

ART MARKET

DAMS (L-3)

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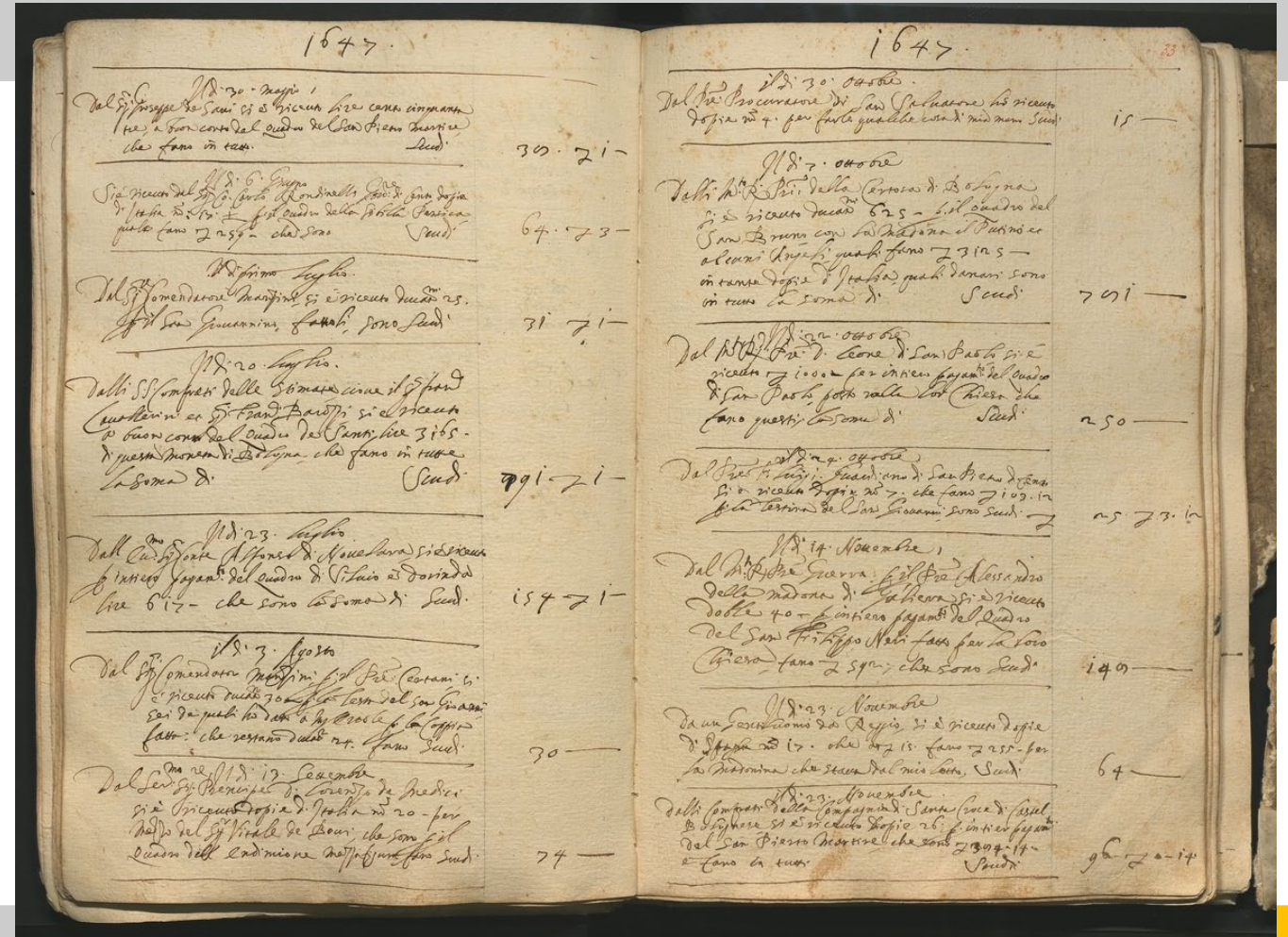
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*X LESSON – ADMINISTRATIVE
TOOLS*

ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS

• Painters used various administrative tools to manage their economic activities. Among these, accounting records were essential for documenting income and expenses.

