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Introduction

Barbara Wisch

Guest co-editor

This special issue of *Acta historiae artis Slovenica* owes its inception to the international conference *The Role of Religious Confraternities in Medieval and Early Modern Art*, held at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana, on 10–12 May 2017. The conference, sponsored by the France Stele Institute of Art History ZRC SAZU, was organized by its esteemed members, Dr. Ana Lavrič, Assoc. Prof. Dr. and Director Barbara Murovec, and Assist. Prof. Dr. Mija Oter Gorenčič.[1] Many of the innovative papers presented there comprise the core of this volume. The conference itself provided an extraordinary opportunity for both junior and senior European and American scholars to share their new research insights in the ever-expanding field of Confraternity Studies, a multidisciplinary arena that now commands a secure place alongside far older academic disciplines. Owing to our gracious hosts at the France Stele Institute of Art History, the far-flung participants—from Genoa, Kraków, Lisbon, Macerata, Munich, New York, Vienna, and Zagreb—joined eminent scholars from Ljubljana in congenial settings that encouraged the mutual exchange of ideas, creating new bonds of brotherhood (and sisterhood) between cultures and continents. The 14 essays in this volume are organized chronologically, nationally, and thematically, all the while shedding new light on confraternal patronage of the arts.

Although looking back to the late medieval origins of many of the confraternities being discussed, our focus spans Central and Southern Europe in the closing years of the 15th century to the early 19th century. It examines the post-Tridentine decades and the efflorescence of confraternities in the 17th and early 18th centuries, and includes the Catholic Enlightenment, the papal suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1773, the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II's suppression of confraternities in the Habsburg lands in 1783, and the upheavals of the Jansenist revolutionaries. Our survey concludes with the Napoleonic wars, which caused such destruction of the brotherhoods' artistic patrimony. Nationally, the essays navigate across the European continent, placing particular emphasis on Central Europe. Thematically, by analyzing the breadth and evolution of cultic devotions encouraged by post-Tridentine forms of piety, the volume affords an exploration of early modern European confraternities and their patronage of the visual arts that crosses geopolitical borders. However, one significant boundary that remains is language, since most authors in this volume have only ever published in their native tongue. By presenting their important, new scholarship in English, with three in German, the editors hope to ensure greater accessibility of their contributions to a global audience.

Our objective is especially significant, since recent collections in English and Italian on late medieval and early modern confraternities have addressed Western and Northern Europe, the New

[1] The conference was part of the larger research project *The Role and Significance of Religious Confraternities in the Early Modern Art in Slovenian Lands* (No. J6-5563, conducted under the auspices of the France Stele Institute of Art History ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, and financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency. One of the results of the project was the thematic issue *Vloga cerkvenih bratovščin v likovni umetnosti/Religious Confraternities and their Role in Visual Art*, 21/2, 2016, of the *Acta historiae artis Slovenica*.

World, and Asia, but have not turned their attention to Central Europe.[2] Major volumes on Polish and Czech confraternities,[3] for example, are for the most part incomprehensible to Anglophone and other European scholars, since they are written in languages that are less familiar to many researchers. Therefore, this volume is groundbreaking in offering cutting-edge discussions of the rich visual, architectural, literary, and festive cultural production of religious confraternities in many Central European nations as well as sodalities in Italy and Portugal.[4]

We begin in Rome, where the history and influence of confraternities elevated to the new prestigious rank of archconfraternity, beginning in 1520, are analyzed by Barbara Wisch. Archconfraternities were (and are) empowered to aggregate sodalities with comparable devotions and dedications, sharing spiritual benefits, privileges, and impressive indulgences. As a *prologomenon* to this vastly understudied topic, she lays out a chronology of their establishment and the complex networks of powerful, wealthy cardinal protectors whose importance in the patronage of major works of art and architecture was critical. She poses questions about the actual impact of Roman archconfraternities across Europe, some of which are answered in the essays that follow. These queries suggest new avenues of inquiry.

