

Economic History

Frameworks

DANS LES RÈGLES DU MÉTIER.
LES ACTEURS DES NORMES
PROFESSIONNELLES AU MOYEN ÂGE ET
À L'ÉPOQUE MODERNE

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Economic History Frameworks

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Dans les règles du métier. Les acteurs des normes professionnelles au Moyen Âge et à l'époque moderne

A cura di Philippe Bernardi, Corine Maitte, François Rivière

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Construction Guilds in Southern Italy and the Islands (15th-16th Centuries): Leadership and Rivalries

EMANUELA GAROFALO, UNIVERSITÉ DE PALERME

From the last decades of the fifteenth century and well into the next, trade associations in the southern Italian Peninsula and main islands played a major role in the world of construction¹. This is evident primarily in the first act of approval or by the renewal of guilds' statutes aimed at regulating some aspects of labor practices and, at the same time, establishing hierarchies and rules regarding access to the profession. We cannot exclude, in the majority of cases, that surviving documents may have traced and updated prior statutes; the first one known for the region under examination, however, concerns the stone cutters, carpenters and boat builders of Cagliari in 1473².

In 1487 followed the statutes of the master masons and marble sculptors of Palermo³ and master masons of Capua⁴; in 1508 came that of the guild of the master masons and stone cutters of Naples⁵; and in 1538 that of the carpenters, stone cutters and saddle makers of Sassari⁶. In 1542 the *ordinationi artificum* were promulgated, which included master masons and carpenters and covered the whole territory of the county of Modica⁷, in southeastern Sicily. On the same island, in 1559, the first known statute of the trade association of the

¹ For a general framework and a critical review see Garofalo 2010.

² Lippi 1906.

³ Di Marzo 1880-1883, II, doc. IV, 4-7; Lionti 1883, 1-5; Patera 1984.

⁴ Broccoli 1892-1893.

⁵ Strazzullo 1964, 43-44.

⁶ Ponti 1959, 246-250.

⁷ Sipione 1976, 121-125.

master masons, stone cutters and marble sculptors of Messina was produced⁸; and, finally, in 1580, a statute related to the stone cutters, carpenters and coopers of Alghero in Sardinia was recorded⁹.

Moreover, we know that the statute of Cagliari was also applied to masters operating in the city of Iglesias¹⁰ and that the rules established in chapters of Palermo's statute, applied since 1487 and repeatedly confirmed by subsequent approvals, were also adopted in Nicosia (in the interior of Sicily) in 1560¹¹. It seems, as well, that rules regarding the master masons and quarrymen of Syracuse, written in 1515, may also have been derived from the statute of Palermo, and that, in 1598, the rules governing the master masons, marble sculptors and quarrymen of Trapani depended upon Palermo, as well¹².

Despite having such a rich and varied regulatory framework, there undoubtedly exist knowledge gaps, which may be filled with further archival investigations. Based on the case studies described above, the present contribution will shed light on a specific issue raised in this volume : Who were the actors responsible for drafting these laws?

There is probably no univocal answer to this fundamental question, although in general the initiative seems to have arisen among groups of masters, accompanied by the intervention of legal advisers and representatives of the city authorities only during the approval phase. Unfortunately, in none of these cases studied does the documentation concretely retrace the steps of the statute's drafting process (ie, neither meeting nor masters' consultation has been recorded).

Among the examples cited, however, the role of the masters involved in a guild is revealed occasionally or deducible from the statute's underwriters, whose names are listed at the opening or closing of the document. Combined with other information related to those same masters' professional activity, the extant evidence provides us with insight into the dynamics and key roles by which

⁸ Novarese 1986.

⁹ Budruni 1991, 123-127.

¹⁰ Lippi 1906, 2.

¹¹ Garofalo 2010, 238.

¹² *Ibid.*

the elaboration process unfolded in the guild. From this perspective, the following sections focus on four detailed case studies that allow us to discuss the protagonists of each story.

Palermo

Palermo's statute offers enough evidence with which to identify the actors in the drafting process, based on a primary source, the *privilegium pro marmorariis et fabricatoribus*, promulgated in 1487. Its chapters, presented by the masters, were submitted for scrutiny by the highest municipal officers, the *pretore* and *giurati*.

