Autographing the Self: Self-Portrayal through Lettering in Eighteenth-Century England

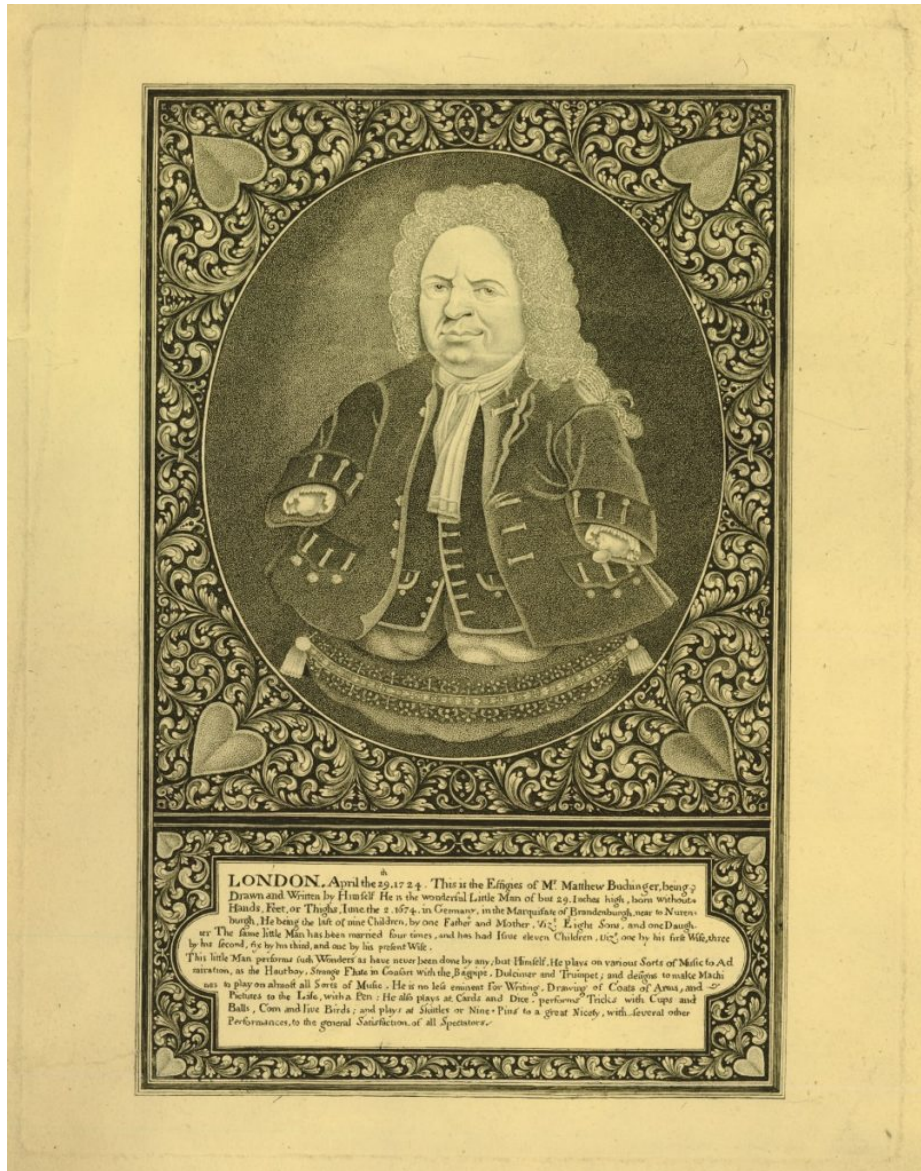Assistant

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Fig. 1. Anonymous, *Matthias Buchinger* (after a Self-Portrait), 1724. Stipple and engraving, 33.2 × 25.7 cm. The British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Introduction: Words and/as Images

Portrayals take many forms. Take, on the one hand, a stipple engraving from 1724 by the artist and performer Matthias Buchinger (**Fig. 1**). It shows the physically disabled German, who was born without hands and legs, sitting on a cushion. An oval portrait supplemented with biographical details, its depiction of the artist's hair has become famous because the curls are made up of so-called micrography—minuscule lettering— that spells out seven Psalms. Or, on the other hand, a collection from 1788 of frontispiece portraits titled *British Autography: A Collection of Fac-Similies of the Hand Writing of Royal and Illustrious Personages, with their authentic Portraits*, which was the first volume to include the sitters' autographs below their pictures (**Fig. 2**). Its publisher, the print-seller and engraver John Thane, provided no additional information on this peculiar choice, but he was aware of an audience for reproductions of handwriting, an audience that valued traces, marks, and vestiges of illustrious persons.
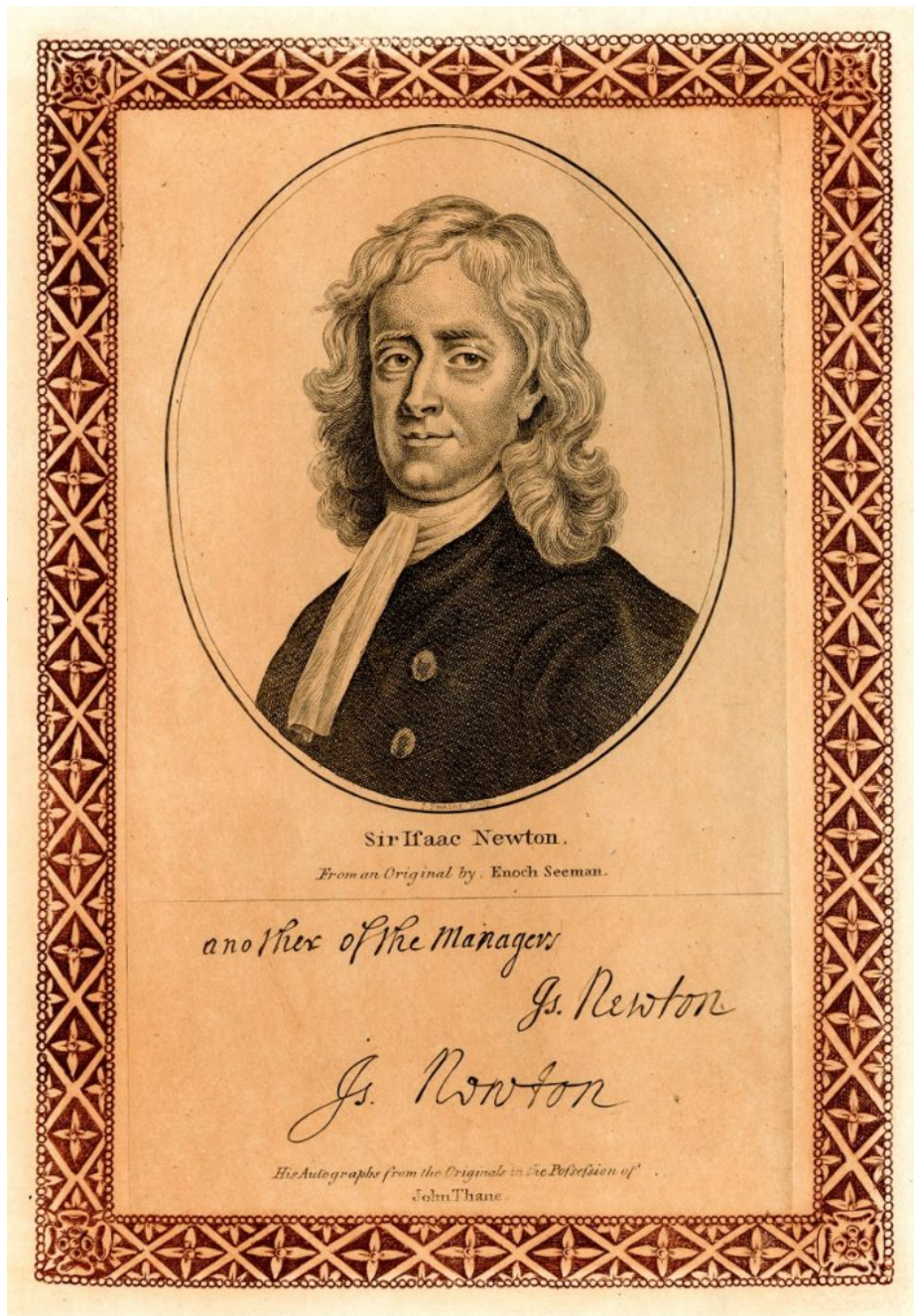
Fig. 2. *Isaac Newton and His Autograph*, 1788-1793. Etching and engraving, 22.5 x 16.4 cm. British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

At first glance, the two forms of portrayal seem to belong to different groups, both in terms of representation and the individual contexts of their creation. One is a self-portrait intended as such, adorned with calligraphy and, together with its author, hailed as a curiosity. The other is an autograph, a conventional proof of authorship, which, while meant to act as a mark of one's self, is usually not assumed to constitute a self-portrait in the narrower sense, that is, a document or image produced by an individual as their representation (i.e., depiction and substitution).[1] One has been undertaken by an artist in pursuit of art, the other by non-artists to serve a primarily certifying function. Despite their differences, however, they converge in the fact that they reproduce and exhibit the singular trace left by each individual in the world, a trace that simultaneously represents and authenticates the presence of the author.[2] Bringing them together

provides, as this article will argue, an opportunity to explore the intersections between self-(re)presentation and self-portrayals, which both pose questions about the mark as evidence of former presence.[3] In the case of their printed reproduction, this original mark, at once an authenticating trace *and* a representation, becomes a representation *of* a trace, and a reproducible one to boot.

