

SUPPLEMENTI

# Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country:

Schiavoni/Illyrian  
Confraternities and Colleges  
in Early Modern Italy  
in comparative perspective

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# Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country: Schiavoni/Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in comparative perspective

This work has been fully supported by 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 (15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> c.)



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# Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country: Schiavoni/Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in comparative perspective

edited by Giuseppe Capriotti, Francesca Coltrinari,  
Jasenka Gudelj

# The painting owned by the Schiavoni Confraternity of Ancona and the wooden compartments with *Stories of St Blaise* by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro\*

Giuseppe Capriotti\*\*

## *Abstract*

The aim of this paper is to analyze the phenomenon related to the migration of the cult as well as the iconography of St Blaise towards the Italian Adriatic coast, due to

\* This work has been fully supported by 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 (15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> c.).

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This essay is a synthesis of some papers presented at two international conferences: the first (*From Dubrovnik to the Italian Adriatic coast: the migration of the iconography of St Blaise and the story of a painting owned by the Confraternity of Schiavoni of Ancona*) was presented at the Sixteenth Century Society Conference, held in Bruges, Belgium, in 2016 (18-20 August); the second (*The wooden compartments with stories of St Blaise by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro: a work commissioned by the Schiavoni confraternity of Ancona?*) was presented at the international conference *Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country: Schiavoni/Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in comparative perspective*, held in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2017 (30-31 May). The author thanks Chiara Musio, Francesca Serpentine, Roberto Dell'Orso, Jasenka Gudelj, Tanja Trška, Ivana Čapeta Rakić, Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić, Valentina Živković, Ivana Čota, Matteo Mazzalupi.

individuals or groups of people who moved from the Dubrovnik Republic, where the saint was venerated as patron. In the paintings produced in the town between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, St Blaise is always represented as a bishop carrying a model of the town in his hand, to show the protection offered by the saint to the Republic. Because of different reasons and patronages, the cult of St Blaise is quite spread in Italy and Europe, however, as for the Italian Adriatic coast, it was promoted by the citizens who came from Dubrovnik for business reasons, as shown by the paintings commissioned to Titian by Alvise Gozzi (Ancona, in the Marche) and to Padovanino by Nikola Radolović (Polignano a Mare, in Puglia), both Ragusans. The essay eventually aims at proposing an analysis of some wooden compartments by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro (15<sup>th</sup> century), representing the stories of St Blaise, as a probable commission by the documented confraternity of St Blaise of Ancona, established by some Schiavoni people in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The compartments, preserved in various museums and collections, could be the remnant panels of the documented altarpiece belonging to the chapel of the Schiavoni confraternity in the church of St Dominic.

Lo scopo di questo saggio è analizzare il fenomeno della migrazione del culto e dell'iconografia di San Biagio verso la costa adriatica italiana, grazie al movimento di singoli o gruppi di persone provenienti dalla Repubblica di Dubrovnik, dove il santo era venerato come patrono. Nella pittura prodotta in questa città tra il XV e il XVIII secolo, San Biagio è infatti sempre rappresentato come vescovo con il modellino della città sulle sue mani, per dimostrare la protezione offerta dal santo alla Repubblica. Per diverse ragioni e patronati, il culto di San Biagio è abbastanza diffuso in Italia e in Europa, ma sulla costa adriatica italiana è stato promosso, in particolare, da cittadini trasferitisi da Dubrovnik per motivi economici, come testimoniano ad esempio i dipinti commissionati a Tiziano di Alvise Gozzi (Ancona, nelle Marche) e al Padovanino di Nikola Radolović (Polignano a Mare, in Puglia), entrambi ragusei. Il saggio si propone da ultimo di analizzare alcune tavole di Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro (XV secolo), rappresentanti storie di San Biagio, come probabile commissione della confraternita di San Biagio di Ancona, costituita nel XV secolo da Schiavoni. Gli scomparti, ora conservati in diversi musei e collezioni, potrebbero essere ciò che resta della documentata pala d'altare della cappella della confraternita degli Schiavoni nella chiesa di San Domenico.

## 1. *Introduction*

The aim of this paper is to analyze three wooden compartments of an altarpiece, attributable to Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro and representing the stories of St Blaise, as a possible work commissioned by the Schiavoni confraternity of Ancona, in the Marche Region, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This “micro” case could be a new chapter in the rich phenomenon of the migration of the cult as well as the iconography of St Blaise towards the Italian Adriatic coast, due to the movement of individuals or groups of people from Dubrovnik, the ancient Ragusa, where the saint was worshipped as patron<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> On this problem see in general: Bianco 2009; Lupis 2014.

