

Stefania Biancani

Facets of Franciscan Iconography in Salento

A research of the iconography at Franciscan churches in Terra d'Otranto has revealed almost regular presence of the image of *Pardon of Assisi* or *Porziuncola Indulgence* on the altars. In Salento, the success of an iconography that, starting from the example of Federico Barocci, follows mostly didactic models presented in the illustrated texts dedicated to the life of the Poor Man of Assisi, dispersed by the Franciscan Order in times of the Counter-Reformation, is documented by numerous paintings with the subject present in the Franciscan churches, like the Seraphic Reform of Puglia or of the Capuchins. The authors of these works, often subject to heavy over-painting, are frequently monks painters, Fra Francesco da Martina, Fra Giacomo da San Vito or Friar Angelo of Cupertino. Especially in the seventeenth century, the *Pardon of Assisi* dominates in the Franciscan churches of Terra d'Otranto, the territory with sea as a border, more an island than a peninsula. In these churches the theme of reconciliation is asserted with determination. It is a salvatory proposal for universal forgiveness that the Franciscans, close to humble people, bring to the land where, in the post-Tridentine period, the Greek rite is still prevailing and where official condemnation of the bishops is strongly felt.