

The Hospital and Church of the Schiavoni / Illyrian Confraternity in Early Modern Rome

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Summary: Slavic people from South-Eastern Europe immigrated to Italy throughout the Early Modern period and organized themselves into confraternities based on common origin and language. This article analyses the role of the images and architecture of the “national” church and hospital of the Schiavoni or Illyrian community in Rome in the fashioning and management of their confraternity, which played a pivotal role in the self-definition of the Schiavoni in Italy and also served as an expression of papal foreign policy in the Balkans.

Schiavoni / Illyrians in Early Modern Italy and their confraternities

People from the area broadly coinciding with present-day Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and coastal Montenegro, sharing a common Slavonic language and the Catholic faith, migrated in a steady flux to Italy throughout the Early Modern period.¹ The reasons behind the move varied, spanning from often-quoted Ottoman conquests in the Balkans or plague epidemics and famines to the formation of merchant and diplomatic networks, as well as ecclesiastic or other professional career moves.² Moreover, a common form of short-term travel to Italy on the part of so-called Schiavoni or Illyrians was the pilgrimage to Loreto or Rome, while the universities of Padua and Bologna, as well as monastery schools, attracted Schiavoni / Illyrian students of different social extractions. The first known organized groups described as Schiavoni are mentioned in Italy from the fifteenth century. Through the Early Modern period, Schiavoni / Illyrian confraternities existed in Rome, Venice, throughout the Marche region (Ancona, Ascoli, Recanati, Camerano, Loreto) and in Udine. As was the case with proto-national confraternities throughout Early Modern Europe, these organizations served as a key regulative societal instrument of integration into the tissue of the host society, their charity work

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¹ Čoralić, “Hrvatska prekomorska iseljavanja,” Esposito, “Minoranze indesiderate.”

² The latter reasons also often brought Italians to the Eastern Adriatic, where many merchants, artisans, and other professionals, not to mention prelates and officials, were a constant presence, making the Adriatic region a dynamic area of cultural and commercial exchange.

designed around helping the sick, the poor, slaves, students, and pilgrims of their nation.³

Based on the ‘national’ key, such confraternities inevitably formulated their identity on their “otherness”: the prerogatives for becoming a member, besides good social standing, were a certain area of origin and familiarity with the Slavonic language spoken in this area. This inspired the study of geography and grammar, but also the formulation of certain narratives constructing the prominence of the nation through deeds of great men and national saints.⁴ The need to articulate such accounts varied, depending on the context: more elaborate verbal and visual data emerge in multi-layered urban contexts such as Rome or Venice, deeply marked by rivalry and alliances between different national groups.⁵ On the other hand, an analysis of the Marche region, which was part of the Papal State on the Adriatic coast, is essential for understanding the processes of assimilation. Here, Schiavoni confraternities were numerous and distributed in both micro-urban contexts such as Camerano and in cosmopolitan sea-ports such as Ancona. They also existed alongside confraternities of Albanians, Armenians, and Greeks.⁶

The architecture of buildings used by these Slavic institutions, as well as paintings, sculptures, and other works of art commissioned by their members, played an important role in both the functioning of confraternities and the construction of a proto-national cultural identity. The artworks in question have been studied only on a case by case basis, without focusing on the collective manner of confraternity patronage and the meanings they carry in terms of identity.

The aim of this article is therefore to analyze the role of architecture and images in the running and fashioning of the Schiavoni / Illyrian confraternity in Rome, an institution that played a fundamental role in the self-definition of the Schiavoni community in Italy as well as in papal foreign politics in the Balkans.

Schiavoni / Illyrians in *Roma communis patria*

Early Modern Rome was a tapestry of the interwoven interests of different social and political groups, papal and communal, professional and pious, present in Rome permanently or temporarily, just to name a few

³ Petti Balbi, *Comunità forestiere*. Institutionalized assistance for students attending Italian universities was provided by the “national” colleges in Bologna, Loreto, Fermo and by a short-lived one in San Giovanni Rotondo sul Gargano, see Ćoralić, “Hrvatska prekomorska iseljavanja”; Perić, “Les institutes croates”; Premrl, *Bolonjske slike*.

⁴ Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*.

⁵ For the Venetian Schiavoni community see the article by Tanja Trška in this issue.

⁶ For the bibliography of the Schiavoni in the Marche, see the articles by Francesca Coltrinari and Giuseppe Capriotti in this issue.

parameters. Among its churches and monasteries, hospitals and nunneries, some forty Early Modern institutions defined themselves as national, confirming the impression of *Roma communis patria*.⁷ In this highly competitive context, the complex of Saint Jerome of the Schiavoni / Illyrians at Ripetta, the smaller of the two Roman fluvial ports, was an important feature in the life and presentation of Slavic Catholic immigrants from the Balkans. (fig. 1.1.) Some were prelates and merchants, but it seems that most arrived in Rome as pilgrims or as fugitives from plague outbreaks, wars, and poverty.⁸

Dante famously mentions pilgrims from Croatia arriving in fourteenth-century Rome to admire the *Sudarium* or Veronica veil (*Paradise*, XXXI, 103). A certain number of nobles and priests from the diocese of Zagreb came to Rome on the occasion of the imperial coronation of the Hungarian-Croatian king Sigismund of Luxemburg (1368–1437) in 1433.⁹ Particularly important were the Jubilees: in describing the Jubilee of 1450, Agostino Dati of Siena remembers the singing of hymns by Slavic pilgrims.¹⁰ Last wills in various cities of the Eastern Adriatic around the same date often mention a pilgrimage to Rome: for example, in just the town of Rab, on the homonymous island, with a population of about 1500, fifteen pilgrimages are documented.¹¹ Janus Panonius (1434–1472), a humanist and a poet at the court of King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary and Croatia, originally from the bishopric of Zagreb, accused Pope Nicholas V Parentucelli (r. 1447–1455) of illicit earnings from pilgrims during the same Holy Year, thus confirming the constancy of the flux towards Rome from continental dioceses.¹²

It is difficult to assess the actual numbers of pilgrims and immigrants arriving in Rome from the area in question, but they were conspicuous enough to require control and assistance. In 1453, for example, Pope Nicholas V issued a concession to a group of hermits from the *Dalmatiae et (or seu) Schiavonae nationum* living around Augusteum to establish a national hospital/hospice and to rebuild the ruined church of Santa Marina, changing its titular patron to Saint Jerome, who was born in Stridon, a town in the Roman province of Dalmatia.¹³ Similar privileges were also given to the Germans, the English, and the Spanish, as well as to

⁷ On national churches in Rome now see Koller and Kubersky-Piredda, *Identità e rappresentazione*.