Who exactly was St Blaise? According to the *Legenda aurea* by Jacopo da Varazze<sup>2</sup>, who in the 13<sup>th</sup> century makes a synthesis of the previous Greek and Latin versions of the legend of the martyr<sup>3</sup>, St Blaise was a bishop who lived in Sebaste, in Asia Minor, under the rule of Diocletian. As soon as he was appointed a bishop, he was forced to hide in a retreat, in order to escape persecutions against Christians. In the cave where he was hiding, he repeatedly received the visit of wild animals, wounded or ill, and he healed them with his blessing. One day, the governor's soldiers on a hunting session found him and caught him. Along the way, Blaise met a woman who was desperate since her son was in danger of dying because of a fish bone stuck in his throat. Blaise healed him with a blessing. Because he refused to worship pagan gods, Blaise was first tortured with the carder's combs and then thrown into a pond. Making the sign of the cross, Blaise made the water as solid as the ground and avoided drowning. The governor then made his soldiers march into the pond, but they all drowned. At this point the governor had Blaise beheaded and his soul rose up to heaven. According to this legend, then, St Blaise does not have any direct relation with the city of Dubrovnik.

The relation between the saint and the South-Adriatic city is narrated by Serafino Razzi, prior of the Dominican convent of Ragusa at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. In his chronicle, the friar mentions a miracle that happened in 971<sup>5</sup>: the parish priest don Stojko told the Senate that he had seen in night vision (maybe a dream) his church of St Stephan full of armed men and a bearded man with a crosier in his hand. The man first revealed that he was St Blaise and then said that he had chased away Venetian ships that had come to conquer the town. Following this legend, the saint becomes the guardian of the freedom of the Republic, first against Venice and then against the Ottomans. In the art of this city, in effect, between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, St Blaise is traditionally represented as a bishop carrying a model of the city in his hand, to show the protection offered by the saint to the Republic, as a guardian of the city walls and of the Ragusan fleet<sup>6</sup>. This happens for instance in the polyptych by Nikola Božidarević, which is now in the Dominican Museum of Dubrovnik (fig. 1)<sup>7</sup>.

For different reasons, the cult of St Blaise is quite spread around Italy and Europe: he becomes the guardian of harvests and animals and the "physician" for throat diseases of the throat<sup>8</sup>; on the Italian Adriatic coast, however, his cult was particularly promoted by citizens who came from Dubrovnik for business

<sup>2</sup> Da Varazze 2007, pp. 204-207. On the importance of this text for the European culture cf. Boureau 1984; Le Goff 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Garitte 1955, 1955b.

<sup>4</sup> On the presence of St Blaise in the Ragusan literature see: Stojan 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Razzi 2011, p. 37; Razzi 1595, pp. 20-21.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gjukić-Bender 2014, pp. 292-325; Fisković 2014, pp. 154-201.

<sup>7</sup> Cvetnić 2007 and the entry in Vilač 2017, pp. 76-77.

<sup>8</sup> Tchouhadjian 2004; Colafranceschi *et al.* 2014.



reasons<sup>9</sup>. The case of the patronage of Lujo Gučetić (Alvise Gozze) in Ancona and Marin Radolović in Polignano a Mare, both Ragusans, is quite meaningful<sup>10</sup>.

## 2. *St Blaise for two Ragusans on the Italian Adriatic Coast*

In his patronage Lujo Gučetić (Gozze or Gozzi in Italian), a Ragusan merchant resident in Ancona had used the hometown saint with a clear identity-defining function. In 1520 Gučetić commissioned Tiziano Vecellio to paint the altarpiece for the high altar of the Franciscan observant church of San Francesco ad Alto (fig. 2)<sup>11</sup>. The relationship of the painting by Titian with the *Madonna di Foligno* of Aracoeli by Raffaello (fig. 3), repeatedly highlighted by critics<sup>12</sup>, is very significant in this case for the role played by St Blaise in the Ancona painting. As well known, in his *Madonna di Foligno*, Raffaello was inspired by a lost fresco by Pietro Cavallini in the apse of the church of Aracoeli<sup>13</sup>, whose iconography scheme is documented by a seal, still preserved in the same Franciscan convent (fig. 4)<sup>14</sup>. The seal, that mirrors the lost fresco by Cavallini, portrays on the left the Tiburtine Sibyl, who points out the appearance of the Virgin with Child to Augustus, according to the well-known legend on the foundation of the church of Aracoeli, also told by Jacopo da Varazze<sup>15</sup>. In the painting by Raffaello the kneeling client Sigismondo de' Conti<sup>16</sup>, accompanied by St Jerome, takes up the place of Augustus in all respect, while the pointing action of the Tiburtine is carried out by St John the Baptist. From an iconographic point of view, St John shares the same gesture (the indicating finger) with the Tiburtine. Titian further elaborates this iconography: to the right, we see St Francis, patron of the church, while on the left the Dubrovnik client is being protected by St Blaise, who at

<sup>9</sup> On the case of Puglia see Bianco 2009 and Lupis 2014; Cf. also Basile Bonsante 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Tomić 2010.

