Marianne CAILLOUX

Dramatic transfers:
Mural painting and religious theatre
in the Western Alps during the sixteenth century

Abstract: In the specific context of the late medieval Alps, it has been demonstrated that artistic exchanges and the circulation of iconographic and stylistic patterns were quite common. Transference can take place between different media, like religious theatrical mysteries and painted works of art such as alpine chapels' wall paintings. This paper explores the circulation of theatrical mysteries through the Alps between Provence, Brianzonese and Piemonte. It analyses some examples of iconographic transference, like composition, precise gesturing, attributes and accessories but also characters designation. A series of accurate matches is thus selected in vices and virtues wall paintings and in some saints' painted cycles. It demonstrates also correspondences in the expressionism and dolorism in some episodes of saint Anthony's life. With the analysis of two saints' cycles (saints Andrew and Bartholomew), it will conclude trying to explain how to find the presence or the absence of dialogue between religious mysteries and wall paintings.

Keywords: mystery plays, wall paintings, visual studies, iconography, devotion

I n recent years, historical studies have evolved towards interdisciplinarity in France, in the wake of Cultural and Visual Studies in the Anglophone world. More academics are currently trying to invest in a dynamic approach of the visual relationship between artefacts and viewers.[1] Contexts are taken into account to better understand cultural representations, in particular through artefacts. In consideration of the specific topic of artistic exchanges, through people, mental images and objects, geographic aspects of some European areas offer good understanding of Medieval and Modern visual *dispositifs*' dynamism.

This paper aims to investigate the interactions between wall paintings and religious mystery plays in a very specific area, the international crossroad of the Northern Occidental Alps. First, the historiographic prospect of the intermediality of painted images and

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theatrical visuality will be synthesised, explaining some particular concepts of new art history, such as cultural transfers. Then, it will focus on the complexity of geographic location and the artistic production of this particular region where villages can be seen as "unexpected quarters".[2] Lastly, the information circulation of iconographic patterns will be addressed in the light of the polylaterality of the exchanges between those medias.

Intermediality & Cultural Transfers: historiographic prospects

The relationship between theatre and images, and specifically between wall paintings and religious mysteries, has been the subject of scholarly enquiry since the beginning of the twentieth century. As early as 1904, Emile Mâle asserted that that there is no priority of one medium over the other.[3] Numerous researchers, like Otto Pächt or Aloïs Maria Nagler, pursued this posture, where theatre precedes image for the iconographic conception. E. Mâle himself moderated his statement for the second edition of the book. More recently, researchers continue to give credit to this idea that religious mystery plays unilaterally produced a lot of iconographies within the late medieval religious art.[4] On the other hand, some think that the painted image produced fundamental iconographic details for medieval religious theatrical scenography. Others consider that both medias established themselves upon a common base.[5]

French and Anglophone scholars agree today that mystery plays do not unilaterally inspire paintings, nor that those paintings are the sole purveyors of stage directions. Clifford Davidson is one of the first to evidence the multi-modal circulations of symbolic and narrative images between painting and play.[6] but he does not however further analyse the causal and instrumental relationships between figurative art and mystery plays, as will be later achieved through M. Steven's conception of the intertextuality of the media, in line with Pamela Sheingorn's approach.[7] Both media influenced each other in a mutual, complex,

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2   This syntagma is a direct reference to the panel's title (Renaissance Society of America, Berlin, 2015) for which this paper was written.

3   Émile MÂLE, *Le renouvellement de l'art par les mystères à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Gazette des Beaux-Arts 31,1904, vol. 3, pp. 89–106; Émile MÂLE, *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Age en France, étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Age et sur ses sources d'inspiration*, Paris 1922, pp. 32–144.

4   Martin STEVENS, *The intertextuality of late medieval art and drama*, New literary history 22, 1991, vol. 2, pp. 317–337.

5   Rose Marie FERRÉ, *L'art et le théâtre au Moyen* Âge: *jalons et perspectives*, Médiévales 59, 2010, pp. 77–89.

6   Clifford DAVIDSON, *Drama and Art, An introduction to the use of evidence from the visual arts for the study of early drama*, in: Clifford Davidson (ed.), Early drama, art and music monographs, series 1, Kalamazoo 1977, pp. 2–3.

7   Pamela SHEINGORN, *On using medieval art in the study of medieval drama: an introduction to methodology*, Research opportunities in Renaissance drama 22, 1979, pp. 101–109.

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rich, and sometimes muddled dialogue. This article will attempt to address this, through precise examples of wall paintings, with the idea that these relationships are more easily analysed in a local ensemble and also that to study images, artists and artistic structures and displays, whatever the media used, means to modify the art history approach in a more innovative way by crossing other disciplines.

Those last years, complex concepts such as cultural transfers allow research about medieval art to be more reflexive and less interpretative in its apprehension of how objects work in the Occidental Late Middle Ages, a society, which is quite difficult to culturally understand and define. At the end of the 1960s, Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg, in the context of the European development of political sciences, worked on the idea of artistic exchanges visualised through circulations between centres and peripheries, but without hierarchising the quality of art pieces or producers. They tried to reintroduce space within time studies and to offer a more dynamic vision than simple art geography: it was not about artistic productions localization anymore, but preferably about how emission and reception worked, how people and artefacts were connected and exchanged in moving or stabilised clusters and relationships. Recently, image anthropology found suitable to adapt the notion of cultural transfer to art issues to put in light transculturation phenomena.[8]

In 2003, Beatrice Joyeux-Prunel rephrased Michel Espagne's manifesto on cultural transfers, that is the mobility of goods, people, ideas, and cultural issues, with particular or general stakes, between two cultural distinctive spaces.[9] Michel Espagne used this notion for information circulation between France and Germany: modelising exchanges with geography and travel works through traditional art history comparatism.[10] B. Joyeux-Prunel and other scholars like Roland Recht, brought this concept to study what and how circulation goes between the reception area and the emission place of the cultural transfer.[11] Investing the circulatory approach, this paper proposes to use this conceptual methodology to explore the exchanges between two particular medias, painted images and theatrical patterns in the specific geographical context of the Northern Occidental Alps.[12]

8   Jacques DUBOIS et al., *Les transferts artistiques dans l'Europe gothique. Repenser la circulation des artistes, des œuvres, des thèmes et des savoirs-faires (XIIe–XVIe siècle)*, Paris 2014.

9   Béatrice JOYEUX-PRUNEL, *Les transferts culturels. Un discours de la méthode*, Hypothèses, 2002 (2003), pp. 151–160.

10   Michel ESPAGNE, *Sur les limites du comparatisme en histoire culturelle*, Genèses, Les objets et les choses 17, 1994, pp. 112–121.

11   Thomas DACOSTA KAUFMANN – Catherine DOSSIN – Béatrice JOYEUX-PRUNEL (eds.), *Circulations in the global history of art*, Farnham – Burlington 2015.

