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Between art market and luxury production. Some methodological remarks.

Productive and non-productive expenses.

From Smith to Marx, and Ricardo to Schumpeter, the neat distinction between productive expenses and/or investments and non-productive expenses has for a long time influenced the choices of economic historians, today as in the past. Both Italian and European nobility, patricians and aristocrats were judged out of hand for their role, in diverse historical moments, in undermining the economic ideals associated with investments, real estate improvements, commerce or banking by busying themselves with voluptuary purchases, conspicuous consumption, extravagances - including obviously those tied to the arts, building, clothing, and music. <sup>1</sup>In truth it is sufficient to recall some phrases from Adam Smith to renew the invitation to distinguish every time between types of expenditures. I believe that one of the more interesting aspects of the art market is precisely that of understanding when, in a given historical moment and place, the patron – whether he be cardinal, prince, or aristocrat – has realized that the acquisition of a marble bust, or a given painting, carpet or tapestry is not just an expense, but also an investment. An investment tied not so much to the intrinsic value of the object, as is clear in the case of jewels, a chased silver platter, a damascened sword; but rather to the awareness that the object, perhaps a painting or a ceramic bust, would retain or increase in value over time.<sup>2</sup> Smith himself speaks of the distinction between voluptuary spending and the acquisition of durable goods. “The revenue of an individual may be spent either in things which are consumed immediately, and in which one day’s expense can neither alleviate nor support that of another, or it may be spent in things more durable, which can therefore

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<sup>1</sup> A nice synthesis of these theories can be found in P. MALANIMA, *Espansione e declino: economia e società fra Cinque e Seicento*, in *Studi storici*, 1979 (XX), 2, pp.287-316.

<sup>2</sup> A very good reconstruction on this argument has just been published: cfr. G. Guerzoni, *Apollo e Vulcano. I mercati delle arti in Italia (1400-1700)*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2006, Chap. 1 and 2. See this volume also for the most recent bibliography on the art market in Italy and Europe.

be accumulated...A man of fortune, for example, may either spend his revenue in a profuse and sumptuous table, and in maintaining a great number of menial servants, and a multitude of dogs and horses; or contenting himself with a frugal table and few attendants, he may lay out the greater part of it in adorning his house or his country villa, in useful or ornamental building, in useful or ornamental furniture, in collecting books, statues, pictures...Were two men of equal fortune to spend their revenue, the one chiefly in the one way, the other in the other, the magnificence of the person whose expense had been chiefly in durable commodities, would be continually increasing, every day's expense contributing something to support and heighten the effect of that of the following day...The former, too, would, at the end of the period be the richer man of the two. He would have a stock of goods of some kind or other, which, though it might not be worth all that it cost, would always be worth something. No trace or vestige of the expense of the later would remain, and the effects of ten or twenty years profusion would be as completely annihilated as if they had never existed." Obviously Smith could not yet realize that in an already established sector such as the arts, many objects could not only maintain their value over time, but could also increase their value. And yet he seems to be in favor of expenditures for durable goods for two other motives. "Noble palaces, magnificent villas, great collections of books, statues, pictures, and other curiosities, are frequently both an ornament and an honour, not only to the neighbourhood, but to the whole country to which they belong" And furthermore "...In the one way, besides, this expense maintains productive, in the other unproductive hands...All that I means is, that the one sort of expense, as always occasions some accumulation of valuable commodities, as it is more favourable to private frugality, and, consequently, to the increase of the public capital, as it maintains productive, rather than unproductive hands, conduces more than the other to the growth of public opulence."<sup>3</sup> I believe that these considerations were present in the minds of the many Italian noblemen, patricians, merchants and bankers between Quattro and Cinquecento: they were certainly aware that a palace was also an investment for the future. Just as a country villa, used for rest and pleasure, was also and importantly the administrative center of its surrounding real estate. Thus in analysis of private demand tied to the art market in the Quattro and Cinquecento the capacity of a given family or person to spend should be better defined. The many studies to date on the economies of Italian aristocratic families in this period have not always succeeded in distinguishing expenses for ephemeral goods and services from those of a durable nature. As of today, the best study of European nobility is without doubt the fine work of L. Stone on the English aristocracy from Elizabeth to Cromwell. Many observations on expenditures and consumption on the part of these families are still valid and are a necessary point of reference for whoever wishes to know

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<sup>3</sup> A. SMITH, *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of Nations*, London, 1776, I, pp. 341-344.