<sup>11</sup> For the circumstances of the commission cf. Gudelj 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Ivi, pp. 86-88. More in general see Polverari 1988; Brock 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. De Vecchi 2002, pp. 244-246.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Tomei 1982; 2000, pp. 106-107.

<sup>15</sup> In a sibylline key, the famous *Ara Coeli* legend develops a theme already dealt with in the Greek version of the *Chronographia* by Giovanni Malalas (6<sup>th</sup> century), in which Augustus asked the Pythia of Delphi who would reign after him. In divulging the Tiburtine Sybil as its protagonist instead of the Pythia, the *Golden Legend* by Jacopo da Varazze does nothing but resume a replacement already present in the *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. To the manifested wish of the Senate to venerate the emperor like a god, Augustus himself replies that he would ask the Sibyl beforehand if a man greater than himself would ever have been born. While the prophetess interrogates the oracle in the imperial chamber, a Virgin appears in a circle around the sun with a child in her lap, which the Sibyl indicates to him as an object of adoration. After this event, the emperor not only did not allow the Senate to worship him as a god, but founded the still existing Church of the *Ara Coeli* on the Campidoglio, in honor of the Virgin. Cf. Verdier 1982.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Sensi 2014.

the same time shows him the appearance of the Virgin. St Blaise, who makes the gesture that was Tiburtina's in Cavallini and the Baptist's in Raffaello, here plays for Gozze the dual function of protecting and announcing the vision. In summing up Raffaello's model, therefore, Titian reinforces the role of the patron of Dubrovnik.

In the following century, another Ragusan immigrant, that is, Marin Radolović uses the patron of Dubrovnik to remind his origin. Marin's brother, Nikola Radolović, a descendant of a merchant family from Ragusa, had become a feudal lord of the Viceroyalty of Naples in 1604, acquiring the feud of Polignano a Mare, ruled by his family until 1713<sup>17</sup>. Nikola promoted the restoration of the Franciscan observant complex of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli (today, Sant'Antonio), which was meant to become a sort of family sanctuary. For this church, his brother Marin commissioned an altarpiece to Alessandro Varotari, known as Padovanino, around 1626 selecting some very significant saints to celebrate his double homeland (fig. 5): on the right there is St Vito, patron of Polignano, portrayed while he is holding a dog by the leash; on the left, there is the patron of his family's hometown, portrayed as a bishop, while an angel carries his international attribute, the carder's comb<sup>18</sup>. This latter is quite significant: while in Dubrovnik the specific attribute of St Blaise is the model of the town, in the rest of Europe it is the instrument of one of his tortures, the carder's comb<sup>19</sup>.

### 3. *The Schiavoni Confraternity of Ancona and its painting in the documentation*

Already in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, St Blaise had a close relationship with the Schiavoni of Ancona, one of the most important communities of immigrants, settled in the multicultural port of Ancona in the modern period<sup>20</sup>. According to the documentation produced between the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century by the confraternity of St Blaise of Ancona, groups of Schiavoni, fleeing from the plague, had disembarked in the 15<sup>th</sup> century on the coast of Ancona, where they founded a confraternity dedicated to St Blaise<sup>21</sup>. The existence of this confraternity, that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century had an altar in the Dominican church, is confirmed by some notarial documents, found by Matteo Mazzalupi<sup>22</sup>: in 1476 Guccino di Bonanno from Ragusa (this provenance is quite important) leaves a florin *cappelle Sancti*

<sup>17</sup> Basile Bonsante 2002, pp. 75-100.

<sup>18</sup> Ivi, pp. 90-91.

<sup>19</sup> See for example the case of Ascoli Piceno: Capriotti 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Hansen 2004.

<sup>21</sup> See Capriotti in print.

<sup>22</sup> Some documents are quoted in Mazzalupi 2008, pp. 180-181, note 28; other documents are quoted in an unpublished entry written by Matteo Mazzalupi for the company Altomani&Sons. I would like to thank Mazzalupi for this reference.

