Loreto as an Illyrian Shrine: The Artistic Heritage of the Illyrian Confraternities and College in Loreto and Recanati

Francesca Coltrinari*

Summary: *This article reconstructs the history of the Illyrian confraternity in Loreto and explains the connection between the legend of the Holy House and the Schiavoni. Images related to the confraternity and the Illyrian College before and after the Catholic Reformation are used to explain how the Shrine of the Holy House was an element of connection between the people of the Adriatic region.*

The birth of Schiavoni confraternities in fifteenth-century Italy is closely linked with the waves of migration from the Balkans to the West. These migrations occurred primarily for economic and geo-political reasons as people from the Balkans looked for work or safety in so-called *Italia felix* (happy Italy). They found work mostly as farmers in the countryside or as servants and artisans in the cities. Many were stonecutters, stonemasons, or even sculptors, called to work the so-called Istrian stone imported from the Dalmatian coast. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the fall of Albania in 1468 to Turkish forces, the advance of the Ottoman Empire became the main reason that led the Christian population of the Balkans to seek refuge in Italy.[1]

Schiavoni immigrants settled mainly in coastal towns in the Marche region of Italy, from Pesaro to Fermo. Many chose Recanati as their new home, attracted by a vast countryside that in the fifteenth century still had to be reclaimed, and settled particularly in two areas: in the district of Castelnuovo, just outside the walls of Recanati, and in the near-by village of Loreto, which had grown around the relic of the Holy House. The life of the Schiavoni and Albanian communities in Italy was not easy: documents show that they were often relegated to the margins of city life, accused of having brought the plague with them and subsequently expelled.[2]

At the beginning of the fifteenth century some "national" confraternities composed only of Schiavoni immigrants began to be founded in the

* This work has been fully supported by the Croatian Science Foundation under the project "Visualizing Nationhood: The Schiavoni / Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Italy and the Artistic Exchange with South East Europe (Fifteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)," no. 2305.

[1] Anselmi, *Italia Felix*, 1988.

[2] For immigrants in Recanati see Moroni, *Sviluppo e declino di una città marchigiana,* 140–163; for Loreto see Grimaldi/Sordi, *La villa*, 47–51; Grimaldi, *La historia*, 90–100; Grimaldi, *Pellegrini*, 258–277.

area. In 1469, for example, a confraternity of Schiavoni dedicated to Santa Maria di Loreto was established in the village of Loreto. Scholars such as Monaldo Leopardi and Mario Sensi suggested that such confraternities served to provide structure and organization to these immigrant groups.[3]

It is probably no coincidence that the establishment of the Loreto confraternity of Schiavoni is contemporaneous with the legend of the transit of the Holy House from Palestine to Loreto via the north-eastern Adriatic. The legend first appeared in the second half of the fifteenth century in the so-called *Relazione* composed between 1465 and 1473 by Giorgio di Pietro Tolomei from Teramo, dean of the church of Loreto. The story tells that when the Muslims conquered Palestine the angels picked up the house of the Virgin Mary in Nazareth and carried it in flight "to parts of Slavonia," specifically to a castle, or fortified town, called Fiume (today's Rijeka, in Croatia). Because the Holy House was not being honoured enough in Fiume, the angels resumed their journey and carried it across the Adriatic Sea to Italian village of Loreto.[4]

The legend underwent many variations. Giacomo Ricci, writing in 1467–69, imagined that while the Holy House was being taken away from Fiume the Virgin Mary scolded the "Illyrians" saying that God had given them Saint Jerome, yet they were not able to take care of the Mother of God.[5] Around 1525, Girolamo Angelita in his *Lauretanae Virginis historia*, first published in Venice in 1531, wrote that the Holy House had stopped at Tersatto (today, Trsat), on the mountain just above Fiume, on 6 May 1291; here the Virgin herself appeared to a hermit, saying that the house was hers; a century and a half later, after the Holy House had left to go to Loreto, the local lord, Nicolò Frangipane, built a church in Tersatto and dedicated it to the Virgin (1431).[6] Italians were not the only writers to enrich the legend. The Spanish Jesuit Raffaele Riera (1528–1582), confessor in Loreto from 1554 to 1582, introduced yet another detail into the story: the grief of the Illyrians for the "flight" of the Holy House away from them. He claimed that in 1559 he witnessed a pilgrimage of a large group of Schiavoni who, when they saw the church from the sea, began to cry; then, when they arrived at the shrine, desperately asked the Virgin to return to Fiume.[7] The legend is represented in many devotional prints and in a painting dating

