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**Elisabetta Sirani's *Porcia Wounding Her Thigh* (1664)
A Piece of Mute Eloquence or a Meta-Painting?**

The paper deals with an almost hypnotic picture of Elisabetta Sirani, *Porcia Wounding Her Thigh* (1664); an altogether brutal and refined painting, allusive and violent, pleasant and disturbing. The fascination is due to the multifaceted interactions between an extraordinary intertext - Plutarch's lines on Porcia in *Brutus life* and our contemporary reception of a text and image which cannot preclude or remove feminist and psychoanalytic approaches on what seems a female recrimination and self-mutilation. Comparative skills will be used to unfold the mysteries of the painting: literary material, particularly a French 17th century commentary on Porcia's gesture in *La Femme héroïque* of J. Du Bosc (1642). Porcia's *charisma* stems from this polisemy: she lends herself to political, philosophical, psychanalytical and other readings. We would like to propose Porcia as the third panel of a mental triptych formed by the *Nota delle pitture fatte da me*, transcribed by Malvasia in his *Felsina Pittrice*, and the "signature phenomenon" as evidences of Elisabetta Sirani's maturity and professional self-awareness. *Porcia wounding her thigh* could be held as a "meta-painting"; not the remonstrations of a wife to her husband but a claim of *pictura's* superiority over *poesis*.