12   More specifically, see the chapter "Cultural transfers in art history" by Michel Espagne (pp. 107–110) in the former reference.

Geographic location and their artistic production

New art geography can be used to discern temporary artists' travels and what relation it bears to artistic exchanges. In relating geo-political phenomena to art history, it is vital to investigate regional territories that are culturally consistent, to better understand contact areas and exchange modalities. Northern Occidental Alps are a very specific region and the specific valley investigated here shows an altogether important cultural consistency for this topic. High piemontese Susa is unified both politically and physically by its mountain context, but, as a frontier passage, it is also prone to international circulations that enrich considerably its local production in an acculturative way.[13] The villages mentioned in this paper are all in altitude and along circulation roads and therefore can be understood as unexpected quarters because they don't fit the modern vision of alpine isolated and depopulated villages. Indeed, studying the alpine circulation shows a vivid social activity: at the end of the fifteenth century, those places are busy and active with passing merchants, pilgrims, workers – from the vicinity or farther away – but also bourgeois or even aristocratic people. As the Piemonte is a really pervasive area, it is possible to see movements not in a unilateral or binary way but in a pendulary migration of multiple, back and forth round-trips. This idea brings out how those small habitats can be, and are here studied as, intercultural and intermedial exchanges places. The Susa valley is particularly fitted for this study, for it is by far one of the richest alpine valleys in wall painted saints cycles but also in religious plays performances.[14]

This paper approaches one particular artistic workshop, today known – as others – as actively itinerant for professional purposes through several generations.[15] The Serra family is active in Northern Piemonte and Briançonnais from the 1430s until around 1500, and it is focused on three personalities known through painted signatures and archive documents – contracts, civic registrations, payment receipts and such – Matteo Serra, active in Pinerolo around 1435–1465, Bartolomeo Serra, his son, workshop master after him till 1495 when the grandson, Sebastiano Serra, takes over the leadership of the *atelier*. The latter two work together a long time, as is customary, and there are traces of other Serras during the sixteenth century in documentary sources, but without matching works of art. Based on their identified painted cycles and archive documentation, it is possible

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13   Enrico CASTELNUOVO, *L'artista itinerante…*, in: Arturo C. Quintavalle, Le vie del Medioevo, Milano 2000, pp. 319–322.

14   Jean CHOCHEYRAS, *Le théâtre religieux en Dauphiné du Moyen Age au XVIIᵉ siècle (domaine français et provençal*, Geneva 1975, pp. 120–121.

15   For a detailed presentation of the workshop, please see: Marianne CAILLOUX, *Peindre, voir et croire dans les* Alpes, Lille 2021, pp.106–118.

to define a great part of the workshop circulation and the specific villages they worked in at specific times, following a pendulary movement between the two – French and Italian – sides of the Alps barrier.[16] In the high valley of Susa, they worked on painted cycles of saints around 1480–1500 in the villages of Chiomonte, Giaglione, Horres and Jouvenceaux – while at the same time other less well recorded artists worked on similar wall-paintings in the villages of Novalesa, Savoulx and Salbertrand – all in a very small area where each of those places are less than 30 km apart and connected through the main royal road, the *Via Francigena*, and by secondary paths. As it is a region struggling with – and against – Waldensian presence, those places are used to disseminate an active catholic doctrinal propaganda, through any means possible.[17] In this regard, displaying stable images and using the power of words colourfully staged can be more effective than official preaching. All the conditions are met to allow the composition of detailed martyrial iconography in hagiographic cycles, that take place in the inside or outside walls of villages' chapels and parish churches, where they are frequently the only vivid decoration, and therefore attract every attention due to their important visibility.

At the verge of the sixteenth century, this region presents quite a serious production of wall-paintings, as the rest of the Alps, but also of religious plays, called mysteries: frequently written in Arpitan, an old version of Franco-Provençal language also known as Gallo-Romance Language. The corpus here investigated contains three painted cycles of saint Anthony (Ranverso, Salbertrand, Savoulx), three of saint Andrew (Chiomonte, Horres) and two of the Vices and Virtues (Giaglione, Novalesa), that can be correlated to one play of each saint.

A mystery dedicated to saint Anthony the abbot circulates in these parts of the Alps. There are indications that the mystery was known and staged before those cycles were painted, from a copy of the text made in 1503.[18] Although there are preserved or documented painted cycles of saint Anthony and of the Vices and Virtues on both sides of the Alps (due to the strong presence of the Antonine order), none of those in Brianzonese show close similarities to

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16   Please see *La circolazione e l'eredità della bottega Serra al di qua e al di là delle Alpi: problemi di identificazione e attribuzione*, in: Mauro Fiori (ed.), I Pittori Serra, San Maurizio Canavese 2018, pp. 137–151.

17   Marianne CAILLOUX, *Religion et identité visuelle: les Vaudois et l'image peinte dans les Alpes occidentales à la fin du Moyen Âge*, in: Sarah Alyn Stacey – Joanne Poetz (eds.), New Perspectives on Heretical Discourse and Identity: The Waldensians in the Medieval and Early Modern Context, Bern 2021, pp. 225–243; Marianne CAILLOUX, *Voir la religion dans les Alpes à la fin du Moyen Âge : peintures murales et altérités culturelles*, Questions de communication, La religion sous le regard du tiers 37, 2020, pp. 63–88.

18   Paul GUILLAUME, *Le mystère de Sant Anthoni de Viennès*, Torino 1998; Nadine HENRARD, *Le théâtre religieux médiéval en langue d'oc*, Geneva 1998, pp. 262–263, 326–327.

the text like the Piemontese ones.[19] In this play, the text of the mystery uses the Vices to figure the temptations faced by the saint. According to Nadine Henrard, the text is from Provence: it travelled along the Durance valley and was translated in local language at Briançon with few adjunctions in order to adapt to the Waldensian heresy struggles. In this form, it arrived at the village of Névache and was performed on 1503.[20] This text gives information about how it was staged: there were to be about 80 actors and quite a few feminine parts. A nineteenth century local testimony, when those mysteries were still staged in the Brianzonese area, indicated that those plays lasted for at least three days and that the feminine parts were played by women: as the number of characters was quite important, whole communities were involved in the staging.[21]

A theatrical text for 142 characters, entitled *The Passion of Saint Andrew* is documented by a copy of 1512, which is not complete, telling only the persecution and martyr of the saint.[22] It is difficult to determine if this text has been written in 1512 or has only been adapted from a previous version.[23] It seems that, by the means of sixteenth century copies, numerous fifteenth century Provençal and Alpine mystery plays survived. So, this Passion of saint Andrew is very close to a sixteenth Parisian edition of the *Vie et Mystère de saint André.*[24] Jean Sibille, like Nadine Henrard, thinks that these two texts, the Passion of Puy-Saint-André and the Parisian edition, have the same common source, an older text which would have been adapted several times.[25] It is very likely that the original text circulated, like other mystery plays in the Alpine environment at the end of the fifteenth century; supposedly it was adapted for a theatrical performance in Briançonnais at the beginning of

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19 Laurence MEIFFRET, *Saint Antoine ermite en Italie (1340–1540), programmes picturaux et dévotion*, Rome 2004, pp. 217–218.

