

# **San Girolamo degli Schiavoni (also: degli Illirici/ dei Croati) in *Roma communis patria***

Constructing National Identity Through Papal Interventions\*

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## **Abstract**

This essay examines the positioning of the Schiavoni, i.e. Illyrians/ Croats, within *Roma communis patria* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries through papal commissions of architecture and painting related to the church of San Girolamo degli Schiavoni. It assesses the gestures made by Nicholas V and Sixtus V towards this particular ethnic group against the background of papal foreign policy and the Papacy's approach to the urban problems of Rome, and explores the promotion of the cults of national saints. The disentanglement of the group's dynamics and its interplay with the Curia not only sheds light on the minute mechanisms of artistic and architectural patronage as they relate to 'national' churches, but also redefines the approach to identity issues often understood as exclusively powered by 'national' forces.

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## **Introduction**

[1] The church of Saint Jerome of the Illyrians in Rome (San Girolamo degli Schiavoni/ degli Illirici), now known as San Girolamo dei Croati, was an important monument for fashioning the cultural identity of an immigrant community that during the Early Modern period had no single center or political entity on the map of Europe with which to identify (Fig. 1).

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1 Alessandro Specchi, *Porto di Ripetta*, 1704, engraving. Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo, Rome (photo: Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome)

In 1453, Pope Nicholas V Parentucelli (1447–1455) granted the ruined church of Santa Marina, located at the smaller of the two Roman ports, Ripetta, to the *Dalmatiae et Schiavonae nationum*, conceding permission to reconstruct it and dedicate it to Saint Jerome. In the sixteenth century, the church was completely rebuilt by Sixtus V Peretti (1585–1590) according to a project by Martino Longhi the Elder (1534–1591).

[2] The members of the Hieronymian institutions at Ripetta originated from territories ruled by the Serenissima, the Hungarian kings (from 1527, the Habsburgs), the Ottomans, and the small Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik).<sup>1</sup> This also meant that before moving to Rome, the Schiavoni, also known as Illyrians, inhabited the area of a triplex religious *confinium* bordered by both the Muslims and the Orthodox Church. Moreover, the Catholic Church in this region used three languages (Latin, Paleoslavic/ Church Slavic and vernacular Croatian) and three alphabets (Latin, Glagolitic and the so-called Croatian redaction of Cyrillic).

<sup>1</sup> On the historical migrations from South-East Europe towards Italy, see Sergio Anselmi, ed., *Italia felix. Migrazioni slave e albanesi in Occidente. Romagna, Marche, Abruzzi, secc. XIV-XVI*, Ancona 1988; Lovorka Čoralić, "Hrvatska prekomorska iseljavanja i kolonije na zapadnoj jadranskoj obali", in: Natka Badurina, *Hrvatska/Italija. Stoljetne veze: povijest, književnost, likovne umjetnosti*, Zagreb 1997, 41-63; Ferdo Gestrin, *Slovenske migracije v Italijo*, Ljubljana 1998; Lovorka Čoralić, "'S one bane mora' – hrvatske prekojadranske migracije (XV-XVIII stoljeće)", in: *Zbornik Odsjeka povijesti znanosti Zavoda za povijesno društvene znanosti HAZU* 21 (2003), 183-198; "Hrvati u Italiji", in: *Leksikon hrvatskog iseljništva i manjina*, Zagreb 2014-2015, 368-370, <http://www.pilar.hr/leksikon.html> (accessed 20 September 2019); *Confraternitas* 27 (2016), no. 1-2: special issue *Schiavoni/ Illyrian Confraternities in Italy*, <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/confrat/issue/view/1879> (accessed 27 February 2020); *Il capitale culturale* (2018), *Supplementi 7*: special issue *Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country: Schiavoni/ Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Giuseppe Capriotti, Francesca Coltrinari and Jasenka Gudelj, <https://riviste.unimc.it/index.php/cap-cult/issue/view/90> (accessed 27 February 2020).

[3] This essay examines the positioning of the *natio* in question within *Roma communis patria* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries through papal commissions of architecture and painting related to San Girolamo degli Schiavoni. It assesses the concessions made by Nicholas V and Sixtus V towards this particular ethnic group against the background of papal foreign policy and the Papacy's approach to the urban problems of Rome, and explores the promotion of the cults of St. Jerome, St. Cyril and St. Methodius as saints of the *natio*. Finally, the disentanglement of the group's dynamics and its interplay with the Curia not only sheds light on the minute mechanisms of artistic and architectural patronage as they relate to 'national' churches, but also redefines the approach to identity issues often understood as exclusively powered by 'national' forces.

### The pope and the Schiavoni in the fifteenth century: Nicholas V Parentucelli

[4] The establishment of the Schiavoni community at Ripetta is usually explained in a rather linear narrative: a confraternity, the *Venerabilis Societas Confallonorum Slavorum Burghi S. Petri* led by a hermit Hieronymus of Petoma,<sup>2</sup> obtained on 21 April 1453 the concession from Pope Parentucelli to construct a national hospice as well as to rebuild the ruinous church of Santa Marina de posterula in the Campo Marzio, an area where some Schiavoni had already been living.<sup>3</sup> This historiographical construct often includes an account, unsupported

