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Florence: Protagonists, Locations, and Controversies¹

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¹ Translation from Italian to English by Sonia Hill for Scriptum, Rome. Criteria for the publication of sixteenth-century texts: *u* has been distinguished from *v*; *j* has been rendered as *i*; accents, apostrophes, and punctuation marks have been introduced according to current usage, as well as the division of words and use of capitals: however, some occurrences of the use of capital letters have been preserved in order to respect customary court language (e.g. Duke, Messer); all abbreviations have been removed without mentioning them; all our amendments or additions will be placed in square brackets and will be indicated and explained in the footnotes.

Abstract

The essay aims to draw attention to the initial moments of the Accademia del Disegno in Florence, the main players on the artistic and cultural scene, and the reasons behind its formation. Founded in 1563, the institution responded to a series of needs that originated both within the regime of Cosimo I and in the quarrelsome world of the Florentine workshops, constantly in search of rich and prestigious commissions.

My paper will attempt to highlight the most significant instances in order to enucleate the decisive political and educational role entrusted to the new city body, rigidly organized internally in a series of offices that were accessed after an equally rigorous training.

Keywords: Accademia delle Arti del Disegno – Vincenzo Borghini – Cosimo de’ Medici – Giovannangelo Montorsoli – Lelio Torelli – Giorgio Vasari

The constitutive articles of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno were approved by Cosimo de’ Medici (**Fig. 1**) on 13 January 1563, while the first meeting of the new assembly took place shortly thereafter, on 31 January, within the chapter house of the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli (**Fig. 2**).² The duke’s intervention thus renewed the very foundations of a city

² See Pacini, *Le sedi dell’Accademia*, 7; On the monastic complex of Santa Maria degli Angeli and particularly the chapter house, extended in 1364, see Cricchio, ‘Santa Maria degli Angeli’, 49.

institution that brought the artists working in Florence together and that had originated in around 1340, namely the Compagnia di San Luca.³

In 1560, after years of hardship and changes of location in Florence (from the Cappella Maggiore of Santa Maria Nuova Hospital to the 'Stanza de li Angeli' in Santa Maria Novella, then back to Santa Maria Novella after an indeterminate period of time), the 'Compagnia e Università de' dipintori', or Compagnia di San Luca, found its place in the Santissima Annunziata convent quarters. The Company was housed in the upper part of the convent at the time, but it could only be used for religious functions and the artists' funeral rites.⁴ This was made possible thanks to the sculptor and friar Giovannangelo Montorsoli, who took the necessary steps to give a proper burial to the artists who could not afford it. The first was Pontormo (1494–1557) (**Fig. 3**), whose mortal remains were buried with a solemn ceremony in the morning of 24 May 24 1562 (Feast of the Holy Trinity), in the center of the convent, inside the shaft tomb made by Montorsoli himself (who would also be buried in this same place on 31 August 1563)⁵ (**Fig. 4**).

Nevertheless, although the artists had finally found a place to bury their dead and for religious functions, there still was not a proper venue for the Compagnia di San Luca's assembly

³ See Ważbiński, *L'Accademia medicea del disegno*, vol. 2, 417–420 (who publishes the articles of the Compagnia di San Luca); Geronimus and Waldman, 'Children of Mercury'; and Monciatti, "Da Cimabue insino a oggi".

⁴ See Pacini, 'Le sedi dalle origini al Novecento', 139–141.

⁵ The following inscription can be read on the tombstone: 'semper floreat vel invita morte'; see Jonker, 'The Cappella di San Luca', 289 and fig. 4. Regarding Montorsoli, see Chong and Principi, *The Sculpture of Giovan Angelo Montorsoli*.

of members in 1562. Duke Cosimo I would play a crucial part in resolving this situation. After numerous requests made by Giorgio Vasari, he finally replied:

Of which Giorgio having spoken with the Duke, demanding some place from him, his Excellency said that he had thought of providing them with one wherein they might not only be able to erect a building for the Company, but also have room enough to work and demonstrate their worth. And shortly afterwards he wrote through M. Lelio Torelli to the Prior and Monks of the Angeli, giving them to understand that they were to accommodate the above-named Company in the temple that had been begun in their monastery by Filippo Scolari, called Lo Spano.⁶

The building mentioned by Duke Cosimo I can be identified as Brunelleschi's Rotonda, the central-plan church (unfortunately never to be completed) built on the outer part of the Camaldolese abbey of Santa Maria degli Angeli, as we can see from the *Codice Rustici*, a manuscript dating back to the first half of the fifteenth century⁷ (**Fig. 5**).

⁶ The quote is taken from the *Life of Fra Giovanni Agnolo Montorsoli*, included in the second edition of the *Lives*, printed in Florence by Giunti in 1568: Vasari, *Lives*, trans. De Vere, vol. 8, 155. The passage by Vasari (and the matter as a whole) is also discussed by Gamberini, 'Benedetto Varchi'.

⁷ Gurrieri, Newbigin, and Olive, *Codice Rustici*, vol. 1, fol. 17^v. The depiction of Santa Maria degli Angeli is also discussed by Acidini and Gurrieri, 'Didascalie', 67 and plate IX, 92. On the writing of the codex, datable to ca. 1447–1455, see instead Olive, 'Alla ricerca'.

