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**The Scene of the Stigmatization of Saint Francis of Assisi in the Guidelines for Iconography of Altars in Reformed Church in Poland**

The scene of the *Reception of stigmata by Saint Francis* is one of the most popular themes in Franciscan iconography. The images illustrating the scene may be found in numerous Franciscan churches, especially in post-reformation temples. In case of the Reformats – the Franciscan reformist wing - descending from the Observants, who settled in Poland at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the “stigmatization” was a legally sanctioned representation of the Saint, which was supposed to appear in every Franciscan church, in one of the side altars dedicated to Saint Francis. The Reformats, a legally registered order until 1897, were not separate from the Observants (also known in Poland as the Bernardines). Yet they had considerable autonomy, regional structures and legislation. The law of the Reformats, apart from rules regarding life in the order, social and moral values, included also the clearly stated directives and norms towards the building of churches and monasteries. Similar legal norms referred to the decoration and the equipping of the temples. Uniquely precise and detailed rules regarding construction and fine arts can be found especially in the particular charters in the Polish Reformants’ provinces. From the perspective of this study, the most important seems the charter of the Wielkopolska province of Saint Anthony of Padua, which were published in Rawicz in 1757. The document is the final codification of all the previous laws for the province, and they are also authoritative for other provinces as being similar to their legislation. The above charters, among other directives regarding the equipping of temples, give precise iconographic scheme of the stigmatization of Saint Francis and the way it ought to be presented in the painting in the altar. According to the charter: [the figure] *of Our Holy Father Francis, miraculously marked with the sacred stigmata by our crucified Lord in the form of a Winged Seraph, placed in the opposition to the saint, and touching the five spots of the sacred limbs with five red rays, [ought to be] presented in no other manner.* The presentation of the scene in such a form was obligatory and was followed as a norm in all the provinces and reformed churches in Poland.