The *privilegium* opens with a list of proponents differentiated by professionalization, including marble sculptors (*marmorari*), master masons (*fabricatores*) and quarrymen (*perriatores*). A large group, it consisted of ten marble sculptors, twenty-four master masons and eight quarrymen, with the clear prominence of the master masons over others in the trade association.

Overall, the names of the proponents, often accompanied by an indication of provenance, show a rather permeable working context, with numerous « foreign » workers, above all of Lombard origin, but not exclusively¹³.

The aspect that appears most relevant to the identification of roles and responsibilities in the statute's formulation, is the presence of the name of Domenico Gagini for the marble sculptors and that of Nicolò Grisafi for the master masons at the beginning of the related lists. Indeed, they are leading figures in each respective professional fields within Palermo's labor market during the second half of the fifteenth century. Their placement in the lists of masters does not, therefore, appear random, but rather could signify their leading role within these professional groups.

The document does not indicate Gagini's position as one long occupied within the guild, but a rich body of documentation testifies to his actual leadership in the field of marble sculpture

¹³ A wider range of foreigner's origins includes, in particular, the trade of master masons, such as the masters *Joanne lo Tudisco* (maybe German), *Benedicto de Salerno* (from Salerno), *Petro Mayorchino* (from Maiorca), *Jaymo lu Francis* (from France?), *Petro de Granata* (from Granada?), *Jeorgio Gallu* (another from France?), while an Albanian, *Amico de Micalo*, is listed among the quarrymen.

in Palermo at that time. A skilled Lombard craftsman and a pupil of Brunelleschi, Gagini arrived in Sicily in 1463 via the site of Castelnuovo in Naples¹⁴. It seems plausible that he may have acted as a representative of the marble sculptors not as a simple signatory of the document, but as one of its creators and promoters. While we may only hypothesize that Domenico Gagini played a leading role in the initial phase of the guild's history, we are certain of his eldest son Antonello's position as consul of the guild, documented in 1517 and 1534¹⁵, and we cannot exclude the possibility of his governance prior to those dates. For both of them, professional success seems to be closely tied to their occupation in the top positions within the guild.

This is further evident in the case of Nicolò Grisafi, whose personal details remain rather out of focus, but who was certainly important in the architectural context of late-fifteenth-century Palermo. In 1471 and 1481, he was involved in updating the city's defensive system and in 1482 he built the chapter house in the convent of Sant'Agostino, covered by a challenging rib vault, showing a high technical skill. Moreover, in 1490 he partnered with Matteo Carnilivari to construct Palazzo Abatellis in Palermo, an alliance probably sought by the latter, who was originally from Noto in the south-east of Sicily, on account of Grisafi's leading role in the city¹⁶. In fact, since 1485, Grisafi held the post of head master builder of the city (*prothomagistrum fabricatorum urbis*), appointed for life by the officials¹⁷. To this very position, also listed in the *privilegium*,

¹⁴ On the activity of Domenico Gagini in Sicily and his role in the Sicilian cultural context see the fundamental works of Di Marzo 1880-1883 and Krufft 1972; on the same subject see also Migliorato 2016.

¹⁵ Di Marzo 1880-1883, I, 246-247. On the activity of Antonello Gagini, see also Krufft 1980, and with a specific focus on his architectural works Nobile 2010.

¹⁶ For Carnilivari, this could have been a strategy to have free access to Palermo's labor market, while avoiding any possible conflict with the local guild. For a short profile on Nicolò Grisafi in general and also with a specific focus on his relationship with the architect Matteo Carnilivari see especially Scaduto 2006, 103-104.

¹⁷ The document, which also recalls the appointment's predecessor, Giacomo Bonfante, relates that the choice of Grisafi for this important responsibility is motivated by his proven expertise in construction, particularly in his interventions in the fortifications of the city. A transcription of the document has been published in Patera 1984, 221-222.

the statute assigns leadership of the group of master masons (*fabricatores*), with the attribution of the prerogatives dictated for the main officers – or consuls – of the guild. Grisafi, a former master builder of the city at the time of the *privilegium* promulgation, may tentatively be identified as a promoter of the operation for the group of *fabricatores*, if not for the entirety of professional associations included in the guild.