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<sup>2</sup> Hermit Hieronymus' origin has been identified as Potomje on the Dalmatian peninsula of Pelješac, now in Croatia, see Ivan Črnčić, "Imena Slovjenin i Ilir u našem gotinjcu u Rimu poslije 1453 godine", in: *Starine* 18 (1886), 1-164 (transcribed documents): 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> Ivan Črnčić, "Imena Slovjenin i Ilir u našem gostinjcu u Rimu poslije 1453 godine", in: *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 79 (1886), 1-70; Luka Jelić, *L'Istituto Croato*, Zadar 1902; Stjepan Ivančić, *La questione di S. Girolamo dei (sic) Schiavoni*, Rome 1901; Giovanni Biasiotti and Josip Butković, *San Girolamo degli Schiavoni in Roma*, Rome 1925; Giorgio Magjrec, *Istituto di S. Girolamo degli Illirici (1453-1953)*, Rome 1953, 17-19; Giorgio Kokša, *S. Girolamo degli Schiavoni (chiesa nazionale croata)*, Rome 1971, 6-7; Ivan Golub, "Istituzioni collegate alla chiesa di S. Girolamo: confraternita, capitolo, collegio", in: *Chiesa sistina 1589-1989*, ed. Ratko Perić, Rome 1990, 37-49: 37; Rosanna Barbiellini Amidei, "San Girolamo dei Croati", in: *Roma sacra. Guida alle chiese della città eterna*, eds. Antonio Caiola and Luciana Cassanelli, vol. 6, Pozzuoli 1996, 43-48; Milan Ivanišević, "Hrvatska crkva Svetoga Jeronima u Rimu", in: *U križu je spas, zbornik u čast nadbiskupa metropolita, mons. Ante Jurića*, Split 1997, 407-446; Zvonimir Seršić, *San Girolamo dei Croati: viaggio nell'arte*, Rome 2011, 15-16; Jasenka Gudelj, "San Girolamo dei Croati a"San Girolamo dei Croati Roma: gli Schiavoni e il cantiere sistino", in: *Identità e rappresentazione. Le chiese nazionali a Roma, 1450-1650*, eds. Alexander Koller and Susanne Kubersky-Piredda, Rome 2015, 297-325; Jasenka Gudelj, "The Hospital and Church of the Schiavoni/ Illyrian Confraternity in Early Modern Rome", in: *Confraternitas* 27 (2016), no. 1-2: special issue *Schiavoni/ Illyrian Confraternities in Italy*, 5-29, <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/confrat/article/view/28222/20785> (accessed 27 February 2020); Jadranka Neralić, "Il ruolo delle istituzioni illiriche di Roma nella formazione della nazione croata", in: *Chiese e nationes a Roma: dalla Scandinavia ai Balcani, secoli XV-XVIII*, eds. Antal Molnár, Giovanni Pizzorusso and Matteo Sanfilippo,

by archival evidence, of this confraternity's members gathering in a house at Borgo Vecchio bequeathed to the group by a rich Dalmatian immigrant.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the immigration of the Schiavoni to Rome is explained by the Turkish conquest of the Balkans, while the introduction of the cult of St. Jerome in relation to the Schiavoni is accounted for by virtue of his birthplace in Dalmatia.

[5] The simplicity of this narrative sequence obfuscates a more intricate series of events and circumstances related to the foundation of the hospice, church and confraternity of St. Jerome of the Illyrians in the Ripetta area, belonging to rione Campo Marzio. The first known references to a Slavic confraternity in Rome are found in the 1451 wills of Caterina de Frigis Schiavona and Giovanni Slavo, which place it in Borgo, that is, in the vicinity of St. Peter's. Caterina was also the owner of a house in Borgo and left money to the churches of Santa Maria in Transpontina, St. Peter's and to Santo Spirito in Sassia where she was also buried, showing her strong connection with the area.<sup>5</sup> Other fifteenth-century testaments reveal that Schiavoni owned houses and vineyards in and around Borgo or in the adjacent rione Ponte, across the bridge controlled by Castel Sant'Angelo, and were well inserted in the multi-ethnic Roman society of the time.<sup>6</sup>

[6] The mid-fifteenth-century supplication to the Pope to build a hospital for the Slavic nation and to restore the ruined church at Ripetta, on the other hand, was written in the name of the hermit Hieronymus and his fellows, not the confraternity, acting in agreement with the cardinal of San Lorenzo di Lucina, the parish church to which Santa Marina belonged.<sup>7</sup> Nicholas V agreed, and nominated the said cardinal, his own half-brother Filippo Calandrini (1403-1476), to be responsible for the realization of the hermits' requests in a bull issued the very same day.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, the scheme to create a new Slavic center in Campo Marzio was devised in close collaboration with the Curia, probably through the mediation of Jerome from Potomje. The plan was a success: already by the spring of 1454 the hospice of Saint Jerome in Rione Campo Marzio was governed by the

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Rome 2017, 133-159.

<sup>4</sup> Gaetano Moroni, "Schiavonia", in: *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, vol. 62 (1853), 157-170: 165; Ivančić, *La questione di S. Girolamo dei (sic) Schiavoni*, 17, Biasotti and Butkovic, *San Girolamo degli Schiavoni in Roma*, 5-6, Oreste Ferdinando Tencajoli, *Le chiese nazionali italiane in Roma*, Rome 1928.

<sup>5</sup> Ivančić, *La questione di S. Girolamo dei (sic) Schiavoni*, part II, 8; Neralić, *Il ruolo*, 134, n. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Neralić, *Il ruolo*, 145.

<sup>7</sup> Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (AAV), Reg. Suppl. 465, fol. 268v-269r. The document was published in (Paolo Gasparri), "La controversia di S. Girolamo degli Schiavoni", in: *La Civiltà Cattolica*, ser. XVIII, 4 (1901), no. 1233, 257-566: 262-263.

<sup>8</sup> The bull is published in Ivančić, *La questione*, part II: *Documenti*, 9-13 (two versions) and (Paolo Gasparri), "San Girolamo degli Schiavoni, studio storico-giuridico", in: *La Civiltà Cattolica*, ser. XVIII, 4 (1901), no. 1235, 513-540: 514-515. See also Neralić, *Il ruolo*, 134-135.

Slavic *societas*.<sup>9</sup> Since its officials were the same individuals cited in the last will of Caterina de Frigis and these early documents are preserved in the historical archives of St. Jerome confraternity at Ripetta, a certain continuity with the confraternity from Borgo, which was now clearly involved with the new institution, is ascertainable.<sup>10</sup>

[7] This whole scheme was evidently only a small segment of Parentucelli's grander efforts to renovate Rome around the Holy Year 1450.<sup>11</sup> As studies by Vitale Zanchettin have shown, Ripetta was notoriously one of the poorest zones within the Aurelian walls and a center of prostitution. Here, confraternities were established to upgrade the conditions of a degraded area.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, concessions to national churches and hospitals/ hospices were a widely applied method of providing organized shelter and medical help for pilgrims and immigrants: between 1449 and 1453, Nicholas V issued permissions and concessions to the Germans, the English, and the Spanish to build or enlarge churches and/ or hospices, as well as to a small community of expatriates from Bretagne.<sup>13</sup> The Jubilee of 1450 attracted numerous pilgrims from the eastern Adriatic coast and the location of the hospital at the fluvial port may have been strategic for its accessibility both from the river and the Porta del Popolo.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> On 20 March 1454 Martino di Pietro Schiavone left a vineyard to the "venerabili hospitali sancti Jeronimi" represented by the society officials Giorgio di Giovanni sclavo and Pietro from Spalato. Ivančić, *La questione*, part II: *Documenti*, 13. Also Neralić, *Il ruolo*, 135-136.

<sup>10</sup> I would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewer who pointed out this coincidence to me.