The reliability of Vasari's record is confirmed by some epistolary evidence, which provides a direct account of the long process involved in the foundation of the Academy. On 31 December 1562, the Benedictine monk Don Vincenzio Borghini (1515–1580) wrote a long letter to Giorgio Vasari, who was staying at Giovanni Caccini's home in Pisa at that point, having been commissioned by Cosimo I to turn the medieval Palazzo degli Anziani into the new seat of the Ordine Cavalleresco di Santo Stefano.⁸ Don Vincenzio Borghini stated, with his well-known frankness:

I am very grateful for the news you have given me about the constructions and designs, and also for the suggestions. I encourage you to govern yourself prudently in two things. The first recommendation concerns the temple and the painters, in order to prevent you from experiencing any sorrow over time, because envy does not sleep and when it enters the lives of evil people, it has the habit of destroying every good and honorable undertaking [...] However, I will stop here because you already understand my meaning.⁹

⁸ On the palace and its transformations, see Karwacka Codini, *Piazza dei Cavalieri*, 65–117; Conforti, *Vasari architetto*, 191–208; and Satkowski, *Giorgio Vasari*, 67–74. On the tasks entrusted by Duke Cosimo to the artist from Arezzo in the site in Pisa, see also Funis, 'Dirigere un cantiere'.

⁹ 'Le nuove, che mi date delle fabbriche e disegni, mi sono grate e de' soggetti ancora. Confortovi in 2 cose a governarvi prudentemente, e cioè ritenuto. La prima nella cosa del tempio e de' pittori, che non ci abbiate poi col tempo haver de' dispiaceri, perché l'invidia non dorme; e quando s'abbatte a subietti maligni, suole operare o sforzarsi almeno d'operare, anzi, per dir meglio, di quastare et impedire ogni

However, immediately after discussing the huge construction site of the Uffizi in Florence, Borghini lingered on the previous matter:

If your monk from the Angeli monastery had come here, we would have spent two days working on that matter without haste. Now I don't know what to say, but I think I will go back to Florence and, before my letter reaches you and your answer comes back, I will already be there, where I very much wish to spend one day with you. I seem to feel better than before and, if I wasn't so worried, I would surely think I feel better. But now too many thoughts and ailments haunt me. I'm sure that if I trust in God, He will help

buona et honorata impresa. Et a qualchuno parrà che voi siate il tutto et ècci chi scoppia: credetemi a me che io veggo qualcosa; et degli umori che giornalmente nascono se ne vede anchora apparir qualche segnuzzo. E quali voi, come un bello animo et veramente virtuoso et non sottoposto a queste miserie di invidiuzze et di baie debbe, dovete vincere con modestia et pazienza; et questa è molto più bella et maggior vittoria che quella che si ha, contendendo et gareggiando per rabbia: ché gareggiare in virtù et in operar meglio è somma lode. Hor non più, che voi intendete d'avanzo'; quoted from the letter preserved in the Archivio di Casa Vasari in Arezzo, file 14 (XLVIII), fols. 24^r–25^v (fol. 24^{r-v}), described at <http://archiviovasari.beniculturali.it/index.php/blue-jay-doc/?id=473#txt> and illustrated at <http://archiviovasari.beniculturali.it/index.php/blue-jay-doc/?id=473#img> (10/06/2024). The text includes the following interventions by Borghini: 'E quali voi, come' is followed by a crossed-out word, and 'et questa è molto' corrected to 'et questa et molto'; see *Der literarische Nachlass*, vol. 1, 687–690 (in particular 688–689). Regarding Borghini, see Carrara and Fubini Leuzzi, *I Ricordi*.

me by putting me to work on one of His projects. And, if His Illustrious Excellency one day does what he promised me more than once, of which I do not doubt, I will certainly feel better. If this is the Lord's will, may he do it as soon as possible. Meanwhile, take care of yourself. God bless you.¹⁰

In Vasari's correspondence, in greater detail among the letters at the Casa Vasari Archive in Arezzo,¹¹ we can also find a missive from Don Bartolomeo di Paolo Bertoni da Bagnocavallo, the prior of Santa Maria degli Angeli, who wrote to the artist on 20 January 1563 expressing his doubts about Duke Cosimo I's strong decision to help the Compagnia degli Artisti:

¹⁰ 'Se quel vostro monaco delli Angeli veniva fin qui, ci stavamo dua giorni sopra quella materia in santa pace. Hor non so che mi dire, che penserò pure al tornarmene; et inanzi che questa sia venuta et tornata la risposta, io sarò in Firenze et voglio un dì in ogni modo che stiamo insieme. Et mi pare havere acquistato qualcosa di quella mala dispositione che havevo; et se io havessi l'animo più quieto, penserei di star bene. Ma ho troppi fastidi et troppi pensieri in questi tempi, tanto stretti; pure confido in Dio, che mi aiuterà, affaticandomi in una opera sua. Et se Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima potrà una volta fare quel che più volte mi ha promesso, che del voler non sto in dubbio punto, starò et potrò stare con l'animo più riposato; et a Dio piaccia, che possa presto. Et in questo mezzo voi state sano et amatemi: che Dio vi conservi'; once again quoted from the letter preserved in the Archivio di Casa Vasari in Arezzo, file 14 (XLVIII), fols. 24^r–25^v (fols. 24^v–25^r); see *Der literarische Nachlass*, vol. 1, 689. On the Uffizi building, designed from 1560 onwards by Vasari, see Conforti and Funis, *La costruzione*.

