

ART MARKET

DAMS (L-3)

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DIPARTIMENTO DI
SCIENZE DELLA
COMUNICAZIONE

*XVII LESSON – CUSTOMERS
AND NETWORKS*

CUSTOMERS AND NETWORKS

One of the crucial aspects of the art trade in seventeenth-century Rome was the importance of networks of acquaintances and personal relationships between artists and clients. Artists often established close ties with their patrons, who could be nobles, high prelates, or members of the emerging bourgeoisie. These relationships not only guaranteed ongoing commissions, but also allowed artists access to material resources and financial support. For example, the painter Andrea Sacchi benefited from the protection of Cardinal Giulio Sacchetti, which allowed him to work on prestigious commissions and avoid economic difficulties.

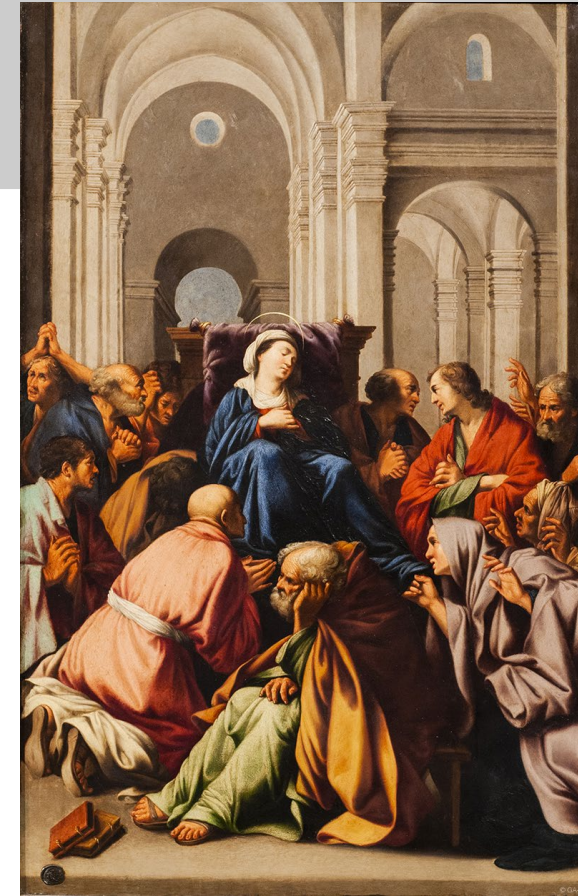
Andrea Sacchi, *Death of St. Anne*,
1640-1649, Rome, San Carlo ai
Catinari



Employment contracts were often detailed and specified not only the subject of the work, but also the materials to be used and deadlines for delivery. It was common to include penalties for delays or for work that did not meet the client's expectations. These agreements reflected a growing professionalization of the craft, in which artists had to balance their artistic ambitions with the pragmatic demands of the market.



Caravaggio, Death of the Virgin, 1604, Paris, Louvre



Carlo Saraceni, Death of the Virgin, 1606, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia



Carlo Saraceni, Death of the Virgin, 1610, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia

Artists had to be skilled not only in art, but also in the management of materials and resources. For example, pigments and canvases were expensive and often difficult to source. Some painters developed close relationships with material suppliers, negotiating discounts or priority access. A case in point is Giovanni Lanfranco, who maintained regular contact with pigment suppliers to secure the best colours for his works.

Giovanni Lanfranco,
Transfiguration of
Christ, before 1627,
Rome, Palazzo
Barberini



Art dealers played a vital role in the art economy, acting as intermediaries between artists and clients. These dealers often had extensive knowledge and could facilitate the spread of artwork beyond local borders.

For example, the dealer Gaspare Vivarino not only sold works of art, but also maps and globes, demonstrating the diversification of goods in the art trade.