<sup>11</sup> On Pope Nicholas' building programme, see at least Carroll Westfall, *In this most perfect paradise: Alberti, Nicholas V, and the Invention of Conscious Urban Planning in Rome, 1447-55*, University Park 1974 (Italian ed. with preface by Manfredo Tafuri, *L'invenzione della città. La strategia urbana di Nicolò V e Alberti nella Roma del '400*, Rome 1984); Flavia Cantatore, "In margine alla Vita di Giannozzo Manetti: scrittura e architettura nella Roma di Niccolò V", in: *Leon Battista Alberti. Architetture e committenti*, eds. Arturo Calzona et al., Florence 2009, vol. 2, 561-588; Giorgio Simoncini, ed., *Roma - Le trasformazioni urbane nel Quattrocento*, 2 vols., Florence 2004; Francesco Paolo Fiore, ed., *La Roma di Leon Battista Alberti. Umanisti, architetti e artisti alla scoperta dell'antico nella città del Quattrocento*, exh. cat., Milan 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Vitale Zanchettin, "Via di Ripetta e la genesi del Tridente: strategie di riforma urbana tra volontà papali e istituzioni laiche", in: *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 35 (2003/04 [2005]), 209-286.

<sup>13</sup> On national hospitals/ hospices in fifteenth-century Rome, see Flavia Colonna, "Distribuzione e tipologie degli edifici assistenziali", in: *Roma - Le trasformazioni urbane nel Quattrocento*, ed. Simoncini, vol. 2, 159-171: 160-162 and 164. On churches built or rebuilt during Nicholas V's pontificate see Renata Samperi, "Gli interventi negli edifici di culto: architettura e rinnovamento urbano", in: *Roma - Le trasformazioni urbane nel Quattrocento*, ed. Simoncini, vol. 2, 65-94: 72-79. On the Schiavoni hospital see Gudelj, "The Hospital and Church of the Schiavoni", 13-20.

<sup>14</sup> A conspicuous number of contemporary testaments mention a pilgrimage to Rome: for example, in Trogir alone 150 testaments (Neralić, *Il ruolo*, p. 134, n. 3), or in Rab 15

[8] Finally, the papal endowment and the change of patron saint from a local martyr to the Church Father known for his ascetic life and the translation of the Vulgata was certainly a powerful symbolic gesture.<sup>15</sup> In Rome, the cult of St. Jerome gained in popularity after the translation of his relics to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore some time before 1290, but it was in Tuscany, Bologna and the Veneto that his cult flourished, thanks in particular to the efforts of Giovanni d'Andrea (ca. 1270–1348) and Cardinal Niccolò Albergati (1375–1443).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, numerous early fifteenth-century humanists working towards the reevaluation of Christian antiquity venerated St. Jerome as a scholar and translator of ancient texts, among whom Giannozzo Manetti, the biographer of Pope Parentucelli.<sup>17</sup> In visual terms, this devotion was expressed through a new iconography of the saint in his study as adopted by Jan van Eyck and Antonello da Messina.<sup>18</sup> Parentucelli had spent two decades in Albergati's service in Bologna and he chose his pontifical name in honor of the cardinal of Santa Croce.<sup>19</sup> Nicholas V became a humanist-pope who brought together the nucleus of the future Vatican library and instigated various translations from Greek, and who also commissioned the now lost *studiolo papale* next to the Cappella Niccolina, the very prototype of the humanist study.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the papal decision to change the patron at Ripetta should be considered precisely within the context of the popularization of the cult of the scholar-saint, especially since prior to San Girolamo degli Schiavoni no Roman church had apparently yet been dedicated to the Dalmatia-born church father.<sup>21</sup>

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testaments (Zoran Ladić, "O kasnosrednjovjekovnim rapskim hodočašćima ad sanctos", in: *Rapski Zbornik*, vol. 2, eds. Josip Andrić and Robert Lončarić, Rab 2012, 139–156). Also see Gudelj, "The Hospital and Church of the Schiavoni", 7. Moreover, Neralić (*Il ruolo*, 145) suggests that the commerce of wood, salted fish and grain, imported to Rome through Ripetta, was in the hands of Schiavoni.

<sup>15</sup> Santa Marina is mentioned from the eleventh century as situated "prope montem Augustum", while in 1242 it was still in function and there was an adjacent house, see Christian Huelsen, *Le chiese di Roma nel Medio Evo*, Firenze 1927 (anastatic ed. Rome 2000), 380-381: "S. Marinae de Posterula".

<sup>16</sup> On the cult of St. Jerome, see Eugene F. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, Baltimore and London 1985; Bernhards Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol. Images of Saint Jerome in early Italian Art*, Groningen 1984; Daniel Russo, *Saint Jerome en Italie*, Paris and Rome 1987; Christiane Wiebel, *Askese und Endlichkeitsdemut in der italienischen Renaissance*, Weinheim 1988; Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna*, Cambridge, UK 2002, 19-23.

<sup>17</sup> Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 84-85; Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol*.

<sup>18</sup> On Albergati as St. Jerome see Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 109-111.

<sup>19</sup> Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Wolfgang Liebenwein, *Studiolo. Storia e tipologia di uno spazio culturale*, Modena 1992.

<sup>21</sup> The church of San Girolamo della Carità is only mentioned in 1490, see Fiorello F. Ardizzone, *San Girolamo della Carità: storia, arte, spiritualità per una chiesa nel cuore di*

[9] Writings by the influential scholar Pier Paolo Vergerio (1370–1444), an Istrian by birth and a professor of logic in Padua and Bologna, may be called upon to testify to the devotion of the natives of the northern Adriatic peninsula to the church father as their local saint.<sup>22</sup> In his Sixth sermon on St. Jerome, Vergerio writes:

*[...] it is especially incumbent upon us, as inhabitants of this region, to celebrate the birthday of Saint Jerome with special regard and greater attention. By doing so, those of us who live near the location of his earthly residence may be made members of his heavenly lineage through his merits and prayers.*<sup>23</sup>

He continues by discussing the problem of the exact location of the saint's birthplace, identified as the small village of Sdregna in Istria:

*Historical sources indicate that Jerome actually came from the town of Stridon, which formerly stood at the border between the Roman provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia, and was destroyed by the Goths. Whatever the truth may be, those among us who have warmly embraced this ancient tradition now boast about such a great fellow citizen and, on that basis, we hope to have a more gracious patron before God, seeing that some vague sort of earthly relationship and proximity of location join us together.*<sup>24</sup>

[10] Writing in the last decade of the fourteenth and the first of the fifteenth century, the pious Vergerio is both a proud devotee and a cautious scholar, but the identification of the Istrian village Sdregna as Stridon is also to be found in the writings of Giovanni d'Andrea and Flavio Biondo (1392–1463).<sup>25</sup> In his closing

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Roma, Città del Vaticano 1987.