We then cast our confraternal gaze across the breadth of the continent. Under the Habsburg imperial flag, at the church of St. Primus above Kamnik, Mija Oter Gorenčič introduces a striking new contextual interpretation of the origins of the Slovenian church's monumental early 16th-century fresco decoration—a major commission by its Marian brotherhood—and posits a direct connection with Cologne's newly instituted Rosary Brotherhood and the works of art it commissioned. The Cologne confraternity, founded by the Observant Dominican Jakob Sprenger in 1475, was officially the first dedicated to Rosary devotion. Unequivocal support by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III from the outset and rich papal indulgences from 1478 onward incentivized the rapid reception of Rosary brotherhoods across Europe, a subject that later essays address as well. Oter Gorenčič's

[2] *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas. International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (eds. Christopher Black, Pamela Gravestock), Aldershot 2006; *Confréries et dévotions dans la catholicité moderne (mi-XVe–début XIXe siècle)* (eds. Bernard Dompnier, Paola Vismara), Roma 2008 (Collection de l'École Française de Rome, 393); *Brotherhood and Boundaries/Fraternità e barriere* (eds. Stefania Pastore, Adriano Prosperi, Nicholas Terpstra), Pisa 2011; *Faith's Boundaries. Laity and Clergy in Early Modern Confraternities* (eds. Nicholas Terpstra, Adriano Prosperi, Stefania Pastore), Turnhout 2012; *Space, Place, and Motion. Locating Confraternities in the Late Medieval and Early Modern City* (ed. Diana Bullen Presciutti), Leiden 2017. The special issue of *Confraternitas*, 27/1–2, 2016, dedicated to the Schiavoni/Illyrian confraternities in Italy, is an important exception; see also *Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country. Schiavoni/Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in Comparative Perspective* (eds. Giuseppe Capriotti, Francesca Coltrinari, Jasenka Gudelj), Macerata 2018 (*Il Capitale Culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, Supplementi, 7); and *Chiese e "nationes" a Roma sotto il potere temporale dei papi. Dalla Scandinavia ai Balcani (secoli XV–XVIII)* (eds. Antal Molnár, Giovanni Pizzorusso, Matteo Sanfilippo), Roma 2017 (Bibliotheca Academia Hungariae – Roma. Studia, 6).

[3] *Bractwa religijne w średniowieczu i w okresie nowożytnym (do końca XVIII wieku)* [Religious Confraternities in the Middle Ages and the Modern Era (until the end of the 18th century)] (eds. Dominika Burdzy, Beata Wojciechowska), Kielce 2014; see the review by Joanna LUDWIKOWSKA in *Confraternitas*, 25/2, 2014, pp. 48–50 (and pp. 58–60 for the table of contents). The volume includes a bilingual table of contents and introduction, and summaries in English; Part 4 is concerned with Polish religious confraternities and the arts, but there are discussions of intellectual and material culture throughout. *Zbožných dusí úl. Náboženská bratrstva v kultuře raněnovověké Moravy* [A Hive of Devout Souls. Religious Fraternities in the Culture of Early Modern Moravia] (eds. Vladimir Maňas, Zdeněk Orlita, Martina Potůčková), [Catalogue for the exhibition of paintings, documents, and artefacts from the Archdiocesan Museum in Olomouc, Moravia, 28–25 April 2010], Olomouc 2010; see the review by Jozef MATULA in *Confraternitas*, 21/2, 2010, pp. 55–56, who notes that the volume is in Czech only. For additional bibliography on Central European confraternities, see the Preface by Barbara Murovec and the essays in this volume.

[4] Special thanks are given to the outside readers for their incisive comments that improved the essays. We are responsible for any mistakes that remain.

trenchant analysis of the iconography and style of the frescoes and architectural decoration, together with her account of the famous "Windische" (Slovenian) pilgrimage to Cologne, confirms her thesis. Her astute observations reveal how the artist gained knowledge of Albrecht Dürer's recent paintings, in addition to the master's graphic production, and how he familiarized himself with works closely connected to the great altarpiece of Cologne's Rosary Brotherhood, all of which he assimilated and synthesized in the St. Primus decorative program.

