



Judith Leyster, Self-Portrait, 1633

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Understanding Art

Dr. Charissa N. Terranova

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Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30-12:45 pm

GR 2.530

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact: terranova@utdallas.edu

Teaching Assistants:

Maureen Okwulogu: maureen.okwulgo@utdallas.edu

Brenda Vega-Mora: brenda.vegamora@utdallas.edu

Research Assistant:

Sofia Penny: sofia.penny@utdallas.edu

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Women in the Art of Italy and Northern Europe during
the Seventeenth Century

Guest Speaker: Sofia Penny



Barbara Kruger, Untitled, 1997



Italy 1559-1814

Italian City-States: Territories, some political others independent, that existed from the beginning of the Middle Ages until the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, which took place in 1861.

- Communes
- Duchies
- Maritime Republics

Low Countries (modern-day Netherlands and Belgium) in 17th century



Women artists remained isolated and exceptional in their professions in Europe during the seventeenth century. While a few talented women managed to conduct successful careers, most artists and patrons were male. Therefore, women artists functioned in institutional contexts that were dominated by male standards and expectations. [Think here of the “male gaze.”] Despite this, it is tempting to try to find spaces in which a proto-feminist sensibility emerges in their works.

Wendy Slatkin



Elisabetta Sirani, Timoclea Kills the Captain of Alexander the Great, 1659



The
Baroque

Senses
Sensuosity
Movement
Diagonals



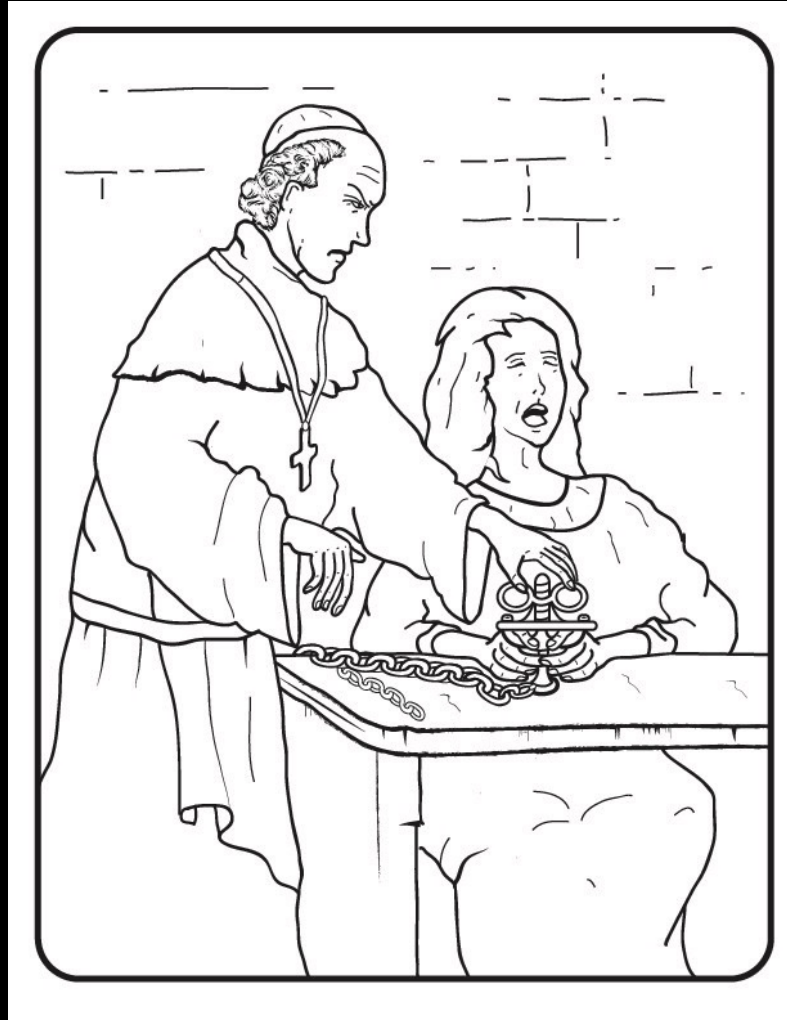
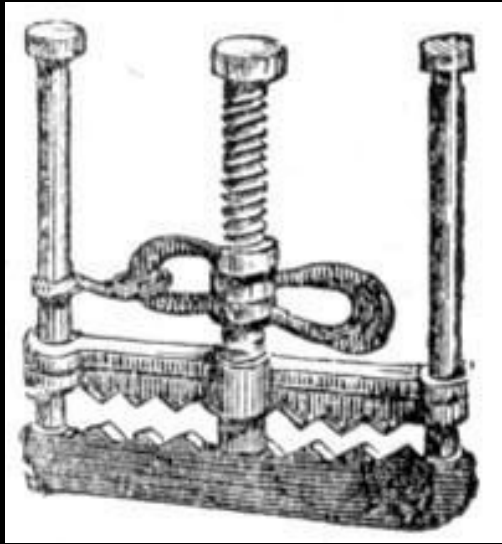
Elisabetta Sirani, Timoclea Kills the Captain of Alexander the Great, 1659