In signatures, the link between indexical and authenticating functions is especially powerful. Accordingly, artists' monograms and signatures, especially from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, have received much scholarly attention because they merge individual expression with artistic self-marketing, thus guaranteeing a personal style and functioning as a form of pre-modern branding.[4] As Charlotte Guichard has observed, "during the eighteenth century, signatures retained this authorial function because of the development of an art market based on the aura of artists' names. But they also emerged as autographic traces, modifying notions of the artist's presence and performance on the canvas."[5] Autographs or monograms became tools by which artists inscribed themselves into the pictorial realm, reflecting and reaffirming the boundaries between the non-artistic and the artistic world, all while partaking of the latter.[6] Guichard has further argued that, whether as text or image, autographs indicate presence (of text, image, artifact) and point to the moment of their genesis and the wider context of their production.[7] Similarly, Philip Sohm has identified palettes in self-portraits as "potent sites of self-declaration: this is who I am; this is my style; this is how I make paintings; this is who I aspire to be."[8]

By virtue of their producers and the places where they appear, artists' signatures oscillate between being word and image. But, going beyond categorizing them as "brandings," "inscriptions," or "descriptions," what does it mean to understand words *as* images,[9] or even, as John Wilmerding has written, as "concentrated glimpses of self-portraiture"?[10] Compared to signatures, which have an identifying function,[11] autographic writing poses different problems because it is concerned with revelations—maybe even unintended—of the self rather than with the self-portrait proper. In eighteenth-century English language, autographs and autography denoted the handwriting of a specific person or the original manuscript,[12] and only later came to signify a person's own signature. The term "self-portrait" did not exist at all.[13] Broaching the issue of resemblance and thematizing the representative function of the genre, (self-)portraits that do not depict the face, body, or some kind of mimetic representation of the sitter's appearance have often been identified as modern.[14] However, scholarship has increasingly drawn attention to the multimedia and multilayered aspects of portraying the self, and to metonymic,[15] non-mimetic, and non-iconic forms of self-representation in the early modern period.[16] As Stuart Sherman has noted: "In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writing, the story of the self operates everywhere—in diaries, autobiographies, memoirs, confessions, letters, essays, travel books, fiction."[17] Nigel Hamilton writes that for most of the early modern period, (auto-)biography was understood to comprise both writing and drawing—as indicated by the common morpheme "graph"—and to denote the act of working with biographical information, regardless of the medium.[18]

Self-portrayals that stand at the threshold between the verbal and the visual, or even the non-mimetic and non-iconic, allow us to engage with questions of referentiality and likeness more broadly and to look at how visual expressions of character relate to the author's identity.[19] Because it derived from the emblematic tradition, replete with symbolism, and often mysticism, the idea of words *as* images was controversial in eighteenth-century England, where hybridity of visual and verbal media and visual encroachments on the literary were discouraged. And yet, taking into account the pictorial aspects of lettering,[20] as well as engaging with handwriting from the viewpoint of portraiture studies, can offer insights into words beyond their textual meaning. This in turn facilitates an understanding of self-portrayals as representations, showing what is characteristic of a person, in contrast to mimetic portraits, which aim for visual resemblance.[21] It also draws attention to the fact that self-portrayals are not only representations, but often also serve as a historical source, in that the genre of self-portraiture—including its retrospective denomination—is one way of engaging with a historical subject and his or her subjectivity.[22]

Self-Portrayal through Micrography: The Case of Matthias Buchinger (1724)
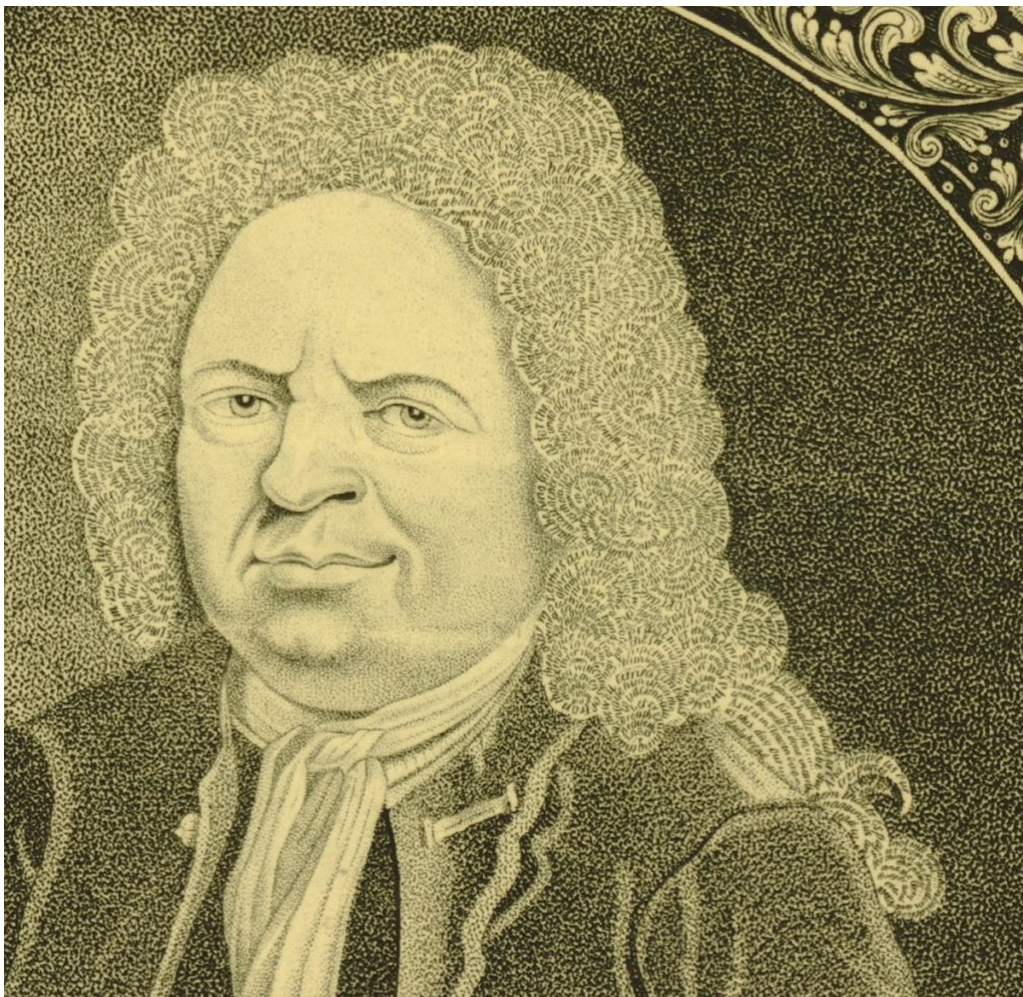

Fig. 1a. Detail of Fig. 1.

Matthias Buchinger's self-portrait (**Fig. 1**) with micrographic hair, for which the original drawing is lost, was published in 1724, seven years after he had come to Britain, where he would remain until his death.[23] The portrait shows Buchinger seated on a cushion

and dressed in contemporary fashion, wearing a vest, a cravat, a curly wig, and a coat whose loose sleeves indicate that his hands are missing. He wears no trousers, making the stumps of his legs visible. His face bears a slightly disgruntled expression and he has a prominent forehead, but his hair is the highlight of the picture. Seven Psalms in English (nos. 121, 127, 128, 130, 146, 149, and 150[24]) and the Lord's Prayer, written in minuscule characters, wind rhythmically and in continuous curls to form his wig, its turns and curves mirroring the floral ornaments surrounding the oval portrait (**Fig. 1a**). A brief biography below the portrait states that "This is the Effigie of Mr. Matthew Buchinger, being Drawn and Written by Himself" and that Buchinger, among other things, could play the flute, write, and draw "Pictures to the Life."