<sup>22</sup> In Dalmatia, the devotion to St. Jerome was especially vivid in the monastic context, among the Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans and Paulines, see Julia Verkholanstev, *The Slavic Letters of St. Jerome: the History of the Legend and its Legacy, or, How the Translator of the Vulgate Became an Apostle of the Slavs*, DeKalb 2014.

<sup>23</sup> John M. McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder and Saint Jerome*, Tempe 1999, 197.

<sup>24</sup> McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio*, 199.

<sup>25</sup> Giovanni d'Andrea, *Hieronymianus liber*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Ottob. Lat. 480, 16: "locus, quo sepulti sunt parentes Hieronymi, hodie vocatur Sdregna in diocesi Triestina et ibi est ecclesia Beati Hieronymi tamen pauperrima et dicitur quod olim vocabatur Strido". Published in McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio*, 199, n. 1. The placement of St. Jerome's birthplace in Istria was challenged by Split humanist Marko Marulić and Hvar historian Vinko Pribojević in the first half of the sixteenth century; they believed Stridon was in Dalmatia, today's Skradin, see Darko Novaković, "Novi Marulić: Vita divi Hieronimi", in: *Colloquia Maruliana* 3 (1994), 5-24; Vinko Grubišić, "Trojica humanista o rodnome mjestu svetog Jeronima: Flavio Biondo, Marko Marulić i José De Espinoza De Sigüenza", in: *Colloquia Maruliana* 17 (2008), 227-298; Verkholanstev, *The Slavic Letters*; Ines Ivić, "Jerome Comes Home: The Cult of Saint Jerome in Late Medieval Dalmatia", in: *Hungarian Historical Review* 5 (2016), no. 3, 618-644; Ines Ivić, "Ille meus est et ego suus – The Appropriation of Saint Jerome in the Writings of Dalmatian Humanists", in: *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 23 (2017), 77-95; Ines Ivić, "The 'Making' of a National Saint:

remarks to the *Italia illustrata*, completed in 1453, Biondo elaborates on the second important point linking St. Jerome to the Slavs inhabiting the eastern coast of the Adriatic: the invention of the Glagolitic alphabet and the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Slavonic.<sup>26</sup> A document attributing these achievements to St. Jerome was written by Biondo, papal secretary under Nicholas V's predecessor Eugene IV, and ought to be read in the context of the conclusion of the Council of Florence and the union of the churches.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Biondo's passage on St. Jerome also opened what was to become a discussion lasting three centuries on the saint's ethnicity, interpreted as either Latin (Italian) or Slavic.<sup>28</sup> What should be stressed here is that Biondo was writing in the year of Nicholas' concession to the Schiavoni, and that this version of *Italia illustrata* was dedicated to Pope Parentucelli in an attempt to regain papal favour. Therefore, the issues tackled by Biondo regarding St. Jerome and the Slavs provide a precisely contemporary speculative context for Nicholas' concession of the Ripetta church.

[11] Moreover, the papal bull granting Santa Marina to the Schiavoni was issued during the Ottoman siege of Constantinople. The focus on the East coast of the Adriatic may thus have been only natural given the political circumstances and the unsuccessful attempts of Nicholas to prevent the fall of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>29</sup> The concession of the church in Rome to the Dalmatians, with their insecure position in the midst of wars and reported schisms, was also an important gesture to secure the support of this ethnic group on the first line of defence. As for Slavic immigrants to Rome, the political instability of the Balkans

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Reflections on the Formation of the Cult of Saint Jerome in the Eastern Adriatic", in: *Il capitale culturale* (2018), *Supplementi 7: special issue Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country: Schiavoni/ Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Giuseppe Capriotti, Francesca Coltrinari and Jasenka Gudelj, 247-278, <https://riviste.unimc.it/index.php/cap-cult/article/view/1795> (accessed 27 February 2020).

<sup>26</sup> *Biondo Flavio's Italia Illustrata. Text, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. Catherine J. Castner, vol. 1: *Northern Italy*, Binghampton 2005, 224, 226.

<sup>27</sup> *Biondo Flavio's Italia Illustrata*, ed. Castner, 226. In reality, already in 1248 Innocent IV (1243-1254) issued a permission to bishop Philip of Senj to use the Slavonic rite in his diocese, mentioning the attribution of the invention of the Glagolitic alphabet to St. Jerome. Modern scholarship agrees that the attribution of the Glagolitic alphabet to St. Jerome was devised in order to sidestep the somewhat dissident status within the Catholic church of the ninth-century Salonico brothers, Saints Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, the probable inventors or agents of both Slavic alphabets, Glagolitic and Cyrillic, as well as to avoid any confusion between the two alphabets. See Verkholanstev, *The Slavic Letters*.

<sup>28</sup> Verkholanstev, *The Slavic Letters*.

<sup>29</sup> The papal legate in Venice at the time, Jacopo Venieri from Recanati, was archbishop of Ragusa/ Dubrovnik (1440-1460), while also acting as one of the prominent figures in the Papacy's relations with the Serenissima during and in the immediate aftermath of the siege. Jonathan Harris, *The End of Byzantium*, New Haven 2010.



in the early 1450s may have induced some to move across the Adriatic, but the number of Schiavoni living in the Eternal City who escaped the imminent Turkish threat was to become more significant during the second half of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century. Even then, however, it would hardly reach the three-digit numbers.<sup>30</sup>

[12] Therefore, the papal concession was a well-devised strategic scheme with urban, confessional and political implications at a very delicate moment in history. As a result, it firmly inserted the Schiavoni into the galaxy of Roman national churches, even if at its very fringe.

