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The academization of art

A practice approach to the early histories of the Accademia del Disegno and the Accademia di San Luca

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Chapter Six

Guild Practices in the Art Academies

6.1. Academy versus guild?

By the end of the sixteenth century guilds organized professional practices in most Italian towns and cities. Originating in the Middle Ages, guilds were associations of merchants or craftsmen of the same trade that protected the market through the control of price and quality. This also held for the corporations that regulated professional artistic practices. For instance, artists' guilds guaranteed high and reliable standards of quality through a system, in which practitioners appraised the work of colleagues.⁶²⁰ Furthermore, they functioned as magistracies, adjudicating in civil cases that involved artists, such as disputes about contracts with commissioners.⁶²¹ Finally, guilds also played a central role in the achievement of another goal in professional artistic practices, namely the education of pupils. Without the continuous education of new generations of artists, the practice would soon die out. Guilds contributed to this activity through regulating and controlling the manner in which students and apprentices were trained and taught, and the way in which a studio was organized.

For a long time, scholars of the Accademia del Disegno and the Accademia di San Luca entertained the idea – which, incidentally, still persists in common opinion – that the artists who founded these institutions did so in order to release themselves from the legal and symbolic fetters of the guilds. More specifically, it was thought that painters, sculptors, and architects founded the academies because they wanted to be seen as liberal artists that performed their arts freely and no longer be subjected to the corporate system. In the eyes of contemporaries, this system was inextricably connected to retail-workshop commerce and manual activities, i.e. to the lower mechanical arts rather than to the liberal arts.⁶²² Some scholars even argued that the academy as institution is antithetical to the guild.⁶²³ This essentialist view

⁶²⁰ Hoogewerff 1912, 60 and 1926, 122, and Matthew 2003, 16.

⁶²¹ See Jack 1976, 6.

⁶²² Sciulli 2007, 123.

⁶²³ See especially Pevsner 1940/1973, 50 and Rossi 1980, 161-162.

is based on the preconception that whereas guilds are typical medieval organizations, academies belong to the modern era.⁶²⁴

Recent studies have made clear that rather than doing away with the guild structure, the artists wanted the newly founded academies to assume the functions that had previously been fulfilled by the guilds. In other words, the academicians used the Accademia del Disegno and the Accademia di San Luca as instruments for controlling the profession and the art market. However, the precise nature and character of the guild activities of the academies and the relationship to the other practices carried out within their walls has until now received very little scholarly attention. Historians who included a discussion of the guild function in their interpretation of the academies have done so in a very brief and abstract way, simply mentioning the new rules and the tasks of the officers, without providing detailed interpretations of their guild activities.⁶²⁵ Therefore, a more detailed and thorough analysis of the guild practices is warranted. Such an analysis has implications for the conception of the modernization process and the role of the academization of art in Italy in it, because it reveals a more gradual transition from medieval organizations (guilds) to modern ones (academies) than hitherto thought by most historians of the art academies.

Due to the quantity of the remaining archival sources, the guild practices of the Accademia del Disegno can be more fully reconstructed than those of the Accademia di San Luca. Nevertheless, the material clearly reveals that guilds practices were carried out somewhat differently in these institutions, especially with regard to the function of magistracy. These differences can be related to the different features of the art markets in both cities.

6.2. *The Florentine guilds and the formation of the Arte del Disegno*

In Florence, as elsewhere in Italy and Europe, merchants and craftsmen were organized professionally in guilds since the twelfth century.⁶²⁶ Around the middle of the thirteenth century there existed in Florence twenty-one corporations: seven *arti maggiori* (major guilds) and fourteen *arti minori* (minor guilds). The guilds, and especially the *arti maggiori*,

⁶²⁴ Hughes 1986a, 5.

⁶²⁵ See, for instance Barzman (2000, 207-214) and Hughes (1986a) on the guild function of the Accademia del Disegno. Although Hughes gives a useful description of the transformations in the Florentine guild system in the sixteenth century, he discusses no examples of guild activities of the Accademia del Disegno at all. Barzman is mainly interested in the transformation of the offices and provides only a couple of examples from lawsuits from the third and fourth decade of the seventeenth century.

⁶²⁶ Grossi/Trani 2009, 24.

had important functions in the state government, as the *priori* of the Signoria were elected from their membership.⁶²⁷ The *arti maggiori* also governed the Mercanzia, which was the city's highest commercial court, the court of appeal for civil lawsuits, and the superintendent of all corporations.⁶²⁸

At the beginning of the Medici principate in 1530, the Florentine guilds were weakened due to decades of economic decline. However, instead of suppressing the guilds as symbols from Florence's republican past – which should have been possible given their state – subsequent Medici dukes reformed and revitalized the corporative system in order to revive the economy. As part of the reforms, in 1534 the seven *arti maggiori* were reduced to six and the fourteen minor guilds merged into four larger corporations, called *università*. In 1556, under Cosimo I's rule, a new round of guild reforms started with the guild of the Medici e Speziali receiving new statutes. Furthermore, in 1560 all corporations were required to contribute to the construction of the city's new administrative building, the Uffizi designed by Vasari, which would accommodate their magistracies. Revised regulations of the Mercanzia appeared in 1577, and in 1584 Grand Duke Francesco I brought the guilds under the control of the Pratica Segreta, the council of advisors to the Medici state.⁶²⁹

It was in the middle of these reforms and against this background that the Accademia del Disegno was founded in 1563 and that eight years later the artists petitioned Cosimo I to form their own guild. Until then, the painters had belonged, as minor members (*membri minori*), to the guild of physicians and apothecaries (Arte dei Medici e degli Speziali) and the sculptors and architects to the guild of the builders (Arte dei Fabbrianti).⁶³⁰ In the petition, copies of which can be found in the *Libro del provveditore*, the academicians had requested to be released from the

⁶²⁷ The Signoria was the governing body consisting of nine magistrates, i.e. eight *priori* and the *gonfaloniere di giustizia*. See Goudriaan 2015, 393.

⁶²⁸ According to Zanré (2004, 9-10), Florentine society was roughly divided into three social strata: 1. The *plebe*, who worked in menial jobs, did not pay taxes and were denied citizenship; 2. The *popolo grasso* (fat or wealthy people) and 3. The *popolo minuto* (the thin or lower people). This latter distinction corresponded roughly to the division within the guild system of the major and minor guilds. The former consisted of merchants and patricians and were also referred to by contemporaries as *grandi*, *ottimati*, or *nobili*. The latter consisted of artisans and craftsmen. Both groups consisted of Florentine citizens who paid taxes.

⁶²⁹ Hughes 1986a, 6-8 and Goudriaan 2015, 28.

⁶³⁰ Previously the sculptors and architects belonged to the guild of the masters of stone and wood (Arte dei Maestri di Pietra e di Legname). In 1534 this guild had merged with various other guilds into the Arte dei Fabbrianti. Jack 1976, 6. Hughes 1986a, 7. According to Jack (1976, 10), after 1571, not one painter paid the annual fee to the Arte dei Medici e Speziali, because in that year the academy took on the function of guild.

obligations to their respective guilds and to form their own corporation.⁶³¹ For the academy, the assumption of the function of guild meant an increase in status and official recognition, as well as greater autonomy. It also entailed an expansion of its activities. In the capacity of guild, the institution could adjudicate civil cases that involved its members.⁶³²

On December 10, 1571 the grand duke gave his approval for the incorporation of a new guild for painters, sculptors, and architects. A week later, during a meeting in the Cappella della Santissima Trinità, the academicians discussed the formation of their guild and elected six reformers (*riformatori*) and four assistants (*arruoti*). This committee was responsible for screening the artists eligible to hold office in the new institution and for transforming the statutes so to include rules pertaining to the function of guild.⁶³³

The implementation of the new function in the existing organization became a recurrent topic in the academic meetings in the months and years following Cosimo I's approval. In January 1572, the artists elected a *cancelliere* ('chancellor' or 'clerk') who would be responsible for the book of the *Deliberazioni e partiti* ('deliberations and decisions'), in which the affairs pertaining to the guild were recorded.⁶³⁴ In the same month the Mercanzia also ratified the foundation of the new guild. In a letter, which is copied in the academy's *Libro del provveditore*, the Mercanzia specified that it would oversee the scrutiny and sortition of the academy's candidate consuls, who would adjudicate the cases brought to the guild's tribunal. The letter emphasizes that the artists desired to have the same rights and obligations as the other

⁶³¹ See ASF, AD 25, 18v-19r and 69r, for copies of the petition and the grand ducal response, signed by Tommaso dei Medici, Cosimo I's *Tesauriere maggiore*. It should be noted that from the second half of 1569 onward, the terms 'academy' (*accademia*) and *disegno* are used more frequently in the *libri del provveditore*. The more frequent use of these terms can be seen both as an expression of a growing confidence of the academicians and, in the case of the request for their own guild, as a justification of their autonomy as an organization. It is interesting that the secretaries of the academy referred more frequently to their institution with these terms in their descriptions of the meetings that were held in the Cappella della Santissima Trinità. Moreover, this occurred when the academicians started to decorate the chapel. See Jonker 2017 for an iconographic interpretation of the decorations in the Cappella della Santissima Trinità from the perspective of guild practices, as well as from the perspective of religious practices. See for the latter point of view also section 5.4.