Fig. 3. Elias Baeck, *Portrait of Matthias Buchinger Surrounded by Thirteen Vignettes*, 1717. Etching and engraving with stipple, 33.3 × 18.8 cm. The British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum

Born without hands and feet in 1674 near Nuremberg, Buchinger was an apparently self-managed traveling artist, earning his living by performing music and magic tricks and, most importantly, drawing coats of arms, family trees, calligraphy, and micrography on commission.[25] He belonged to a group of non-normative individuals who were exhibited, or exhibited themselves, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, and who were classed as "curiosities" or "wonders" by nineteenth-century writers. However, Buchinger's case is more complex as he seems to have exhibited not his bodily differences—which were noteworthy, but not unique—but what he could do despite his apparent physical limitations. He could not only write, but write artistically, his missing

hands running counter to ideas of penmanship being necessarily related to a particular conception of the physically able body.[26] He used micrography, calligraphy, and other techniques, writing words forward, backward, large and small, in cursive and block form (**Fig. 3**). A broadsheet of 1726 stated: "For Hair Stroaks to the Eye they Pass | And yet they're Letters thro' a Glass."[27] From early in his career, he also performed his writing skills to audiences. Among his earliest preserved work is a supplication to the city of Nuremberg (1708), introducing himself as "a person born without hands and feet, endowed by God Almighty," written in calligraphy and requesting permission to set up a booth on the market at New Year to show his artistry.[28] His viewers would later include European royalty, and he drew micrographic portraits of Queen Anne and King George I.
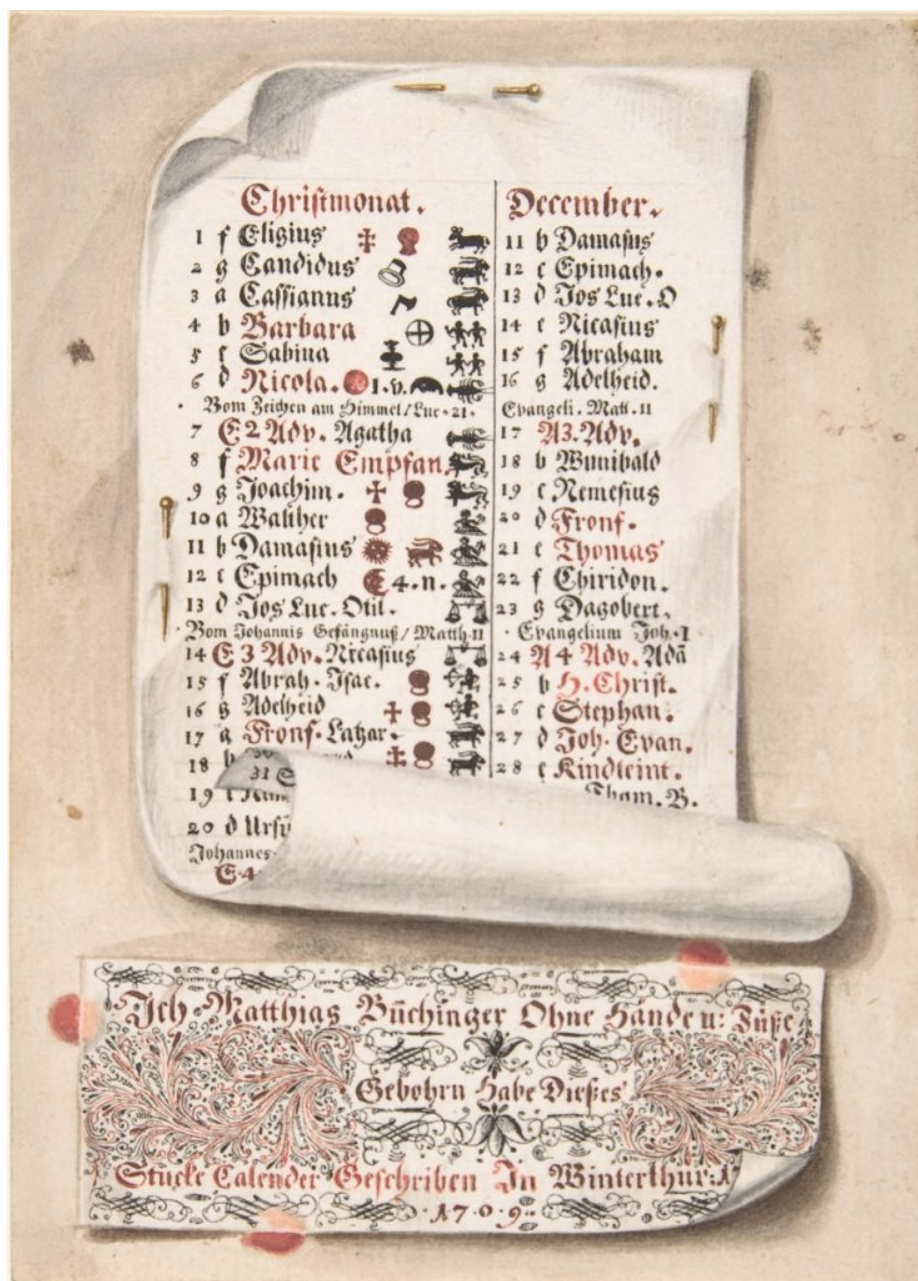

Fig. 4. Matthias Buchinger, *Calligraphic Trompe-l'œil Calendar*, 1709. Pen and red, brown, and black ink, brush and grey wash, 14.3 x 10.3 cm. Metropolitan Museum, New York. © Available under CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0) Public Domain Dedication.

The peculiar rendering of his wig, which both deflects and redirects attention to his limbless body, thus showcased Buchinger's skill at calligraphy while also encapsulating evidence of his performance, making it both a representation of himself and his particular profession. Micrography and calligraphy, straight or patterned, was an intrinsic part of Buchinger's identity as an artist and as a social individual, regardless of his corporeal differences. According to the description beneath, the self-portrait was notably "drawn and written by himself," indicating that, in this work, self-presentation was a visual-verbal enterprise. Most works by Buchinger included the explanation that the image was "written by me [or 'by Buchinger'], born without hands and feet" in one of his various handwriting styles, along with the place and the date in the respective language of the country: a Dutch inscription made in Amsterdam dates from 1704, a calligraphic trompe-l'œil includes a *cartellino* in German on which is written Winterthur and 1709 (**Fig. 4**), and many English inscriptions exist, including one on the inside of a ring.[29] Vouching for Buchinger's writing abilities, these inscriptions also serve as forms of life writing, as they testify to his travels and emphasize that any representation of or production by him was intrinsically linked to writing, its smallness additionally playing on his reputation as "The Little Man of Nuremberg" or "The Greatest German Living."[30]

In its production of iconic forms, micrography very closely approaches pictoriality; and by using quotes from the Bible, Buchinger recalled the religious belief in the potency of words, which had created a world and a people in God's image, including those like him who diverged from the physical norm. By using the Psalms, he also drew on parts of the Bible, which allowed for first-person expressions: Psalm 121, the one commencing the letter-curls on the lower left of the wig, and thus the first, begins

Fig. 1b. Detail of Fig. 1.

with "I will lift mine eyes unto the hills" (**Fig. 1b**); Psalm 130, starting on the upper right side of the head, reads "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord" (**Fig. 1c**); and Psalm 146:2, a bit further down on the right side, states "While I live I will praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being" (**Fig. 1d**). In contrast, the Lord's Prayer, starting with the collective enunciation "Our Father," is relegated to the part of the wig that extends on the back (**Fig. 1e**). While the selection criteria for the Psalms are unknown, there would seem to be some intentionality in using these linguistic self-declarations to become the very form of the artist's self-portrait.[31]
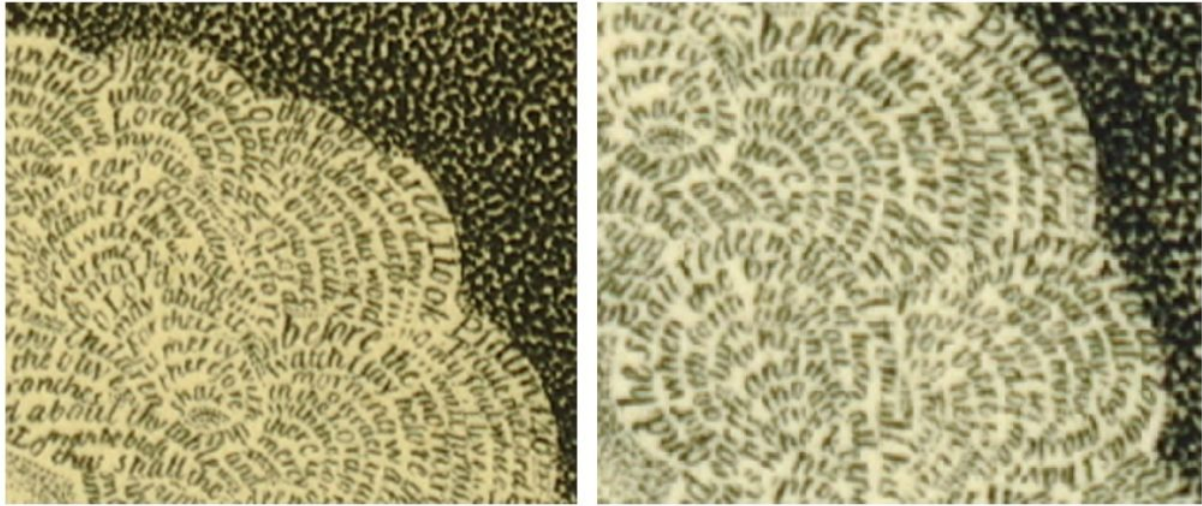
LEFT: Fig. 1c. and RIGHT: Fig. 1d. Details of Fig. 1.

