

SUPPLEMENTI

Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country:

Schiavoni/Illyrian
Confraternities and Colleges
in Early Modern Italy
in comparative perspective

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Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country: Schiavoni/Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in comparative perspective

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Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country: Schiavoni/Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in comparative perspective

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Forgotten “Schiavone”: A Reconstruction of the Artistic Profile of Ivan Gapić (Giovanni da Cherso), Vasari’s «assai buon maestro delle grottesche» *

Laris Borić**

Abstract

Paper presents a number of archival data related to grotesque painter and stucco master Ivan Gapić, known in late Roman Cinquecento as Giovanni da Cherso or Giovanni Schiavone. His career has been closely related to the circle of Taddeo and Federico Zuccari in whose bottega Gapić may have received his elementary training. Working within closely interrelated artistic networks employed on large-scale decorations of mid-to late 16th century Rome, Gapić remained in close relation with Federico’s circles, sharing several of

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his commissions, while even Vasari dedicated him few words of appreciation. Born in the insular town of Cres (Cherso) in northern Adriatic, during his Roman years, Gapić became a member of St Jerome's confraternity for which he also painted a (lost) figure of the patron. Paper will outline this forgotten Schiavone's career within complex artistic networks of Roman Cinquecento, particularly in relation to the position of associates within greater masters' orbits. Paintings that should be attributed to Gapić indicate a style that expectedly comes out of Zuccaris' models, while his later stucco works reflect the iconographical and formal impact of the Tridentine shift.

L'articolo si basa su una sequenza di dati archivistici relativi al pittore di grottesche e maestro di stucco Ivan Gapić, meglio noto nel panorama tardo cinquecentesco romano come Giovanni da Cherso, oppure Giovanni Schiavone. La sua carriera è stata strettamente legata all'appartenenza al circolo di Taddeo e Federico Zuccari, nella cui bottega Gapić ricevette la prima educazione artistica. Ben integrato nei principali laboratori artistici romani e impiegato sovente nelle grandi campagne decorative nella seconda metà del Cinquecento, Gapić rimase in stretto rapporto con gli ambienti artistici di Federico, e persino Giorgio Vasari gli dedicò parole di apprezzamento. Provenendo dalla città insulare di Cherso nell'Adriatico settentrionale, durante tutta la sua carriera romana, Gapić fu membro della confraternita di San Girolamo, per la quale dipinse anche una perduta figura del patrono.

Il contributo ridefinisce questa trascurata carriera dello Schiavone da Cherso, all'interno di una complessa rete artistica del Cinquecento romano, in particolare legata alla posizione degli artisti attivi nell'orbita dei grandi maestri. I dipinti che si attribuiscono a Gapić indicano uno stile che prevedibilmente deriva dai modelli dei fratelli Zuccari, mentre le sue opere in stucco riflettono l'impatto iconografico e formale del cambiamento tridentino.

The art-historical phenomenon of *Schiavoni* – early modern painters, sculptors, and architects who moved from eastern Adriatic towns to Italian artistic centers – has been the subject of extensive and pervasive mythologization during the mid-to late 19th-century processes of Croatian national awakening and corresponding art historical methods¹. In spite of subsequent critical deconstruction, re-evaluation and integration into contemporary art historical narratives and interpretations, some important corrections and demystifications by art historians are still needed to reduce the dominant mythological aura of the phenomenon, deeply rooted in the said public construct.

A particularly interesting question related to Schiavoni and their artistic careers is their social integration, definition of their artistic and personal identities, their education and subsequent networking and patronage. Since the establishment of proto-national confraternities is contemporary with the emergence of Schiavoni artists, it is interesting to examine the role the confraternities played in the formation of these masters of design and, vice-versa, how these creative individuals participated in the visual definition of collective proto-national identity. Though many of these questions are elaborated in this volume on a much more refined methodological level, it should also be pointed

¹ Prijatelj Pavičić 2008, 2012; Dulibić 2015.

out that there are still grey areas, and even forgotten artists and obscure careers, commissions and artistic networks.

