

# The Artistic Patronage of the Confraternities of Schiavoni and Albanians in the Marche Region

## The Promotion of the “National” Saints in Pesaro

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### Introduction

The aim of this essay is to examine the artistic patronage of the confraternities of Schiavoni and Albanians in the Marche region in Italy, promoting the cult of specific national saints who came from the Balkan coast.<sup>1</sup> This objective will be pursued through the analysis of a “micro” case, that is, the promotion of St. Jerome and St. Veneranda in the city of Pesaro.<sup>2</sup>

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century many Schiavoni and Albanians escaped to the western Adriatic coast, especially (but not only) to the Marche region, for three main reasons: the Ottomans’ advance, the threat of the plague and financial needs.<sup>3</sup> The presence of Schiavoni and Albanians in many towns of the Marche, from Pesaro to Ascoli Piceno, is well documented.<sup>4</sup> These new immigrants often

<sup>1</sup> By Albanians we mean the inhabitants of the Balkan region that corresponds roughly to present-day Albania. Although Schiavonia or Slavonia is a historic region of eastern Croatia, the Schiavoni, who reached the Marche in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, came mostly from the Dalmatian coast. Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the term “Illyrian” was used to generally define the Balkan territory. The Illyrian colleges of Loreto and Fermo, founded to educate priests who would have to evangelize and heal the souls of Christians in the Balkan areas conquered by the Turks, in fact, indiscriminately housed students from Croatia and Albania (as well as from Serbia, Bosnia and Macedonia). See Carlo VERDUCCI, *Il collegio illirico di Fermo, Le Marche e l’Adriatico orientale. Economia, società, cultura dal XIII secolo al primo Ottocento. Atti del convegno. Senigallia, 10–11 gennaio 1976*, Ancona 1978, pp. 175–196; Marco MORONI, *I collegi illirici delle Marche e la penisola balcanica in età moderna, Adriatico. Un mare di storia, arte, cultura* (ed. Bonita Cleri), Ripatransone 2000, pp. 183–202.

<sup>2</sup> I have already studied the case of the migration of Balkan cults to Ascoli Piceno and Ancona; see Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI, *The Cauldron of St. Venera and the Comb of St. Blaise. Cult and Iconography in the Confraternities of Albanians and Schiavoni in Fifteenth-Century Ascoli Piceno*, *Confraternitas*, 27/1–2, 2016, pp. 30–45; Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI, *Ricordare le origini schiavone nel Settecento. La chiesa e la confraternita di San Biagio ad Ancona*, *Giornale di storia*, 25, 2017, pp. 1–28; Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI, *The Painting Owned by the Schiavoni Confraternity of Ancona and the Wooden Compartments with Stories of St. Blaise by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro, 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), pp. 187–209.

<sup>3</sup> Sergio ANSELMi, *Schiavoni e Albanesi nell’agricoltura marchigiana dei secoli XIV e XV, Le Marche e l’Adriatico* 1978 (n. 1), pp. 141–173.

<sup>4</sup> Francesco BONASERA, *La presenza storica degli albanesi nelle Marche*, Palermo 1981; *Italia felix. Migrazioni slave e albanesi in Occidente. Romagna, Marche, Abruzzi, secoli XIV–XVI* (ed. Sergio Anselmi), Urbino 1988.

had humble jobs, sometimes even humiliating ones, such as working as executioners.<sup>5</sup> In many cases their stay was strictly supervised, and on some occasions they were even expelled, as they were believed to be the carriers of the plague they had brought from the opposite coast.<sup>6</sup> In order to fight suspicion and prejudice, Schiavoni and Albanians would frequently group themselves into confraternities that fostered their members' integration into the civic and religious life of the new country.<sup>7</sup> Studies on the "unwanted minorities" in the Papal State in the 15<sup>th</sup> century have shown how, both in central and peripheral areas, the phenomenon of associations, especially confraternities, was one of the first and most effective integration strategies used by "foreigners" of the Catholic faith to amalgamate into their host society.<sup>8</sup> The presence of the confraternities of Albanians and Schiavoni in the Marche is well documented from Pesaro to Ascoli Piceno: in some cities we find either a confraternity of Albanians or Schiavoni, but in others (such as Fermo, Loreto, Recanati and Ascoli Piceno) we find confraternities of both Albanians and Schiavoni. While the confraternities of Albanians are usually dedicated to St. Venera or Veneranda, the Schiavoni brotherhoods have various dedications—to St. Blaise (patron saint of Dubrovnik), documented in Ancona and Ascoli Piceno, and to St. Jerome (national saint of the Illyrian people) in Loreto and Jesi.<sup>9</sup> The case of Pesaro is particularly noteworthy.

### The Schiavoni Confraternity, the Chapel of St. Peter and the New Oratory of St. Jerome

The dramatic situation of these ethnic minorities living in Pesaro during the plague epidemics of the 15<sup>th</sup> century is attested by the City Council records. To address the emergency, on 29 May 1462 the Council decided to expel all the Albanians and Schiavoni who did not own property in the city.<sup>10</sup> Again, because of the plague, on 14 January 1464 it was mandated that anyone who had been renting a house to Albanians or Schiavoni during the previous two months had to alert the Custody Office within two days or be sentenced to a 10 ducat fine and two months in jail. Furthermore,

<sup>5</sup> This occurred in many towns in the Marche, such as in Ancona. An act of the Council, dated 25 July 1439 and recorded in the city charter, states that "no Illyrian or Slav from whatever parts of Slavonia" (*quod nullus Inliricus seu Sclavus de quibuscunque partibus Sclavoniae*) could be forced to carry out the work of an executioner; see Archivio di Stato di Ancona, Archivio storico comunale di Ancona, Statuta Civitatis Anconae, 1394, in copia del 1426 circa, con successivi al 1501, fol. 51. The act was transcribed by Camillo Albertini (Biblioteca Benincasa of Ancona, Camillo Albertini, *Storia di Ancona*. 10/1: *Additiones*, fol. 10v) and mentioned by Mario NATALUCCI, *Insediamenti di dalmati, slavi e albanesi in Ancona, Le Marche e l'Adriatico* 1978 (n. 1), pp. 93–111, in particular p. 99.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, the events that occurred repeatedly in Macerata in the 15<sup>th</sup> century: Romano RUFFINI, *Medici e guaritori forestieri nella Marca anconitana, in particolare nella città di Macerata, nei secoli XIV–XVI, Studi maceratesi*, 30, 1996, pp. 233–480, in particular pp. 313–315.

