

ART MARKET

DAMS (L-3)

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DIPARTIMENTO DI
SCIENZE DELLA
COMUNICAZIONE

*VII LESSON – ACCREDITATION
AND EARNINGS*

ACCREDITATION AND EARNINGS

Accreditation of painters took place through a series of formal and informal steps, which included recognition by academies and guilds, as well as reputation built through commissions. The accreditation process was crucial to ensure the quality of the works and to protect both painters and patrons.

The painters' earnings varied and depended on their fame, commissions received, and ability to negotiate prices. Painters could earn money through:

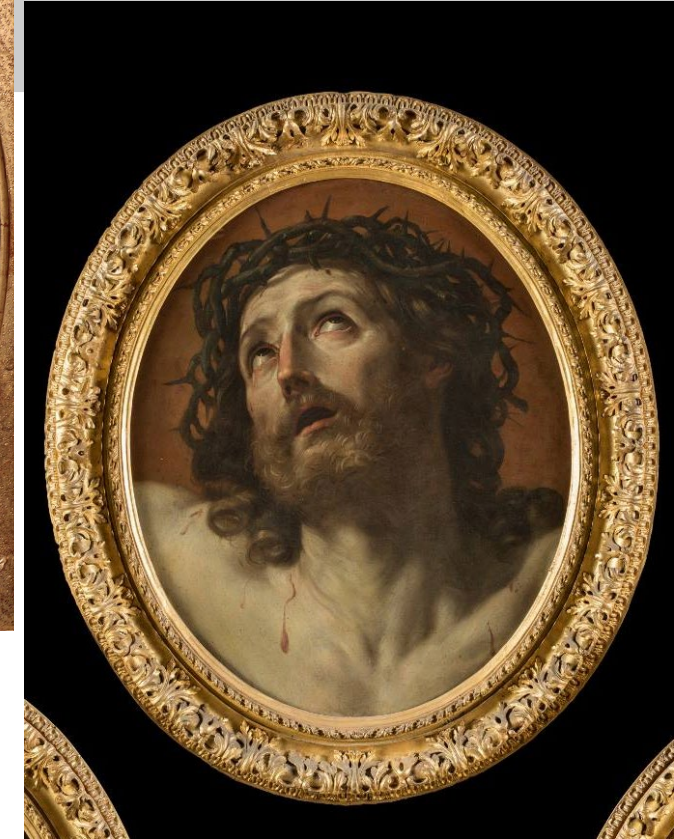
- **Direct commissions:** These included altarpieces, portraits, and other paintings at the specific request of the patrons.
- **Sale of existing works:** Artists could sell works that had already been made, often through markets or galleries.
- **Replicas and variants:** An interesting aspect of the art market was the production of copies and variations of famous works, which allowed painters to increase their earnings without having to create new works from scratch each time.

The copy market was particularly flourishing in Bologna. Many painters made replicas of their most famous works or the works of famous masters. These copies were in high demand, both for prestige and economic reasons, as they were more affordable than the originals. Variants, on the other hand, allowed painters to experiment with and modify elements of their works, thus creating slightly different versions that could appeal to different customer segments.

Marcantonio Franceschini used to retouch replicas of his original paintings to increase their market value. For example, in 1692 he received three hundred lire for having redone a painting of a Charity, and in 1720 twelve louis for having retouched a Pastoral.



Guido Reni, *Ecce Homo*, c. 1630, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale



Guido Reni, *Ecce Homo*, 1620 ca., Roma, Galleria Corsini

Women painters, although less visible than their male colleagues. They often operated within their own families or under the guidance of male relatives, but some were able to distinguish themselves independently. Their artistic production and their economic contribution were, however, often underestimated or not adequately documented.

Lavinia Fontana

Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614) is a remarkable example of female economic management in the Bolognese artistic context. Daughter of the painter Prospero Fontana, Lavinia managed to build a solid reputation as a portraitist and religious artist. Her skill in marketing and managing commissions allowed her to maintain a prestigious clientele, including members of the nobility and clergy.

Characteristics of Lavinia Fontana's Economic Management:

Market Strategy: Lavinia Fontana knew how to position her works in the Bolognese art market, managing to obtain high-value commissions.

Networking: his ability to build relationships with patrons was critical to his success. Fontana used his family's contacts and those he personally developed to secure constant commissions.

Innovation and Adaptation: Fontana was able to adapt her style and subjects to market demands, showing considerable flexibility that allowed her to remain competitive.



Barbara Longhi

Barbara Longhi (1552-1638) was a Renaissance painter who, although less known than Lavinia Fontana, successfully managed her own artistic career. Daughter of the painter Luca Longhi, Barbara was known mainly for her portraits and religious works.