about private demand in the art market, whether in Italy or other European countries. The circumstances tied to the roles of a family of feudal nobility or of one of a town's patrician class may vary, but in every case the income and expenses must be analysed and distinguished carefully. In the first part of his book Stone considers conspicuous consumption to have been one of the factors causing the decline of many families between Cinque and Seicento. But this must be considered along with others: for example the costs of military campaigns, of ambassadors, or of living in the Court at London; or again of those, sometimes heavy, for funerals and tombs or of gaming, the cause of ruin of many noble families of the time. And yet, even with a detailed outline of the private expenditures of an aristocratic family such as here indicated, it is not always easy to distinguish the two types of expense. The average ten-year expenditures for an average noble Italian family in the Cinquecento could have been as follows: food, clothing, transportation (horses, wagons, carriages), arms, furnishings, ceramics and majolica, silver and jewellery, books, carpets and tapestries, paintings and art objects, upkeep of buildings, servants, various services (medical, education, legal, notary), duties for public services or military expeditions. A provisional outline of this type can help set up initial distinctions between expenses for services and non-durable objects and those for durable objects. But, once again, we need further distinctions. In the case of a great Venetian or Florentine patrician who has a bank or trade, how are we to classify his travel expenses? For a famous jurist or doctor like Girolamo Mercuriale whose annual income at the end of the 1500's was 1,000 *scudi*, where do we classify his purchases of expensive medical and legal books? Certainly the purchase of horses and dogs appears lightweight: but it was not unusual in those times to find men like the great Neapolitan noble Marzio Carafa who bred and sold horses and dogs, turning an aristocratic pastime into a sort of investment. It is also true that many Italian nobles, among them those of the Piedmont or the Venetian patriciate, sustained heavy military costs. But it is also true that many others made their military profession into an instrument of enrichment and acquisition of social position. Stone keenly points out the sometimes deep difference in values between old and new nobility: "Above all, conspicuous consumption serves a social function as a symbolic justification for the maintenance or acquisition of status. So long as their position is secure and unchallenged, old-established families are usually unostentatious in their spending. It is new wealth which sets the standard of novelty, of fashion, and of opulent display, simply because wealth is not a sufficient source of honour in itself. It needs to be advertised, and the normal medium is the purchase of obtrusively expensive capital goods, equipment, and services." He also underlines how expenses for luxury goods were not tied to the conditions of one's own income: on the contrary, these increased in the time of Elizabeth when incomes were stagnant and diminished with Charles I, when they were growing strongly. "The true explanation lies in changing

standards of values, changing codes of behaviour, changing fashions of competition, which affected both Court and Country alike. The virtuoso replaced the feudal lord; men bought books, coins, and pictures, not food, servants, and retainers...They withdrew into dining-rooms, bedchambers, and closet."<sup>4</sup> This follows the model, I would add, of the many Italian patricians and nobles of the Quattro and Cinquecento, including the numerous cardinals of the Roman Curia. These had reached and ripened ideals and values partly different from the simple mercantile evaluation of profits and losses, of balances of debits and credits.

Towards a study of the art market in modern Italy: 1550-1700.

Scholars of the history of the modern Italian art market should consider that demand existed on three levels: private, public, and ecclesiastic. Thus the infinite number of artists or artisans involved worked from time to time and often simultaneously for more than one patron.

Even within the study of private demand in the art market it will then be sometimes necessary to reconstruct the broader general structure of nobles' expenditures. Whether this be a prince like Ercole d'Este or a cardinal like Alessandro Farnese or a simple Florentine patrician, everything will be compared to the substance of the patrimony and annual income.<sup>5</sup> Certainly we know better the financial situation of many Italian courts of the Cinquecento; as well as a large part of the purchases made both in the artistic spheres as well as in more general consumption and services. But it will be just as important and interesting to know and understand the motivations behind the expenditures of the smaller provincial nobility, local patricians, clergy or Roman Cardinals active in the Curia.<sup>6</sup>

One must then keep in mind some general data regarding the calculation of wealth in Italy at the end of the Cinquecento and of the Seicento, because it is this wealth that supplied the demand.

