

Lunette B12

SAINT FRANCIS TEMPTED

INSCRIPTION:

PRETENDING TO BE A WANDERING MAIDEN IN THE CASTLE OF BARI, INCITED BY HER MASTER TO MAKE BOOTY OF THE PATRIARCH'S CELIBACY, HE, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE LIFE OF HIS SOUL, CAST HIS BODY INTO THE FIRE LIKE A SALAMANDER; THUS, BY DEFEATING THE ENEMY AMID THE PURPLES OF THOSE FLAMES, HE WAS LEFT CROWNED.

Frederick II had invited Francis to his castle in Bari. One evening he wanted to put the Saint to the test. After a dinner in which he offered him every delicacy, he had him escorted to the comfortable room that had been prepared for him. There was also a large fireplace to warm it.

Saint Francis, as he always did, did not use the bed, but lay down on the bare ground. Suddenly, a beautiful and young woman entered the room, who gracefully offered herself to him.

The Saint was not troubled: he picked up some burning coals from the fire, scattered them on the floor, lay down, and invited the woman to lie down there beside him.

Some courtiers, through the cracks in the door, saw the scene and ran to report everything to the emperor.

Astonished and pleased, Frederick overcame his mistrust: Francis truly was, as had been reported to him, a friar of great virtue.

The year 1220 could be hypothesized as the year in which Francis met Frederick II.

But there are no certain sources.

There are also very evident inconsistencies in the fresco: the first concerns a gesture that is unlikely for Saint Francis, which is showing the wound in his side.

We know that the Saint did not like to show his stigmata and tried to hide even those on his hands and feet. The one in his side was discovered after his death by Brother Elias, and it is unthinkable that the Saint would show it in that situation.

Furthermore, after the event of the stigmata, Saint Francis did not undertake long journeys and therefore could not have been in Apulia.

