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## The Vow of Ivan Crnojević to the Virgin Mary in Loreto under the Shadow of the Ottoman Conquest<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper looks at the circumstances in which Ivan Crnojević, a fifteenth-century ruler of Zeta (historic region in present-day Montenegro), made a vow to the Virgin in a famous pilgrimage shrine, the Santa Casa in Loreto (Italy), where he was in exile fleeing another Ottoman offensive. The focus of the paper is on a few issues which need to be re-examined in order to understand Ivan's vow against a broader background. His act is analyzed in the context of the symbolic role that the Virgin of Loreto played as a powerful *antiturca* protectress. On the other hand, much attention is paid to the institutional organization of Slavs (*Schiavoni*) who found refuge in Loreto and nearby towns, which may serve as a basis for a more comprehensive understanding of the process of religious and social adjustment of Orthodox Slav refugees to their new Catholic environment.

**Keywords:** Ivan Crnojević, Cetinje, Zeta, Santa Casa in Loreto, confraternities, *Schiavoni*

Ivan Crnojević, the ruler of Zeta (in present-day Montenegro), states in the 1485 foundation charter for the monastery of the Virgin Mary in Cetinje that he paid his devotions and made a vow to the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary in the pilgrimage shrine of the Santa Casa in Loreto (Italy).<sup>2</sup> His vow was clear and simple: he would build a church in her honour in Cetinje if he returned safely to his homeland, which he had been forced to leave twice, in 1476 and again in 1479, due to Ottoman conquests. Upon returning to his homeland in 1481, Ivan Crnojević set out to honour his vow. The construction was completed in August 1484, when the stone slab with his donor's inscription was affixed to the

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<sup>1</sup> This is an expanded version of the paper presented at the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies held in Belgrade in 2016.

<sup>2</sup> The charter of the Cetinje monastery in: S. Milutinović Sarajlija, *Istorija Crne Gore od iskona do novijega vremena* (Belgrade: Knjaževsko-srpska pečatnja, 1835), 4–7; reprinted in *Povjesnica crnogorska. Odabrane istorije Crne Gore do kraja XIX vijeka* (Podgorica: Unireks 1997), 43–48, 77–82; F. Miklosich, *Monumenta Serbica spectantia historiam Serbiae, Bosnae, Ragusii* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1858); 3rd rpt. ed. (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet, 2006), 530–534, no. CDLIII; B. Šekularac, *Vranjinske povelje XIII–XV vijek* (Titograd: Leksikografski zavod Crne Gore, 1984), 115–122; B. Šekularac, *Dukljansko-zetske povelje* (Titograd: Istorijski institut Crne Gore, 1987), 197–207. I am wholeheartedly grateful to my colleague Djordje Bubalo, who generously shared with me invaluable and exhaustive information about the charter of Ivan Crnojević.

church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.<sup>3</sup> He transferred the seat of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Zeta to the newly-founded monastery and, by moving his residence to Cetinje, rounded off the formation of his capital.<sup>4</sup>

Ivan's vow and its fulfilment raise a myriad of questions which are highly relevant to reviewing the historical and cultural circumstances in the Metropolitanate of Zeta at the time of the Ottoman threat in the last decades of the fifteenth century. Even though the topic is exceptionally intriguing, it has only been mentioned in passing by historians in the context of the chronology of the Ottoman conquest. The only more extensive study which discusses it in some detail, as an example of Loretan themes in the visual arts in the area of "Illyricum", has been produced by the Croatian art historian Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić.<sup>5</sup> Offering her findings on the significance that the Holy House of Loreto had for Slavs – *Schiavoni*, and the possible influence of its architecture on Ivan's foundation, she poses the question as to what the Madonna of Loreto may have meant to Ivan – whether he considered her as the protectress of his homeland or as his own protectress.