*Blaxii site in ecclesia Sancti Dominici de Ancona*<sup>23</sup>; in 1498 Gregorio di Giovanni called Zingaro (the gypsy) requests to be buried in the Dominican church *in sepulture confraternitatis Sancti Blasii ante altare Sancti Blasii*, delivering 5 ducats to use *in uno Sancto Ieronimo fiendo in dicto altare*, probably a sculpture, now lost<sup>24</sup>. In this context, the documented reference to St Jerome is quite interesting because in the 15<sup>th</sup> century the author of the Vulgate had become the saint representative of the Illyrian nation<sup>25</sup>, as testified by the dedication to him of the national church of the Croats in Rome<sup>26</sup>.

According to an inventory compiled in 1791, the Schiavoni origin of the confraternity would be documented by a painting found in the church of St Blaise in Poggio, near Ancona, site of the first organized community of Schiavoni<sup>27</sup>. However, the painting is not described in the document. A painting, brought by the Schiavoni that settled in Poggio, is mentioned in the 1817 inventory, in which it is stated that they had brought from Schiavonia «a Painting portraying the Madonna with Child in her arms, St Blaise, highly worshipped by them, and underneath the image of the Purgatory with various souls, and a young boy that, with a vase, poured water over the purifying fire»<sup>28</sup>. According to this source, the “painting” had the same identical subject of the one now preserved in the church of St Blaise in Ancona, made out by Domenico Simonetti known as Magatta in the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>29</sup> (fig. 6). In the 1808 inventory compiled by the Schiavoni confraternity of St Germano of Camerano, near Ancona, another painting is mentioned, owned by the confraternity of Ancona, which should portray the landing of the Schiavoni at Numana, on the Conero coast<sup>30</sup>. So far we have no trace of this painting and the accounts about it are clearly discordant: according to the 1791 inventory, the painting found under the altar of St Blaise in Poggio would reveal the Schiavoni origin of the brotherhood, but it is not specified how; according to the 1817 inventory, the Schiavoni had brought with them a painting, which should be identical in its iconography to the one that is today on the altar of the church of St Blaise in Ancona; according to the inventory of St Germano, the painting should represent the landing of the Schiavoni on the shore of Numana.

<sup>23</sup> Archivio di Stato di Ancona, Archivio Notarile di Ancona, 65, notaio Melchiorre Bernabei, II fasc., c. 27r-v.

<sup>24</sup> Archivio di Stato di Ancona, Archivio Notarile di Ancona, 137, notaio Girolamo Sevini, cc. 483r-484r.

<sup>25</sup> Ivić 2016. See also: Rice 1987.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Gudelj 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Archivio Diocesano di Ancona (hereinafter ADAN), S. Biagio. Regole Storia (1768-1943), *Inventario* (1791), p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> «un Quadro in cui vi era dipinta la Madonna Santissima col Bambino in braccio, Santo Blasio da essi tenuto in somma venerazione, e sotto poi a detta figura vi era il Purgatorio con varie anime, ed un Donzello con vaso di acqua, che versava su quel purgante fuoco»: ADAN, S. Biagio. Regole Storia (1768-1943), *Platea* (1817), p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Capriotti in print.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Toccaceli 1991, p. 49.

Regardless of the problems posed by this discordant documentation, starting from 1444, the Schiavoni of the confraternity of St Blaise of Ancona definitely possessed a painting that adorned their altar in the St Dominic church in the town<sup>31</sup>. In 1717, when the Dominicans decided to renew their church, the brothers were forced to transfer their painting to a new chapel in Calamo, which was built in 1718. In 1728 an inventory of the main altar of this chapel describes an altarpiece representing the Madonna with Child in the center, on the right St Blaise and St Mary Magdalen and on the left St Jerome and St Lucy. St Blaise and St Jerome, the saints that identify the Schiavoni, are also replicated in two statues in the gilded frame of the altarpiece. When St Blaise church was rebuilt in 1748, this altarpiece, now lost, was surely replaced with the abovementioned work by Magatta. This painting actually defines the new role of the confraternity, which is no longer to keep Illyrian customs alive but to soothe the pains of the souls in purgatory with their prayers. In fact, in the painting, the Virgin and St Blaise are interceding with Christ to save the souls in Purgatory, whose sorrows find some relief in the water poured from the *donzello*, a young man wearing the dress of the confraternity of St Blaise<sup>32</sup>.