The case of late-Cinquecento painter and stucco master Ivan Gapić (also known as Giovanni Gapei, Giovanni da Cherso *venetiano* or Giovanni Schiavone) provides an appropriate example of such situation. He had been part of a larger group of artists within the orbit of Zuccari brothers, and though employed by some of the highest ranked Roman patrons, Gapić's name does not appear in any of the surveys of Roman Cinquecento visual culture. Even in some of the studies related to Zuccaris' *entourage* and other interrelated artistic circles, his name appears marginally within the context of associates and assistants of similar status. Moreover, Gapić had been overlooked even within the aforementioned context of Croatian art historical mythologization and subsequent re-constructions of Schiavoni phenomenon, even though he had been introduced in the mid-19th century by one of the pioneers of Croatian national awakening, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, in the first volume of his *Slovník umjetnikah jugoslavenskih*². This lexicon, published in 1858, was the first compendium of Croatian and Slovenian artists that intended to establish a foundation for the construction of national cultural identity within the context of Croatian version of Risorgimento³.

Kukuljević's research in the archives of Croatian confraternity in Rome, more precisely *Libri degli Decreti della Congregazione Illirica di s. Girolamo*, revealed information related to our Schiavone, born in the town of Cres (Italian: Cherso) around 1540, on a homonymous island in Quarnero bay in the northern part of the eastern Adriatic. According to *Slovník*, painter Ivan Gapić (erroneously named Agapić) became confraternity member on the 12th of April 1562, while the ultimate mention in congregation's archives according to Kukuljević was in 1576. He has also remarked on the conspicuous absence of our painter from these archives between years 1564 and 1568, which might indicate a sojourn outside of Rome⁴.

Kukuljević's archival reports should be supplemented with regesta published by Vinko Kisić that give evidence of Gapić's presence (mentioned as Giovanni Capiccio) at an extraordinary session of St Jerome's congregation on 30th of August 1589, when it was decided to appoint clergy «nella Chiesa noua fatta da Sua Santità»⁵.

Finally, and far more important for the outline of Gapić's artistic profile is Kukuljević's report that on January 3rd, 1563, the Illyrian confraternity registered a payment of 12 *scudi* to Gapić for a painting that had originally been placed above the portal of the hospice. In the mid-19th century, Kukuljević thought that

² Kukuljević Sakcinski 1858, p. 1.

³ Mance 2008.

⁴ Kukuljević Sakcinski 1858, p. 1.

⁵ Kisić 1902, p. 138; Burić 1966, p. 13.

it might have been the painting he saw in confraternity's storeroom. He describes it as a wooden panel depicting St Jerome in full height holding the crucifix in his hands, while in the upper part of the composition there was Madonna with Child surrounded by angels. The drawing was – in Kukuljević's opinion – «good, and coloring quite vigorous and natural»⁶. Although the painting is today lost, we may be able to draw some initial hypotheses on the style and the quality of the painting. Kukuljević didn't see himself as an art connoisseur and – according to his own words – avoided qualitative judgements of artworks⁷ yet his esteem of Gapić's drawing leads to an initial hypothesis that Gapić's painting of Madonna with Child and St Jerome paid for in 1563 followed the general eclectic post-classical stream of contemporary Roman style.

Intriguingly – and absolutely unknown to Kukuljević as well as to the whole subsequent Croatian art history – our Schiavone from Cherso had also been mentioned by Vasari, in his chapter on the life of Taddeo and Federico Zuccari, brothers whose style epitomized contemporary Roman painting through reinterpretation of classical elements that restrained mannerist tensions. Speaking about Federico's early works, whom he knew personally, Vasari takes the reader through rooms of the Casina in Belvedere gardens, a small villa commissioned from Pirro Ligorio by Pope Paul IV but accomplished under Pope Pius IV in 1563 (fig. 1)⁸.

Elaborated and sophisticated humanist iconographical programme of villa's façades combine pagan and Christian references in stucco grotesques, as well as lavish painting decoration and stucco decoration of its rooms⁹, were at least partly conceived by the erudite Venetian cardinal Marcantonio da Mula who was also responsible for the decorative concepts in Sala Regia¹⁰. Vasari states that the cardinal himself «diede a dipingere a molti giovani (acciò fosse finito tostamente) il palazzetto, che è nel boscho di Belvedere», and continues naming them and their respective rooms:

I giovani dunque, che in detto luogo con loro molto onore lavorarono, furono Federigo Barrocci da Urbino, giovane di grande aspettazione, Lionardo Cungi e Durante del Nero, ambidue dal Borgo Sansepolcro, i quali condussono le stanze del primo piano. A sommo la scala, fatta a lumaca, dipinse la prima stanza Santi Zidi, pittore fiorentino, che si portò molto bene, e la maggior, ch'è a canto a questa, dipinse il sopra detto Federigo Zuccherò, fratello di Taddeo, e di là da questa, condusse un'altra stanza Giovanni dal Carso Schiavone, assai buon maestro di grottesche¹¹.