The purpose of reopening this topic is to problematize a few questions which have not received enough attention in modern historiography. One of them is the presence of *Schiavoni* from the areas of the former medieval Serbian state in Italy in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The stay of Ivan Crnojević in Loreto offers a good opportunity to review our current knowledge on the subject but also to raise some new questions, the investigation of which may help us to better understand how the Orthodox Slav refugees coped with adjusting to a new, Catholic environment. Therefore, the focus of the paper will be on emigration from the eastern Adriatic coast and hinterland to the Italian region of the Marches, notably to the town of Recanati and to Loreto itself. Particular attention will be paid to some questions relating to a strong institutional

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<sup>3</sup> Construction must have been well underway in 1483, considering that it was then that some 2,000 tiles were imported from Dubrovnik, see V. J. Djurić, "Umjetnost", in *Istorija Crne Gore* 2/2 (Titograd: Redakcija za istoriju Crne Gore, 1970), 489. The slab with the inscription – В име Рождества ти пресвета Богородице, зидах си свети храм твој в лето 6992 [In the name of your Nativity, most holy Mother of God, I built your holy shrine in the year 6992] – was affixed above the entrance to the church of the new monastery in Cetinje. For the inscription see Dj. Sp. Radojičić, *Tvorci i dela stare srpske književnosti* (Titograd: Grafički zavod, 1963), 282–285.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Crnojević endowed his foundation with land, the income from customs duties collected in Kotor and from the salterns in Grbalj, and the possessions of the abandoned monasteries of Kom and Gorica on Lake Scutari, see J. Erdeljanović, *Stara Crna Gora*, 2nd ed. (Belgrade: Slovo ljubve, 1978), 218–237, 239–244; M. Janković, "Saborne crkve Zetske episkopije i mitropolije u srednjem veku", *Istorijski časopis* 31 (1984), 199–204.

<sup>5</sup> I. Prijatelj-Pavičić, *Loretske teme: novi podaci o štovanju Loretske Bogorodice u likovnim umjetnostima na području "Ilirika"* (Rijeka: Vitagraf, 1994), 47–54.

network and support which the Slav immigrants in Loreto and its environs developed, and which the ruler of Zeta must have come in contact with and most likely used at the time he made his vow. The problematization of this issue will hopefully lay a basis for further research into the transfer and merging of cultural, religious and artistic influences in late fifteenth-century Zeta.

Ivan Crnojević made his vow to the Virgin of Loreto at a volatile time of war and diplomatic efforts in Zeta. For Zeta, which had been part of the Serbian Nemanjić state in the middle ages, the whole fifteenth century was a period of great turbulence, which forced its rulers to change their overlords several times. In 1421, its last ruler of the Balšić family bequeathed his domain to his maternal uncle, the Serbian despot Stefan Lazarević. In the 1440s, under the despot's successor, Djuradj Branković, Zeta became the scene of rivalry among the Serbian despot, the Republic of Venice and the regional Bosnian lord, *herceg* Stefan Vukčić Kosača. The Crnojević rulers took advantage of the despot's weak central power to grow in independence. In 1451, Ivan's father, Stefanica Crnojević, recognized the suzerainty of Venice. Ivan succeeded him in late 1464 (or early 1465).<sup>6</sup> He pursued a different and more independent policy than his father, acting against Venice from time to time and making alliances with Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The Venetians described him as a "restless spirit, prone to intrigue". Balancing between two strong powers, Venice and Turkey, and regional lords, Ivan sought to secure his domain and assert his dominance. From 1469 he expanded his power to the regions of Crmnica, Paštrovići and Grbalj. He then married for a second time, to Mara, daughter of *herceg* Stefan Vukčić Kosača, at whose court he had, at a young age, spent ten years as a hostage. About 1475, since his seat at Žabljak was under imminent threat by the Ottomans, Ivan Crnojević moved it to his newly-built fortress in Rijeka (Obod), with a church of St Nicholas.<sup>7</sup>

Ivan Crnojević left for Italy during a war with the Ottomans in 1476. The threat he had been under after the Ottoman capture of Žabljak forced him to flee. In 1479 he returned from Italy to coastal Zeta to stir up a rebellion. But, the Venetians reported the sultan of every anti-Ottoman movement, and he had to seek refuge in Italy once more. The situation calmed down following the death

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<sup>6</sup> For more see *Istorija Crne Gore 2/2*, chapters by I. Božić, "Doba Balšića"; "Zeta u Despotovini"; and "Vladavina Crnojevića", 49–371; Dj. Bubalo, "Nekoliko dokumenata o zetskom vojvodi Stefanici Crnojeviću", *Istorijski zapisi LXXXVIII/1-2* (2015), 27–45.