<sup>7</sup> Mario SENSI, *Fraternite di slavi nelle Marche. Il secolo XV, Le Marche e l'Adriatico* 1978 (n. 1), pp. 53–84; Mario SENSI, *Slavi nelle Marche tra pietà e devozione, Studi maceratesi*, 30, 1996, pp. 481–506.

<sup>8</sup> Anna ESPOSITO, *Le minoranze indesiderate (corsi, slavi e albanesi) e il processo di integrazione della società romana nel corso del Quattrocento, Cittadinanza e mestieri. Radicamento urbano e integrazione nelle città basso-medievali secc. XIII–XVI* (ed. Beatrice Del Bo), Roma 2014, pp. 283–297.

<sup>9</sup> See the clarification by Francesca COLTRINARI, *Some notes on Confraternities, Immigrants and Artistic Production of the "Illyrians" in the Marche. The Unknown Master Piero di Giorgio da Sebenico in Fermo (1462), Visualizing Past* 2018 (n. 2), pp. 165–185.

<sup>10</sup> Biblioteca Oliveriana di Pesaro (BOP), Ms. 937, Squarci Almerici, vol. XII, BC, cc. 7r–8v; Marcello LUCHETTI, *Le confraternite a Pesaro dal XIII al XVII secolo*, Ancona 2013, p. 50.

every Albanian and Slav who had arrived in Pesaro during the previous two months was obliged to leave within two days or undergo the same sentence.<sup>11</sup> To confront this situation, as happened in many towns in the Marche, some of the immigrants began to form confraternities. While we do not have any archival proof about the foundation of a confraternity of Albanians, we know that a confraternity of Schiavoni in Pesaro definitively already existed in 1463, when Slav Pietro della Lia made his final testament, leaving his entire fortune to the confraternity.<sup>12</sup> According to Francesco Fabbri, an erudite scholar of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, that same year “*mercanti schiavoni*” founded an altar dedicated to St. Peter in the Pesaro Cathedral, which was privileged by Pope Gregory XIII (reigned 1572–1585); in the now lost epigraph (transcribed by Fabbri), the altar was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Jerome, but the confraternity was dedicated solely to St. Peter (*Societas Sancti Petri*).<sup>13</sup> Between 1476 and 1477, Niccolò di Antonio from Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Slavic barber Giovanni di Giovanni from Busano, and a poor beggar, Giorgio di Giovanni from Zagreb, bequeathed funds for the decoration of a *cappella illiricorum* dedicated to St. Peter, owned by the confraternity and located in the cathedral.<sup>14</sup> In 1483 Nicola di Priamo from Ragusa *elegit eius sepulturam in cappella Sancti Petri episcopatus Pisauri* (chose to be buried in the chapel of St. Peter in the Diocese of Pesaro), but also left 6 florins *congregationi Sancti Ieronimi pro fabrica et constructione oratorii construendi* (to the confraternity of St. Jerome for the building of the oratory that is already under construction).<sup>15</sup> By that date, the Schiavoni had already started to build an oratory distinct from the chapel, attested by the will of Paolo Radi, who had served as a tailor to Costanzo Sforza, the lord of Pesaro. In 1485, Radi left 200 florins *pro fabrica et aedificio unius oratorii seu ecclesie construende et fundande ad honorem omnipotentis Dei, sub vocabolo S. Hieronimi, que ecclesia seu oratorium sit et esse debeat oratorium et congregario scoriatorum sclavorum* (for the building of an oratory, or church, that is already under construction and founded in honor of the Omnipotent God with a dedication to St. Jerome, that this church, or oratory, is and ought to be the oratory and gathering place of the Flagellant Slavs).<sup>16</sup> This oratory, dedicated to St. Jerome, became the new residence of the confraternity upon its consecration (the precise date is unknown). The late 15<sup>th</sup>-century statutes, preserved in a copy dated 1611, are titled *Capitoli della Fraternita di S. Pietro Apostolo et di San Girolamo Dottore di Santa Chiesa nella città di Pesaro*,<sup>17</sup> and unify the dedications of the first confraternal altar in the cathedral and the newer one in the oratory.

<sup>11</sup> LUCHETTI 2013 (n. 10), p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> LUCHETTI 2013 (n. 10), p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> BOP, Ms. 320, Francesco Fabbri, Storia di Pesaro, c. 37r. The same data is reported by the scholar in another work, where 1469 is erroneously considered the foundation date; see BOP, Ms. 204, Francesco Fabbri, Historia della vita et morte del glorioso S. Terentio martire titolare della cattedrale e protettore della città di Pesaro, c. 81r.

<sup>14</sup> LUCHETTI 2013 (n. 10), p. 51. For the document regarding Giorgio di Giovanni from Zagreb, see BOP, Spogli d'Archivi, Ms. 376, vol. II, c. 631v.

<sup>15</sup> Oreste DELUCCA, Gli slavi a Pesaro, *Santa Veneranda degli schiavoni* (ed. Girolamo Allegretti), Pesaro 1990 (Costellazioni, 5), pp. 12–18, in particular p. 18, where the author mentions many documents without citing archival references.

<sup>16</sup> Paolo M. ERTLER, *La Madonna delle Grazie di Pesaro. Origine e primi sviluppi del santuario 1469–1687*, 2, Roma 1991, p. 627; LUCHETTI 2013 (n. 10), pp. 51–52.

<sup>17</sup> BOP, Ms 463, cc. 208r–221v.