Rachel Ruysch, An Arrangement of Flowers by a Tree Trunk, c. 1683

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1652)

From a letter from Artemisia Gentileschi to Don Antonio Ruffo of November 13, 1649

I have received a letter of October 26th, which I deeply appreciated, particularly noting how my master always concerns himself with favoring me, contrary to my merit. In it, you tell me about that gentleman who wishes to have some paintings by me, that he would like a Galatea and a Judgment of Paris, and that the Galatea should be different from the one that Your Most illustrious Lordship owns. There was no need for you to urge me to do this, since by the grace of God and the Most Holy Virgin, they [clients] come to a woman with this kind of talent, that is, to vary the subjects in my painting; never has anyone found in my pictures any repetition of invention, not even of one hand. As for the fact that this gentleman wishes to know the price before the work is done, ...I do it most unwillingly. ...I never quote a price for my works until they are done. However, since Your Most illustrious Lordship wants me to do this, I will do what you command. Tell this gentleman that I want five hundred ducats for both; he can show them to the whole world and, should he find anyone who does not think the paintings are worth two hundred scudi more, I won't ask him to pay me the agreed price. I assure Your Most illustrious Lordship that these are paintings with nude figures requiring very expensive female models, which is a big headache. When I find good ones they fleece me, and at other times, one must suffer [their] pettiness with the patience of Job. As for my doing a drawing and sending it, I have made a solemn vow never to send my drawings because people have cheated me. In particular, just today I found...that, having done a drawing of souls in Purgatory for the Bishop of St. Gata, he, in order to spend less, commissioned another painter to do the painting using my work. If I were a man, I can't imagine it would have turned out this way... I must caution Your Most illustrious Lordship that when I ask a price, I don't follow the custom in Naples, where they ask thirty and then give it for four. I am Roman, and therefore I shall act always in the Roman manner.



Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith and Maidservant, ca. 1625

- Caravaggism
- Tenebrism
- Chiaroscuro



Caravaggio, The Calling of Saint Matthew, 1600



Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith and Maidservant, ca. 1625



Sofonisba Aguiola, Boy Pinched by a Crayfish, 1554



Caravaggio, Boy Bitten by a Lizard, 1593-94
psychological realism

- Caravaggism
- Tenebrism
- Chiaroscuro



Caravaggio, The Calling of Saint Matthew, 1600



Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Beheading Holofernes, 1620



Annibale Carracci, *The Choice of Heracles*, 1596



Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith and Maidservant*, ca. 1625