⁶ Kukuljević Sakcinski 1858, p. 1.

⁷ Mance 2008, p. 289.

⁸ Smith 1977, pp. 8-15 with detailed chronology of construction between 1558 and 1562.

⁹ Frommel 2011, p. 42. Author defines the iconographical program of Casina decoration: «come se avesse avuto due anime: una ancora rinascimentale un'altra con tendenze già riconducibili alle linee del Concilio di Trento». This notion adequately defines the period as well as iconographical and stylistic transformations in which will strongly influence Gapić's artistic career.

¹⁰ Smith 1977, pp. 5 and ss.

¹¹ Vasari 2007, p. 1184. This record appeared in the second edition of Vite (1568), five years after the execution of these works that were probably reported to Vasari by Federico himself.

Vasari enlists artists who executed painting and grotesque decoration of its rooms under the supervision and partly after designs by Taddeo and Federico Zuccari. He claims that decoration of the ground floor rooms had been entrusted to the promising youngster from Urbino, Federico Barocci with associates Leonardo Cugni and Durante del Nero from Borgo San Sepolcro. Vasari then leads the reader upwards, through the spiral staircase with vault painted by Florentine Santi di Tito, into the *piano nobile* central room decorated by Federico Zuccari himself¹². The last room in Vasari's account is the first-floor front façade room, right above the entrance porch, painted by an artist whom Vasari names as *Giovanni del Carso Schiavone* who is an «*assai buon maestro delle grottesche*».

The toponym of his origin – Carso – may seem to relate to the area of Carso Triestino, but already Friedlaender's very first monograph on Casina recognized Vasari's misspelling of the town of Cherso/Cres¹³. We may now also add that Giovanni del Carso Schiavone responsible for the overall decoration of the front room of the Casina is none other than Ivan Gapić, registered as a member of the St Jerome's Roman confraternity between years 1562 and 1589.

Friedlaender's 1912 study also lists a number of payments between October 1561 (six months before Gapić became a member of St Jerome's confraternity), and 8th September 1563¹⁴.

a m.o Giouannj da Cherso Venitiano pittore [...] p resto, et compito pagamento del suo lauoro fatto di pittura, stucco et doratura nella quarta stanza ouero galeria di sopra alle stanze del boschetto in Belu.re¹⁵.

This final document determined that twelve previous payments added up to 260 scudi, which accounts for another 221 scudi owed to Gapić to cover the total expense of 481 scudi for his works on the decoration of *galleria*. Except for these documents that testify to Gapić's work in the upper *galleria*, there is an 18th-century report by Agostino Taja who claimed that Schiavone also worked in its ground floor porch¹⁶. This might not refer to the vestibule of Casina but

¹² Smith 1970, p. 109 correctly interprets Vasari's somewhat confusing sequence of the rooms.

¹³ Friedlaender 1912, p. 129.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*. Author also points out to a still unknown painter mentioned by Bertolotti 1884, p. 24, under the name of Giovanni de Franciscis who was the member of Accademia di San Luca, who might be Giovanni da Cherso. Taja also adds that Giovanni da Cherso had been payed in August of 1563 for some works at "loggia superiore".

¹⁵ Friedlaender, 1912, p. 129. Smith (1977, p. 72) indicates new collocation for the final document: Archivio di Stato di Roma, Camerale I, Fabbriche 1520, f. 77v.

¹⁶ Taja 1750, 503. «La volta di questo portico e dipinta di grotteschi, d'istorie tratte al principio di Genesi nel fregio, che circonda, nelle testate, e din moltri altri siti, ma d'una eccellenza incredibile. Queste pitture, benci è abbiano assai patito, pure si riconoscono risolte, e ben mosse nella composizione, ne' contorni, e nel impasto del colorito, tanto che si può credere essere state da Giovanni Schiavone, peritissimo maestro non pure in grotteschi, ma in figure piccole, e in ornati». Taja's statement is probable source for the publication of a large reproduction of Creation of Adam attributed to Giovanni Schiavone in Piazzoni *et al.* 2016, pp. 99-100.

to Loggetta, whose decoration has also been attributed to Federico Zuccari¹⁷. However, since the question of attribution in these areas is still questionable, Taja's notion doesn't add to the clearer understanding of Gapić's work, except for his closeness to Federico.