1. School of Giovanni Santi: Lunette with Christ as the Man of Sorrows; Virgin and Child with St. Peter and St. Jerome, Duomo, Pesaro

Because of the bombing by Cesare Borgia in 1503<sup>18</sup> and a substantial 19<sup>th</sup>-century restoration of the church by architect Giovan Battista Carducci,<sup>19</sup> only a detached fresco from the Schiavoni chapel remains as a testament to the confraternity's patronage. Preserved in the Pesaro Cathedral, it is attributed to the school of Giovanni Santi (fig. 1).<sup>20</sup> The painting in the lunette depicts Christ as the Man of Sorrows supported by two angels, while below, the Virgin and Child are enthroned between St. Peter and St. Jerome, the two patrons of the brotherhood. The presence of Jerome, the Church Father who translated the Bible into the Vulgate, is especially meaningful. Born in Stridone, in Istria (part of Illyria), he had become the saintly representative of the Illyrian

<sup>18</sup> According to a document published by Paride Berardi, in 1505, because of the bombing by Cesare Borgia, the main chapel of the cathedral of Pesaro and the chapel of St. Peter were to be rebuilt by Agostino di maestro Cecco da Fabriano, following the model made by Andrea di Girolamo della Ciacca; see *Arte e artisti a Pesaro. Regesti di documenti di età malatestiana e di età sforzesca. Scultori e architetti. Parte terza* (ed. Paride Berardi), Pesaro 2002 (= *Pesaro. Città e contà*, 16, 2002), pp. 158, 162–164.

<sup>19</sup> Virginia TEODORI, *Giovan Battista Carducci architetto fermano 1806–1878*, Fermo 2001, pp. 168–178.

<sup>20</sup> Grazia CALEGARI, La pala di Pesaro e la città in quegli anni, *Adriatico. Un mare di storia, arte, cultura. 2: Atti del convegno, Ancona, 20–22 maggio 1999* (ed. Bonita Cleri), Ripatransone (AP) 2000, pp. 129–147, in particular pp. 144–145; Grazia CALEGARI, L'affresco restaurato nel Duomo di Pesaro. Raffaello adolescente?, *Le cento città*, 15, 2000, pp. 42–44; Grazia CALEGARI, Madonna col Bambino fra i santi Pietro e Girolamo. Cristo deposto, *Raffaello e Urbino. La formazione giovanile e i rapporti con la città natale* (ed. Lorenza Mochi Onori), Milan 2009, pp. 154–155. Before the restoration of 1999, the fresco was attributed to an unknown follower of Barocci (Giuliano VANZOLINI, *Guida di Pesaro*, Pesaro 1864, p. 136) or to an unknown artist from the Marche (Ciro CONTINI, *Pesaro. Guida storica ed artistica illustrata*, Pesaro 1962, p. 84).

nation as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the church of the Illyrian nation in Rome is dedicated to St. Jerome, and is currently known as St. Jerome of the Croatians.<sup>22</sup> Although the confraternal members had emphasized their Illyrian origin through St. Jerome, over the centuries the memory of their Slavic origins was lost. A pastoral visit in 1778 recorded that the group was of uncertain foundation and only bore the name of St. Peter.<sup>23</sup>

### The Confraternity of St. Veneranda and its Church

The presence of Albanians in Pesaro is even harder to trace, even though a peripheral suburb of the municipality is named St. Veneranda, the saint of Albanians *par excellence* in the Marche. In this hamlet there is a church also dedicated to the saint, where the patronage of the confraternity of St. Veneranda in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is still recognizable. In 1990 the town of Pesaro published a volume edited by Girolamo Allegretti attributing Slavic origins to both the confraternity and the village, as its title indicates: *Santa Veneranda degli Schiavoni*.<sup>24</sup> In fact, among the archival documents concerning the church and its confraternity from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which I discovered in the diocesan archives of Pesaro, there are no references to Slavic or Albanian origins of the brotherhood. Nevertheless, I believe that the origins of both the confraternity and the village are indeed Albanian because throughout the Marche, without exception, confraternities dedicated to St. Veneranda all have documented Albanian origins. In fact, St. Veneranda is a Balkan saint, highly venerated in Albania. She arrived in the Marche thanks to the migration of Albanians, where she also acquired the attribute of a cauldron, originally the attribute of the homonymous St. Veneranda of Rome.<sup>25</sup> Despite the problematic origins of the confraternity, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century its patronage was unmistakably aimed at promoting the saint's cult.

In 1616 the decorative structure of the confraternal church was remodeled, and the new layout incorporated a fresco from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>26</sup> (fig. 2). The enthroned Virgin and Child are accompanied by St. Sebastian on the left and St. Veneranda on the right. Seated on the Virgin's lap, Jesus holds an unidentifiable bird, a traditional symbol of the sinner's soul saved by him,<sup>27</sup> and grasps his mother's mantle, anticipating his shroud. The deep red coral necklace is another symbol of his Passion, although coral was contemporaneously used

<sup>21</sup> Daniel RUSSO, *Saint Jérôme en Italie. Étude d'iconographie et de spiritualité XIIIe–XVe siècle*, Paris 1987; Eugene Franklin RICE, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, Baltimore 1988; Ines IVIĆ, *The Cult of Saint Jerome in Dalmatia in the Fifteenth and the Sixteenth Centuries*, Budapest 2016 (MA Thesis).

<sup>22</sup> Jasenka GUDELJ, San Girolamo dei Croati a Roma. Gli Schiavoni e il cantiere sistino, *Identità e rappresentazione. Le chiese nazionali a Roma 1450–1650* (eds. Alexander Koller, Susanne Kubersky-Piredda), Roma 2015, pp. 297–325.

<sup>23</sup> *La visita pastorale del cardinale Gennaro Antonio de Simone alla diocesi di Pesaro 1776–78* (ed. Giulio F. Allegretti), Pesaro 2007, p. 832.

<sup>24</sup> *Santa Veneranda* 1990 (n. 15).

<sup>25</sup> CAPRIOTTI 2016 (n. 2).

<sup>26</sup> The painting was mentioned by Manuela MARINI, I temi pittorici della tradizione popolare, *Santa Veneranda* 1990 (n. 15), pp. 23–27, and CALEGARI 2000 (n. 20), p. 145.

<sup>27</sup> On the symbolism of the birds, see Francesco SORCE, *La Madonna del passero* di Guercino. Problemi di esegesi visiva e simbolismo degli uccelli, *Il Capitale Culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, 18, 2018, pp. 85–117.

as an amulet for children.<sup>28</sup> In the foreground a footed bowl overflows with fruit—cherries, apples, a fig or a pear. Although possibly alluding to the fruits' symbolic meanings,<sup>29</sup> it seems more likely a votive offering to the Virgin. Graffiti inscriptions left by devotees throughout the centuries demonstrate the affective powers of the Virgin and this image.