Images created from micrography (minuscule lettering) or calligraphy (beautiful lettering) are rooted in religious culture. Dating back at least to antiquity, they are best known from Jewish and Muslim communities, where they made it possible to make images, including those of humans, while technically observing religious commandments against idolatry.[32] Early modern western or gentile examples of handwritten or printed letters arranged into images, nowadays known as "pattern," "concrete," "visual," or "iconic" poetry, are mostly ornamental, such as the lover's knot or George Herbert's famous poems *Easter Wing*s and *Altar* (1633), whose forms often mirror their content.[33] Micrographic portraits, in contrast, were rare, probably existing mostly in manuscripts.[34] Johann

Fig. 1e. Detail of Fig. 1.

Michael Püchler, who may have influenced Buchinger, produced several micrographic portraits of, among others, Martin Luther (**Fig. 5**), John Calvin, and King Gustav of Sweden; the library of St. John's College in Oxford holds a micrographic portrait of King Charles, the hair made of Psalms, which has been linked to the autobiographical account *Eikon Basilike. The Pourtraicture of His Sacred Maiestie in his Solitudes and Sufferings*, often called his literary self-portrait.[35]
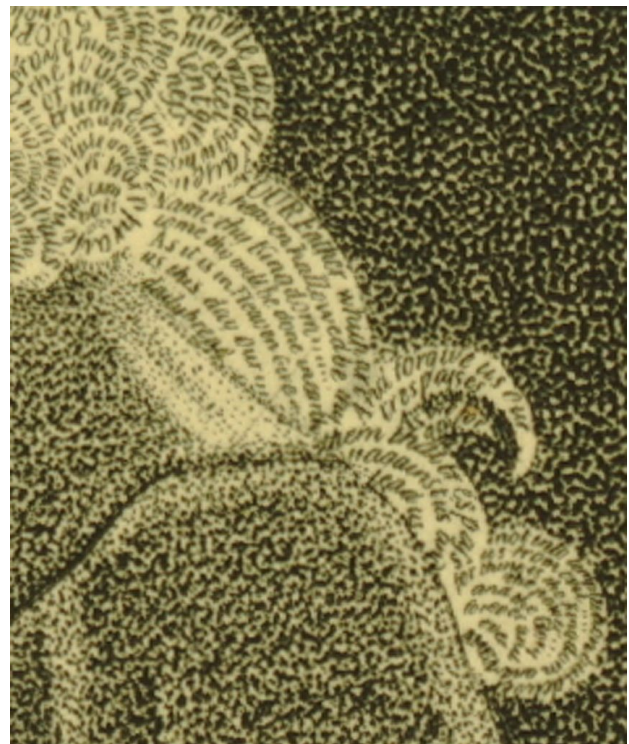
Fig. 5. Johann Michael Püchler, *Martin Luther*, c. 1680-1702. Engraving, 9.5 x 6.7 cm. Metropolitan Museum, New York. © Available under CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0) Public Domain Dedication.

While patterned writing enjoyed some popularity, visual-verbal hybrids were not highly regarded in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England.[36] In 1711, Joseph Addison devoted his *Spectator* essay no. 58 to denouncing such writings as an "obsolete kind of wit" that demonstrated industry rather than genius. Addison approvingly cited baroque poet and theorist of translation John Dryden's (1631-1700) assertion that it was wrong to "torture one poor word a thousand ways," and he derided Buchinger's works, quipping that he "has transcribed all the *Old Testament* in a full-bottomed Perriwig." Preceded by the motto "Ut pictura poesis erit," or "painting is like poetry," essay no. 58 was written "to establish among us a taste of polite writing."[37] Addison especially disliked the fusion of modes of representation as any micrographer "was first of all to draw the Out-line of the Subject [...]. The Poetry was to contract or dilate it self according to the Mould in which it was cast."[38] Addison apparently thought that micrography

took the idea of pictures' resemblance to poetry too far: instead of language and images subscribing to common ethics of virtuous politeness, but not to common modes of expression, micrographic image-making or pattern poetry produced a cross-breed of genres. This truly intermedial product was therefore believed to be, as Dick Higgins writes, "unable to stand on its own and was thus inherently mediocre."[39]

While Buchinger was seen as a spectacle at the end of the eighteenth century (sufficiently well-known that Horace Walpole could casually refer to him in a letter of 1796[40]), considering his work merely as the product of an idiosyncratic mind does not do justice either to his singular engagement with self-representation, or to his treatment of words as form. In his self-portrait, he shows his bodily particularities, but the micrographic hair belongs to an established tradition in which Buchinger situates himself not only by executing an art form, but also by using it to produce a self-image. Here, the typical (the expression of an art form) joined the incidental (the body of the artist). His most representative feature was his writing skill, which is corroborated by the fact that facsimiles of his hand-writing were often included in his engraved portraits. In Buchinger's self-portrait, the intertwining of the hand as a metaphor for style and the hand as a literal extension of the body occurred on various levels: the artistic, the aesthetic, the social, and the physical. The hand, understood as style, represented the artist Buchinger, but it also substituted for the hand as a limb, producing rather than reproducing an artistic identity within the self-portrait.

Self-Portrayals by Auto(bio)graphy: John Thane and Lucy Hutchinson

Buchinger was a rather unique case in England, capitalizing on his individual circumstances. However, the very idea that autographic writing—both signatures and letters—was a self-presentation bordering on, if not becoming, a form of self-portraiture increasingly took hold during the eighteenth century. It was read as an inimitable form of self-expression for both artists and laypeople alike. Importantly, and hence the link to Buchinger, the specifically visual qualities of autography played as much into this concept as its material qualities, as both were traces of historic individual(itie)s. The fashion for including facsimiles in collections of letters, portrait prints, or in memoirs and biographies toward the end of the eighteenth century implied that the image of handwriting remained telling beyond the original. Even as a reproduction, it made readers "almost contemporaries with York and Canterbury, Salisbury and Warwick," as the first book to employ facsimile autographs, John Fenn's *Original Letters* of 1787, explained.[41]
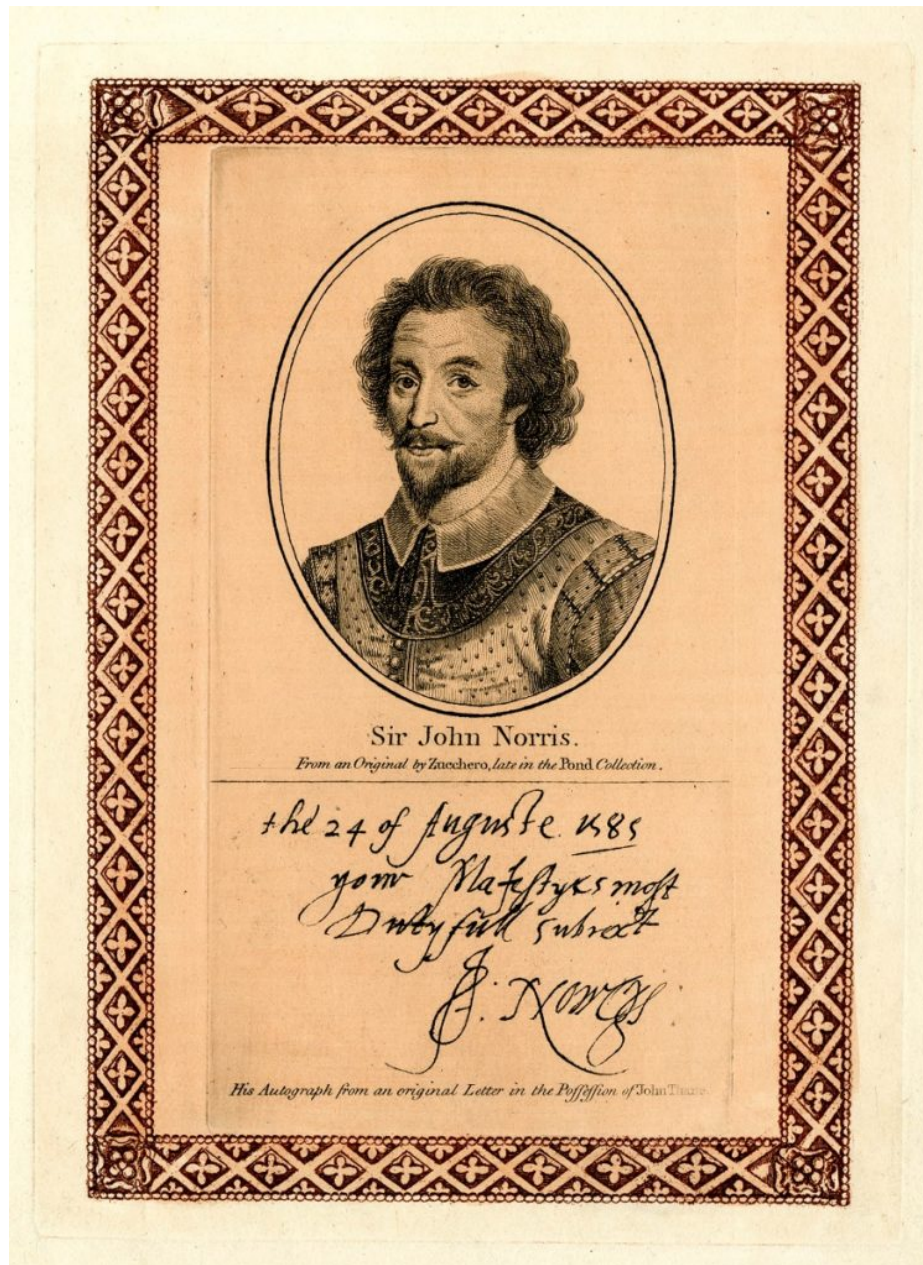
Fig. 6. *Sir John Norris and His Autograph*, 1788-1793. Etching and engraving, 18.4 x 16.4 cm (bor-der platemark: 22.4 x 9.8 cm). The British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Following Fenn, John Thane's *Autography* of 1788 was the first English book devoted solely to a combination of portraits with signatures or a few sentences written by the sitter (**Fig. 6**). Words of illustrious persons were seen as representing past ages and were made visible in their original state. Autographs therefore played their part in processes of nation-building, bolstering national genealogy by making history almost palpable. Paradoxically, the individual trace also became part of processes of homogenization: embedding autographs into a canon of like-minded individuals and a unifying common —albeit often invented—tradition ultimately diminished their chronological and personal specificities. Thane, for instance, presented all the signatures collected in the volume in a similar fashion, placing them underneath the print portraits and thus passing over their potentially different contexts, such as letters, certificates, records, or diaries. This treatment selectively exhibited certain particularities while leaving out others.