Moon map,
seventeenth
century:
popularization of
scientific
observations

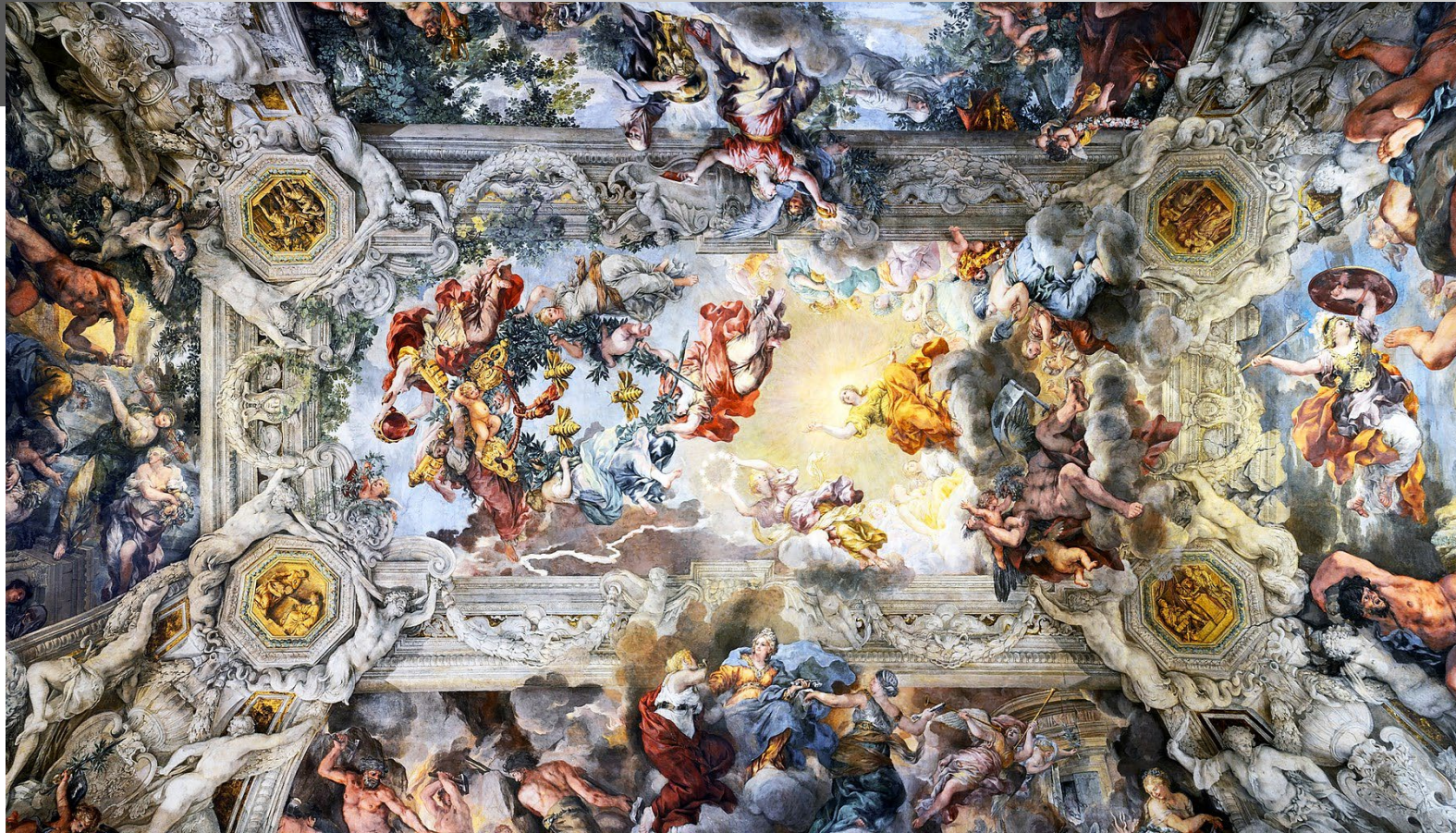


A specific case cited in the text is that of Tommaso Donini, a painter well known in Rome. In 1625, the inventory of his chamber, taken by the Governor's Criminal Court in the presence of his mother Martha, listed a number of works and artistic instruments, highlighting the importance of judicial investigations in providing details about the daily lives of artists.

Tommaso Donini, David
with the Head of
Goliath, 1620-1637,
Rome, Palazzo Corsini



Many artists worked in workshops that served as centers of collaborative production. These workshops were not only workplaces, but also training centers for young apprentices. The workshops of artists such as those of Pietro da Cortona were famous for their ability to produce high-quality works thanks to the division of labor and the specialization of tasks.



Pietro da Cortona, Triumph of Divine Providence, 1633, Rome, Palazzo Barberini

Inventories of artists' workshops and homes provide valuable information on the production and distribution of works of art.