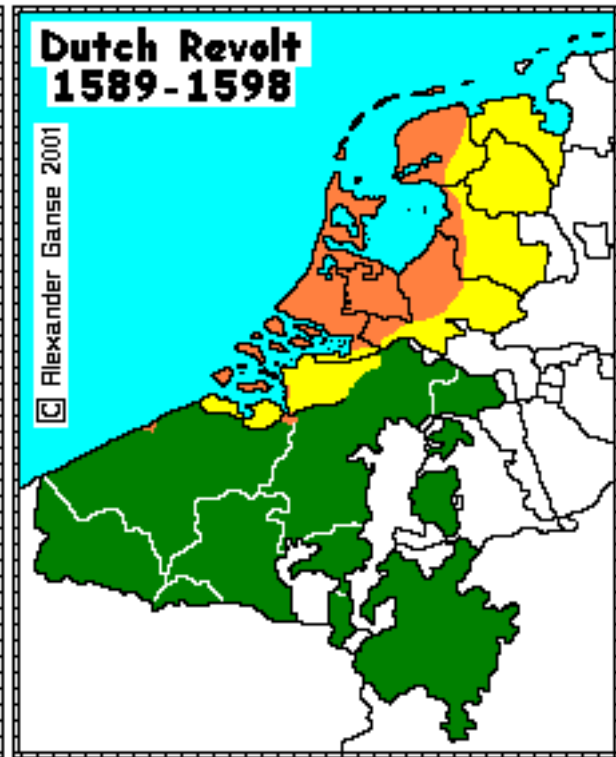
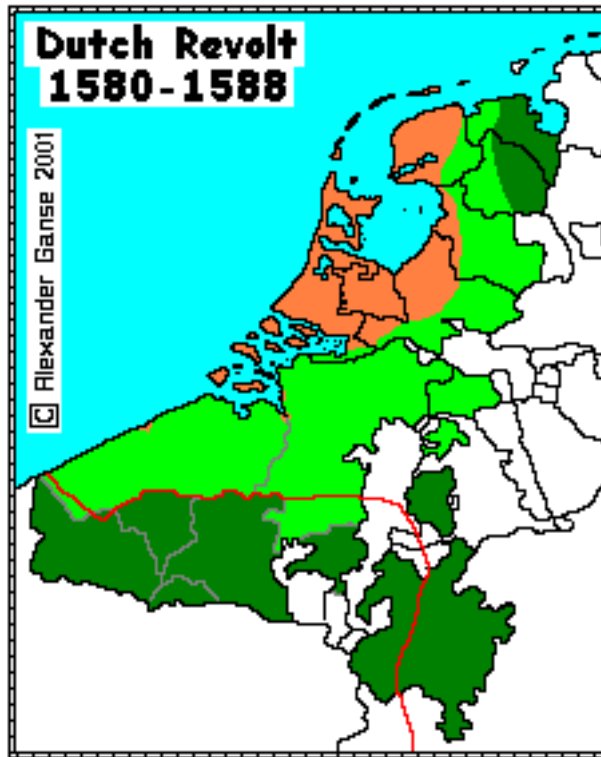
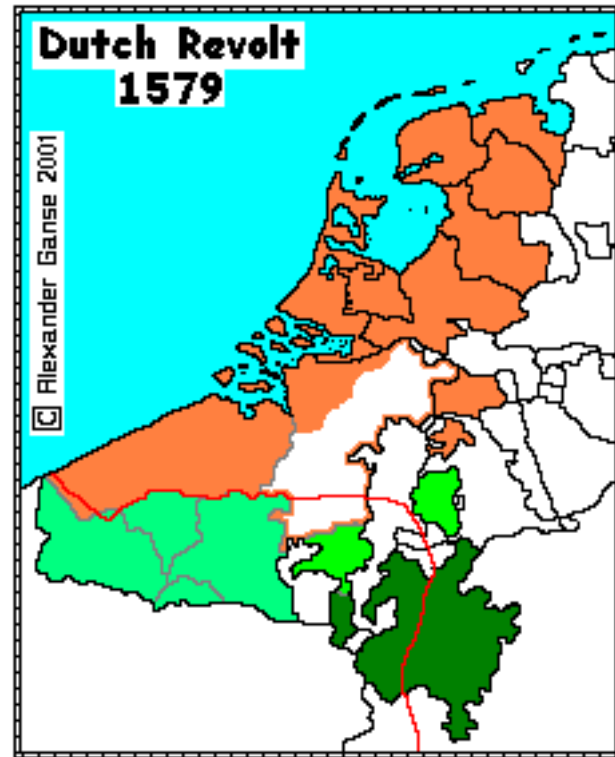
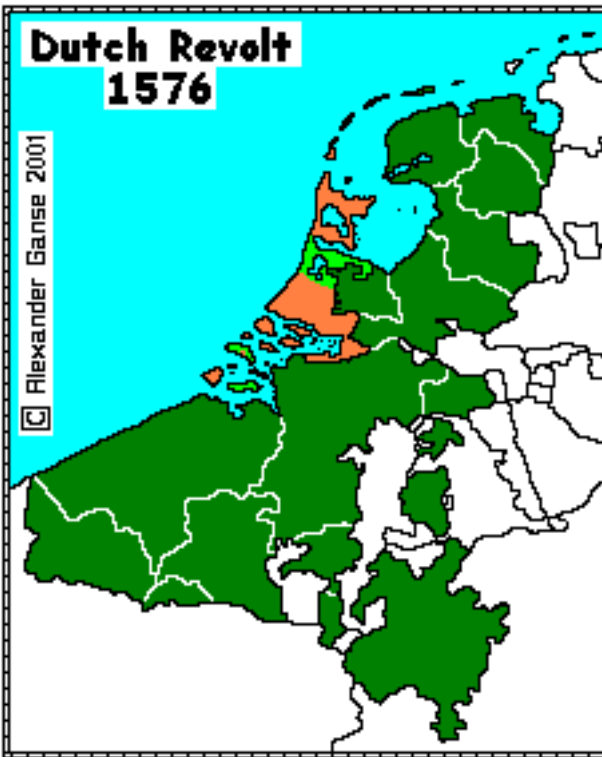
Elisabetta Sirani,
Portia Wounding her
Thigh, 1664