¹¹ On the creation of the Archivio Vasari, see Baggio, Benigni, and Toccafondi, *Giorgio Vasari*, and particularly to the essay by Moriani, 'L'eredità Vasari'.

Most Magnificent and Excellent Messer Giorgio, one of your letters reached me last night and in the footnotes I noticed a rescript by His Illustrious Excellency which shocked and surprised me, not knowing from whence it came. I do not know what to do or say. Having spoken with some of our monks and knowing the kindness they have shown to all of you in my absence, I cannot believe that some of you might have wronged us. You know for certain, as Bronzino, Ammannato, San Gallo, and Messer Benvenuto can confirm, that you have always been welcomed into our home and even accommodated, if there was no other space available, in the monks' own rooms.¹²

¹² 'Magnifico et Eccellente Messer Giorgio, tornando hiersera a casa, mi fu data una di Vostra Signoria, nella quale ho veduto a piè della supplica della vostra Compagnia un riscritto di Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima, che m'ha in modo stordito e cavato di me, non sapendo donde ciò proceda e possa venire, ch'io non so che mi fare né che mi dire. E havendo parlato, oltre a quello che mi sapeva, con alcuni de' nostri monaci et intese le carezze che in mia assenza sono state fatte a tutti voi dalla maggior parte di detti monaci, non posso credere che alcuno di voi habbia fatto se non buono uffizio, non havendone havuto cagione. Sapete voi, sa il Bronzino, sa l'Ammannato, sa il San Gallo, sa Messer Benvenuto et in somma, sapete tutti quanti, se voi volete dire il vero, che voi sete stati sempre da noi ricevuti volentieri a tutte l'hore et accommodati, quando non s'è havuto altro commodo, nelle proprie camere'. Quoted from the Archivio della Casa Vasari in Arezzo, 13 (47), fols. 44^r–45^v (fol. 44^r); the letter is described at <http://archiviovasari.beniculturali.it/index.php/blue-jay-doc/?id=410> while a photographic reproduction can be consulted at <http://archiviovasari.beniculturali.it/index.php/blue-jay-doc/?id=410#img>

Vasari swiftly replied to the duke, trying to act as a mediator between the two parties involved and to end the affair successfully:

Most Illustrious and Excellent Lord, my arrival in Florence brought great joy to the Academy and Company of Drawing; the protection offered by His Lordship to the artists increased their desire to demonstrate their skills and creations. His Lordship also signed the Articles, which will be made known publicly next Sunday morning after the Mass of the Holy Spirit, and which will be used from that day on, immediately after receiving His Lordship's seal of approval as written in His letter. On the other hand, the whole Academy felt sorry to hear of His Lordship's decision because of its harsh and uncompromising judgment regarding the monks of Santa Maria degli Angeli who, having kindly lent their rooms and belongings to the Academy members, felt excluded from this place on which they had been working for such a long time. His Lordship's conduct stunned everyone and they failed to think of any reason why He would take such a decision.¹³

(11/06/2024). See *Der literarische Nachlass*, vol. 1, 704–706 (704). On the monk, who was abbot from 1560 and died in Forlì in 1581, see Farulli, *Istoria cronologica*, 79–80.

¹³ 'Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo Signor mio, la mia venuta in Firenze, Signor mio, à portato con seco grande allegrezza all'Accademia et Compagnia del Disegno, sì per la protectione che tutti questi eccellenti artefici veggono che Quella à preso di loro et dell'arte, che à acresciuto loro dessorio di dimostrar con lo ingegno et con l'opera quanto Quella effectualmente ne mostra loro col favore dello

Vasari ended his letter by hinting at another figure who was directly involved in these historical events, namely Lelio Torelli:

I do not want to say anything about Messer Lelio, because Your Excellency's message made him very ill and he almost seemed to be destroyed by it. I had to comfort him, because I was saddened too. For this reason, My Kindest Lord, if by your grace and goodness you wish, like a good father, to accept the prayers of all, who think of nothing

avere sottoscritto i capitoli, i quali domenica mattina prossima si publicheranno con la messa dello Spirto Santo; et si comincerano a usargli, et allora si tratterà l'aprobatione del suggello, conforme al Suo benigno rescritto. Ànno sentito dall'altro canto tutta la Accademia et Compagnia grandissimo dispiacere nell'udire il rescritto di Quella, tanto rigido et terribile verso i monaci degli Angeli. I quali, avendo eglino del continuo a tutta l'Accademia et Compagnia servito et delle stanze et altre cose, che ànno auto bisogno, messe, fuocho et altre comodità molto amorevolmente, che tutta la Compagnia et Accademia ne può far testimonio, et vedersi escludere da questo luogo, dove avevon posto amore et già pensato il modo da ornallo, et alcuni accademici preso il luogo et le misure per far qualche principio, gli è parso molto strana et nuova cosa così all'inproviso avere a pensare altrove; et doppo molto dire n'à freddo l'animo a molti, non vedendo il fine'. Quoted from the Archivio della Casa Vasari in Arezzo, 13 (47), fols. 43^{r-v} and 46^{r-v} (fol. 43^r); the letter, dated 22 January 1563, is described at

