

Andrea Pala

Wooden Crucifix of Nicodemus in Oristano: a Model of Franciscan Iconography in Sardinia

The wooden crucifix of Nicodemus is preserved in the church of San Francesco in Oristano and represents an interpretation of the type of gothic painful crucifixes, spread widely in Central European region and closely linked to Franciscan spirituality. This work of art has attracted the interest of many scholars, but has not yet found a precise place within a scholarly work, both in reference to dating and its origin. Some art historians consider it a product of Rhenish origin deriving from the crucifix of S. Maria in the Capitol in Cologne (1304), and diffused through the Franco-Iberian Christ of Perpignan (1307). Other scholars suggest a date closer to the '400, supported by the fact that its iconography becomes a prototype in the Sardinian painting only in the '500, nevertheless the stylistic similarities to Christ preserved in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence as well as the recent historical interpretations have raised new questions. The paper traces the history of studies and proposes a new critical reading, researching the relationship with the Franciscan patrons.