[3] Leopardi, *Annali di Recanati, Loreto e Porto Recanati*, 1:401; Sensi, "Fraternite di Slavi nelle Marche," also available in Anselmi, *Italia felix*, 192–212; see also Grimaldi, *Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto*, 259–260; Vogel, *De ecclesiis racantensi et lauretana*, 1:219.

[4] See Grimaldi, *La chiesa di Santa Maria di Loreto nei documenti,* 54–60, 154–189; Grimaldi, *La historia della chiesa di Santa Maria di Loreto*, 69–140. On the shrine in Tersatto, see Hosko, *Gli elementi di internazionalità del santuario mariano di Tersatto* and Grimaldi, *La historia della chiesa di Santa Maria di Loreto*, 100–104.

[5] Ricci, *Virginis Mariae Loretae historia*, 215.

[6] Angelita, *Lauretanae*, 16–28.

[7] Martorelli, *Teatro istorico della santa casa*, 22–23.

from around the middle of the sixteenth century now in the Museum of Loreto (fig. 3.2).[8]

The legend and historical evidence agree that Loreto was recognized by the Schiavoni as a shrine of special interest to them. In going from the eastern to the western shores of the Adriatic the Holy House had made the same journey merchant ships were undertaking every day, as did also the ships carrying the Istrian stones used for the construction of the church. Starting from the fifteenth century, building timber and stones were transported from Schiavonia to Loreto: the Istrian town of Rovinj (Ital., Rovigno) was the main port from which these materials were shipped out.[9] The first version of the legend underlined the fact that the Virgin had preferred Loreto to Fiume and, like many immigrants at a time, *Italia felix* to Schiavonia. In his later editions, Angelita also recognized the sacredness of the shrine to the Virgin built by Niccolò Francipane in Tersatto in 1431 in honour of the fact that the Holy House had once been there.

At the same time that the legend was being created and the confraternity founded, we have several documentary sources attesting to the strong connections between the Schiavoni community in Loreto, its devotion to the shrine, and its membership in the confraternity. Many wills show that in the years after 1469, Schiavoni immigrants living in Loreto left money to the confraternity of Santa Maria. The most important legacies were in 1476: that year, for example, the wealthy inn-keeper Giovanni di Giorgio, known as "big John," originally from Zadar, indicated in his will that he wished to be buried in the chapel "recently chosen by the Confraternity of Our Lady of Loreto"; he endowed the chapel with lands and chose its first rector. That same year the Schiavona Lucia left some money to the chapel of the confraternity of Santa Maria of Loreto in order to paint inside the chapel the figure of Our Lady of Loreto with the Child Jesus, angels, St. Nicholas, and St. Lucy.[10]

The Anonymous *Virgin in Glory and Prophets*

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the historian Joseph Anton Vogel speculated that the altarpiece of the Schiavoni chapel was the great Byzantine painting at that time housed in the Apostolic Palace of Loreto, today in the Museum of the Holy House, the *Virgin in Glory and Prophets* (fig. 3.1).[11] The painting shows the Madonna and the Child in

[8] On the painting see Santarelli, *L'Arte a Loreto*, 218–219.

[9] See Grimaldi, Sordi *L'ornamento marmoreo*, 35–36 and now also Coltrinari, *Loreto cantiere artistico internazionale*, 300–301. For the Istrian stone see Fiorentin, *La pietra d'Istria e Venezia.*

[10] See Grimaldi, Sordi, *La villa di Santa Maria di Loreto*, 59–60 and doc. DCXLI, 521–526.