- Genre element in upper left corner
- *exemplum virtutis*

Low Countries
(modern-day
Netherlands and
Belgium) in 17th
century

The Dutch Republic





- held by Spain
- held by the Rebels
- Spanish conquest

- held by Spain
- Union of Utrecht
- Spanish conquest
- Union of Arras

- held by Spain
- Union of Utrecht
- Spanish conquest

- held by Spain
- Union of Utrecht
- Liberated by the Dutch

Dutch Golden Age 17th Century





The Golden Age in the Netherlands was an era of trade development, economic growth and cultural diversity, flourishing science and high-quality art. Seventeenth-century Dutch society was a “laboratory of the world.”

- Trade
- Science
- Military
- Art

Johannes Lingelbach, The Dam Square in Amsterdam with the New Town Hall under Construction, 1656

The Rebellion of the Netherlands

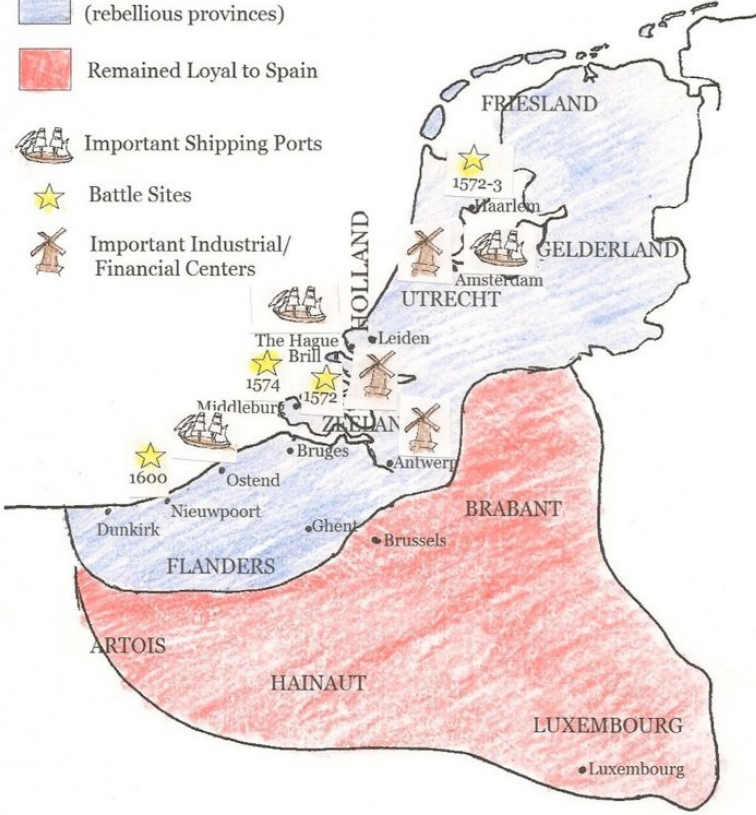
 Union of Utrecht (rebellious provinces)