• **House Books and Accounts Books:** these were critical documents for keeping track of daily transactions and contracts made.



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**MEMOIRS, NOTEBOOKS,
REGISTERS AND ACCOUNT
BOOKS**

Guido Reni's accounting in the Borghese house represents a fundamental aspect of the artist's economic management during his Roman period. Here is an in-depth look at this topic, based on data from the accounting register.

Historical Context

Guido Reni worked for the Borghese family in Rome between 1609 and 1612. This period is documented in an accounting register that covers precisely these years, a document that offers a detailed view of his economic activity and professional relationships during his stay in Rome.

Document Origin

Reni's accounting register was acquired by Giampietro Zanotti Cavazzoni in 1729 and represents one of the main sources for understanding Reni's economic organization. Zanotti noted the acquisition of the document on the first page, highlighting the importance of this piece for Bolognese artistic history.



Register structure

The register was begun on October 25, 1609 and closed on May 15, 1612. It includes details on commissions, payments and expenses, specifying the names of the commissioners, geographical origins, subjects of the works and prices. This detailed recording system is a testament to Reni's ability as an administrator as well as an artist.

Financial management

The register shows that Reni had a balance of 805 scudi on 22 December 1611, to which were added 565 scudi of credit. However, by January 1612, the balance drops to 455 scudi, suggesting that Reni was shifting funds to other investments. The management of its finances demonstrates a remarkable organizational capacity but also a propensity for risk, as evidenced by the discrepancies between the recorded and actual collections, attributable in part to gambling losses.



End of the relationship with the Borghese

The closure of the accounting register coincides with the conclusion of the professional relationship between Reni and the Borghese family. On May 15, 1612, Reni notes that he had settled all the accounts, thus marking the end of his career as a salaried painter for this powerful family.

Historical impact

The register has been a cornerstone for the chronology of the Capitoline frescoes and for the identification of other works by Reni. It is considered a masterpiece of knowledge that allows us to explore the painter's economic and social dynamics in Rome.

In summary, Guido Reni's accounting in the Borghese house not only reveals the artist's organizational and managerial effectiveness, but also offers a valuable window into his professional life and the complex economic interactions of the seventeenth century.



The accounting of the Barbieri, i.e. Giovan Francesco Barbieri (known as Guercino) and his brother Paolo Antonio Barbieri, represents a detailed and structured example of administrative and financial management of a seventeenth-century artistic workshop in Bologna.

Unified Home & Business

The Barbieri, together with the Gennari, initially lived in three separate houses, but later bought a large house in Bologna in 1644 to unify their residence and workshop.

The house, located in Via di Sant'Alò, was enlarged in 1659 with the purchase of the adjacent rectory, creating an adequate space for the activities of the workshop and the family.

Organizational Structure

The inventory of the houses drawn up in 1719 reveals a clear division of the spaces and their functions, showing how the house was adapted to accommodate both family life and artistic activity.

The main rooms housed portraits of family members, a sign of ennobling and memory of past and present generations.

Administrative Documentation

The Barbers used various administrative tools for the management of their business, including memoirs, notebooks, registers and account books. These documents were crucial for keeping track of income, expenses, and various fees.

The draft will of 1648 and the final will of 1665, drawn up by Giovan Francesco and Paolo Antonio, show the equal management of assets and affairs, confirming the close collaboration and mutual trust between the brothers.

Commission Management

The Barbieri's accounting included details of payments received for works of art, often expressed in local units of measurement such as the "castellate" for crushed grapes, also used as payment for paintings.

Administrative papers demonstrate the smooth running of the family business, with detailed notes on the fees and costs incurred.

Legacy and Continuation of the Business

Upon the death of Paolo Antonio in 1649, Giovan Francesco continued to run the workshop with the help of Ercole Gennari, and later Benedetto Gennari, ensuring the continuity of the business until his death in 1666. The heirs, Benedetto and Cesare Gennari, Guercino's nephews, continued to manage the company, respecting the testamentary wishes to maintain the collaboration and shared management of the workshop and the properties.