<http://archiviovasari.beniculturali.it/index.php/blue-jay-doc/?id=409#txt> while a photographic reproduction of it can be consulted at <http://archiviovasari.beniculturali.it/index.php/blue-jay-doc/?id=409#img> (12/06/2024). See *Der literarische Nachlass*, vol. 1, 706–711 (706).

but doing your will, in so doing you will restore health to the old man, and the monks and the Academy will also benefit from Your actions, which will go down in history through the donation of the oratory to the Academy, so that our memories may live on with it. The whole Academy relies on Your holy decision and, together with them, I have faith in You, Your Excellency.¹⁴

This sharp reply came from Torelli himself, in Cosimo's usual style:

His Excellency does not wish to be remembered as a foolish man; besides, His Excellency is more willing to do these things than they are.

Lelio T., 25 January 1562/3.¹⁵

¹⁴ 'Di Messer Lelio non vo dir niente: che ho trovato, ch'el rescritto di Vostra Eccellenza gli fé venir la febre subito, e era mezzo morto; e l'ho auto a ire a consolare: che n'ho auto dispiacere. Inperò, Signor mio dolcissimo, se per grazia e benignità Sua Ella voglia, come ottimo padre, accettar le precie di tutti, che non dessiderano se non far il voler di Quella, renderà, facendolo, la sanità a quel vechio, a' monaci la grazia, perduta con Vostra Eccellenza, e alla Accademia donerà l'oratorio, acciò viva per fama con Quella le memorie nostre, rimettendosi inperò tutta l'Accademia al santissimo giudizio Suo, e io insieme con loro me li raccomando'; quoted once again from the Archivio della Casa Vasari in Arezzo, 13 (47), fol. 43^r; see *Der literarische Nachlass*, vol. 1, 707.

¹⁵ 'Sua Eccellenza non vuol'aver fama di balordo: nel resto Ella ha più voglia di far queste cose che loro stessi. Lelio T., 25 Gennaro '62/3'; quoted once again from the Archivio della Casa Vasari in Arezzo, 13 (47), fol. 43^r; see *Der literarische Nachlass*, vol. 1, 707.

Torelli was born in Fano in 1489, and he was portrayed by Domenico Capriolo (**Fig. 6**) during the final days of Malatesta's regime in Rimini, when the jurist was able to demonstrate all his technical ability directly to Pope Clement VII, who was worried about the city's fate.¹⁶ Thanks to Pope Clement, Torelli entered the service of Duke Alessandro de' Medici and then, after his death, the service of his successor Cosimo I, as testified by a medal made by Francesco da Sangallo in 1551 (**Fig. 7**). On the *verso* we can read the praise given to the duke's first secretary: 'VERA FIDES RERVMQ SCIENTIA MAGNA, TORELLE, TAM CHARVM COSMO TE FACIT ESSE DVCI'.¹⁷

Torelli was a cultured man, as confirmed by Benvenuto Cellini who dedicated a sonnet to him.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Anton Francesco Doni wrote to him from Rome on 21 May 1547 to describe

¹⁶ Regarding the jurist from Fano, see Clough, 'Lelio Torelli'; and Carrara, 'La nascita dell'Accademia del Disegno', 133–137. On the painting by the Veneto artist, now in the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle, signed and dated 1528 with an indication of the sitter's age ('XXXVIII'), see also Fossaluzza, 'Profilo', 60 and fig. 18.

¹⁷ The translation reads as follows: 'Your true faith and your knowledge, Torelli, makes you dear to Duke Cosimo'; regarding the cast-bronze medal, see Hill, 'Notes', 207; Hill, *Medals*, 84 and plate 16.2; Attwood, *Italian Medals*, vol. 1, 333 (cat. 794a) and vol. 2, fig. 169; and the entry on the British Museum website at https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_G3-IP-1027 (12/06/2024).

¹⁸ See Cellini, *Opere*, 915–916 (sonnet LXXX); and Cellini, *Rime*, 304–306. Torelli is also mentioned in Cellini's *Vita* (book II, chapter XCVIII); see Cellini, *Opere*, 560.

‘the paintings of the Sala della Cancelleria’,¹⁹ and Vasari also remembered his ownership of ‘a marble panel of Our Lady by the hand of the same Donatello’ (possibly the *Madonna Pazzi*, now on display in Berlin)²⁰ (**Fig. 8**).

