "'By our direction and for our use": The Queen's patronage of artists and artisans seen through her Household Accounts', in E. Griffey, ed: *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage*, Aldershot, 2008, pp.115-38.

of their Majesty's houses'.⁸⁸ As mentioned, the *Susanna* sports the King's 'CR' brand on its reverse, making it (as with many other items in the Queen's residences) technically his property—an asset of the crown—but this does not preclude the painting having been ordered by Henrietta Maria. Its close association with the Queen feels even more explicit in view of the painting's position hanging directly above her personal cipher.⁸⁹

Furthermore, the work is one of only three or so (out of around fourteen) bearing no prior location or provenance information in this apartment of rooms.⁹⁰ The entry lists just the definitive ascription to the artist, 'done by'. In view of the preceding information, we might speculate that the work was inserted directly into this location without having hung anywhere previously. That no provenance information accompanies the *Susanna* may well also support the contention that it was commissioned straight from the artist herself. The only other items in the Queen's lodgings omitting information about their provenance or prior hanging location, apart from the *Susanna*, are two family portraits by Gerrit van Honthorst, who worked in England during the second half of 1628—hence likely also direct commissions.⁹¹

⁸⁸ TNA, LC5/134, fol. 429 (16th November 1640).

⁸⁹ For Artemisia's comment indicating Henrietta Maria's patronage while she was in England, see Solinas 2011, pp.121-22 (letter 51), where Artemisia refers to the Queen as 'mia Signora'.

⁹⁰ Though there is a general title on folio 176 (Millar 1958-60, p.175; in van der Doort's hand, so probably added slightly later) indicating that the King placed all the pictures himself and therefore took responsibility for the hang, the fact that only some (not all) of the subsequent items are then individually listed as specifically 'removed' by the King suggests that indeed not all of them were, and folio 176's title is misleading—i.e. it was not simply the King's hang but probably also the Queen's. On Henrietta Maria's agency in the hangs of pictures, see Griffey 2015, p.130; *idem.*: 'Introduction', in Griffey 2008, pp.3-4; and Karen Serres, 'Henrietta Maria, Charles I and the Italian Baroque', in Rumberg and Shawe-Taylor 2018, pp.172-79.

⁹¹ I take the rooms hung deliberately by Henrietta Maria and Charles I, constituting the Queen's apartment proper, to be the two (old and new) Bedchambers, the Little Dressing Room, and Withdrawing Room (nos. 20-34 in the inventory). The Queen's Gallery (nos 35-46) is filled with old-fashioned items, probably still in hanging positions held since the previous reign, whereas the the other spaces (nos 47-51) contain stored, miscellaneous, and damaged items with apparently no connection to the Queen's quarters.

The *Susanna* is therefore very possibly the product of Artemisia's immediate wish to ingratiate herself with her new patrons.

As mentioned, the Royal Collection version seems deliberately designed to evoke and revitalise the character of Artemisia's earlier versions of the subject at Pommersfelden (fig. 6) and Burghley House (fig. 7)—two earlier examples of a long-standing and personal engagement with Susanna iconography on the part of the painter.⁹² The Royal Collection *Susanna* is notably much closer to these earlier works than it is to any of Artemisia's later Neapolitan Susannas in size, format, conception and emphasis (and even though the *Susanna* was painted in between her Naples periods and shares stronger stylistic affinities with her Neapolitan output). Perhaps significantly, these analogous earlier Susannas are both Roman works: the first dated 1610 by a prominent signature and painted in her first Roman period, the second executed in 1622 at the beginning of her second Roman period, also bearing a conspicuous dated signature. With these signatures, both canvases have the quality of announcements. The Pommersfelden *Susanna* had once heralded Artemisia's initial, triumphant professional establishment in Rome; the Burghley *Susanna* had helped proclaim her fame upon her return to the same city. Thus, upon her arrival in England, Artemisia revisited this subject, fundamental for her artistic identity, to remind those new audiences of her past glories.