Vault of Gapić's *galleria* is decorated with grotesques developing around the central iconographical program that consists of the depiction of the Marriage of St Catharine flanked by two smaller fields with St Paul and (lost) St Peter. Lateral fields are divided from the central scene with grotesque bands, representing Heracles and Apollo accompanied by muses. The omnipresent permeation of Christian and pagan iconography is evident in smaller fields within grotesque frieze that runs below the vault. It consists of the scenes of St Peter kneeling before Christ after the miraculous fishing, Christ and Peter walking on water above the north-eastern wall, and old-testament scenes with David and Abishai, Crossing of the Red Sea and Judith with a maid and Holofernes' head on the opposite side. Above the north-western wall, there are hermits; a scene with Jonah and the whale flanked with St John the Baptist and St Jerome in the wilderness, while on the opposite wall there are the Flood, a topographical view, and a lost scene¹⁸.

Since particular elements of Gapić's hand still need to be identified among numerous Zuccari's associates, paper will focus on archival records in order to define his biography and visual context as the basis for future research. Scholars who researched Casina or Federico Zuccari's opus mention Gapić in various manners. Graham Smith's 1977 monograph on Casina and Cristina Acidini Luchinat's 1998 comprehensive volume on Zuccari brothers have taken the quoted archival data cautiously, assuming that Schiavone worked exclusively after designs by Federico, probable author of the overall program. Taddeo, who seems to be the chief organizer of the project, was at the time at Caprarola, commencing the complex project of villa Farnese decoration. Even though Gapić was the single receiver of considerable payments for the decoration of *galleria*, Smith disagreed with Friedlaender's proposal that Schiavone executed the entire decoration except for the central composition with St Catharine, thus reducing his role to a mere executor of younger Zuccari's decorative programme, whose highly elaborated academism shows similarities with some of the Federico's known paintings¹⁹. Acidini Luchinat accepted Federico's involvement in *galleria* as well as that of his associate Lorenzo Costa, however with no further analysis of the style or attribution of scenes. Regarding Giovanni da Cherso, Luchinat also noticed the high quality of the grotesque programme and its «consciously archeologic» character. The Italian scholar judged them directly related to those of Raphael's Loggia, cardinal Bibiena's *stufetta* and Perin del Vaga's decorations

¹⁷ Volpi 2011, p. 47. This might also be the «loggia superiore» mentioned in Friedlaender's document, see note 15.

¹⁸ Smith 1977, p. 88.

¹⁹ Ivi, p. 73.

in Castel Sant'Angelo²⁰. Caterina Volpi, on the other hand, seems to reattribute at least some of the painted compositions in galleria to Giovanni, agreeing with earlier Friedlander's suggestion on his Venetian education because of certain chromatic and landscape values in smaller biblical scenes. Moreover, she also recognizes his hand in the figure of St Paul²¹. Nevertheless, all these scholars agree in seeing Gapić's contribution as a master of grotesques who worked exclusively after designs provided by Federico Zuccari, some of them recognizing his contribution in painted scenes that indicate Venetian atmosphere. Following Friedlaneder's and Smith's suggestions that only the scene with St Catherine should be attributed to Federico, future analysis should pay attention to St Paul's figure, whose stiff impostation indicates a less skilled follower of Zuccari's style, while some flowing qualities of the design indicate author's experience with the grotesques.

Still, Federico's authorship of the overall concept and particular details is corroborated by Vasari whom Federico himself informed that he prepared *disegni* for other artists. This should not be questioned since all the participants of the project, like Federico Barocci, were quite young and still anonymous at the time or, like Santi di Tito, Tuscans in Rome temporarily. Speculating on the gathering of such a heterogeneous group of painters, Smith pointed to relations of Pope Paul IV with Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo II della Rovere, whose daughter Vittoria had been married to pope's nephew Federico Borromeo. Zuccari brothers descend from Sant'Angelo da Vado near Urbino, the birthplace of Barocci, while two of the stucco associates came from Borgo Sansepolcro, place of origin of Santi di Tito²². This conspicuously excludes Giovanni da Cherso *venetiano* from the group, implicating that he might have already been part of Taddeo's circle (and hence experienced in grotesques) or might have been invited from Venice, perhaps through abovementioned Venetian cardinal da Mula whom Vasari gave a prominent role in the invention and organization of villa decoration. Gapić's Venetian artistic provenance would not exclude probable previous experience with grotesques, which were quite popular in Veneto from the 1520s on²³. This would also corroborate "Venetian mood" recognized in landscapes of the smaller scenes below the *galleria* vault²⁴.