The Portuguese Crown was equally emphatic in its support of confraternities. Through privileges, exemptions, and donations, the Confraternity of Mercy was instituted in Lisbon in 1498. With exponential speed, the Holy Houses of Mercy became the most important confraternal foundations for spiritual and charitable assistance throughout Portugal and its overseas empire. Joana Balsa de Pinho offers a new interpretative approach to this impressive architectural heritage by demonstrating how the building complexes evolved to become easily recognizable by their central urban location and distinct architectural and decorative characteristics, decidedly different from other Portuguese religious and secular institutions.

Our discussion then turns to the Balkan immigrants who had crossed the Adriatic Sea to settle in Italy. Two essays elucidate how these ethnic minorities integrated themselves into their new society via confraternities by strategically promoting their "national" identity through art, architecture, and language, and by venerating their native-born saints. Giuseppe Capriotti concentrates on the city of Pesaro in the region of The Marches. There, the Schiavoni, as the Illyrians were known, identified with their protector St. Jerome (owing to his birthplace in Stridon, on the border of Dalmatia), while the Albanians looked to their own St. Veneranda as patron. By carefully analyzing the artistic commissions of these two confraternities, especially where documentary sources are lacking, Capriotti reconstructs a nuanced evolution of the confraternities' piety that extended beyond their national saints to encompass the newly canonized as well as new confraternal devotions, namely the Cord of St. Francis, a subject which Mirjana Repanić-Braun later addresses.

Jasenka Gudelj and Tanja Trška unite their expertise on the two most prominent Slavic confraternities in Italy, located in Venice and in Rome. Significantly, this is the first time that the Illyrian communities of these great, yet disparate cosmopolitan centers have been systematically compared. The authors' collaboration results in innovative observations about the construction of self-defining visual narratives in the famous painted cycles illustrating the lives of St. Jerome and St. George that these confraternities commissioned. Using the shared origin of the confraternal members as a critical platform on which to base a discussion of Schiavoni visual strategies, Gudelj and Trška shed new light on such central issues as national saints, anti-Ottoman sentiment, and the early modern Illyrian scholarly emphasis on language, alphabet, translation, and printing.

In Genoa and extending inland into the mountainous regions of Liguria, confraternities created networks called *casacce*, formed by three or four brotherhoods that assembled in a single oratory. Rather than focusing on the architecture or decoration of their private space, Valentina Fiore demonstrates how their public face was most prominently displayed during processions, in large part due to the monumental, dramatic, and emotive multi-figured sculptural groups they commissioned. Proudly paraded through city streets on major feast days, these vibrant, polychrome wooden sculptures seemed to activate the divine through the ritual performance of procession. She examines the impressive work by Anton Maria Maragliano, who set the standard for Genoese wood sculpture in the 18th century. In addition, she documents the dismantling, conservation, and transmission of these splendid objects following the Napoleonic suppression of Ligurian confraternities in 1811.

The following essays direct their attention to Central Europe. The city and Diocese of Kraków was one of the largest centers of religious life in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of

Lithuania—indeed, if not in all of Central Europe. One of the city's preeminent sites is the church of the Holy Trinity, granted to the first Dominicans who had arrived from Italy in 1221, including Jacek [Hyacinth] Odrowąż (died 1257), who was so highly venerated that he was eventually canonized in Rome in 1594. Krzysztof J. Czyżewski and Marek Walczak delineate the institutional history and centuries-long art and architectural patronage of the Rosary Confraternity, founded at Holy Trinity probably by 1484, which became the largest and most important of the many confraternities dedicated to the Rosary in Kraków.

