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Puccio Capanna in the Oratory of Confraternity of Flagellants of San Rufino: An Example of the 14th Century Assisi

In Assisi in the late fourteenth century, Puccio Capanna succeeded in becoming the main contractor of the most important commissions related to the Franciscan Order, the City Council and the laity confraternities in a way to overtake the monopoly at the market. Starting from the analysis of the program he executed in the Oratory of Confraternity of Flagellants of San Rufino, (for which, based on new documentary evidence, year 1348 is proposed as a *terminus post quem* for its execution), the main guidelines of the Franciscan officialdom in the city have been constituted. The Minorites, through the provision of benefits and the development of devotional practices, ensured the monopoly in life of lay groups that was spread as to had become representative of the entire community of believers (at least at Assisi).

The brotherhoods developed, in fact, true forms of reverence to St. Francis, especially since their soteriology, focused on *conformitas* of a penitent's to the God-man crucified, found the model in the miracle of the stigmata. And that is why the Saint is depicted in the scene of the Crucifixion in the Oratory of San Rufino, in context, not Franciscan, as well as in the votive panel of the church of Santo Stefano, linked to the custom of the community of Santo Stefano, at the time when they gathered in this church. Afterwards, when the Christological example of St Francis became a silent metaphor of deified holiness, according to the doctrinary theories developed within the Order, then the Saint began to emphasize iconographical his Christological form. It was a gradual process which premises, already captured in the lost apse decoration of the Lower Basilica of San Francesco, are also reflected in the artistic production.

In this regard the shrine of the Confraternity of San Lorenzo, signed by Petruccioli Cola and dated around 1394, represents the saint with stigmata in the act of presenting the brothers in the presence of Maesta, according to a solution that is equivalent to the one proposed in the later Crucifixion of the Oratory of St. Francis attributed to Giovanni di Corraduccio and dating to after 1428. Here Francis is figural imitation of the crucified Christ, but if the concept in the mural is expressed synthetically, the banner, the oldest preserved in Umbria (around 1378), illustrates it in a narrative way. The survey closes before the observing moment reflects its new idea of the Franciscan sanctity in the figurative furnishings of the confraternities; furnishings that will essentially hold a signature of the Mazzaforte – Alunno workshop.