The power of numbers: the population. According to Cipolla, Italy at the end of the Cinquecento had about 13 million inhabitants, about the same as at the end of 1600 - showing a stagnation caused by the plague which hit the peninsula some years, and in particular in 1630 and 1656. The more populous cities were Bologna, with 43,000 inhabitants, Florence with 72,000, Genoa with 75,000, Milan with 125,000, Naples with 220,000. Palermo with 110,000, Rome with 120,000 and

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<sup>4</sup> L. STONE, *The crisis of the aristocracy*, Oxford, 1965, pp. 201.203. This is a fundamental text for anyone studying the demand of private families in modern Europe.

<sup>5</sup> Excellent in this regard is the work by A. MANIKOWSKI, *Economic Aspects of the Cultural Patronage of a Florentine Aristocratic Family in the 17th Century*, in *Gli aspetti economici del mecenatismo in Europa...*, XVII settimana Datini, 19-24 aprile 1985.

<sup>6</sup> One example from the many studies: *I Farnese. Corti, guerra e nobiltà in antico regime*, ed. A. BILOTTO-P. DEL NEGRO-C. MOZZARELLI, Bulzoni Editore Roma 1997.

Venice with 138,000, down from 150,000. There has never been a count, even approximate, of the number of aristocratic and patrician families existing in Italy in these years, nor of the families tied to the professions: doctors, notaries, lawyers, architects, engineers, teachers or public office-holders, nor of the ecclesiastics who had a middling income. Nevertheless, and still according to Cipolla; in the cities, 10% of the population held between 50% and 60% of the wealth.<sup>7</sup> This could mean, given the large number of cities existing in Italy at this time, that about 1,200,000 individuals held 50% of the wealth, on average. Or perhaps, to be clearer and more prudent, in those years at least 200,000 families could have held about 40% to 50% of the global wealth.

In this same period Italy had 16 universities. The great hospitals and charitable institutions, present in all the cities and states, were very numerous – at least two or three thousand – and were institutions that could have incomes that oscillated between 4,000 and 50,000 silver *scudi*.

Today's historians unfortunately cannot calculate the investments made in agriculture and manufacturing: think only of the irrigation canals dug in the Po valley, or the artificial canals which brought water to manufacturers' mill-wheels, like those that moved the fulling-mills, or the hammers in paper mills, or metal works, or the complicated industrial machines called Bolognese silk mills, and, in the Sei and Settecento, common in Lombardy, Veneto, and Piedmont. In Tuscany alone it has been calculated that, between the end of the Quattrocento and mid-Settecento, 18,000 farm houses were constructed. This valuation, even if very approximate and indirect, of the wealth of the various Italian states, can be calculated on the basis of the public revenues of the various Italian states at the end of the Cinquecento and the end of the Seicento.

The revenues of the larger states for the end of the Cinquecento are well known: Milan had an annual income of 1,200,000 *scudi*, Venice as much as 2,450,000 ducats, and considering Genoa, Florence, Rome, Naples, Turin or the respective states, one can calculate an overall income of between 12 and 14 million silver *scudi*. Calculating also the incomes of the minor states such as Ferrara, Mantua, Parma and Piacenza, Massa and Carrara, Sicily and Sardinia, one arrives at 18 or 20 million silver *scudi*. To this figure must be added the incomes of the smaller cities and communes, that almost universally had their own taxation, as well as the percentages of cost of collection, which remained local. But taking as very probable a public revenue of 20 million silver *scudi* and keeping in mind the observations of many scholars such as Cipolla, Felloni, De Maddalena, Delumeau to the effect that taxes in that historic period were about 5% or 6% of income, the sum is already very indicative. One must in fact remember that the 20 milioni *scudi*

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<sup>7</sup> C. M. Cipolla, *Storia economica dell'Europa pre-industriale*, Bologna 2002, pp. 23-45. For Naples in 1811, the percentage of the middle and upper levels was more than 20%; cfr. P. Malanima, *L'economia italiana...*, Bologna 2002, pp. 259 ff. Malanima also notes that "in relative terms the pro-capita product in Italy was similar, between 1550 and 1750, to that of Holland and Great Britain and Italy loses ground mostly in the course of the Ottocento." Ivi, p. 257.

touched only a part of the active population, with very important exclusions for goods and income of ecclesiastical and feudal properties. Considering, cautiously, that that taxation touched 10% of income, it follows that each year it touched a global income of 200 million silver *scudi*. A century later, calculating the entire public revenue in 30 million silver *scudi*, one deduces a global income of more than 300 million *scudi*.<sup>8</sup>

These data, even if provisional and indicative, can give an idea of the spending capacity of private citizens and of the state or other public institutions, but do not furnish information about ecclesiastical establishments: monasteries, convents, bishoprics, abbeys, etc. that play a very important role in artistic patronage. It would perhaps be possible to say that, every year, between private, public, and ecclesiastic expenditures, no less than 20 or 25 million *scudi* were destined for luxury acquisitions and artistic products in the broad sense.