This authoritative discussion brings us back to our starting point in Rome. By 1600 the Kraków brotherhood had been elevated to an archconfraternity. Most significantly, at this time it was given a sanctioned copy—blessed by the pontiff and enriched with indulgences—of the most potent Roman Marian icon, the *Salus Populi Romani* in S. Maria Maggiore, which was revered as a civic palladium. When borne in a propitiatory procession by Pope Gregory the Great in 590, it was believed that the image, through Mary's merciful intercession, had saved the city from the plague. Czyżewski and Walczak show how the replica in Kraków, specifically donated to the Rosary Archconfraternity, was thus integrally bound to Rosary devotion; consequently, it was associated with the naval victory over the Turks at Lepanto in 1571, which the faithful believed had been achieved by invoking the Virgin's intervention through Rosary prayers at the behest of the staunch Dominican Pope Pius V (reigned 1566–1572). The Kraków image then proceeded to perform its own miracles. It was celebrated with splendid processions, and finally, in thanks for the triumph over the Turks at the gates of Vienna in 1683, it received an oratory of its own at the church of the Holy Trinity. Czyżewski and Walczak document not only the architecture and lavish furnishings of the image and its chapels, but they demonstrate how Rosary devotion blossomed throughout the city with splendidly decorated altars and replicas of the miraculous image—known in Poland as *Our Lady of the Rosary* or *Our Lady of the Snows*—which appeared in painted, engraved, and sculpted versions and became Poland's beloved image of the Virgin and Child.

Kraków confraternities encouraged and deeply influenced those with similar devotions throughout the diocese. This was especially evident at the collegiate church of St. John the Baptist in Skalbmierz (about 50 km northeast of Kraków), whether the brotherhoods were founded by the Dominicans, Observant Franciscans, or canons closely allied with the theological faculty at the Kraków University, as Wojciech Sowała documents. So, too, Kraków's artists set the standards for work in all mediums. By introducing important research on the new Rosary Confraternity in Skalbmierz, formally confirmed in Kraków in 1682, Sowała expands Czyżewski and Walczak's discussion by relating the miraculous history of Skalbmierz's own replica of the icon, which was credited with the salvation of the citizenry from the plague in 1677. So, too, the close association of the Dominican confraternities of the Holy Name of Jesus with the Rosary reflects that of Kraków's Holy Trinity church, where the pairing of their confraternal altars to the left and right of the chancel arch was duplicated in most Dominican churches throughout the Polish province. The interweaving of these sodalities was exemplified in Skalbmierz by a shared altar.

In Poland, as we have seen, the Roman icon was inextricably linked with the Rosary, but the Jesuits, with papal approval in late 1560s, had already distributed replicas of the image as part of their global missionary efforts. Together with their IHS monogram, the *Salus Populi Romani* image became a worldwide Jesuit logo.[5] As a direction for future research, it would be useful to compare the

[5] Simon DITCHFIELD, *Catholicus* and *Romanus*. Counter-Reformation Rome as *Caput Mundi*, *A Companion to Early Modern Rome, 1492–1692* (eds. Pamela M. Jones, Barbara Wisch, Simon Ditchfield), Leiden 2019, p. 142.

Polish Dominicans' pairing of the Holy Name of Jesus and *Our Lady of the Rosary* with that of the Jesuits' to gain insight into post-Tridentine competitive "branding."

Since 1563 the Jesuits had been founding their own distinct Marian Congregations—exclusively male confraternities until 1751 that were tightly organized under the authority of a Jesuit priest—as well as sodalities for both men and women that advocated new devotions. Sanja Cvetnić illuminates the Bona Mors (Good Death) confraternities, originally founded in 1648 at Il Gesù, the Jesuits' mother church in Rome, and elevated to an archconfraternity with substantial indulgences in 1729. When the first Croatian Jesuit College opened in Zagreb in 1653, the Bona Mors was also instituted. These sodalities continued to be established throughout the Jesuit provinces with specific goals: to re-Christianize regions still under Ottoman rule;[6] to renew the Catholic faith in communities exposed to Protestant ideology; and to reinvigorate waning devotion by promulgating a "good life" informed by the Sacraments, especially frequent Communion, so a good death—and salvation—would inevitably follow. The confraternal chapels were richly decorated, but most of their liturgical furnishings and works of art were irreparably lost or fragmented owing to the suppression of the Jesuit Order and the subsequent Josephine and Napoleonic reforms. Cvetnić re-evaluates what remains of the Croatian Bona Mors artistic heritage by integrating these works into confraternal pious practices. She underscores the Jesuits' remarkable ability to promote their sodalities by unifying devotions and using strategies of fidelity to the Supreme Pontiff and Rome.