⁸ Esposito, "Minoranze indesiderate."

⁹ Ladić, "O hrvatskim hodočašćima," 8.

¹⁰ Krasić, *Počelo je u Rimu*, 64.

¹¹ Ladić, "O kasnosrednjovjekovnim rapskim hodočašćima"

¹² Ladić, Zoran, "O hrvatskim hodočašćima," 4.

¹³ For the more elaborate discussion of Nicholas' V concession, see Gudelj, "San Girolamo degli Schiavoni / Illyrians / Croats in Roma," with previous bibliography.

immigrants from Bretagne, who, around 1450, were all granted permission to build or enlarge their national churches and/or hospices.¹⁴

The choice of Ripetta, the smaller of the two Roman ports, used to transport wood and other products from upper Latium, was not casual. This was a problematic and degraded area around the *Augusteum*, the ancient Mausoleum of Augustus; in the sixteenth century the area was to undergo major re-urbanization. The port traffic at Ripetta and the routes used by pilgrims and other visitors pouring into Rome from the northern gate at Porta del Popolo enticed boatmen, tavern-keepers, and prostitutes to settle in this part of the city.¹⁵ One should note that well-to-do Schiavoni did not live there; their confraternity is documented two years earlier in Borgo; furthermore, the official request to create a national hospital was signed by a group of hermits living near the ancient mausoleum.¹⁶ The concession, issued the very same day of the request, was to be supervised by the pope's half-brother and apostolic protonotary Filippo Calandrini (1403–1476). It was thus through a papal plan for the gentrification of Ripetta that the Schiavoni were assigned the ruined medieval church, which they then turned into the complex that would serve as their future national hub in Rome. In the following years, the Slavic confraternity established itself as one of the active factors in the urbanization of the area around the church and the hospital, devising a stable property-based economic system similar to other Roman pious foundations.

Analogous concessions to create churches and hospitals, as Vitale Zanchettin has shown, were given to other confraternities in the vicinity: in 1499, a confraternity of tavern-keepers and boatmen inserted themselves between St. Jerome and *Augusteum* with the church of St. Roch.¹⁷ To the north of the Schiavoni, in 1471, the Lombards were given the ruined church of Saint Nicholas de Toffo, with permission to rededicate it to Saint Ambrose and build a hospital to be administered by their “national” confraternity.¹⁸ Nearby there were also the hospital and the church of San Giacomo degli Incurabili, while the hospice of St. Mary Magdalen attested to the presence of prostitutes, who, in 1569, were enclosed in a short-lived ghetto that bordered with the Schiavoni properties.¹⁹

On the other hand, the semi-rural character of the area, which offered the possibility of obtaining large plots of land and a view over the river and fields on its other bank, attracted the wealthy. A large suburban palace with garden next to St. Jerome was begun by Cardinal Rodrigo

¹⁴ Colonna, “Distribuzione e tipologie,” 160–162, 164; Samperi, “Gli interventi negli edifici di culto,” 72–79.

¹⁵ Zanchettin, “Via di Ripetta,”; Riccomini, *La ruina*, 29.

¹⁶ Gudelj, “San Girolamo degli Schiavoni / Illyrians / Croats in Roma.”

¹⁷ Zanchettin, “Via di Ripetta,”; Zanchettin, “Costruire nell’antico,” 129–130.

¹⁸ Esposito, “La comunità dei Lombardi,”; Bortolozzi, “Santi Ambrogio e Carlo.”

¹⁹ Cohen, “Seen and known,” 401–407.

Borgia, who, on becoming Pope Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503), donated it to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza (1455–1505).²⁰ The cardinal enlarged the property confining with the lots owned by the Schiavoni. During the pontificate of Leo X de' Medici (r. 1513–1521), the land was acquired by the Cibo family, only to be bought from them by Alvise Gibraleoni in 1521, who divided it into different lots, while also tracing the present day Via Tomacelli. Gibraleoni's heirs sold it to different owners, among whom the Baschieni family from Brescia, whose little palace overlooking the port still exists, and to Sigismondo Chigi, who owned the long block right behind the church of St. Jerome, where the present-day papal Croatian college stands. Chigi also constructed a palace on the triangular lot to the south, which later in the century was owned by the Spanish Cardinal Pedro Deza and finally by the Borghese family.

The area in the vicinity of the ancient mausoleum attracted people interested in the Roman past. In 1546 the Soderini family acquired the ruins of *Augusteum* and turned it into a garden for their collection of ancient sculptures. The Schiavoni entered into a very long lawsuit with the Soderini charging that this family had appropriated some of the lots belonging to the confraternity.²¹ In 1550, Pope Julius III Del Monte (r. 1550–1555) commissioned Michelangelo Buonarroti to design a palace that would incorporate the said ancient structure, but it was never built.²² Finally, the high building activity and the presence of antiquities in the area attracted artists: Baldassare Peruzzi and Antonio da Sangallo the Younger lived nearby and drew sketches of the mausoleum and other Roman fragments excavated in the area.²³

The development of the Schiavoni complex at Ripetta was thus conditioned both by palaces with gardens on large lots and modest houses owned by confraternities and inhabited by the demi-monde of Rome. Its destiny in the centuries to follow was marked by both worlds in a profound manner.

The confraternity and its visibility: the church

The well-documented activity of the national confraternity of St. Jerome lasted, with minor interruptions, until 1901. It was administered by a president, two guardians and a revenue commissioner (*esattore*), and regulated by the statutes confirmed in 1544 by Pope Paul III Farnese (r. 1534–1549). Its main duties were to maintain the church and the hospital/hospice and help its co-nationals. It also assisted Schiavoni / Illyrian pilgrims to Rome

²⁰ Frommel, "Palazzo Borghese," 190–193; Frommel, "Die Ripetta."