On the other hand, confidence that was shown to Gapić with his earlier Roman commissions, and close relationship with Zuccari brothers as well as the skilled execution of grotesques that was noted by Vasari, may imply his education in Roman circles which cherished this particular visual culture elaborated by Raphael's workshop and developed by artists like Polidoro da Caravaggio, admired by Taddeo²⁵.

²⁰ Acidini Luchinat 1998, vol. I, p. 138.

²¹ Volpi 2011, p. 55.

²² Smith 1977, p. 65.

²³ Zamperini 2013, pp. 148 and ss.

²⁴ Volpi 2011, p. 55.

²⁵ In Federico's painterly mythologization of his prematurely deceased older brother's life,

Immediately after the accomplishment of Casina decoration in October of 1563, Federico Zuccari left Caprarola where he had been working with Taddeo and assistants on the decoration of Villa Farnese and went to Venice where he stayed until the summer of 1565 when he returned to Rome just before Taddeo's death. Patriarch Giovanni Grimani invited him to finish the deceased Battista Franco's altarpiece and stucco decoration, probably modelled after Alessandro Vittoria's design, for the family chapel in San Francesco della Vigna²⁶. Gapić's absence from the archives of Roman Illyrian confraternity between 1564 and 1568, noted by Kukuljević, partially coincides with the later part of Federico's Venetian sojourn. Therefore, one should consider the possibility that Francesco invited Gapić to Venice as an experienced associate, skilled in the execution of Casina grotesques, in order to work on the decoration of Grimani chapel as well as the exquisite staircase vault in patriarch's palace near Santa Maria Formosa also commissioned from Federico²⁷.

Presently there is no evidence that Gapić's association with Federico was continued after the latter's brief return to Rome from Venice in September of 1565 since Federico soon went to Florence. In the meantime, Taddeo had been working at Villa Farnese in Caprarola, and, from 1564 until his premature death in 1566, on *Fasti Farnesiani* at Palazzo Farnese. However, there is no known archival record that would indicate Gapić's collaboration on elaborated grotesque decoration at Caprarola or palazzo Farnese during mid-to late 1560s.

Gapić probably remained related to Federico's circles, since we find him again associated with Cesare Nebbia during 1572 and 1573 on the decoration of cardinal Ippolito d'Este chapel in his delightful villa at Tivoli. The decoration of the villa began in 1565, led probably by Girolamo Muziano and Cesare Nebbia. Muziano's associate was recorded in Tivoli in 1568, while Federico first appeared in 1566 and 1567 on the decoration of the Rooms of Nobility and the Glory and returned to Tivoli for the decoration of villa's chapel in

there is a scene (also mentioned by Vasari) in which young Taddeo was fascinated by Polidoro's decorative programmes. Besides, Taddeo's early commissions mostly consisted of decoration of Roman palaces' façades as part of that tradition. Brooks 2007, pp. 46 and ss.

²⁶ Acidini Luchinat 2001.

²⁷ Future research of Gapić's life and work should also consider brother Zuccaris' circle of patrons. They are in contact with cardinal Alessandro Farnese from 1561 at Caprarola and subsequently on the decoration of palazzo Farnese while Federico enters the service of patriarch Giovanni Grimani. Both commissioners were also related to another Schiavone, Giulio Clovio, who might also have connected Federico to Cornelis Cort, as he who exactly in mid-sixties began making prints after Federico's works exactly in mid-sixties. Clovio was by then already in life-long service of cardinal Farnese and he must have known Gapić. On the other hand, Clovio seems to have had no relation to the Illyrian confraternity. Acidini Luchinat (1998, p. 227) supposed that Clovio, previously in service of the Grimani, might have been the original link between Federico and the patriarch. Moreover, there are circumstantial links with yet another Schiavone, Andrea Meldola. While in Venice, Federico worked on the decoration of villa Pellegrini between Monselice and Chioggia where Meldola previously worked with Lambert Sustris (Acidini Luchinat 2001, p. 237).