<sup>7</sup> On 28 August 1474 Ivan Crnojević made a request of the Venetian Senate to be recognized as the sole ruler of Upper Zeta if he succeeded, with God's help, in wresting it from the hands of the Ottomans: "che nessun altro non habia bailia ne podesta sopra la dicta excepto io Ivan Zernovich e li mei figlioli, et romasta a me libera et fina da uno cavo fino l altro, zoe da Chussevo fina Ostrog" (quoted after *Istorija Crne Gore 2/2*, 178). Djurić, "Umjetnost", 488–499, suggests that this threat to Žabljak might have been the reason why Ivan Crnojević was granted permission by the Dubrovnik authorities to purchase and export 8,000 roof tiles.

of Mehmed the Conqueror in 1481. Ivan returned home from Italy, only to realize that his only chance to survive was to make peace with the sultan. The new Ottoman sultan Bayezid II accepted Ivan as his vassal. Fighting arduous diplomatic, political and military battles both with the Ottomans and with Venice, Ivan Crnojević managed to establish Cetinje as a short-lived centre of Orthodox culture and spirituality.<sup>8</sup>

The threat of Ottoman invasion was acute on the Italian Adriatic coast as well. It became imminent after the *massacro di Otranto* (in Apulia) between 1480 and 1481. One of the measures undertaken in early 1480, before the attack on Otranto, had been the order of pope Sixtus IV to Martin Segon of Novo Brdo, bishop of Dulcigno (Ulcinj), to put together a report on possible Balkan routes for deploying troops to intercept the advancing Ottoman forces.<sup>9</sup> Loreto itself was in fear – cardinal Girolamo Basso della Rovere, together with the bishop and council of Recanati, took further steps to fortify the town port and the church of Santa Maria di Loreto. It was then that the anti-Turkish aspect of the cult of Our Lady of Loreto came to the fore.<sup>10</sup> And it was exactly the time when Ivan Crnojević was in Loreto, where he clearly professed his faith in the power of the Virgin's protection by making a vow before her miraculous icon. Namely, legend has it that an icon (now lost) turned up in Loreto together with the Santa Casa. In 1472 the rector of the Loreto basilica, Pietro Giorgio Tolomei, also known as Teramano, wrote about the 1294 flight of the Santa Casa to Loreto (*Translatio miraculosa Ecclesie Beate Marie Virginis de Loreto*). He gave an account of the legend of the *translatio* to Italy of the house in Nazareth in which Mary had been born, received the Annunciation, and lived during the Childhood of Christ and after his Ascension. Teramano also pointed out that it had been in this house in Nazareth that the apostle Luke had painted the image of Mary with his own hand.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> M. Spremić, *Srbija i Venecija, VI–XVI vek* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2014), 199–204.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Segon's *De itineribus in Turciam libellous* was in fact plagiarized by Feliks Petančić, *Quibus itineribus Turci sint aggrediendi*. Only an excerpt from an Italian translation of his work has survived, but it remained unknown until 1981, when it was published by Agostino Petrusi, *Martino Segono di Novo Brdo, vescovo di Dulcigno. Un umanista serbo-dalmata del tardo Quattrocento* (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1981). On that see *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 7, eds. T. David and J. A. Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 54.

<sup>10</sup> For more see R. Mancini, *Infedeli. Esperienze e forme del nemico nell'Europa moderna* (Florence: Nerbini, 2013), 48–51, 99–101.

<sup>11</sup> Legend has it that the angels took the Santa Casa first to *castel Fiume* in 1291 (which has been identified as present-day Rijeka, i.e. Terssato, in Kvarner, Croatia) and thence, a few years later, to Italy, to a wood near Recanati. Early authors mostly mentioned the name *Fiume*, without specifying its location more closely. In 1468 Giacomo Ricci wrote in *Virginis Mariae Loretae Historia* that the shrine had been moved to the *illiricorum provinciam in oppidi*

Heading for Loreto, Ivan Crnojević took the usual migration route from the Balkans to the Marches. From ancient times there had been a lively economic exchange between two Adriatic coasts. Of particular importance to the towns on the eastern coast were the Italian towns of Ancona and Fermo as well as the trading fair held in Recanati.<sup>12</sup> Apart from trade, this Italian region maintained strong cultural, institutional and religious ties with urban centres across the sea. Let me mention but a few examples by way of illustration: in the first half of the fourteenth century the notaries of the commune of Kotor (Cattaro) came from the towns of Ossimo and Fermo;<sup>13</sup> at the time Ivan Crnojević fled Zeta, the bishop of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) was a native of Recanati, Giovanni Veneri (1470–1490); Loreto was a favourite pilgrimage destination for people from the eastern Adriatic coast and hinterland – as suggested by the will of *Nicolaus Joncich*, a Ragusan priest and *rector et magister scholarum in Catharo*, drawn up in 1465: *Item volo quod mitatur aliquis pro voto meo ad ecclesiam sancte Marie de Rechaneto*.<sup>14</sup>