⁶³² Ticciati 1876, 234-235; Jack 1976, 17; Dempsey 1980, 553-554; Barzman 2000, 207-208.

⁶³³ ASF, AD 25, 15v-16r. See also Barzman 2000, 208.

⁶³⁴ This *cancelliere* was Giovanni da Falgano. ASF, AD 25, 18r. See, for the rule in the academy's statutes of 1585, in which the chancellor's function is described, Ważbiński 1987, II, 456-459. Falgano was already succeeded in August of that same year by Persio Compagni, who would play an important role in the drafting of the new statutes and who would remain in office until 1587.

Florentine corporations, which included being subjected to the Mercanzia.⁶³⁵ This means that the academicians wanted to be seen and function as a normal guild.⁶³⁶ The subjection to the Mercanzia entailed, among other things, that it would serve as the court of appeals for the cases handled by the academy's magistracy.⁶³⁷

Still in January 1572, the officers of the academy held an extraordinary meeting in the house of lieutenant Jacopo Pitti, in which they discussed the site for their tribunal. The record of the meeting shows that, in accordance with their desire to function as a regular corporation, the academicians considered petitioning the grand duke to grant them access to a building of one of the other guilds. The document mentions two suitable locations: the *audientia* of the guild of the moneychangers and merchants of precious stones and metals (Arte di Cambio) or the *audientia* of the guild of the cloth merchants (Arte dei Mercatanti or Arte di Calimala).⁶³⁸ During the following months, the artists apparently reconsidered the matter, because in the copy of the petition that was finally sent to the grand duke in August 1572, two other sites are suggested: the *audientia* of the guild of the physicians and pharmacists (Arte dei Medici e Speciali) and that of the builders (Arte dei Fabbricanti). As mentioned, these were the guilds to which the artists had previously belonged. The grand ducal response, dated August 27, 1572, granted the artists access to the building of the Arte dei Fabbricanti when it was not in use. This turned out to be on Wednesdays.⁶³⁹ From that moment on, the Arte dei Fabbricanti is regularly mentioned in the archival documents as venue for the tribunal and, on occasion, also as site for the academy's meetings.⁶⁴⁰

The reason why the artists changed their minds about the location for their guild activities is unknown. Two possibilities come to mind. On the one hand, in the course of 1572 the academicians might have discovered that their first choices were unfeasible for practical reasons.

⁶³⁵ ASF, AD 25, 19r. For instance, the passage states that 'si contentano et vogliono esser soggetti a detta università della mercantia, nel modo che sono soggetti le altre arti.'

⁶³⁶ See also the petition from August 1572 to the grand duke, in which the site for the tribunal is discussed. ASF, AD 25, 70r.

⁶³⁷ The Mercanzia later reviewed the statutes of the academy to make sure that they were in accordance with those of the other guilds. See for a copy of the decision of the Mercanzia, ASF, AD 25, 18v-19r. See also Barzman 2000, 208, Zangheri, 2013, 90 and Sartoni 2015b, 188-189.

⁶³⁸ ASF, AD 25, 16v.

⁶³⁹ ASF, AD 25, 70r.

⁶⁴⁰ For instance, in 1573 and 1574 the *festaioli* and the *provveditore* were elected in the building of the Arte dei Fabbricanti. ASF, AD 25, 27r and 30v. However, as discussed in section 4.2.3 the Cappella della Santissima Trinità remained the most popular meeting place throughout the 1570s.

On the other hand, however, their change of heart might have had something to do with the status of the locations in question. The Arte di Cambio and the Arte dei Mercatanti were two of the oldest and most prestigious guilds of Florence. Therefore, the academy's desire to set up its tribunal in one of their buildings attests to the artists' ambition and self-confidence. The Arte dei Medici e Speciali and the Arte dei Fabbrianti were less powerful.⁶⁴¹ The actual request to perform their function of guild in the buildings of these corporations, therefore, might suggest that the artists came to view their initial options as immodest and arrogant, or that these suggestions would have been perceived as such by the grand duke. It is possible that Cosimo I's decision to grant them access to the *audientia* of the Arte dei Fabbrianti, rather than to that of the Arte dei Medici e Speciali, points in the same direction, as the former was less prestigious than the latter.

The academy's use of the building of the Arte dei Fabbrianti meant that the institution's guild practices were not only spatially separated from the educational and religious ones, but also temporally. Whereas the meetings of the academy and company in the Cappella della Santissima Trinità – and later also in Cestello – usually took place on Sundays, the sittings of the magistracy in the building of the Arte dei Fabbrianti were held on Wednesdays. However, the artists attempted to guarantee the unity of the institution by having its officers govern all three branches (academy, company, guild).

On February 2, 1572 the academicians gathered at the house of lieutenant Jacopo Pitti for another extraordinary meeting concerning the guild. On this occasion were preselected the artists, whose names would be placed in the bags for the scrutiny and sortition in the Mercanzia. The entry in the *Libro del provveditore* specifies that about 140 artists were screened in Pitti's house.⁶⁴² The secretary does not mention, however, how many of these were approved. The first time that the academy's magistrates were drawn from the bag in the Mercanzia (in the presence of the *cancelliere* and a notary) was on August 19 of that year.⁶⁴³ From that moment, the sortition took place every four months.

In the first half of 1572 the academicians also held two extraordinary meetings about the seal of the organization. The seal would appear on official documents and was supposed to symbolize the essence of the academy, as perceived by the artists and the grand duke. The old seal of the confraternity represented a winged reclining ox, the symbol of

⁶⁴¹ Although like that of the Cambio and Mercatanti the Arte dei Medici e Speciali was one of the seven major guilds (*arti maggiori*), it was less prestigious. As one of the minor guilds (*arti minori*), the Arte dei Fabbrianti was even less important.

⁶⁴² ASF, AD 25, 19v.

⁶⁴³ ASF, AD 25, 21v. See also ASF, AD 101, 120v.

Saint Luke. Traditionally, the evangelist was the patron saint of the painters, whereas the Four Crowned Saints (Santi Quattro Coronati) were the heavenly advocates for the sculptors and architects. The academicians must have deemed the image of the winged bull inappropriate for an organization that included sculptors and architects as members and, therefore decided to create a new seal. Unfortunately, the outcome of the discussions about design for the new seal in 1572 is unknown.⁶⁴⁴ In any case, at least from 1597 onwards – and possibly already at the end of the 1570s – the academy used a more inclusive image as seal. It consists of three intertwining garlands, which conveys the idea that the arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting are inextricably connected and equivalent (see fig. 32). To this day, this image is the emblem of the Accademia del Disegno.⁶⁴⁵

The archive of the Accademia del Disegno contains another petition about the magistracy that was probably written in the second half of the 1570s. Although the lack of a date and grand ducal response makes it unlikely that it was dispatched, it is interesting for what it discloses about the condition of the academy and about the ideas of the academicians concerning the magistracy in this period. Its author is the painter Domenico di Francesco Schiena, who fulfilled the function of *provveditore* of the institution in 1576 and that of consul in 1578. In his letter Schiena asked Grand Duke Francesco I to decree that all artisans, who in some form or another can be called painters or sculptors, are obliged to be inscribed in the new guild. The artist adds that this measure is supposed to ensure that the institution flourishes and to prevent it from deteriorating, ‘like it presently is’.⁶⁴⁶ The negative tone of the last remark shows that in this period the academy was not functioning as it supposed to in the eyes of its members.⁶⁴⁷

Furthermore, Schiena also emphasized that the academy desired to be ‘like all the other magistracies’.⁶⁴⁸ To ensure that it did, the author included, on the reverse of the petition, a watercolor drawing with the designs for the formal attire of the academy’s magistrates (fig. 30). These robes, which clearly differentiated the status of each officer in the academy, were supposed to be worn during public processions and

⁶⁴⁴ ASF, AD 25, 16v-17r and 20v.

⁶⁴⁵ See section 7.5.1 for a more elaborate discussion and iconographic analysis of the academy’s seal.

⁶⁴⁶ ASF, AD 157, ins. 3 (n.p.): ‘(...) che tal magistrato et Accademia si inalzi, et non vadi al basso si come al presente fa (...)’.

⁶⁴⁷ This picture is confirmed by other sources, such as Zuccari’s proposal for the educational program of the Accademia del Disegno from the second half of the 1570s. See Ważbiński 1987, II, 493 and section 4.2.3.

⁶⁴⁸ ASF, AD 157, ins. 3 (n.p.).

official occasions such as the change of officers and funeral services.⁶⁴⁹ The subscript explains which officers are visible in the drawing: the lieutenant (A), the consuls (B), the *cancelliere* and *proveditore* (C), a child (*putto*) holding a staff with the grand ducal crown, which represents the dignity of the magistracy (D), the envoy conceded by the grand ducal palace (E), and two messengers (*donzelli*), who like the envoy (and the *putto*) were not members of the academy.⁶⁵⁰ Together with the other archival documents discussed in this section, Schiena's petition and drawing are evidence of the academy's preoccupation with the assumption of the function of the guild in this period.