1572²⁸. In Tivoli, Giovanni Gapei is recorded in 1569 as an associate of Cesare Nebbia, though the degree and the form of his participation are still vague. David Robbins Coffin – who published this archival reference in his 1960 monograph on Tivoli villa – suggested without further elaboration that Gapić worked at the Room of the Glory²⁹, while Acidini Luchinat implied that Federico – who according to Vasari's report, again took the role of the chief organizer of the project, similarly to his previous experience in Caprarola – had employed Schiavone on the decoration of the chapel fresco cycle with the Life of the Virgin, adorned with grotesque decoration (fig. 2)³⁰. This hypothesis opens yet another necessary field of research in an attempt to define Gapić's profile. Such densely intertwined networking of artists who execute previously elaborated compositions obstructs attempts to determine individual artistic involvement and to define Gapić's artistic abilities, particularities of style or at least features of his *ductus*.

Presently there are no other known Italian archival records related to Gapić's work after Tivoli, yet quite unexpectedly, the most revealing and previously unpublished archival sources that indicate his works during the 1570s and the early 1580s come from the archives of his native town of Cres. Certain Giovanni Gapich is recorded in *Libbri delle fabbrica delle mura*, book of expenses for the construction of towns new fortifications, on February 21st, 1587 when he received 68 liras for the execution and gilding of St Mark's winged lion relief installed at the façade of recently reconstructed Pretorial (Rector's) palace, the seat of Venetian administration of the community of Cres and Osor (Cherso and Ossero)³¹. However, this particular Ivan Gapić is not Federico's Roman associate but his nephew. In the second volume of Book of Communal Council's assemblies, there is a note related to the gilding of Andrea Vicentino's altarpiece, that had been recently been acquired for the high altar of the reconstructed collegiate church in Cres³². On May 5th, 1596 the younger Ivan Gapić applied for this task previously commissioned by the communal council, advertising his skills with the experience acquired during seven years he had spent with his uncle, «a famous painter» at several places in Rome:

p. servizio della Chiesa, et p. mostrar p. honor mio, ch. no ho speso indarno sette anni co'tinui, ch. so. stato in Roma co.il a Zio famoso pittore, nel qual tempo ho sfuito co.lui, et

²⁸ Tosini 1999 and 2010 with the thorough elaboration of complex attributional situation, particularly in Room of the Fountain and in Noah's and Moses' rooms of villa d'Este. However, lack of any reference to Gapić probably implies that author regarded him as an assistant of a lesser significance. This view is probably reflected in D. Catalano (2013) overview of villa decoration.

²⁹ Coffin 1960, pp. 61-62.

³⁰ Acidini Luchinat 1998, vol. II, p. 6.

³¹ State Archives in Rijeka (Državni Arhiv Rijeka), JU 28 - XXXVII/4, *Libbro de conti della fabbrica dele Mura di Cherso per essecutiem della deliberation del Senato 1509. 24 Septembris, f. 96r, sub diem.*

³² Gudelj 2008, p. 164.

di pittura, et d'indoratura nella Capella gregoriana, nel soffita d'Arancelli, nel palazzo del gia Ill.mo cardina farnese a'Patto (or a'Pallo, unreadable), et ad altri Smi

and continues:

l'esperienza dell'indoratura ch. ho fatto del sa. Marco nella facciata dell pallazzo gia nove anni ch. par fatto feri, nella Chiesa della Ma. di Nerese, et in altri luochi, et a Cavisole, et altorve, et non ma.caro anco di fedelta' nel maneggio dell'oro nel quale si potria far dell'inganno³³.

Leaving aside the interesting fact that Gapić junior had already executed several gilded stucco reliefs around the island, on the façade of Pretorial palace in the town of Cres, in the church of St Mary of Nerese and in the small town of Beli (Caisole), his description of activities during his Roman education with his uncle provide a number of important information on the older Schiavone's works in Rome after Tivoli. Moreover, along with all of the previously mentioned works, these documents delineate an interesting artistic career. They suggest that in the 1570s Gapić worked on the decoration of Capella Gregoriana within St Peter's Basilica and the decoration of the ceiling of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, also commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII. Moreover, he did some works in the palace of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese as well as the decoration of some other, unspecified Roman churches. It is not clear whether nephew's record of Roman experience is arranged chronologically or the papal chapel has been put first because of its plausible resonance with the local community.

