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*Slavic Rome: Constructing Foreign Communities in an Early Modern Italian City, 1450-1750*

### **Abstract**

My dissertation, "Slavic Rome: Constructing Foreign Communities in an Early Modern Italian City, 1450-1750," is an architectural and urban history of the East Slavic expatriate communities and their churches in early modern Italy, with the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ruthenian (i.e. Belarusian and Ukrainian) community in Rome as its primary subject. Since 1640, the Ruthenian national church in Rome - Santi Sergio e Bacco - and its *ospizio* served as a locus of all incoming Ruthenians, many of which were ecclesiastics. I argue that the community, with its miraculous icon of Madonna del Pascolo, was constructed around image veneration that tied it to both to Tridentine Catholicism and to Ruthenian vernacular Orthodox practices. The community's sacred space allows us to examine the liturgical and cultural ecology of early modern Italy's lesser known minority - East Slavs. Naples, as one of the major Italian port cities, played a central role in this process of how Slavs (often as pilgrims or even more often as escaped/liberated/sold slaves) encountered Italian society - a society that for them was fundamentally urban.

My work examines evidence that is both concrete and ephemeral, extant architecture and archival records, visual and material cultures. I look closely at instances of translation of popular devotional imagery between Italy and Eastern Europe, its re/usage and integration into Marian spirituality of Post-Tridentine Italy, and the extent to which this phenomenon was exceptional or paradigmatic both for Ruthenian Greek Catholicism and for Italian Roman Catholicism during the early modern period. What is at stake is our understanding of mechanisms used by non-Western-European and non-Latin Rite communities in constructing their "homes" in the midst of early modern Italy. For instance, contemporary accounts and news reports (*avvisi* and *relationi*), printed in Rome and Naples in the first half of the 1600s, describe liturgical celebrations pertaining to the news from Eastern Europe (political and military victories in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth etc.), or noteworthy arrivals of Slavs to Italian cities (a group of two hundred *Ruteni* escaping the Ottoman slavery that sailed to Italy and met Pope Urban VIII).

These narratives of encounter between the papal Rome of the Barberini, and traveling East Slavs substantiate my argument that this relationship in the Early

Modern period was much stronger and more regular, and thus likely more influential than previously considered by art historians, requiring a more thorough investigation, especially in places like Naples. By critically reconsidering the facts of liturgical diversity and non-Latin identities within the newly "global" Church, my project aims to show that early modern Italy, through careful use of art, architecture, and renovated early Christian antiquities, attained a fascinating appeal to non-Latin Christians in the "peripheries" of Europe. In fact, a papal reorientation of the Catholic missionary efforts, allowed for a different participation of these peripheries in the greater global Catholicism. These global strategies played out on a local level in the middle of early modern Italian port cities like Naples, Venice, Genoa, and Rome.