

Lunette C15

BLESSED ENRICO, KING OF DENMARK

INSCRIPTION:

THE BEATIFIED HENRY, KING OF DENMARK, OF THE THIRD ORDER OF SAINT FRANCIS, FOR HIS GREAT HUMILITY, LEFT HIS KINGDOM AND RETREATED INTO SOLITUDE. BUT, WHEN FOUND BY HIS PEOPLE, HE WAS FORCEFULLY BROUGHT BACK TO HIS MOTHER, WHO, EITHER BECAUSE SHE DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM OR [...] ORDERED HIM TO BE THROWN INTO A GREAT FIRE, FROM WHICH HE RECEIVED NO INJURIES [...] HE WANDERED IN ITALY AND, ARRIVING IN PERUGIA, DIED IN THE YEAR 1415 AND WAS BURIED WITH A REPUTATION FOR SANCTITY.

The Beatified Henry, son and only heir of the King of Denmark, was very young when he felt the call to serve God "on the path of poverty." When his father died, everyone, especially his mother, urged him to marry in order to ensure the continuation of the royal dynasty.

Henry felt that this was not his path; he became a tertiary and fled to seek refuge in a "rugged and solitary" place where he lived for a long time. Noble courtiers relentlessly searched for him, and when they found him, they forced him to return. While the country rejoiced at his return, his mother did not recognize him (or pretended not to) and condemned him to be burned. The flames, however, miraculously spared his body, allowing him to continue his journey. "While on pilgrimage to Assisi, upon reaching the foot of the mountain near Perugia, he died." It is said that as his soul ascended to heaven, the bells rang on their own, and thus it was decided to bury him in the nearby church. It was the year 1415.

Frà Giuseppe painted Henry with his arms wide open, clearly indicating his prayer but also his helplessness in front of the fire. On the right is the queen mother with a young woman and a child, watching the scene. They show no expression of sorrow. On the left are the common people: one is stirring the flames with a pitchfork, two are carrying firewood. A courtier merely watches. There is also a common man seen from behind. On the right, another common man is stirring the flames with a bellows. It is a lively representation, rich in finely detailed elements and various actions.