[13] Moreover, a 1455 supplication to Pope Callixtus III (r. 1455–1458) reveals an interesting point on how the universe of national churches functioned. When the Schiavoni while finishing their hospice encountered financial problems, they pleaded with the pope to grant his indulgence in exchange for work on the construction site by any one member of the said nation, but also of the Bohemian or Hungarian ones.<sup>31</sup> This indicates the gravitation of the pilgrims of the above-mentioned nations towards the Schiavoni community in Rome – probably depending on the mid-fifteenth-century union of the Bohemian, Hungarian and Croatian crowns in the person of king Ladislaus the Posthumous, but also on the legacy of the Dalmatian Glagolites invited to Bohemia in the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>32</sup>

[14] Contemporarily, there were two churches in Rome related to the Hungarian nation: only a year earlier, in 1454, Nicholas V entrusted Santo Stefano Rotondo on the Celio hill to the Hungarian Pauline order; but decisively more vital were the Hungarian institutions, including a hospice, around the church Santo Stefano Minor (degli Ungari), in the proximity of Saint Peter's Basilica, renovated in the early fifteenth century by Sigismund of Luxemburg, king of Hungary and Croatia from 1387, and entrusted to the Franciscan order.<sup>33</sup> Apparently the flux of pilgrims from Eastern and Central Europe to Rome in the mid-fifteenth century was steady, and opportunities to provide food and shelter remained multiple.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Egmont Lee, "Foreigners in Quattrocento Rome", in: *Renaissance and Reformation* 19 (1983), 135-146; Anna Esposito, "Le minoranze indesiderate (corsi, slavi e albanesi) e il processo di integrazione nella società romana nel corso del Quattrocento", in: *Cittadinanza e mestieri. Radicamento urbano e integrazione nelle città bassomedievali (secc. XIII-XIV)*, ed. Beatrice del Bo, Rome 2014, 283-297; Neralić, *Il ruolo*.

<sup>31</sup> The document was transcribed by Andrija Lukinović and published in *Chiesa Sistina 1589-1989*, ed. Ratko Perić, vol. 2, Rome 1990, 52-53.

<sup>32</sup> Verkholanstev, *The Slavic Letters*.

<sup>33</sup> On Hungarian institutions in Rome see Antal Molnár, "Una struttura imperfetta: le istituzioni religiose ungheresi a Roma (secoli XI-XVIII)", in: *Chiese et nationes*, 117-131: 119.

<sup>34</sup> On the Czech presence in Early Modern Rome see Tomáš Parma, "La scarsa presenza della nazione ceco-boema nella Roma papale tra XV e XVIII secolo", in: *Chiese e nationes*, 103-116.

[15] The first church dedicated to Saint Jerome at Ripetta, visually documented only through sixteenth-century representations, was a simple single-nave construction. Around 1550, it was preceded by a courtyard within a block of houses and shops (Fig. 2).



2 Lodovico Appiani, *Libro delle piante*, 1581, fol. 1v. Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo, Rome, archive (photo: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo)

The registry of the Illyrian confraternity's houses drawn up in 1581 and the printed map of their properties produced in the 1660s, both preserved in the archive of Saint Jerome, testify to the establishment of the eastern Adriatic community at Ripetta.<sup>35</sup> This comprised a considerable area in the vicinity of the Mausoleum of Augustus, confining with the possessions of the confraternity of Saint Rocco, the Lombard confraternity, the Chigi family and the hospital of San Giacomo degli Incurabili. The Slavic confraternity, originally inserted in the area by a papal bull, had slowly gained land lots through small testamentary legates, such as the already mentioned vineyard left by Martino di Pietro.<sup>36</sup> Finally, members of the national elites stepped up and in the late fifteenth century the confraternity benefited from considerable financial donations, thanks to the Bosnian queen Katarina Kosača (1424–1478) and her court, and the papal auditor and bishop of Skradin, Fantino della Valle.<sup>37</sup> More adjacent terrains were bought and small houses slowly built, gaining the name Schiavonia for the area. This created a stable property-based economic system, similar to other pious foundations in Rome.

<sup>35</sup> Lodovico Appiani, *Libro delle piante*, 1581, and *Stampa delle proprietà*, ca. 1660–1670, both Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo, Rome, archive.

<sup>36</sup> Zanchettin, "Via di Ripetta", 224.

<sup>37</sup> Zanchettin, "Via di Ripetta", 224. Neralić, *Il ruolo*, 139–143. On Fantino della Valle see also Jadranka Neralić, *Put do crkvene nadarbine. Rimska kurija i Dalmacija u 15. stoljeću*, Split 2010, 185–187.

[16] Nevertheless, the economic power of the community should not be overestimated, as its members were generally rather poor and the houses were modest, turning out some 900 scudi annually in 1590. A considerable part of this income was spent on different forms of social assistance to pilgrims and immigrants from war-stricken homelands. The houses were distinguished by stone plaques representing Saint Jerome, executed between 1582 and 1584 by the Dalmatian sculptor Nikola Lazanić, thus emblematically marking the presence of the 'national' community on the streets of the Rione Campo Marzio.<sup>38</sup> Finally, its secure finances and a certain increase of income probably led to the elevation of San Girolamo degli Schiavoni to the title of a titular church in 1566.<sup>39</sup>

### Papal intervention II: Sixtus V Peretti

[17] The second papal intervention that relaunched the architectural visibility of the Schiavoni community was the renovation of the church in the years 1585–1591, commissioned by Pope Sixtus V (r. 1585–1590) and much better documented than the earlier one.<sup>40</sup> The pope, who had previously been its titular cardinal, had the church completely reconstructed using funds from the Apostolic chamber, dismissing the protests of the cardinal protector of the confraternity, Alessandro Farnese, who complained about a lost income of 500 scudi per year because of the demolitions.<sup>41</sup> As David Ganz has noted, the new construction of San Girolamo was the first papal commission after a century and a half for a church and a decorative programme that was executed in its entirety.<sup>42</sup> It also remains the only church built by Sixtus V, chiefly known for his urban renovation projects carried out by the architect Domenico Fontana.<sup>43</sup>

[18] In the case of San Girolamo, the pope devised a series of astute measures to impose his will on the confraternity, nominating as the new titular cardinal a Spaniard, Pedro de Deza, who was constructing his palace (now known as Palazzo

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<sup>38</sup> Burić, *Iz prošlosti*, 14.

<sup>39</sup> Kokša, *San Girolamo*, 73-76.

<sup>40</sup> See Gudelj, "San Girolamo dei Croati".

<sup>41</sup> Avviso, 4 July 1587, BAV, Urb. lat. 1055, fol. 275: "Farnese, che ha la protettione di quella natione et di quel luogo, ha raccordato Sua Santità, che gettandosi a terra le case di quel contorno per piantarvi una nuova fabrica, questa natione sentiria un danno di più di 500 scudi à l'anno, che sene cava di piggione, et provisto, che si sia d'un ristoro à questo, s'attenderà alla detta struttura con pensiero un ponte..."; Kokša, *San Girolamo*, 16-17; Tod Marder, "The Porto di Ripetta in Rome", in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39 (1980), no. 1, 28-56: 31.