[11] For the painting see Salvi, "Iscrizioni greche in un quadro" and Santarelli, *L'Arte a Loreto*, 145–146. Both scholars refer to Vogel's attribution of the Greek painting, but they give

glory supported by seraphim; at the top, in the sky, float the symbols of the four evangelists (from left, Matthew, John, Mark, and Luke) while at the bottom stand eight prophets arranged symmetrically on either side (from left, Daniel, Aaron, Moses, David; Salomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk). The image is set in a natural landscape, enriched with attributes of the various prophets — above Moses, for example, one recognizes the burning bush and behind Habakkuk one can see a mountain, recalling the words of prophecy written in his scroll, "God will come from Teman and the Saint from a densely shady mountain." Other connections are less clear, such as, for example, the church on the right or the man on the left. The church may be a reference to the Holy House. We note, however, that there is no explicit reference to the confraternity in this painting.

Manuelis Chatzidachis, the first scholar interested in the altarpiece, compared it to a painting in the museum of Byzantine icons of the Scuola di San Giorgio dei Greci in Venice, which has the same iconography of the Virgin and the prophets and is attributable to a Cretan painter of the mid-sixteenth century.[12] The Loreto panel seems more mature and original due to the great landscape in the background.

Vogel suggested that the painting came from an altar of the church in Loreto and that it was probably removed after a renovation in the seventeenth or in the eighteenth century. Vogel's hypothesis was based on a document from 1475 that mentions a Greek painter named Nicolaus who lived in Ancona and had gone to Recanati to sign a contract for an altarpiece for the main altar of the Franciscan Observant church of Santa Maria di Varano. The painter did not speak Italian, so he communicated with his employers through an interpreter. Nicolaus committed himself to paint the altarpiece in a "modern way" and received some gold and ultramarine blue for the precious painting, which he would paint in Ancona and then send to Recanati.[13] Vogel suggested that Nicolaus the Greek might have also been called to the nearby town of Loreto and could thus be the artist who painted the picture for the chapel the Schiavoni confraternity had "chosen" in 1476. This is an interesting hypothesis, but it lacks any evidence to support it. The few scholars who have studied the Loreto painting consider it, on the basis of stylistic analysis, to be a work datable to after 1475–1476, or, even more probably, to the early sixteenth century.[14] Other evidence also

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incorrect documentary references to Vogel's manuscripts in the Archive of the Holy House (see ASSC, *Miscellanea Vogel*, vols. IX and X). I am still looking for the solution of this problem. Salvi and Santarelli were probably mistaken. Vogel described another Greek painting formerly in the cathedral in Recanati in a letter to the Marquis Mazzagalli dated 31 October 1804 (ASSC, *Miscellanea Vogel*, vol. X, fol. 324r).

[12] Chatzidakis, *Icones de Saint-Georges des Grecs*, 23–27.

[13] For the document about "Magister Nicolaus de Grecia" see Santarelli, *L'Arte a Loreto*, 145; Coltrinari, *Due schede documentarie*, 73–78.

[14] See Bettini, *La pittura di icone cretese-veneziana*, 33; Chatzidakis, *Icones de Saint-Georges des Grecs*, 26.

points towards the early sixteenth century, thus placing Vogel's hypothesis in doubt.

In 1469, when the confraternity of Schiavoni was founded, Pope Paul II (r. 1464–1471) decided to build a large new church to enclose the Holy House of Nazareth. The director of the construction site between 1469 and 1473 was an artist of possible Dalmatian origin, Marino di Marco Cedrino who was also mentioned in some documents in Venice.[15] Because of the renovations, the chapel the Schiavoni wanted could not be completed until the end of the fifteenth century.