As becomes immediately apparent, Torelli played a crucial role in the birth of the Accademia del Disegno, alongside Duke Cosimo. In fact, if we examine the manuscript containing the ‘Articles, and the Rules of the Academia and Compagnia dell’Arte e del Disegno approved by the Most Illustrious and Excellent Duke Cosimo de’ Medici, the second duke of

¹⁹ Doni, *Disegno*, 105–108 (in particular 108). The letter, which focuses on the *ekfrasis* of the frescoes painted in 1546 by Giorgio Vasari in the Salone della Cancelleria, was published for the first time in Doni, *Lettere*, fols. 65^v–68^f. It is also worth noting that Doni, when writing on 17 August 1549 to Alberto Lollio, who intended to visit Florence, advised him: ‘[...] poi basciate la mano a un huomo de’ maggiori huomini da bene (non biasimando alcuno) che voi praticaste mai, amator de’ virtuosi, defensor de’ poveri, sostentator de’ ricchi et benefattor di tutti, et perché voi sappiate il nome, e’ si chiama M. Lelio Torello, il qual meriterebbe la statua eterna per le qualità et virtù sue, sì che questo non vi si scordi’. The letter appears in Doni, *Disegno*, fols. 47^r–49^r and 82, note 217.

²⁰ See Vasari, *Lives*, vol. 2, 250 (the text is only present in the 1568 edition). It is difficult to establish whether the work mentioned should be recognized as the so-called *Pazzi Madonna*, datable to around 1420 and now in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin: see Janson, *The Sculpture*, 44–45 and plate 19b; see also Rowley, ‘Madonna und Kind’.

Florence and Siena', we can see the duke's signature together with the signature of the first secretary:²¹

Ita est Cosimus.

The aforementioned Chapters must be revised in order to increase or decrease their text, depending on what will be considered useful.

Lelio Torelli, 13 January 1562/3.²²

Writing the Articles was a challenging process and took a very long time because the text had to be revised three times by the Academy members, as shown by these documents: the final review was completed by 1 July 1563, while the first Academy assembly took place on 31

²¹ 'Capitoli, et ordini dell'Academia et Compagnia dell'Arte del Disegno approvati dall'Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo Signor Duca Cosimo de' Medici duca secondo di Fiorenza et di Siena'; quoted from MS II I 399 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, fol. 1^r; the manuscript can be consulted online at <https://archive.org/details/fondo-nazionale-ii-i.-399> (14/06/2024).

²² 'Ita est Cosimus. Osservinsi li sopra scritti capitoli da poterli diminuir et accrescer secondo che si giudicarà re[s]pondente a beneficio de l'opera. Lelio Torelli, XIII gennaio '62/'63'; quoted from MS II I 399 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, fol. 8^r. Regarding Cosimo de' Medici's seal of approval in public acts, see Vestri, 'Breve avvertenza'.

January of that same year. Moreover, as you can observe, the final revision (fols. 45^r–56^v) is the fair copy of the previous versions (fols. 15^r–30^v and 31^r–43^v).²³

It is also important to note that, in the first folios of MS II I 399 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence, in addition to the copyist's calligraphy, we can observe numerous additional notes near the paper margins, written in sharp and distinctive handwriting, which can be attributed to Lelio Torelli. This can be demonstrated by comparing the hand with his answer written in the footnote of Don Vincenzo Borghini's letter, who wrote to him on 10 July 1565 to request information about some medieval jurists, now kept in MS Magliabechiano VIII 1393 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence (fol. 214^{r-v}).²⁴

By that time, Borghini was busy preparing the iconographic program for Joanna of Austria's arrival, as testified by MS II X 100 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence. Joanna of Austria was Prince Francesco's bride-to-be, and the couple were married the following December.²⁵

²³ Regarding the codex, see Masini and Cecchi, 'Codice miscellaneo', which supplements and partly corrects Carrara, 'Vincenzo Borghini, Lelio Torelli', 548–549.

²⁴ See Carrara, '1563, la fondazione', 40 and fig. 10, where a number of corrections by the hand of Giorgio Vasari are identified in the text of the *Capitoli* in the margins of MS II I 399 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence.

²⁵ See Scorza, 'Vincenzo Borghini's Collection', 66. Regarding the imposing festive devices created to celebrate the sumptuous wedding that took place on 18 December 1565, see, most recently, Lepri, *Le feste medicee*; and Carrara and Vestri, *Prima e dopo Vasari*.

The Academy Articles had been planned to chart the artists' lives, starting from their apprenticeships to their enrolment in the newborn Academy, where they were able to achieve many roles (consuls, counsellors, and other tasks, such as camerlengo, superintendent, chancellor, scribe) as the result of the group ballot among the members.²⁶ As the final part of this procedure, their funeral would be celebrated inside the Cappella di San Luca with a public ceremony (the Cappella di San Luca was given to the Company with an act penned in 1565).²⁷ Its current appearance is the result of the artists' contribution. Indeed, this space was decorated by various artists including Vasari himself, who painted the altar fresco with *St Luke Painting the Virgin* (ca. 1565), flanked by the statue of the priest *Melchizedek* (made by Francesco Camilliani, 1570) and the statue of *Joshua*, the leader of the Israelites (made by Zanobi Lastricati, ca. 1570), which resembles Duke Cosimo I²⁸ (**Fig. 9**).

Thanks to this system, based on the rotation of various assignments, this strict *cursus honorum* succeeded in mitigating competition as far as possible in the Florentine artistic world.²⁹ There was also a special focus on the training and education of young apprentices, the new blood of the city's many workshops. This is illustrated by Article VIII, entitled 'the Oldest members of our Company and Academy are obliged to teach the youngest if they ask for help':

²⁶ See Barzman, *The Florentine Academy*, 191–199.