<sup>42</sup> David Ganz, "Rückeroberung des Zentrums, Anschluss an die Vergangenheit und institutionelle Selbstdarstellung. Konfessionalisierung im römischen Kirchenraum 1580–1600", in: *Konfessionen im Kirchenraum. Dimensionen des Sakralraums in der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Susanne Wegmann and Gabriele Wimböck, Korb 2008, 263-283: 267.

<sup>43</sup> These are celebrated in the book *Della trasportatione dell'obelisco Vaticano et delle fabriche di nostro signore papa Sisto V*, Rome 1590.

Borghese) in close proximity and according to the designs of Martino Longhi the Elder.<sup>44</sup> The Lombard architect also became the architect of the Slavic church, devising a single-nave, dome-less structure with side chapels, a short transept and a large rectangular presbytery (Fig. 3).<sup>45</sup>



3 Interior of the church of San Girolamo dei Croati, Rome, 1585–1591, architect: Martino Longhi the Elder (photo: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo, Rome)

Giovanni Santucci's recent recognition of the Longhi drawing for the façade, a recycled project originally ideated for the Chiesa Nuova, firmly places the papal intentions to rebuild San Girolamo in the first year of Sixtus' pontificate.<sup>46</sup> The

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<sup>44</sup> Manuel Pedro de Deza, law professor at the University of Salamanca, became cardinal in 1578. In 1586 he bought the lot near Ripetta containing the initiated palace for Tommaso del Giglio by Vignola and engaged Martino Longhi il Vecchio for its completion, see Howard Hibbard, *The architecture of Palazzo Borghese*, Rome 1962, 37-41, doc. 4, 6; Elena Fumagalli, *Palazzo Borghese: committenza e decorazione privata*, Rome 1994, 28; Gianluigi Lerza, "Martino Longhi il Vecchio", in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani (DBI)*, vol. 65, Rome 2005, 650-656. The building of San Girolamo is documented in particular in AAV, Archivum Arcis, Armarium B.8, 1, Conto della nuova chiesa di San Girolamo dell'Illirici, 1 marzo 1590, partially published in Kokša, *San Girolamo*, 17-23, 98-99, and by Gianluigi Lerza, *L'architettura di Martino Longhi il Vecchio*, Rome 2002, 184-186, n. 54.

<sup>45</sup> Maurizio Caperna, "Influssi lombardi a Roma: la chiesa di S. Girolamo degli Schiavoni, opera di Martino Longhi il Vecchio", in: *Atti del XXIII Congresso di storia dell'architettura*, ed. Gianfranco Spagnesi, vol. 1, Rome 1989, 219-225; Maurizio Caperna, "La Chiesa di San Girolamo dei Croati (già 'degli Schiavoni' o 'degli Illirici')", in: *Storia architettura* 1 (1992), 255-285; Lerza, *L'architettura di Martino Longhi*, 184-186.

<sup>46</sup> The Chiesa Nuova project had been abandoned a few months earlier because of the death of Cardinal Federico Cesi, its major benefactor. Alessandro Nova, "Il 'modello' di

scheme also shares similarities with Ottaviano Mascherino's façade for Santo Spirito in Sassia, also commissioned by Sixtus, but based on an earlier project by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger. This method of repetition and recycling adopted by Sixtus V to promote the principles of the post-Tridentine Church, is of particular importance, as it marks a shift from the ideal of originality in architectural creation to a method based on rapid and efficient executions according to homogeneous models.

[19] The confraternity did not participate in the building of the church, and in their official documents it is mentioned as "Affare del nostro Signore", but the construction site compromised their meeting room and the hospice spaces. Moreover, a certain clerical party within the confraternity, led by Aleksandar Komulović (Alessandro Comuleo), a canon of the cathedral of Split, favoured the idea of transforming the confraternity into a college for the formation of priests based on the model established by Gregory XIII.<sup>47</sup> The death of Alessandro Farnese in 1589 led to the election as the confraternity protector of the cardinal of Santa Severina, Giulio Antonio Santori, who favoured his former *famigliare* Komulović.<sup>48</sup> What followed was the foundation of a national chapter at San Girolamo in 1589, with Komulović as its arch-priest.<sup>49</sup>

[20] The reformation of this internal organization also opened up a space for the participation of some members of the community in the formulation of the iconographic programme of the frescoes. These were executed by a team of Sistine painters (Antonio Viviani, Andrea Lilli, Paris Nogari, Avanzino Nucci and Paolo Guidotti Borghese) led by Giovanni Guerra, all veterans of Sixtus V's fresco campaigns in the Vatican library and elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> The visual celebration of Saint Jerome is formulated through three large narrative scenes in the presbytery (Figs.

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Martino Longhi il Vecchio per la facciata della Chiesa Nuova", in: *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 23/24 (1988), 387-394; Giovanni Santucci, "Martino Longhi il Vecchio, Progetto di facciata per la chiesa romana di San Girolamo degli Schiavoni o degli Illirici. Datato 1586, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Largest Talman Album, WA1944.102.22" [2014], [http://talman.arte.unipi.it/scheda.php?cor\\_pg=0&tot\\_rows=14&nomeimg=AM%2FLargest+Talman+f.+22.jpg&lang=IT&s=1&simple=san+girolamo&posizione=0](http://talman.arte.unipi.it/scheda.php?cor_pg=0&tot_rows=14&nomeimg=AM%2FLargest+Talman+f.+22.jpg&lang=IT&s=1&simple=san+girolamo&posizione=0) (accessed 1 April 2015).

<sup>47</sup> On Komulović see Miroslav Vanino, "Aleksandar Komulović (1548.-1608.)", in: *Kalendar Napredak za godinu* 1936 [1935], 40-54; Antun Trstenjak, "Alessandro Komulović S.I., 1548-1608. Profilo biografico", in: *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 58 (1989), 44-86; Franco Pignatti, "Komulović, Alexandar", in: *DBI*, vol. 62, Rome 2004, 757-759 ([http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alexandar-komulovic\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alexandar-komulovic_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)); Mijo Korade, "Prijedlozi vizitatora Aleksandar Komulovića (1548.-1608.) za borbu protiv Osmanlija", in: *Gazophylacium* 13 (2008), nos. 1-2, 111-127.

<sup>48</sup> On Santori see Giulio Antonio Santori, "Vita del card. Giulio Antonio Santori detto il card. di Santa Severina composta e scritta da lui medesimo", in: *Archivio della R. Società di Storia Patria* 12 (1889), 327-372 and 13 (1890), 151-205; Saverio Ricci, *Il Sommo Inquisitore. Giulio Antonio Santori tra autobiografia e storia (1532-1602)*, Rome 2002.