20 N. HENRARD, *Le théâtre religieux*, pp. 126–127. Névache is a Brianzonese village distant from Savoulx by 20 km, Jouvenceaux by 30 km, Giaglione and Novalesa by 60 km.

21 Marie-Louis DES AMBROIS DE NEVACHE, *Notice sur Bardonnèche*, Florence 1872, pp. 64–65. The *Mystère des trois Doms* staged in Romans (Drôme) in May 1509 is documented by Jacques Chocheyras as having women for feminine parts, with the precision that even with gaudy or even obscene details, some were played by good reputation and family women. See J. CHOCHEYRAS, *Le théâtre religieux*, pp. 21–22, 54; William TYDEMAN (ed.), *The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 306–307.

22 Gap, Departmental archives of the Hautes-Alpes, Serie E, manuscript 229–285. Der MING ONG, *Édition de deux mystères alpins en moyen occitan: le mystère de saint André et le mystère de saint Martin*, PhD diss., University of Paris IV-Sorbonne 1995.

23 Jean SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André, drame religieux de 1512 en occitan briançonnais: Édition critique, étude linguistique comparée*, PhD diss., University of Lyon I-Lumière 2003, p. 12.

24 Paris, French National Library, Reserve Yf 121, 1530c.

25 N. HENRARD, *Le théâtre religieux*, pp. 320–321; J. SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André*, p. 30.

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the sixteenth century and later on, in 1666 and 1739 at Chiomonte itself.[26] Ones can't fail to notice the two painted cycles' difference of datation: Chiomonte would be contemporary of the original text of the mystery play, as it is at the end of the fifteenth century, while Horres would be about fifteen years after the Puy-Saint-André copy made in 1512.[27]

Unfortunately, the contexts of production and performances is quite unknown: the two mysteries were preserved mainly by copies and needed a thorough study of the idiomatic language, added to the few informations manuscripted by the transcriber to identify where and when they were initially produced. So, it is mostly the primary raw material of the descriptions and character lines that can be examined for a comparison with local painted images. It is unknown if artists, like the Serra family, have participated or even seen those specific plays but they surely witnessed religious mysteries as it was usual in late medieval life.[28] In the villages of Giaglione and Savoulx, it is documented however that wall painting artists were summoned by *sindaci* for theatrical sets commissions during the Seicento.[29] This blurs the line between the creative processes of both media in a way that goes beyond the usual perspective for analysis: the influence of one end-product on another. It could indicate a common basis of iconographic imagination that artists draw from, regardless of their medium. For example, the saint Andrew play was performed on 20th June of 1513 (as a manuscript note of the vicar indicates) in the village of Puy-Saint-André, where we know the Serra family worked several years previously. Nadine Henrard, closely studying the text, states that the vicar brought some modifications to the prologue of the text to give it more local accuracy.[30]

Both texts are quite detailed with very graphic and colourful mental images that are brought to life on stage. One cannot help to notice the visual similarities with some of the wall-paintings produced in the same area. It suggests a strong interest in studying the consistency of intermedial exchanges between the two media and how they deal with structural problems due to their own technical constraints.

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26 Bruno DOLINO (don), *I misteri delle Ramats e di Puy-Saint-André: raffronto con gli affreschi di Sant'Andrea delle Ramats*, in: Elena Stano – Roberto Perol (eds.), Sant'Andrea di Ramats: cronaca di un restauro, Pinerolo 2001, pp. 107–108.

27 Puy-Saint-André is a Brianzonese village distant from Chiomonte and Horres by respectively 40 and 60 kilometres and was locally famous for its mysteries. Indeed, this very small area concentrated all performances of five of the ten mysteries that are documented for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. See N. Henrard, *Le théâtre religieux*, pp. 126–127.

28 J. CHOCHEYRAS, *Le théâtre religieux*, p. 119.

29 Gabriella SALA, *Le sacre rappresentazioni nella valle di Susa*, MA diss., Università degli studi, facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia di Torino 1983, p. 91.

30 N. HENRARD, *Le théâtre religieux*, pp. 304–311.

Intramedial exchanges: iconographic patterns between wall paintings and mysteries

Studying those plays in comparison with these painted cycles of saints' lives brings out strong similarities of iconography, composition, structures and details. One can wonder if those exchanges are an alpine specificity and how close the correspondence are. A painted cycle visually depicts the stories and marking episodes of a saint's life, often with a standard narrative from spiritual calling to martyrdom through several encounters, trials and temptations, with converted disciples, incarnated demons and vindictive pagan kings. Mysteries follow mostly the same scheme, displayed on several "days" of staging and often ending with a "diablerie", which is a *sarabande* of demons corresponding sometimes – at least in the small area investigated here – to the painted pattern of Vices and Virtues Cavalcade. Saint Anthony is one of the most tempted saints: retired into a deserted land, he is the object of demonic attacks under different forms, in a very christic-like posture. One can then observe similarities between the Névache antonine mystery text and wall paintings of Vices and Virtues and the three painted cycles of saint Anthony.

When Vices correspond to very graphic ideas, both text and painting describe the characters with colourful details. For example, Pride is displayed with a sceptre in Salbertrand, Giaglione, and Novalesa, in accordance with the idea of royalty expressed in the text, while in Brianzonese it is characterised only by its fine clothes. When Gluttony says in the mystery: "*I am eating with appetite / for, I swear thee by my sacrament / you will find here / some roasts and broths / some white and vermillion wines*", it is shown in the paintings hams, chickens on or off a spit (so boiled or roasted, as specified in the text), and wine in glasses, flasks, or wineskins, though in that case almost always red, probably because rendering white wine on a clear background would be less obvious [Fig. 2].[31] Wrath strays from the text, as he is almost always depicted stabbing himself, while the text indeed mentions weaponry and violence, but directed towards others. Envy, who always offers several choices in the text, is depicted with crossed arms and hands showing several directions [Fig. 3]. It seems the images attempt to visualise the abstract concepts of the text.