²¹ ASG, Libri decreti, Riccomini, "A Garden of Statues and Marbles."

²² Riccomini, *La ruina*, 66–67. Riccomini, "A Garden of Statues and Marbles."

²³ Frommel, "Die Ripetta," 76; Riccomini, *La ruina*; Zanchettin, "Costruire nell'antico."

and Christians enslaved by the Ottomans; and it provided dowries and accommodations for Schiavoni / Illyrian women.²⁴

The nucleus of the Schiavoni edifices at Ripetta was built around the site of the ruined church of Saint Marina, overlooking the slope of the small port on the Tiber. The earliest known images of the complex date from the mid-sixteenth century: representations of the area, such as maps and views by Leonardo Bufalini (1551), Giovanni Sallustio Peruzzi (c. 1565) or Étienne Dupérac (1577) depict a somewhat irregular block englobing the small church.²⁵ Although the church of St. Jerome must have been the most prominent feature of the complex, the three cartographers do not agree on its position and form, probably because the church was partially hidden by the surrounding houses. The situation immediately before the construction of the current church is visible on a map from a register of the confraternity's properties in the Archive of Saint Jerome of the Croats. The plan, drawn in 1581 by the *sottomaestro delle strade* Ludovico Appiani, shows a compact block around a small single-nave church with a rounded apse, preceded by an open court (fig. 1.2).²⁶ Some pilgrims died in the hospital and were buried in the church or its courtyard.²⁷ This lay-out of the block is a result of the sixteenth-century rectification of Via Ripetta as an oblique straight line with row of shops and houses built around 1550, as suggested by a printed map of Schiavoni possessions from around 1660.

The main sixteenth-century Schiavoni / Illyrian block focussed on the small port on the Tiber, although its main buildings, the church, and the hospital, became virtually invisible by the second half of the Cinquecento. The church St. Roch, built on the site of the medieval church of St. Martin, was consecrated in 1502; when Baldassare Peruzzi enlarged it some twenty years later, it dwarfed the modest nearby structure of St. Jerome.²⁸ In spite of its being visually insignificant in the cityscape, the importance of the Slavic church increased when, in 1566, it was elevated to the rank of a titular church; four years later, Felice Peretti di Montalto, who would later become Pope Sixtus V (r. 1585–90), was named its titular cardinal.

As pope, Peretti relaunched the architectural visibility of the Schiavoni community, rebuilding the church with funds from the Apostolic

²⁴ Burić, *Iz prošlosti*, 22–27. Golub, “Istituzioni collegate alla chiesa.”

²⁵ On the church see the recent work by Kokša, *San Girolamo*; Perić, *Chiesa Sistina*; Caperna, “Influssi lombardi”; Caperna, “La Chiesa di San Girolamo”; Barbiellini Amidei, “San Girolamo”; Ivanišević, “Hrvatska crkva,”; Seršić, *San Girolamo*; Gudelj, “San Girolamo dei Croati.”

²⁶ ASG, Libro delle piante, fol. 1^v. Also Zanchettin, “Via di Ripetta,” 224.

²⁷ For example, on 2 November 1548, Alexandro son of Antonio from Senj died and was buried in the church, ASG Libro Infermi, fol. 2^r.

²⁸ Zanchettin, “Via di Ripetta”; Zanchettin, “Costruire nell’antico.”

camera.²⁹ Sixtus V moved swiftly to appoint a new titular cardinal for the church, the Spaniard Pedro de Deza (1520–1600), who was building a large palace nearby (now known as Palazzo Borghese). The architect in charge of the cardinal's palace was Martino Longhi the Elder (1534–1591), who now assumed responsibility for the design of the new church of St. Jerome of the Schiavoni. In 1589, a chapter of priests was established at the church, exceptional for its national character: its members were all of Illyrian origin and spoke the Illyrian language.³⁰

The pope and the new titular cardinal were the sponsors of the rebuilding of St. Jerome: the confraternity logbook mentions the makeover as a “matter of our lord” (“Affare del nostro Signore”).³¹ The new church of St. Jerome was a post-Tridentine structure with a single nave flanked by three chapels, a transept, and a deep rectangular apse, probably devised for the canons of the chapter. The dome was replaced by an illusionistic painting, which is understandable given the rapid construction. The façade was a slightly updated design that Longhi the Elder previously devised for Santa Maria in Vallicella, similar to Santa Caterina dei Funari and Santa Maria ai Monti.³² Interestingly enough, it bears a great resemblance to the facade of Santo Spirito in Sassia, the church of the largest Roman public hospital, which was another recycled project brought to realization by Sixtus V. The decorative program at St. Jerome was carried out by so-called Sistine painters, already active as a team in previous projects promoted by Peretti, such as the Biblioteca Vaticana: Antonio Viviani called il Sordo (1560–1620), Andrea Lilli (1570–1631), Paris Nogari (c. 1536–1601) and Paolo Guidotti Borghese (1560–1629), all led by Giovanni Guerra (1544–1618) (fig. 1.3).³³ The program of the paintings, which decorate the presbytery and the upper zone of the transept of the church, features an original image of St. Jerome of the Illyrian Nation, envisioning the Church Father being ordained, lecturing on Holy Scripture, and discussing it with Orthodox saints. The program also includes a selection of Slavic national saints: St. Cyril and St. Methodius, translators of the Bible into the Slavic idiom, and St. Arnerius (Rainier) and St. Domnius, patron saints of the archdiocese of

²⁹ ASV, Archivum Arcis, Armarium B.8, 1, Conto della nuova chiesa di San Girolamo dell'Ilirici, 1 marzo 1590, partially published in Kokša, *San Girolamo*, 17–23, 98–99 and by Lerza, *L'architettura di Martino Longhi*, 184–186, n. 54.

³⁰ Golub, “Istituzioni collegate alla chiesa.”

³¹ Gudelj, “San Girolamo dei Croati”; Gudelj, “San Girolamo degli Schiavoni / Illyrians / Croats.”

³² Nova, “Il ‘modello’ di Martino Longhi”; Santucci, “Martino Longhi.”

