



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



Tabernacle of St. Francis

In 1926 the seven hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Francis was solemnly celebrated, a recurrence particularly felt in Mugello, a land of ancient Franciscan activity in which the Franciscan Third Order counted on a deep-rooted, consistent presence. In the sphere of the numerous initiatives taken in Borgo San Lorenzo for that occasion this monumental aedicule was also realized, erected in the religious heart of the town, between the church of St. Lawrence and the sixteenth century female Dominican monastery of St. Catherine.

It was solemnly inaugurated on 4th. October 1926 and its realization is entirely due to Chini Manufacturing and its collaborators. It is formed of a recess covered with tiles of remarkable decorative efficiency, made in the wall of the monastery of St. Catherine, in which the statue in ceramics of **St. Francis** is set.

The surrounding wall is decorated with paintings, the wolf and the lamb, and ceramics portraying above all the coats of arms of the most important families of the area, whilst a canopy covered in the lower part, by ceramic tiles, from which a beautiful lamp in wrought iron hangs, covers the complex. Probably, for the execution of the artefact, they used a space previously occupied by a monument relating to the first world war, of which the small railing in wrought iron still remains today, this, too, referable to Chini Manufacturing, given the presence of the characteristic decoration with broken lines.

This work assumes the significance of a complete repertoire of the numerous productive properties of the Manufacturing and of the Chini family, assuming the form of the work of a studio (intended in its highest significance), in which each component carries out a fixed job. In fact, the planning of the whole structure is due to Chino, while Tito carried out the pictorial decorations. The sculptural parts, amongst which the austere statue of the Saint of Assisi, were the concern of the young Augusto, Chini's other son.

However, Dino Chini on the pictorial part, Emilio Meastrini, who carried out the work of joinery, and O. Cipriano who took care of the masonry, also took part in the realization of the tabernacle. The commemorative inscription, dictated by the Capuchin father Epifanio, was engraved on the tomb-stone by Cesare Squarcini.

The aedicule, rather seriously damaged by the years and the atmospheric agents, above all in the painted parts, was restored in 1989 by Augusto Romagnoli, ex decorator of Chini Manufacturing, by the Lions Club Mugello. Beside the entrance door to the monastery of St. Catherine is centenarian, the model of which is due to Augusto Chini.

Walking along Via San Francesco, on the facade of the Chapel of the St. Catherine monastery one may observe a lunette in polychromatic ceramics portraying The Meeting between St. Francis and St. Dominic. The work in which the figures of the two Saints stand out against a golden base, present a decorative fascia with the motif of broken lines and this, too, is related to the production of the San Lorenzo Furnaces for the Franciscan celebrations of 1926.