At other times, text and image can struggle for more gawdy details, as is visible in the Lust Vice present in the Vices Cavalcade but also in the courtesan temptation in saint Anthony's life [Fig. 1]. The text of the mystery uses the Vices to figure the temptations, whereas they are almost always translated in the paintings like in Voragine, with the courtesan symbolising the temptation of the flesh and the other vices replaced by monstrous but unrecognisable demons attacking the Saint, probably also because the iconographic program is usually

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31 "*Ar mango alegroment/ Car te juro, per mon sagrament / Que tu trobarés eyci / De rosti et de bulhi / De vin blanc et de vermel […]*." P. GUILLAUME, *Le mystère de Sant Anthoni de Viennès*, verse 2972.

completed elsewhere by a cavalcade of vices.[32] In the Jouvenceaux cycle, the courtesan, depicted with two small black horns as a reminder of her devilish condition, is standing at the door of the Saint's cell and holding her heart in her right hand [Fig. 4–4a]. This gesture of offering her heart – and thus ideal love and not merely physical love like in the other painted cycles – relates to the speech of Lust in the text of the mystery, who uses a very courteous language in the first part:

> *"Because you are noble and more / And have silver and gold,*
> *But considering before me / The nobility to which you belong,*
> *I searched around the whole country / In order to find thee.*
> *Because you are the most gracious / By figure and face,*
> *That is no mortal body. /Therefore, I give thee my love,*
> *And ask for yours, with great desire / Do not refuse it,*
> *For I want thee to know / That you are beautiful and gracious,*
> *And above all loving / White as a lily flower,*
> *And the most beautiful of the country."*[33]

By contrast, the five last lines are strangely very straightforward and offer the girl's bosom as more likely to arouse the Saint's interest than courteous love, nobility, or grace.[34] In the cycle of Novalesa where every vice is accompanied by two demons, Lust has a devil holding up her breasts for display [Fig. 1]. The text of the mystery also stresses that part of the young courtesan's anatomy: "*Look at my cleavage / it is beautiful and generous / And if you want to see my teats / which are gracious and gorgeous / I will show them to you*".[35] These lines seem to have had greater iconographic success when transposed as the unveiling of the thigh of the courtesan personifying Lust. The Novalese cycle goes even further as the unveiling of the thigh goes with a devil grabbing and holding up Lust's breast to emphasise the carnal offer of the vice. In Jouvenceaux the courteous aspect is depicted: the courtesan offers an ideal to turn the Saint from his spiritual calling [Fig. 4–4a].

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32 Jacques VORAGINE, *Légende dorée* (trad. by Teodor deWysewa), Paris 1998, p. 87.

33 "*Car yà soy nobla et davantage / Et d'or et d'argent habundant / Mas en my considerant / La noblesso dont sé partis / Ay cherchà tot lo pays / Per trobar vos / Car vos sé lo plus gracios / De corsage et de figuro / Que non es corps de creature / Et, per so, vos dono m'amor / Requerent vos, per grant dosour / Que vos non la refusé pas / Car yà volo que vos sapias / Que yà soy belo e gracioso / Et principalment amoyroso / Blancho coma la flor de lys / Et la plus belo dal peys.*" P. GUILLAUME, *Le mystère de sant Anthony de Viennès*, verses 2878–2895.

34 The image of the heart offering exists in Renaissance courteous books, for example in the *Petit Livre d'Amour* (illuminated by the Master of the Chronique scandaleuse and later Jean Perréal around 1500–1525), Pierre Sala litterary gives his red heart to his lover Marguerite Builloud. Brititsh Library, Stowe Ms 955, fol. 6r.

35 "*Regardà lo meo corsage / Lo qual es beos per avantage / Et si volés veyre mas mamellas / Que sont tant graciosas et bellas / Yà los vos mostrarey.*" P. GUILLAUME, *Le mystère de sant Anthony de Viennès*, verses 2895–2899.

In most painted lives of saint Anthony abbot, the scene of temptation with the courtesan is quite scarcely depicted with this specific detail of showing the thigh, the beastly demons being preferred for a more striking effect on the viewer.[36] For example, it is present in one southern occidental alpine cycle, at the Clans chapel (Alpes Maritimes), and in the antonine decoration in the oratorio of Montefalco (Umbria). There is on occurrence of the demonic courtesan showing her thigh and inviting the saint to bed, in the painted chapel of Bassano del Grappa (northern Italy), where for instance in Padova, the Lust temptation is a naked man showing his bottom, the particularity of which could be suggesting a link with theatrical colourfulness. In Veneto, the issue of antonine iconography development is specifically tied to a will of identifying Antony to saint Francis, for the sake of legitimacy of this new order at the end of the fourteenth century. On the contrary, in Piemonte and Brianzonese areas, the antonine order seeks to confirm its authority and therefore tends to supplant the influence of Briançon and Embrun friars' franciscan convents.

Another stripping courtesan is visible in the Bastia Mondovi San Fiorenzo famous cycle of saint Anthony. This one is indeed an interesting case for, to answer new dogmatic aspirations, the iconographic program presents an explicit description of the consequences of sin and temptation. It shows the local influence of penitential confraternities (through painted panels of the Works of Mercy) that linked saint Anthony's life with Vices and Virtues at the same time when a Last Judgement mystery, *Lo Iudicio de la fine del Mondo*, was staged several times and printed in Bastia Mondovi (1510). The woodcuts of the book followed the description of the painted Antonian cycle of San Fiorenzo. The naked thigh of Lust and saint Anthony's courtesan remains quite a unique iconographic detail that can be connected to the flowering of religious plays in the Northern Occidental Alps [Fig. 5].[37] It may well be that other Antonian cycles are not that developed, but also that non-alpine stories, like Pistoia's oratorio, are prone to select the episode of the exorcism of the possessed woman that comes just after the lusting temptation of saint Anthony.

More generally, the alpine cycles of saint Anthony have precise scenes that are often absent from more meridional painted lives like Tuscanian or Umbrian Antonian stories. For example, in those traditional cycles, the Alms to the poor scene is preferably depicted instead of the Goods selling scene which is only visible in some altarpieces (Corsi wood panel), and in the most detailed cycles and in the Alpine cycles here discussed. In Jouvenceaux Sant'Antonio chapel, the cycle takes place all over the nave, from the left to the right,

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36 It is worth to notice that recently a new Antonine cycle has been brought to light in the Cordeliers church of Briançon: the episode is depicted there in a two steps' scene. On the left, the courtesan enters the wicker hut, on the right she talks to the saint. The whole scenery seems to be staged, like with an actor entering and exiting a set.

37 L. MEIFFRET, *Saint Antoine ermite*, pp. 175–177, 182–183, 218–219.

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crossing the choir through the apse arcade. The first striking feature is the addition of rare episodes that are usually overlooked in other Antonine cycles with a smaller number of panels. For instance, the entrance of the Saint's sister in the convent and the Goods selling are painted in Jouvenceaux in a very specific manner [Fig. 6]. The sale of the Saint's property is also absent from the other four Valsusine cycles and is narrated. A man holds the merchant's hand to legally bind it with Anthony's. The gesture is highly symbolic, showing the transfer of rights and property. The same gesture in the Jouvenceaux painting allows us to recognize the character of the broker – *coratyer* or *coratier* in the text of the mystery. The text mentions a broker acting as a middleman for the sale of the saint's property to three merchants. The deal is concluded with the third merchant, Jean du Moulin, and the broker: "*And I say, give me your hand / For surely you will have it*".[38] We see the broker in the middle, holding in his left hand the right wrist of the young saint with his halo and in his right hand the right wrist of the merchant whose profession is displayed through his long robe and purse. He is sealing the deal by carrying out the handshake he promised in the text. Those two scenes are absent from every other Valsusine depiction of Anthony's life and in Tuscany's an Umbria's cycles, it is replaced by the Alms to the poor with the help of the sister, this scene being often used as a synthesis of several narrative details of this saint Anthony's life episode.[39] The selling of the saint's goods is visible in the Pelugo di Vigo Rendena cycle, which is in the northern oriental Alps: the scene is mixed with the Alms and so, without the handshake, for the gift takes place in front of the broker's desk.