Characteristics of Barbara Longhi's Economic Management:

Family activity: Longhi worked closely with his father and brother, integrating family resources to manage commissions and artistic production.

Specialization: by focusing on a limited number of subjects, such as portraits and religious themes, Longhi was able to create a niche market in which he excelled.

Management autonomy: despite the influence of her family, Barbara managed many of her commissions independently, demonstrating organizational and entrepreneurial skills.



Barbara Longhi, Self-portrait as Saint Catherine, 1589, Ravenna, Museo d'Arte

Properzia de' Rossi

Properzia de' Rossi (1490-1530) was a Bolognese sculptor and miniaturist, the only woman mentioned by Giorgio Vasari in his "Lives". Rossi was famous for her skill in carving semi-precious stones and for her marble sculptures.

Characteristics of the Economic Management of Properzia de' Rossi:

Exploitation of Renown: her notoriety as a skilled miniaturist and sculptor allowed her to obtain important public commissions, including works for the basilica of San Petronio in Bologna.

Diversification of Skills: Rossi was not limited to a single artistic medium, but worked on a variety of materials, thus expanding his market opportunities.

Resilience and Adaptability: in a male-dominated field, Rossi managed to carve out a significant space for himself thanks to his determination and ability to adapt to adverse circumstances.



Properzia de' Rossi, Giuseppe and the wife of Putiphar, 1526, Bologna, Museo diocesano di San Petronio

ACCREDITATION AND EARNINGS

The section dedicated to contracts, prices and costs analyzes how painters negotiated their fees and how they managed the expenses related to artistic production. Contracts varied greatly based on the complexity of the work, the artist's fame, and negotiating skills. Costs included materials, assistants, and operating expenses, which painters had to carefully balance with earnings to keep their business sustainable.

Contracts could be very detailed, specifying not only the subject and size of the work, but also delivery times and staggered payments. Payment methods were often flexible, with initial down payments followed by payments as work progressed.

Colors, frames, transportation, and travel represented significant expenses for painters. The quality and provenance of the materials greatly influenced the final cost of the work, and painters often had to find a balance between the desired quality and the budget limitations imposed by the clients.



ACCREDITATION AND EARNINGS

Description: Guido Reni entered into a contract with the company of silk merchants for the creation of the San Giobbe Altarpiece for Santa Maria dei Mendicanti. The first contract (1622) provided specific details on the size of the works, the subjects to be represented and the materials to be used. Amid negotiations and delays, the painting was delivered in 1637.

Characteristics of the Contract:

Price and Payments: the contract specified a total price of 1500 scudi, but Senator Filippo Sampieri obtained another 100 scudi to finish.

Materials: high-quality colors and fine linen canvases had to be used.

Delivery Time: they were not respected not only because of the painter's delays, but also because of the iconographic changes of the patrons who made Guido Reni obtain larger sums.



Guido Reni,
St. Job Altarpiece,
Paris, Notre Dame

ACCREDITATION AND EARNINGS

Description: Annibale Carracci was commissioned to decorate the Gallery of Palazzo Farnese in Rome. The contract was made with Cardinal Odoardo Farnese and included details on painting techniques and iconographic themes.

Characteristics of the Contract:

Price: the expected payment was 2000 scudi, divided into three installments: a third at the beginning of the work, a third in half and the rest at the end.

Technical Specifications: the contract called for the use of frescoes with natural pigments and the help of assistants only for secondary tasks.

Supervision: Cardinal Farnese or his representative would periodically supervise the progress of the work.



Description: Lavinia Fontana signed a contract with the Convent of Santa Caterina for the creation of a large painting depicting Santa Caterina d'Alessandria.

Characteristics of the Contract:

Price and Payment Methods: the agreed price was 400 scudi, with payment in two installments: half at the beginning and half on delivery.

Materials: a high-quality canvas and expensive colors had to be used to ensure the durability of the work.

Quality Clause: the contract included a clause that allowed the nuns to request changes if they were not satisfied with the final result.

Lavinia Fontana,
Apparition of the
Virgin and Child, 1601
Bologna, Pinacoteca
Nazionale (formerly
San Michele in Bosco)



ACCREDITATION AND EARNINGS

Description: Francesco Albani was commissioned to paint a series of canvases for Maurice of Savoy, brother of Duke Vittorio Amedeo I
Characteristics of the Contract:
Price: the total compensation was 200 scudi (or 1000 lire) for each.
Themes and Iconography: each of the four canvases was to depict the four elements (now in the Savoy Gallery in Turin).