In the following essay, Sibylle Appuhn-Radtke reinforces the Jesuits' particular attention to uniformity in the statutes, privileges, and indulgences assigned to the Marian Congregations, but she also observes that decisions regarding the decoration and furnishings of the Marian altars and assembly rooms were left to the individual groups. A significant part of this artistic legacy that has not been examined is the graphic production of the Marian confraternities within the Jesuits' Austrian Province, conserved in their archive in Vienna. Appuhn-Radtke clarifies the many essential functions of these previously unpublished membership certificates that were engraved, printed, and distributed across Austria and southern Germany from the second half of the 17th to the early 19th century. In addition to including the requisite Jesuit iconography—for example, a sheet from Ingolstadt depicts its own miraculous image, a copy of the Roman *Salus Populi Romani*—the certificates were embellished with city views and ilustrations of the confraternities' own splendid altars and chapels. Since many of these structures no longer survive, the engraved sheets are crucial evidence of their former splendor.

Mirjana Repanić-Braun returns us to Croatia, where confraternities in the northern regions have been less thoroughly studied than those along the Adriatic coast. She provides a wealth of documentation about the confraternities founded at Franciscan churches and friaries in the Croatian Franciscan Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, and offers fresh insights into their significant religious and artistic heritage. For example, she notes the exponential growth of confraternities dedicated to the Cord of St. Francis that were instituted at all the friaries of the Province—encouraged, one might suggest, by the confraternal seat in Assisi having been raised to an archconfraternity in 1585 and lavished with indulgences by the Franciscan Pope Sixtus V. Moreover, Repanić-Braun alerts us to the confluence of other devotions in those same Franciscan churches. For example, having a Dominican Rosary altar was by no means remarkable, since Rosary iconography appeared almost regularly in most Franciscan and parish churches in northern Croatia owing to its prominence in Catholic spirituality. So, too, confraternities

[6] Cvetnić notes that in the recovered territories, mosques were often converted into churches and consecrated to saints because they provided the only available spaces large enough for Catholic liturgical ceremonies. Their reuse underscored the Church's victory over the "infidel" and the return of Catholicism to Croatia.

of the Holy Scapular, a Carmelite devotion, could be found in the Franciscan churches alongside more typical Franciscan confraternities, such as those dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua. Perhaps this fluidity was, in part, indicative of the Order's effort to keep the faithful for themselves because the Jesuits had become serious competitors with their flourishing Good Death confraternities and Marian Congregations.

Matija Ogrin considers how the cultural environment of Slovenian confraternities resulted in their commissioning some of the most expressive early modern literary work written in Slovenian, most of which remains in manuscript form and is unpublished. He focuses on selected Baroque examples and breathes new life into understudied dramatic texts, most importantly the spectacular Passion plays performed by the brethren. His singular overview of a wide range of literary genres considers meditative prose, poems, hymnals, and sermons of outstanding quality, and introduces thought-provoking suggestions about their resonance in religious art. Slovenian confraternities also played vital roles in printing and publishing books. Again we turn to the highly influential Jesuit Marian Congregations. The Marian sodality established in Ljubljana in 1605 was an intellectual powerhouse that published dozens of devotional books in Latin, the first editions of classical authors to appear in the Slovenian lands, as well as books by highly renowned recent and even contemporary authors of the Catholic renewal. For those with little knowledge of Latin, the Holy Rosary Confraternity published the earliest Slovenian form of the complete Rosary in 1678, accompanied by contemplative prayers, which was widely used as a result of its accessibility and vivid literary style.