In the notarial documents drawn up in Loreto and Recanati, immigrants from the eastern Adriatic coast and hinterland are usually referred to as *Schiavoni* or named by the town they came from. During the most intense emigration to Italy caused by the threat of Ottoman conquest, *Schiavoni* of the Catholic faith from Dalmatian towns were much more numerous among the immigrants to the Marches.<sup>15</sup> We have considerably less information about Orthodox im-

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*Flumen*. The identification of *castel Fiume* with today's Rijeka in Kvarner was made by Girolamo Angelito in 1530, see F. Grimaldi, *Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto nei secoli XIV–XVIII* (Foligno 2001). On the legend see E. Renzulli, "Tales of Flying Shrines and Paved Roads: Loreto, an Early Modern Town of Pilgrimage", *Città e Storia* VII (2012), 27–41.

<sup>12</sup> *Per una storia delle relazioni tra le due sponde adriatiche*, ed. P. P. Fausto (Bari: Società di storia patria per la Puglia, 1962).

<sup>13</sup> N. Fejić, "Kotorska kancelarija u srednjem veku", *Istorijski časopis* 27 (1980), 5–62.

<sup>14</sup> Nikola also states in his will the wish that a pilgrimage be made for his soul: *aliquis sacerdos secularis vadat pro anima patris mei Romam, et hoc si placuerit matri, quia ipsa fatetur illud votum suum implevisse.... Item quod vadat quis duabus vicibus ad Sanctam Mariam de Antibarano...* At the end of the will he bequeaths a legacy for someone to visit also *Santo Antonio de Padua per voto persona una religiosa delo convento de Santa Croxe*, and mentions that he possesses, in his home, a silver cross of St Anthony, see J. Tadić, *Gradja o slikarskoj školi u Dubrovniku XIII–XVI v.*, vol. I (Belgrade: Naučna knjiga, 1952), 230–232.

<sup>15</sup> On the emigration of Slavs to Italy in the 13th and 14th centuries see D. Dinić Knežević, "Prilog proučavanju migracija našeg stanovništva u Italiji tokom XIII i XIV veka", *Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta u Novom Sadu* XVI/1 (1973), 39–62; J. Kolanović, "Le relazioni tra le due sponde dell'Adriatico e il culto Lauretano in Croazia", in *Loreto – crocevia religioso tra Italia, Europa ed Oriente*, ed. F. Citterio and L. Vaccaro (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1997), 165–190.

migrants, who came by the same migration routes and upon their arrival had to adapt to a new life in Catholic environments.<sup>16</sup>

The most intense Slavic migrations to Recanati and Loreto were triggered by the troubles caused by Ottoman conquests and poverty. There is no doubt that among the reasons for emigrating were plague epidemics, given that one of the most massive migrations took place in the wake of the 1435 and 1456 epidemics. But that was also the main reason why the Slav immigrants were not welcomed in new environments. Namely, since the newcomers from the Balkans were believed to be responsible for the spread of the disease from the eastern to the Italian Adriatic coast, they were not given much chance to integrate into society and had to do humble jobs. The commune of Recanati tried to curb immigration, especially during the spread of the plague in 1456, by issuing an ordinance which required the banishment of newcomers and the punishment of its citizens who offered them hospitality. The next major outbreak of the plague, in 1464, greatly weakened the Slav community, but it survived. The *Schiavoni* banished from Recanati found refuge in nearby places along the coast and in Loreto. The integration of *Schiavoni* into the life of Italian communes was easier to carry out if the newcomers were organized into confraternities, because in that way the authorities were able to control them more closely. The main duty of the confraternities was to do charity work, by taking care of pilgrims, the sick and the poor in hospitals, and by providing for burials. This system meant a great relief to the authorities in Recanati and Loreto, and in times of plague it operated as part of an organized system of sanitary control on the level of the commune.<sup>17</sup> The history of these confraternities, apart from providing information about the ways in which Slav immigrants were organized, sheds much light on the social, economic and cultural situation in Recanati and Loreto in the