We know, in fact, that only in 1495 did the "Schiavoni nation" obtain the authorization to build a hospice (*ospedale*) to welcome pilgrims from Schiavonia, complete with its own chapel where people could meet, as well as two walled tombs in the church. The authorization was issued by the cardinal protector of the shrine, Girolamo Basso della Rovere (1434–1507), nephew of Pope Sixtus IV. On 17 May 1497 the confraternity finally received a chapel in the church dedicated to both the Virgin Mary and St. Jerome. The documents indicate that this chapel was located on the left aisle of the church, towards the stairs that went up to the houses of the shrine's priests and Mount Conero.[16]

The altarpiece was probably painted after this date, that is, around 1500. Nevertheless, Vogel's hypothesis is not to be completely rejected because it is not certain that the Byzantine painting in Loreto is connected to the Schiavoni confraternity, so it could stand independently of the Schiavoni and their confraternity. If it were to be associated with the Schiavoni, however, the choice of a Greek painter would be very unusual and would need to be explained. The figurative culture of the Schiavoni between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is in fact an "Adriatic" culture that takes Venice as a model, not Greece. Furthermore, the artistic patronage of Schiavoni immigrants went to local masters: for example, in Recanati in 1464 the two local painters Monaldo di Giacomo and Cipriano di Pietro di Recanati were chosen to paint the chapel of the Schiavoni

[15] On Marino Cedrino see Vogel, who first supposed that the artist came from Zadar; see Vogel, *De Ecclesiis*., I: 313. This hypothesis was rejected by Gianuizzi, "Nuovi documenti," docs. XV, 325; XXIII–XXV, 366–267; Gianuizzi, "Marino di Marco Cedrino da Venezia," 333–341, and accepted by Quinterio, "Dal santuario alla fortezza," 30 and Mariano, "Il campanile della basilica," 176. For the documents about Cedrino's work in Loreto see Grimaldi, *La Basilica della Santa Casa di Loreto*, docs. XXXIII, 155–157; XXXVIII, 159–160; L, 166–167;

[16] "Anno 1497, 17 maji Fraternitati Sclavorum, quae Laureti instituta fuerat, ac dicata Deiparae Lauretanae, Dominicus Sebastolus vicarius generalis concessit sacellum S. Hieronymi, in quo sacra fieri et mortuos sepeliri. Sacellum id situm erat in templo Lauretano […] prope lumacam a parte sinistra ecclesie existentem, per quam itur in domum dicte ecclesie solite habitationis presbyteriorum, et aliorum commorantium ad servitia dicte ecclesie versus Montem Anconitanum." Vogel, *De ecclesiis racantensi et lauretana*, 1:219. See also Leopardi, *Annali di Recanati, Loreto e Porto Recanati*, 1:401; Grimaldi, *Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto,* 259–260.

dedicated to St. Peter Martyr in the church of San Domenico.[17] Slavic painters, such as Giambono from Ragusa, who worked in Ancona at the beginning of the fifteenth century, or a century later Italian painters such as Marchesiano di Giorgio from Tolentino, have a figurative culture that is influenced by Italian painters such as Carlo Crivelli, Luca Signorelli, Pinturicchio, Lorenzo Lotto.[18] Similarly, in 1520 the merchant Alvise Gozzi from Ragusa commissioned an Italian master, Titian, to paint the altarpiece for his altar in the church of San Francesco ad Alto in Ancona.[19] If it were to be associated with the confraternity, then the choice of a Byzantine style by the Schiavoni could be understood as an indication of a precise expressive choice, the desire to recall the Eastern tradition or perhaps the original image, painted by Saint Luke, that, according to tradition, hung in the Holy House. Taking all considerations into account, the association of the anonymous panel with the Illyrian confraternity of Santa Maria remains uncertain.

