

Francesco Sorce

**Mohammed in Rome and Crusades in the Square
Palace Facade in Piazza Capranica in Rome by Polidoro da Caravaggio
and Maturino da Firenze**

This text examines the possible meanings of the facade painted by Polidoro da Caravaggio and Maturino da Firenze in Piazza Capranica in Rome. Considering some philological and hermeneutical questions still open, the essay highlights the links between the work and the *topoi* circulating in the cultural production in the pontificate of Leo X that support, more or less directly, the crusade promoted by the pope. To explain the iconographic choices of the artists, characterized by a clear anti-Ottoman connotation, some narrative schemes deriving from the tradition of eschatological thought and well documented in the textual network linked to the reign of Giovanni de' Medici are analyzed. These schemes thematize the Western victory over the Turkish enemy and the universal conversion to Christianity, considered as necessary precursors for the fulfillment of the prophecy enunciated in the Gospel of John (10, 16: "fiet unum ovile et unus pastor") and quoted in an inscription that stood out on the prospectus. The last part of the text is dedicated to the images of Polidoro and Maturino that were aimed at a very large audience. The levels of comprehensibility and semiotic efficiency are therefore discussed also in the light of the 'street' communication network, made up by professionals of 'popular' information such as errant preachers and storytellers, capable of disseminating the knowledge necessary to understand the sophisticated contents represented, creating proto-modern forms of public opinion available for war against the Islamic adversary.