On the right, St. Veneranda suffers martyrdom inside a searing cauldron, while praying with joined palms and holding a *circulum precatorium*, a forebear of the Franciscan *corona* (crown).<sup>30</sup> According to legend, because of her Christian faith, Emperor Antoninus Pius had her placed in a cauldron of boiling oil and tar, but this method of execution proved to be ineffective. When accused of practicing magic, Veneranda splashed the hot tar into the emperor's eyes and blinded him. Thanks to her fervent prayers, the emperor converted and regained his sight.<sup>31</sup> St. Sebastian is portrayed tied to a column with arrows piercing his body. Since antiquity, arrows have symbolized the vehicle through which an enraged divinity sends plague to punish humankind. St. Sebastian, having survived this martyrdom, was venerated as a powerful protector against plague.<sup>32</sup> In this case, it must be underscored that Albanians from Pesaro, along with the Schiavoni, had been accused several times of being carriers of the contagion. In the fresco, therefore, the two saints could represent both the ethnic identity of the confraternity and the fraught indictment most often used against them.

In the upper zone, two angels crown the Virgin with a garland of roses, complementing the circlet of pearls held by Veneranda. Stylistically, the angels and the lush green curtains are early 17<sup>th</sup>-century additions, when the original altar was modified. The fresco was transformed into the



2. Virgin and Child with St. Sebastian and St. Veneranda, old church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)

<sup>28</sup> On these symbols, see Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI, *Ce sta picto. Simboli e figure nella pittura di Vittore Crivelli e del suo tempo, Vittore Crivelli da Venezia alle Marche. Maestri del Rinascimento in Appennino* (eds. Francesca Coltrinari, Alessandro Delpriori), Padova 2011, pp. 73–85.

<sup>29</sup> See in general Mirella LEVI D'ANCONA, *The Garden of the Renaissance. Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting*, Firenze 1977.

<sup>30</sup> In effect, seven decades of beads can be counted, as the early modern Franciscan *corona* (crown). On the contrary, the Dominican rosary counts 15 decades (corresponding to the 15 mysteries). On the Franciscan tradition, see Leone BRACALONI, *Origine, evoluzione ed affermazione della Corona francescana mariana, Studi francescani*, 29, 1932, pp. 257–295.

<sup>31</sup> For a revision of the data on the saint, see CAPRIOTTI 2016 (n. 2), pp. 33–34.

<sup>32</sup> On the “culture of plague”, see Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI, *San Sebastiano nei luoghi della paura. Sculture lignee dipinte nelle Marche centrali del Quattrocento, Giovani studiosi a confronto. Ricerche di storia dell'arte* (ed. Alessia Fiabane), Roma 2004, pp. 23–37; Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI, *Un dipinto contra pestem di Paolo da Visso. “Crisi della presenza” e simbologia della freccia nella pittura italiana del XV secolo, Iconographica*, 9, 2010, pp. 75–88.



3. Altar wall, old church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)

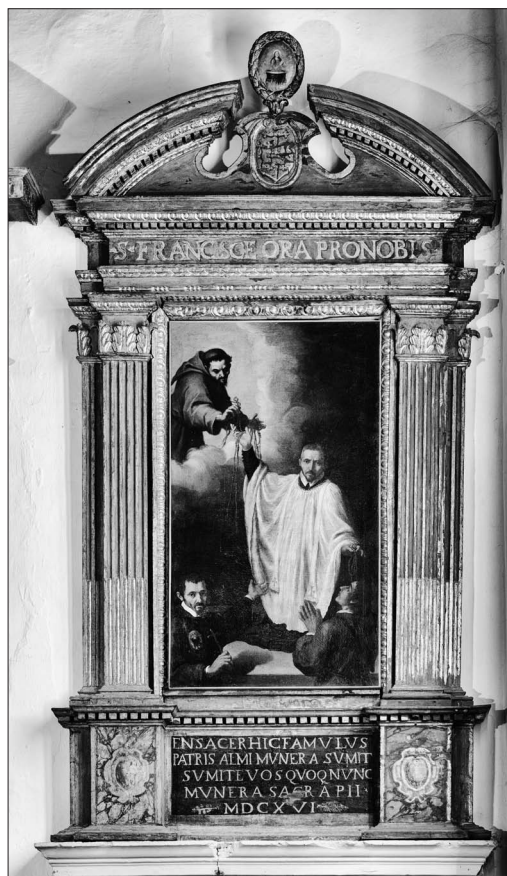
center of what could be considered a detached triptych occupying the entire altar wall (fig. 3). A classicizing painted and gilded wooden frame is articulated with two attached composite columns on its sides, a decorated architrave, and a curved, broken pediment. A small aedicule at the top contains the dedication: *DEI GE / NITRICI / ET B(EATAE) / VENE / RANDAE / D(EDICATUM)*. Below, a small plaque on the architrave is inscribed *PII HOMINES*, memorializing the devout men who commissioned the new altar consecrated to both the Virgin and Veneranda.

Above the doors to the sacristy, on either side of the altar, is a pair of paintings portraying St. Carlo Borromeo and St. Francis. The date 1616 on both frames records when the entire altar wall was remodeled. Even without specific documentation about the cult of these two saints in the Santa Veneranda confraternity, it is significant that when renovating the altar, the medieval St. Francis was juxtaposed with Carlo Borromeo, newly canonized in 1610. Kneeling in prayer before a crucifix, with a gesture of revelation as the heavens open to reveal the Holy Spirit (fig. 4), St. Carlo is asked to “Pray for us” (*S. CAROLE ORA PRO NOBIS*), and the following is invoked on the base of the frame: *TV NOSTROS ANIMOS / TV FER SVSPYRIA NOSTRA / DEFER VOTA, PRECES / THVRAQ(VE) NOSTRA DEO / MDCXVI* (You lead our souls, guide our sighs and carry our vows, prayers and incense to God. 1616). St. Francis is beseeched in the same way: *S. FRANCISCE ORA PRO NOBIS* (fig. 5). In the case of St. Carlo, the painter followed a rather traditional hagiographic iconography with the saint kneeling in front of a crucifix.<sup>33</sup> However, the image of St. Francis does not seem to have any iconographic precedents. The saint delivers his cinctures, knotted ropes signifying the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, to a clergyman, who, in turn, passes it to a

<sup>33</sup> See Angelo Maria RAGGI, Carlo Borromeo. 4: Iconografia, *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, 3, Roma 1962, coll. 846–850.