What's in a Name? The Confraternity Rebaptized

In the sixteenth century the history of the Schiavoni confraternity of Loreto completely changed. With the Counter-Reformation Loreto became a symbol of Catholic orthodoxy against any enemy of the faith: Protestants, Jews or Turks. The popes directly controlled the shrine and its artistic patronage.[20]

Around 1536, at the behest of Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, protector of the shrine, the Schiavoni confraternity "of Santa Maria di Loreto" was renamed the confraternity "of the Holy Sacrament and Saint Mary." In 1540, Cardinal Contarini asked the confraternity to take over the management of the pilgrims who came to Loreto. The confraternity's hospice, originally intended to accommodate pilgrims from Schiavonia, thus became the town's main hospice. The first record book of the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament and Saint Mary, covering the years 1540–1559, reveals that Schiavoni were no longer the only members of the organization, which by now included men and women from different nationalities and social status, as well as the canons of the Holy House.[21] From at least 1546 the confraternity also had two different altars, the original one dedicated to St. Jerome from their pre-Tridentine period, and a new one dedicated to the Holy Sacrament. By the end of the sixteenth century, only the latter altar remained in place. In 1627, the French artist Simon

[17] Coltrinari, "Ipotesi per la presenza di Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche," 63.

[18] For Giambono see Mazzalupi, "Giambono di Corrado da Ragusa," 2008; for Marchisiano di Giorgio see Coltrinari, "Marchisiano di Giorgio da Tolentino."

[19] For the Gozzi Altarpiece see Gudelj, "Ponuda kakva se ne odbija."

[20] See Coltrinari, *Loreto cantiere artistico internazionale nell'età della Controriforma.*

[21] ASSC, Confraternita del Sacramento di Loreto, *Raduni*, vol. 1 (1548–1559).

Vouet (1590–1649) painted a beautiful altarpiece of the *Last Supper* for this altar, today in the museum of the shrine of Loreto.[22] In short, under the influence of the Counter-Reformation and while the Schiavoni were being integrated in the local society, the Slavic origin of the confraternity was dropped and the sodality's devotional focus redirected towards devotion to the Eucharistic Sacrament. The Schiavoni were no longer immigrants that had to struggle to become part of the local society and "normalize" their precarious situation, but were now common allies with the local population in Catholicism's fight against non-believers, be they Protestants who attacked the sacrament or Muslims who physically threatened the Christian West. While the Protestants were a theological threat, the Turks were an imminent physical threat because of their piracy in the Adriatic, so much so that in 1488 the sanctuary was fortified by the architect Baccio Pontelli and in 1518–1520 walls were built around the city at the express order of Pope Leo X.[23]

The Legend of the Slavic Priest

This transition — from Schiavoni immigrants to defenders of Catholic orthodoxy — can be seen through the prism of another Loreto legend connected with the Schiavoni. This is the story of a Slavic priest who was a devotee of the Madonna of Loreto. On his way to the Holy House, the priest was captured by the Turks who opened his belly and pulled out his intestines, but the priest miraculously managed survive, escape, and arrive in Loreto where he celebrated Mass in the Holy Chapel and then promptly died.

The first to tell this story was the French pilgrim Jacques le Saige (or Lesaige), who, in May 1518, during his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, stopped in Loreto and he saw the bowels of the priest hanging in the Holy Chapel. Le Saige dated the story of the priest back to the late thirteenth century at the time of the transfer of the Holy House from Tersatto to Loreto.[24] The Jesuit Orazio Torsellini (1545–1599), who wrote one of the most important histories of the shrine, also recounts the legend in detail. Torsellini set the episode at the time of Pope Leo X (r. 1513–1521) and says that the priest's bowels were kept for a long time hanging from a wooden beam in the Holy Chapel and that, when time had worm them out, they had been replaced by a wooden carving, which was then removed at the time of Pope Paul III

[22] The first mention of the chapel of the Sacrament is in ASSC, Confraternita del Sacramento di Loreto, *Raduni*, vol. 1 (1548–1559), fol. 41r–v. For the Simon Vouet's *Last supper* see Santarelli, *L'Arte a Loreto*, 188–189.