Furthermore, the Burghley *Susanna* is thought to have been originally commissioned by the papal nephew, Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi, as a work of its description was inventoried in

⁹² Charles I owned an allegorical work of a woman with a trumpet by Artemisia, clearly also based on a successful work from earlier in the painter's career, on which see above, and Christiansen and Mann 2001, pp.401-02, no.75; Treves 2020, pp.200-01, no.27. On Orazio's intentional replication or evocation of prior (potentially celebrated) compositions for new patrons, see Christiansen 2001, pp.20-21.

his collection in 1623, directly after the date on the painting.⁹³ Just prior to the 1638-39 *Susanna*'s first appearance, Charles I had in fact (around 1636) demonstrated an insistent interest in acquiring the same Cardinal's collection wholesale.⁹⁴ Though Artemisia was not the reason for these petitions (her 1622 painting had already left), the King's blatant, recurring intent to purchase is just one of many indications from the 1630s that the British crown was targeting the aesthetic tastes current in the papal court, of which Artemisia's earlier *Susannas* are arguably representative.⁹⁵

⁹³ C. H. Wood: 'The Ludovisi collection of paintings in 1623', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 134 (1992), p.522: '[284] Una Susanna Con li vecchi alta p.i 8 Cornice nere profilate e rabescate d'oro di m.o di artimitia' (Wood associates the reference with the Pommersfelden canvas). At 8 *palmi* high, the work must be in the region of 170 cm tall. It is unclear whether this measurement would take account of the frame. The Pommersfelden *Susanna* had previously been associated with the Ludovisi reference, in view of the measurements and the fact that it was originally purchased from an artist who had spent time in Rome (170 x 119 cm, bought from Benedetto Luti in Florence in 1715). But the Burghley version has more recently been linked with the reference, partly because of the Cardinal's demonstrable fondness for the Bolognese style, which is evident in the Burghley version. For the Pommersfelden provenance see H. Maué and S. Brink: *Die Grafen von Schönborn: Kirchenfürsten, Sammer, Mäzene*, Nuremberg, 1989, pp.374-6, no.292. For the Ludovisi entry's association with the Burghley picture, which measures 161.5 x 123 cm, see Treves 2016, pp.102-04, no.22, Garrard 2001, pp.96-97 and Christiansen and Mann 2001, p. 355-58, no.65. Note that the Burghley version was considered to have come from a (different) Roman papal collection, as it is listed as 'Susannah and ye Elders by Arta: Gentileschi from ye Barberini Pallace at Rome' in a late-eighteenth-century inventory taken by the 9th Earl of Exeter; for references and further information, see again Treves, 2016, pp.102-04, no.22.

⁹⁴ R. Wittkower: 'Inigo Jones – "puritanissimo fiero"', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 90 (1948), p.50, note 8. In a flurry of letters, the Earl of Arundel also writes to his agent in Italy, William Petty, repeatedly demanding he 'buy some of the principal paintings of Ludovisios for the King our Master' (M. F. S. Hervey: *The Life, Correspondence & Collections of Thomas Howard Earl of Arundel*, Cambridge, 1921, p.383-84).

⁹⁵ In any case, as no Ludovisi pictures can be found in the royal inventories, on this occasion the King's demands appear not to have been satisfied. K. Garas: 'The Ludovisi collection of pictures in 1633-I', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 109 (1967), p.288. Notably the Ludovisi collection also contained a *Susanna* by Guercino of 1617, now in the Prado (no. 201): Wood 1992, p. 519, [no.139]. This picture should probably be more strongly associated (as a precedent influence) with the Artemisia's Burghley *Susanna* than it has, in particular the sultry landscape setting whose inclusion in Artemisia's painting has been a point of attributional contention. Perhaps this strengthens the connection between the Burghley *Susanna* and the Ludovisi reference. The Burghley painting seems to have left the collection by the time of the 1633 inventory taken after the Cardinal's death. (Note also Domenichino's landscape-format *Susanna* in the same inventory ([no.141]) now in