4. Giovan Giacomo Pandolfi: St. Charles Borromeo, old church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)



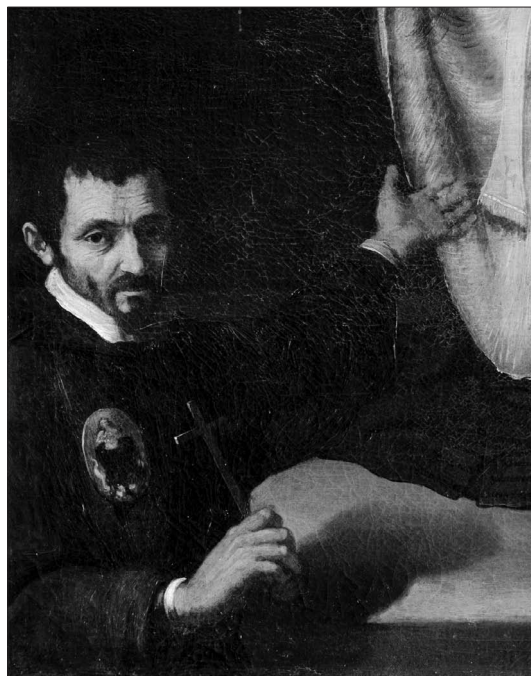
5. Giovan Giacomo Pandolfi: St. Francis Delivers the Cinctures, old church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)

confraternal member, portrayed in prayer at the bottom right. On the left, another brother looks toward the viewer while holding a cross in one hand and with the other directing attention to the miraculous event that transpires above. In this case, perhaps thanks to the suggestion of a cultured cleric, the painter has depicted a new iconography, reworking a specific type of image in which the Virgin is the protagonist, such as: the Virgin who bestows her sash (*cintola*) upon St. Thomas during her Assumption;<sup>34</sup> the Madonna who gives the rosary to St. Dominic;<sup>35</sup> and the Virgin who appears to St. Simon Stock and gives him the scapular.<sup>36</sup> In particular, the latter two subjects became widespread during the Counter-Reformation era. Moreover, on the image of St. Francis, another element underscores Counter-Reformation precepts, that is, the central role played by the clergyman who acts as a mediator between the saint and the brothers, like the Church between God and

<sup>34</sup> On this iconography and on its literary sources, see Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI, *Lo scorpione sul petto. Iconografia antiebraica tra XV e XVI secolo alla periferia dello Stato pontificio*, Roma 2014, pp. 41–57.

<sup>35</sup> See Ivana ČAPETA RAKIĆ, Giuseppe CAPRIOTTI, Two Marian Iconographic Themes in the Face of Islam on the Adriatic Coast in the Early Modern Period, *IKON. Journal of Iconographic Studies*, 10, 2017, pp. 169–186.

<sup>36</sup> See Ludovico SAGGI, Claudio MOCCHEGIANI CARPANO, Simone Stock, *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, 11, Roma 1968, coll. 1188–1192.



6. Giovan Giacomo Pandolfi: *A brother of the confraternity, detail of St. Francis Delivers the Cinctures*, old church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)



7. Giovan Giacomo Pandolfi: *Confraternal insignia of St. Veneranda, upper part of the frame of St. Francis Delivers the Cinctures*, old church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)

the faithful. The words written at the bottom appear to be uttered by the brother gazing intently at the observer: *EN SACER HIC FAMVLVS / PATRIS ALMI MVNERA SVMIT / SVMITE VOS QVOQ(VE) NVNC / MUNERA SACRA A PII / MDCXVI* (Here is this sacred servant of the benevolent Father receiving the gifts. You too are now taking the sacred gifts of the pious man. 1616). Reinforcing Catholic tenets of belief and practice, the brother invites the devout to recognize the essential role played by the clergyman. Because such specific facial features were used, he might portray the priest who participated in the devotional practices of the confraternity and helped to develop the innovative image. The brother standing on the left, with the oval confraternal badge of St. Veneranda in the cauldron clearly recognizable on his chest, might well be a portrait of the patron (fig. 6).

The same emblem crowns the frames of both side panels (fig. 7), is sculpted on the architrave of the sacristy doors and is painted at the center of the choir on the counter-façade (fig. 8). It is also depicted in a relief on the two holy water fountains, moved to the new church of St. Veneranda, which was built near the first church in the 1950s (fig. 9).<sup>37</sup> St. Veneranda is, therefore, the epicenter of the cult of the brotherhood, which also possessed a relic of the saint, documented in their inventories

<sup>37</sup> Although the two holy water fountains are currently located in the new church on each side of the portal, I believe they were originally placed in the old church. One seems to have been made at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and could be contemporary with the fresco. The other seems to be a cruder 17<sup>th</sup>-century copy, perhaps to create a pendant when the church was renovated, but neither is stylistically of high quality. I thank Graziano Alfredo Vergani for enlightening discussions about these objects.



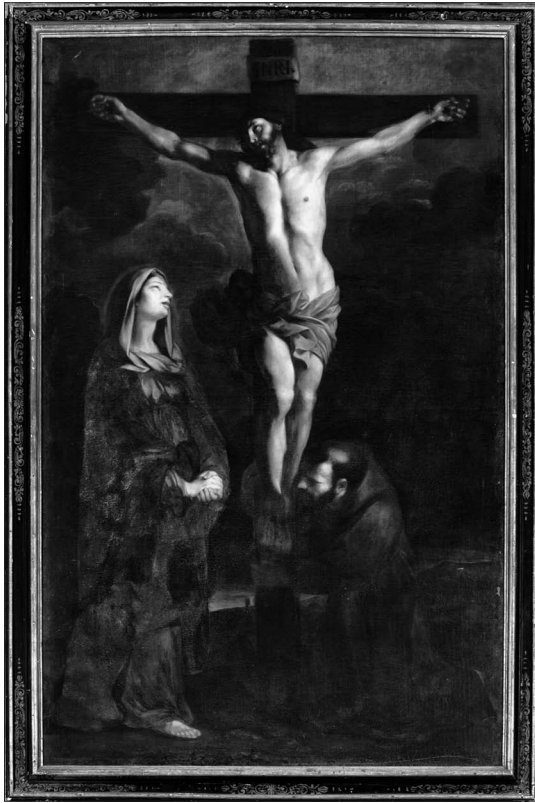
8. Choir, old church of St. Veneranda,  
Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)