<sup>16</sup> On that see K. Jireček, *Istorija Srba*, vol. I (Belgrade 1984<sup>3</sup>), 428; M. Spremić, *Dubrovnik i Aragonci (1442–1495)* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 1971), 24; P. Rokai, *Dubrovnik i Ankonitanska Marka u srednjem veku* (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet, 1995), 79; M. Sensi, "Confraternite lauretane e pellegrinaggio", in *Pellegrini verso Loreto*, ed. F. Grimaldi (Ancona 2003), 111–152. Attention to this has recently been drawn by M. Moroni, "Rapporti culturali e forme devozionali fra le due sponde dell'Adriatico in età moderna", in *Pellegrini verso Loreto*, 181–216, who points to the fact that Loreto was also a pilgrimage destination for prominent persons from an Orthodox background such as, in the first place, cardinal Bessarion (in 1472) or, before him, Vladislav Hercegović (1454), and, finally, Ivan Crnojević.

<sup>17</sup> G. Santarelli, "Štovanje Majke Božje Loretske te prisuće Hrvata u Loretu", *Dometi* 24 (1991), 59–76; M. Sensi, "Fraternite di slavi nelle Marche: il secolo XV", in *Le Marche e l'Adriatico orientale. Economia, società, cultura dal 13. secolo al primo Ottocento*, ed. A. Ventura (Ancona: Deputazione di storia patria per le Marche, 1978), 53–84; M. Sensi, "Slavi nelle Marche tra pietà e devozione", *Studi maceratesi* XXX (1996), 481–501; F. Coltrinari, "Loreto as an Illyrian Shrine: The Artistic Heritage of the Illyrian Confraternities and College in Loreto and Recanati", *Confraternitas* 27/1–2 (2016), 46–61.

times of Ivan Crnojević. That this issue should be revisited seems obvious in the light of the fact that the confraternities and hospitals, i.e. shelters for pilgrims (and there is no doubt that Ivan was also a pilgrim, given that he made a vow to the icon of the Madonna) provided organized care and support for those fleeing from the Balkans to Italy.

When Ivan Crnojević arrived in Italy, most probably via Dubrovnik, there had already been *confraternite degli schiavoni* in Loreto and Recanati. The earliest reference to a confraternity of Slavs in Recanati dates from 1337: the *fraternità dei Frustati di San Pietro Martire, tutta composta di schiavoni*, based in the Dominican church of San Domenico.<sup>18</sup> The first Dominicans who had arrived in Recanati soon after 1272 began constructing a church and a monastery, where a relic of the True Cross (*una reliquia della Santa Croce*) brought by St Peter the Martyr was enshrined.<sup>19</sup> The Slav members of the confraternity played a prominent role in the procession which used to take place on the anniversary of the miraculous arrival of the Santa Casa: they were assigned to carry *il simulacro* in token of remembrance that the Santa Casa had first landed on the Slavic side of the Adriatic. They were clad in white habits (*sacco bianco*) with a large red cross.<sup>20</sup>

In 1469, after the plague epidemic, the Slavs requested permission from the authorities to found a confraternity in Loreto in order to be able to provide assistance to their fellow citizens. The authorities of Recanati recognized the potential benefits and the *Confraternita del Sacramento* was founded.<sup>21</sup> The fact

<sup>18</sup> *Questa Fraternità esisteva nell'anno 1337. in cui Ugone Generale delli Domenicani le accordò la partecipazione a tutte le Indulgenze dell'Ordine*, see M. Leopardi, *Annali di Recanati*, vol. I, ed. R. Vuoli (Varese: La Tipografica, 1945), 206; Santarelli, "Štovanje Majke Božje Loretske", 59–76. Also, there is, in the 1320s, a mention of the church of *Santus Vitus de Sclavonibus* near Otranto, and, in 1362, of the church of *San Niccolò degli Schiavoni* in the small town of Vasto; some family names in the area of Gargano are obviously of South Slavic origin, such as, among others, *Pastrovicchio*, see L. Čoralić, "'S one bane mora' – hrvatske prekojadranske migracije (XV–XVIII stoljeće)", *Zbornik Odsjeka povijesti znanosti Zavoda za povijesno društvene znanosti HAZU* 21 (2003), 189; F. Gestrin, "Migracije iz Dalmacije u Marke u XV. i XVI. stoljeću", *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu* 10/1 (1977), 395–404.

<sup>19</sup> D. Calcagni, *Memorie storiche della città di Recanati nella marca d'Ancona* (Messina: V. Maffei, 1711), 332.