Figure 30. Domenico di Francesco Schiena, *Design for the costumes for the officers of the Accademia del Disegno, 1576-80, Florence, ASF, AD 157, ins. 3* (with permission of the Ministero dei Beni e delle attività culturali e del Turismo, prohibition of further reproduction or duplication by any means; photo GAP s.r.l. ASF)

6.2.1. *New statutes*

In order to regulate the activities pertaining to the academy as guild, the artists had to formulate a new set of statutes.⁶⁵¹ The process of drafting

⁶⁴⁹ ASF, AD 157, 16r. Barzman 2000, 209.

⁶⁵⁰ See for the tasks of the *donzelli* the statutes of 1585, Ważbiński 1987, II, 458-459.

⁶⁵¹ See the preamble of the statutes of 1585 transcribed in Ważbiński 1987, II, 447.

and ratifying the new rules lasted for over a decade. Records show that in the late 1570s and early 1580s, the academicians obtained copies of the statutes of the *Arte dei Medici e Speziali* of the *Art dei Fabbricanti*.⁶⁵² The committee that was in charge of drafting the new statutes, undoubtedly, used these writings as guidelines and as source of inspiration. It was only in August 1582 that the new regulations, consisting of eleven *Rubriche* (sections), were read out loud and approved by the academicians in an extraordinary academic meeting in Cestello.⁶⁵³ It took almost three more years for the rules to be ratified by Grand Duke Francesco I and the *Mercanzia*, by which the academy obtained the official status as a minor guild.⁶⁵⁴ This happened on April 6, 1585 and these statutes would remain valid until 1784, when Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo transformed the institution into the *Accademia di Belle Arti*.⁶⁵⁵

Both in content and form, the new statutes of the *Accademia del Disegno* followed regulations of the guilds, to which the artists had previously belonged.⁶⁵⁶ Compared to the incorporating statutes and the addenda – of January and July 1563, respectively – the rules of 1585 are far more explicit and detailed about financial issues, such as the height of taxes, deposits, and fines, and the prices of services like appraisals and lawsuits. This shows the academy's concern for economic sustainability.⁶⁵⁷ The new rules are also more formal and bureaucratic. For instance, the consuls, who were now drawn every four months instead of six, had to live in the city and had to be inscribed in the institution as academician for at least a year; they could not fulfill official functions in the city or have been condemned by the commune for a crime, have an outstanding debt or have worked in the past as servant.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵² ASF, AD 101, 134r (copies in 1579) and ASF, AD 26, 49v (inventory of 1586): 'scritture cavato delli statuti de fabricanti e speziali (...).'

⁶⁵³ ASF, AD 26, 29r. The new statutes were read by Persio di Bastiano Compagni, who was a jurist and the academy's *cancelliere* from 1572-1587. Together with Santi di Tito, Tommaso Feltrini, and Cristofano di Papi dell'Altissimo, who formed the committee of reformers of the statutes in 1580, Compagni played an important role in the drafting of the new statutes. Sartoni 2015a, 73, n. 92.

⁶⁵⁴ ASF, AD 25, 71v.

⁶⁵⁵ Sartoni 2015a, 84. The reason why the artists had to wait so long for grand ducal approval is not clear. It is noteworthy that the new statutes were ratified only six weeks after the academy had donated a painting – which had been made by a young artist for one of the religious celebrations – to the secretary of the grand duke, Jacopo Dani. See Barzman 2000, 62-63.

⁶⁵⁶ See, for instance, Reynolds 1974/1985, 71-72 and Jack 1976, 6, according to whom *Accademia del Disegno* took over from the guilds the regular meetings, the election of officers, and the regulation of business relationships between artists.

⁶⁵⁷ Sartoni 2015a, 76.

⁶⁵⁸ Wazbiński 1987, II, 448.

Furthermore, in order to prevent disorder, only the lieutenant, the three consuls, the four councilors, and the four *conservadori* ('guardians') – a new office created after the formation of the guild – would screen the candidates for the official functions. Previously, all academicians were allowed to participate in this activity.⁶⁵⁹ The new statutes also explain what archival procedures and bookkeeping techniques should be used by the *camarlingo*. For instance, one rule prescribes in detailed fashion how the ledger book was to be structured (e.g. of how many parts it was supposed to consist).⁶⁶⁰

The new functions of the academy as guild are regulated in the statutes about appraisals (*Rubrica quinta*), civil lawsuits (*Rubrica ottava*), and professional relationships within and between workshops (*Rubrica decima*). Each year, four appraisers were to be drawn, two from the bag of the academicians and two from the bag of the company. Academic appraisers had to judge the work of academicians, appraisers of the company the work of non-academic artists. Both the institution and the appraisers would receive a fee for each appraisal from both parties, i.e. the artist who produced the work and the commissioner. Moreover, both parties had to pay a deposit before the appraisers commenced their work.⁶⁶¹ Down payments also had to be made by artists who wanted to start a lawsuit. The height of the deposit depended on the amount for which the plaintiff sued. In order for his arguments to be heard by the tribunal, the defendant had to make a deposit of half of that of the plaintiff. Furthermore, this rule specifies the timeframe and price of each part of the judicial process, as well as the authority of the lieutenant and consuls in the cases.⁶⁶²

The statute regulating workshop practices contains several prohibitions. Artists were not allowed to take over pupils or assistants from other masters before the end of the contract; pupils or assistants could not start a workshop within 200 arms-lengths of the studio of their former master; the subletting of studios was forbidden, as well as the use of the designs and models of other masters or the completion of their works of art without their explicit consent or that of the consuls of the

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 451.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 452-454.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 454-455. The academy's incorporating statutes of 1563 also contain two short passages about appraisals. Section XXXVIII states that when disagreements arise about houses or about the estimates of their value, architects of the academy are to arbitrate. *Capitolo XXXX* (sic) stipulates that the academy could appoint appraisers in financial disputes about works of art. Ważbiński 1987, II, 434-435 and see Hughes 1986a, 8. There is no evidence, however, that the academy carried out appraisals of works of art in the first eight years of its existence other than of the artworks produced for Michelangelo's funeral.

⁶⁶² Ważbiński 1987, II, 460-466.

academy. These rules were supposed to protect masters from fraud and theft of their work and of their labor by other artists. Furthermore, they enabled the guild to control the market.

This also holds for the final rule in the *Rubrica* about the workshops, which states that each artist had to sign his works with a maker's mark (*segno*), an example of which was to be conceded to the academy.⁶⁶³ According to the statutes, the artists had to sign their works with their mark. Failure to do so would result in a 20 *lire* fine, a quarter of which would go to the person who brought the transgression to the attention of the academy, and three-quarters to the institution itself.⁶⁶⁴ Signing one's work with a mark had been a common practice in the guild systems of European cities since the twelfth century. Artists and artisans such as painters and stonemasons placed these makers' marks or 'trademarks' on their products for two reasons. On the one hand, the maker's marks assured buyers that the products were of a certain quality. On the other hand, the marks enabled the guilds to control the market, because they made it easier to distinguish the products of members from those of non-members.⁶⁶⁵ The fact that one year after the official approval of the statutes – and four years after the final version had been drafted – already 120 painters and sculptors had consigned their mark to the academy, shows that the artists took the guild function of the institution seriously.⁶⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the *segni* of the artists in the academy's collection are now lost.

The statutes of 1585 are not only interesting because of what they say, but also because of what they leave out. For instance, there is no longer a rule about the educational practices of the academy. The only thing that is mentioned about young artists is that, in order to be eligible for elevation to the rank of academician, they had to produce a work for the celebration of either the feast the Santissima Trinità or of that of San Luca and that they subsequently had to donate their work to the institution.⁶⁶⁷ The corresponding rule from the incorporating statutes of

⁶⁶³ Ważbiński 1987, II, 468-470.

⁶⁶⁴ ASF, AD 26, 49v, transcribed in Ważbiński 1987, II, 482: '120 segni o marche di pittori et scultori che servono per segnare i lavori che faranno secondo lo statuto.' And section 10 of the 1585 statutes in Ważbiński 1987, II, 470.

⁶⁶⁵ The traditional maker's mark consisted of three features: 1. a personal sign of the maker, 2. a sign identifying the city and 3. a sign identifying the year. In the Netherlands, the function of the maker's mark shifted in the seventeenth century from controlling the material qualities of paintings to serving as a sign for their aesthetic or stylistic dimensions. And, the mark itself changed into the artist's signature. See Adams 1993, 582-583.

⁶⁶⁶ These marks were recorded in one of the academy's inventories. See ASF, AD 26, 49v and section 4.2.4.

⁶⁶⁷ Ważbiński 1987, II, 467.