<sup>49</sup> Josip Burić, *Iz prošlosti hrvatske kolonije u Rimu*, Rome 1966, 74, 76.

5-7), the illusionistic dome with the vision of the Holy Trinity, the apotheosis of Saint Jerome (Fig. 4), and figures of the saints important to the nation: two Dalmatian popes, the Slavic apostles Cyril and Methodius and saints Domnius (also: Doimus) and Rainerius, celebrated in the diocese of Split, evidently accentuating the prominent role of Dalmatians in devising the pictorial programme.<sup>51</sup>

[21] A more attentive reading of these paintings clearly indicates the significance of St. Jerome in the post-Tridentine church: the execution of the frescoes coincides with Sixtus' personal efforts to correct the Vulgate, which led to the edition of 1590.<sup>52</sup> The preface of this edition strongly confirms the attribution of the translation of the Holy Scriptures to the church father, which had been questioned in the second half of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century.<sup>53</sup> In the church, the barrel vault of the presbytery features a central oval with a large figure of an ascending St. Jerome holding two books, flanked by two groups of angels, one holding the flags and the other the keys (Fig. 4). The saint is identified by his usual attribute, the lion, and the inscription "S. Hieronymo Illyricorum".

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<sup>50</sup> Payments to Guerra are documented in Archivio di Stato di Roma, Camerale I, Giustificazioni di tesoreria, busta 17, fasc 2. Conti di Giovanni Guerra Pittore 1591, signed by Pepoli, cit. by Kokša, *San Girolamo*, 28. On the paintings see Paola Mangia Renda, "San Girolamo degli Schiavoni", in: *Roma di Sisto V. Le arti e la cultura*, ed. Maria Luisa Madonna, exh. cat., Rome 1993, 145-151. On Guerra see Mario Bevilacqua, "Giovanni Guerra", in: *DBI*, vol. 60, Rome 2003, 611-615; Stefano Pierguidi, *"Dare forma humana a l'honore et a la virtù". Giovanni Guerra (1544-1618) e la fortuna delle figure allegoriche da Mantegna all'Iconologia di Cesare Ripa*, Rome 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Mangia Renda, "San Girolamo"; Ivanišević, "Hrvatska crkva".

<sup>52</sup> *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis Sixti Quinti Pontificis Maximi iussu recognita atque edita*, Ex Typographia Vaticana, Rome 1590.

<sup>53</sup> See Rice, *St. Jerome*, 173-188.



4 Paris Nogari, *Apotheosis of St. Jerome*, church of San Girolamo dei Croati, Rome, 1589-1590 (photo: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo)

[22] Moreover, St. Jerome's status as the inventor of Glagolitic is affirmed by his fresco portrait and an inscription in the Vatican Library, executed by the same painters. After describing the above-mentioned fresco in his publication on the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Angelo Rocca (1545-1620), prefect of the Vatican typography, furnishes typographical and pronunciation tables of the alphabet and elaborates on the birthplace, ethnicity and achievements of the church father.<sup>54</sup> Quoting Biondo, Rocca concludes that St. Jerome was of Istrian origin, and therefore not of Slavic ethnicity, but acknowledges his importance for the language as well as the great devotion to him of the inhabitants of the region where this language is spoken.<sup>55</sup> Again, the contemporary speculative frame is present, although the frescoes in San Girolamo degli Schiavoni are more eloquent in positioning the church father as one of them, and as their protector, while the book remains one of the most frequently represented objects in the whole fresco cycle.

[23] The three scenes on the presbytery walls, *The Dalmatian saint explains the difficult passages of the Holy Scriptures*, *Priestly ordination of St. Jerome in Antioch by bishop Paolino*,<sup>56</sup> and *St. Jerome disputes with two doctor-saints of the*

<sup>54</sup> Angelo Rocca, *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana a Sixto V. Pont. Max. in splendidiorem, commodioremque locum translata, et a fratre Angelo Roccha a Camerino, ordinis eremitarum S. Augustini ... commentario ... illustrata*, ex Typographia Apostolica Vaticana, Rome 1591, 159-161. On Rocca, the Glagolitic alphabet and St. Jerome see Eduard Hercigonja, *Na temeljima hrvatske književne kulture*, Zagreb 2004, 36-46.

<sup>55</sup> Rocca uses all three terms: Dalmatian, Illyric, and Slavonic, to describe the language; see Rocca, *Bibliotheca*, 161; Hercigonja, *Na temeljima*, 45.

<sup>56</sup> Also described in the inscriptions under the scenes as: "Venuta a Roma per comporre la controversia dei vescovi", "Redazione con san Damaso delle lettere pontificie".

*Orthodox Church, Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus* (Figs. 5-7), are of particular importance, each dutifully explained by inscriptions.

[24] The first (Fig. 5) may be interpreted in the context of Sixtus' work on the Vulgate, but also in the context of the post-Lepanto papacy and the role of the Dalmatians in the dissemination of knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; notable in this sense are the Turkish robes of the "Eresiarchi".



5 Giovanni Guerra and his workshop, *St. Jerome explains the difficult passages of the Holy Scriptures*, church of San Girolamo dei Croati, Rome, 1589-1590 (photo: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo)

The central scene, the *Priestly ordination of St. Jerome in Antioch by bishop Paolino* (Fig. 6), problematizes the ordination of the priests and the role of the bishops, one of the rules accepted at the Council of Trent in 1563. However, it must also be seen in the context of the installation of the chapter of eleven canons at San Girolamo, who had to be of Slavic (Illyrian) origin and able to speak the language of the fatherland.



6 Giovanni Guerra and his workshop, *Priestly ordination of St. Jerome in Antioch by bishop Paolino*, church of San Girolamo dei Croati, Rome, 1589-1590 (photo: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo)



Finally, the third scene (Fig. 7) is a representation of the discussion with Orthodoxy (as well as with Gregory XIII, here prefigured as Gregory of Nazianzus, to be linked with a recent portrait of him in this saint's vestments in the church of Sant'Atanasio dei Greci).<sup>57</sup>



7 Giovanni Guerra and his workshop, *St. Jerome disputes with two doctor-saints of the Orthodox Church, Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus*, church of San Girolamo dei Croati, Rome, 1589–1590 (photo: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo)

[25] At this point it is important to note that Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santori had previously been one of the promoters of Sant'Atanasio dei Greci in Rome, founded during Gregory XIII's papacy as an intellectual and formative center for Greek Catholic priests in Rome.<sup>58</sup> Under Sixtus V apostolic funding came to a halt, and with no immigrant community to rely upon, the Greek college remained an isolated institution. Sant'Anastasio dei Greci, designed by Giacomo della Porta with the participation of Martino Longhi the Elder, even more than San Girolamo depended on papal support for any large-scale investment.<sup>59</sup> The new focus of Pope Sixtus on the Dalmatian community, also evident from the relocation of Santori, suggests that Peretti saw more potential for propagating the Roman Catholic faith among the ethnic groups inhabiting the eastern borders of

<sup>57</sup> Alessandro Nesi, "Dai dipinti per l'antica iconostasi di S. Atanasio dei Greci a Roma, uno spunto critico per le opere toscane di Francesco Traballesi", in: *Arte cristiana* 95 (2007), no. 841, 263-274.