<sup>20</sup> M. Leopardi, *Serie dei vescovi di Recanati con alcune brevi notizie della città e della chiesa di Recanati raccolte dal conte Monaldo Leopardi* (Recanati: G. Morici, 1828), 86–87.

<sup>21</sup> The Corpus Christi or Sacrament confraternity, whose purpose was to encourage frequent communion and devotion to the sacraments by the laity, cf. C. F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 69. On the Sacrament confraternities see D. Zardin, "Le confraternite in Italia settentrionale fra XV e XVIII secolo", *Società e Storia* X (1987), 81–137; N. Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 219.



that the former confraternity, whose members were for the most part Slavs, was dedicated to the patron saint of the Inquisition, St Peter the Martyr – who emphasized the power of the host and the doctrine of transubstantiation in eradicating heresy – and the latter to the Blessed Sacrament, may be taken as symbolic evidence of the aspiration of the Roman Catholic Church to preserve the faith of the immigrants coming from areas which were not exclusively Catholic. The *Cappella dei Schaivoni* dedicated to the *Santissimo Sacramento* was built in the Loreto church in 1476, and the confraternity soon proposed to build their own hospital where care would be provided to their ailing fellow Slavs, and which would have an oratory where they would be able to meet, hold congregations and celebrate mass at least once a month. The hospital was to serve the sick and pilgrims. The running of the hospital was entrusted to the confraternity of the *Santissimo Sacramento dei Schiavoni*. On that occasion cardinal Basso della Rovere pointed out that the intention of the *Schiavoni* was good, and their deed pious and commendable. The *Schiavoni* had two shelters in Loreto at their disposal – the one within the walls of the fortress was intended for the accommodation of pilgrims of higher status (*honestiores peregrini*), while the other was outside the walls and provided lodging for the sick and the poor (*per gli Scabbiosi, e ed altre più miserabili Persone*).<sup>22</sup>

What seems to follow as an inevitable conclusion from this brief chronological overview of the emergence and development of the confraternities and hospitals in Loreto is that Ivan Crnojević found himself in a region where there was a very well organized system of charitable economic support to the immigrants from the eastern Adriatic coast and the Balkans. It is in that light that we may reach a deeper understanding of the motivations behind his symbolic act of making a vow to the Virgin and of praying to her for protection before her miraculous icon.

When the Virgin of Loreto was petitioned for protection by an entire commune or a town, the usual devotional practice was to present a wax or silver votive model of the town.<sup>23</sup> Ivan's prayerful vow was its inverse, so to speak: he pledged to build a church, which would be the seat of the Metropolitanate of Zeta, while the establishment of the capital town, which he probably had in

<sup>22</sup> V. Murri, *Dissertazione critico-istorica sulla identità della Santa Casa di Nazarette ora venerata in Loreto* (Loreto: A. Carnevali, 1791), 95. On the founding of hospitals in Loreto see F. Grimaldi, *La Santa Casa di Loreto e le sue Istituzioni* (Foligno: Accademia Fulginia di Lettere, Scienze e Arti, 2006), 293–305.

<sup>23</sup> M. Sensi, "Santuari 'contra pestem': gli esempi di Terni e Norcia", in *Dall'Albornoz all'età dei Borgia. Questioni di cultura figurativa nell'Umbria meridionale* (Todi: Ediar, 1990), 347–362; V. Camelliti, "Tradizione e innovazione nell'iconografia dei santi patroni marchigiani tra Medioevo e Rinascimento", in *Santi, patroni, città: immagini della devozione civica nelle Marche*, ed. M. Carassai (Ancona: Consiglio regionale delle Marche, 2013), 71–119: [http://www.araldicacivica.it/pdf/saggi/santi\\_vessilliferi.pdf](http://www.araldicacivica.it/pdf/saggi/santi_vessilliferi.pdf)