1563 was more elaborate and detailed. It stated that young artists were obliged to bring an example of their work to the academy four times per year, to be reviewed by the consuls. The best of the students would be commissioned to produce a work for the celebrations of the feasts.⁶⁶⁸

The description of how the religious feasts should be celebrated by the academy is also much shorter than in the incorporating statutes. In one small paragraph of the ninth statute (*Rubrica nona*) it is mentioned that the lieutenant had to make sure that the *festaiuoli* were drawn by lot, so that they could organize celebrations of the Santissima Trinità and of San Luca. By contrast, the statutes of 1563 had ordered the academicians to celebrate other religious feasts as well (e.g. Easter) and they were more detailed as to what should be done and how much money should be spent by the *festaiuoli*.⁶⁶⁹ Moreover, unlike the incorporating statutes, those of 1585 contain no rules about the funeral services for deceased members. A final important difference in the rules of the 1585 concerns the patron of the academy. Whereas Duke Cosimo I is mentioned in almost a third of the incorporating statutes, he and his son Francesco I are only referred to – and praised – in the preamble of the 1585 statutes.⁶⁷⁰

The relatively little attention for the patron(s) and the religious activities of the academy, and complete absence of educational activities in the new rules in favor of a greater focus on bureaucratic and economic issues, might be seen as a reflection of changing practices in the academy. Moreover, scholars have been tempted to interpret these changes with the help of the concepts ‘pre-modern’ and ‘modern’. However, the use of these terms is problematic because they allow for contradictory interpretations. For, on the one hand, it can be argued, as Pevsner did, that with the new rules the academy moved away from the initial – Vasarian – goal of the institution, which, according to him, was to guarantee the preeminent position of Florence in the future in the realm of the visual arts through the education of new generations of artists.⁶⁷¹ In

⁶⁶⁸ This is described in chapter XXXIV of the incorporating statutes. *Ibidem*, 433.

⁶⁶⁹ See chapters IX-XVI (*Ibidem*, 428-430).

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, 447.

⁶⁷¹ In a recent article, Sartoni (2015a, 76-79) argues, in the spirit of Pevsner, that the rules of 1585 meant the end of the Vasarian academy. According to Pevsner (1940/1973, 50), the incorporation of the guild was the reason why Vasari seems to have withdrawn from the academy in the early 1570s. In a passage from a letter of Vasari to Borghini dated March 1, 1573, quoted by Pevsner, the artist claims to be annoyed by the *baie e coglionerie di nostri academici* (‘foolishness and stupidities of our academicians’). However, Vasari here most probably refers to the personal disputes among the academicians, rather than to the incorporation of the guild. See, for the letter, Frey 1923-1940, II, 651-652. What is more, there is another good reason for Vasari’s lack of academic participation in the early 1570s. In this period, Vasari travelled a lot and worked in different places in Italy (Orvieto, Arezzo, Perugia and Rome), which made it difficult for him to actively participate in the academy. See Jack Ward 1972, 225. For instance, in

other words, the assumption of the function of the guild meant that the academy regressed in time and became a ‘pre-modern’ institution. On the other hand, however, it can be argued that the new rules indicate that the academy was on its way of becoming a ‘modern’ institution, in which impersonal and bureaucratic rules about studios and workshops mediated and replaced direct and personal ties between the artists themselves, and between the artists and the patrons.⁶⁷²

Instead of forcing the Accademia del Disegno into a pre-conceived model of the development of western history towards modernity, it is better to analyze and reconstruct the practices that were performed within its walls for their own sake. This can be done with the help of the records in the *Libri del provveditore*. The first thing to be noted when studying the archival documents of this period is not only that existing religious celebrations were continued as before and that the educational activities even expanded in the last decade of the sixteenth century, but also that the academy formulated new rules regarding these practices. As discussed in Chapter Five, the secretary recorded that on April 18 and August 8, 1574 the artists discussed and approved new rules concerning the religious feasts and funeral services of deceased members of the academy.⁶⁷³ Furthermore, also already mentioned is Zuccari’s proposal for the rules concerning the institution’s educational activities, which he formulated in response to a request from the academy in the second half of the 1570s.⁶⁷⁴

Therefore, the fact that the 1585 statutes are almost completely silent about the institution’s educational and religious activities does not imply that these practices were no longer performed in the academy. Rather, it means that these practices were regulated by internal rules that, unlike those concerning function of the guild, did not have to be officially and explicitly approved by the grand duke and the Mercanzia.⁶⁷⁵ Moreover, during the meeting of April 18, 1574 the academicians had decided to separate the rules of the magistracy from those of the academy

the record of the artists’ petition to the duke to form their own guild, it is stated that Vasari is one of the six reformers of the institution, but that he could not fulfill the function because he had to work for the pope in Rome.

⁶⁷² This is the argument advanced by Barzman about the development of the Accademia del Disegno in seventeenth century. Moreover, it is in line with Bourdieu’s (1979, 183-184) conception of the process of modernization. See section 3.4.

⁶⁷³ ASF, AD 25, 31r-34v and 36v-37r. See section 5.4. for a discussion.

⁶⁷⁴ BNCf Cod. II. IV. 311, transcription in Barzman 2000, 243-246. See section 4.2.3 for a discussion of what Zuccari’s proposal discloses about the sites of the Accademia del Disegno and see sections 8.5 and 9.7 for a discussion of Zuccari’s suggestions for the educational program.

⁶⁷⁵ Ważbiński 1987, II, 472-473, n. 1.

and company.⁶⁷⁶ On the basis of the archival evidence it can be concluded that this is indeed what happened.

The answer to the question about the grand ducal relationship to the Accademia del Disegno is more complex. On the one hand, as is well known, Francesco I was less interested in the visual arts than his father.⁶⁷⁷ This might explain why his involvement in the art academy was minimal and why it took almost three years for the new statutes to be approved. From the academy's side, after securing a more permanent headquarters in Cestello and especially after the assumption of the function of the guild, a direct and vibrant relationship with their powerful patron was no longer urgent. On the other hand, Francesco I's attitude towards the Accademia del Disegno was not that different from that of his father. Although Cosimo I supported its foundation and was of great assistance to the artists by arranging several (temporary) headquarters, he provided very little financial assistance and did not seem to have been very interested in the academy's affairs. For instance, he was never present at one of its meetings and did not attend the funeral for Michelangelo, which had been organized by the academy. Instead, Cosimo I let himself be represented by a lieutenant, i.e. his placeholder as head of the institution. After the formation of the guild, the responsibilities of the lieutenant were extended to include the presidency over the tribunal. Furthermore, it is worth noting that according to the new rules, the *cancelliere*, who fulfilled an important function in the new branch of the organization, was to be elected directly by the grand duke. Before, the *cancelliere* had been elected by the academicians.⁶⁷⁸

6.2.2. Guild practices: appraisals and litigations

As mentioned, already before the approval of the new statutes in 1585, the academy started to carry out its function as artists' guild. The activities of the magistracy were recorded in various documents, most notably in the books of the *deliberazioni e partiti dell'Accademia del Disegno* ('deliberations and decisions'), the *Libri de cause* ('books of the cases'), and the *Filze de atti e sentenze* ('bound documents of acts and sentences'). The *cancelliere* kept the books of the *deliberazioni e partiti dell'Accademia del Disegno*, in which he recorded the drawing of the

⁶⁷⁶ ASF, AD 25, 34r.

⁶⁷⁷ Instead, Francesco I was more interested in natural curiosities, alchemical investigations, and arts that were deemed 'minor' and 'mechanical' even by members of the academy, such as glass blowing. Barzman 2000, 60 and Alberts 2015.

⁶⁷⁸ Ważbiński 1987, II, 457. The first *cancelliere* of the academy, Giovanni da Falgano, was elected by the academicians. ASF, AD 25, 18r.

consuls and appraisers, copied the petitions to the grand duke and the appraisal reports, and described the cases handled by the tribunal.⁶⁷⁹ The first of these books was commenced by Persio Compagni on September 1, 1572, just two weeks after the consuls were drawn for the first time in the Mercanzia.⁶⁸⁰ Compagni's notarial training is apparent from the formal legal shorthand in Latin at the beginning of most entries. The descriptions of the cases themselves are, however, mostly in the vernacular.

Some of the lawsuits concerned disagreements between an artist and a commissioner or buyer of a works of art. For instance, on August 25, 1574 the tribunal of the academy handled a case brought before the tribunal by the painter Giovanni Batista Fiammeri (1530-1606) against a certain Pierlorenzo Vigiemini (or Vijemini) from the town of San Gimignano.⁶⁸¹ Fiammeri had made two paintings – one representing a scene from the story of Noah and the other a Virgin – that were currently in Vigiemini's house, but for which he had not received payment. The consuls decided in favor of the artist and Vigiemini had to return the two paintings to Fiammeri or pay him 25 *scudi*. The records of the *cancelliere* show that the case dragged on for two months because Vigiemini refused to yield to the order of the tribunal. Therefore, on October 13 the academy's magistrates commanded Vigiemini to be incarcerated in Bargello (Florence's prison) and that he had to pay an extra 25 *scudi* to be released.⁶⁸²

Lawsuits and appraisal reports were also recorded in the *Libri de cause* and the *Filze de atti e sentenze*.⁶⁸³ These documents show that lawsuits were a common phenomenon in the academy. In the last two decades of the sixteenth century the magistracy handled more than fifty cases per year. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, lawsuits were held so frequently that the institution even used printed forms, on which only the date, names of the people involved, and sentence of the tribunal had to be filled out.⁶⁸⁴ Often, the disputes concerned the price of works of art. In October 1588, the painter Jacopo da Empoli started a lawsuit about two paintings he had produced for the provision-dealer (*pizzicagnolo*)

⁶⁷⁹ ASF, AD 7-23.

⁶⁸⁰ ASF, AD 7. In the same month, the Accademia del Disegno acquired a wooden table for the magistracy. ASF, AD 101, 121r.