Fig. 7. "Fac-simile of Mrs. Hutchinson's Hand-Writing; Taken From Her Theological Remarks," in Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (S.I. 1806), following p. 18. © Available under CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0) Public Domain Dedication.

One of the first biographies to include autographs were the *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel John Hutchinson*, written by John's widow Lucy in the 1660s and 1670s, but only published by their descendant Julius Hutchinson in 1806.[42] Containing a preface by Julius, an autobiography by Lucy, and the biography of John, as well as two print portraits (John's prefacing the entire book, Lucy's her autobiography), this multimedia family history also included two autographs: a page in Lucy's hand, concluding "The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, Written by Herself. *A Fragment*"(**Fig. 7**), and John's signature, placed on a plan of Nottingham Castle following page 134 (**Fig. 8**).[43] Autographic writing was the only form of original self-expression handed down to the heirs. Throughout the book, Julius let it be known that Lucy's writing was much more telling than her picture because it showed her character and gave "a faithful image of the mode of thinking in those days of which it treats, an interesting and new specimen of private and public character, of

general and individual biography." Julius repeatedly emphasized Lucy's peculiar spelling. While acknowledging that orthography in general was "in a most unsettled state" in her time, he also noted that "she herself varies it so frequently, that it many times differs within the same page."[44] In Lucy's autobiography, writing and piety emerge as her two particularly important personal characteristics. Accordingly, the autobiography concluded with the "FAC-SIMILE OF MRS. HUTCHINSON'S HAND-WRITING; TAKEN FROM HER THEOLOGICAL REMARKS," which exemplified the inconsistent orthography, gave evidence of her enthusiastic religiosity, and created a counterpoint to the portrait with which the life-narrative had opened, ending with this alternative self-portrayal-in-handwriting.
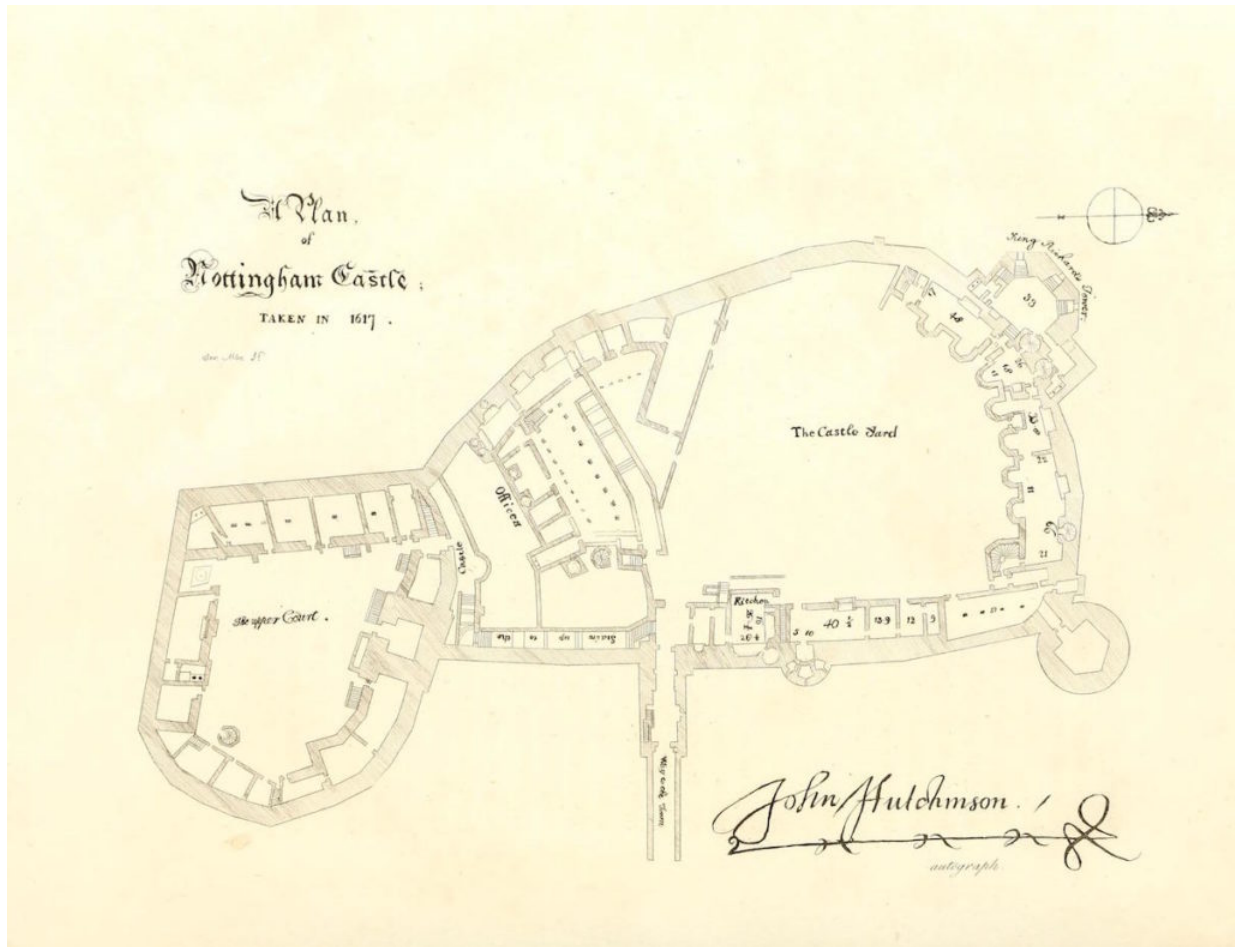

Fig. 8. "A Plan of Nottingham Castle, Taken in 1617", with the autograph of John Hutchinson, in Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (S.I. 1806), following p. 134. © Available under CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0) Public Domain Dedication.

