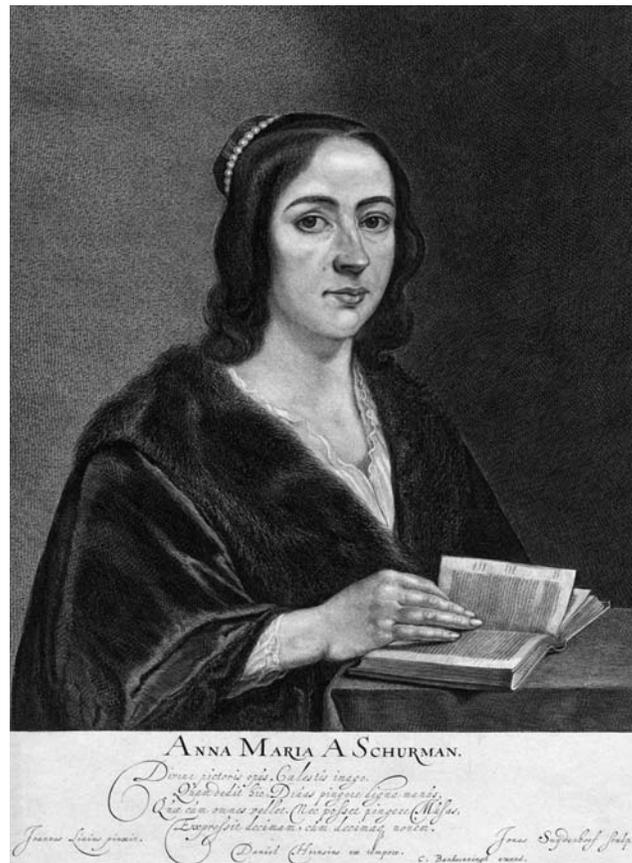


► EXERCISE 9

Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678), of German and Dutch descent, was a friend of the great French philosopher Descartes. Like Erasmus, van Schurman corresponded with many learned women and men of the *rēs pūblica litterārum*, “the republic of literature.” While Erasmus also traveled about, van Schurman spent most of her life in Utrecht in the Netherlands where she received many visitors including Queen Christina of Sweden. She was considered the most learned woman of the seventeenth century. Van Schurman received special permission to follow classes, from behind a curtain, at the University of Utrecht. She became proficient not only in Latin and Greek, but also in Hebrew, Arabic, and ten other languages. Van Schurman is celebrated for her writings that logically defended women’s right to study. Here is an adapted excerpt of her letter to the medical doctor Johannes Beverovicus “Johan van Beverwijck” (1594–1647), discussing the ruling power that determines the term of human life and the possibilities of human interference.



The portrait of the scholar Anna Maria van Schurman is an engraving by Jonas Suyderhoef (1613–1686) of Haarlem, Netherlands. An eminent engraver of the Dutch Golden Age, Suyderhoef based his work on paintings by the masters. Jan Lievens (1607–1674), who shared a studio with Rembrandt, painted the original portrait.