And on the other hand, the presence of conspicuous property wealth and the constant circulation of money in Italy between Cinque and Settecento are factors confirmed by the continuous and constant decline of interest rates on the public debt, as well as on bank debts or loans based on the census, so that there was a change from an average rate of 8% or 9% at end Cinquecento to 2,5%-3% in mid-Settecento.<sup>9</sup>

A concrete example: prestigious buildings in Genoa, Florence, Rome, and Naples

The best analysis of investments in important buildings constructed in Italy between Cinque and Settecento is the one done by Giorgio Doria for the city of Genoa. Between 1530 and 1650 about 300 palaces and villas were erected in Genoa and surroundings. The average cost of the more important palaces ranged from 20,000 to more than 50,000 gold *scudi*, while the lesser had costs of 8,000 to 20,000 gold *scudi*. And according to an estimate in 1797 regarding 159 urban palaces in Genoa, the total value was 3,321,851 gold *scudi*, or an average of 20,326 *scudi* per palace.<sup>10</sup>

At Rome, in the Cinquecento, 55 palaces were erected inside the walls, and 30 villas outside the walls, while in Florence, according to R. Goldthwaite, 80 palaces were built inside the walls between 1450 and 1560.

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<sup>8</sup> I note briefly the data reported in E. Stumpo, *Finanza e stato moderno in Piemonte...*, Roma 1979; ID. *Il capitale finanziario a Roma...*, Milano 1985; L. Pezzolo, *Il fisco dei veneziani...*, Verona 2003; M. C. Giannini, *L'oro e la tiara...*, Bologna 2003.

<sup>9</sup> L. Pezzolo, *L'economia d'antico regime*, Roma, Carocci, 2005, p. 122.

<sup>10</sup> G. Doria, *Nobiltà e investimenti a Genova in età moderna*, Genova, Istituto di storia economica, 1995, p. 245.

Cost of some Roman palaces:

Quirinal Palace,	1585-90, silver <i>scudi</i>	364,000
Vatican library,	1587-89, “ “	42,000
Palazzo della Consulta,	1619, “ “	55,000
Borghese Palace,	1610-1620, “ “	275,000
Borghese Villa, complex,	1610-1630 “ “	233,000

The cost of palaces in Naples in these same years was much lower; according to Labrot about 15,000 ducats, and the most sumptuous residence, Palazzo Sanseverino, was sold to the Genoese Grimaldi for 44,000 ducats at the end of the Cinquecento.

In Florence, in the Cinquecento, the most costly palace was the Strozzi, which cost 40,000 florins in 1525; while the Medici Riccardi palace was purchased in 1659 for 40,000 *scudi* and the Riccardi in the course of 60 years spent another 110,000 for improvements and furnishings. But the average cost of palaces built in Florence's Cinquecento was around 15,000 *scudi*.

Giorgio Doria's estimate of cost for "furnishing" a palace or villa in Genoa with frescoes, upholstering, tapestries and paintings, inlaid or decorated furniture, mirrors, candelabras, lamps, vases in majolica or silver, arms and armor, silverware and majolica tableware, between Sei and Settecento, was, at 5,2% of the value of the net patrimony of the ten patrician families in his sample, or a minimum of 3,6% to a maximum of 17,8%.

Above and beyond the many considerations and warnings that one may make about the history of prices, staying within the confines of a sector such as that of luxury consumption, or better luxury objects that may in time become art objects, one must understand what was the purchaser's perception of the object. Certainly a collector or amateur in the Cinquecento was aware of his purchases; but one must not forget that the greater part of the patriciate or nobility did not have a clear idea of the "artistic" value of many objects now considered such, but then seen differently. In 1742 Chiara Pisani redid the *piano nobile* of her palace on the Grand Canal in Venice, substituting frescoes by G.B. Tiepolo and a large painting by Piazzetta, la *Morte di Dario*, for the antique Cinquecentesche decorations. Just a few years earlier she had given as much as 19,975 ounces of silverware to the goldsmith Gerolamo Pilotto so that it could be "re-worked in a more modern way".