The different forms of autographs raise the question of intention in self-representation. Between Buchinger's conscious self-portrait, the self-declaration contained in the identifying and authenticating function of signatures, and a (possibly random) page of writing, the difference between intentional self-presentation and accidental self-revelation seems to differ markedly. While intention is, most certainly, not negligible, Hutchinson's autographs, Fenn's *Letters,* and Thane's *Autography* also address questions revolving around the category of self-portraiture: self-presentation in whatever form is not only about—as Joanna Woods-Marsden has described it—"the relations between an 'I' and its world,"[45] but also about the boundaries of the self, its circumscription, its

autonomy, and accessibility to others.[46] Tellingly, in 1829, John Gough Nichols explained that autographs were the next best thing to a portrait because "we may place our hands on the spot where theirs once rested; and, in the studied or hasty letter, may pursue their very thoughts and feelings."[47]

Collecting autographs dates back to the sixteenth-century *album* or *liber amicorum*. Especially popular in German and Dutch academic circles, these volumes assembled signatures, poems, dedications, emblems, drawings, and, later in the eighteenth century, silhouette portraits from friends and acquaintances.[48] Understood as hybrid and unorthodox forms of self-portrayal,[49] autographs became collectibles and were featured in paintings.[50] The significance ascribed to them corresponded to enlightenment ideas of individuality, personal style, and authorship and appealed to antiquarian interests in classifying history. A form of analysis later known as graphology posited that autographs revealed one's personality because, as Johann Caspar Lavater wrote, handwriting was an index of the character of a person. Notably, this indexicality was supposedly not lost in reproductions such as the facsimile. Indeed, the very technique of the facsimile, the imitating copy that was distinct from the mediating print,[51] implied that it was possible for the individuality of the mediator to converge with that of the creator, the former's original contribution showing in the degree of absolute imitation. Separating the depiction from the material upon which it was written, facsimiles of autographs implied that the visual-verbal interaction had a meaning beyond the original's materiality, a meaning that is most forcefully articulated in the art that Buchinger represented, namely, the understanding that writing has visual qualities. Autography facsimiles thus both reinforced and undercut the genetically informed idea of lines as traces and imprints of the self: they are copies, but valid as representations of a unique combination of lines that conveys, if not all, then an essential part of the original.[52]
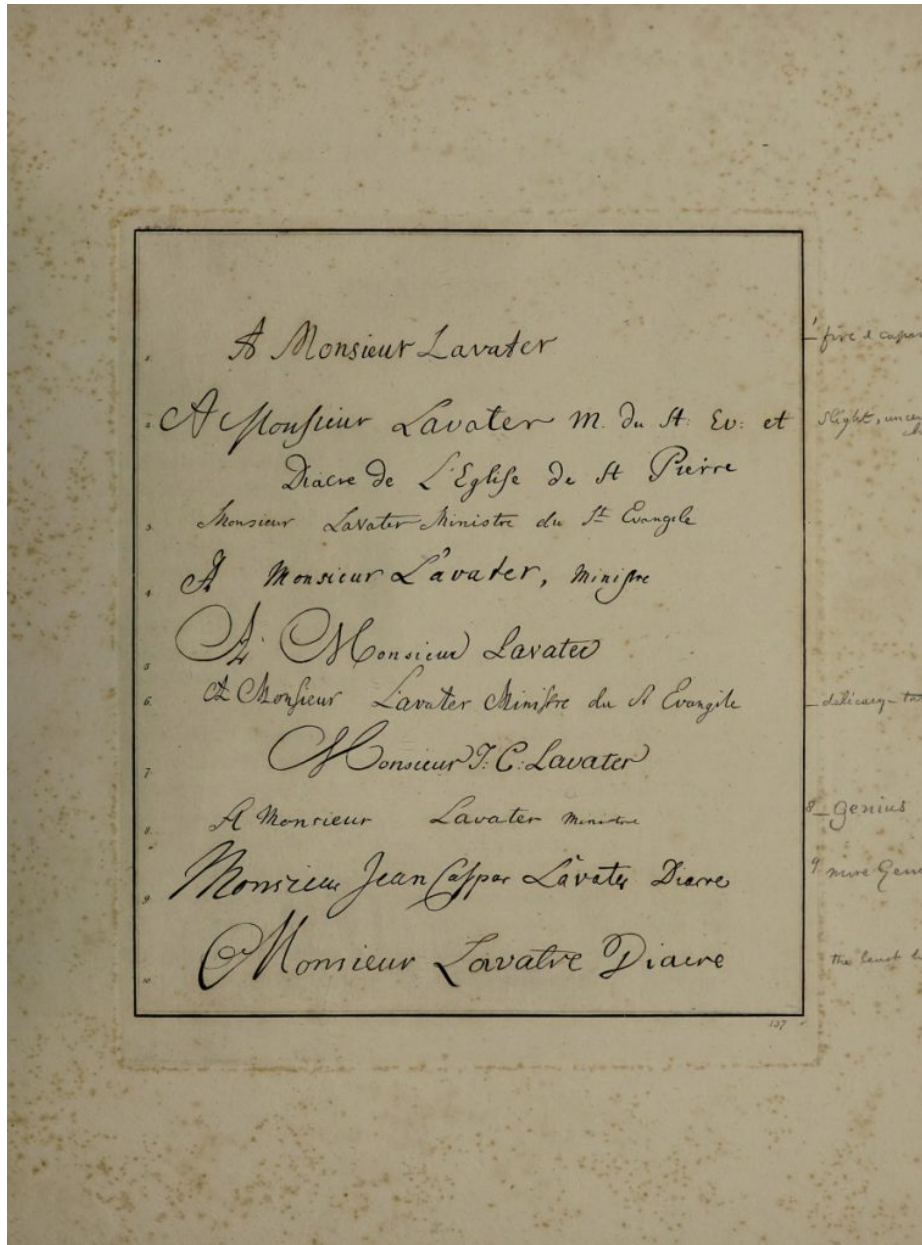
Fig. 9. "Engraved Writings, B", in Johann Caspar Lavater,*Essays on Physiognomy*, vol. 3, part 2 (London 1789), following p. 262, London, Wellcome Library. © Available under Public Domain Mark 1.0.

While the concept that handwriting could serve as a self-portraying practice drew on physiognomic ideas, in England, deducing character traits from letters was seen as an esoteric shenanigan. In an 1830 criticism of Nichols's *Autographs*, which had endorsed Lavater, the critic stated that he aimed at "[s]weeping away with little ceremony all the nonsense that has been written from the time of Lavater, about the hand-writing marking the characteristics of the writer."[53] Still, from the moment they were published, Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (1775-1778; English, 1789) shaped ideas on character recognition, correspondences between the inner and outer self, natural dispositions, and unique individuality. His claims, moreover, were supposed to extend to one's writing: "each of us has his own hand-writing, individual and inimitable."[54] Handwriting was an extension and effusion of one's singularity, a singularity that was inscribed into every part of the body and expressed by the form and motion of one's hands. Because "you never find on two different persons, two hands which perfectly

resemble each other," Lavater wrote, "the hand contributes its share towards unfolding the character of the individual."[55] Accordingly, his discussion on "Design, Colouring, and Writing" included "Engraved Writings," namely, two letters and ten samples of other people writing his name that had all been taken from letters addressed to him (**Fig. 9**).[56]

Hands were devices of individualization and because it consisted of lines, handwriting was akin to drawing, drafting, sketching.[57] Whether printed or original, lines bridged pictoriality and literariness, joining image and writing as well as indicating an artist's manner[58]—from the Latin term for hand, *manus*—or their peculiar artistic style, which was also verified by their signature.[59] However, "manner" could also refer to one's social deportment, indicating that the norms and regulations of the social realm in which hands and bodies moved were shaping what they produced on paper or canvas.[60]

Conclusion: Inscriptions and Ascriptions

Artists' signatures are tied to the ideas of mastery and masterworks, [61] but non-professional and non-artistic writings were (and still are) likewise approached with ideas of self-portrayal in mind, particularly with an eye to deliberate as well as non-intentional elements of self-presentation. It has been argued that each form of life writing is a form of self-life writing,[62] and, at least since Giorgio Vasari, every visual depiction could be seen as the artist's self-portrayal because the artist's identity is operative in the execution of the work.[63] Such notions of unintentional disclosures come close to graphology's promise of uncovering original experiences and personality traits through the study of autographs, peeling away the performed self to make its original state emerge. However, the method of treating handwriting as self-portrayal must itself be historicized to avoid reproducing historically determined artificial distinctions between the inner and outer self. In the case of Buchinger, handwriting played a major part in his negotiation of identity and selfhood as a social being, an artist, and a spectacle. But in the case of autographs and their facsimiles, the argument of life writing and portrayals being self-life writing and self-portrayals could be reversed: their employment and interpretation reveal as much, if not more, about the collector and editor (and maybe about the engraver) as they do about the writer. The implication is that self-portrayals involve viewers partaking in the construction of a person's "self," but at what point does self-presentation turn into self-portraiture? According to Pierre Vaisse, neither medium nor mode of depiction, but only the artist's subjectivity can serve as criteria for categorizing a representation as a self-portrait.[64] In contrast, Isabelle Oger has argued that during the Renaissance, resemblance was constituted as much via recognition as via representation, making it possible even to consider emblems as portraits.[65]

With the self being as much discovered as displayed, showing rather than being shown, and embedded in a variety of media, forms, and formulas,[66] the very idea of the self-portrait is a precarious concept, as self-representations may straddle the realms of the visual and the verbal. Employing letters for both their form and content, Matthias Buchinger's self-representation(s) are charged with a referentiality that goes beyond the

textual meaning, showing how self-portrayals can take on forms that transcend the mimetic, the identificatory, and the semiotic.[67] Eighteenth-century writers detected the self where authors had perhaps never aimed to place it, with writings, and especially autographs, serving as both traces and representations, synergizing the author's individuality with the ethical and social framework within which they were integrated. Understanding handwriting (including print versions) as self-portrayal not only draws attention to the different locations where the self can be expressed, it also underscores the way that self-portraiture[68] was tasked with capturing a historical subject by being both its representation and its inimitable mark.