In any case, the existence of a direct link between professional success and a high-ranking appointment in the respective trade association is discernable at a later time, as well. Antonio Belguardo, who, according to studies during the past ten years, appears to be the most successful master builder of the city in the 1530s, served as one of the guild's consuls in 1536.¹⁸

But to what primary target were the chapters of Palermo's statute aimed?

From the very beginning, the document reveals the existence of a marked dualism. Beyond the regulation of the relationship with « foreigners » or matters of deontology among masters and between masters and apprentices, the statute primarily seeks to establish a distinction between two categories of craftsmen, *marmorari* and *fabricatores*; rather than promote their integration into a single guild, it imposes boundaries between the jurisdictions of the two professions.

This suggests a certain rivalry that this legal framework failed to extinguish. It would have led, on the contrary, to the creation of two autonomous corporations before 1508. At that time, in fact, in the announcement for the renewal of the officials of the guild of *fabricatores* and quarrymen¹⁹, the marble sculptors no longer appear, but are probably replaced by lime producers, who, while mentioned here, were absent in the *privilegium* of 1487.

¹⁸ The appointment as consul, together with Pietro Faya, is stated in a document that also describes the assessment of construction works directed by the master Antonio de Baudo in the monastery of Santa Maria del Cancelliere in Palermo; for this information and a complete list of Belguardo activities known till now see Mendola, Scaduto 2016, 122.

¹⁹ For the transcription of the document of 1508, see Patera 1984, 221.

1487: a crucial date or a coincidence?

As mentioned above, in 1487 the statutes of building-trades associations of Palermo and Capua were approved and that of Cagliari was updated with the introduction of fifteen new chapters. Is it a coincidence or is this date somehow critical within the context of the labor market under examination?

To date, I have not tracked events or historical causes that enable us to answer this question unequivocally. This concentration is indicative, however, of at least a concomitant excitement and a shared attention regarding the establishment of rules in the world of construction crafts in the three cities, comparable as well in their project²⁰. In fact, although there are variations between the three charters, notably the different composition of the professional figures involved, there are some similarities. In general, regulating the competition among masters and the relationship with « foreigners » appears to be a primary concern; they confronted more restrictive provisions in Cagliari, fewer in Palermo and fewer still in Capua. The eventual circulation of legislative models is an aspect worthy of further investigation. In this respect, the mobility and the prior experiences of the masters involved in the statutes' creation could help to explain this apparent coincidence.

Capua

The statute of Capua yields addition compelling information about the actors involved in the process of regulating the local trade association within the realm of construction. The document containing the statute concludes with a list of twenty-nine subscribers, members of a single professional category, that of *fabricatores*. It also includes specialists in the field of stone cutting, explicitly mentioned in the text of the chapters, but who are not identified as an independent professional group. Most of the twenty-nine names are accompanied by an indication of each master's

²⁰ For a comparative analysis of these statutes see Garofalo 2010.

provenance, a large proportion of whom came from Capua. The result is a less complex picture when compared to the composition of Palermo's signatories, where Lombards are also present and where masters have also come from Cava dei Tirreni. The latter, in fact, underwent extraordinary entrepreneurial growth in the construction sector during the second half of the fifteenth century, and consequently the craftsmen of Cava expanded their field of action throughout the entirety of Southern Italy and beyond²¹.

The Capuan guild was governed by four officials, called the « four of trade » (*i quattro dell'arte*) according to the document, who were annually elected by the masters. At the time of the promulgation of the statute these officials were already in charge, and their four names are recorded in the document: *magister Jacobus lombardus, magister nardus de benedicto, magister mactheus quaranta, et magister petrus de nuvente de capua fabricatores*. Even in this case, then, within the whole group of subscribers, the names of masters emerge to assume a prominent role in the founding act of the corporation.

Although the document's testimony refers to a democratic designation mechanism for the selection of the trade associations' four officials²², we cannot exclude the possibility that their responsibilities go beyond those of simple representatives. Among the twenty-nine masters mentioned in the document, the only one for whom we have further information is *magister Matteo Quaranta*, mentioned by the scholar Filangieri, in his *Indice degli artefici ...*, who acknowledged him as a master mason²³. Not by chance he is one of the « four elected » in the year of the statue's registration and may be among the promoters of Capuan corporation's foundation.