#### 4. *The compartments of the altarpiece by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro*

Today, there is no trace of the painting mentioned in the reports representing the origin of the Schiavoni confraternity, once in the Dominican church in Ancona. Nevertheless, it is possible to develop a hypothesis formulated in 2008 by Matteo Mazzalupi, who dubiously proposed to identify the three works by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro as the surviving compartments of the old altarpiece of the Schiavoni altar in the Dominican church<sup>33</sup>. Federico Zeri included these works in the catalog of Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro in 1948<sup>34</sup>, a painter that had been active in the Marca of Ancona for a long time, from 1441 to 1475, year of his death (even if he is documented in Pesaro in 1459)<sup>35</sup>. The three stories of St Blaise, due to their size, cannot be considered compartments of a *predella*. More likely, they were compartments of a hagiographic altarpiece following the Venetian model, with the saint in the middle and stories on the sides, similar to the *Stories of St Lucy* by Jacobello del Fiore or the *Stories of St Elpidio* by Giacomo di Nicola da Recanati<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Capriotti in print.

<sup>32</sup> For a more detailed story see Capriotti in print.

<sup>33</sup> Mazzalupi 2008, p. 180.

<sup>34</sup> Zeri 1948.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Berardi 1988; Mazzalupi 2008, pp. 178-180 and pp. 210-223 (chapter written by Alessandro Marchi).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the unpublished entry written by Matteo Mazzalupi for the company Altomani&Sons.

The compartment now in the museum of Palazzo Venezia in Rome depicts the torture with the carder's comb (fig. 7). Before being hanged on two poles in the form of a crucifix, St Blaise was undressed: in the foreground, there is, in fact, his garment, his cane, and a book. Two persecutors in tattered clothes are torturing him with two carder's combs, while two groups of people are observing on the right and on the left.

The compartment now in an unknown collection (fig. 8) represents the moment when Blaise, thrown into the lake, does not drown, unlike the soldiers persecuting him. At the center of the image, St Blaise is still naked while praying with palms united, with a big stone wheel hanging on his neck, despite which the martyr does not sink. This wheel tied to his neck is not present in the *Golden legend* by Jacopo da Varazze. Among four legends of the martyr published in the *Acta Sanctorum*, only one tells us that St Blaise was punished «marmoreo pondere ad collum eius ligato»<sup>37</sup>. However, the generic weight quoted in the legend becomes a millstone in the painting<sup>38</sup>. This detail creates a figurative connection with the martyrdom of another saint highly venerated in the Dalmatian coast, St Anastasius from Solin (the laundryman), who is, together with St Domnius, one of the patron saints of the city of Split. According to his legend, St Anastasius was thrown into the sea with a stone hung on his neck<sup>39</sup>; in his iconography this stone becomes a wheel of a millstone, his most common attribute<sup>40</sup>, as it is evident in the relief by the Master Otto in the Cathedral of Split<sup>41</sup>, in the tomb of the martyr conceived by Juraj Dalmatinac for the same Cathedral<sup>42</sup> and in the polyptych by Dujam Vušković, coming from the Franciscan church in Split and today preserved at the Hermitage (fig. 9)<sup>43</sup>. Therefore, in the painting by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro, St Blaise seems to appropriate the attribute of another Dalmatian saint, St Anastasius, probably to create a visual link between the two much-venerated saints on the Dalmatian coast.

The last compartment, which was owned by the antiquarian Altomani and which is now in another private collection (fig. 10), portrays the beheading of the saint. St Blaise prays again with his palms united, while a rogue is about to decapitate him together with two banded boys, who are also present in the legend of the saint. On the right, some characters dressed in Oriental clothes

<sup>37</sup> *Acta Sanctorum Februarii* 1658, p. 352. Although this detail is rather rare, it is mentioned in a passion of St Blaise rewritten in 1752. Cf. Niccolai 1752, p. 51.

<sup>38</sup> The representation of the weight tied to the neck of St Blaise is quite rare in his iconography. It misses for instance in a compartment of the *predella* in the polyptych by Sano di Pietro (Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale) and in the cycle of frescos by Giacomo Jaquerio in Sant'Antonio di Ranverso (Buttigliera Alta, TO). Cf. Colafranceschi *et alii* 2014, p. 26 and p. 36.

<sup>39</sup> *Acta Sanctorum Septembris* 1750, p. 23: «ut suspenso in collo eius lapide in mare mitteretur». On this legend see Delehay 1897; Jarak 1997.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Prijatelj 1978.

<sup>41</sup> Goss 2010, p. 126.