These anecdotal episodes, less important to the comprehension of the history and precepts of the Saint, are nevertheless also included in the religious theatre. So, their depiction already implies a resonance with the mystery.

For the mystery of saint Andrew and the painted saint life of the Chiomonte chapel, the correspondences are also quite important: The Passion of saint Andrew text contains only the second day and it is also the case for the wall-paintings of Chiomonte, whose cycle begins with the appearance in front of Aegeus and ends with the burial of Andrew by Maximilia. In the play, the second day begins with the Murgondie king regretting Andrew's absence, gone to Achaïe; it ends with Maximilia and her daughters coming to gather the sacred remains. From the fifth tableau, the Chiomonte painted cycle matches the mystery text. The narrative order is the same and the scenes follow the same order, as we can see in the episode of the sentence by the king to jail: "*from us you will have this bead / Then*

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38   "*Ar say, presta-me la palmo / Car segurament vos l'auré.*" P. GUILLAUME, *Le mystère de sant Anthony de Viennès*, verses 2091–2092.

39   Georges KAFTAL, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting*, Florence 1952, pp. 61–75; Georges KAFTAL, *Iconography of the Saints in the painting of North East Italy*, Florence 2003, pp. 51–72.

we will see what you can do […] For your impertinence / and your great wickedness / you will be taken and bound".[40] The painting of Chiomonte depicts Andrew on the right, about to enter the gate, his hands obviously tied with ropes, whereas the ropes are not visible in the other painted cycle in Horres, despite that cycle being more detailed: it begins with the miracle of the resurrection of the young man, continues with other miracles and also ends with the passion and the entombment [Fig. 7–8].

The physical expression is also specified in the text and the Chiomonte painting where Andrew presents a frowning and worried face: "*He begins to be unhappy / He does not laugh nor cry / But he is wincing all right*".[41] The emphasis on the physical treatment inflicted to the saint is generally present in the two media. This is the case for the rope but also for the caning. In the text, the servant Flocart advises the king to flog Andrew. During the flogging, the text, via the executioners, puts heavy emphasis on blood appearing and the skin reddish glow:

> *"First, his discipline / I want to tell thee my intention /*
> *First, his punishment / Will be to be beaten*
> */ By three or four fellows / Naked and tied to a pillar […]*
> *Let lads give him a good beating / And beat him till / thou can see the blood running […]*
> *He will not laugh / Between the three of us […]*
> *Thou will learn to canter / With us three without delay […]*
> *To do a good job / Three is better than one […]*
> *His skin changed colour / He will have the robe of a great lord, red as a scarlet […]*
> *We beat him until he bled / In front and behind, everywhere / from head to toe*."[42]

In the corresponding episode in the Horres and Chiomonte paintings, the short whiplashes, thick and red, are visible all over the saint's body, as in all posterior scenes [Fig. 9–10]. His nudity is stressed inside the two cycles, by his unclothing from his long shirt, tied to the waist or a white loincloth. There are three executioners in the text. At Horres, there are four but three at Chiomonte, which better corresponds anyway to the text. This composition creates a dissymmetry in the organisation of the scene.

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40 "*De nous öurés aquest cordon / Puys veyrén qué sabrés far […] Per ta outrocudansso / Et ta grant meychensso / Tu sias preys e lia !*" J. SIBILLE, verses 1015–1016, 1019–1020.

41 "*Encar non eys houro / El non ry ny plouro / Ben fay la grimasse.*" J. SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André*, verses 1028–1030.

42 "*En-correction prumieroment / Dire vous vôloc ma entention / Prumieroment sa pugnition / Saré que on lo fasso batre / Per trey compagnoûs ou quatre / Tôt nu en ung pillon […] Et sià galhars a-lo ben batre / Et lo baté dequoi a tant […] Que vous veyà corre le sanc […] Ben lo tenrrén de rire / Mas que l'ayàn entre nous treys […] Tu apenrrés d'anar a-l'amblo /Ambe nous t reys sens tarsar gayre […] La no val ren vung solet / Vung bel férir fay ambe treys […] Sa pel chanjo de collour / Robo öuré de grant segnour royo como escarllato […] Batù l'avén dequo al sanc /Damont, daval, pertot n'a tant / Dous la testo dequio al tallous*". J. SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André*, verses 1363–1368, verses 1380–1382, verses 1390–1391, 1396–1397, 1473–1475, 1503–1505.

There is also in the Saint Andrew cycle a piece of detail similar to the broker gesture within the Saint Anthony cycle. After the lashing, the executioners decide to dress the saint again for him to look presentable before the king: "*If they agree together / Let them dress him quick / Don't think that I am ungracious*".[43] This detail is synthesised in Chiomonte: facing the tyrant on the left, the tortured saint is brought by executioners who maintains a piece of cloak against his torso [Fig. 11]. The gesture remains anecdotal but still it is very indicative of a dialogue between the two media or more likely of a common basis in the narration elaboration within those two variants. In both painted cycles and in the text, the Nailing to the cross is done with ropes so as to hurt more:

> "*Thy body I will lie / upon a cross and there thou will die […]*
> *On the cross, thou will put him naked / But without nails*
> *So he will suffer longer / With good and strong ropes*
> *Thou will wrap his body / And tie and his hands and his feet /*
> *To inflict on him cruel and inhuman torments […]*
> *Let's hurt him the most / I will bound him so tight /*
> *With this hand, first / When bound, He sure will feel it.*"[44]

However, only in Chiomonte and the text, the brutality is underlined, and the saint tied by one hand and both feet [Fig. 12]. Their dedication to the task is stressed in the text using expressions marking the will to inflict pain, using in particular ropes instead of nails, as Aegeus explains. In Chiomonte wall-painting, they are caricatured as pulling with all their strength, pressed against the cross beams and knees/feet firmly planted in the saint's body [Fig. 13]. One is depicted with a grinning and contorted face, animalized/devilized by ardours of hatred, contrasting with Andrew's serene and dispassionate face. This tendency to emphasise the executioners' desire to hurt and the saint's calm ecstasy is one of the common characteristics between alpine wall-painting and religious mystery. Like in the Gris di Bicinicco (Friuli) antonine cycle, ropes are often represented in the martyrdom of saint Andrew, if only to separate it from the holier Passion of Christ, which also partly explains the distinction with the X-shaped cross. However, even in the Friulian cycle, executioners are depicted without caricature or aggressiveness. They can be ugly, bald, toothless and expressively open-mouthed, as in Vittorio Veneto or in the *predella* of the Arcangelo di Cola da Camerino altarpiece of Modena but composition remains

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43 "*Se sé entent / Que lo revistàan prestoment / Non crey que sio malgratiou.*" J. SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André*, verses 1535–1537.