The most precise dating can be related to their probable contribution to the decoration of wooden ceiling at Santa Maria in Aracoeli (fig. 3) after the decision by Roman Senate on November 21st, 1571 to adorn the church with new *soffito* dedicated to the recent Victory of Lepanto in which Christian allies (Venice, Papal States, and Habsburg Spain) defeated Ottoman fleet. The woodworks by Flaminio Boulangier – who previously worked for Cardinal Ippolito d'Este and on a number of papal and communal assignments – was probably accomplished by 1574 when Cesare Trappasi from Foligno and his assistant Girolamo Siciolante from Sermoneta³⁴. The whole ceiling consists of three longitudinal sections divided into rectangular fields with the central relief of Madonna, coats of arms of Gregory XIII and Pius IV, Roman communal insignia and a number of trophies and arms related to the naval battle. Subsequently, in February of 1576, Boulangier's offer to execute a decorative frieze below the ceiling has been accepted. It also carries a number of gilded maritime and naval symbols (dolphins, naval rostra, sirens) intermingled with papal and ecclesiastical references (Boncompagni heraldic dragon, Mary's crown, etc.) The decoration

³³ Lemessi 1979, pp. 501-502. The third and the fourth book of Cres Communal council with records between 1556 and 1622 are missing. However, their regesta have been transcribed by Stefano Petris at the end of the 19th century, and subsequently published by N. Lemessi.

³⁴ Anderson 2013, pp. 133-134; Simone 2013, pp. 290 and ss.

of the ceiling was finished in June of 1578 by Nicola de Amicis and Daniele da Volterra's pupil Giacomo Rocchetti, who also collaborated with Boulangier on the ceiling decoration of nearby Palazzo dei Conservatori³⁵. Recent publications by Paul Anderson and Gianluigi Simone re-evaluated archival data published by Ottaviano Caroselli, whose regesta give no mention either of the Gapić uncle or nephew³⁶, but there is no reason to doubt nephew Gapić's Cres statement. If future research confirms that they have indeed been a part of the network of painters and stucco masters engaged on this project of considerable proportions between years 1574 and 1578, it would indicate the possible descending path of Schiavone's career after Tivoli, to that of a minor co-worker. Such a course had probably been already indicated at Tivoli, especially when such engagement is compared with his work at *Galleria of Casina of Pius IV*. Reasons can be seen in new circumstances that may have destabilized Gapić's career. Federico Zuccari, the central figure of previous Schiavone's commissions and collaborations, spent much of the 1570s outside of Rome, in France, Flanders, and England. After Pope Gregory XIII exiled him from Rome because of satirical cycle *Porta Virtutis* he moved to Loreto and then Spain³⁷. Besides, and probably even more importantly, the most notable of Gapić's artistic skills, that of an «*assai buon maestro delle grottesche*», became outdated in the terms of style³⁸, as towards the end of Cinquecento it became more of synthetical nature. Moreover, Cardinal Carlo Borromeo wrote against grotesque decoration in ecclesiastical areas in his *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae* (Milan, 1577)³⁹. Such a shift may already be recognized in Aracoeli ceiling, where decorative schemes were transformed from free-flowing, organic rhythm of grotesques that quote and emulate patterns of classical antiquity to geometrically organized fields transferred from an early-Christian pattern such as that at Sta Constanza, particularly emphasizing cross-like patterns as crucial elements of the grid⁴⁰.

Similar patterns have been applied to another decoration for the same commissioner, Pope Gregory XIII, whose chapel is mentioned by Cres document immediately after the Aracoeli ceiling. (fig. 4) The decoration of the dome of Giacomo della Porta's chapel must have been accomplished by 1583, by which time Federico Zuccari had returned to Rome, probably expecting a commission for the decoration of the chapel. However, the invention of cartoons for the decorative mosaics was attributed to Muziano – whom Gapić must have known from Tivoli years⁴¹. Gapić junior testifies to working only on gilding of chapel

³⁵ Simone 2013, p. 291.

³⁶ Caroselli 1922, pp. 31-45; Anderson 2013; Simone 2013.

³⁷ Acidini Luchinat 2001, vol. II, p. 237 and ss.

³⁸ Zamperini 2013, p. 197.

³⁹ Volpi 2011, p. 52.

⁴⁰ Simone 2013, p. 136.

⁴¹ Acidini Luchinat 1998, vol. II, p. 122; Papoulia 2015, p. 176. It is also interesting to mention that the woodcarver F. Boulangier was commissioned with the organ case for the chapel in 1582 (Simone 2013, p. 298).

decoration, but that does not necessarily exclude that his uncle's tasks included an individual more significant contribution to the decoration of the chapel's vault. Nevertheless, it must have been again within a larger group of masters and according to Muziano's design⁴².