³³ Strinati, “L'iconografia cinquecentesca”; Mangia Renda, “San Girolamo”; Barbiellini Amidei, “San Girolamo”; Ivanišević, “Hrvatska crkva”; Seršić, *San Girolamo*; Gudelj, “San Girolamo dei Croati,” 306–315.

Split (Spalato).³⁴ David Ganz established that the new Saint Jerome was the first papal church (not chapel) commission in a century and a half to be completed, in terms of both the architecture and its decorative program.³⁵ This is also the only church Sixtus V commissioned within his well-known urban restoration of Rome that was designed by the architect Domenico Fontana.

After the Council of Trent, the confraternity financed the printing of translations of liturgical books and assisted students of Eastern Adriatic origin studying in Rome, clearly working on the goals of the Curia in its politics in the multi-confessional Balkan area. Furthermore, a group of priests within the confraternity sought to convert the confraternity facilities into a college for the formation of clergy. This party was headed by the archpriest of the new chapter, Aleksandar Komulović (1548–1608) from Split, who also translated liturgical books into Croatian.³⁶ Komulović probably devised the program for the paintings, given the prominence it gives to the diocese of Split, to the translation of books, and to ordination of priests.³⁷ During the realization of the decorative program in St. Jerome in the autumn of 1589, two *Avvisi* indicated the intention of Sixtus V to move the college for the formation of national priests from Loreto into the palace owned by cardinal Deza. Soon there was also a hint that a Polish college should be added to these structures, making Ripetta the home of a new pan-Slavic Catholic formative centre.³⁸ This plan was never put into action, but it is a telling episode in the continuation of the formation of a system of national colleges elaborated by Pope Gregory XIII Boncompagni (r. 1572–85).³⁹

The death of Sixtus V in 1590 prevented the transformation of the Schiavoni confraternity into a college, so the confraternity and the chapter continued to co-exist as separate bodies within the church of St. Jerome at Ripetta. This separation was a cause of constant friction, especially because estates in Brescia and Todi, endowed by the pope to the chapter,

³⁴ For more elaborate explanation of the program, see Gudelj, “San Girolamo dei Croati,” 306–315.

³⁵ Ganz, “Rückeroberung des Zentrums,” 267.

³⁶ On Komulović see Pignatti, “Komulović, Alexandar.”

³⁷ Gudelj, “San Girolamo dei Croati,” 316–319.

³⁸ *Avviso* of 30 September 1589 (BAV, Urb. Lat. 1057, fol. 624^r): “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 natione, che si trova hora in Loreto,” cit. in Hibbard, *Palazzo Borghese*, 38–39. *Avviso* of 7 October 1589 (BAV, Urb. Lat. 1057, fol. 635^v) “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.” The Polish college is mentioned in the *avvisi* quoted by Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, 611, n. 67; 608, n. 56; 609, n. 61. See also Gudelj, “San Girolamo dei Croati,” 316–317; Gudelj, “San Girolamo degli Schiavoni / Illyrians / Croats.”

³⁹ Bellini, “I collegi e gli insediamenti.”

never entirely entered into its possession. Yet, membership in both the confraternity and the chapter, which sometimes overlapped, was reserved to Schiavoni / Illyrians: membership requirements included place of origin and language, both much disputed through Early Modern period.

The cultural capital of the church now known as San Girolamo dei Croati was significant: its visual messages reflected the importance of this *natio* in Rome and for Rome. It is also the only surviving edifice that belonged to the confraternity that dates from the Early Modern period, as other buildings were subsequently demolished to make room for Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo's project devised between 1936–1937 of Piazza Augusto Imperatore, part of the fascist-era interventions in the historical core of Rome.⁴⁰

Schiavoni / Illyrians in Rome and their obligations: the hospital

The main practical reason for the existence of the Schiavoni hub in Rome was the hospital, an institution for receiving both pilgrims and the sick of the *natio*. As such, the hospital was also a tool much used by the Curia to help with, and control the constant flux of foreigners into the city.⁴¹ This feature sets the Illyrian confraternity in Rome apart from other such Illyrian confraternities in Early Modern Italy, which were primarily devoted to the direct assistance of permanent immigrants.⁴² Although the archive of the confraternity preserves an ample series of documents on the hospital/hospice, these are yet to be studied in a systematic manner.

The hospital/hospice of the Schiavoni is only one of several similar structures in Rome, including large hospitals such as Santo Spirito in Sassia or Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini, and smaller “national” hospice/hospitals.⁴³ As previously noted, in the immediate vicinity of the Schiavoni buildings there were other hospitals; those administered by confraternities were the hospital/hospice of Saint Roch and the Lombard hospital, both larger than the Slavic one. Originally admitting only men, the hospital of St. Roch was built between 1524 and 1528, and, judging from a plan of the area from 1660s, it was twice as large as St. Jerome.⁴⁴ The one maintained by the Lombard nation beginning in 1471, adjacent to the houses owned by the Schiavoni confraternity, was even larger than the St. Roch

⁴⁰ On the demolition of the confraternity buildings see Bogdan, *Hrvatski papinski zavod*.

⁴¹ On medieval hospitals in Rome see Keyvanian, *Hospitals*.

⁴² As shown in the accompanying article by Francesca Coltrinari, the Schiavoni confraternity in Loreto was responsible for a similar structure, but not destined exclusively for pilgrims from the other side of the Adriatic.

⁴³ Keyvanian, *Hospitals*; Esposito, “Gli ospedali romani”; Fedeli Bernardini, “La nostra povera.”

⁴⁴ Fedeli Bernardini, “La nostra povera,” 280.

hospital.⁴⁵ The hospital of St. Roch was substantially enlarged in the early seventeenth century with the addition of a new building for women, most notably expectant mothers (“*donne partorienti*”), constructed partially on a site previously owned by the Schiavoni. The structure was designed by Carlo Maderno, who received his final payments in 1613.⁴⁶ The men’s wing contained 21 beds, while the women’s, divided into two parts for the sick and for mothers, had 13 beds in total.