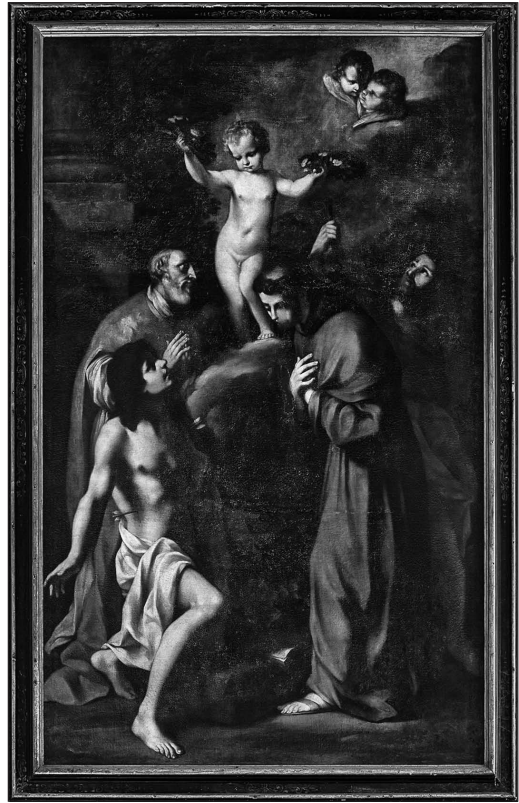
9. Holy Water Font, new church of  
St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)



10. Reliquary of St. Veneranda, new church  
of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)



11. *Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. Francis*, new church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)



12. *Child Jesus Crowning St. Sebastian and St. Anthony of Padua with St. Filippo Neri and an Unidentified Saint*, new church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)

from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and still extant.<sup>38</sup> The fragment of the saint's body is now preserved in an 18<sup>th</sup>-century reliquary in the new church of St. Veneranda (fig. 10).<sup>39</sup>

Originally, the decoration included two additional paintings, currently located in the new church: the *Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. Francis* (fig. 11) and the *Child Jesus Crowning St. Sebastian and St. Anthony of Padua with St. Filippo Neri and an Unidentified Saint* (fig. 12). These had been placed on the lateral walls of the old church, where their hooks may still be seen, allowing a virtual reconstruction of the church (fig. 13). In the *Stato della chiesa di Santa Veneranda* (State of the Church of St. Veneranda), drawn up in 1850 during a pastoral visit, all the 17<sup>th</sup>-century paintings were

<sup>38</sup> An undated inventory of the church of St. Veneranda states: "Nella suddetta chiesa si conserva un pezzo di reliquia del corpo di S.ta Veneranda colla sua autentica confermata dal fu Monsignor Radicati, già vescovo di Pesaro" (Archivio Storico Diocesano di Pesaro (ASDP), Atti della parrocchia di S. Pietro in Calibano, n. 47). Because Umberto Luigi Radicati was bishop between 1739 and 1773, we can document the existence of the relics from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the pastoral visit between 1776 and 1778, made by Gennaro Antonio de Simone, the relics of St. Veneranda are mentioned again: "Nella chiesa di Santa Veneranda si venera quella di detta santa e stanno custodite nel loro armadio sotto chiave; si espongono poi alla pubblica venerazione con quattro lumi e sua incensazione, secondo dice la rubrica"; see *La visita pastorale* 2007 (n. 23), p. 286.

<sup>39</sup> Because the style of the reliquary is Late Baroque in the upper part, but Neoclassical in the lower, with two lions on the base, we surmise that the object was conceived at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Bishop Radicati approved the authenticity of the relics. Again, I thank Graziano Alfredo Vergani for his insightful observations.



13. Hypothetical reconstruction of the position of the paintings inside the old church of St. Veneranda, Santa Veneranda (Pesaro)

attributed to “a certain Cantarini” or Pandolfi, both from Pesaro.<sup>40</sup> The attribution to Simone Cantarini (1612–1648) must be excluded for all the paintings preserved in the old church, not only on stylistic evidence, but because of the painter’s age.<sup>41</sup> In my opinion, the four paintings were conceived in two distinct decorative campaigns. Those on the altar wall are dated 1616, and have been convincingly attributed to Giovan Giacomo Pandolfi (and his workshop).<sup>42</sup> The other two were added later, certainly

<sup>40</sup> “Altari n. 3. Il maggiore sotto l’invocazione della B.M.V. dell’Apinta, S. Sebastiano, e S. Veneranda. Il Secondo del SS.mo Crocefisso, quale è di Celebre Autore, cioè o di un Certo Cantarini o vero di Pandolfi, e come pure la Madonna Addolorata di eguale celebrità. Il terzo sotto l’invocazione di S. Sebastiano, e S. Antonio. Et altri due quadri, che stanno sopra le porte della Sagrestia, cioè S. Carlo, e S. Francesco, si dice, che siano di eguali autori del SS.mo Crocefisso. Tutti 3 questi altari sono relativamente privilegiati in perpetuo per i fratelli, e sorelle della Compagnia di S. Veneranda soltanto, come risulta dal Breve della S. Memoria di Clemente XIV datato il dì 18 settembre 1772” (ASDP, Santa Veneranda, 50/3, n. 1).

<sup>41</sup> See in general *Simone Cantarini detto il Pesarese 1612–1648* (ed. Andrea Emiliani), Milano 1997; *Simone Cantarini nelle Marche* (eds. Andrea Emiliani, Anna Maria Ambrosini Massari), Venezia 1997; Mario MANCIGOTTI, *Il Pesarese ed i suoi capolavori. Simone Cantarini 1612–1648*, Pesaro 2006; *Pesaro per Simone Cantarini. Genio ribelle 1612–2012* (ed. Anna Maria Ambrosini Massari), Ancona 2012.