<sup>42</sup> Ivanišević 1982; Prijatelj 1989; Ivanišević 1989.

<sup>43</sup> De Marchi 1996.

observe the scene: one wears a pointed hat, another a turban, and another a shawl similar to a Jewish *tallit*<sup>44</sup>. Their appearance, therefore, is similar to that of the Jews in a scene of Crucifixion, although in this context they seem to have a more positive function as if they were merely the Eastern companions of the martyr.

Since the iconography of St Blaise along the west coast of the Adriatic is generally linked to the cult of the saint, promoted by individuals or communities of Schiavoni in their new homeland (the quoted cases of the patronage of Lujó Gučetić in Ancona and Marin Radolović in Polignano a Mare may be the most famous examples), I think that the three stories of Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro could really be fragments of the “mysterious” painting mentioned in the conflicting documentation at the origins of the Schiavoni confraternity of Ancona. The altarpiece by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro could have been dismembered and dispersed after 1718, with the transfer of the confraternity from the Dominican church to the new chapel, and replaced with a new altarpiece already documented in the inventory of 1728.

### 5. *A final Adriatic comparison*

I would like to finally propose a comparison with the case of a painting dating to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and now kept in the church of St Andrea in Barletta, in Puglia (fig. 11). The existence of a confraternity entitled to St Blaise had been documented in this town already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but we do not know whether it was founded by Ragusans and whether this confraternity commissioned the painting<sup>45</sup>. However, in this hagiographic altarpiece, St Blaise is portrayed as a bishop in the act of blessing, holding a crosier and the model of Ragusa. The presence of this detail, which is the special attribute of St Blaise in Dubrovnik, makes us assume that the painting was commissioned by Ragusans that had moved to a new country. Indeed, it would make no sense to portray the saint in Barletta with the model of Ragusa. This artwork is also very important because it is one of the rarest examples of a hagiographic altarpiece dedicated to St Blaise, as should have been the one by Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro before its dismembering. Behind the still figure of the saint we can see some episodes of his life: on the top left, St Blaise is portrayed as hermit healing some wild animals, whereas at the bottom left he is healing the boy with the fishbone in his throat with his blessing; on the top right, Blaise is being tortured with the combs, while in the scene at the bottom he is beheaded.

In conclusion, it is possible to observe how, along the west coast of the Adriatic, from Marche to Puglia, the Schiavoni patronage has very similar

<sup>44</sup> On the attributes of the Jews in the iconography see Capriotti 2014, pp. 13-17.

<sup>45</sup> Lupis 2014, pp. 143-146.



features, using St Blaise to recall their motherland and distinguish themselves from the Other. Furthermore, both in Barletta and in Ancona, the confraternity of Schiavoni promoted the saint from Ragusa with a hagiographic altarpiece in Venetian style.