 Remained Loyal to Spain

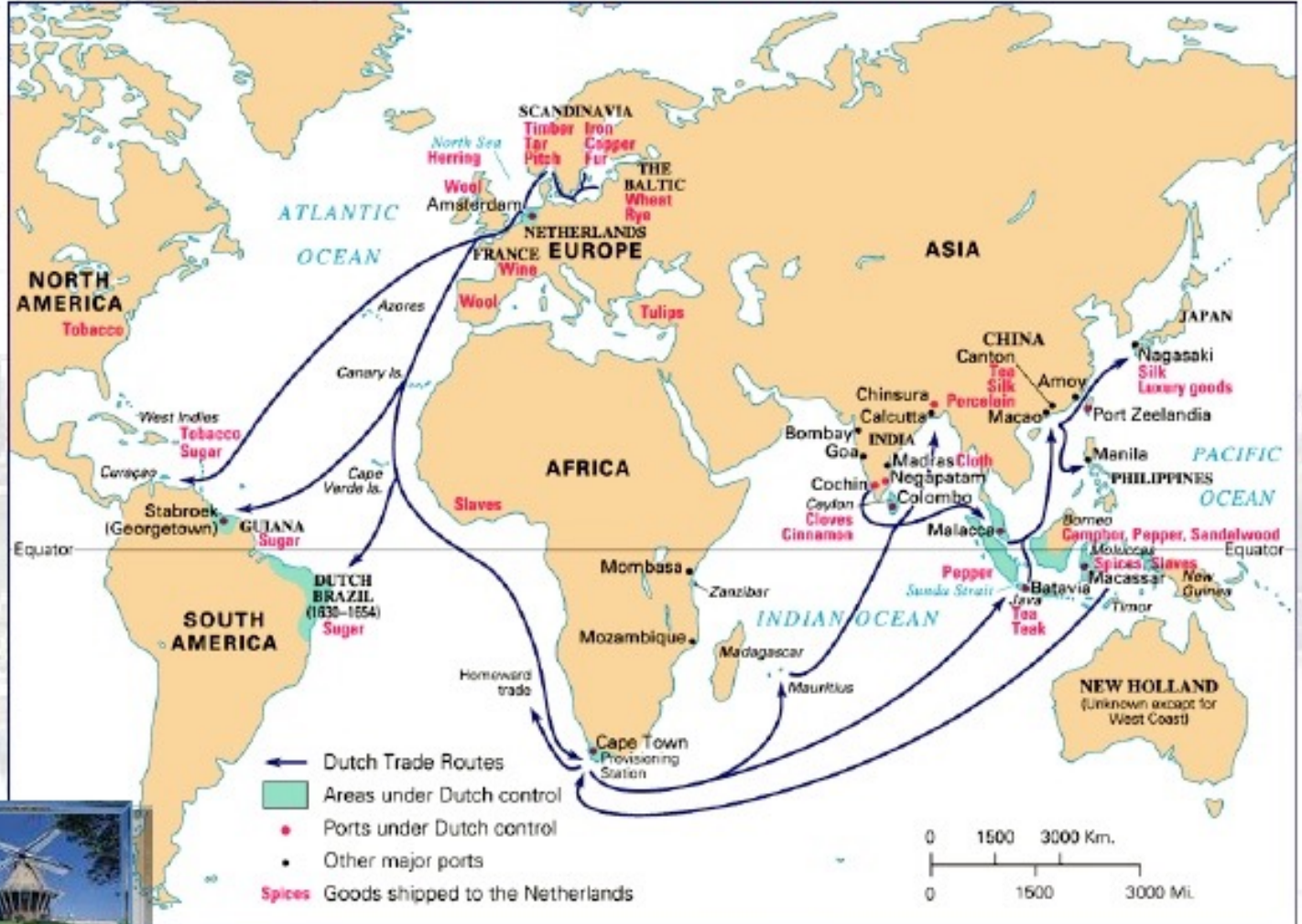
 Important Shipping Ports

 Battle Sites

 Important Industrial/Financial Centers



Dutch Global Commerce



Dutch West India Company, offshoot of Dutch East India Company



Above: A senior merchant of the Dutch East India Company, presumably Jacob Mathieusen, and his wife; in the background the fleet in the roads of Batavia [capital city of the Dutch East Indies, today Jakarta] by Aelbert Cuyp, c. 1640-1660



Right: Board of Dutch East India Company



Top Left: Dutch West Indies

Bottom Left: Map of the main West India Company settlements in the Atlantic Ocean (1640s.1650s.)