²⁷ See Baroni and Meijer, 'La cappella degli accademici', 151–165.

²⁸ See Summers, 'The Sculptural Program'; and Jonker, 'The Cappella di San Luca'.

²⁹ As emphasized in Carrara, 'La nascita dell'Accademia', 137–139.

[Our Academy and Company has to] instruct men who are talented in the Art of Drawing, and those who want to improve their abilities to make excellent pieces of art; we demand and command that every time one of the young members of our Company and Academy asks for help from one of the Consuls who is already a well-known artist, the latter must teach everything he knows and help him by reviewing his artworks; each Consul is required to comply with younger members' requests once or twice, if needed, and to show them, with kindness and respect, what the Consul thinks is best for their learning process; students must not develop their skills anywhere other than the Academy or the rooms of this Institution.³⁰

³⁰ *'Che i maggiori della Compagnia nostra et Accademia siano obligati insegnare a minori essendo richiesti. Et a fine che nell'Accademia e Compagnia nostra si habbiano a venire allevando sempre huomini che possano riuscir valenti nell'Arte del Disegno, e che quelli che nelle Virtù desiderano avanzarsi, e far opere degne di lode, vogliamo et ordiniamo che ogni volta che accaderà che alcuno de' Giovani della Compagnia et Accademia nostra richiegga alcuno de' Consoli o altri dell'Accademia e Compagnia nell'Arte del Disegno instrutto e di maggior Nome che gli mostri, insegni o rivegga qualche lavoro di tal Arte; ciascuno così Consolo come altri sia tenuto di andare col Giovane che lo richiederà una o più volte secondo che occorrerà, et amorevolmente e con sincerità mostrare et insegnar loro, quanto giudicherà convenirsi ad utile, beneficio et amaestramento de tali Giovani, intendendo nondimeno che non debbano in altre stanze o d'altri lati che nelle Case e stanze di questi tali giovani che richieggono d'esser ammaestrati'. Quoted from Adorno and Zangheri, *Gli Statuti*, 24. See also Waźbiński, *L'Accademia medicea*, vol. 2, 443.*

Therefore, within the Academy, particular attention was paid to theory, with lessons covering mathematics as well as drawing. Borghini was also employed as teacher:³¹

I'm getting these young students to do some exercises while also practicing, and you can tell they are having fun; they only know how to portray human figures but have not mastered other techniques, and so I help them to draw other subjects like moldings, columns, pillars, doors and telamons.³²

The results of these lessons can be seen in folios like this one (**Fig. 10**) with the representation of the arches of Porta al Prato and 'Prudenza Civile', which forms part of a notebook featuring

³¹ See Dempsey, 'Some Observations', 552–557; Hughes, "An Academy for Doing"; and Claire Farago, 'Leonardo's Workshop Procedures', 162–163.

³² '[...] io vo esercitando quei fanciulli e facendoli ghiribizzare un poco, che da ritrarre una figura in fuori non han termine alcuno di certe leggiadrie; et io gli fo fare spartimenti fantastichi, scorniciamenti, colonne, pilastri, porte, termini etc'. Quoted from the Archivio della Casa Vasari in Arezzo, 14 (48), fols. 200^{r-v} and 204^{r-v} (fol. 200^v); the letter is described at

<http://archiviovasari.beniculturali.it/index.php/blue-jay-doc/?id=570#txt> while a photographic reproduction of it can be consulted at <http://archiviovasari.beniculturali.it/index.php/blue-jay-doc/?id=570#img> (14/06/2024). See *Der literarische Nachlass*, vol. 2, 23–26 (in particular 24).

drawings of ancient statues and monuments or concerning the ephemeral devices created for the wedding of Francesco and Joanna of Austria in 1565.³³

In addition to this, the Academy committed itself to more practical actions, such as helping young artists who were unable to make a living. Proof of this can be found in a letter written on 9 January 1565 by Duke Cosimo I to Don Vincenzo Borghini, in which the duke asked his lieutenant within the Academy what he could do in terms of offering practical support to the young artists in the Academy:

Cosimo de' Medici, Duke of Florence and Siena. My Dear Reverend, through your letter of the first [of January], we have heard everything you have had to say regarding the Academy painters and sculptors. The provision that you say would be necessary to help those poor young people who are practicing their virtues, seems to us to be a good consideration. However, please tell us how this is to be achieved, and we will not fail to help them. Moreover, as regards your succession, remind the Prince, who is responsible for this. May God keep you. From Pisa, 9 January.

1564/5. The Duke of Florence.³⁴

³³ On fol. 16^r of MS L.IV.10 at the Biblioteca degli Intronati in Siena; see Scorza, 'A Florentine Sketchbook', 172–173, 175–180 and fig. 42a. On the two ephemeral devices, respectively erected at Porta al Prato and at the Dogana in Piazza della Signoria, see Lepri, *Le feste medicee*, vol. 1, 37–57 and 103–111.