44 "*Ton cors you farey estendre / En crous et aqui murrés […] En la crous lo metré tot nu De clavez non li métré gis / Affin qu'el puecho may languir / Ambé cordas bona et fors / Environaré tot son cors / Et lo me lià et pes et mans […] De ben tirar so s'y mon menstier / Quant lo liarey ben so sentré / Or fasso al-pyey qu'el far poyré / Liar ly voloc estrechoment / Aquesto man primieroment / Quant saré lià o sentré.*" J. SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André*, verses 1560–1561, 1638–1343, 1930–1935.

orderly and calm, without this tension of buttressed bodies visible in the alpine cycle, that characterised a form of vulgar and animalized determination. In Chiomonte, and more generally in the Serra workshop's paintings all over the area due to internal pattern *sagoma* (artistic cardboard cartoons) circulation –, one of the executioners is always facially deformed enough to assume a porcine appearance.[45] The specific shape of the nose may be supposed to expose the villainy of the character, emphasising the shame and sin of molesting a saint.[46] So, the physical appearance of the villains matches the violence they inflict on the saint martyr's body. Saint Andrew's christic "performance" is on the one hand supposed to draw compassionate feelings and cathartic identification and on the other to help focusing attention with bloody verism for blood is a "material proof of authenticity".[47]

Visually and textually, the insistence on voluntarily inflicted physical suffering corresponds to late medieval taste for morbidity, which is omnipresent here.[48] It is quite interesting to point out that in such a small geographic area – Chiomonte and Horres are only 30 kilometres apart – only the Chiomonte cycle presents iconographic similarities with the Puy-Saint-André mystery text. This can be explained by the fact that, although Horres is spatially nearer to the village where the play was performed, it is not, firstly, on the main road, the *Via Francigena* that indeed leads directly to Chiomonte. Secondly, the Horres paintings have been realised during the 1530s, so well after the Brianzonese adaptation of the *Saint Andrew* text, which is suspected to have taken place at the very end of the fifteenth century, contemporarily with the execution of the Chiomonte cycle. Last but not the least, the Serra workshop – meaning Bartolomeo and Sebastiano Serra – to whom the Chiomonte paintings were commissioned, are considered to have also worked in Puy-Saint-André, whereas in Horres, the supposed painter – the convention Master of Horres – was a stylistically distant follower, maybe a grand-child or nephew, years after. So, the circulation of physical people but also the importance of geographic issues seems here a good explanation for the circulation of iconographic patterns and how complexly the intermediacy between theatre and painting can function.

However, some iconographic details differ between the *Passion*'s text and the Chiomonte cycle. Those differences are quite isolated and document the fact that one medium does not draw all its inspiration from another, and that variations are always possible. Some

45 Gil BARTHOLEYNS – Pierre-Olivier DITTMAR – Vincent JOLIVET, *Image et transgression au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2008.
46 Valentin GROEBNER, *Defaced. The visual culture of violence in the late Middle Ages*, New York 2004, p. 76.
47 *Ibidem*, pp. 93, 108; Mitchell B. MERBACK, *The thief, the cross and the wheel. Pain and the spectacle of punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, Islington 1999, pp. 153–154.
48 Jean WIRTH, *L'Image à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Paris 2011, pp. 211–217.

concepts are quite difficult to manifest according to the media used: what is graphic and narratively interesting on stage may not work in wall paitings panels that are at the same time static and speechless. When characters can be named in the theatre text, they need specific attributes in painted images.

Some other divergences are more difficult to explain. For example, the sentence of Andrew to flogging indicates that the executioners strip to their shirts in order to carry it out: "*Let's get in our shirtsleeves / And whip him soundly*" says the mystery, whereas the Chiomonte painting depicts short thigh-length and waist-wrapped tunics.[49] One could wonder why this difference between a solemn ceremony where one keeps his tunic in the wall painting, and a more colourful aspect where one is in his "shirt-sleeves". The idea to work "in shirt" refers to a common imagery of gruelling work in which sweat could damage the more expensive outer clothing. It reinforces the idea of relentlessness, the idea that the executioners are going to take pains to inflict pain on the saint. The painter, or his commissioner, chose to represent the physical effort not with half-dressed executioners but rather with them exaggerating the violent moves with caricatural positions assumed to hurt the saint.

Following this idea, one can begin to wonder if the two media, painting and theatrical text, are used to find different graphic solutions to represent images and concepts within the technical limitations of a specific medium. For example, weapons are specified in the images. In the painted panel of Aegeus threatening both Estratodes and the people, the latter is armed with a sword, no doubt to illustrate his princely status and to isolate him from the other petitioners [Fig. 14]. The viewers of the painting can therefore easily identify the king's brother: he is noble but without a crown, so the only one with a sword. The text speaks several times of "well-armed knights" in lines and stage directions (verses 383, 450, 1114) but knighthood can't be represented in art images, except through the symbolism of swords and lances, as it is in those wall paintings. The sword is supposed to be a symbol of purity, of the "good" fight: Estratodes is the pagan king's brother but is converted by saint Andrew and so takes his defence, "gaining" the right to draw a good sword. The pictorial strategy thus differs from the performative in that the character is called by his name in the text, and so does not need such an attribute to be identified by the play's audience. It may well be that the locals have seen the *Passion of saint Andrew* and were able to connect the details of the narrative with the painted cycle in their chapel, but there is no archived evidence of it. The Serra are not known to use inscriptions to outline the saints' histories they used to paint; they presumably used different graphic tools to give all the narrative details.

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49 "*Metan nous tous treys en chamiso / E-lo foytàant valhentoment.*" J. SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André*, verses 1440–1441.

More abstract concepts are also quite difficult to represent on stage and in wall painting. The idea of holy Assumption, the saint's rapture to the heavens, for example is often represented with graphically different solutions according to the media. Stage directions in plays often mention the mechanics: how angels and saints "fly" in the sky with a little help from ropes and machinery, whereas in painting, they are just suspended in the air in two-dimensions non-gravitational space. However, in the Chiomonte cycle, we can see some details that show connection with the specificity of the saint Andrew's mystery text. The background of the painted frame is occupied by a snowy mountain range, very typical of the alpine side and two angels take the saint's soul away [Fig. 15]. The text indicates a cloud and only one angel literally climbing down a rope to retrieve Andrew's soul: "*The angel comes by the mode of a rope and, with the song of the Vexilla Regis, says this*".[50] Cloud and snowy mountains represent differently the same idea of elevation and celestial purity; the descending angel from a rope in the text and the two angels flying with a sheet to transport the saint express the same concept, mystical rapture, each with a graphic solution best suited to the specificities of the media. Moreover, the indication "the angel climbs down with a rope" is a stage direction and so not intended for this audience but for the play director: fleshing the narrative and giving the text in colourful images is not necessary in painting that can in fact literally depict the wonderful.