Thus for the moment it is impossible to understand the very recent discovery presented by L. Lorizzo about Rome in the second half of the Seicento: the inventory of the shop of the Genoese Pellegrino Peri "seller of paintings". From this inventory emerge 2,491 pieces: paintings on canvas,

wood, copper and slate, of various formats, both originals and copies, for a total value of 18,318 *scudi*.<sup>11</sup>

How are we to judge this inventory? How many merchants of paintings were active in Rome in these years? Did they have stocks like Peri? Can this information be extended to painting merchants active in Bologna, Venice, Florence, Milan, Genoa or Naples? What was the rapport between production of originals and of copies in the painters' workshops of the time?

From another recent article by P. Cavazzini on the Roman market in the first half of the Seicento emerges strongly the diffusion of paintings in modest settings: to boatmen, pasta makers, bakers, perfumers, laundry women, lower level town functionaries went paintings of low cost, but also copies from Caravaggio, Titian, and Raphael.<sup>12</sup> These are all interesting points that indicate a greater attention on the part of younger historians of Italian art to the phenomenon today called the art market, which, however, do not yet allow us to draw conclusions of a general nature, even if they give us hope for future studies on this theme in Italy.

The force of continuity: artistic production in Italy between Sette and Ottocento: exportation of originals and copies or antique and modern collector's items

In evaluating Italian production however, whether as consumption of luxury or "artistic" items, one must not forget that there was already a flourishing exportation activity in the Cinquecento. And thus, even the evaluation of the capacity of private, or public, or ecclesiastical purchases is not enough to allow us to quantify the phenomenon of the production. The exportation of antiques, carved marbles and alabaster, gold and silver ware flourished in the Cinquecento, continued in the Seicento embracing painting and Italian artists working in other countries, and in the Settecento is increasingly concerned with copies, reproductions or even just collector's objects defined as "modern", or constructed and made in those years.

That which emerges from Roman sources, for example, as from the Florentine, equally interesting and relative also to the first half of the Ottocento, is not only the dispersion of the Italian artistic patrimony, but a much more complex phenomenon. And that is the persistence of a manufacturing production, centered prevalently on that which is today called the art market, that following the

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<sup>11</sup> L. Lorizzo, *Documenti inediti sul mercato dell'arte...*, in *Decorazione e collezionismo a Roma nel Seicento*, ed. F. Cappelletti, Roma, Gangemi, 2003, pp. 159-175.

<sup>12</sup> P. Cavazzini, *La diffusione della pittura a Roma nel primo Seicento...*, in *Quaderni Storici*, 116, 2/2004, Mercanti di quadri.

attraction demonstrated by the buyers towards antiquity, paintings, sculpture and objects of “antique” minor arts, regarded for the most part, objects, furniture, paintings and sculpture, “modern” ceramics and majolica, that could be called “genre” or “in the style”, or as some documents said “produced by the contemporary Italian school”. F. Haskell reconstructed some time ago the more important moments in the dispersion of the more important Italian collections notwithstanding the laws and decrees emitted by the various Italian state governments; from that of Ferdinando I dei Medici, in 1603, to those of Innocenzo XI in 1686, up until the constitution of the Capitoline and Pio-Clementine museums at the end of the Settecento.<sup>13</sup>

Laws, decrees, and provisions had little effect however, because they were concerned above all with public collections rather than private, and because they almost always provided for exceptions, like the well known edict of Cardinal Pacca in 1820 which was used in Rome throughout the second half of the Ottocento.<sup>14</sup> Evidently the functionaries and director of the Royal Gallery of Florence were inspired by the same concept as regards the paintings: it is true, as F. Borroni Salvadori reminded us, that between 1760 and the early years of the Ottocento, 3,000 paintings were exported under license, not counting the copies and “some hundreds of sculptures”.<sup>15</sup>

Thus a large part of the legislation was guided by the concept of the sovereign right of pre-emption in the first instance, and in the second, protection of antiquities and art objects belonging to religious organizations, congregations, and corporations which, between 1760 and 1866, following the suppressions decreed by the various Italian states, the French government, and finally the Italian kingdom, had invaded the art market.<sup>16</sup> Thus it is not surprising that in 1821 and the years following, permissions for exportation were given in Florence that bore the following motivation: “having seen the painting described here, I find it not fitting for the Royal Gallery...”<sup>17</sup>

