

*The Procaccini and the Business of Painting in Early Modern Milan.*

Angelo Lo Conte.

Visual Culture in Early Modernity. London: Routledge, 2021. xii + 162 pp. \$160.

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The business of art, a field built on the interdisciplinary collaboration of art historians, economists, and social historians, has asked new questions and sought to understand existing questions through the lens of socioeconomic issues. Lo Conte's premise is that the Procaccini family workshop, active in Milan at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, made a savvy business decision to diversify that enabled them to become the most successful group of painters in Milan and Lombardy. In the introduction, the author justifies the scope of his study: "the Procaccini family has never been investigated in its entirety since previous studies have generally focused on the analysis of their individual careers" (1). This approach has the benefit of bringing together much new material, including archival findings that enrich our understanding of how the Procaccini brothers worked together.

The first chapter surveys the biographical sources and the modern historiography of the Procaccini. The second is a chronological summary of the lives and works of Ercole the Elder, Camillo, Carlo Antonio, and Giulio Cesare, occasionally enhanced by comparative data on business-related factors such as the young age at which Ercole registered his son in the painters' guild. The third chapter successfully puts to rest the claim of Malvasia that the family left Bologna to avoid competing with the Carracci. A chart comparing the prices they received with other prominent artists demonstrates that their pay per square meter was on par with the notoriously highly paid Guido Reni. This first half of the volume also surveys the Procaccini activities in Bologna, where Camillo launched his career in Bologna and obtained prestigious commissions. The last three chapters explore the expansion of the business through Lombardy and beyond, to Genoa, Switzerland, and Savoy, and their principal patrons.

Lo Conte emphasizes the importance of Camillo as business manager and his strategic decision to have his younger brothers specialize—Carlo Antonio in landscape, Giulio Cesare in sculpture—to expand their market. Camillo was good at getting commissions and supervising assistants, which allowed him to produce works for every church in Milan at a stunning pace—to the detriment of his modern reputation due to the varying quality of his output. Lo Conte praises his business acumen and creativity in developing a multitiered system of original commissions, studio copies after public works, and less expensive grisailles sold to private individuals.

He explains the turn of Giulio Cesare from sculpture to painting as another business strategy, arguing that the demand for altarpieces and small easel paintings was greater than the demand for decorative schemes with sculpture, and considers Giulio Cesare's rapid ascent as a painter as the expected outgrowth of the family network, imagining the brothers at first working together as a group with the new painter repurposing studio

drawings. The rise of the family to a solid middle-class status and Giulio Cesare's marriage to a noblewoman is given relatively little weight in this career change, while the Procaccini emphasis on Correggio and Parmigianino as models and their incorporation of stylistic elements from Flemish masters are seen as business strategies on a par with the Carracci synthesis extolled by Agucchi and Bellori.

Despite a few minor omissions (Greco Grasilli, 2010, on commissioning Garbieri), the author has both brought together much-published information and discovered exciting new information about the overlooked contribution of Carlo Antonio, who developed a unique market in Lombardy for garland paintings and landscapes. Yet the last three chapters, which survey the paintings each Procaccini brother produced for public and private patrons, have so much information packed into dense paragraphs that readers unfamiliar with their immense output are left longing for a more leisurely pace and for richer interpretive explanations to shape the mass of detail. The absence of professional editing is noticeable in missing words, extra prepositions, errors of punctuation, mistyped dates, and excessive repetitions that obscure the gems of Lo Conte's valuable approach, leaving the reader wishing this book were as lucid and as focused as his recent journal articles on Carlo Antonio in *Italian Studies* (2016) and *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* (2020).

Janis Bell, *National Coalition of Independent Scholars*

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*Chapels of the Cinquecento and Seicento in the Churches of Rome: Form, Function, Meaning.* Chiara Franceschini, Steven F. Ostrow, and Patrizia Tosini, eds. Milan: Officina Libraria, 2020. 272 pp. €40.

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Seldom does a collection of art history essays leave readers yearning for a second volume. Beautifully produced with stunning color images, although lacking sufficient comparative illustrations, *Chapels of the Cinquecento and Seicento in the Churches of Rome* presents nine resplendent examples—some little studied, others well known but newly interpreted. Fulfilling the promise of the introduction, readers are offered “a deeper understanding of the [chapels’] variety, richness, and complexity . . . as sites for liturgical celebration, quiet devotion, and pilgrimage; as burial places and reliquary shrines; and as expressions of individual, familial, and ecclesiastical power and spirituality” (13).

The informative introduction by the three editors explicates theological definitions, canonical rights of patronage, and chapels’ diverse architectural forms. Private chapels first proliferated in thirteenth-century Mendicant churches, then “reached [an] apogee” (10) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Despite Carlo Borromeo’s directives (1577) for reforming church construction and furnishings, Roman patrons and artists felt no compulsion to conform. They explored innovative techniques for creating