That the commission formally revisits this lineage of high-profile Roman commissions attains even more significance in the context of contemporary religious politics. The story contained a particular significance for the Catholic faith during the post-Tridentine period; an invigorated artistic pursuit of Susanna iconography dates from exactly this moment.⁹⁶ And the Royal Collection *Susanna* may well have still held this religious resonance for Henrietta Maria. Artemisia's status as an Italian Catholic who had worked in Rome, patronised by cardinals, was surely integral to her employment at this delicate moment in European religious politics. Just a couple of years before Artemisia's arrival, the Pope's circle had sent a gift of pictures, icons and relics to Henrietta Maria, hoping to influence the King (Pope Urban VIII was the Queen's godfather).⁹⁷ Orazio had thought that Henrietta Maria wanted to maintain a Catholic painter in England.⁹⁸ Artistic (and diplomatic) relations between the papal and English courts clearly reached a peak in the second half of the 1630s, in the midst of dealings with Guido Reni and Gian Lorenzo Bernini.⁹⁹

Munich's Alte Pinakothek (no.466), in a similar setting and with a large, sculpted fountain with prominent basin.) For more information, see again Treves, 2016, pp.102-04, no.22; and for further artistic links between Rome and England during the 1630s, see below.

⁹⁶ Simons 2017, p.45. See also W. R. Rearick: 'Jacopo Bassano and Changing Religious Imagery in the Mid-Cinquecento' in S. Bertelli and G. Ramakus, eds.: *Essays Presented to Myron P. Gilmore*, Florence, 1978, vol. 2, p.341.

⁹⁷ J. Berington: *The Memoirs of Gregorio Panzani; Giving an Account of his Agency in England in the Years 1634, 1635, 1636*, Birmingham, 1793, p.196. Henrietta Maria owned a (still extant) personal bound copy of one of Urban VIII's collections of poetry, *Poesie latine* (1642; Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 1080414).

⁹⁸ Ward Bissell 1981, p.51. Orazio himself had painted a St Francis, presumably for Henrietta Maria as it was inventoried at Wimbledon House (Millar 1970-72, p.218, no.19), a highly unusual subject to be commissioned in England at this time; valued at £30, it was a relatively substantial work. Guercino was famously invited to England by Charles I around the time of his accession to the throne in the mid-1620s, but the painter declined saying that he did not want to work for a heretic. See C. C. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice, vite de' pittori bolognesi*, Bologna, 1678, vol. 2, p.366.

⁹⁹ In 1637 Henrietta Maria commissioned Guido Reni to paint a large Bacchus and Ariadne for the ceiling of her bedchamber at the Queen's House, Greenwich—anxiously and diplomatically facilitated by Cardinal Francesco

Artemisia's stay, however, also coincided with a growing suspicion shown towards Henrietta Maria's Catholic circle.¹⁰⁰ Polemical tracts and pamphlets circulated from around 1640 onwards, criticising the worship of Roman mass by the Queen's circle ('a generall connivance, amounting to a tacite toleration of all Papists... the *Filthy Capuchin-Fryers* and Priests... like so many *muzzed Wolves* and *Tygers...*')¹⁰¹ Due to the mounting antagonism, and at the House of Commons' recommendation, Marie de Médicis left England in the summer of 1641; in May 1641 she had even been forced to request protection against a hostile crowd gathering at St James' field.¹⁰² Though we do not know what led to the painter's exit from the country, we might speculate that it had something to do with these same pressures. In fact,

Barberini. Though completed, the painting seems not to have arrived in England (it is not recorded in the Sale Catalogue), probably due to the outbreak of the Civil War; several fragments purporting to belong to the original work have emerged during the last twenty or so years. See A. Colantuono, 'Guido Reni's Bacchus and Ariadne for Henrietta Maria of England. A Diplomatic Argument?' in S. Albl, B. Hub and A. Frasca-Rath, eds: *Close Reading: kunsthistorische Interpretationen vom Mittelalter bis in die Moderne*, Berlin, 2021, pp.394-403 and S. Madocks, "'Trop de beautez découvertes" – New light on Guido Reni's late "Bacchus and Ariadne"', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 126 (1984), pp.544-47. In June 1635 Charles I secured papal permission to commission a portrait bust in marble from Bernini; as inspiration Charles sent van Dyck's triple portrait (Royal Collection Trust, no.RCIN 404420) to the sculptor in Rome. The bust arrived in London at the end of July 1637 as a papal present to the Queen (it was eventually destroyed in the Whitehall fire of 1698). Henrietta Maria approached Bernini for a similar bust in 1639, which due to the Civil War was never executed. See R. Wittkower, *Bernini: The Sculptor of the Roman Baroque*, London, 1997, pp.258-59.

