

*The statue of St Anthony,
patron saint of all crosseurs,
nearly completely restored*

Before After



*The seven centuries of its existence and the candle fumes dirtied the statue; it looks as if the saint is wearing sunglasses. With the restoration, His tau (stick) and his pig have disappeared. –
Photo Geert Nijs, 05/2002*



*At the beginning of the nineties, his original pig was stolen. The request for information, placed in June, hoping to return it to St Antoine, hasn't yielded any results so far. For the stolen tau, the restorer had no problems replacing it. After the renovation, St Anthony's face and hands are again clearly visible. Currently, his face shows signs of age, with wrinkles, aligning with the tradition that he lived to 105 years old.
Photo <https://cipar.be>, 2022*



In May 2002, Geert & I made an acquaintance with St Anthony at Havré. Fascinated by his links with the game of crosse/crossage, we returned to him the following year around his name day, which falls on 17 January. We were not the only ones to honour him by lighting candles.

Photo Geert Nijs, 01/2003

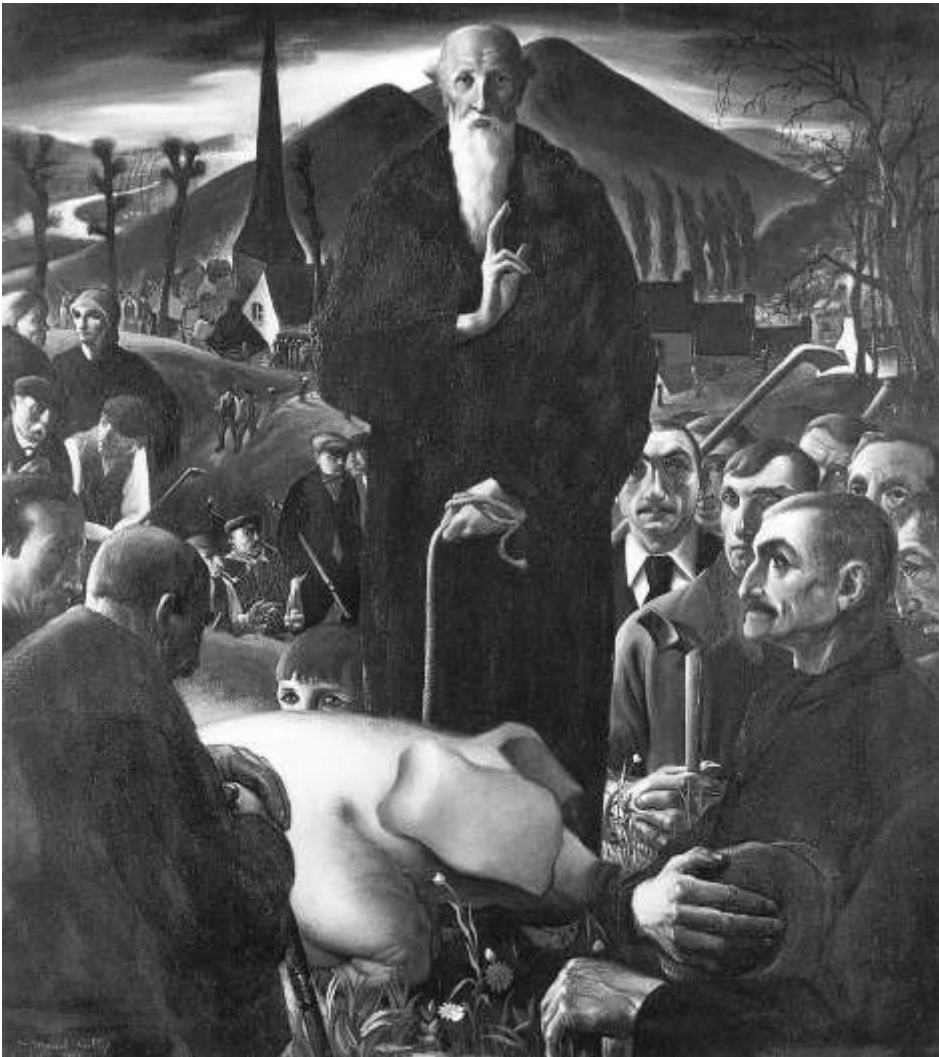
Being back in the region in 2007, again we wanted to pay a visit to ‘our one and only St Anthony’! Over the years, we discovered a lot about his role in ‘jeu de crosse’, so he had a strong appeal to us! But, what a flop: the barriers around the chapel, which never opened, made it impossible to get nearer to him.



*By the autumn of 2007, the chapel, one of the oldest sites in the county of Hainaut, was in a state of disrepair. –
Photo Geert Nijs, 09/2007*

So happy to know that, after two years at the IRPA (Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Bruxelles), the statue of St Anthony has been restored and is back in Havré, although not yet really at home. The chapel where one could visit the statue is now a refuge for birds, insects and small mammals! But first, the chapel has to be restored before the 14th -century statue can go home.

The good news: under the chairmanship of Marc Geerinck, Prof. Emeritus & president of the ASBL Chapelle Saint-Antoine, the association has launched the ambitious project to restore the chapel to receive the restored statue 'back home'.



In the Roman Catholic region of the ancient county of Hainaut, jeu de crosse was part of the religious calendar. St Anthony was even the patron saint of all crosseurs. – 'Saint Anthoine bénit les crosseurs', Marcel Gillis, 1953 – Musée des Beaux-A

And the link with 'jeu de crosse'?

In all the comments about the restoration of the statue, not a single word about the link nor the game, sadly lost in the mist of time.

Sources :

Geert & Sara Nijs, 'Jeu de crosse - Crossage A travers les âges', 2012

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