⁶⁸¹ This Fiammeri is possibly the same as the *sculptor* who complained about the list of the first artists admitted to the academy and who was one of its first consuls in 1563. On this issue see section 10.3.2.

⁶⁸² ASF, AD 7, 8v-11r.

⁶⁸³ These documents are categorized as ASF, AD 63-79. These books also contain lists of artists who had to pay the entrance fees and taxes for the guild, as well as lists of debtors. See, for instance, ASF, AD 63, 19v-21v and 33r-38v.

⁶⁸⁴ ASF, AD 27, 150r-167r and see Appendix 3 for a transcription of the form.

Luca di Francesco Salesi. According to Empoli, the paintings, representing a nativity and a baptism of Christ, were finished and worth thirty *scudi* or the amount to be estimated by the ‘experts’, i.e. the appraisers appointed by the academy. However, when Salesi appeared before the tribunal two weeks later he argued that the paintings were not of Empoli’s usual quality and invention and that he, therefore, was not obliged to buy them at that price.⁶⁸⁵ Apparently, Empoli realized that his initial price had been too steep, because on the two subsequent occasions that he appeared before the magistrates he demanded a price of 140 *lire* (i.e. 20 *scudi*). Salesi also refused to buy the paintings for this sum and in March 1589 the painters Francesco Morandini ‘il Poppi’ (1544-1597), and Giovanni Batista Isabelli were drawn by lot to carry out an appraisal.⁶⁸⁶ Although Morandini and Isabelli’s decision is not recorded in the *Libro de cause*, an entry in the ledger book from December 1589 indicates that they appraised the two paintings at almost 140 *lire*, i.e. the (second) price asked by Empoli.⁶⁸⁷

Appraisal reports with the decisions from the appraisers can be found in the books that are comprised of bound sheets and documents (*filze*) with the *atti e sentenze* (‘acts and sentences’) in the academy’s archive.⁶⁸⁸ The reports show that the academy not only appointed appraisers for estimating the work of acclaimed masters and academicians, such as Jacopo da Empoli, but also for lesser artists. For instance, the lieutenant and the consuls of the academy recorded that on September 2, 1602 the academic painters Alessandro Pieroni (1550-1607) and Giovanni Maria Butteri (1540-1606) presented their report about three paintings that had been copied by a certain Achille di Baldassare. Pieroni and Butteri estimated the copies as follows: 18 *soldi* for a large Madonna, 10 *soldi* for a small Madonna, and 8 *soldi* for a painting representing San Giovanni.⁶⁸⁹ Compared to the works of Empoli mentioned above, these paintings were very cheap.

In addition to the sources mentioned, the academy’s ledger books also contain numerous references to citations or subpoenas (*citazioni*) and civil lawsuits (*liti*). The reason for this is that the academy received fees

⁶⁸⁵ ASF, AD 63, 10v: ‘(...) non esser della qualità et invenzione che conviene con detto Jacopo (...).’

⁶⁸⁶ ASF, AD 63, 10r-10v and 13v-14v.

⁶⁸⁷ ASF, AD 102, 77v. The treasurer recorded that he received 5 *lire*, 10 *soldi*, and 4 *danari* from the appraisers. According to the statutes of 1585 (Ważbiński 1987, II, 455), the academy would receive 12 *danari* for each appraised *lire* until 70 *lire*, and 8 *danari* for each appraised *lire* above 70 *lire*. This means that for an appraisal of 140 *lire*, the academy would receive 5 *lire*, 10 *soldi*, and 80 *danari*. See Appendix 1 for the units of currency in Florence in this period.

⁶⁸⁸ ASF, AD 64-79.

⁶⁸⁹ ASF, AD 64, 99r. The appraisers signed the report at the bottom.

for adjudicating these cases and because it occasionally was a party in them. The money was brought into the academy by the *cancelliere*. For example, on March 5, 1582 Persio Compagni handed over to the *camarlingo* of the institution 42 *lire* for multiple citations.⁶⁹⁰ The account books also contain various entries for sums received for appraisals. For instance, on October 6, 1596, the painter Giovanni Maria Casini (1546/1555-1617) deposited 3 *lire* and 10 *soldi* in the academy for the appraisal of a portrait he made for a baker named Giovanni. The portrait was appraised by the painters Domenico Passignano (1559-1638) and Francesco Mati (1561-1623) at 28 *lire*.⁶⁹¹ As stipulated in the statutes, a percentage of the money would go to the appraisers. For instance, the painters Francesco Morandini (1544-1597) and Giovanni Batista Isabelli received 5 *lire* for the appraisal of the above-mentioned paintings by Jacopo da Empoli for Luca Salesi.⁶⁹² The academy also occasionally received a sum from an artist when he was bailed out of jail. On October 29, 1595, for instance, a Flemish artists named Bastiano paid the academy 27 *lire* for this reason.⁶⁹³

The archival documents disclose that disagreements arose not only between artists and individual buyers, but also between artists and religious companies, such as the Compagnia di San Lorenzo of the Tuscan town of Figline and the Compagnia di San Francesco of Cortona.⁶⁹⁴ Furthermore, other artisans besides painters, sculptors, and architects appeared before the tribunal of the academy. For instance, the *Libro de cause* contains numerous records of lawsuits involving goldsmiths, gilders, and stucco-workers.⁶⁹⁵ This shows that these artisans were, indeed, subjected to the magistracy of the Accademia del Disegno, as requested by Domenico Schiena in his petition of the late 1570s.⁶⁹⁶ However, the vast majority of the cases brought before the academy's tribunal concerned painters. Two – non-mutually exclusive – reasons can be given for this fact. On the one hand, the art of painting might have been more susceptible to disagreements than sculpture and architecture. Contracts between sculptors (and architects) and their commissioners were, in general, probably much more elaborate and detailed due to the high cost of the materials with they worked. On the other hand, it might be an indication that notwithstanding its ambition of being an inclusive

⁶⁹⁰ ASF, AD 101, 70r. See for more examples ASF, AD 101, 70v, 87v, and 127r.

⁶⁹¹ ASF, AD 102, 128v-129r. The appraisers usually had the academy deduct the fee from the sum they owed the institution in taxes.

⁶⁹² ASF, AD 102, 77v.

⁶⁹³ ASF, AD 102, 41v.

⁶⁹⁴ ASF, AD 102, 128v-130v.

⁶⁹⁵ See, for instance, ASF, AD 63, 2v, 9v, and 13r.

⁶⁹⁶ See section 6.2.

academy of *disegno*, to which sculptors and architects could also belong, it primarily was an institution for painters.

Finally, the Accademia del Disegno was itself occasionally plaintiff in the cases handled by its tribunal. For instance, in 1590 the painter Donato di Matteo Mascagni (ca. 1570-1637) was chosen to contribute a painting to the celebrations of the feast of San Luca. As becomes clear from the *Libro de cause*, Mascagni was reluctant to accept this ‘honor’. Therefore, the magistrates ordered him to produce the painting and if he failed to comply he would have to pay a fine of 10 florins.⁶⁹⁷ This episode shows how educational and religious practices – i.e. having a young artist display his progress in a work produced for the feast of the institution’s patron saint – could overlap with the academy’s guild activities – i.e. Mascagni’s reluctance provoked a reaction from the magistracy.

In 1598 the institution’s magistrates admonished the painter Jacopo Ligozzi (1547-1627) in a similar fashion. Five years earlier, in December 1593, he had received the most votes, out of eleven candidates, in the election of the painter of the academy’s altarpiece in Cestello. As usual, the academy supplied the materials, i.e. the canvas and the pigments, and Ligozzi was supposed to produce the painting, representing *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin*, without remuneration. Seven months later, in July 1594, the lieutenant and the consuls urged the artist to begin with his painting, probably because they wanted it completed for the feast of San Luca for that year.⁶⁹⁸ Being himself the secretary of the institution at this time, Ligozzi recorded this command in the *Libro del provveditore*. However, the order did not have the desired effect because the lieutenant and the consuls had to reiterate it in July 1598. This time, the admonition was recorded in the *Libro de cause* and it specified that Ligozzi was to have the picture completed and consigned to the academy by October 17, the day before the feast of San Luca. Otherwise the commission would go to someone else. A marginal note states that Ligozzi appeared before the tribunal to promise that, although he was very busy with works for the grand duke, he would finish the altarpiece.⁶⁹⁹ The more severe tone of the second admonition, together with the fact it was recorded in the *Libro de cause* – rather than in the *Libro del provveditore*, as before – shows that the lieutenant and the consuls started to lose their patience and wanted to lay more pressure on Ligozzi. However, this was to no avail because again the artist failed to

⁶⁹⁷ ASF, AD 63, 26v.

⁶⁹⁸ ASF, AD 29, 110r-110v.

⁶⁹⁹ ASF, AD 63, 141v. It is not unlikely that Ligozzi’s role a court artist of the grand duke helped him to obtain the commission for the altarpiece in Cestello, as well as his election as *provveditore* of the academy. Barzman 2000, 205.

keep his promise and the altarpiece was finally painted by Domenico Passignano (1559-1638) in the early 1600s (see fig. 16).

