Arts, Religion and Culture in the Capuchin Order (Teramo, 12–14 Apr 23)

University of Teramo (Italy), Apr 12–14, 2023
Deadline: Feb 19, 2023

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De habitudine Ordinis ad artem. Arts, Religion and Culture in the Capuchin Order between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Officially founded in 1528 with the bull Religionis Zelus by Pope Clement VII, the Order of Capuchin Friars Minor lived the twenty years of transition preceding the Council of Trent imitating St Francis and his first companions through the preach and the education the of the young people.
Despite the escape to Switzerland of the famous Vicar and preacher Bernardino Ochino in 1542, the Order survived, and the Council of Trent (1547-63) gave great impetus to the spread of the Order, thanks also to the participation of the Vicar General Bernardino da Asti as consultant. This appeared an opportunity to get in contact with many bishops who want to have Capuchins in their dioceses, even outside the Italian borders. In 1574 Pope Gregory XIII allowed the Capuchins to found convents outside the Peninsula. The friars went to France, Spain and the German-speaking regions. New settlements were founded in Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Bohemia, Bavaria, Westphalia and Ireland. About one hundred years after their foundation, the Capuchins had more than 40 provinces, 1,200 friaries and nearly 20,000 brothers. Close to the Jesuits, in the norther side of the Alps the Order grew mostly than in other countries, thanks to the religious activity of recovery of the lands that, especially in the Imperial lands, the Catholic princes subtracted to the Protestants. Under a missionary point of view, the Capuchins were an extremely active Order by evangelizing most part of the world: from the reformed Europe to Brazil, from Congo to the Middle East, from North Africa to the West Indies, they were one of the main players, in close contact with sovereigns and the Holy See.
Among those who asked to join the Order, especially in the years between 1618 and 1761, before taking the religious habit many Capuchins were dedicated to studies and arts, obtaining a very good reputation. Unfortunately the Capuchin way of life was not suitable to the one typical of the arts, especially outside the convents. For this reason in the General Chapter of 1627, the friars were forbidden to agree any painting or carving work requested by laymen.
Although the culture of the arts was not originally part of the Order activity and its practice was in many cases hindered, there were many religious that reached very high levels in the cloister, especially in painting and wood sculpture. Especially during the 17th and 18th centuries, many Capuchins devoted themselves to painting, driven by different motivations: pleasure, needs or if requested by of nobles and benefactors. Sculpture was practised much more frequently, often for decorating the small churches that, according to the Constitutions, were not allowed to be sumptu-

ous, but only decorated with poor and simple ornaments. The right combination of simplicity of material and preciousness of form was expressed in the works of the friars cabinet-makers, also known as 'marangoni'.
Numerous studies were conducted to understand the relationship between the arts and the Capuchin Order. Many areas of investigations still remain unexplored or only partially explored, especially considering some areas related to the connections between arts, culture and religion on an European and global level.

The Conference De habitudine Ordinis ad artem. Arts, Religion and Culture in the Capuchin Order between the 16th and 18th centuries, organised by the University of Teramo with the patronage of the Seraphic Province of the Immaculate Conception of the Capuchin Friars Minor, the International Society of Franciscan Studies and the Capuchin Historical Institute, aims to explore the difficult and elusive relationship between art culture, religion and the Capuchin Order on an international level, with particular attention to the historical context and the religious dimension, considered an essential prerequisite for understanding artists, the production of art objects, patronage and relations with the secular world on a global scale. With the aim of fostering discussion and scientific debate, any contributions concerning further aspects relevant to the theme of the conference that have not been made explicit above will also be taken into consideration. The most significant contributions will be considered for publication.

The conference will be divided into five sessions:
- the role of the Order in the context of the post-Tridentine Church;
- artistic practice between norms, prohibitions and customs;
- the cultural objects of the Capuchin world: use and circulation;
- capuchin patronage;
- images, knowledge and preaching between devotion and catechesis.

Proposal composition and deadlines
Each proposal must consist of two parts: the abstract of the paper (max 2000 characters including spaces) and the profile of the speaker (max 1500 characters including spaces), highlighting the curriculum vitae and professional position. The two parts must be combined in a single Word or PDF file. Interested parties must submit the Word or PDF file by 19th February 2023, by uploading the documents at the link: https://forms.gle/tkdknJwetyi4LvEL9.

Scientific Committee
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Reference:

CFP: Arts, Religion and Culture in the Capuchin Order (Teramo, 12-14 Apr 23). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 14, 2023 (accessed Nov 16, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/38336>.