

Protectorship or *patrocinio*? The Accademia di San Luca, Its Cardinal Protectors, and Institutional Hybridity, 1577–1800

Abstract

What role did a cardinal play in an early modern institution after having been appointed to the position of its protector? And how did this custom of protectorship relate specifically to the Accademia di San Luca as the organization responsible for the production and cultivation of the fine arts in Rome? From 1577 onwards, when Pope Gregory XIII joined the painters' guild with a newly created religious confraternity to create the Accademia, a number of cardinals were directly involved in its affairs. Especially Francesco Maria del Monte had a large impact on its development during the 1620s. However, the study of these cardinal protectors has until now focused predominantly on their private interests in the arts and has failed to examine how this position was redefined and evolved in response to the way in which the papal authorities repositioned the Accademia within the complex bureaucratic landscape of Baroque Rome. This article therefore focuses not on the involvement of individual cardinals in the Roman art scene but instead seeks to clarify what their formal position within the academy was and what was expected of them by the Church authorities. This approach will also throw new light on the hybrid organizational identity of the Accademia, how connections with high-standing cardinals served the members' own desire for social prestige, and how they attempted to balance this desire with efforts to minimize interference from both civic and ecclesiastical authorities.