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*Appendix*

Fig. 1. Nikola Božidarević, *Bundić Polyptich*, Dubrovnik, Dominican Museum



Fig. 2. Tiziano Vecellio, *Pala Gozzi*, Ancona, Pinacoteca Podesti



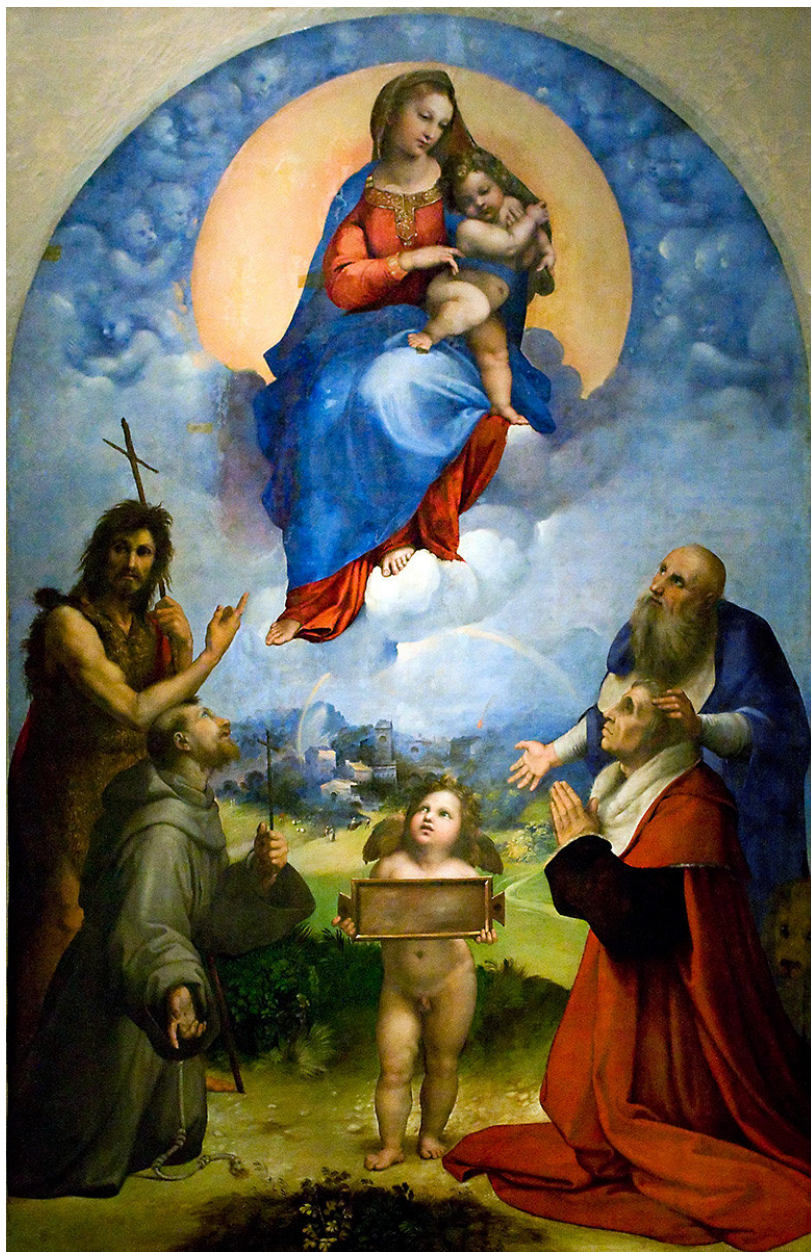


Fig. 3. Raffaello, *Madonna di Foligno*, Città del Vaticano, Musei Vaticani



Fig. 4. Sigillo dell'Ara Coeli, Rome, Ara Coeli convent





Fig. 5. Padovanino, *Pala Radolović*, Polignano a Mare, Church of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli



Fig. 6. Domenico Simonetti, called il Magatta, *Christ, the Virgin, St Blaise and the souls of the Purgatory*, Ancona, Church of St Blaise