¹⁰⁰ S. Thurley, 'The politics of court space in early Stuart London', in M. Fantoni, G. Gorse, and M. Smuts, eds.: *The Politics of Space: European Courts ca. 1500-1750*, Rome, 2009, pp.293-316; Caroline Hibbard, 'The Somerset House Chapel and the topography of London Catholicism' in Fantoni, Gorse, and Smuts 2009, pp.317-18. See also M. A. White: *Henrietta Maria and the English Civil Wars*, Aldershot, 2006 and C. Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot*, Chapel Hill, 1983.

¹⁰¹ Thurley 2009, pp.304-05

¹⁰² According to the House of Commons, Marie de Médicis had precipitated "the Flowing of Priests and Papists to her [Henrietta Maria's] House; and, by the Use and Practice of the Idolatry of the Mass, and Exercise of other superstitious Services of the Romish Church..."; see Osborne 2011, pp.35-37 (quoted at p.36). In May 1641, open death threats were issued to Catholics worshipping at Somerset House. Father Jean Marie de Trélon, the Capuchin's Superior, was for a short while arrested through the designs of parliament; see Thurley 2009, p.307.

that Artemisia's English visit had an ulterior diplomatic motive might be suggested by the correspondence with Cassiano dal Pozzo, secretary to Cardinal Francesco Barberini (Pope Urban VIII's nephew), immediately preceding her travel.¹⁰³ This religious context should not be overlooked in relation to the painting, as the *Susanna* fits demonstrably well with the range of Catholic imagery then present in the Queen's Side of Whitehall Palace.¹⁰⁴ On the eve of the Civil War, Counter Reformation Rome was granted wall-space in the guise of the *Susanna*, right at the heart of the Stuart monarchy.

Yet more justifications for a dating at the beginning of Artemisia's English period, in 1638-39, emerge from the results of the conservation project. Technical analysis offers further insights into Artemisia's working methods, while providing further evidence about the date and location of the work's execution. And additional connections arise—both with the artist's

¹⁰³ Cf. F. Solinas: 'Lo stile Barberini', in L. Mochi Onori, S. Schütze, and F. Solinas, eds.: *I Barberini e la cultura europea del Seicento*, Rome, 2007, p.108 and Solinas 2011, pp.12-13. Orazio is credited as passing information to Panzani, the papal agent in England in 1636 (Wittkower 1948, p.50, note 8). That Orazio served as a diplomat is also indicated in a letter dated 4th December 1626 of Amerigo Salvetti, envoy of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, sent from London to Andrea Cioli, the Grand Duke's Secretary in Florence, indicating that Orazio had served on some secret expeditions made to Brussels ('da alcune spedizioni segrete fatt a Brusselles'): A. M. Crinò, 'The date of Orazio Gentileschi's arrival in London', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 109 (1967), p.533. On diplomacy and art in the early Stuart era, see three essays in E. Cropper, ed.: *The Diplomacy of Art: Artistic Creation and Politics in Seicento Italy*, Milan, 2000: A. Colantuono: 'The Mute Diplomat: Theorizing the Role of Images in Seventeenth-Century Political Negotiations', pp.51-76; E. Oy-Marra: 'Paintings and hangings for a catholic queen: Giovan Francesco Romanelli and Francesco Barberini's gifts to Henrietta Maria of England', pp.177-93; S. Madocks Lister, "'Trumperies brought from Rome": Barberini gifts to the Stuart Court in 1635', pp.151-76.