Martin Scheutz presents a range of little-explored written sources that are crucial for understanding the dynamic agency of Austrian confraternities during the early modern period. First and foremost, the sodalities needed to reform certain (im)pious practices in an effort to counter Martin Luther's scathing critiques. The brotherhoods were aided by the watchful eyes of local ecclesiastical authorities, who, in their copious visitation reports, kept tabs on membership numbers, financial portfolios, real estate holdings, liturgical furnishings for the proper celebration of the divine offices, etc. Scheutz meticulously unpacks the detailed visitation reports of 1617 and 1619, then turns to the confraternities' own wealth of archival material to supply additional information: registers of living and dead members, books of protocols and statutes, account ledgers, inventories, etc. He also notes the confraternities' substantial printing needs, together with their literary production, that supported local printing establishments, a subject highlighted by Matija Ogrin in the previous essay. Equally important in understanding the Austrian brotherhoods are the illustrated engravings—often depicting a miracle-working image—that were presented as New Year's gifts, and the multi-purpose matriculation certificates, also discussed by Sibylle Appuhn-Radtke. But another key print medium, as Scheutz points out, kept confraternities in the public eye: beginning in 1703, the *Wiener Diarium*, the earliest, continuously published daily newspaper that appears today as the *Wiener Zeitung*, carried up-to-date information about their activities. Not only did reports abound with descriptions of the great Roman archconfraternities, their magnificent processions, and generous philanthropic activities, but news about local brotherhoods also filled the pages, including lists of newly elected officers, deceased brethren, even those to whom the sodalities had lent money. Following the confraternities' suppression in 1783, the *Diarium* reported and illustrated the wealth of precious objects that were to be auctioned, allowing readers to confront the fate of this rich cultural heritage.

Rather than end on a note of loss, it seems appropriate to conclude the volume with the resplendent celestial visions painted on the ceilings of the Late Baroque pilgrimage churches in the Diocese of Augsburg. Angelika Dreyer explains that from the mid-18th century, the confraternal patrons responded to the principles emphasized by Catholic Enlightenment theologians, who recognized in the brotherhoods powerful instruments to fulfill their reform agenda. Their program

promulgated Christological devotion, paying special attention to Jesus' terrible suffering and agonizing death, encouraged new confraternal foundations with these dedications, and strongly endorsed the salvific power of grace and the Sacraments, particularly penance, while de-emphasizing veneration of Our Lady, inculcated by the ubiquitous Rosary confraternities. However, the calls for increased charitable works to replace sumptuous confraternal displays in processions, obsequies, and church decoration went in large part unheeded. Nonetheless, the monumental frescoes filling these churches exhibited a new simplicity in design and clarity in message by adhering closely to the biblical text—tenets that the Council of Trent had decreed explicitly in 1563, and the Catholic Enlightenment reaffirmed. Only in the late decoration of the parochial church in Haag am Amper (1764/65, 1783), as Dreyer demonstrates, did the appeal for a renewed focus on charity in this world, rather than rewards in the theater of the hereafter, take shape, but only as a swan song.

The breadth and evolution of devotions inspired by post-Tridentine pious practices, new philanthropic initiatives, accounts of political pressure from local, imperial, and ecclesiastical authorities, economic exigencies, and the diversity of civic spaces in which confraternities flourished are themes elucidated throughout the volume. So, too, are the histories of the churches, hospitals, chapels, and oratories they constructed and adorned with lavish altarpieces, extensive frescoes, and magnificent ceilings. The essays explore celebrated miracle-working icons that protected Polish cities from war and plague. Polychrome and gilded sculptures at confraternal altars across Croatia and the Slovenian lands took on vibrant life in flickering candlelight. So, too, complex multi-figured sculptural groups seemed animated as they were reverently carried aloft in processions by Genoese and Ligurian confraternal brethren. Prayer books, hymnals, membership certificates, all filled with engraved images, literally illuminated confraternal aspirations as did monumental murals and illusionistic paintings overhead.

Throughout the essays a number of significant issues appear and reappear. Foremost among them are the powerful roles played by the Mendicants and the Jesuits in establishing confraternities, the resulting competition for membership, and the critical place of national and civic identity in confraternal culture. In addition to presenting new archival research that documents brotherhoods and the works they commissioned, the essays demonstrate that much more study is required to integrate confraternities in a broader and more nuanced understanding of early modern religious, social, economic, and cultural history throughout Europe. A truly comprehensive history of art and architecture cannot exist without recognizing the contributions of confraternities, which were so crucial to their development.