³⁴ 'Cosimo de' Medici Duca di Fiorenza e di Siena. Reverendo nostro carissimo, per la vostra del primo [scil. gennaio] habbiamo inteso tutto il discorso ci fate sopra e casi della Accademia de' pittori e scultori;

Borghini was well aware that these young artists would certainly develop and make their social progress in the huge construction sites that had been started by the Medici dynasty. This kind of glorification could be temporary or permanent, such as the series of frescoes in Palazzo Vecchio painted by Vasari and his workshop by the end of the 1550s.³⁵

It should be no surprise that one of Don Vincenzo Borghini's pupils was already employed in the realization of the huge catafalque built to celebrate the solemn burial of Michelangelo

et la provisione che dite sarebbe necessaria per aiuto di quelli giovani poveri che si esercitano nelle virtù, ci pare sia buona consideratione; però diteci che modo ci sarebbe a farlo, che non si mancherà aiutarli. Et quanto al vostro scambio, ricordatelo al Principe, che lo doverrà fare. Dio vi conservi. Di Pisa, el dì 9 di gennaio 1564/5. El Duca di Fiorentia'. Quoted from MS II I 399 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, fol. 9^r; see Lorenzoni, *Carteggio artistico inedito*, 5–6; and Pacini, *Le sedi dell'Accademia*, 96 (doc. 14). On the 'scambio' of Lieutenant in the Academy requested by Borghini, see Carrara, 'La nascita dell'Accademia', 138 and note 28.

³⁵ To this regard, see Waźbiński, 'Giorgio Vasari'. See also Cecchi, 'Giorgio e Bartolomeo'; and Conticelli, 'Giorgio Vasari'.

Buonarroti in July 1564,³⁶ with a display that led to the fierce resentment of Benvenuto Cellini, the author of the institution's seal.³⁷

Naldini had to paint one of the canvases featuring key moments in the artist's life, that is to say his encounter with the young Prince Francesco, who went to Rome in 1560 to pay tribute to

³⁶ Regarding the sumptuous funeral of the artist, who died in Rome on 18 February of the previous year, see, most recently, Schraven, *Festive Funerals*, 85–87; Fratini, 'Le esequie di Michelangelo'; and Bambach, 'Michelangelo', 16. Significant graphic evidence of the initial design of the monumental catafalque is provided by a folio of the Codice Resta in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (F 261 inf. n. 67/2, p. 65), attributed to Zanobi Lastricati, which can be consulted online at <https://collections.library.nd.edu/2d498adc70/inventory-catalog-of-the-drawings-in-the-biblioteca-ambrosiana/items/cf011cf6e0> (14/06/2024). On the important figure of the clergyman and art lover, see Bianco, Grisolia, and Valenti Rodinò, *Padre Sebastiano Resta*.

³⁷ On the violent disagreements between Borghini, Vasari, and Cellini concerning the creation of Michelangelo's catafalque, on which the sculptor felt that the statue of *Painting* had prevailed over that of *Sculpture*, see Wittkower, *The Divine Michelangelo*, 19–21; Barocchi, 'Una Selva di notizie' (and then also in Barocchi, *Scritti d'arte*, vol. 1, 611–673; and in Varchi and Borghini, *Pittura e scultura*, 85–142); Carrara, 'Vasari e Borghini', 243 and 246; and Cellini, *Rime*, XLIII, LIII, XCI–XCII, XCIX, 52–55, 213, and 250. On Cellini's designs for the seal of the Accademia del Disegno (particularly the one preserved at the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich, inv. 2247, and the design at the British Museum, inv. 1860,0616.18), see Pierguidi, 'Francesco Salviati', 193–197; and Corretti, *Cellini*, 52 (footnote 67), 54 and fig. 19.

the great master.³⁸ To fully understand the influence that Michelangelo had on the young artists, it is important to remember that the Florentine sculptor was honored with the title of ‘Father and Master of these three Arts’ in January 1563, while Duke Cosimo was named ‘Prince’ of the Academy.³⁹ Moreover, we have to stress that, from October of that same year, the Sagrestia Nuova became the new meeting point of the newly founded Florentine institution, and it was also the preferred place of study,⁴⁰ as confirmed by some fine drawings by Federico Zuccari.⁴¹

³⁸ On the drawing at the Musée des Beaux Arts di Lille (inv. Pl. 426’), see Brejon de Lavergnée, *Catalogue*, 161–162 (no. 455). However, Bailey, ‘Santi di Tito’, 33 and fig. 9, was the one to attribute the drawing to Naldini.

³⁹ ‘Prince [...] Father and Master of these three arts’; quoted from the letter sent by Giorgio Vasari to Duke Cosimo I, then in Pisa, on 1 February 1563 (Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato, 497, fols. 913^{r-v} and 914^v: fol. 913^r); see *Der literarische Nachlas*, vol. 1, 712–718 (in particular 713); and Pacini, *Le sedi dell’Accademia*, 95, doc. 13. Regarding Michelangelo’s influence on the Academy artists, see Scorza, ‘Vasari’; and van Veen, ‘Vasari’.

⁴⁰ See Pacini, *Le sedi dell’Accademia*, 8: ‘[...] l’undici ottobre 1563 gli Accademici si riuniscono per la prima volta nella sagrestia michelangiotesca di San Lorenzo’.