Archival documents reveal that, occasionally, the academy's practices overlapped and sometimes it is not clear to what practice an event belonged. For instance, on January 13, 1574 the magistrates ordered Santi di Tito to appear before them the following week. It had come to their attention that Tito wanted to erase or retouch (*guastare o ritochare*) some parts of the fresco that he had made in the Cappella della Santissima Trinità, i.e. the *Solomon Building the Temple in Jerusalem* (see fig. 12). The reason why he wished to do so is not mentioned. Apparently, Tito was no longer satisfied with parts of his fresco. The magistrates wanted to give him the opportunity to present his reasons, and they decided that in the meantime Tito was forbidden to make any changes to his painting without their explicit permission.⁷⁰⁰

Records show that the artist failed to appear before court twice. It is not clear how this episode ended and whether he was allowed retouch his fresco or not. The reason why the officers discussed this matter during a session of the magistracy, instead of during a regular academic meeting in the Cappella della Santissima Trinità – which would have been more suitable, as it was the location of the painting – was without doubt Tito's earlier behavior with regard to this commission. In December 1570, the academy had urged him to finally start the fresco and to finish it within two months. Although Tito promised to do so, the documents show that he completed the painting around the middle of 1571.⁷⁰¹ Moreover, in February 1573 he already retouched the fresco for the first time.⁷⁰² Therefore, Tito's desire to retouch it again must have made the officers anxious and it led to their decision to discuss the case in the magistracy.

6.3. Rome: two artistic practices

As mentioned in the previous chapter, before the foundation of the Accademia di San Luca, the professional organization of the artists in Rome was slightly different from that in Florence. Like Florence, in the fifteenth century, and for most of the sixteenth, the painters, sculptors, and architects in Rome belonged to different organizations. Whereas the sculptors and architects, together with stonemasons and marble workers, were part of the Università dei Marmorari ('guild of marble workers'), the painters were professionally organized in the Università e Compagnia

⁷⁰⁰ ASF, AD 7, 7r-v.

⁷⁰¹ ASF, AD 24, 29r, 61r and 62r-v.

⁷⁰² Ważbiński 1987, I, 141, n. 164, with references to ASF, AD 24, 91r and ASF, AD 25, 7r.

di San Luca, together with miniature painters, goldbeaters, and banner and vestment makers.⁷⁰³ The name of the latter institution shows the difference with the situation in Florence. Whereas in Florence the confraternity and guild of the painters – and related arts – were separate institutions (Compagnia di San Luca and Arte dei Medici e Speziali), in Rome these functions were combined in a single organization.

The old Università e Compagnia di San Luca had been a guild like many others in Rome and elsewhere. Practitioners of the arts subsumed under its rule were obliged to become a member of the institution. The annual membership fees allowed them to practice their profession and to carry out appraisals of works in Rome.⁷⁰⁴ Moreover, like the other guilds, the Università di San Luca was subjected to the municipal authorities. This means that the sentences of the civil cases handled by the guild were spoken in the palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill (*Campidoglio*) – although the consuls could hear the cases in the rooms of the institution.⁷⁰⁵ The palace of the Conservatori was the site where were professional disagreements of the Roman tradesmen and merchants were adjudicated and it housed the offices of several of the Roman guilds.⁷⁰⁶

The old guild of San Luca was numerically and formally dominated by the painters and illuminators guild. Within the institution, they belonged to the *arti principali* ('principal arts'), whereas the vestment makers, gilders, and embroiderers formed the *arti aggregati* ('associated arts'), which occupied a lower position. What is more, although the four consuls of the guild were to be elected from the various groups of artists – painters and illuminators, embroiderers, vestment makers, and gold beaters – the consul of the painters always preceded over the others. This hierarchy within the organization was formally arranged in the statutes of 1478 and 1546, which are preserved in the academy's archive.⁷⁰⁷

The foundation of the Accademia di San Luca in the last quarter of the sixteenth century entailed several important transformations of the old painters' organization. In the first place, the function of school was added to its activities. Secondly, membership of the new institution was to consist not only of painters and practitioners of related minor arts; it now opened up to sculptors and architects as well. This means that, like its Florentine predecessor, the Roman academy was supposed to be an

⁷⁰³ Rossi 1984, 369-370.

⁷⁰⁴ Grossi/Trani 2009, 26.

⁷⁰⁵ Rossi 1984, 373.

⁷⁰⁶ Lukehart 2013, 162.

⁷⁰⁷ Rossi 1984, 374-375 and Grossi/Trani 2009, 25-27.

accademia del disegno, in which the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture were united by the theoretical concept of ‘design’.⁷⁰⁸

A third transformation of the old painters’ organization, in addition to the assumption of the function of school and the entry of other types of artists, was that the new institution no longer fell under municipal jurisdiction. Instead, it was now answerable to the Catholic Church through the pope’s vicar general.⁷⁰⁹ As discussed in the previous chapter, this change in authority did not imply a major break as to the religious-confraternal activities in the institution. Although the papacy and the artists did not exactly see eye to eye as to how the religious functions were to be carried out in the academy, they agreed *that* these activities were to be continued in some form or another.

The perseverance of the guild activities in the new institution, however, was a more ambiguous matter. In the first place, there is not a single reference in the papal bulls to guild practices that were to be carried out by the academy.⁷¹⁰ On the one hand, the omission of references to professional and economic activities of the academy in the papal bulls is not surprising, because the governance of the corporate system and the guilds in the city was the responsibility of the municipal authorities. On the other hand, however, as most powerful institution in Rome, the Church could trump the commune and, as discussed below, it did so on two occasions in the early history of the academy.⁷¹¹

The stance of the artists with regard to the question of the continuation of the guild activities under the new institution was equivocal. On the one hand, in the notarial document that recorded the meeting in March 1593 during which twenty-eight painters discussed the foundation of the academy, the new institution seems to be clearly dissociated from the guild system. It is stated that the ‘practice of a profession that is so noble and worthy of free men should be free of any imposition, such as paying an entrance fee for the guild or other

⁷⁰⁸ However, the status of the sculptors and, especially, that of the architects in the new institution was ambiguous. See section 8.4.

⁷⁰⁹ Grossi/Trani 2009, 29, Salvagni 2008, 43. The Gregorian brief of 1577 (Lukehart 2009, 349) states that the artists could create new statutes and alter them later, but that the cardinal vicar has to approve them.

⁷¹⁰ As discussed in the previous chapter, the bulls envision the new organization as consisting of two branches: a school for teaching young artists the principles of the arts and Christian doctrine, and a confraternity for devotion, for the maintenance of the cults of San Luca and Santa Martina, and for handing out charity – including a hospice for foreign or impoverished students of the arts.

⁷¹¹ See Nussdorfer 1992 for the intricacies of the relationship between the papacy and the municipal government of Rome in the seventeenth century.

mechanical and servile obligations'.⁷¹² Instead, it was asserted that donations to the institution should be given spontaneously and liberally. This is a clear indication that, according to the artists in question, the nobility of painting, which had been demonstrated by Romano Alberti in his 1585 treatise on behalf of the academy and company, excluded this profession from the guild system. In 1601, Pope Clement VIII officially underwrote this standpoint – at least partially – by exempting the academy from paying a tax, *la tassa del quattrino*, which had to be paid by the guilds. His reason for doing so, moreover, was an echo of the argument brought forward by the artists in the above-mentioned sources. According to Clement VIII, 'painting is a noble profession' and should not be subsumed under the 'mechanical arts'.⁷¹³

On the other hand, other sources indicate that the academy absorbed the *università* and that the new institution carried out the functions that had previously been performed by the guild. For instance, Zuccari's rules ordered that all painters working in Rome and who had carried out 'praiseworthy works in public' should become members of the new institution.⁷¹⁴ This means that in principle, only the painters, sculptors, and architects that had achieved public commissions could become a member of the academy proper, which was responsible for teaching and for governing the institution as a whole. Other artists and those practicing the 'minor arts' belonged to the large body of the company.⁷¹⁵ In this way, the academy attempted to exercise control over the professions that fell under it.

In accordance with this strategy, the 1607 statutes of the Accademia di San Luca contained several rules that were supposed to control the production and sale of paintings in Rome. For instance, 'in order to distinguish the learned from the ignorant', academicians received a gratis privilege from the institution, which allowed them to work in the city. By contrast, artists who were a member neither of the academy nor of the company had to obtain a temporary license from the *capo* ('head') – the new name for the *principe* – of the institution to carry out their

⁷¹² ASR, TNC, uff. 11, 1593, pt. I, vol. 25, 426v: 'S'è stabilito ancora che havendosi gli Aggregati da essercitare in una professione che in se è tanto nobile, et degna de persone libere, però ineritamente habbino da essere sempre libere d'ogni impositione come di pagare introito dell'arte, et altri oblighi mecanici, et servili.'

⁷¹³ Salvagni 2008, 43, and 64 note 11: 'comae dicta Pictura sit profession nobilis, et sub nomine mecanicar[um] Artium non veniat.' See AASL, Statuti 1675, 57v-58r. According to Baglione (1642/1995, 73), it had been the painter Tommaso Laureti, who pleaded and argued with clerics, cardinals, and finally with Pope Clement VIII himself that the artists of the noble Roman academy should be exempt from paying the tax of the *quattrino*.

⁷¹⁴ Alberti 1604/1961, 6-7.