A particularly interesting, though the most enigmatic element of the Cres document, is the mention of uncle and nephew Gapić's works for the palace of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. Again, this most probably refers to them being part of a larger group of artists who decorated some of the rooms in cardinal's palace. Certainly, understanding of still obscure location «a' Patto» or perhaps «a' Pallo» (if either the Cres notary or one the regesta transcribers were mistaken), would help to solve the problem. Ultimately, Gapić junior's document also gives mention of «altri santissimi», implying that during the 1570s and early 1580s Schiavone continued to work on a number of other commissions that junior probably thought would not be of a particular interest for Cres public.

There is no doubt that Ivan Gapić senior remained in Rome after his nephew returned to Cres when his seven years long Roman education had been completed. The ultimate Schiavone's appearance in Rome is in the aforementioned assembly of the Illyrian congregation in 1589. However, another Cres document testifies to his death in Rome; on June the 9th 1595, Cres notary C. Colombis introduced Katarina and Nikoleta Gapić, daughters of late Frane, into the property bestowed to them by the testament of their uncle Ivan Gapić, «excellentissimo picture Giovanni Capicio, morto a Roma in questi giorni»⁴³.

This profile, or rather a *bozzetto*, of Ivan Gapić's life, a forgotten Schiavone, indicates that his Roman career didn't take a progressive path. Vasari's reference adequately describes his early skills in grotesque decoration displayed in Casina and indicated by his position within the orbit of Taddeo and Federico Zuccari. After Taddeo's premature death and Federico's absence from Rome in 1570s, Gapić continued with commissions, most probably still related to Federico's circles, such as works for Cardinal Farnese and Ippolito d'Este. However, years of his artistic maturity coincided with the post-Tridentine shifts in trends, forms, and contents, which consequently allowed fewer possibilities to develop his visual imagery. Future research of this, still quite mysterious Schiavone, should continue to develop and question the hypothesis brought here and based on Cres archival documents, particularly one in which his nephew specifies Gapić's previously unknown Roman works.

⁴² Some of the already published researches were, unfortunately, unavailable to the author by the completion of the paper.

⁴³ Mitis 1927, pp. 99-100.

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Appendix



Fig. 1. Giovanni da Cherso, Federico Zuccari, *Casina di Pio IV*, Vault of the *galleria*, Rome (foto Fototeca Hertziana, Max-Planck Institute for Art History, Bibliotheca Hertziana Rome)

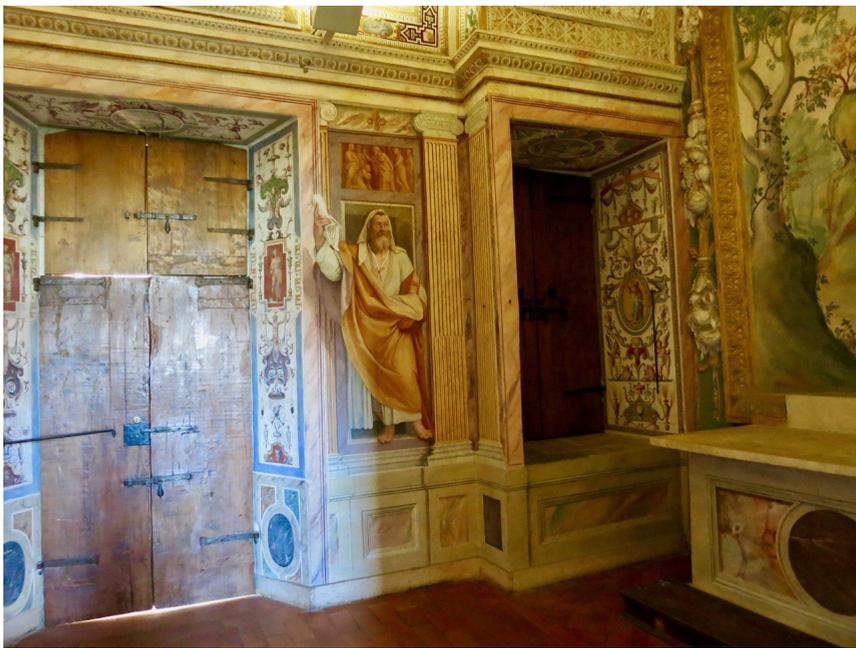


Fig. 2. Giovanni da Cherso?, *Decoration of the chapel of Villa d'Este*, Tivoli (foto L. Borić)



Fig. 3. *Soffitto of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Rome* (foto L. Borić)



Fig. 4. *Vault of the Cappella Gregoriana, Vatican, St Peter's* (foto L. Borić)

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