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[1] See Omar Calabrese, *Die Geschichte des Selbstporträts* (Munich: Hirmer, 2006), 29-30, who argues that self-portraits need to deliver on three accounts: they have to communicate first, "I," "now," and "here"; second, their self-reflexivity; and, third, their will, that is, their intention to communicate the self (30).

[2] I am indebted to my colleague Michael Amico for his insightful comments on my article and on this aspect in particular, as well as to my two anonymous reviewers for their tremendously helpful comments.

[3] See in particular Hans Belting, "Face oder Trace? Zur Anthropologie der frühen Christus-Porträts," in Sigrid Weigel, ed., *Gesichter: Kulturgeschichtliche Szenen aus der Arbeit am Bildnis des Menschen* (Munich: Fink, 2013), 91-102, especially 91-94.

[4] On artists' signatures, see André Chastel's special issue *L'art de la signature*, *Revue de l'art* 26 (1974); Rona Goffen, "Signatures: Inscribing Identity in Italian Renaissance Art," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 32 (2001), 303-370; Patricia Rubin, "Signposts of Invention: Artists' Signatures in Italian Renaissance Art," *Art History* 29:4 (2006), 563-599; Karin Gludovatz, *Fährten legen – Spuren lesen: Die Künstlersignatur als poietische Referenz* (Munich: Fink, 2011). Nicole Hegener, "Anker für die Ewigkeit. Die Signatur: Marginalie oder Kunstwerk?" in Hegener, ed., *Künstlersignaturen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart/Artists' Signatures from Antiquity to the Present* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2013), 14-43, 16-17, provides an overview of existing literature. For the eighteenth century, see Charlotte Guichard, "La signature dans le tableau aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: identité, réputation et marché de l'art," *Sociétés & Représentations* 25:1 (2008), 47-77. On signatures and the print market see Tobias Burg, "Signaturen in der frühen Druckgraphik," in Hegener, ed., *Künstlersignaturen*, 284-293, especially 284-286 and 289-291.

[5] Charlotte Guichard, "Signatures, Authorship and *Autographie* in Eighteenth-Century French Painting," *Art History* 41:2 (April 2018), 266-291, 268. See also Gludovatz, *Fährten legen*, 9-10.

[6] See Karin Gludovatz, "Der Name am Rahmen, der Maler im Bild:

Künstlerselbstverständnis und Produktionskommentar in den Signaturen Jan van Eycks," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 54:1 (2005), 115-176, especially 115-125; John Wilmerding, *Signs of the Artist: Signatures and Self-Expression in American Paintings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), ix-xi, 1-37.

[7] See Charlotte Guichard, *La griffe du peintre: La valeur de l'art (1730-1820)* (Paris: Seuil, 2018), 19.

[8] Philip Sohm, "Palettes as Signatures and Encoded Identities in Early-Modern Self-Portraits," *Art History* 40:5 (November 2017), 994-1025, 995.

[9] On word-images see Karin Gludovatz, "Malerische Worte: Die Künstlersignatur als Schrift-Bild," in Gernot Grube, Werner Kogge, and Sybille Krämer, eds., *Schrift: Kulturtechnik zwischen Auge, Hand und Maschine* (Munich: Fink, 2005), 313-328. See also W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 111-117.

[10] Wilmerding, *Signs*, x.

[11] "[T]he signature depends on a crucial semiological relationship obtaining between (i) the specific individual in question, (ii) the specific biomechanical act of signing, and (iii) the specific form produced. This is true of no other written sign." Roy Harris, *Signs of Writing* (London: Routledge, 1995), 80.

[12] See the entries on "autograph" in Nathan Bailey's *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London: J. Darby et al., 1726) and Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: J. and P. Knapton et al., 1755). See also Guichard, "Signatures, Authorship and *Autographie*," 268.

[13] See Hannah Williams, "Autoportrait ou portrait de l'artiste peint par lui-même? Se peindre soi-même à l'époque moderne," *Images Re-vues* 7 (2009), 1-17, especially 2-3, 5; Guichard, *Griffe*, 126-132.

[14] Non-mimetic portraits have been called "antiportraits" (Benjamin Buchloh, "Residual Resemblance: Three Notes on the Ends of Portraiture," in *Face-Off: The Portrait in Recent Art*, exhib. cat. (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 53-69); and "Portraits after the Portrait" (Petra Gördüren, *Das Porträt nach dem Porträt. Positionen der Bildniskunst im späten 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Reimer, 2012)). See also Martina Weinhart, *Selbstbildnis ohne Selbst. Dekonstruktionen eines Genres in der zeitgenössischen Kunst* (Berlin: Reimer, 2004), 7-36; Ulrich Pfisterer and Valeska von Rosen, "Vorwort. Der Künstler als Kunstwerk," in Pfisterer and Von Rosen, eds., *Der Künstler als Kunstwerk. Selbstporträts vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005), 19-23.

[15] Pierre Vaisse, "Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen zum Selbstporträt," in *Ich bin hier! Von Rembrandt zum Selfie*, exhib. cat. (Karlsruhe: Staatliche Kunsthalle, 2016), 22-31, 22-23 and 30, has argued that the use of the term "self-portrait" participates in the genre's self-constitution.

[16] Isabelle Oger, "L'emblème à la Renaissance: un portrait sans visage?" in Fabrice Flahutez, Itzhak Goldberg and Panayota Volti, eds., *Visage et portrait, visage ou portrait* (Paris Nanterre: Presse Universitaire, 2010), 49-61; Pfisterer and Von Rosen, "Vorwort," 21; Gunter Schweikhart, ed., *Autobiographie und Selbstportrait in der Renaissance* (Cologne: Walther König, 1998); Weinhart, *Selbstbildnis*, 30-31.

[17] Stuart Sherman, "Diary and Autobiography," in John Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge History of Literature, 1660-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 649-672.

[18] Nigel Hamilton, *Biography: A Brief History* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 84-85. See Marsha Meskimmon, "Visual Arts and Life Writing," in Margaretta Jolly, ed., *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms* (London: Routledge, 2001), 916-918; and Domna C. Stanton, "Preface," in Stanton, ed., *The Female Autograph: Theory and Practice of Autobiography from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), vii-xi.

[19] Calabrese, *Selbstporträt*, 29-30.

[20] See Wilmerding, *Signs*, x; and Gerd Blum, "Autobiographical Visual Arts, esp. Painting," in Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, ed., *Handbook of Autobiography/Autofiction* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 485-496. See also Andrew Small, *Essays in Self-Portraiture: A Comparison of Technique in the Self-Portraits of Montaigne and Rembrandt* (New York: Lang, 1996); Victor Stoichita, "Peindre le passage: autoportrait et autobiographie dans l'œuvre de Rembrandt," in Catherine Cardinal and Lucie Galactéros-de Boissier, eds., *Le temps dans la peinture* (La Chaux-de-Fonds: Institut l'homme et le temps, 1994), 8-10; Jerome Bruner, "The Autobiographical Process," in Robert Folkenflik, ed., *The Culture of Autobiography: Constructions of Self-Representation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 38-46, 49, on autobiography as an act rather than a form.

[21] On "likeness" and "resemblance," see Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion, 1991), 45; Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 21-29. See also Sigrid Weigel, *Grammatologie der Bilder* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2015), 9-26, who distinguishes between "visualization," that is, the rendering of already existing phenomena into visual forms, and "imaging" (*Bildgebung*), that is, making non-presentable phenomena visually emerge (10-11).

[22] Williams, "Autoportrait," 3.

[23] On Buchinger, see Walter M. Brod, "Der Schreibmeister Matthias Buchinger," in *Mainfränkisches Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kunst* 37 (1985), 91-102.

[24] Brod, "Buchinger," 92, lists Psalms 27, 121, 128, 140, 149, and 150, which repeats the mistake made in James Caulfield, *Portraits, Memoirs, and Characters, of Remarkable Persons, from the Revolution in 1688 to the End of the Reign of George II*, 4 vols. (London 1819), vol. 2, 24.