<sup>42</sup> On Pandolfi, in addition to the bibliography mentioned in the following note, see in general Stefano DE MIERI, Pandolfi, Giovan Giacomo, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 80, Roma 2014, *ad vocem*.

after 1622, when Filippo Neri was canonized. They seem to have been made in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century by a painter who was very familiar with Emilian art, in particular Guido Reni and Guercino, but who had also learned from the example of Caravaggio and his followers.<sup>43</sup>

It is difficult to make a general statement about the evolution of the confraternity's devotional practices owing to a total absence of documentation. However, the images preserved in the church show us that between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the confraternity was exclusively devoted to St. Veneranda and St. Sebastian, who are represented in the oldest painting, together with the Virgin and Child. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, St. Francis and St. Anthony of Padua, two medieval Franciscan saints, and St. Carlo Borromeo and St. Filippo Neri, both canonized in the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, were added when the new decoration of the church was underway. The presence of St. Francis and St. Anthony suggests that the confraternity was linked to the Franciscan order and that the latter guided the devotional practices of the brothers. On the other hand, the presence of the two new saints might express the desire to incorporate post-Tridentine religious models as well, perhaps required by the bishop or other officials of the diocese.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is possible to observe how in the case of the confraternity of Schiavoni of Pesaro, the strong Illyrian identity, documented by sources and reinforced through the image of St. Jerome, had been lost over the centuries. By the time of the pastoral visit of 1778, there was neither mention of the old oratory dedicated to St. Jerome nor the Slavic origin of the confraternity—only that the divine patron of the brotherhood was St. Peter alone. Whereas in the case of the confraternity of St. Veneranda, an Albanian origin seems to be the only reasonable hypothesis, for which, as of now, there is no documentary support. However, the decorative complex of the church of St. Veneranda bears witness that even in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the confraternity promoted the cult of the “national” saint of the Albanians living in the Marche.\*

<sup>43</sup> I would like to thank Anna Maria Ambrosini Massari for having discussed with me the problems of attributing these paintings. Without reference to documentation, the paintings in the old church of St. Veneranda have been attributed to Giovan Giacomo Pandolfi, and the other works, currently in the new church, to Simone Cantarini by Grazia CALEGARI, *I nuovi temi della pittura colta, Santa Veneranda* 1999 (n. 15), pp. 28–35. See also Grazia CALEGARI, Giovan Giacomo Pandolfi, *i Della Rovere e la corte di Spagna, I Della Rovere nell'Italia delle corti. 2: Luoghi e opere d'arte* (eds. Bonita Cleri, Gian Carlo Bojani), Urbino 2002, pp. 205–222 (where the confraternal brother's face in the *St. Francis* is considered the painter's self-portrait); Grazia CALEGARI, Giovan Giacomo Pandolfi, *Nel segno di Barocci. Allievi e seguaci tra Marche, Umbria, Siena* (eds. Anna Maria Ambrosini Massari, Marina Cellini), Milano 2005, pp. 220–223, and in particular p. 233 (where the works in St. Veneranda are mentioned). See also Antaldo ANTALDI, *Notizie di alcuni architetti, pittori, scultori di Urbino, Pesaro e de' luoghi circconvicini* (ed. Anna Cerboni Baiardi), Pesaro 1996, pp. 76–77 (where the *Crucifixion* in the new church of St. Veneranda is attributed to Pandolfi).

\* This work has been fully supported by the Croatian Science Foundation under the project number 2305—*Visualizing Nationhood. The Schiavoni/Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Italy and the Artistic Exchange with South East Europe (15th–18th c.)*.

## Umetnostno naročništvo slovanskih in albanskih bratovščin v Markah

### Propagiranje »nacionalnih« svetnikov v Pesaru

#### Povzetek

Skupine Slovanov (*Schiavonov*) in Albancev so se od 15. stoletja naprej preseljevale z vzhodne obale Jadrana v Marke v glavnem iz treh razlogov: zaradi otomanskega napredovanja, nevarnosti kuge in finančnih stisk. Da bi premagale nezaupanje in predsodke, so se te »nezaželene« manjšine pogosto združevale v bratovščine, ki so spodbujale vključevanje svojih članov v civilno in versko življenje nove domovine. Prisotnost slovanskih in albanskih bratovščin v Markah je dobro dokumentirana vse od Pesara do Ascoli Picena.

Cilj prispevka je preučiti umetnostno naročništvo teh bratovščin, ki so spodbujale kult specifičnih svetnikov, pri čemer se osredotoča na primer Pesara. Tu je slovanska bratovščina dokumentirana od leta 1463, ko je *Schiavone* Pietro della Lia v oporoki zapustil vse svoje premoženje bratovščini. Potem je leta 1477 Giorgio di Giovanni iz Zagreba (med drugimi) zapustil 10 dukatov za okras sv. Petru posvečene *cappelle illiricorum* v pesarski stolnici. Leta 1483 je bratovščina gradila oratorij, posvečen sv. Hieronimu, ki ni bil identičen s kapelo. Z združitvijo patrocinijev prvotnega oltarja v stolnici in novega v oratoriju je bratovščina dobila dva zavetnika, sv. Petra in sv. Hieronima. Oba sta upodobljena tudi na freski, ki je prvotno krasila kapelo in jo je mogoče pripisati šoli Giovannija Santija. Sneta freska, danes hranjena v pesarski stolnici, je edini dokaz o obstoju kapele in oratorija slovanske bratovščine v Pesaru. Slikarija v luneti kaže Kristusa kot Moža bolečin, ki ga podpirata angela; spodaj je Marija z otrokom na prestolu med obema bratovščinskima svetnikoma. Prisotnost sv. Hieronima, cerkvenega očeta, ki je prevedel Sveto pismo v latinščino, ima poseben pomen. Sv. Hieronim, rojen v Stridonu v Istri (del Ilirije), je že v 15. stoletju postal svetniški predstavnik ilirskega naroda. Tudi ilirska nacionalna cerkev v Rimu je posvečena sv. Hieronimu. Čeprav so člani bratovščine s sv. Hieronimom poudarili svoje ilirsko poreklo, se je spomin na njihov slovanski izvor skozi stoletja izgubil; ob pastoralni vizitaciji leta 1778 je bilo zabeleženo, da je bratovščina posvečena zgolj sv. Petru.