<sup>58</sup> Federico Bellini, "I collegi e gli insediamenti nazionali nella Roma di Gregorio XIII", in: *Città & storia* 2 (2007), no. 1, 111-130. See also Camilla Fiore, "Gregorio XIII e i greci di S. Atanasio a Roma tra fine Cinquecento e inizio Seicento", in: *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 42 (2015/16 [2018]), 387-436, and Camilla Fiore, "Il caso di Sant'Atanasio dei greci a Roma tra universalismo riformato e liturgia greca" in this special issue.

<sup>59</sup> Romolo Tancredi, "Giacomo della Porta e Martino Longhi il Vecchio nella chiesa di S. Atanasio dei Greci a Roma", in: *Opus* 6 (1999 [2000]), 139-172; Maria Barbara Guerrieri Borsoi, "S. Atanasio dei Greci", in: *Roma di Sisto V*, 199.

Catholicism and conversant in the language understood in both the Orthodox (Serbia, Bulgaria) and the Protestant (Bohemia) lands.<sup>60</sup>

[26] This idea of the apostolic role assigned to (or longed for by) the community related to San Girolamo at Ripetta is also represented by the figures of St. Cyril and Methodius in the transept (Fig. 8). As noted, the two saints, also known as the apostles to the Slavs, had a somewhat disputed status in both Rome and in Dalmatia, but were exceptionally popular in the Slavic Orthodox regions. Their inclusion in the pictorial programme, with the monochrome episodes related to their mission in Moravia, clearly suggests the ambition of the 'national' center at Ripetta, and was probably devised by Komulović, who had spent much of his life on missions in the Balkans, Poland and the Ukraine.<sup>61</sup>



8 Avanzino Nucci, *Saints Cyril and Methodius*, church of San Girolamo dei Croati, Rome, 1589–1590 (photo: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo)

[27] This claim is also supported by two *avvisi* issued in late 1589, while the mural decoration in San Girolamo was being executed, announcing Sixtus V's intention to buy a palace from the Spanish cardinal Deza and to move the college for the formation of national priests from Loreto to Rome.<sup>62</sup> In the following months, the idea of adding the Polish college to these structures was also ventilated through various *avvisi*, thus alluding to the possibility of a new Slavic

<sup>60</sup> On the ideological substrate of Komulović's efforts see Zrinka Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*, Zagreb 2008, 152-157.

<sup>61</sup> Pignatti, "Komulović".

<sup>62</sup> *Avviso* of 30th September 1589 (BAV, Urb. Lat. 1057, fol. 624): "Nostro Signore ha fatto pigliare la misura del sito, et del Palazzo del Cardinale Deza, designando unirlo all'hospedale et chiesa de Schiavoni a Ripetta, et di farvi venire ad habitare il Collegio della medesima nazione, che si trova hora in Loreto;" quoted according to Hibbard, *The architecture of Palazzo Borghese*, 38-39. *Avviso* of 7th October (BAV, Urb. Lat. 1057, fol. 635v): "Hora si dice di piu, che l'Pontefice voglia ridurre nel Palazzo, che disegna comprare dal Cardinal Deza come scrissi per unirlo all'hospedale de Schiavoni."

formative hub at Ripetta.<sup>63</sup> The project was never implemented, but it is an important sign of Sixtus' intention to develop the system of national colleges initiated by his predecessor, Gregory XIII.<sup>64</sup>

[28] Sixtus' death in 1590 precluded the transformation of the Schiavoni confraternity into a college, and thus the confraternity and the chapter remained as co-existing bodies related to the church of San Girolamo at Ripetta until the end of the eighteenth century. This was a cause of constant friction, in particular because the estates in Brescia and Todi with which the pope had endowed the chapter, never entirely entered into their possession. In the last decade of the sixteenth century Komulović was ostracized from the community and entered the Jesuit order. Nevertheless, the impact of the papal gesture remained a prominent one, especially in terms of the visual arts and the messages they transmit.

[29] As both cases examined here show, the implementation of architectural and artistic projects depended entirely on the success of negotiations between the pope and his mediators and the members of the national community. The condition of this poor immigrant community from the edge of Catholic Europe, whose priest members rarely rose above the ranks of the middle clergy, limited its investments in art and architecture, but nonetheless provoked interventions from the Curia. In conclusion, the Schiavoni or Illyrian institutions in Rome were strongly conditioned throughout the Early Modern period by two important papal interventions, and although the field of the visual expression of their 'nationhood' was rather limited, these papal gestures launched them into the dynamic Roman 'national' universe.

### **About the Author**

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<sup>63</sup> The Polish college is mentioned in the *avvisi* quoted by Ludwig von Pastor, *Storia dei papi dalla fine del Medio Evo*, vol. X: *Storia dei papi nel periodo della riforma e restaurazione cattolica. Sisto V, Urbano VII, Gregorio XIV e Innocenzo IX (1585-1591)*, Rome 1955, 611, n. 67; 608, n. 56; 609, n. 61. On the Polish presence in Early Modern Rome see Adriano Amendola, "La formazione dell'identità nazionale polacca nella Roma della Controriforma", in: *Identità e rappresentazione*, 249-270; Hieronim Fokciński, "La chiesa nazionale polacca a Roma", in: *Chiese e nationes*, 97-102.

<sup>64</sup> Bellini, "I collegi e gli insediamenti nazionali nella Roma di Gregorio XIII".

and Colleges in Italy and the Artistic Exchange with South-East Europe", exploring the visual culture of the Schiavoni/ Illyrian immigrant communities.

### **Special Issue Editors**

Susanne Kubersky-Piredda and Tobias Daniels, eds., Constructing Nationhood in Early Modern Rome, in: RIHA Journal 0237-0243.

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