The Barbieri's accounting represents an effective and detailed management model of a seventeenth-century artistic workshop, where the family and the company were closely integrated. The surviving documents offer a clear picture of their organization, administrative strategies and accounting practices, highlighting the importance of equal and collaborative management for the success and continuity of the artistic enterprise.



Cesare
Gennari,
Allegory of
Painting,
Rome,
National
Gallery of
Ancient Art

Elisabetta Sirani, one of the most renowned painters of the seventeenth century in Bologna, adopted a particular system of management of her works and relations with patrons, characterized by the use of gifts as an economic and social tool. Here is a deep dive into the highlights regarding this system:

Revenue and Gift Management

- Despite being a highly sought-after painter, Elisabetta Sirani often received relatively modest fees for her works. Sources, in particular Carlo Cesare Malvasia, report that Elizabeth preferred to receive precious gifts rather than large sums of money.
- This approach was functional both to maintain good relations with clients and to avoid seeming too interested in profit, a quality that was highly appreciated at the time.

Precious Gifts and Valuable Items

- Elisabeth accumulated valuables such as silver, gold and jewels, which she kept in a special closet in her father's house. These gifts were not only a sign of appreciation, but also a way to accumulate wealth in a discreet way.



Role of the Family in Profit Management

- The economic management of Elisabetta's works was mainly in the hands of her father, Giovanni Andrea Sirani. Monetary receipts were used for the common benefit of the family, while precious gifts were kept and displayed as a symbol of prestige.
- The family, including his mother, brothers and sisters, played a key role in managing commissions and choosing clients.

Image and Public Perception

- The adoption of the gift system helped to create and maintain the image of Elizabeth as a virtuous painter, not motivated by money but by pure love of art. This strengthened his reputation and attracted additional commissions.
- The gifts received, in addition to representing an economic value, served as tangible proof of the esteem and recognition of his patrons, often including members of the crowned heads of Europe.



ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS

Elisabetta Sirani's gift system not only allowed her to maintain a certain image of virtue and dedication to art, but also served as an effective strategy for accumulating wealth and prestige discreetly.

This method was part of a family management of profits and professional relationships, demonstrating a remarkable ability to navigate the complex economic and social landscape of the time.

Elisabetta Sirani, St.
Anthony and Child Jesus,
Bologna, Pinacoteca
Nazionale



ELISABETTA SIRANI'S PROFIT MANAGEMENT

Marcantonio Franceschini

A seventeenth-century Bolognese artist, he offers a fascinating case study for understanding accounting practices and the management of art commissions in the context of a family workshop. Here is an in-depth look at the highlights of his administrative system and his memoirs.

Account Book

Preserved at the Archiginnasio Library in Bologna, Franceschini's account book has been published in its entirety and offers a detailed view of the economic management of his workshop.

The book records income and expenses from 1684 to 1729, including details of the costs of materials, household expenses, and fees received for the works carried out. This register was the main tool for the daily accounting of the company.



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**THE PERFECT CASE OF
MARCANTONIO FRANCESCHINI**

Memoir

Franceschini's Memoirs, recently found and published, provide further details than the account book, including the costs of individual paintings, patrons and, occasionally, intermediaries. These documents also narrate the circumstances of the commissions and deepen the iconographic aspects of the works.

The Memoirs document Franceschini's activity from 1668, when he was still a pupil of Carlo Cignani, until 1729. These notes were more narrative than the account book and were used to record the course of commissions and customer relationships.

Revenue

The receipts recorded in the account book amounted to 234,148 lire until 1723, and reached 251,433 lire at the end of the Memoirs in 1729. After 1723, the annotations are less detailed, probably written by a collaborator or by Franceschini's son.



Pricing Calculation

Franceschini used a method of calculating prices based on a combination of factors: the size of the support, the number of figures, the complexity of the landscape and other iconographic details. This approach differed from that of other Bolognese artists of the time, such as Guercino and Reni, who often relied on the number of figures to determine the cost.

Marcantonio
Franceschini,
Birth of Apollo
and Diana, 1692-
1709, Vaduz,
Liechtenstein
Museum