Edina priča o kolektivni albanski identiteti v Pesaru pa je freska sv. Venerande iz 15. stoletja, ohranjena v cerkvi v sosednji vasi Santa Veneranda. Sv. Veneranda je v resnici balkanska svetnica, zelo češčena v Albaniji. V Marke je prišla z migracijo Albancev in tu privzela atribut kotla, ki je bil prvotno atribut istoimenske svetnice iz Rima. Freska kaže Marijo z otrokom, ki jo spremljata sv. Boštjan na levi in sv. Veneranda na desni strani. Sv. Veneranda je upodobljena med mučeništvom v vrelem kotlu, v molitvi in z rožnim vencem v rokah. Sv. Boštjan je privezan na steber, njegovo telo prebadajo puščice. Od antike dalje so bile puščice vizualizacija sredstva, s katerim je jezno božanstvo za kazen poslalo nad človeštvo kugo. Ker je sv. Boštjan to mučenje preživel, so ga obhajali kot mogočnega zavetnika proti kugi. Poudariti je treba, da so bili Albanci iz Pesara skupaj s Slovani večkrat obtoženi, da prenašajo bolezen. Na freski bi lahko svetnika predstavljala etnično identiteto bratovščine in hkrati obtožbe, ki so bile najpogostejše uperjene proti njim.

Leta 1616 je bila freska spremenjena v osrednji del triptiha, ki zaseda celotno oltarno steno. Na vsaki strani je nad vrati, ki vodijo v zakristijo, uokvirjena slika z letnico 1616; ena kaže novokanoniziranega sv. Karla Boromejskega, druga sv. Frančiška; na obeh je napis *Ora pro nobis*. Sv. Karel kleči v molitvi pred Križanim z drugim napisom, ki se v prevodu glasi: *Usmerjaj naše duše, vodi naše vzdihljaje in nosi naše zaobljube, molitve in kadila Bogu 1616*. Če je slikar pri sv. Karlu Boromejskem sledil precej tradicionalni ikonografiji, ko ga je upodobil kleččega pred križem, pa se zdi, da podoba sv. Frančiška nima ikonografskih predhodnic. Svetnik izroča svoje pasove, vrvi z vozli, ki ponazarjajo zaobljubo revščini,

čistosti in poslušnosti, duhovniku, ta pa jih nato predaja članu bratovščine, upodobljenemu v molitvi spodaj na desni. Na levi se v gledalca ozira drug član bratovščine, v eni roki drži križ, z drugo usmerja pozornost na pomembni dogodek, ki se odvija zgoraj. Verjetno s pomočjo nekega izobraženega klerika je slikar v tem primeru iznašel novo ikonografsko rešitev, tako da je predelal specifičen tip podobe, v kateri je protagonistka Marija: npr. Marija, ki med vnebovzetjem izroča svoj pas sv. Tomažu; Marija, ki daje svoj rožni venec sv. Dominiku; Marija, ki se prikaže sv. Simonu Stocku in mu da svoj škapulir. Predvsem zadnja motiva sta postala zelo razširjena v času protireformacije. Na podobi se na protireformacijsko kulturo nanaša še en element, osrednja vloga duhovnika, ki deluje kot posrednik med svetnikom in člani bratovščine, kakor Cerkev posreduje med Bogom in verniki. Na dnu podobe so napisane besede, ki jih dozdevno izgovarja član, obrnjen proti gledalcu, in se v prevodu glasi: *Glejte, tukaj prejema sveti služabnik darove dobrohotnega očeta. Sprejmite zdaj tudi vi svete darove pobožnega moža*. Utrjujoč načela katoliške vere in prakse član bratovščine vabi vernike, da prepoznajo ključno vlogo, ki jo ima duhovnik. Ker je ta upodobljen s specifičnimi obraznimi potezi, gre prav mogoče za portret duhovnika, ki je v času naročila slike vodil bratovščino in je kot naročnik pomagal slikarju izdelati tako inovativno podobo. Emblem bratovščine se pojavlja v cerkvi na številnih mestih in poudarja sv. Venerando kot žarišče kulta bratovščine, ki je imela v lasti tudi relikvijo svetnice.

Okras je prvotno vključeval še dve sliki, ki sta danes v novi cerkvi sv. Venerande: *Križani z Marijo in sv. Frančiškom* ter *Jezus otrok s sv. Antonom Padovanskim, sv. Filipom Nerijem, sv. Boštjanom in neprepoznanim svetnikom*. Sliki sta sprva viseli na stranskih stenah stare cerkve; tu so še vidni kavlji, ki omogočajo virtualno rekonstrukcijo cerkve. Staro atribucijo slik Simoneju Cantariniju je treba ovreči. Menim, da so bile slike narejene v dveh različnih okrasnih akcijah. Tisti na oltarni steni sta datirani 1616 in sta prepričljivo pripisani Giovanu Giacomu Pandolfiju (in delavnici). Preostali dve sta bili dodani kasneje, vsekakor po kanonizaciji Filipa Nerija leta 1622. Zdi se, da ju je sredi 17. stoletja naredil slikar, ki je dobro poznal umetnost Emilije, še posebej Guida Renija in Guercina, učil pa se je tudi od Caravaggia in njegovih naslednikov.

Vidimo lahko, kako se je v primeru slovanske bratovščine v Pesaru močna ilirska identiteta, ki jo dokumentirajo viri in ki jo je okrepila podoba sv. Hieronima, skozi stoletja izgubila. Ob pastoralni vizitaciji leta 1778 se sv. Hieronimu posvečeni stari oratorij ali slovansko poreklo bratovščine ne omenjata več, kot zavetnik bratovščine se omenja le sv. Peter. Pri bratovščini sv. Venerande pa se zdi edina sprejemljiva hipoteza, da je albanskega izvora, vendar tega doslej ni bilo mogoče potrditi z dokumenti. Kljub temu pa okras cerkve sv. Venerande priča, da je bratovščina v 17. stoletju še vedno spodbujala kult »nacionalne« svetnice v Markah živečih Albancev.