Dutch East Indies

Golden Carriage (1898) carrying Dutch Royals





Triptych: Nicolaas van der Waay, Homage of the Colonies, 1898

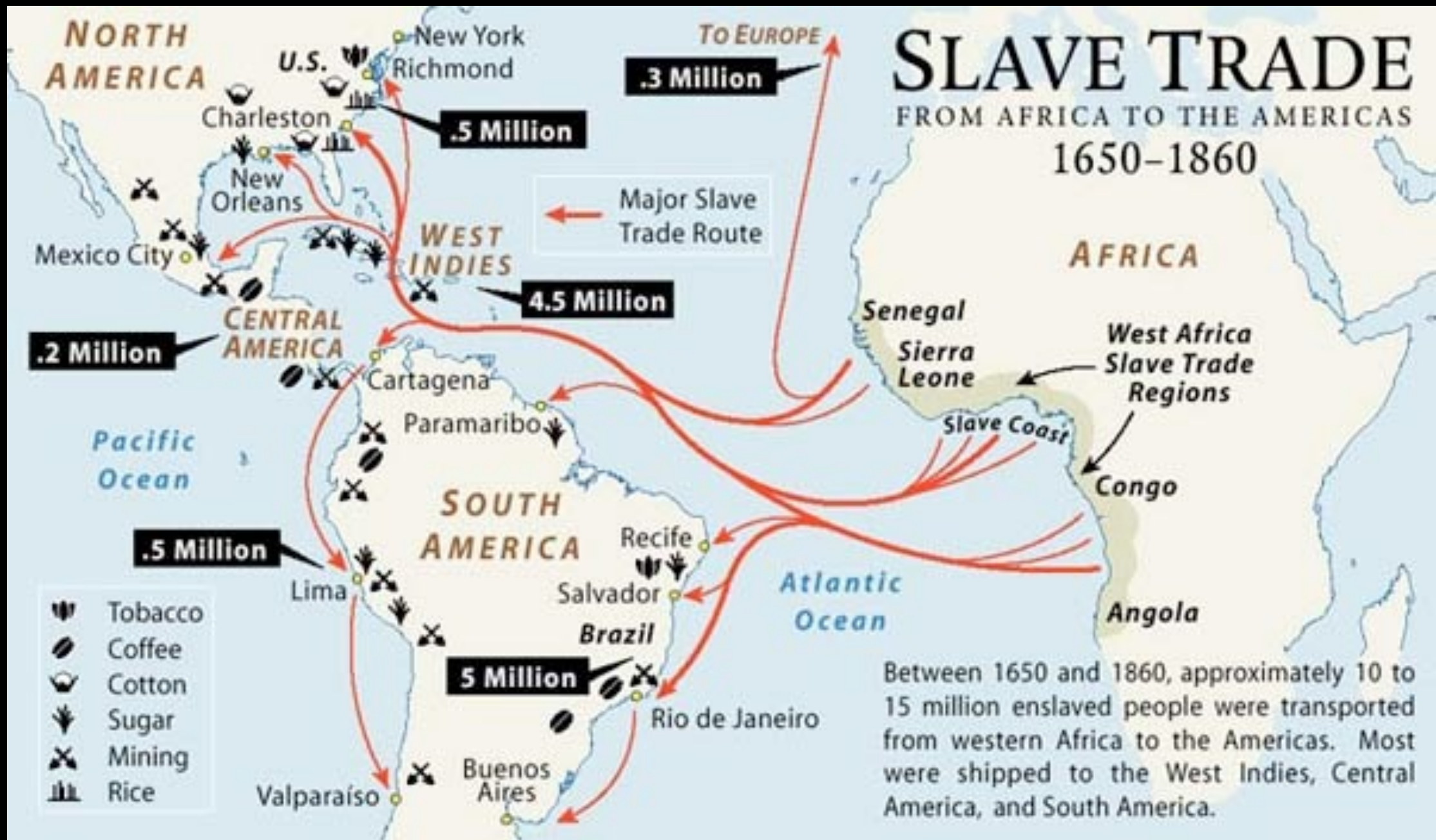






SLAVE TRADE

FROM AFRICA TO THE AMERICAS
1650-1860



Between 1650 and 1860, approximately 10 to 15 million enslaved people were transported from western Africa to the Americas. Most were shipped to the West Indies, Central America, and South America.



Arent Arentsz, Polderlandscape with Fishermen and Farmers, c. 1611; A polder is a piece of low-lying land reclaimed from the sea or a river and protected by dikes, especially in the Netherlands.



Above: Pieter Janssens Elinga, Interior with Painter, Woman Reading and Maid Sweeping, c. 1655

Above Left: Pieter de Hooch, Dutch Interior, 1655

Below Left: A Family Group in an Interior, attributed to Quiringh van Breckelenkam, ca.1658-70

Genre painting – slice of life painting Who were the “burghers”? (Related term: Bourgeoisie)

In terms of pursuing a career as an artist, how are women artists in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic different from those in Baroque Italy?

What were the challenges in the South?



Clara Peeters, Table, 1611



Clara Peeters, Still Life with Crab, Shrimps and Lobster, 1635-40

still life

What makes these works “Baroque”?



Clara Peeters, Still Life,
ca. 1630



Rachel Ruysch, Flower Still Life, ca. 1710

Rachel Ruysch, Flowers on a Tree Trunk, ca. 1710





Rachel Ruysch, Still Life with Flowers, 1695

vanitas paintings



Detail of Rachel Ruysch, Still Life with
Flowers, 1695

From Jan van Gool, *The Life Story of Rachel Ruysch*, 1750

With the good master [Willem van Aëist] our clever **Art-Heroine** advanced so much that she easily followed him close upon the heels in the garden, and superseded his teachings, subsequently taking nature as her teacher and example which she imitated so naturally and artfully because of her tireless study and exercise satisfied the high expectation one had of her; having done wonders in art, both in the painting of beautiful flowers as well as pleasant fruits, everything being so naturally depicted by her flattering brush, it snatches away the beholder in amazement and pleases the art lover to such an extent, that her artworks are sought after and paced in the famous cabinets of Europe.