It is not possible to say if and how one media precedes the other: the complexity of the interactions of patterns between painted images and theatre performance evidences a more circular intermedial exchange. Sometimes, text and painting are very similar in the graphic solutions they adapt to express narrative details; sometimes both media, restrained by their technical specificities, go for simpler and more adequate visual solutions to signify more abstract concepts. For example, two different solutions are realised for the witnesses' reaction to this miracle. In the text, the executioners remain paralysed and (literally) stunned: "*Comrades, what say thou? / Are you all petrified? / I never saw such a thing / I can move no more […] I cannot move nor my legs nor my harms*".[51] This incapacity to move would be quite difficult to depict in a two-dimensional still image. Thus, the painting shows astonished Andrew's disciples, and the painter made this clear by including gestures that were bodily as well as facial: open hands on the chest and toward the cross, praying jointed hands, raised heads to follow the Assumption, with one even shading his eyes with his

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50   "*Modo angélus veniat per cordam et dicat in cantu vexilla regis ut sequitur.*" J. SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André*, stage direction before verses 2196, 2315, 1727–1728. The *Vexilla Regis* is an antiphon of a Gregorian hymn about the glory of crucifixion passion, written by the bishop of Poitiers, Venance Fortunat.

51   "*Mous compagnùs, qué dizé vous? / Sé vous tous dous palaficàs? / Jamays non vic lo parelh cas / Bojar non me puys nulloment […] Chambo ny bras non puys bojar.*" J. SIBILLE, *La Passion de saint André*, verses 2212–2221.

hand [Fig. 16]. Another example would be the need for simplified composition to ensure visual clarity without sacrificing narrative flow. Some characters and places change in the theatrical and pictorial representations of the same hagiographical episode. For example, the disciples are present during the crucifixion in the text but in the painting, they only appear once the cross has been raised. It shows how the painter reasons the narrative within the available space to set up: the painted surface could not give a clear visual reading with too numerous a crowd. If the disciples were all present, it would have been difficult to emphasise the immoderate gestures and cruelty of the executioners.

Each media adapts innovative solutions and logics within its own capacities and techniques depending on the necessary or superfluous narrative contingencies. A last example could be about the pagan idols worshipped by king Aegeus in saint Andrew's story. It is indeed specifically stated in the play that there are pagan statues in the false temple and Aegeus repeatedly mentions them – and the sacrilege supposedly committed against them by Andrew – in his speech. By the king's word, the idols are made visible on stage constantly. In the wall painting cycle, the idols should not be visible, for the images show the *aula*, the public hearing room of Aegeus palace and not the secluded temple. However, the statues are depicted in every panel where Aegeus speaks with Andrew, no matter where they spatially are [Fig. 17]. Like a leitmotif, the king's insistence about them in the mystery text echoes their omnipresence in the painted image. They are then stressed out in the narrative, by the king's speech and by visual reminder, both solutions, however different, aim for the same purpose: the idols are to be shown as the main bone of contention between main characters and so the fuel of the story.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The new approaches of Visual Studies lead toward a constructive analysis of images as global objects. Those *dispositifs* can only be fully understood through the plurality of their contexts, and the ways of the media interact with each other need to be investigated, independently from the media they are on. Through the examples presented here, it is interesting to see how the painted image and the theatrical image pursue a similar outcome: the transmission of a narrative that can, by the means of emotion and identification, emulate faith and shape Christian behaviour. They borrow graphic tools from one another; and for abstract concepts, they work solutions out of their inner technical characteristics. So, we cannot be content only with a one-way directional process to explain the direct correlation between text and image. There is in fact an intermediality between the two medias: the iconographic patterns can be seen as going bi-directionally, from the text to the image and from the painting to the play. It seems more likely that the media adapt themselves through constant visual dialogue, because they are present at the same time in the same

area. And because of the Alps' spatial specificity, the image's practises – that are known elsewhere – seem to be exacerbated.[52]

Those particular geographic areas document the interactions of media and how they support images in tight connection but without losing their own character. It is possible to acknowledge the cultural transfers between them and to suppose the transfers to be multi-modal and not only one-sided: all the presented examples tend to point to this conclusion. Nevertheless, all the ramifications of artistic transfers can still be hard to determine exhaustively due to lacking medieval documentation. The rich historical and artistic legacies of the Alps demonstrate the possibility to theorise the relationship between pictorial and theatrical images, in order to bring to light its complex dialogue; thus, to construct more accurate reflexive tools.[53]

Fig. 1. Maestro Geoffrey, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, 1500ca (copy, 1714), 75x90cm, fresco. Novalesa, Santo Stefano (Piemonte).

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52 Nadine HENRARD, *Le théâtre religieux médiéval en langue d'oc dans les vallées alpines*, in: Caterina Agus – Giuliana Giai – Andrea Zonato (eds.), Teatro religioso e comunità alpine. Atti del Congresso Internazionale. Susa, Convento di San Francesco, 14–16 ottobre 2010, Susa 2011), pp.151–169.

53 M. CAILLOUX, *Au croisement de l'histoire culturelle et des sciences de l'information et de la communication.*

Fig. 2. Serra, Gluttony, 1480ca, 60x60cm, fresco. Giaglione, Santo Stefano (Piemonte).

Fig. 3. Serra, Envy, 1480ca, 60x60cm, fresco. Giaglione, Santo Stefano (Piemonte).

Fig. 4. Serra, Saint Anthony's Temptation, 1490ca, 100x105cm, fresco. Jouvenceaux, Sant'Antonio Magno (Piemonte).
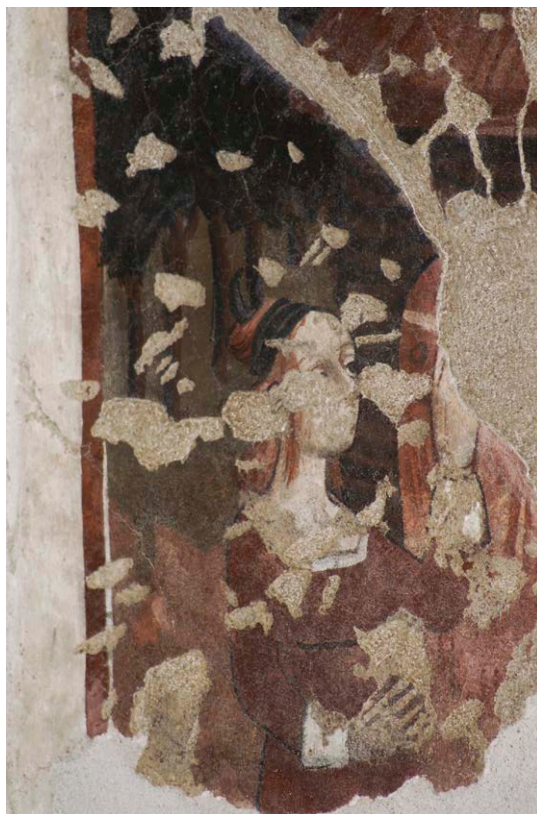
Fig. 5. Biasacci and others, Saint Anthony's Temptation, 1472, fresco, Bastia Mondovi, San Fiorenzo (Cuneo).