⁷¹⁵ Rossi 1984, 385.

profession.⁷¹⁶ Non-academic artists could only produce works of art of a value of more than three *scudi* if they had a written permit from the head of the institution.⁷¹⁷ Furthermore, it was forbidden for painters and sculptors to receive direct commissions from other types of artisans, such as frame makers, and merchants. The reason given in the statutes was that this was a practice that belonged to the mechanical arts and it encouraged the production of cheap and inferior works.⁷¹⁸ For similar reasons it was forbidden to retouch the works of other masters without the consent of the head of the academy.⁷¹⁹

The statutes also limited the number of workshops that were allowed to sell paintings or sculptures in the city to ‘four or six’. These studios were subjected to controls by the academy with regard to the prices and the percentage they were allowed to keep on sales.⁷²⁰ Furthermore, all works of painting and sculpture commissioned by the pope or the people of Rome, i.e. the Capitoline Government, had to be supervised by the *capo* of the academy, who was to carry out this task without remuneration.⁷²¹ This means that the rules established the Accademia di San Luca as the official authority of artistic matters in Rome.

The 1607 statutes show that the institution assumed the function of guild. More specifically, the control over the profession was the task of the academy proper. The other branch of the institution, the company, was responsible for organizing the religious activities and for the maintenance of the church. Some of the money for carrying out these tasks came from the fines that were collected for transgressions of the rules, as the statutes earmarked these for the confraternity. Most of the fines for transgressions of the rules went to the company. Although the functions of the two branches of the institution were subdivided more clearly than before, the criteria for membership of each branch were not specified.⁷²² It is stated very generally that painters and sculptors could join the academy. Also women could become a member, but they had no voting rights.⁷²³ The statutes are completely silent as to who should belong to the confraternity.

⁷¹⁶ The statutes of 1607 contain templates for the privilege and the license. See AASL, Statuti 1607, 34r-v and 35v-36v.

⁷¹⁷ AASL, Statuti 1607, 30r; Cavazzini 2008, 45.

⁷¹⁸ AASL, Statuti 1607, 20v and 36r.

⁷¹⁹ Ibidem, 24r.

⁷²⁰ AASL, Statuti 1607, 20v; Grossi/Trani 2009, 34.

⁷²¹ AASL, Statuti 1607, 31v; Cavazzini 2008, 45.

⁷²² For instance, the statutes also order that the meetings of the academy and the company should be held in distinct rooms in order to avoid confusion. AASL, Statuti 1607, 28r.

⁷²³ The statutes of the old guild and company of San Luca of 1478 had also mentioned women as potential members. See Grossi/Trani 2009, 31.

Zuccari's rule about the distinction between the academy consisting of major artists, who carried out public commissions, and the company, to which belonged minor artists and artisans, who owned shops and worked for the market, seems to have been upheld. However, there are notable exceptions. One of the founding members of the academy, the painter Antonio Orsino, owned a shop. The painter Agostino Tassi only belonged to the company, while some of his apprentices joined the academy. And some major artists such as Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci seem to have belonged to neither branch of the institution.⁷²⁴

A final way in which the academy attempted to gain control over the production and sale of art in Rome was through monopolizing the execution of appraisals of the products of their practitioners. The archival documents of the Accademia di San Luca show that the academicians petitioned the cardinal vicar and the cardinal protector of their institution on various occasions in the late 1580s and early 1590s to procure such a monopoly.⁷²⁵ In 1595, the academy, indeed, obtained from Cardinal Vicar Girolamo Rusticucci the right to impose a tax of 2% on all appraisals of works of art (above 25 *scudi*) in and around Rome. The appraisers were to be appointed by the academy and two-thirds of the tax would go to the academy, whereas one-third was reserved for the appraiser.⁷²⁶ Therefore, in addition to exercising control over the profession, the decree also meant additional income for the academy. The 1607 statutes confirm the right of the academy to carry out or organize appraisals in Rome and they even contain a form or template, according to which the appraisals had to be recorded.⁷²⁷ Unlike the form used by the Florentine academy in the

⁷²⁴ Cavazzini 2008, 48; Grossi/Trani 2009, 32.

⁷²⁵ See AASL 69, 317 for the drafts of the petitions to the cardinal vicar (1589) and cardinal protector (1592-1593). These petitions are not dated but do contain some evidence as to their dates. In the first petition it is mentioned that the artists met on July 22, 1589 to discuss the tax ('li fratelli di essa confraternità... il dì 22 di luglio 1589 congregati insieme secondo il solito, con intervento et consiglio anco di Mons. Sacrista Prefetto dell'Accademia de Pittori, statuirno, et ordinorno che nessun pittor o miniator, o indoratore [crossed out: o stuccadore], qual non sia approvato dalla detta confraternità o deputati da essa possa estimar alcuna opera spettante all'arte di pittura...'); the second draft states that they have been meeting in the church for four years ('... quattro anni congregati insieme con l'intervento et presenza di Mons Sacrista Prefetto di essa compagnia et Accademia.'). Since the church of San Martina came in the possession of the confraternity in December 1588, this means that the draft dates from 1592-1593. The account book shows that other petitions for obtaining the right to carry out appraisals were drafted in the beginning of 1594. AASL, 42, 83v.

⁷²⁶ For example, on October 20, 1624, the following artists were elected as appraiser: Tomasso Salina, Bartholomeo Balducci, Stefano Maderna, Cristofaro Coscietti, Bartholomeo Lavarozza, Paolo Venetiano, Silvio Capio, and Crispino Tomassino. ASR, TNC, uff. 15, 1624, pt. IV, vol. 102, 198r.

⁷²⁷ AASL, Statuti 1607, 35r-v.

beginning of the seventeenth century for the lawsuits, however, this one was not printed.

The account books show that, in anticipation of the approval from the cardinal vicar, the academy already started to appoint appraisers and collect the tax of 2% from the beginning of 1593.⁷²⁸ Although the documentation is not complete, the sources suggest that this activity was carried out more frequently after 1595, the date of the decree. The amounts received by the academy for the appraisals generally fluctuated between half a *scudo* and four *scudi*. This means that the value of the works of art had been estimated between 25 and 200 *scudi*, which are mid-range to high prices. However, it should be noted that the records in the account books are generally not very specific and sometimes it is mentioned that the amount was an accumulation of appraisals of various works of art over a longer period of time.⁷²⁹ On the few occasions that the records are somewhat more specific, they give an idea of the type of work carried out by academicians in Rome. For example, on July 20, 1604, the painters Pietro Riera and Pietro Contini both paid the academy nine *scudi* and twenty *baiocchi* for work carried out on the gilded ceiling of the Hall of the Consistory in the Vatican Palace, after it had been appraised by Annibale Corradini.⁷³⁰ This means that gilding of the ceiling was valued at more than nine hundred *scudi*, a substantial amount. Moreover, this example shows that, like the Florentine academy, the Accademia di San Luca not only attempted to control figurative works of art, but also what was conceived as the more mechanical products of artists, such as gilding.

As discussed above, in general guilds also functioned as tribunals or magistracies where professional disputes were adjudicated. However, in contrast to the Florentine art academy, the Accademia di San Luca did not perform this function itself in the period under discussion. Instead, before the foundations of the academy, the litigations were handled by the Conservatori, and afterwards by the tribunal of the cardinal vicar.⁷³¹ Unfortunately, the records of this tribunal are now lost.⁷³² However, the account books of the Accademia di San Luca occasionally mention expenses for envoys for delivering subpoenas (*citazioni*) to persons who, supposedly, were summoned to appear before the tribunal. Like the descriptions of the appraisals, these records are not very specific and typically do not state to whom the subpoena was delivered or for what

⁷²⁸ See, for example, AASL 42, 1r, 3v, 4v, 5r, and 5v.

⁷²⁹ For instance, on February 2, 1604, Annibale Corradini paid the academy one *scudo* and ten *baiocchi* for appraisals carried out during the past years. AASL 42, 17r.

⁷³⁰ AASL 42, 21r.

⁷³¹ AASL Statuti 1627 (13A), 37.

⁷³² Cavazzini 2008, 47.

reason.⁷³³ Furthermore, the documents show that the academy appointed professional lawyers as procurators to handle civil and criminal cases in which it was itself a party.⁷³⁴

It has been argued that the academy's attempts to control the professions that belonged to it were ineffective and that it met with resistance from the subordinated artists and artisans, who were members of the company or who worked outside of the institution entirely. The frequent renewal of the statutes after 1607, i.e. in 1617, 1619, and 1627, is an indication of such disagreements. Moreover, the content of the new rules shows that the academy attempted to deal with the objections posed by subordinated artists. Some rules were more liberal than the ones of 1607. For instance, in 1617 the number of shops was no longer regulated and, more importantly, it was no longer necessary to practice the profession independently as a master in one's own studio to be admitted to the academy. It was enough to demonstrate one's ability by presenting a work of art.⁷³⁵ Furthermore, the statutes of 1627 proclaimed that the members of the company would have the same privileges as the academicians.⁷³⁶

Although exact numbers cannot be given, it is certain that many more painters worked in Rome than those that joined the academy or company. For instance, in the 1634 census, 190 persons were registered as painter, whereas only 50 of them belonged to the Accademia di San Luca. In Florence by contrast, about half of the 68 painters recorded in the 1632 census were members of the Accademia del Disegno.⁷³⁷ The artists' profession and the art market seems to have been more closed in Florence than in Rome, where the remains of classical art, the examples of recent masters such as Raphael and Michelangelo, and the possibility of finding employment – not only at the large papal court, but also in the households of the many other wealthy prelates and aristocrats – attracted many foreign artists, both Italians and from the north of the alps.⁷³⁸

⁷³³ See for instance, AASL 42, 80r-v, 89v, and 109v.