¹⁰⁴ Griffey 2015, p.115 notes the Catholic tone of the hang on the Queen's Side. There was in fact a 'little lobby' for Catholic worship in Whitehall Palace, fitted with rich furnishings in 1636: TNA, LC5/134, fol.104 and Hibbard 2009, p.318.

c.1610 Roman period and some of Orazio's working procedures. For example, an early spatial reserve created for the Elders against the sky, perceptible in the *Susanna's* X-ray, is reminiscent in technique and handling to that in the Pommersfelden *Susanna* (see fig. 18 for X-ray).¹⁰⁵ The preliminary outline of Susanna's form is defined by broad *abbozzo*-like sweeps in a pale colour with radiopaque pigments. This laying-in method is noticeably similar to that in the initial placement of the central figure in Orazio's Galleria Spada *David*, seen in the X-ray (fig. 19).¹⁰⁶

The *Susanna's* X-ray also suggests that the wet paint may have been sculpted or scored through in some areas, to indicate basic coordinates. The earlier position of Susanna's back was changed, with an incision line plotting the later, slimmer profile still visible at the surface. Summary marks in a carbon-based material are occasionally visible in the IRR; these would have strategically marked the contours of the different forms, for instance in Susanna's face (fig. 20). Pre-existing drawings or cartoons must have been employed at this stage in the painting process. Sketching-in modelling was then likely applied in paint *alla prima* with a darker brown earth pigment. There are occasional signs of this, for instance, in the free handling around the thinly covered raised foot, where the warm lower layer is exploited as a mid-tone. Elsewhere, highlights are built up using the darker lower layer at the boundaries to provide definition.

Originally, the painting measured approximately 186 x 140cm. Although slightly trimmed when the additional canvas pieces were attached, cusping remains visible on all sides of the

¹⁰⁵ See the X-ray reproduced in Christiansen 2004, p.104.

¹⁰⁶ Christiansen 2004, p.105; see in particular the similarity in the outlines of both David and Susanna's shoulders.

original canvas, suggesting that relatively little of the composition was lost at this point. The original painting consisted of two canvasses joined with a vertical seam just to the left of Susanna's body. Although unusual to find such a narrow bolt of canvas, it is worth noting that the linen used in England and principally imported from France and the Low Countries was narrower than that found in the Italian states in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁷ However, it is also true that such economical shortcuts are apparent in some of Artemisia's earlier works which find her reusing canvasses, even if it meant painting over earlier abandoned works, possibly as a result of financial difficulties.¹⁰⁸ Orazio too is noted for his 'thriftiness' in creating larger pictures from fragments of canvas.¹⁰⁹

The *Susanna* canvas itself has a finer weave than might be expected for a painting executed in Naples during the 1630s.¹¹⁰ The coarser woven Neapolitan canvasses resulted in a characteristic grid-like craquelure as exemplified by Artemisia's *Birth of Saint John the Baptist* (fig. 21a and 10).¹¹¹ By contrast, the finer weave in the Royal Collection *Susanna* has had less impact on the ageing of the paint film, and the resulting craquelure is wider and less dominated by the substrate (fig. 21b). Notably, most of the canvasses used by Orazio in England and available to analysis have a similar-weave and comparable thread count to that of the *Susanna*.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ See J. Kirby: 'The Painter's Trade in the Seventeenth Century: Theory and Practice', *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 20 (1999), 5-49.

¹⁰⁸ Keith, Treves, Melchiorre di Crescenzo, and Russell 2019.

¹⁰⁹ Christiansen 2004, p.104.

¹¹⁰ The canvas weave count is 12 x 11 threads/cm² (warp x weft). We are grateful for discussions with Lucia Martinez (at the Prado Museum), Simon Bobak, Tom Bobak and Michaela Straub.

¹¹¹ Also familiar in paintings by Artemisia like the *Birth of St. John the Baptist* (fig. 11).