Thus it is not surprising if, after the Unification, the overwhelming majority of permissions for exportation, both in Florence and Rome, touched on modern objects. In the case of Rome, as far as latest studies reveal, we have only the statistics published in the *Bollettino Ufficiale del Ministero per la Pubblica Istruzione*, but the lists still exist and will be used in the near future. Below is the summarization of the first half of 1886, with the values expressed in *lire*:<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> F. HASKELL, *La dispersione e la conservazione del patrimonio artistico*, in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, vol. X, cit., pp.4-35; on the modern and Ottocento legislation, see A. EMILIANI, *Leggi, bandi, provvedimenti per la tutela dei beni artistici e culturali negli antichi stati italiani*, 1571-1860, Bologna 1978.

<sup>14</sup> EMILIANI, op. cit., pp. 130-145.

<sup>15</sup> F. BORRONI SALVADORI, *L'esportazione di opere d'arte nella Firenze della seconda metà del Settecento*, in *Amici dei Musei*, 31, 1984, p. 12. On the equally important question of copies, in the same period, see also ID., *Artisti e viaggiatori agli Uffizi nel Settecento*, in *Labyrinthos*, 7-8; Firenze, le Monnier 1986, pp. 3-72; ivi, 10, 1986, pp. 38-93; ivi, 12, 1987, pp. 93-156; ivi, 17-18, 1990, pp.198-272, with an ample appendix that reports the works copied, the artists and their patrons.

<sup>16</sup> HASKELL, *La dispersione...*, cit. pp.26-27.

<sup>17</sup> Archivio storico delle gallerie fiorentine, (ASGF), f. 45, 1821, *Licenze di esportazione*.

<sup>18</sup> *Bollettino Ufficiale del Ministero per la Pubblica Istruzione*, Roma 1887.

<i>Month</i>	<i>Number of licences</i>	<i>Value of antiquity</i>	<i>Value of moderns</i>	<i>Tax of licence</i>	<i>Tax of 20% antiquity</i>	<i>Total payment</i>
<i>January</i>	90	670	149.938	312,80	124	436,80
<i>February</i>	107	2.865	91.990	355,70	573	928,70
<i>March</i>	159	5.735	541.320	627	1.097	1.724
<i>April</i>	175	8.725	228.195	604	730	1.334
<i>May</i>	162	5.840	235.070	562,30	558	1.120,30
<i>June</i>	130	2.310	162.335	412,60	462	874,60
<i>Totale</i>	823	26.270	1.408.848	2.874	3.554	6.418,40

Certainly the fact that in Rome antique objects were subject to the famous 20% tax introduced by the Pacca edict, recalled and still applied, after diverse favorable judgments from the State Council, may seem suspect. And this may have led a certain number of exporters to classify pieces from earlier times as modern. There was of course the right for the Exportation officers to view the objects, paintings, or antiquities proposed for export, and in Rome and Florence many reports are carefully preserved. But the value in *lire* of the “modern objects” can not but strike one, even hypothesizing that a certain number of “antiques” had been “modernized”.<sup>19</sup> In the second half of that year, and from the same source, there are other data. We will note only the increase in value of antique objects which passed at *lire* 73,196, and the substantial stability of value of modern objects, at *lire* 1.428.915. In a word, in only one year, 1886, antique and modern art objects to the value of 2,937,229 *lire* left Rome, of which those considered antiques and taxable had the value of 99,466 *lire*, or just over 3%.

If we look at an analogous, but more detailed, list from Florence a few years later, the situation has not changed:

Table of the art and antique objects sent to foreign countries during the year 1891 with permission from the Royal Office of art exportation of Florence

<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, this highly placed exponent of Roman nobility, prince Baldassare Odescalchi, senator of the Kingdom, in 1900 denounced the lack of government controls over the illegal sale of some masterpieces by some Roman nobles: “A short while ago an important painting of Botticelli belonging to the Chigi left...of the Sciarra gallery there is no news; the splendid portrait which is perhaps of a Borgia and falsely attributed to Raphael has for some time now ornamented the Rothschild collection; a while ago a very beautiful bust attributed to Benedetto da Maiano in the Palazzo Barberini collection went off to enrich the collections of the museums of Berlin.” Cfr. *Atti parlamentari, Senato, Sessioni 1900*, vol. 80, pp. 346ff.