In 1455 the Schiavoni hospital is mentioned as being under construction. It was probably enlarged after 1475, using 400 gold florins left for this purpose by the papal auditor and bishop of Skradin (Scardona), Fantin della Valle from Trogir (Traù).⁴⁷ The registers of pilgrims and the sick as well as the costs of their maintenance start from 1547 and record most of the early modern period visitors to the facilities, both female and male, noting their origin: Zagreb, Senj (Segna), Zadar (Zara), Šibenik (Sebenico), Dubrovnik (Ragusa), Kotor (Cattaro), Rab (Arbe), Koper (Capodistria) and many other localities, primarily in Dalmatia and Istria.⁴⁸ The right to hospitality was also a much disputed matter, as was membership in the confraternity or the chapter. The confraternity paid a doctor, who would also visit confraternity officials in case of need. Sometimes, a barber would also be needed for bloodletting,⁴⁹ while a *hospitaliera* or *priora* was a woman of the nation who was responsible for the lodgers.⁵⁰ The hospital also offered meals, thus inventories mention necessary kitchen utensils, chairs etc., while accounting books register money spent for food and wine. For example, on Friday 23 September 1569, an entry in the registry mentions that Mattheo from Zadar and Margarita from Split came to the hospital that day, so dinner was offered to six lodgers: Chiara, Luca, Gieronimo, Ziva, Mattheo, and Margarita. They ate bread, ten eggs, butter, boiled pears, almonds, while a chicken and two more eggs were for Ziva, who was apparently very ill.⁵¹ On Monday 26 September, the six ate bread, wheat, chicory, parsley and pears, and the hospital also paid for their wine,

⁴⁵ Esposito, “Gli ospedali romani,” 244, n. 30.

⁴⁶ Fedeli Bernardini, “La nostra povera,” 290.

⁴⁷ In the 1455 supplication to Pope Callixtus III Borja, the Schiavoni referred to the hospital as being under construction; document transcribed by Andrija Lukinović and published in Ratko Perić (ed.), *Chiesa Sistina*, 2, 52–53. On the della Valle bequest, see Kokša, *San Girolamo*, 7.

⁴⁸ ASG, Spese, Libro deli Infermi et Pellegrini accetati nel Hospital de San Hieronimo per nation Illirica in Roma (1 1547–1561). The series contains records from 1547 until the nineteenth century.

⁴⁹ On 16 august 1576 a barber was paid 10 soldi. Libro Infermi, 5, s. n.

⁵⁰ In 1553 the nurse was a certain Orsa (Spese 2, fol. 1^v); in 1572, the nurse was Caterina from Zadar (Spese fatte per infermi, 5, fol. 1^v).

⁵¹ ASG, Spese, Libro deli Infermi et Pellegrini (5 — 1569–1578), s. n.

rose water, and vinegar, their meals being very similar to those offered at nearby St. Roch and other Roman institutions.⁵²

The 1581 map by Lodovico Appiani shows the hospital at the far end of the block, separated from the church by a pair of two-storeys storage-rooms, a passageway, and a large space for the meeting room of the confraternity, placed above a granary (fig. 1.2).⁵³ The irregular sequence of these spaces suggests a piecemeal enlargement of the Schiavoni buildings from their original nucleus of Santa Marina, eventually resulting in a relatively large space dedicated to hospitality and medical care in the late sixteenth century. The bigger of the two rooms is marked as *hospitale grande*, while a perpendicular smaller space is called *hospitaletto*, but their exact use might have been fluid, as they could have been used to separate the pilgrims and the sick.

The inventories of the hospital mention eight beds in 1554, while in 1578 there are fourteen new wooden beds with columns bearing a canopy, thus ensuring some privacy in otherwise collective rooms.⁵⁴ In 1590, a special inventory of the hospital submitted to Pope Sixtus V mentions thirteen beds with their mattresses and “very outworn” linen, insisting on the poverty of the structure.⁵⁵ The hospital inventory of 1604 lists eleven beds, a large chest, four old chests, a good table, and an altar. The latter had a red leather antependium on a wooden frame with an image of St. Jerome, while on the altar there were a painting of the Pietà and two paintings of angels.⁵⁶

The full set of rules of conduct at the hospital are included among the deliberations of the confraternity on 15 July 1601.⁵⁷ They define the hospitality ritual (the washing of the feet, the supper, and the bed), the evening menu (salad, soup, bread, half a litre of wine, and a pound of meat per pilgrim), sacraments (confession and communion), the duration of hospitality per pilgrims (three days), and the evening closure of the hospital (maximum half an hour after evening Ave Maria). It also prohibited members of the confraternity from eating, drinking, or fraternizing with pilgrims and patients or from gossiping about hospital and confraternity officials.

The Jubilee years were particularly challenging, so much so that the confraternity even tried to resolve the debt they confronted after the Jubilee

⁵² On alimentation in Roman hospitals see Vaquero Pineiro, “Giorni di grasso.”

⁵³ ASG, Libro delle piante, fol. 1^v.

⁵⁴ ASG, Series generalis. Statuta et Inventaria, Inventarii delle robbe della Chiesa et Hospitale di S. Girolamo delli Illirici dall’anno 1554 fino a 1650, fols. 4^r, 29^r.

⁵⁵ ASV, Vat. Lat. 5440, fol. 4^r (published in Ratko Perić, *Chiesa Sistina*, 2, 55)

⁵⁶ ASG, Inventario delle Robbe del hospitale et Chiesa di San Girolamo delli Illirici, s. n.

⁵⁷ ASG, Libro Decreti 6, fol. 42^r (published in Croatian translation in Burić, *Iz prošlosti*, 34–35.)

of 1600 by closing the hospital.⁵⁸ Fortunately, Cardinal Giulio Antonio Sartori (1532–1602), the cardinal protector of the confraternity since 1589, not only stopped the closure, but also formulated, as mentioned, the rules of conduct, reaffirming the importance of the national hospitals for the Curia as a way to provide assistance for pilgrims. The confraternity books seems to suggest that in 1650 some 470 pilgrims used the hospital facilities, in 1675 330 stayed there, while in 1700 there were 249 visitors.⁵⁹

More precise inventories about the use of the rooms start from the mid-seventeenth century. An inventory from 1652 mentions a room for confraternity meetings, a room for men, a room for women, and a kitchen.⁶⁰ Men had eight iron beds at their disposition. A particular space was now given to images: the altar of St. Jerome, still with its old leather antependium, was now decorated with a large painting of the Dalmatian saint, while the Pietà painting seems to have been elsewhere in the room, newly framed. There was a tondo with another St. Jerome, framed with a garland, and a small painting of St. Lucy, as well as a portrait of Pope Pius V Ghisleri, and the coat of arms of Pope Urban VIII Barberini above the door. There were no images in the women's room, which had five wooden structures for beds and two iron ones, as well as wardrobes and chests with linen, desks used for the sick and for pilgrims, a stretcher for the dead, and so on, suggesting a more practical and less representative use of the space. The kitchen had cupboards, chairs, and other items used for cooking and serving, including 38 ceramic plates and 32 cups.