⁴¹ Federico Zuccari, *Artisti nella Sagrestia Nuova, 1575–1579*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, inv. 4554^r and 4555^r; see Ferretti, ‘Vasari’, 35 and fig. 1; de Luca, ‘Federico Zuccari’; and Carrara, *Vasari e l’architettura*, 145–147 and fig. III.24.

The pivotal figure who held the Florentine Academy together was, as we have previously seen, Vincenzo Borghini, the Spedalingo of the Ospedale degli Innocenti.⁴² Even today his portrait, painted by Marucelli, greets guests in the Academy headquarters on Via Orsanmichele as the first in the series of portraits of Academy Lieutenants in the Sala dell'Udienza.⁴³

⁴² Regarding his role of administrator at the great Florentine hospital, see Fubini Leuzzi, 'Vincenzo Borghini'; and Fubini Leuzzi, 'Vasari'. Moreover, regarding his activity as manager, within this institution, of the bequests of artists such as Andrea del Sarto, see Vestri, 'Appendice'.

⁴³ See Scorza, 'Il ruolo'; on p. 36 the scholar lingers on the portrait of Borghini in the role of the first Lieutenant painted by Marucelli in 1596 (illustrated in Meijer and Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno*, vol. 2, fig. 14), regarding which see also Carrara, 'Marucelli'. On the role and importance of lieutenants within the Academy, see Paltrinieri, 'Alla scoperta'.

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Captions

Fig. 1. Giorgio Vasari (and workshop), *The Apotheosis of Cosimo I*, 1563–1565, oil painting on panel. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, Salone dei Cinquecento, ceiling (detail).

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https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8e/Giorgio_vasari_e_aiuti%2C_apoteosi_di_cosimo_I_tra_gli_stemmi_della_citt%C3%A0_di_firenze%2C_1563-65%2C_03.jpg?uselang=it

Fig. 2. *Nova pulcherrimae civitatis Florentiae topographia accuratissime delineata*, engraving; draughtsman: Stefano Buonsignori; engraver: Bonaventura Billocardi (Siena: Girolamo Franceschi, 1594). Detail with Santa Maria degli Angeli Monastery.

Royalty-free photograph downloadable from

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Map_of_Florence_by_Stefano_Buonsignori#/media/File:Pianta_del_buonsignori,_1594,_via_del_castellaccio.JPG

Fig. 3. Alessandro Allori, *Portrait of Pontormo*, 1571, fresco. Santissima Annunziata, Florence, Cappella di San Luca (detail by Agnolo Bronzino and Alessandro Allori, *The Trinity*).

Royalty-free photograph downloadable from

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8e/Alessandro_Allori%2C_santissima_trinit%C3%A0%2C_1567-1571_circa%2C_ritratto_dei_maestri%2C_pontormo.jpg?uselang=it

Fig. 4. Giovannangelo Montorsoli, *Artists' tombstone*, 1562, marble. Santissima Annunziata, Florence, Cappella di San Luca).

Royalty-free photograph downloadable from

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/17/Cappella della compagnia di s. luca%2C int%2C montorsoli%2C lapide tomba comune artisti 02.JPG?uselang=it](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/17/Cappella_della_compagnia_di_s._luca%2C_int%2C_montorsoli%2C_lapide_tomba_comune_artisti_02.JPG?uselang=it)

Fig. 5. *Santa Maria degli Angeli*, ca. 1447–1455, paper manuscript, Biblioteca del Seminario Maggiore, Florence, Codice Rustici, fol. 17v.

Royalty-free photograph downloadable from

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Codice rustici%2C santa maria degli angeli.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Codice_rustici%2C_santa_maria_degli_angeli.jpg)

Fig. 6. Domenico Capriolo, *Portrait of Lelio Torelli*, 1528, oil on canvas. The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle. Royalty-free photograph downloadable from

<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/lelio-torelli-14891578-jurisconsult-at-fano-44226>

(Photo credit: The Bowes Museum)

Fig. 7. Francesco da Sangallo, *Lelio Torelli*, 1551, cast bronze medal. British Museum, London, inv. G3,IP.1027.

Royalty-free photograph taken from

George F. Hill, 'Notes on Italian Medals—XIII', *The Burlington Magazine* 20:106 (1912), 200–208

(Plate II F).

Fig. 8. Donatello, *The Virgin and Child (Madonna Pazzi)*, ca. 1420, marble. Staatlichen Museen, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Berlin, inv. 51.

Royalty-free photograph downloadable from

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/Donatello%2C_madonna_pazzi%2C_1425-30_ca._01.jpg?uselang=it

Fig. 9. Cappella di San Luca, 1565–1570, Santissima Annunziata, Florence.

Royalty-free photograph downloadable from

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3e/Cappella_della_compagnia_di_s._luca%2C_int%2C_altare%2C_s._luca_che_dipinge_la_madonna_di_vasari_01.JPG?uselang=it

Fig. 10. Anonimo fiorentino, *Sketch of the ephemeral devices at the Porta al Prato and the Arco della Prudenza Civile, after 1565*, drawing, 27.8 x 20.5 cm, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena, MS I.IV.10, fol. 16^r (Photo credit: © Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati).