Valuable introductions to the interrelated themes of artists’ education, intellectual ambitions, and literary endeavors in early-modern Europe include, to name just a few major works, Wackernagel 1938, 363-68; Wittkower 1963, 14-16 and 93-96; Dempsey 1980; Rossi 1980; Rubin et al. 1984; André Chastel in Garin 1988, 237-69: 253-63; Thea Vignau-Wilberg in Fučíková 1997, 179-88; Ames-Lewis 2000; Guthmüller et al. 2006, and Damm et al. 2013. The intellectual education of Renaissance artists, between ca. 1450 and 1550, is the topic of the monographic treatment of Dressen, forthcoming. The widespread use of the Latin expression *doctus artifex* in recent scholarly literature derives from the concise and influential work of Białostocki 1984, which took as a focus the libraries of several European artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

See Schlosser 1924, 85-406. In his book, Schlosser examined a handful of poetic works by Italian Renaissance artists. In particular, he paid attention to Giovanni Santi’s Cronaca Rimata (ca. 1478-1494), to the Antiquarie prospetiche Romane by the so-called “Prospectivo Milanese depintore” (published in 1500), to Francesco Lancillotti’s terza rima composition of the Lamento della pittura (published in 1509), and to Giovan Paolo Lomazzo’s poetic autobiography and anthology of the Grotteschi (1587). On the whole, however, this typology of artists’ writings remains a peripheral subject in his paramount monograph on the sources of art history.

For the ancient sources of these ideas, see in order Horace, Ars Poetica, l. 361, and Plutarch, Moralia (De gloria Atheniensium), 346f. A vast scholarly literature, which is impossible to survey here, has addressed the revival of these notions in artistic literature of the Italian Renaissance. Suffice here to mention just the classic study of Lee 1940, the elegant treatment of Barkan 2013, and the recent overview of relevant sources in Passignat 2017, 76-78 and 273-78, with further bibliography. In the Trattato dell’arte della Pittura (1584), Giovan Paolo Lomazzo claimed that nearly every painter possesses a poetic talent and inclination: for a discussion of his argument see infra, n. #. One of the indirect consequences of the centrality of ut pictura poësis in early modern artistic literature is also the fact that a number of recurrent motifs in biographical accounts on artists’ lives were modelled after those typical of prominent poets’ biographies: on this, see Soussloff 1997, 47-61, and Bartuschat 2004.

Among the most illuminating monographic treatments of Michelangelo’s poetry and its relation to the artist’s oeuvre are Cambon 1985; Folliero-Metz 2004; Barkan 2011; Schiavone 2013; Campeggiani 2015; Prodan 2018, and Moroncini 2019, as well as the magisterial critical and annotated edition of Michelangelo 2016, by Antonio Corsaro and Giorgio Masi.

Rossi 1995. On Cattaneo’s poetic activity, see also Rosa Maria Galleni Pellegrini in Baldissin Molli et al. 2013, 320-45, and Artico 2017.

Such a renewed interest came in almost equal measure from literary scholars and art historians. See at least the editions of Bronzino 1988 and 1998, as well as the critical treatments of Parker 1997, 2000, 2003, and 2004; Brock 2002, 7-17 and passim; Wolf-Dietrich Löhr in Frangeberg 2003, 48-100; Tanturli 2004b and 2011; Campbell 2004 and 2011; Stefania Pasti in Strinati 2010, 201-37; Massimiliano Rossi in Falciani and Natali 2010, 177-93; Geremicca 2013, 2017b and 2019; Lingo 2015; Chiummo 2016 and 2017; Hendler 2016. The new critical and annotated editions of the painter’s lyrical verse and of a selection of five burlesque compositions are also the object of the unpublished doctoral dissertations of Celi 2018 and Latini 2016.

See in order Enrico Mattioda’s critical and annotated edition of Vasari 2012 and my own work on Cellini (Cellini 2014.) For the poetic production of Danti and Poggini, see in order Cole and Gamberini 2016 and Gamberini 2016, with further references.

Along with the commentary to Cellini 2014, relevant works include Stimato 2008, 154-83; Guassardo 2016; the contributions of Marcello Ciccuto and Antonio Corsaro in Sacchi 2017, 89-99 and 101-19, and Rizzarelli 2019.

Two insightful assessments on the presence of artist-poets in the Florentine context are the essays by Massimiliano Rossi in Fumagalli and Rossi 2011, 27-31, and in Falciani 2015, 149-55. The only broad-ranging monographic work on the poetry of artists in Renaissance Italy dates back to over one century ago, but is of a compilatory and descriptive rather than critical nature: see Berti 1907. In many passages, Berti’s book closely follows the historical reconstruction that we read in the preface of Furno 1902 (3-25), the first monograph devoted to Bronzino’s literary activity. On a more personal note, the realization of the serious limits of available research in the field and of the heuristic possibilities inherent in a more organic exploration of it became clear at the end of my monographic study of Cellini’s poetry, and first led me to envision the present project.

Mazzoni 2005, 17.

To see just how widespread this mistaken assumption among critical discussions of premodern poetry actually is, see esp. Giunta 2002, 16-30, and Mazzoni 2005, 36-42. In their analyses, both Giunta and Mazzoni explicitly build upon a set of ideas that Theodor W. Adorno first articulated in his concise and influential Rede über Lyrik und Gesellschaft (1951), which underlined that the modern idea of lyric poetry has little correspondence with pre-modern examples of the genre. See esp. Adorno 1991, I, 38-40: “The lyric work hopes to attain universality through unrestrained individuation [...]. But the manifestations in earlier periods of the specifically lyric spirit familiar to us are only isolated flashes, just as backgrounds in older painting occasionally anticipate the idea of landscape painting. They do not establish it as a form. The great poets of the distant past [...] whom literary history classifies as lyric poets are uncommonly far from our primary conception of the lyric. They lack the quality of immediacy [...] which we are accustomed, rightly or not, to consider the criterion of the lyric and which we transcend only through rigorous education.”

Roeck 2013 and Ames-Lewis 2000, 168-72.

On the art-historical relevance of Giovanni Santi’s Cronaca, see at least the recent discussions of Kim E. Butler in Mochi Onori 2009, 38-43; on the five surviving autograph sonnets by Raphael and their main literary models, see the analysis by Lucia Bertolini and Francesco P. Di Teodoro in Faietti and Lanfranconi 2020, 287-93 (with further references); on the Antiquarie prospettiche and their debated attribution to Bramante, see the edition by Agosti and Isella 2006 and the considerations of Giontella and Fubini 2006.

Consider in particular the remarks of Ames-Lewis 2000, 168-69: “some Renaissance painters sought to exercise their inventive abilities by writing poetry themselves. They sought recognition as poets because, in spite of Alberti’s defence of painting and Leonardo’s arguments for the painter’s affective superiority, throughout the early Renaissance poets were more highly regarded than painters in intellectual circles [...]. Some early Renaissance artists themselves aspired to write poetry, although their early products should perhaps be described as ‘verse’ rather than ‘poetry.’” According to Ames-Lewis, the only literary accomplished poetic compositions by early Renaissance artists are those by Raphael, Bramante, and the young Michelangelo. A more neutral evaluation of the poetic production of early Renaissance artists, spanning from Andrea Orcagna to Bramante and Raphael, is that of Hessler 2014, 228-30. Rather than focusing on the supposed unpoeticity of these text, Hessler’s discussion emphasizes the extent to which such works reflect their authors’ aspirations to be recognized as learned and universal artists.

The fortune of such extroflected forms of poetry dates back to the first centuries of Italian literature, and represents the unifying thread of the broad-ranging study of Giunta 2002 on the poetic traditions of medieval Italy. Compare also Mazzoni 2005, 212: “L’egocentrismo della poesia moderna non ha equivalenti in nessun’altra forma letteraria, neppure nell’autobiografia posteriore a Rousseau [...]: i poeti moderni di solito scrivono in uno stile distante dalla frase di grado zero, prestando poca attenzione all’aspetto reale del mondo che la voce descrive. Le opere in versi degli ultimi secoli sembrano incapaci di porre dei limiti all’io [...]. L’immagine del mondo che la maggior parte delle poesie moderne rinvia al lettore è di tipo narcisistico.” For Adorno’s remarks see supra, n. 11.

Consider for instance Giunta 2002, 225, which discusses some Medieval examples of “identità di funzione e conguaglio della poesia sulla prosa” after observing, with reference to the subjects of the poems by Giovanni Dondi dall’Orologio (ca. 1330-1388): “il messaggio può [...] essere quello banale, privato, quotidiano, privo di qualsiasi valore e intenzione artistica che normalmente (vale a dire in un’altra età della poesia: quella presente, ad esempio) verrebbe giudicato incompatibile coi versi.”

See the essay La letteratura italiana nell’età del Concilio di Trento, in Dionisotti 19712, 227-54.

On sociability as one of the most defining features of sixteenth-century Italian poetry, see at least Ferroni 1999, XI-XXI and passim, Di Benedetto 2006, 179-80; Chiodo 2007, as well as the assessment by Richardson 2009, 95-137. Richardson stresses the centrality of such a feature in connection with his analysis of manuscript culture in Renaissance Italy, as this form of production and dissemination was the one typically associated with discursive verse. Once again, this social dimension of poetic production found an antecedent in the medieval tradition, for which see Giunta 2002, 71-266.

On Bramante as a poet, see at least Carlo Vecce’s introduction to his edition of the artist’s 25 preserved sonnets (Bramante 1995), Luciano Patetta in Patetta 2001, 77-81, as well as Isella 2005, 27-37.

The following considerations on the poet-artists who were active on that scene are indebted to Giovanna Perini’s contribution on the topic in Frangenberg 2003, 3-28. The focus of Perini’s essay extends up to and including three Baroque Bolognese painters who also penned verse – namely, Lionello Spada, Giovanni Luigi Valesio, and Agostino Mitelli.

The text of the sonnet All’Excellente Pictore Raffaello Sanxio, Zeusi del nostro secolo, whose incipit runs Non son Zeusi, né Apelle, e non son tale, was first published in Malvasia 1678, 1, 46.

For the poem (incipit: Chi farsi un buon pittor cerca, e desia), see ibid., 159. For a review of the modern critical debate on both the sonnet that Malvasia attributed to Francia and the one he ascribed to Agostino Carracci see Perini in Frangenberg 2003, 8-9.

The detailed account of the gatherings of this group can be read in Cellini 1996, 105-09 (Vita I 30): 105 for the quote.

For exact references to these letters by Aretino, see here chapter 1, n. #.

An updated discussion on the place of artists, and poet-artists, within the Academy is offered by Tramelli 2011, with further references on the institution.

For the Rabisch, see Dante Isella’s edition of Lomazzo 1993; for the Rime, which include the Vita del auttore descritta da lui stesso in rime sciolte and a second book largely devoted to the celebration of sixteenth-century artists, see Alessandra Ruffino’s edition of Lomazzo 2006. A useful introduction to Lomazzo’s poetic activity is that of Taddeo 1997.

Consider what the author writes in the second chapter of the text, with regards to the matter of pictorial compositions (Lomazzo 1974, II, 244-46): “E se pure in parte alcuna si vuol variare, si ha d’avvertire alla convenevoleza et anco all’accrescimento dell’effetto, ad imitazione de’ poeti, a quali i pittori sono in molte parti simili, massime che così nel dipinger, come nel poetare, vi corre il furor di Apolline, e l’uno e l’altro ha per oggetto i fatti illustri e le le lodi de gl’Eroi da rappresentare. Onde soleva dir alcuno che la poesia era una pittura parlante e la pittura era una poesia mutola. Anci pare, per non so quale conseguenza, che non possa essere pittore che insieme anco non habbia qualche spirito di poesia; e di rado s’è ritrovato pittore che abbia potuto cosa alcuna dipingere, che subito anco non sia stato indotto dal genio naturale a cantarla puramente in versi, ancora che per aventura non sapesse leggere né scrivere. Sì come tra gli altri fa fede quello enimma de i dadi di Bramante, che così dice [...]. Così si trova che il dotto Leonardo da Vinci soleva molte volte poetare, e fra gli altri suoi sonetti, che sono difficili a ritrovare, si legge quello: Chi non può quel che vuol, quel può voglia [...]. Se ne leggono anco de gli altri gran pittori gimnosofisti [here in the sense of ‘savvy’, ‘learned’], come furono il Buonarotti, il Ferrari, il Lovino et il bernesco Bronzino [...].” On Lomazzo’s attribution to Leonardo of Antonio di Meglio’s sonnet see here chapter 1, n. #.

It is perhaps worth noting the apparent absence of Southern cities among the Italian centers that, in the Renaissance, witnessed a flourishing of poetic vocations among visual artists. This absence is all the more relevant if we consider that the most prominent poet-painter of Seicento Italy, Salvator Rosa, was of Neapolitan origin, although his famous Satires mostly date to the artist’s sojourn in Florence. On Rosa’s literary activity see at least Ferrari and Ulivi 1975; Conte 2014, II; De Liso 2018.

On Soffici as a poet see, among others, Pierpaoli 2003.

For a detailed discussion of the manuscript transmission of the poem, a critical edition of its text, and a review of the scholarly literature available on it, see Baldassarri 1997.

The only notable exception to this general silence seems to be a mention of Giotto’s poetic activity in Giovan Battista Armenini’s De’ veri precetti della pittura (1586). See Armenini 1988, 237: “Ma quel pittore che fu quasi un miracolo, che accompagnò con l’architettura e con l’istorie la pittura, la musica e la poesia fu primieramente Gi<o>tto fiorentino, dal quale si vide uscire la prima luce da quelle orrende tenebre in che sepolta era.”

Baldassarri argues for the reliability of the poem’s attribution (see ibid., 387-89). The same position is articulated by two of the few other modern studies of the composition, Ciccuto 1996 and Schwarz and Theis 2004, I, 63-69.

See Billi 1991, 72, for which Orcagna “Dilettossi di comporre, e ancora si truova de’ sua sonetti.” Starting from the first edition of the Vite (1550), Vasari drew on this source for ascribing to Andrea di Cione a familiarity with poetic composition. For a discussion of the passage, see here, chapter 1, n. #.

For the most recent and philologically thorough assessment of the tradition of the poems see Carboni 2009, which concludes that the author of the texts was indeed Andrea di Cione. As reconstructed by Carboni in his overview of the debate on the paternity of the compositions (see ibid., 113-14), Trucchi 1846, 2, 24; Lanza 1989, 337 and 365-66; Orvieto and Brestolini 2000, 189, and Kreytenberg 2000, 13-14 were of the same opinion.

Among the studies that uphold this thesis are Rossi 1938, 265; Gordon 1956, 128-29; Bausi 1994, 277, and Cursietti 2002.

Manetti mentioned Brunelleschi’s use of the sonnet as a means for conducting diatribes in two passages of his biography of the artist. In the first, he was reconstructing the origins of an enmity between the architect and Donatello, on the occasion of the completion of the latter’s sculptural works for Brunelleschi’s Old Sacristy in the Florentine basilica of San Lorenzo. See Manetti 1976, 110: “Le quali cose sue della sagrestia [...] non ebbono mai la grazia di Filippo. Il che veggendo ed intendendo Donato, furono cagione di grande indegnazione verso Filippo; e detraeva Donato alla fama ed all’opra di Filippo quant’e’ poteva, essendo sollevato da qualcuno, ché era un poco leggieri; ma Filippo se ne ghignava e faceva poca stima di sue parole. Pure, dopo le molte, perseverando Donato nelle sue prosunzioni, e per purgarsi Filippo pe’ tempi, che le porticciuole de’ macigni che hanno per usci e bronzi non fussino sue, né nulla che fussi in quelle facciuole delle porticciuole tra pilastro e pilastro, dalla cappella alle mura de’ canti, costrinse Filippo a fare certi sonetti, che ancora se ne truova qualcuno, che lo purgano di tutto.” In the second passage, the biographer related that Brunelleschi similarly responded to the ongoing criticism of a detractor over his works for the Opera of Santa Maria del Fiore (Manetti 1976, 114): “E essendo Filippo raguagliato di queste cose, e provatosi di farlo stare cheto per più modi, e non gli giovando nulla, e’ gli fece un sonetto, ch’io udi’ già, e non l’ho potuto ritrovare, el quale costui tenne a mente non tanto quant’e’ visse Filippo, ma quanto visse lui medesimo.” On the art-historical relevance of the first passage see Pfisterer 2002, 284.

See Giuliano Tanturli’s preface to his critical edition of the poems in Brunelleschi 1977, 5-19, with a review of the previous literature on the poems and of the wrong attributions that had sometimes dogged studies on the topic. In his monograph on Brunelleschi, Eugenio Battisti (1976, 324) had for instance expressed doubts on the sonnets’ attribution to the architect.

See the Sonetto d’uno che contraffà l’Orcagno, in Brunelleschi 1977, 23.

On the poetic output of these artists see esp. Bastogi 2008, 367-73 (Andrea Boscoli); Pizzorusso 1982, 93-98 (Cristofano Allori); Baffoni 1955, 12-17 (Andrea Commodi); Fantuzzi 2003, 149 and Hansen 2016 (Giovanni da San Giovanni, the latter article also with reference to manuscript sources on Baccio del Bianco and Cosimo Lotti’s poetry); Massiliano Rossi in Gregori and Maffeis 2007, 107-19 and 295-306, and Hansen 2017, 82-83 (Francesco Furini); Rossi 2000 (Sebastiano Mazzoni); Struhal 2007 and ead. in Damm et alii 2013, 105-27 (Lorenzo Lippi); Piermei 1934, 226-30 (Giovanni Angelo Lottini); Pizzorusso 1989, 63-71 and 125-85 (Agostino Ubaldini.) The majority of this list was first compiled by Rossi in his contribution on Furini (107), which emphasized how Giovanni da San Giovanni, Furini himself, Baccio del Bianco, Sebastiano Mazzoni, Cosimo Lotti, and Lorenzo Lippi embody “una vera e propria poetica neoburlesca.” The only true exception to this trend of comical poetry among early seventeenth-century Florentine artists is that of the Servite friar and religious dramatist Lottini, a former pupil of the sculptor, friar and poet Giovann’Angelo Montorsoli, for Lottini’s extensive and manuscript poetic output (over 300 compositions, among sonnets, madrigals and canzoni) consists entirely of moral and devotional texts.

For the connection that Filippo Baldinucci establishes, in numerous passages from his Notizie de’ professori del disegno, between the artists’ active engagement with comic poetry and the motif of the bizzarria see ibid.

Such is the thesis of Bucchi 2007, which is based on the presence in Andrea del Sarto’s alleged text of many linguistic and historic anachronisms, as well as of a number of intertextual references to literary works of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, after a revision of the long scholarly debate on the poem’s attribution, Wellen 2009 maintains that the Guerra has probably come down to us in the form of a substantial, eighteenth-century revision of an original composition by Andrea del Sarto.

For a discussion of how these poetic genres were those most often circulated in manuscript form, see Richardson 2009, 95-137.

Rossi 1995, 7.

See, among others, the considerations of Joanna Woods-Marsden in Rogers 2000, 5, which connect the relative paucity of visual self-portraits by Florentine artists of that milieu to their extensive use of literary media: “exceptionally for the culture, all these Florentine artists [Bandinelli, Pontormo, Bronzino, Vasari, Cellini and Allori] wrote something, most of them for publication. To say that they privileged the word is an understatement. Bandinelli, for instance, declared that his real passion was literary, not artistic, creation: ‘I wish to immortalize my name with my pen, this being a truly congenial and liberale pursuit.’ His enemy Cellini did precisely that by producing no visual self-likeness, not even a medal, to place beside his incomparable literary self-representation. Such cultural values [...] were a key determinant underlying the veritable explosion of artistic biography, autobiography and autobiographical treatises in Florence in the 1550s and 1560s.” In their introduction to Buonarroti’s poems (Michelangelo 2016, VII), Antonio Corsaro and Giorgio Masi similarly emphasize how mid-sixteenth century Florence witnessed an extraordinary “assembramento di pittori e scultori conterranei che compongono in un breve torno d’anni un buon numero di versi e di prose,” and how such a concentration of artist-writers represents a most unusual phenomenon in the history of Italian literature.