Fig. 6. Serra, Saint Anthony selling his properties, 1490ca, 100x105cm, fresco. Jouvenceaux, Sant'Antonio Magno.

Fig. 7. Serra, Saint Andrew imprisoned, 1530, 110x105cm, fresco. Horres, St'Andrea di Millaures.

Fig. 8. Serra, Saint Andrew imprisoned, 1480–1490ca, 150x140cm, fresco. Chiomonte, St'Andrea di Ramats.
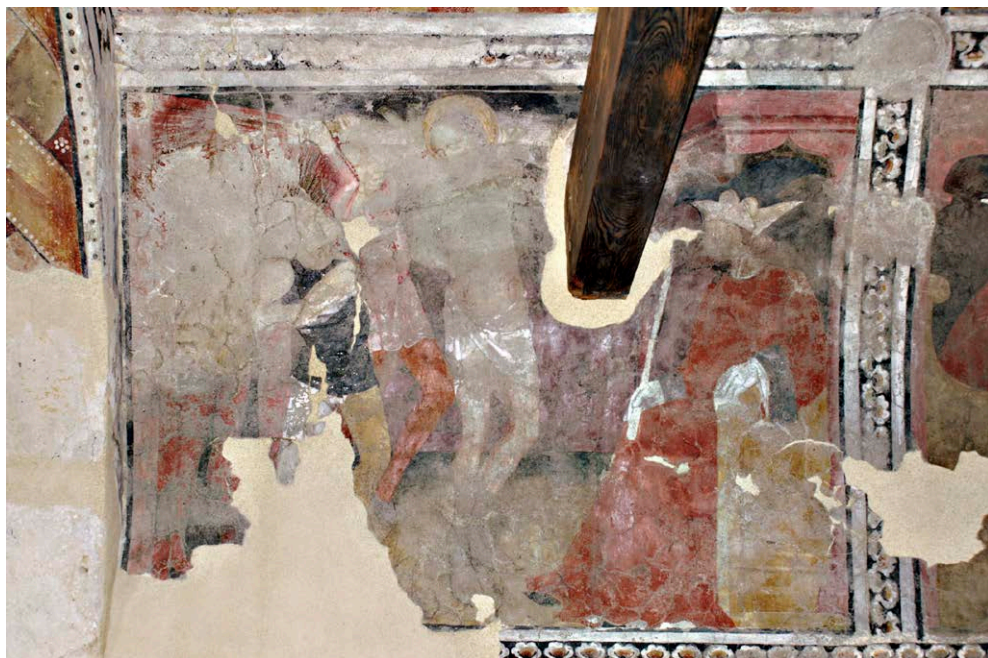
Fig. 9. Serra, The Scourging of the Saint, 1480–1490ca, 120x120cm, fresco. Chiomonte, St'Andrea di Ramats.

Fig. 10. Serra, The Scourging of the Saint, 1530, 110x105cm, fresco. Horres, St'Andrea di Millaures.

Fig. 11. Serra, Saint Andrew confronting Aegeus, 1480–1490ca, 120x120cm, fresco. Chiomonte, Sant'Andrea di Ramats.

Fig. 12. Serra, The Crucifixion, 1480–1490ca, 140x130cm, fresco. Chiomonte, Sant'Andrea di Ramats.

Fig. 13. Horres Maestro, The Crucifixion, 1530, 110x105cm, fresco. Horres, Sant'Andrea di Millaures.

Fig. 14. Serra, The Threat of the Sword, 1480–1490ca, 150x140cm, fresco. Chiomonte, St'Andrea di Ramats.
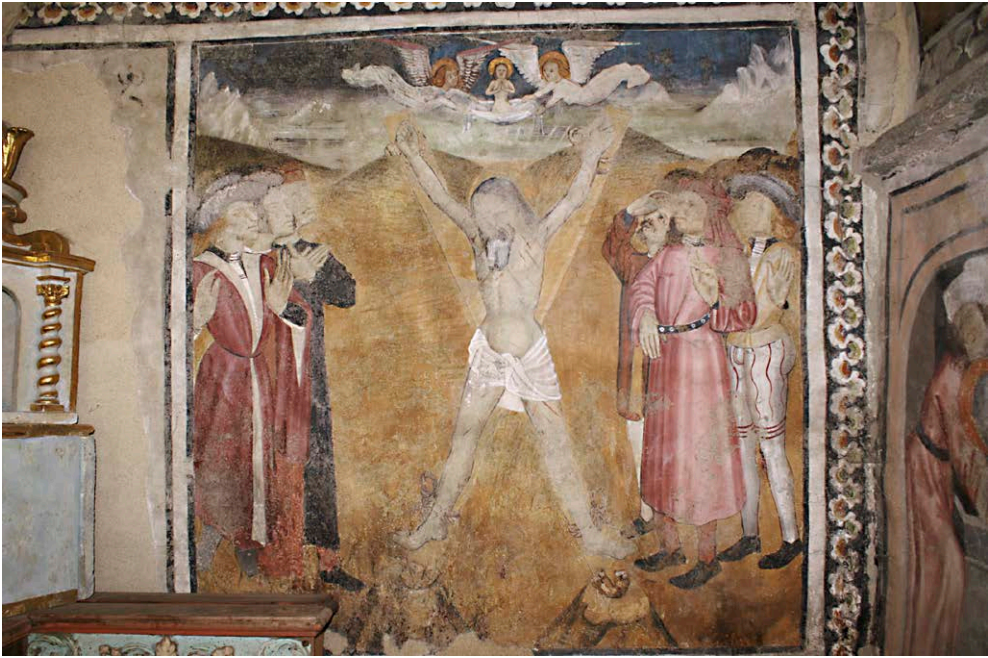
Fig. 15. Serra, Saint Andrew's Death, 1480–1490ca, 150x140cm, fresco. Chiomonte, Sant'Andrea di Ramats.

Fig. 16. Serra, Saint Andrew's Tribulation, 1480–1490ca, 140x130cm, fresco. Chiomonte, Sant'Andrea di Ramats.

Fig. 17. Serra, Saint Andrew's Jugement, 1480–1490ca, 150x140cm, fresco. Chiomonte, Sant'Andrea di Ramats.