Between 1664 and 1682, the Schiavoni block underwent major changes as the series of small mid-sixteenth century houses next to the church façade were replaced by a *casamento di qualche eleganza*, an apartment building designed by Pier Andrea Bufalini (1621–post 1688).⁶¹ This new façade of the *natio* did not affect the rooms at the rear end of the block, containing the hospital, although the 1663 deliberations did indicate that a small granary on the ground floor should be divided into two in order to create a refectory for the pilgrims and a sacristy cloakroom.⁶²

In the Jubilee year 1675 yet another inventory was drawn up.⁶³ It listed the same number of beds as in 1652, but many more images: there was also a crucifix above the entrance to the men's hospital room, while the Pietà painting now stood above the door on the inside. The altar of St.

⁵⁸ ASG, Libro Decreti 6, fol. 41^{r-v}.

⁵⁹ ASG Libro decreti 9; Libro decreti 10, fol. 92^v; Libro decreti 11, fol. 119^v; Burić, *Iz prošlosti*, 45.

⁶⁰ ASG, Libro delli Inventrij di tutti li mobili della Chiesa et ospedale degli Illyrici, 1652, fols. 14–17.

⁶¹ Gudelj, “Architettura e diplomazia,” 195–202.

⁶² ASG, Libro Decreti 10, fol. 4^r.

⁶³ ASG, Libro delli Inventrij di tutti li mobili della Chiesa et ospedale degli Illyrici, 1675, fol. 44^r.

Jerome featured the same painting and the same leather antependium. An interesting new item was a large painting with the Madonna, St. Jerome, St. Francis and a portrait of Biagio Bianchi 'Croato', the first record of the visual presence of a private co-national rather than a functionary of the Curia. Unfortunately, this painting, with a trio of the most popular saints on the Eastern coast of the Adriatic and an otherwise unknown donor, is no longer recognizable among the paintings owned by the Croatian papal college of St. Jerome in Rome. In addition to paintings, a newly listed item was the framed rules of conduct in the hospital issued by the cardinal protector Giulio Sacchetti (1587–1663), testifying to the continuous control of the Curia over the small Slavic hospital. The women's room appears to have contained six beds and chests, and a table, while there is also a first mention of an image, a Crucifix with three other figures.⁶⁴ Other items, such as linen and kitchen utensils, are listed as "in the hospital."

The rules of conduct in the hospital seem to have been an issue for most of the Early Modern period, as they are listed again in 1764 in the confraternity meetings logbook.⁶⁵ The same entry mentions the decision to frame the rules and put them in the hospital, therefore to keep them in sight just like Sacchetti's rules mentioned by the inventory almost a century earlier. Eighteenth-century deliberations concerned the hospital finances (all medical bills should be registered and approved), the nationality of the patients (knowledge of the language and maternal origin were not enough), the diagnosis (no feverish, terminally ill, or syphilitic patient was to be admitted), and some politics (no dissidents from Naples). Therefore, besides the financial problems the confraternity continuously encountered, the rules set by their cardinal-protectors and the confraternity insisted on the exclusion of non-nationals and politically suspect persons. Guests had to prove their origins and political standing.

The major rebuilding of the Schiavoni hospital happened in the early eighteenth century following the construction of the new undulating stone port of Ripetta on a plan by Alessandro Specchi that used the church of St. Jerome as its focal point.⁶⁶ The planning of the new hospital led to a rather particular dispute when, in the second decade of eighteenth century, this urban renewal project was contested by Tommaso Mattei (1652–1726), the architect who had worked for the confraternity for several years to maintain its structures, and Giacomo Antonio Canevari (1681–1764), a young newcomer who managed to facilitate the building permit with papal authorities.⁶⁷ The dispute was resolved only in 1717, when the confraternity's cardinal protector Pietro Ottoboni (1667–1740), asked two architects

⁶⁴ ASG, Libro delli Inventarij di tutti li mobili della Chiesa et ospedale degli Illyrici, 1675, fol. 45^r.

⁶⁵ ASG, Libro decreti 14, fols. 7^r, 8^r.

⁶⁶ On Ripetta see Marder, "The Porto di Ripetta in Rome."

⁶⁷ Gudelj, "Progettare"

in his service, Matteo Sassi (1647–1723) and Ludovico Gregorini (ca. 1661–1723) to evaluate the drawings of the hospital by both Mattei and Canevari. Given his previous services for Ottoboni, it is not surprising that the designs by Mattei were eventually chosen, with Sassi and Gregorini justifying their decision by citing better spatial distribution, a larger inner courtyard, better accessibility, and the lower cost of this project.⁶⁸

The dispute also led to a decision to preserve the drawings by both architects in the confraternity archives.⁶⁹ As a result, six working drawings and three finished ones that ought to be ascribed to Canevari still survive, as do five drawings that should be attributed to Mattei, and also a third series of slightly different drawings of the hospital by a still unknown hand that are based on two pencil drawings by one of the canons of St. Jerome and member of the confraternity, Francesco Rinaldi from Zadar.⁷⁰ All these drawings present a rare insight into the elaboration of the design of a small Roman hospital run by a confraternity, with the program including a larger room for men and a smaller room for women, a space for the caretaker, a kitchen, and a refectory, as well as confraternity rooms, latrines, and stairs.