[23] For Baccio Pontelli in Loreto see Quinterio, "Dal santuario alla fortezza," 36–37. For the fortifications promoted by Pope Leo X see Renzulli, "Loreto, Leo X and the Fortifications on the Adriatic Coast."

[24] Jacques Le Saige's narrative is published in Grimaldi, *Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto,* Foligno, 132–133.

(r. 1534–1549) to prevent the simple and ignorant from being distracted by such a curious thing. Finally, in order to keep the memory of the miracle alive, it was decided to have a painting commissioned that showed the priest holding his bowels.[25]

The episode of the Slavic priest was one of the most famous miracles associated with the shrine. It was illustrated in numerous woodcuts depicting the Madonna of Loreto, either as single images or as illustrations in books devoted to the Holy House. For example, on a sheet from a private collection published by Grimaldi, one can see on the left the priest offering his bowels to the Virgin and on the right a soldier with two cannonballs suspended in front of him.[26] In the woodcut illustrating the "Legend and Prayer" by Paolo Danza (1525 ca.), the soldier with the gun shoots a bullet while, on the other side, the priest holds his entrails in his hands.[27] In this image the priest actually seems to be a Franciscan friar — he wears a sackcloth tied at the waist with a cord. Yet another woodcut depicts the priest kneeling with his entrails in his hand, but this time he is not tonsured and is dressed as a layman; the ambiguity is clarified by the poetry printed under the image that tells the story of the Slavic priest disemboweled by the Turks.[28] It is possible that, in this case, an existing image was reused, perhaps the image of a pilgrim standing at the feet of the Virgin. In this third woodcut there is also, under one of the angels, a small figure of a soldier that probably references the miracle of the soldier present in the other two woodcuts.

The story of the priest is shown in a narrative sequence on the canvas illustrating *The Translation of the Holy House*, today in the museum in Loreto (fig. 3.2). The painting has been dated to the end of the sixteenth century. It offers a wide view illustrating the journey of the Holy House from Palestine to Italy. On the bottom right, two miracles of the Virgin are depicted. On the far right, there is a depiction of the miracle that spared Pope Julius II from death during the siege of Mirandola (1510) when a cannonball that fell close to him did not explode. The pope attributed his survival to the Virgin of Loreto, to whom he later donated the cannon ball. This scene probably replaced the simple figure of the soldier that we can see in the popular woodcuts. The miracle of the Slavonian priest is illustrated immediately to the left of this image. The narrative is to be read from right to left. We first see the priest in the woods and surrounded by the Turks, recognizable by their beards and turbans, who have just wounded him. We next see the priest holding his entrails standing by the sea shore and finally we see him on a ship crossing the sea. On shore there are four people — perhaps an allusion to his Schiavoni countrymen in Italy — ready

[25] Torsellini, *De l'Historia Lauretana*, 87.

[26] Grimaldi, *La historia della chiesa di Santa Maria di Loreto,* 216.

[27] Grimaldi, *La historia della chiesa di Santa Maria di Loreto*, 188–189, 488.

[28] Grimaldi, *La historia della chiesa di Santa Maria di Loreto*, 222.

to welcome him. The image has all the narrative vividness and didactic character of a votive painting and was possibly one of the images in public view at the shrine.

Another painting depicting the history of the Dalmatian priest differs from a votive painting both for its size and the artistic quality; this is the anonymous *The Miracle of the Dalmatian Priest* (fig. 3.3). The work, although quite damaged, is of better quality than the previous example. Some scholars have attributed it to the painter Pietro Paolo Menzocchi from Forlì (ca. 1532–1589), who worked for the shrine between approximately 1564 and 1567. The attribution is not very tenable, however, because the style of the painting does not seem to match Menzocchi's style.[29] It is more likely, instead, that this is the painting mentioned by Torsellini that was commissioned to replace the wood sculpture of the bowels of the Slavic priest that was hanging from a bean in the church. The double inscription in Latin and Italian at the bottom of the image does, in fact, contain many details mentioned by Torsellini. The image shows in the centre the priest holding his lungs and heart as an offer to the Virgin, depicted above the House of Nazareth carried in flight by angels. The priest's heart and lungs symbolize the internal relationship with faith: Torsellini says that the Turks gutted the priest after he had declared that he carried Mary and Christ in his bowels. In the background on the left, the priest is surrounded by Turks who are opening his belly.