²¹ On this topic see in particular Peduto 1982, Fiengo and Guerriero 1997. A relevant example is that of Onofrio di Giordano, whose activity is documented between Rome, Dubrovnik and Naples; for a biographic profile see Ghisetti Giavarina 2007.

²² The document specifies "*electi et deputati per alios magistros fabricatores ad presens commorantes in civitate Capue et sui districtu*" (elected and appointed by the other master-masons at the time residing in the city of Capua and in its district); Garofalo 2010, 228. The document was published for the first time in Broccoli 1892-1893.

²³ Filangieri 1891, VI, 234; some of the information collected by Filangieri on the works by Matteo Quaranta is more likely related to a homonymous sculptor working in Naples in the 16th century.

Naples

Dated to 1508, the Neapolitan statute, similar to that of Capua, presents the first known formulation of rules related to construction trades in the city. The presentation of the chapters is included in a legal deed drawn up by a notary in the presence of twenty-six underwriting masters, whose origin and trade are specified in addition to their name and surname.

In addition to masters from Cava dei Tirreni, who represent an overwhelming majority, thus, proving their abundance and mobility as aforementioned, there are three masters from Salerno, two from Calvanico, one from Siano, one from Mercato Sanseverino, and one from Naples. There is no indication regarding the provenance of the other three, but aside from them, all masters originated from Campania. Even if they may be only representative of the professional categories brought together by the guild, their names offer significant cause for reflection.

The trades listed in the association include : the master masons, called *fabricatores*, as noted in the prior two examples of Palermo and Capua ; the *intagliatores lapidum* or stone carvers, who were included in the group of *fabricatores* in Palermo and Capua and did not form an independent category of workers ; and, lastly, one *intagliator pipernorum*, that is to say a carver specialized in working with a local volcanic rock called *piperno*. The first group of professionals is the biggest, giving us an indication about the probable sponsors of the initiative, that is the group that conceived and promoted the statute.

Regarding the identification of the underwriting masters, more than two thirds are also known through other archival sources, mainly recorded in the aforementioned Filangieri's *Indice degli artefici*. Among the ranks of the master masons, one of the most interesting figures is Onorato de Marinis from Cava, who belonged to a « saga » or group of master builders from Cava dei Tirreni of which there were many between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries²⁴.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 118-123.

Filangieri collated information related to his professional activity during a period between 1482 and 1520, when he was engaged at several construction sites, initially concentrated in the territory of Cava²⁵. Using archival documentation, he refers first to the modifications that the master Onorato made to a design he had previously conceived for the Monastery of the Trinity in the city of Cava in 1482. In the same city, in 1504, he had traced on the ground the plan for the new oratory of the Confraternity of Santa Maria della Porta of Casale di Corpo. In 1499 a salary was granted to the master Geronimo Genuino di Bellotto, who had served on behalf of magister Onorato de Marinis in unspecified construction works. These data prove his design activity, as well as his direct involvement in the building site. The name of Onorato de Marinis is the second listed in the document of 1508, suggesting that the order of the underwriting masters' names was not random. This hypothesis may be indirectly confirmed by later information reported by Filangieri in his record on the master Onorato de Marinis, namely his appointment together with Panunzio Ferrara - the only master mason to precede Onorato in the list of 1508 - as arbitrators in a controversy between two master masons during the assessment of a new building's construction. Thus, the position of the names of Panunzio Ferrara and Onorato de Marinis in the document of 1508, respectively, could be proof of their prestige achieved and recognized within the Neapolitan corporation, where they perhaps served roles as officials of the association (*consoli*) at that time.

Messina

A final point of comparison, drawn from a later time, is that of the statute approved for the guild of master masons, stone cutters and marble sculptors of Messina, dating to 1559, but known through a later transcription²⁶.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 121-122.

²⁶ Novarese 1986; the transcription of the original document is included in a manuscript, a collection of different kind of texts, kept at the public city library in Palermo (Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo), under the following collocation: Qq H 237; this transcription was found and published for the first time by Daniela Novarese.