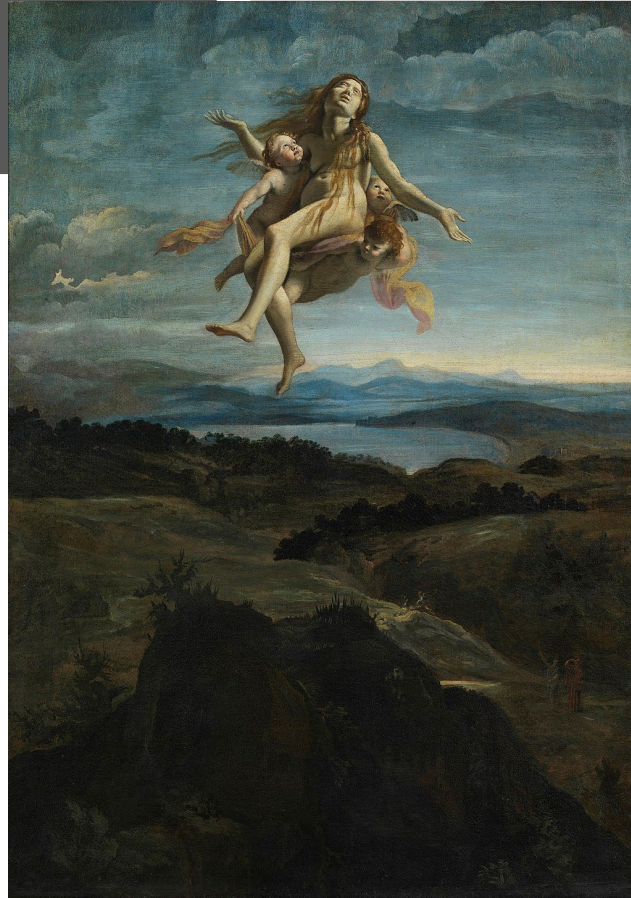
For example, the inventory of Antonio di Ventura Zalli, compiled in 1633, lists a series of painted tablets and drawings, illustrating the variety of a painter's artistic productions.

Hans Jordaens III,
Kunstkammer, c. 1630,
Vienna,
Kunsthistorisches

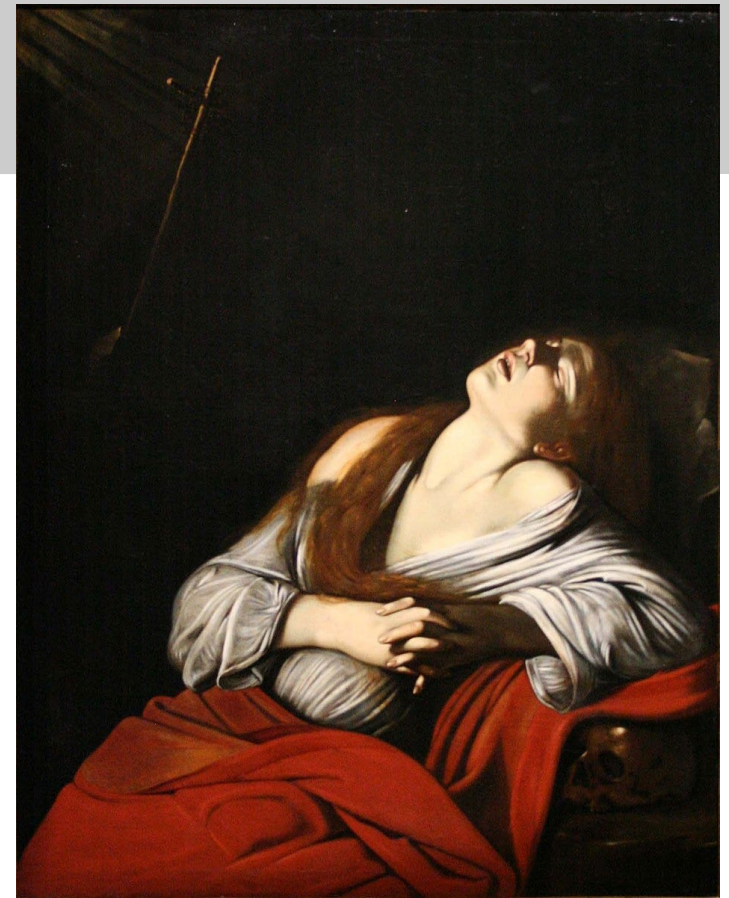


These inventories show a wide variety of subjects and types of works, ranging from portraits of saints and madonnas to scenes from landscapes and still lifes.

For example, Antonio Quaglino's inventory lists several paintings depicting religious subjects such as St. Mary Magdalene, as well as miniatures and drawings.



Giovanni Lanfranco, Ecstasy of St. Mary Magdalene, 1615-1618, Naples, Museo di Capodimonte (formerly the dressing room of the Hermits of Rome)



Louis Finson, Magdalene in Ecstasy, 1612, Marseille, Museum of Fine Arts

The inventories did not just list the works, but often also included detailed valuations. These valuations were expressed in shields and were used to determine the economic value of the works in the event of sales or inheritance divisions. The importance of economic evaluation is underlined by the fact that, although valuations were sometimes expressed in baiocchi, they were transformed into shields for uniformity.

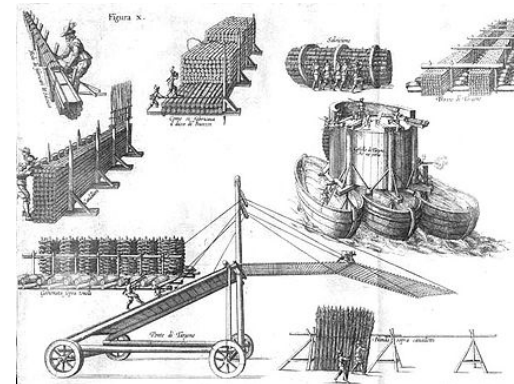


Pompeo Targone,
ciborium for St. John
Lateran



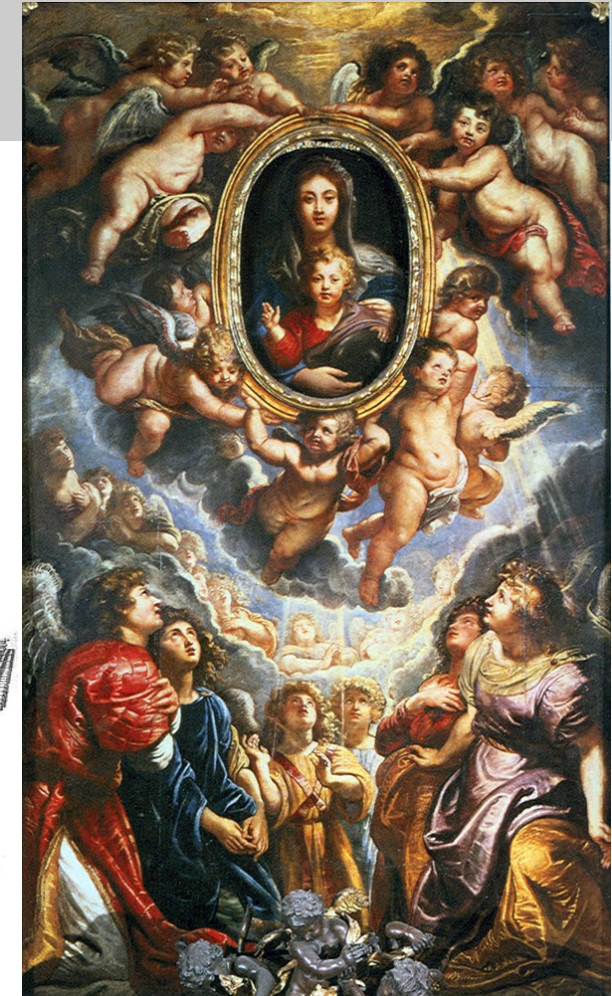
Pompeo Targone, Altar
of the Pauline Chapel in
Santa Maria Maggiore
(Rome) based on a
design by Antonio
Tempesta

Pompey Targone, project of war machines for the Siege of Ostend, from the book *On the Wars of Flanders* (drawing by Pompey Justinian), Antwerp 1609



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Pieter Paul Rubens,
Santa Maria della
Vallicella adored by
angels, 1608,
Rome, Chiesa
Nuova



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The documentation examined offers an in-depth look at the economic and social dynamics of the art trade in seventeenth-century Rome. Networks of acquaintances, detailed contracts, careful management of materials and the role of art dealers emerge as key elements of a complex system that allowed artists to operate and thrive in a highly competitive environment.

Caravaggio, Madonna dei Palafrenieri,
1605, Rome, Galleria Borghese