⁷³⁴ ASR, TNC, uff. 11, 1595, pt. I, vol. 30, fols. 941r-v, See also ASR, TNC, uff. 11, 1596, pt. III, vol. 33, fol. 53r, ASR, TNC, uff. 11, 1598, pt. I, vol. 37, fols. 4r-v, and ASR, TNC, uff. 11, 1603, pt. I, fols. 49r-v. The academy also appointed procurators to handle the financial affairs of the institution with third parties, such as the tenants of the houses or the exploiter of the tavern owned by the academy. In the academy's early years this function was carried out by painter Giovanni Paolo Picciolli (or Piccioni). ASR, TNC, uff. 11, 1593, pt. III, vol. 27, fols. 168r-v, 169r-v and ASR, TNC, uff. 11, 1598, pt. IV, vol. 40, fols. 415r-v.

⁷³⁵ Cavazzini 2008, 46.

⁷³⁶ Pietrangeli 1974, 15.

⁷³⁷ Sohm 2010, 7-8, Spear 2010, 40. See also Cavazzini 2008.

⁷³⁸ Cavazzini 2008, 43. See on the Florentine situation Fumagalli 2010.

The account books of the Accademia di San Luca show that, in the first two decades of the seventeenth century, non-academic artists regularly paid their taxes to the academy. For instance, in 1602, the *fiamminghi* (which included Dutch and German artists) paid 12 *scudi* and 27 *baiocchi*, the Italians 3 *scudi* and 50 *baiocchi*, and the French 6 *scudi* and 53 *baiocchi*.⁷³⁹ Until the beginning of the 1620s, the amounts are comparable. However, the contributions of the Flemish artists dropped considerably in 1625 and 1626.⁷⁴⁰ This was precisely the period when a group of Dutch and Flemish painters formed an informal society, which they called the Bentvueghels ('birds of a feather').⁷⁴¹ Archival sources suggest that after repeated unsuccessful attempts to collect the tax from the *fiamminghi* in the 1630s, the academy gave up and allowed the Bentvueghels to opt out of the institution.⁷⁴²

Contrary to what had been assumed for a long time on the basis of the biographies of artists' lives, originating in the same period, only a small percentage of the painters in Rome seem to have worked on commission. Most painters earned modest wages in the workshops of others as assistant, or they sold mediocre works on the art market, either directly or through dealers and the shops of guilders, shoemakers, barbers, tailors, and second-hand clothes salesmen (*rigattieri*).⁷⁴³ Such paintings were often produced in series and they could represent Madonna's, saints, the ruling pope or important cardinals.⁷⁴⁴ The producers of these works, whose names are generally unknown, were described as *pittori grossi* ('coarse painters') or the *infimi* (the 'lowest'). At the other end of the socio-economic spectrum were the *valentiuomini* ('men of value'), who (mainly) worked on commission.⁷⁴⁵

Although occasionally working together – for instance, in the execution of copies – these types of painters often opposed each other. In fact, the differences between these artists were so great that it can be said that they participated in two distinct practices. Whereas the *pittori grossi* were conceived and treated as manual laborers or craftsmen, the *valentiuomini* presented themselves as practitioners of a liberal art and were often recognized as such by others. For this reason, the practice of the first can be called the 'painting-as-craft practice' and the second, the 'painting-as-art practice'.⁷⁴⁶ Although the main goal in both practices was

⁷³⁹ AASL 42, 97v.

⁷⁴⁰ Hoogewerff 1912, 61-62 and 1926, 123-124.

⁷⁴¹ Hoogewerff 1912 and 1926, and Sohm 2010, 12.

⁷⁴² Hoogewerff 1912, 70-75 and 1926, 130-143, Sohm 2010, 12, and Spear 2010, 110.

⁷⁴³ Pietrangeli 1974, 15.

⁷⁴⁴ Sohm 2010, 8.

⁷⁴⁵ Cavazzini 2008, Sohm 2010, and Spear 2010.

⁷⁴⁶ Jonker 2010, 155. In Bourdieu's terminology, these artists would be working in different and specialized sub-fields within the field of painting. See Bourdieu 1977, 30.

the same, i.e. making a profit, the strategies in reaching it were very different: working on commission versus working directly for the market. The selling of cheap canvases on markets by mediocre painters damaged the *valentuomini* in financial and social terms.⁷⁴⁷ It conflicted with their ambition to uplift the social status of the profession, i.e. the aim of elevating painting to a liberal art. The skills required in the painting-as-art practice differed accordingly. Unlike the *pittori grossi*, artists who aimed to participate in this practice had to know some poetry, history, art theory, and they had to be able to converse about these things with (potential) patrons. In Florence, a similar distinction was made between figure painters (*pittori*) and decorative painters (*dipintori*), but the fissure seems to have been smaller than in Rome.⁷⁴⁸

The ambiguous relation of the Roman academicians to the guild function of their institution can be understood from the existence of the different art practices in Rome. It seems that the academy's rules were a reflection of these two artistic practices in Rome around the turn of the century. What the academicians, and especially the painters attempted to do was to formalize the already existing distinction between the painting-as-art and painting-as-craft practices. They used the academy as an instrument both for liberating themselves, through a self-conception as *valenthuomini*, and for subjugating other artists, through placing them under stricter rules and regulations.

6.4. Conclusion

It has become clear that categories of 'modern' and 'pre-modern', which occupy prominent positions in past studies of the art academies, are not readily applicable to the academies' assumption of the functions of guild in their early years. The foundation of the Accademia del Disegno and the Accademia di San Luca was certainly not an attempt to leave the guild system. But it also did not entail a 'regression' into medieval times. Instead, academic artists used existing guild structures and practices to augment their autonomy and agency. It can be said, in Bourdieu's words, that in doing so, there was created a field of artistic production, in which oppositional strategies were employed and relations of domination transformed. By employing an anti-market logic, i.e. emphasizing the liberal nature of their profession, for instance, by giving away their works

⁷⁴⁷ Cavazzini 2008, p. 5.

⁷⁴⁸ Sohm 2010, 7.

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to patrons with the expectation of receiving higher rewards and by making the contributions to the institutions voluntary, the artists who founded the academies proper attempted to differentiate their practices from those of their (former) colleagues, who they came to describe as *dipintori* or *pittori grossi*.

The guild practices employed by the art academies were similar as those of the other guilds. Concerning the teleoaffective structure of these practices, their main goal was to protect and control the profession and the art market. It should be noted, however, that although in Florence and Rome there was, indeed, a market where artistic products were sold, this was not really an ‘art’ market, but a site where a variety of goods were sold and where the distinct category of art did not yet exist. This makes it somewhat difficult to uphold the Bourdieusian interpretation of this development as the differentiation and autonomization of the artistic field.

More than the other practices carried out by the Accademia del Disegno and the Accademia di San Luca, their guild practices were rule-governed. The statutes contained explicit rules and instructions about appraisals, contracts, the organization of workshops and retailers, and working permits for artists falling under its jurisdiction. The frequency of the lawsuits in Florence and the difficulty the Roman academy had in collecting the annual taxes shows that these rules were often contested, mostly by subordinated artists and artisans such as banner makers and stucco workers. However, the fact that the rules were regularly broken does not mean that they, in general, did not guide the guild practices of the Florentine and Roman art academies. In both cities, the academy as guild had to be reckoned with by the artists subsumed under it.

Finally, with regard to the practical understandings of the guild practices, the above-mentioned goals and rules entail that the academicians had to possess the following skills. In order to carry out appraisals, the artists not only had to be expert artists themselves, but they also needed a complete overview of the ‘art’ markets in their cities. What is more, because the system of appraising each other’s products was prone to fraud – for instance, by overvaluing the work of colleagues, one’s own paintings and sculptures would also fetch higher prices – the character and moral qualities of the appraisers became important issues. For this reason, the academies regularly screened the appraisers to make sure that they were honest, incorruptible, and of the highest moral standards. Furthermore, at least in Florence the artists who were eligible to be elected as consul were required to possess basic juridical knowledge and skills, so that they could, together with the lieutenant, adjudicate the cases brought before the institution’s tribunal. In Rome, this was not a

requirement for the officials of the academy, because the professional disputes were handled by the tribunal of the cardinal vicar.

Another distinction between the Florentine and Roman art academy has to do with the 'art' markets. Although comparable to a certain extent, insofar as the social and financial differences between major and minor artists increased in both cities in the period under discussion, the dynamic of the markets was not the same, due to the different sizes of the artistic communities and the number of foreigners in them. The art profession in Rome was traditionally more open than in Florence, which made it more difficult for the Accademia di San Luca to effectively control the market and the profession. Therefore, resistance to the power of the art academy was more likely to succeed in Rome than in Florence, as the example of the Bentvueghels shows.