Detail of Rachel Ruysch,
Still Life with Flowers,
1695



Jan van Gool, Self-Portrait, 1750



Judith Leyster, Self-Portrait, ca. 1630



Judith Leyster, The Proposition or Man Offering Money to a Young Woman, 1631



Johannes Vermeer, The Milk Maid, 1658

genre painting

Images of domestic
virtue



Judith Leyster, The Proposition or Man Offering Money to
a Young Woman, 1631



detail of Johannes Vermeer, *The Milk Maid*, 1658 showing the foot warmer, with tiles of Cupid and a man with a pole on either side of it



Foot warmer (detail), Judith Leyster, *Man Offering Money to a Woman (The Proposition)*, 1631



Judith Leyster, Boy with a cat, red hat and a piece of bread. Ca. 1631

genre painting



Judith Leyster, The Cello Player, 1636



Right: An occupational portrait by Jacob Houbraken, after Georg Gsell, via *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium*, Amsterdam 1705
Left: Maria Sibylla Merian, *Plate 18* (from "Dissertation in Insect Generations and Metamorphosis in Surinam", second edition), 1719

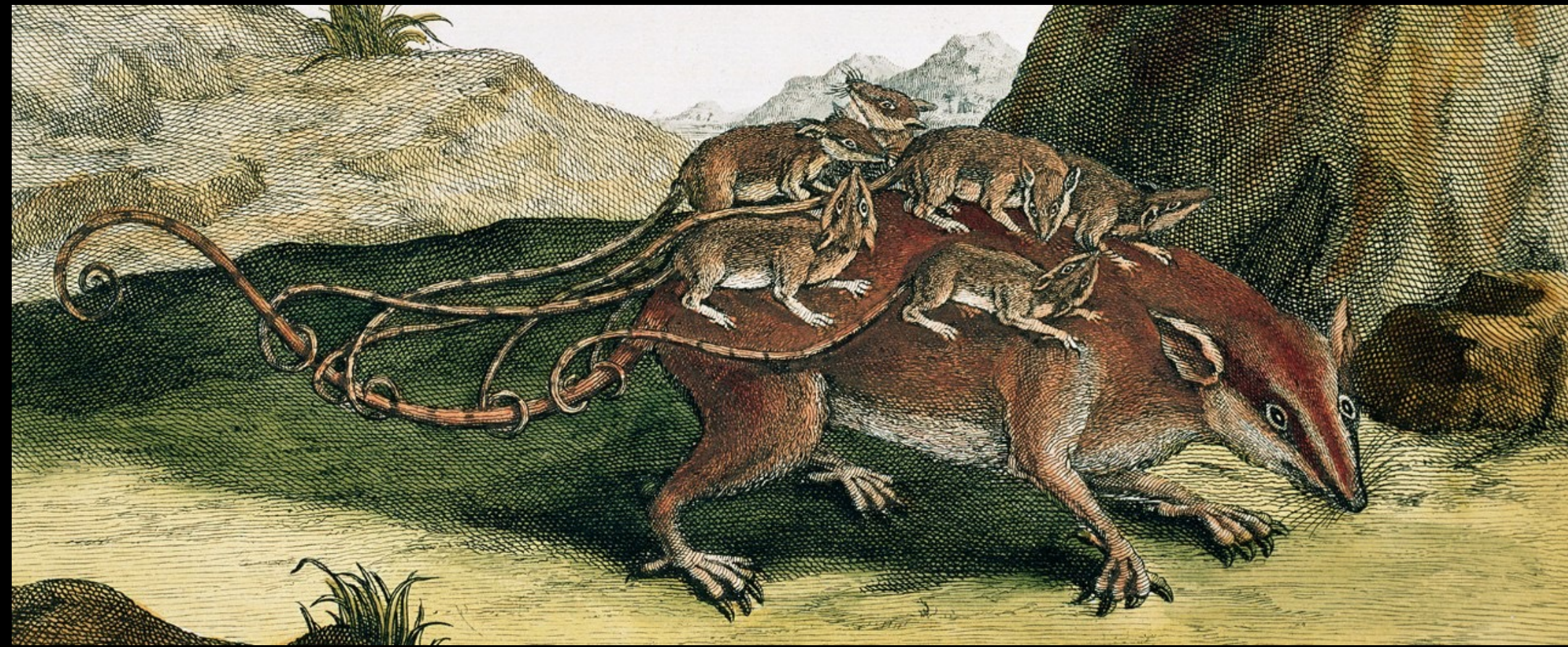
- Botanical artist
- Entomology



A Surinamese melon and insects from the book *Insects of Suriname* by Maria Sibylla Merian, 1726 edition. Throughout her career, Merian's work methodically linked the life cycle of species to the plants they lived and fed on.