¹¹² With thanks to Kristina Mandy at the National Gallery for information about *Finding of Moses* (early 1630s; National Gallery, London, no.NG6684) and see A. Sanchez-Lassa de los Santos: 'Technique and Materials in the Paintings of Orazio Gentileschi', in Finaldi 1999, p.80; e.g., *Lot and His Daughters*, painted in Genoa in

An analysis of the paint film is similarly illuminating. The preparatory layer consists of a thick layer of red ochre and a little lead white, considerably lighter and warmer than the darker brown grounds mostly seen in Artemisia's Naples-based paintings. A mid-grey upper ground layer is visible in the lower and left sides of the painting (and visible in fig. 22) but was not applied consistently across the whole surface. There is, instead, a light beige brown beneath the sky and a darker brown beneath the flesh tones of both Susanna and the Elders.

Interestingly, this more specific blocking in of the various components echoes the preparatory layers in Orazio's *Lot and his Daughters*, executed in London (1628; Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao, no.69.101). There, the grey upper ground is limited only to the figures and parts of the sky, and also does not appear to have been applied over the whole surface.¹¹³

SEM-EDX analysis has revealed that the brownish underpainting of Susanna's flesh tones consists of a dark earth pigment, maybe sienna or umber, mixed with coarsely ground bone/ivory black and lead white.¹¹⁴ The upper layer contains a mixture of lead white, ochre and lead-tin-antimony yellow (fig. 23). The latter is coarsely ground and dense, providing the surface with a richly scattered light. The same pigment, applied thinly in a semi-opaque paler glaze, imbues the surface of the darker shadowed areas of flesh with a subtle reflected light,

1621-22, is painted on a fairly coarse, plain weave canvas similar to that of many Italian paintings of the seventeenth century. Orazio's later *Lot and His Daughters*, painted in London (1628; Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao, no.69.101), was executed on a plain weave canvas 11 x 12/cm², of the same density as the Royal Collection *Susanna*.

¹¹³ Sanchez-Lassa de los Santos 1999, p.83. It is notable that in Orazio's Joseph and Potiphar's wife, also made in London, has a similar canvas and lowest ground layer structure, containing a bright orange-red earth with around 1% carbon black. Here, however, the second grey, composed of lead white and charcoal black, covers the whole surface.

¹¹⁴ We are grateful to Tracey Chapman for undertaking the SEM-EDX analysis.

notably in Susanna's neck and shoulder (always an important area in any painting by Artemisia). The same handling is also apparent in the neckline area shadows in the *Self-Portrait* (fig. 2).¹¹⁵

The turbaned elder's green brocade drapery was built up with a dark green lower layer containing an organo-copper green, lead white, ochre and bone/ivory black. Above this, a similar green is mixed with lead-tin-antimony yellow, ochre, and lead white. The surface of the drapery contains a glaze of predominately copper green mixed more transparently with only a minor quantity of lead white and ochre to achieve a rich depth of colour. The brown surface colour may be due to oxidative degradation of the copper-based pigment (fig. 24).

Artemisia created the right-hand Elder's upper garment using a deep red lower layer containing significant quantities of red lake, followed by smalt mixed with red lake and increasing levels of ochre and lead white for the highlights. Although almost completely discoloured now, it probably originally appeared as a shot silk fabric with a rich *cangiante* effect (i.e. changing a form's colour in order to achieve tonal variation) of deep reddish purples with yellowish purple highlights.¹¹⁶ Smalt was likely used for the flowing water from

¹¹⁵ Visual comparison only, as the *Self-Portrait* has not undergone any formal analysis. An unusual pigment, lead-tin-antimony yellow is associated with seventeenth-century Italian painting, especially in Rome. It has repeatedly been found in Artemisia's works: her *Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (fig. 15a); *Self-Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (National Gallery, London); and *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), amongst others.