In his final drawings, which reflect the thinking visible in his working sketches, Canevari straightened the pre-existing irregular shape of the rear wall of the block (fig. 1.4). He elaborated a sequence of hospital rooms with the men's room (eight beds) towards the south and the kitchen and caretaker rooms dividing it from women's space (six beds); he also introduced a room for sick priests (three beds) in the privileged angular position. The younger architect also envisioned the confraternity meeting room, the cloakroom, and the archive as part of *piano nobile*. Mattei, on the other hand, worked around the angular form of the rear wall and organized the hospital floor with a sequence of three larger rooms along the back and three smaller ones around the stairs and north wall, with the corridor as the main form of communication (fig. 1.5). Finally, the third set of drawings, based on the ideas of *canonico* Rinaldi, straightens the wall and places the largest hospital room in the north-east angle, thus with the best possible light and aeration, with the women's room next to it and the *hospitaliera's* room, the kitchen, and the confraternity rooms following towards the church (fig. 1.6).

As already mentioned, the main block of Schiavoni buildings was demolished during the transformations of the Piazza Augusto Imperatore in the 1930s, but the drawings of its first floor executed in 1925 indicate that it was Mattei's project that was executed.⁷¹ The new hospital was built quickly; by April 1718 the basement and the ground floor were already

⁶⁸ ASG, Libro decreti 12, pp. 126–127.

⁶⁹ ASG, Libro decreti 12, p. 129.

⁷⁰ ASG, Piante, s. n.

⁷¹ Published in Bogdan, *Papinski hrvatski zavod*, t. LXXXIV.

constructed,⁷² while in the autumn of 1719 there are payments to a window-maker, indicating the final refurbishments of the new construction.⁷³

As I have shown elsewhere, besides the limited value of the project itself, which only defined rear utility rooms within a block, Canevari actually wanted to introduce himself to a foreign confraternity in order to obtain a very different commission.⁷⁴ On the back of one of his hospital drawings there is a sketch for the enlargement of the cathedral of Split (Spalato), revealing his intention to repeat the good fortune of Pier Andrea Bufalini some fifty years earlier, who designed the front of the confraternity building at Ripetta, but also the new cathedral of Dubrovnik (Ragusa).⁷⁵ The Schiavoni confraternity was thus seen by local artists as a conduit for exporting their ideas to South-Eastern Europe, a new market for their works.

The presence of women of the *natio* in Rome was important for the confraternity — not only are female pilgrims mentioned, but the confraternity cared for poor women and widows of their nation in Rome. A separate house near the church of St. Mark, thus quite far away from the Schiavoni complex, was left for the establishment of a women's hospice in the second half of the fifteenth century by Marija Mišljenović, lady in waiting to the Bosnian Queen Katarina Kosača, and is mentioned in guides of Rome by Panciroli (1600) and Fanucci (1601).⁷⁶ This house was rented all through the eighteenth century, though no longer serving its original purpose.⁷⁷ The poor women of the *natio* must have used one of the houses in Via Schiavonia (that is, near the church), since the Schiavoni protested that the prostitute's ghetto established by Pope Pius V was dangerously near their protégées.⁷⁸ The seventeenth-century inventories mention a women's room in the hospital, which was always smaller and less representative, with a curiously late introduction of devotional images. The division of spaces for men and for women was one of the main design problems for the architects competing for the project in the *querelle* of 1715–1718. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that between 1769 and 1773, at nearby St. Roch hospital, the men's section was closed and the architect Nicola Forti, who also worked for the Schiavoni, refurbished the structure as an institution exclusively for women.⁷⁹

Although the members of the Schiavoni confraternity were only men, and their doctor too, the caretaker at the hospital was usually a woman, and thus the entire scheme had very precise gender roles. The role of

⁷² ASG, Libro Decreti 12, p. 131.

⁷³ ASG, Libro Decreti 12, p. 150.

⁷⁴ Gudelj, "Progettare,"

⁷⁵ Gudelj, "Architettura e diplomazia,"

⁷⁶ Mrkonjić, "Le notizie sulla chiesa," 140, n. 19.

⁷⁷ ASG, Libro decreti 12, p. 9.

⁷⁸ Cohen, "Seen and known," 402.

⁷⁹ Fedeli Bernardini, "La nostra povera," 282.

women within the Schiavoni / Illyrian national community at Ripetta still needs to be assessed with more precision. They did not participate directly in the policy-making of the confraternity, or, at least, their participation is rarely documented, however, women often found themselves at the receiving end of the confraternity's charitable activities and, vice versa, women contributed in a noticeable way to the church and the hospital in their wills and donations.

Visualizing nationhood: Schiavoni / Illyrians in Rome

The Schiavoni church and hospital served as an important institution of social aid for immigrants and as a safe haven for pilgrims from Croatian lands in Rome. Moreover, the hospital kept the Roman confraternity in constant touch with the homeland, providing access to very different angles for defining oneself as a Schiavone/Illyrian. Given the political fluidity of the Early Modern notion of Illyricum, membership in the confraternity and in the chapter, as well as the use of the hospital, were much disputed. Most famously, in the seventeenth century the right to become a member and use the facilities was contested between those originating from coastal Adriatic dioceses and those corresponding to present day Slovenia, leading to a court case in front of the Sacra Rota.⁸⁰ The visual outcome of the dispute was a large geographical map of four provinces, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia and Bosnia, by Pier Andrea Bufalini from Urbino, already mentioned as the designer of the façade of the main building at Ripetta and the architect of the cathedral in Dubrovnik. Confraternity member Ivan Lučić from Trogir, in his important historical work on Croatian historical lands, also used the map.⁸¹

Visual messages in the fresco cycles and paintings in the church and the hospital include national saints, first and foremost St. Jerome, but also Sts. Cyril and Methodius, present in the Sistine cycles but also in a 1650 altar painting by Benigno Vangelini, still in the church, promoting the role of Illyrians as translators, and the post-Tridentine Slavic apostles. The images of the patron saints of Split, St. Arnerius and St. Domnius, point to the prominence of the archdiocese of Split (it is also their only known appearance in Rome). Many papal insignia in the hospital signal the importance of the relationship with the Curia, also confirmed by symbols of cardinals protectors, while the devotional images feature Piety, St. Jerome as a national saint, and St. Lucy, probably a votive image presented by someone with eye troubles. Unfortunately, the only image mentioned in the hospital documents with a donor's name, the large painting of Madonna with St. Jerome, St. Francis and Biagio Bianchi 'Croato', has since perished; had it

⁸⁰ Crnčić, "Imena Slovcenin i Ilir"; Krsić, *Počelo je u Rimu*, 445–457; Blažević, *Illirizam prije ilirizma*, 238–254.