Emperor moth (*Arsenura armida*) living on the leaves of the coral tree (*Erythrina fusca*), from Merian's *Insects of Suriname*, 1705



Merian's 'forest rat' or opossum (*Didelphimorphia*) carrying her young. Detail from plate 66 of *Insects of Suriname*, 1705. Reproduced as an engraving.

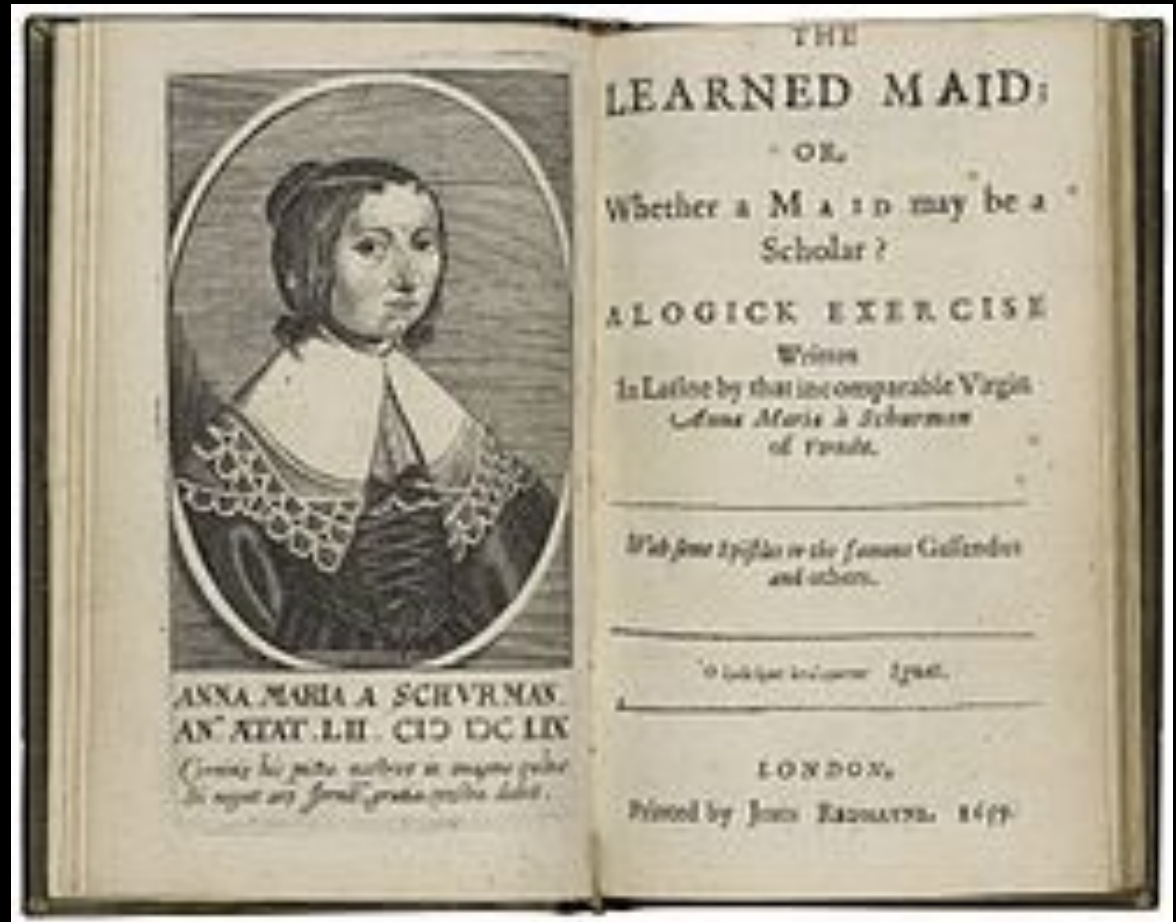
Labadists



Maria Sibylla Merian, *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*, 1719



Anna Maria van Schurman, Self-Portrait, 1632



Schurman argued that "A Maid may be a Scholar... The assertion may be proved both from the property of the form of this subject; or the rational soul: and from the very acts and effects themselves. For it is manifest that Maids do actually learn any arts and science."