	<i>Antique art</i>		<i>Modern art</i>			<i>Total objects</i>	<i>Total value</i>
	Painting	Sculpture	Minority arts	Painting	Sculpture	Minority arts	
<b>Objects</b>	585	215	14.332	3.595	4.460	3.626	26.813
<b>Value in lire</b>	134.916	71.180	231.070	914.139	842.551	121.431	2.315.187

As one can observe, for antique art, the “miscellaneous arts” make up the most important group both in number and value, followed by painting and sculpture; this last is notable, for modern art, only a little less than painting. Unfortunately, in this summary, there is no distinction between originals and copies, but undoubtedly that which at the time was called modern art made up the greater part of exported objects.

By now the art market had undergone another important change, as noted by K. Ponian for the second half of the Ottocento: “it begins to traverse the Atlantic. Having begun a phase of rapid economic growth after the Civil War, the United States become the country where there is the greatest accumulation of capital, and the capitalists – like the Italians of the XV-XVI centuries, the Dutch in XVII, the French of the XVIII and the English in the XIXth – begin to be interested in contemporary art and to collect antiquities. From this point, the exchange: the American buyers and merchants of European art become active in the markets of Paris and London, while the sellers, merchants already well established in these two centers, open shops in New York in order to be closer to their clients. In the beginning of the XXth century New York thus becomes the third capital of a market in which the purchasing power of the collectors and amateurs grows; the quotation of a million dollars for a work is already history at this time.”<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, together with antique and modern art, the Roman sources tell of the growing demand for copies, various objects, inlaid furniture, bronzes, carved marble and alabaster, porcelain, majolica, and ceramics. It seems almost that the demand from across the ocean touches entire furnishings “in style”, from artistic fireplaces to fountains, to fabrics, to plaster models. From

<sup>20</sup> PONIAN, *L'arte fra museo e mercato...*, cit., p. 19. ID., *Dalle sacre reliquie all'arte moderna. Venezia – Chicago dal XIII al XX secolo*, Ital. trans., Milano, Il Saggiatore 2004, pp. 276-294.

Leghorn to, for example, New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, but also to Brasilia, Mexico City, Texas, or Minnesota, between 1898 and 1907, went box on box and whole wagonloads of “works in marble and alabaster, oil paintings, inlaid chairs, works in iron, mosaics, terrecotte, bronzes, antique and modern prints, watercolors, gilt frames, busts”, whose declared value was not ever very high, from 500 to 1,200 *lire*, but sometimes rose to 5,000, 6,000, even 10,000 *lire*.<sup>21</sup>

So if the first American buyers appeared sporadically in Florence in the 1820’s, as, for example appeared in the archive of the Gallery of the Uffizi in 1828, between the 1880’s and the first World War their numbers became notable.<sup>22</sup>

This situation was well known in Italy and also concerned the internal market, that which Prince Baldassare Odescalchi, as early as 1876 claimed was too dependent on foreign demand: “our art will not ever regain its original and national character until we again begin to sculpt and paint for the Italians, and art returns to pleasing our compatriots...<then> our artists will not be obliged to be humiliated by Goupil or other foreign merchants.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Archivio Centrale dello Stato, AA. BB. AA., III versamento, II parte, *Dogane*, 1898-1907, ff. 344-375. In 1907 Adolfo Borgheroni of Bologna sent a complete garden to Switzerland: in 63 pieces, and for a value of 8,220 *lire*, there were: “steps, benches, a wrought iron gate with clusters of grapes, lions, a fountain with a Neptune of bronze and Veronese marble, statues and terrecotte”

<sup>22</sup> Archivio Storico Gallerie Fiorentine, f. 56, 1828. On May 13, 1828, “G. G. Howland of the United States of America” requested exportation of “a copy of the *Madonna del Granduca* painted on wood”; in 1837 instead Henry Whitney asked permission for 21 paintings and W. Busch, resident “in America” did the same for 9. These were certainly minor compared to other requests like that of the councillor of the college Paolo Demidoff’s 821 pieces, among which were paintings, sculptures, silver and ancient objects; or of the Frenchman C. Seguin, who had collected 993 paintings, or madame Svertehoff (?), born at Gourieff, who exported 67, or the Englishman T. Kennek (?), who had purchased 105.

<sup>23</sup> M. M. LAMBERTI, *1870-1915: i mutamenti del mercato...*, in *Storia dell’arte italiana*, Torino, Einaudi, XI, p.5.