⁸¹ Mlinarić et al, "Historijsko geografski kontekst."

survived, it would have been very interesting to explore the visual culture of its commissioner.

The church and the hospital (as part of the main block) were the most prominent architectural features of Via Ripetta and the Porto di Ripetta, disputed among popes, cardinals, confraternities, and architects. The façade that Pope Sixtus V wanted for the church, similar to the most important papal hospital, Santo Spirito in Sassia, together with the Ripetta confraternity house “of some elegance” next to it, fashioned the public image of the Schiavoni / Illyrian *natio* in Rome. The confraternity also introduced some of the *more romano* to the eastern Adriatic coast, through the projects for the cathedrals in Split and Dubrovnik. The interplay of the verbal and visual accounts of Schiavoni / Illyrian identity formulated in Rome remains one of the most enduring influences on what would later become the underpinning of the nineteenth-century and contemporary Croatian national narrative.

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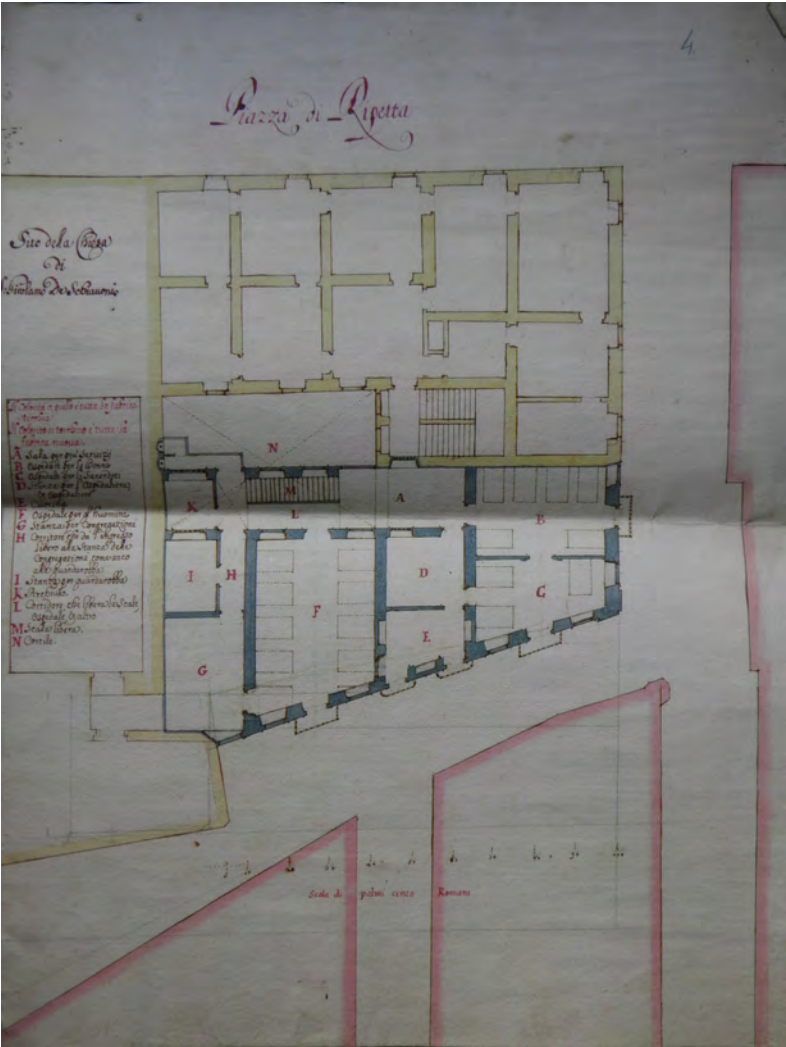
1.1. Alessandro Specchi, *Porto di Ripetta*, 1703–1704 (Photo and permission: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo)



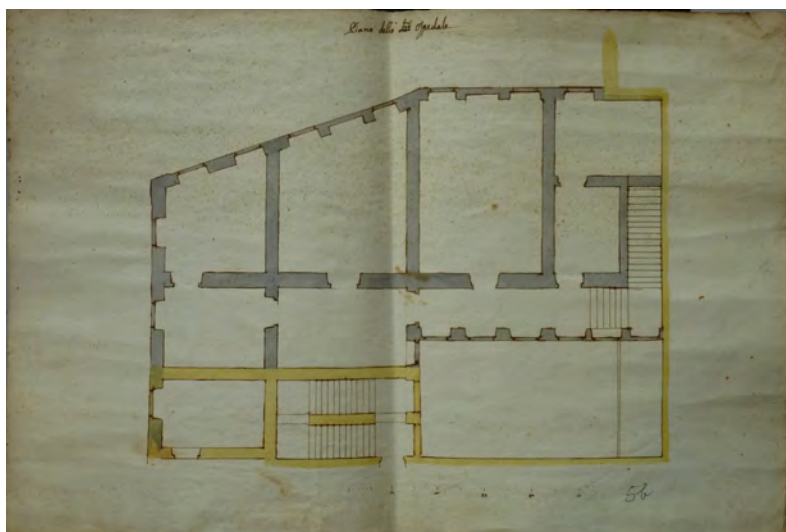
1.2. Ludovico Appiani, Plan of the main block of the Schiavoni buildings. "Libro delle Piante," Archive of Saint Jerome, Rome (Photo: Jasenka Gudelj)



1.3. St. Jerome of the Croats, interior (Photo and permission: Collegio Pontificio Croato di San Girolamo)



1.4. Giacomo Antonio Canevari, Drawing of the Hospital of St. Jerome, c. 1715. Archive of Saint Jerome, Rome (Photo: Jasenka Gudelj)



1.5. Tommaso Mattei, Drawing of the Hospital of St. Jerome, c. 1715.
Archive of Saint Jerome, Rome (Photo: Jasenka Gudelj)



1.6. Unknown, Drawing of the Hospital of St. Jerome after canon Rinaldi,
c. 1715. Archive of Saint Jerome, Rome (Photo: Jasenka Gudelj)