

## ***The Accademia di San Luca and Its Notaries***

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# The Accademia di San Luca and Its Notaries

Laurie Nussdorfer

More rigorous control of writing practices meant more labor and hence more scribes, but it also generalized the use of the table of contents in Roman notarial protocols, which makes it easier to find the acts and meetings of artists' associations like the Accademia di San Luca. Nevertheless, state rigor did not extend to linguistic usage, and, as we have seen, it often fell to subordinate employees to decide what name to give a corporate client in the notarial records. Confraternity \* (*societas*) and guild (*universitas*) were familiar, conventional terms, but what to call unprecedented modes of association or new formations? Ottaviano Saravezzi's index for the first volume of 1593 lists the meeting of March 7, 1593, as a *congregatio* ("congregatio pictorum"), which, in the word's general sense of a gathering, it surely was.<sup>40</sup> The notary and his staff preferred not to make fine discriminations. They erred on the side of more titles rather than fewer, so we frequently see them coupling the painters' "collegio et universitas" (1589), "collegio et societas" (1600), or "collegio et accademia" (1626).<sup>41</sup> This inclusiveness may also have a deeper significance. That the leaders of the initiative resulting in the March 1593 meeting used the services of Saravezzi, the same notary who had been working for some years for the painters' guild and confraternity, implies that they wanted to reform from within rather than break away in a new organization. Dissident or disgruntled members of groups turned to different notaries when they set out on a new course.<sup>42</sup> The founders of Rome's academy in 1593 did not see themselves as creating a separate institution for artists.

For more than 20 years, the painters' guild, confraternity, and academy used Saravezzi's office 11 for meetings, business acts, and litigation.<sup>43</sup> When Ottaviano mysteriously disappears from the college of Capitoline notaries from 1594 to 1600, the artists employed Marco Aurelio Saravezzi, and when Ottaviano returned in 1600 they remained with him and his next successor, Alessandro Saravezzi, until 1609. Notaries liked to have institutional clients and especially to have formal appointments to serve as an association's secretary. In the age of venality, such positions increased the value of the office. Notaries appointed as corporate secretaries were often paid a yearly retainer and were thus guaranteed steady income. Moreover, ancillary business could arise when members went for their personal needs to the same notary they had come to know at confraternity meetings or in the guild tribunal. The guild of carpenters even required this, treating it as a form of compensation for its notary.<sup>44</sup> Some institutions, for example the hospital of the Santissimo Salvatore in Rome, offered such a captive market for document making that it sold the right to be its secretary to the highest bidder.<sup>45</sup> Although the numerous revised *statuti* of the Accademia di San Luca do not refer to its notary as a secretary, Erasto Spannocchia does identify himself as such.<sup>46</sup> In 1623 Spannocchia negotiated an annual provision of 3 scudi from the artists' "confraternity or Academy."<sup>47</sup> The enduring relationship between the various painters' associations and specific Capitoline notarial offices is clear, and was indeed the norm in Rome. It made sense for an institution to stay with one office, particularly when the common practice was to

reference instruments by the notary's protocol and date rather than to pay for a personal copy.<sup>48</sup>

Notwithstanding their long attachment to office 11 in Via del Gesù, in 1609 the artists switched to office 15, not far away, just east of Piazza Sant'Eustachio, where they kept their business for the next 25 years. The presumed death of Ottaviano Saravezzi sometime after 1607 could not be the only explanation for the shift because the painters had stayed with his office during the late 1590s, when Marco Aurelio Saravezzi was titleholder. Moreover, later on they registered no reaction to the death of their secretary Spannocchia in the midst of a very active period of meetings and decisions in fall 1624, remaining loyal to office 15 as it went through another change of *padrone* three years later. How to explain the sudden departure to a new notary in 1609?

It appears to be a fresh twist on the practice whereby rebels took themselves to a different notary when they had grievances against their leaders. The details are murky, as is so often the case in the academy's early history, but they point to Gaspare Celio's term as *principe* (prince, director) of the Accademia in 1609 as the flash point. Celio was the focus of an intense conflict within the artists' association, as a well-known but undated plea to the pope from the painters' guild makes clear.<sup>49</sup> The petition asks the pontiff to order the judge with jurisdiction over the painters, Guazzini de Guazzinis of the cardinal vicar's court, to punish Gaspare Celio. The painters charge that Celio broke into the archive of the confraternity of San Luca and removed its documents. They insinuate that he was an illegitimate *principe*, and they also accuse him of making new rules (*capitoli*) "against freedom and the public good" and posting them publicly without the consent of the collectivity. Although we lack further details about Celio's alleged poster campaign, the *principe* did take proud responsibility for printing the somewhat authoritarian 1607 *statuti* of the Accademia early in 1609. On the final page of the first edition of the Accademia *statuti*, he wrote in his own hand: "I, Gasparo Celio, now *principe* of the Illustrious Accademia of the Painters of Rome, had the present volume printed at the request of the entire Illustrious Accademia, and I confirm this in my own hand today, January 27, 1609."<sup>50</sup> Subsequent events raise questions about whether the "entire" academy really had made such a request.

Just a few months later, four members of the "generale congregazione" of San Luca appeared in Alessandro Saravezzi's office 11, on May 12, 1609, to appoint an attorney, Severo Particelli, to undertake litigation on their behalf.<sup>51</sup> On June 3 their *camerlengo* made a payment "on behalf of the Academy and *congregatio*" to one Joseph Cidonius to represent them before judge Guazzini de Guazzinis.<sup>52</sup> This document of June 3, 1609, is the last trace of the painters in notarial office 11. The next dated transaction by the academy, a routine *stima* obligation of July 23, 1609, is found in Giovanni Antonio Moschenio's office 15, as are subsequent instruments, lawsuits, and meetings.<sup>53</sup> Since the Roman-born Moschenio was Celio's personal notary, it seems likely that Celio found the painters so completely united against him that the only way to hold onto power was to remove the business of the Accademia to a notary loyal to himself.<sup>54</sup> Moschenio proved appealing to other members, however, winning their trust so fully that for six years he even served as their treasurer (*camerlengo*), a very rare occurrence in notarial relations with institutional clients.<sup>55</sup> Moschenio was not the only one involved who survived Celio's eclipse after 1612. Agabito Visconti, documented in the painters' confraternity from 1595 and the man who delivered the petition against Celio to the pope, was still deeply engaged at the meeting held on January 8, 1619, when he was one of two representatives from the *compagnia* chosen to rewrite the statutes of 1617.<sup>56</sup>

By then Capitoline notary Erasto Spannocchia of San Polo in Sabina had taken over office 15. We first see his name in a document concerning the rental of the buildings next to the painters' church in January 1618; he died in the summer or early fall of 1624. Under Spannocchia, or perhaps later, the meeting records for the period 1618 to 1621 were not bound in the protocols but gathered in a separate volume, now in the archive of the Accademia di San Luca, which was an occasional practice among other Roman corporations.<sup>57</sup> Spannocchia's office must have been well run, for the strenuous conflicts over the form and leadership of the academy that marked 1624, the year Antiveduto Gramatica was forcibly replaced as *principe* by Simon Vouet, were recorded without interruption by a staff who had lost their *padrone*.<sup>58</sup> Spannocchia's successor was briefly Lorenzo Tigrino, who is first documented at work for the painters in June 1625.<sup>59</sup> In 1627 Tommaso Salvatore of Spoleto, who over the next 20 years made office 15 one of the busiest in Rome, was signing documents as a *sostituto* for Tigrino.<sup>60</sup>