¹¹⁶ In striking similarity to the description of Orazio's treatment of shot fabric in *The Finding of Moses* (early 1630s; National Gallery, London, no.NG6684) in Sanchez-Lassa de los Santos 1999, p.90.

the fountain and from the Triton figure's mouth. Its dull brown appearance would be explained by the smalt's almost total discolouration.¹¹⁷

Beneath much of the sky area, Artemisia applied a pale brown preliminary lower layer. This was followed by a lower blue layer containing a mixture of coarse-grained discoloured smalt, lead white and a little ochre (fig. 25). A brighter blue mid-layer, found in many areas, was identified as containing predominately indigo and lead white (fig. 26).¹¹⁸ Above it lies a further discoloured and coarse-grained layer of smalt, lead white and a little ochre. It is notable that the established Italian practice of adding azurite as an underlayer was exchanged by Orazio for smalt, for example in *The Finding of Moses* (early 1630s; National Gallery, London, no.NG6684), as the latter was cheaper and more easily available in England.¹¹⁹

These several similarities with Orazio's materials and procedures raise the problem of the extent of the two artists' collaboration while Artemisia was in London. Might Artemisia have worked in Orazio's studio, making use of tracings and drawings (the potential for which is suggested earlier), pigments and canvases—even after his death? Intriguingly, a now-lost *Susanna and the Elders* by Orazio seems, from its placement and description in the Sale Catalogue of Charles I's collection, to have been placed at Whitehall Palace (just like Artemisia's *Susanna*). But this must have occurred some time after van der Doort's inventory

¹¹⁷ Smalt discolours with age principally due to interaction with an oil binding medium, on which see M. Spring, C. Higgitt, and D. Saunders: 'Investigation of Pigment-Medium Interaction Processes in Oil Paint containing Degraded Smalt', *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 26 (2005), pp.56-70.

¹¹⁸With much gratitude to Dr Tracey Chaplin for kindly undertaking Raman spectroscopy analysis to identify the indigo.

¹¹⁹ N. Christie: 'Technical Examination of Gentileschi's *The Finding of Moses* (ex Castle Howard)', *Apollo* 424 (1997), p.37.

of c.1639, where it does not feature.¹²⁰ Orazio's *Susanna* was probably also relatively substantial, judging by the price (valued £30, sold for £35). Inventoried sequentially, it may have formed a pair—or at least been associated—with the Mocking of Christ (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, no. 2012.193).¹²¹ There are, in fact, intriguing similarities between the outlines of Artemisia's *Susanna* figure and Christ's twisted body.¹²² We may, however, never know when exactly Orazio painted this other *Susanna*, what it looked like, or whether it had any impact on the appearance of Artemisia's own 1638-39 rendition.

In summary, the *Susanna* appears to have been painted while in England, and for several reasons. These include the work's suitability for display above the fireplace, pragmatic condensation of different motifs, apparent absence of Neapolitan-like collaborative elements, relation to various works in her oeuvre dated both before and after the English period, and possible links to Orazio's (London) working procedures and compositional formulae. Contextual information from the Whitehall building works and c.1639 inventory adds weight to the proposal that the *Susanna* was painted in London, as does further technical evidence, such as the work's narrower bolt of more finely woven canvas and use of particular pigments.

Aside, however, from the specificities of technical information and the political speculations outlined above, the work is a persuasive demonstration of Artemisia's talents and a major

¹²⁰ Millar 1970-72, p.306, no.128. Perhaps this followed the artist's decease and the dispersal of his workshop contents. Even though the reference is labelled simply 'Gentileschi', the designated work is perhaps unlikely to have been painted by Artemisia. As proven by correlations with extant works, it seems highly likely that when the Sale Catalogue ascribes a work to 'Gentileschi' without a first name, Orazio is implied—whereas Artemisia's first name is apparently always noted in conjunction with her works.

¹²¹ Millar 1970-72, p.306, no.129. Dated 1628-35, measuring 124 x 160 cm.

¹²² The pyramidal shape formed by the Mocking of Christ's strong contours is also comparable to that of Artemisia's Pommersfelden *Susanna*.

addition to her known oeuvre. As a key remnant of her English period, the *Susanna* marks a pivotal moment, when, after many years, Artemisia re-unites with her father—compelled, once again, to win a new patron’s favour in an unfamiliar city. The wealth of contextual, documentary, artistic and technical information provides a rare opportunity to grasp, with a fullness almost unparalleled, the history of a surviving painting by Artemisia Gentileschi.