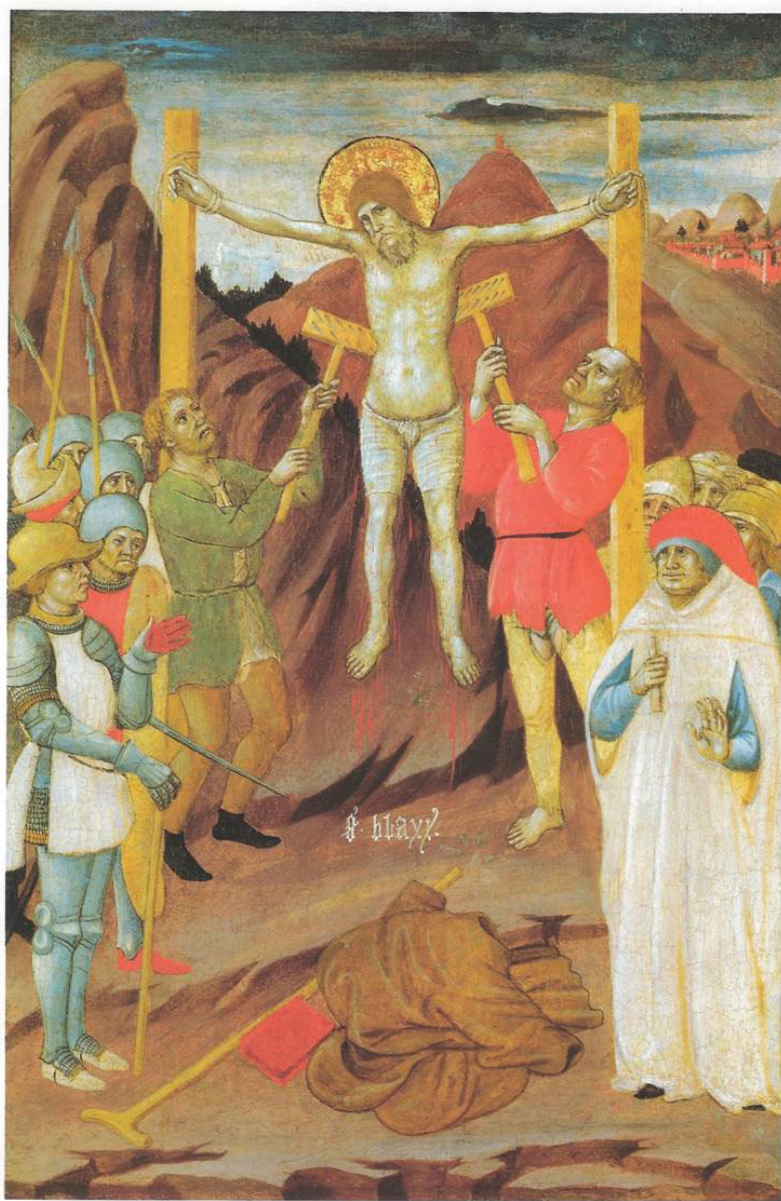


Fig. 7. Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro, *Story of St Blaise*, Rome, Museum of Palazzo Venezia



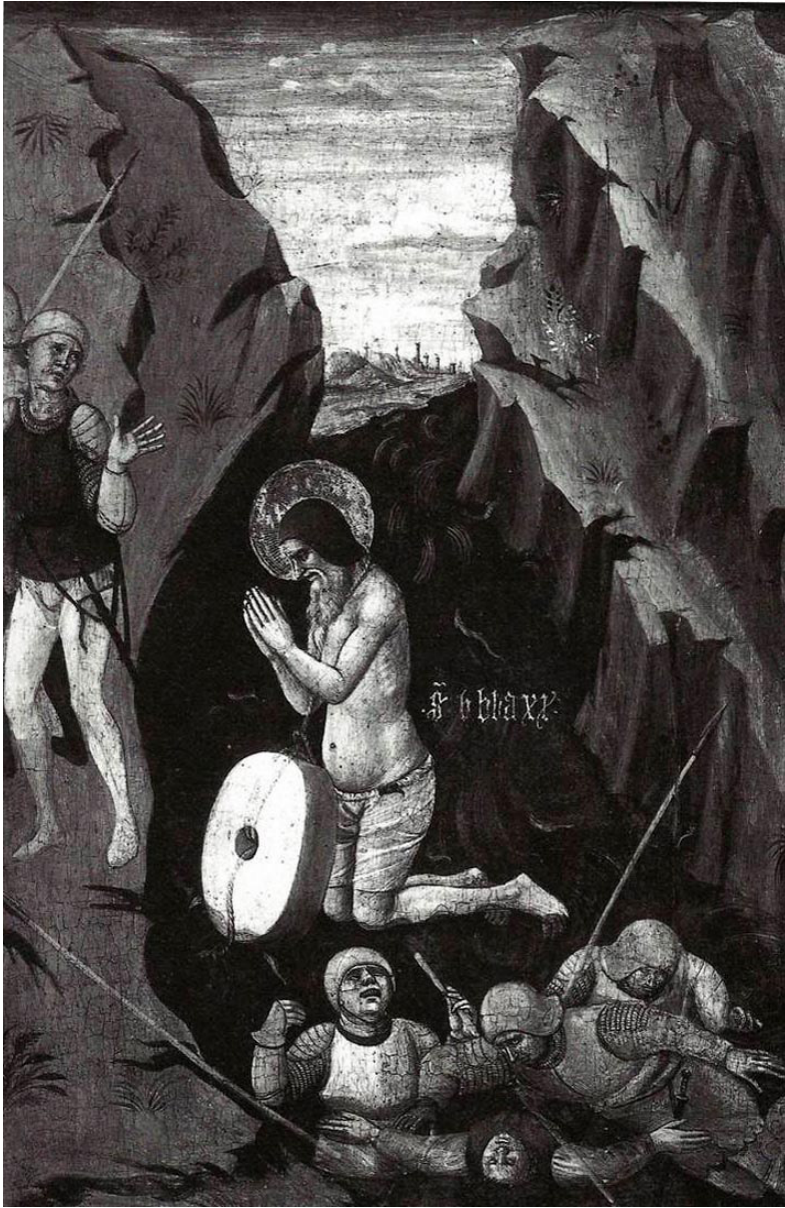


Fig. 8. Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro, *Story of St Blaise*, Unknown Collection



Fig. 9. Dujam Vušković, *Polyptych from the Franciscan church of Split*, Saint Petersburg, Hermitage





Fig. 10. Giovanni Antonio da Pesaro, *Story of St Blaise*, Private Collection



Fig. 11. *Altarpiece of St Blaise*, Barletta, Church of St Andrea

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