The Illyrian College in Loreto

In 1580, around the time the anonymous canvas of *The Miracle of the Dalmatian Priest* was being painted, the Illyrian College in Loreto was inaugurated. Five years earlier, in 1575, the Jesuit Giulio Mancinelli from Macerata (1537–1618) had journeyed to Ragusa and had ventured inland where he was able to note that the local population had been forced to convert to Islam, but that they still secretly kept their ancient Christian cults. Once back in Loreto in 1576 and then in Rome, Mancinelli proposed to the pope the idea of establishing an Illyrian college that could prepare missionary priests to be sent to Slavonia to help maintain and spread Christianity.[30]

In light of this story, the garments worn by the priest in *The Miracle of the Dalmatian Priest* are very interesting: they are not actually priestly garb, but a layman's dress used by "Croats" as depicted in the book by Cesare Vecellio illustrating ancient and modern dresses (fig. 3.4).[31] The

[29] For the painting see Santarelli, *L'Arte a Loreto,* 218–219 and Coltrinari, *Loreto cantiere artistico internazionale nell'età della Controriforma*, 264–267.

[30] Coltrinari, *Loreto cantiere artistico internazionale nell'età della Controriforma*, 266–267. For the Illyrian college see Moroni, "Le Marche e la penisola balcanica," 207–210; Moroni, "Rapporti culturali," 198–203; Kovačić, "Il collegio illirico."

[31] Vecellio, *De gli abiti antichi et moderni*, fol. 343r.

priest's tonsured head, evident in the woodcuts, is here covered a fur-lined hat. His priestly garments have been replaced by clothes worn by the local population in Slavonia. More specifically, they can be identified in line with Vecellio's illustration with the Croatian population of Illyria (Vecellio in fact distinguishes between Dalmatians, Ragusans, and Croats). The "Croatian" costume worn by the priest in this painting may not have been completely unknown in Loreto because the students of the Illyrian College did, in fact, wear the garments of their native lands for a long time before becoming priests.

Conclusion

The Illyrian confraternity in Loreto thus served its expatriate members and contributed to the local community in a many different ways. The confraternity offered its members not only a structure and organization in their new lands, but also spiritual and cultural connection with their lands of origin. The artworks it commissioned spoke to its religious roots while also alluding to Illyrian resistance against the Turks. The iconic Croatian priest who offers his heart and lungs to the Virgin stood as a model for those who were called to maintain the faith in the lands newly conquered by the infidels. The opening of the Illyrian College for the education of priests from Schiavonia and Albania marked the culminating point in this process of integration and preservation that had begun a century earlier with the arrival of the first Illyrian refugees.

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3.1. Unknown Greek painter, *Virgin in Glory and Prophets* (1530–1540) panel. Loreto, Museum of the Ancient Treasure of the Holy House. By permission, Museum of the Ancient Treasure of the Holy House, Loreto.

3.2. Unknown painter, *The Translation of the Holy House of Loreto* (end sixteenth century) oil on canvas. Loreto, Museum of the Ancient Treasure of the Holy House. By permission, Museum of the Ancient Treasure of the Holy House, Loreto.

3.3. Unknown painter, *The Miracle of the Dalmatian Priest* (end sixteenth century) oil on canvas. Loreto, Museum of the Ancient Treasure of the Holy House. By permission, Museum of the Ancient Treasure of the Holy House, Loreto.

3.4. Cesare Vecellio, "Crovatto" ["The Croatian"]. Copper engraving from *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo* (1590), fol. 343r. (Image from Gallica in the public domain).