From the document, we may infer that previous advice had been requested from Utriusque Iuris Doctor Nicola Nucilla, who served as a consultant (*Consultor*) in his capacity as *sindaco* and *procuratore*, before the submission for approval to the city's officials. Twenty-three masters subscribed to the chapters, whose names are listed on a document that was presented to the city officials by two representatives, Franco La Camiola and Antonino Bagliotta. Their names are accompanied by the attribute *honorabilis*, one granted only to those masters who had already acquired a respected professional status²⁷. The presentation of the chapters also benefited from the mediation of Reverend Salvo Carrozza, associated with the church of Sant'Eustazio or della Grazia, which is requested by the master masons at the opening of the chapters to be used as the guild's church. It is interesting to observe that for this election explicit reference is made to the methods and objectives already practiced by other trade associations in the same city. In crafting this particular statute, the group emulated other similar instruments, ultimately adopting a good well-tested practice. Moreover, one of the last chapters states that, given the varied composition of the guild, four consuls were to be elected: two from the group of master masons and another two to be chosen alternately between the marble sculptors and stone carvers.

Unlike the cases examined above and in particular the Neapolitan one, the names of the underwriting masters listed at the end of the document are not accompanied by any specification, either of origin or of profession; rather, the order in which they appear seems to be random. The repetition of some surnames – Morabito, Iannecto and Iannello – does suggest, however, the existence of familial relationships among members of the guild.

A comparison with other documents, in particular notarial contracts, makes it possible to identify the specializations of some of the masters, as well as to hypothesize further familial ties with supporters in related professions, who also operated in Messina during

²⁷ In any case, this attribute is indicative of his inclusion solely within the field of handicraft. For a focused reflection on the terms and attributes in use for professionals in the field of architecture in the Sicilian documents at the beginning of the Early modern period see Vesco 2016.

the following decades. For example, the master mason Antonino Bagliotta, charged with presenting the chapters to the city officials with his fellow mason, was probably related to Salvus Bagliotta, active as master mason in 1555, and to Vincenzo Bagliotta, the city's master builder in 1605²⁸. Moreover, using details known about the Florentine master Pietro Bagliotta (or Bachiotta), who served as a master builder in important public building sites in Palermo during the last decades of the sixteenth century²⁹, we can further hypothesize the Tuscan origin of the entire « saga ».

It is probable, therefore, that the role of representative of the master builders and master Antonino Bagliotta's involvement in the approval process of the statute are a logical consequence and, for us, a clear signal of a solid professional affirmation of this master. This is certain for the other master, Franco La Camiola, with whom Bagliotta shared the important assignment. The sixteenth-century historian, Francesco Maurolico, in fact, celebrated him as the creator of the aqueduct of Camaro, a distinguished water supply project built between 1530 and 1547³⁰.

Conclusions

While none of the presented case studies provides a crystal-clear account of each statute's formulation process, the leading role played by a few experts in their respective labor markets seems to us a viable hypothesis worthy of further investigation. Furthermore, we strongly believe that the scope of statutory application – limited to a single urban context – presupposes an interaction, perhaps of a dialectic nature, with the main public officers of the respective city's government.

²⁸ Novarese 1986, 85 (note 28).

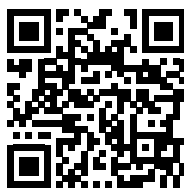
²⁹ Some different versions of the surname (Bagliotta, Bachiotta, Bagiotto, Bacciotta, Picciotto, Picciotta) are in our opinion referable to the same master mason Pietro in documents related to important building sites in Palermo in the 1570s and 1580s, including: the Royal Palace; the city gate, Porta Nuova; the Pretoria Fountain in front of the townhall. He was also consulted during a controversy regarding the construction of a new church for the Benedictine abbey of San Martino delle Scale (near Palermo). His Florentine origin is specified in the related documents. For more details and the relative bibliography see Garofalo 2015, 34 and 44 (note 27).

³⁰ Maurolico 1562, 231. See also Arenaprimo 1906, 3; Novarese 1986, 87-88.

Emanuela Garofalo

At the beginning of this contribution, we observed that a city might adopt wholesale another city's statute or draw upon specific norms from an earlier statute, seen, for example, in Messina's election of its consuls. This practice of emulating or sharing statutes, for which we have clear evidence, must be more clearly framed within each sphere of reference. A further survey of the biographical profiles of the masters, who worked in the cities where guild statutes in the field of construction were promulgated, regardless of whether or not the name is specified in the statute's document, could give us more information. Furthermore, a reflection on the dynamics of the emulation processes, hypothesized above, appears to be a promising angle for further investigation.

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