Out of caution, I am excluding from this list the so-called Memoriale of Baccio Bandinelli, which Louis Alexander Waldman first argued to be an early seventeenth-century forgery by the artist’s grandson, Baccio Bandinelli il Giovane (see Waldman 2004, X-XII.) However, while Waldman’s thesis is grounded in codicological and archival evidence, a documentary discovery has recently been made that suggests questioning some of his conclusions about the late fabrication of the Memoriale. In a momentous forthcoming essay, Carlo Alberto Girotto discusses one previously unknown text by Anton Francesco Doni, a distant relative of Baccio Bandinelli and one of the artist’s few fervent supporters in the Italian literary scene of the age, which contains in nuce some of the contents that we read in the Memoriale. According to Girotto, it is plausible that Bandinelli (who might have played a role in the conception of the text) preserved the document, which must have remained in the archives of the sculptor’s family after Baccio’s death. The source was then most probably recovered and taken as basis by Baccio il Giovane for his rewriting.

Dionisotti 19712, 243.

Ibid., 244-46.

Compare the following remarks from the same scholar’s study of Leonardo’s literary culture (Dionisotti 1962, 189): “Il Vasari scriveva quando letteratura e arti belle, dipingere e far versi, erano diventate abilità facilmente cumulabili, di che egli stesso era esempio, e quando il pieno trionfo della poesia italiana cinquecentesca faceva sì che un’abilità poetica fosse fra le decorazioni ambite da ogni persona d’ingegno, nonché di genio.” For the commercial fortune, in Cinquecento Italy, of editorial instruments such as the rimari see esp. Presa and Uboldi 1974 and Quondam 1991, 123-50. For a discussion of the relevance that such books could have in the literary instruction of artists see Cole and Gamberini 2016, 1318-23.

For an account of Pliny’s anecdotes on ancient artists’ short poetic compositions, see here, ch. 3, n. # and #.

It is worth noting that my use of the expression “arts of drawing”, and the deriving identification of the four main categories of practitioners that my book considers (painters, sculptors, architects, and goldsmiths), refers to a classification that was typical of the Florentine artistic tradition up to the foundation of the Accademia del Disegno (1563). As Marco Collareta has demonstrated (see, for instance, his essay in Nova and Schreurs 2003, 161-69), the policy of the institution marked the demotion of gold smithery to the rank of artisanal activity, following the ideas on the subject of Giorgio Vasari. The same scholar has however shown that several Florentine artists, with Benvenuto Cellini in the first place, voiced their opposition to this demotion and continued to hold gold smithery firmly in the number of the arts of drawing.

On the peculiar degree of osmosis and compenetration that characterized the worlds of literati and visual artists in Quattrocento Florence see, among others, Dionisotti 1962, 201; Brucker 1969, 215-22; Giuliano Tanturli in De Angelis d’Ossat et alii 1980, I, 125-44.

On the concept of “trading zones” and its relevance for the study of the culture of sixteenth-century Italy see Pamela O. Long in Valleriani 2017, 223-46, with further references.

For a discussion of the ramifications of these last factors see ch. 1 and 2.

See Christian Bec in Franceschetti 1985, 1, 81-101: 87. Compare, in particular, the observations that writing was never, for these authors, “un atto gratuito [...], un piacevole svago,” nor was it the fruit of an elementary desire for self-memorialization, since these practitioners of the visual arts were generally using the written word as a site to “riflettere sulla funzione ed il significato dell’arte e dell’artista”, as well as “definire i loro rapporti nei confronti degli altri intellettuali e [...] situarsi in seno ad una società urbana o cortigiana.”