mind to do, only came afterwards. The original appearance of the monastery church built by Ivan is a matter of conjecture because it had been torn down in 1692 by the Venetians, who had to retreat before the Ottoman troops, and remained in ruins until 1886, when king Nicholas of Montenegro had his court chapel built on its foundations.<sup>24</sup> Some assumptions about its architecture have been based on the depiction of a three-aisled basilica in the background of the portrait of Byzantine poets in the *Octoechos* printed in the Crnojević printing house in Cetinje in 1494.<sup>25</sup> However, archaeological excavations have proved them to be erroneous. Ivan's church had no aisles and terminated in a three-sided eastern apse. This is corroborated by a drawing of the site plan of the monastery which was made, a few months before its demolition in 1692, by the Venetian engineer Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, who was staying in Cetinje.<sup>26</sup> His drawing shows a church with three apses on the east side and with columns on the northern and southern sides sited in the middle of the monastic enclosure. On account of the fact that Ivan maintained good relations with Dubrovnik and paid it frequent visits, some have suggested that the model for the colonnaded portico around the church – a rare feature of religious architecture – was the old cathedral of St Mary in Dubrovnik.<sup>27</sup> A third interpretation that has been proposed is that the use of this architectural feature may be attributed to an influence of the Loreto prototype.<sup>28</sup> From the end of the fifteenth and especially in the sixteenth century, one of the manifestations of devotion to Our Lady of Loreto was the building of chapels and churches on the model of the Loreto prototype.<sup>29</sup> Prior to the construction of the present-day basilica in Loreto, the

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<sup>24</sup> For contemporary statements on the demolition see F. Ongania, *Il Montenegro da relazioni dei provveditori veneti (1687–1735)* (Rome: F. Ongania, 1896), 94–99, 106, 108. P. Mijović, "Cetinje", in *Enciklopedija likovnih umetnosti*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, 1959), 611.

<sup>25</sup> Prijatelj-Pavičić, *Loretske teme*, 49–50; B. Borozan, "Sakriveni iskaz gravure iz Cetinjskog oktoiha", in *Crnojevići: značaj za crnogorsku državu i kulturu*, ed. C. Drašković (Podgorica: Matica crnogorska, 2011), 103–136.

<sup>26</sup> The plan was published by Ongania, *Il Montenegro*, 110–111.

<sup>27</sup> On similarities and possible models see Djurić, "Umjetnost", 489–493. A description of Dubrovnik cathedral destroyed by the 1667 earthquake in M. Rajković, "Stara dubrovačka katedrala", in *Naučni prilozi studenata Filozofskog fakulteta* (Belgrade 1949), 117–121; C. Fisković, *Prvi poznati dubrovački graditelji* (Dubrovnik: JAZU, Historijski institut Dubrovnik, 1955), 23.

<sup>28</sup> Prijatelj-Pavičić, *Loretske teme*, 48–49.

<sup>29</sup> The first example of the spread of the Loreto cult beyond the Marches has been recorded in Foligno, in a will of 1404: the notary Giacomo di Vagnolo di Puccio directed in his will that a chapel "sub vocabulo S. Marie de Lorito" be built for his grave in the church of *San Pietro in Pusterla* and that "una immagine della Vergine simile a quella lì venerate" be donated to it. This is the oldest known example of a shrine fashioned after the Loretan model, see

Santa Casa (*la preziosa reliquia*) was located in a smaller church surrounded with a colonnaded portico. A *tempietto* symbolizing the Holy House occurs in many representations of the Madonna di Loreto, to mention but the *Madonna di Loreto* by Lorenzo d'Alessandro called il Severinate (1445–1501) in the Chapel of the Hospital of San Sollecito in Camerino, or the triptych of the *Madonna di Loreto with Sts Sebastian and Rocco* by Andrea de Lizio (1445–1450) in the church of St Nicholas in Atri.<sup>30</sup>

What may be suggested with much certainty is that Ivan Crnojević sought to combine tradition (one-aisled church) with elements of the late Gothic and Renaissance styles which were in use on both sides of the Adriatic at the time.<sup>31</sup> Ivan's artistic tastes must have been influenced by his travels in Italy, and a role in shaping them could have been played by his frequent stays in Dubrovnik and Kotor, where he had a mansion which the Venetian government had granted to his father.<sup>32</sup>

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A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, "Loreto, o l'invenzione di uno spazio angelico", *Frate Francesco. Rivista di cultura francescana* 82/1 (2016), 196.

<sup>30</sup> The cult of the Madonna of Loreto did not, however, take strong root until the second half of the 15th century. Construction of the Sanctuary of the Santa Casa in Loreto began in 1468, see Mark J. Zucker, "The Madonna of Loreto: A Newly Discovered Work by the Master of the Vienna Passion", *Print Quarterly* 6/2 (June 1989), 149–160.