[25] In 2016, the Metropolitan Museum of Art showed the exhibition *Wordplay: Matthias Buchinger's Drawings from the Collection of Ricky Jay*, https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2016/wordplay (accessed April 6, 2019). According to his account, magician Ricky Jay tried to locate the original drawing, but failed. See Ricky Jay, *Matthias Buchinger: "The Greatest German Living": By Ricky Jay Whose Peregrinations in Search of the "Little Man of Nuremberg" Are Herein Revealed* (Catskill: Siglio, 2016), 53-73. See also Rachel Adams, "Afterword I: Disability in Disability Media Studies," in Elizabeth Ellcessor and Bill Kirkpatrick, eds., *Disability Media Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 357-364. See David M. Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England: Imagining Physical Impairment* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 94-99.

[26] On the "role of disability in the creation and circulation of a stage persona," see Adams, "Afterword I," 358.

[27] Anonymous, *Poem on Mathew Buckinger [sic], The Greatest German Living* (London, 1726).

[28] "ohne Hände und Füße gebohrene persohn, von Gott dem Allerhöchsten begabet." Brod, "Buchinger," 91, 97-98.

[29] Jay, *Buchinger*, 48-49.

[30] Jay, *Buchinger*, 15.

[31] See Andrew Morrall, "'*On the Picture of the King Charles the First … written in Psalms*': Devotion, Commemoration and the Micrographic Portrait," in Antoinina Bevan Zlatar and Olga Timofeeva, eds., *What is an Image in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2017), 211-239, 221-222, who has argued that the Psalms, especially those attributed to King David, lend themselves to being included in media of self-expression, such as spiritual autobiography or self-portraiture.

[32] Nadine Rottau, "Hybride Medien—Mikrographien und Federzüge," in Michael Roth, ed., *Schrift als Bild*, exhib. cat. (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: 2010), 158-170, 159-164.

[33] Dick Higgins, "Pattern Poetry as Paradigm," *Poetics Today* 10:2 (1989), 401-428; Ulrich Ernst, "Die Entwicklung der optischen Poesie in Antike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit," in Ulrich Weisstein, ed., *Literatur und Bildende Kunst: Ein Handbuch zur Theorie und Praxis eines komparatistischen Grenzgebietes* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1992), 138-151.

[34] See Dick Higgins et al., *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 28.

[35] Morrall, "Micrographic Portrait," especially 216-225. On Püchler, see Friedrich Polleroß, "Schrift-Bilder: Zum Werk des Mikrographen Johann Michael Püchler d. J. (1679-1709)," in Christian Hecht, ed., *Beständig im Wandel: Innovationen—Verwandlungen—*

Konkretisierungen (Berlin: Matthes und Seitz, 2009), 261-281; Rottau, "Mikographien," 166-167.

[36] Higgins, "Pattern Poetry," 401-402.

[37] Joseph Addison, "The Spectator No. 58," in *The Spectator*, 8 vols. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1712-1715), 1, 324-330, 328-329, and 325; Addison mentions the portrait of Charles I. See Morrall, "Micrographic Portrait," 232-233; Elizabeth Kraft, "Wit and 'The Spectator's' Ethics of Desire," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 45:3 (Summer 2005), 625-646, 629-634.

[38] Addison, "No. 58," 327.

[39] Higgins, "Pattern Poetry," 401.

[40] See Turner, *Disability*, 115.

[41] John Fenn, *Original Letters, Written During the Reigns of Henry VI. Edward IV. and Richard III.*, 2 vols. (London: G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1787), xii.

[42] Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806). See also Derek Hirst, "'Remembering a Hero': Lucy Hutchinson's Memoirs of Her Husband," *English Historical Review* 119:482 (2004), 682-691.

[43] On female albums and autograph collecting, see M. A. E. Nickson, *Early Autograph Albums in the British Museum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 20-21. See also Tom Stammers, "The Refuse of the Revolution: Autograph Collecting in France, 1789-1860," in Carolina Armenteros, Tim Blanning, Isabel DiVanna, and Dawn Dodds, eds., *Historicising the French Revolution* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2008), 39-63.

[44] Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, xiv.

[45] Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 13. Calabrese, *Selbstporträt*, 30, understands this as an intention not to produce a self-portrait but rather to point to one's own identity.

[46] Questions of autonomy of both artist and work feature heavily in the history of self-portraiture. See Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 1, and Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 9: "The picture can therefore claim autochthony, isolating itself from any source, human, historical, or divine, beyond what it already represents."

[47] John Gough Nichols, *Autographs of Royal, Noble, Learned, and Remarkable Personages* (London: J. B. Nichols and Son, 1829), iii.

[48] The origins of the *album amicorum* have been debated since Michael Lilienthal's dissertation *Schediasma critico-literarium* of 1712. See Chris L. Heesakkers, "Album amicorum," *Grove Art Online*: https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T001608 (accessed March 30, 2019); Nickson, *Autograph Albums*, 9-11 and 26 on silhouette portraits. Bronwen Wilson, "Social Networking. The 'Album amicorum' and Early Modern Public Making," in Massimo Rospocher, ed., *Oltre la sfera pubblica/Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012), 205-223, 208-211. See Louise Voll Box, "Marks and Meanings: Revealing the Hand of the Collector and 'the Moment of Making' in Two 18th-Century Print Albums," *Journal18* issue 6 *Albums* (Fall 2018): http://www.journal18.org/2929 (accessed April 4, 2019).

[49] See Nickson, *Autograph Albums*, 9-10, and Wilson, "Social Networking," 213: "With its fragments of text, engravings, drawings and names, the album illustrates how things and parts of things collected in albums stood in for the signatories, not unlike portraits, even in their absence."

[50] See Guichard, *Griffe*, 115-126.

[51] On facsimiles, see Antony Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography: An Introduction to European Printmaking 1550-1820* (London: British Museum, 2016), 122-124 and 463.

[52] See also Erwin Panofsky, "Original and Facsimile Reproduction," trans. Timothy Grundy, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 57/58 (Spring/Autumn 2010), 330-338 (originally published in German in 1930), 333: "the facsimile reproduction (despite its misleading name) *does not aim* to be more than a 'good' *reproduction*. Irrespective of how 'successful' the reproduction is, what it can never convey, and has the good sense not to want to convey, is the *'experience ofauthenticity'* […]. While the authentic is an *irreplaceable* ingredient, it is nevertheless *only one ingredient* of the aesthetic act that results from standing before the original […]."

[53] *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal, Part III: Historical Registers* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 53.

[54] Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, H. Hunter and T. Holloway, 1789), vol. 3.2, 256.

[55] Lavater, *Essays*,3.2, 419, 421. See Guichard, *Griffe*, 262-264.

[56] Lavater, *Essays*,3.2, 253-262; for the engravings see 260-262.

[57] Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 232. See also Raphael Rosenberg, "Johann Caspar Lavater: Die Revolution der Physiognomie aus dem Geist der ästhetischen Linientheorie," *Linea: Vom Umriss zur Aktion. Die Kunst der Linie zwischen Antike und Gegenwart*, exhib. cat. (Zug: Kunsthaus Zug, 2010), 73-85.

[58] Helmar Schramm, "Introduction: The Hand as 'instrumentum instrumentorum,'" in Helmar Schramm, Ludger Schwarte, and Jan Lazardzig, eds., *Instruments in Art and Science: On the Architectonics of Cultural Boundaries in the 17th Century* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2008), xi-xvi. See also Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 225-240.

[59] See Philipp Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 90-97.

[60] See Guichard, *Griffe*, 129; Calabrese, *Selbstporträt*, 249-256; Sohm, *Style*, 155: "In early modern art theory, the hand became an important site for perceived tensions between manual habit and intellective deliberation, practice, and theory, making and thinking."

[61] Guichard has argued for a reassessment of graffiti, long considered unworthy of attention, on the same grounds. Guichard, *Graffitis*, 21-22.

[62] Ira Bruce Nadel, *Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984), 2.

[63] Colin Eisler, "'Every Artist Paints Himself': Art History as Biography and Autobiography," *Social Research* 54:1 (1987), 73-99.

[64] Vaisse, "Betrachtungen," 23.

[65] Oger, "L'emblème à la Renaissance," 2-3.

[66] Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 9, 13-17, offers an overview of the "self" in self-portraiture.

[67] Hall, "Selbstporträt?," 17.

[68] Williams, "Autoportrait," 5: "In the modern era, the most important thing in a portrait was not the author but the sitter. The very idea that there exists a distinction between a portrait of one-self and a portrait of another is not taken into consideration [À l'époque moderne, le plus important dans un portrait n'était pas l'identité du créateur, mais celle du modèle. L'idée qu'il devrait y avoir une différence entre un portrait de soi et un portrait d'un autre n'était pas prise en considération.]."