<sup>31</sup> This is obvious from the surviving architectural elements – eleven capitals (probably from the naos) and a slab with Ivan's coat-of-arms in a Renaissance frame. Six of the capitals were reused for the gallery on the upper floor of the dorter of the new monastery, five were placed on top of the surviving original columns around the new church, and the slab was built into the wall of its apse. The ornaments of the capitals are diverse: some are late Gothic with acanthus designs (such as occur from Dubrovnik, Lastovo and Kotor to the Holy Archangels, a foundation of emperor Stefan Dušan near Prizren), some are early Renaissance with volutes and a flower in the middle (such as occur in Venice and the Drago Palace in Kotor or in the church of St Dominic in Recanati, attributed to Giorgio da Sebenico). Two of the Renaissance capitals show stylized lion's heads. The most interesting are two capitals carved with the Crnojević coat-of-arms: a two-headed eagle with expanded wings and a ball under each talon, see Djurić, "Umjetnost", 494–495; M. Tomić Djurić, "Artistic Trends on the Periphery – the Lands of the Balšić, Kosača and Crnojević families", in *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art*, vol. II: *Sacral Art of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, eds. D. Popović and D. Vojvodić (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2016), 407–409.

<sup>32</sup> P. D. Šerović, "Dvor Ivana Crnojevića u Kotoru", *Glas Boke* 158 (Kotor 1935). Ivan Crnojević's palace in Kotor was described by Timotej Cizila (Timoteo Cisilla) in his 1623 *Bove d'oro*: "Nor should one forget the old palace of Ivan Crnojević, ruler of Montenegro, one of the Venetian and Ragusan togated noblemen, as was said in an excerpt from the annals of Petar Lukarević [Luccari]. He would stay there when he came to Kotor to get some rest and also, as was his habit, to make merry with Kotor noblemen, especially those of the Buća [Buchia] family, to whom he was closely related... He made his residence in it. There you can see dungeons for offenders, a large hall or Town Hall, where he received his subjects and others... The palace is now in the possession of the illustrious lord Marin Meksa [Marinus

The church of the Virgin in Cetinje with its decoration and, especially, with its impressive colonnaded portico was a very different sight from the previous Crnojević foundations, which were quite simple in terms of architectural design, as would be expected under difficult political and military circumstances. The situation was just as difficult, perhaps even more so, but Ivan apparently wished to confer some grandeur to the seat of the Metropolitanate of Zeta.

Ivan's emphasis in the foundation charter for the monastery on the fulfilment of the vow he had made to the most powerful protectress against the Turks and the transfer of the seat of the Metropolitanate of Zeta to it both carry a very clear state and church symbolism. This much can be said with certainty: Ivan laid a strong emphasis on anti-Turkish symbolism epitomized by *Our Lady of Loreto* and maintained the Orthodox spiritual heritage, especially through the significant manuscript-copying activity of the new monastery.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, one should not lose sight of what preceded the construction of the church: the exile of the lord of Zeta in an area which had already become established as a refuge reached by a well-trodden migration route, which he then enveloped in the symbolism of a pilgrimage by emphasizing his prayerful address and the vow he had made. The powerful picture that emerges from the vow of Ivan Crnojević and the whole network of Slav refugees and their religious confraternities centred around an anti-Ottoman shrine, the Madonna of Loreto, is one of an overcoming of religious differences at a time of great danger for all of Christendom.

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Mexe], a nobleman of Kotor...."; see *Analisti. Hroničari. Biografi. Književnost Crne Gore od XII do XIX vijeka*, ed. . Milošević (Cetinje: Obod, 1996), 75–76.

<sup>33</sup> After the foundation of the monastery of the Virgin, Cetinje became the most important manuscript copying centre in Zeta because the monasteries on the isles in Lake Scutari whose scriptoria had flourished in Balšić times (1360–1421) had been largely deserted. For more see *Istorija Crne Gore* 2/2, 499–508, and earlier literature, e.g., Dj. Sp. Radojčić, "O štampariji Crnojevića", *Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva* XIX (1938), 133–171; D. Medaković, *Grafika srpskih štampanih knjiga XV–XVII veka* (Belgrade: Naučno delo, 1958), 5–26. Ivan's son Djuradž mentions in his will that there were plentiful valuables and not a small number of icons in the monastery. He drew up his will, now lost, in 1499 in Cyrillic and – in *schiaava*. It was translated into Italian by Stefano di Pasquali in 1514 – *ho trasduta de lingua et lettera Schiava*, cf. D. G. Wright, "The first Venetian love letter? The testament of Zorzi Cernoevich", *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 9/2 (2006), 11.

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