

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

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*Before    After*



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



*In June, a request for information was published, hoping to give him back his original pig, stolen at the beginning of the nineties, but so far without result. For the tau, the restorer had no problems replacing it. After the renovation, the face and hands of St Anthony are again clearly visible. Today, his face is lively with his old-age wrinkles; according to tradition, he arrived at age 105. –  
Photo <https://cifar.be>, 2022*

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In May 2002, Geert & I made 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 regarding the candles lit for him.

*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’! During the years, we discovered a lot about his role in ‘jeu de crosse’, so he had a great attraction for us! But, what a flop: the barriers around the chapel, which never opened, made it impossible to get nearer to him.



*Already in the autumn of 2007, the chapel, one of the oldest sites in the county of Hainaut, was dilapidated. – Photo Geert Nijs, 09/2007*

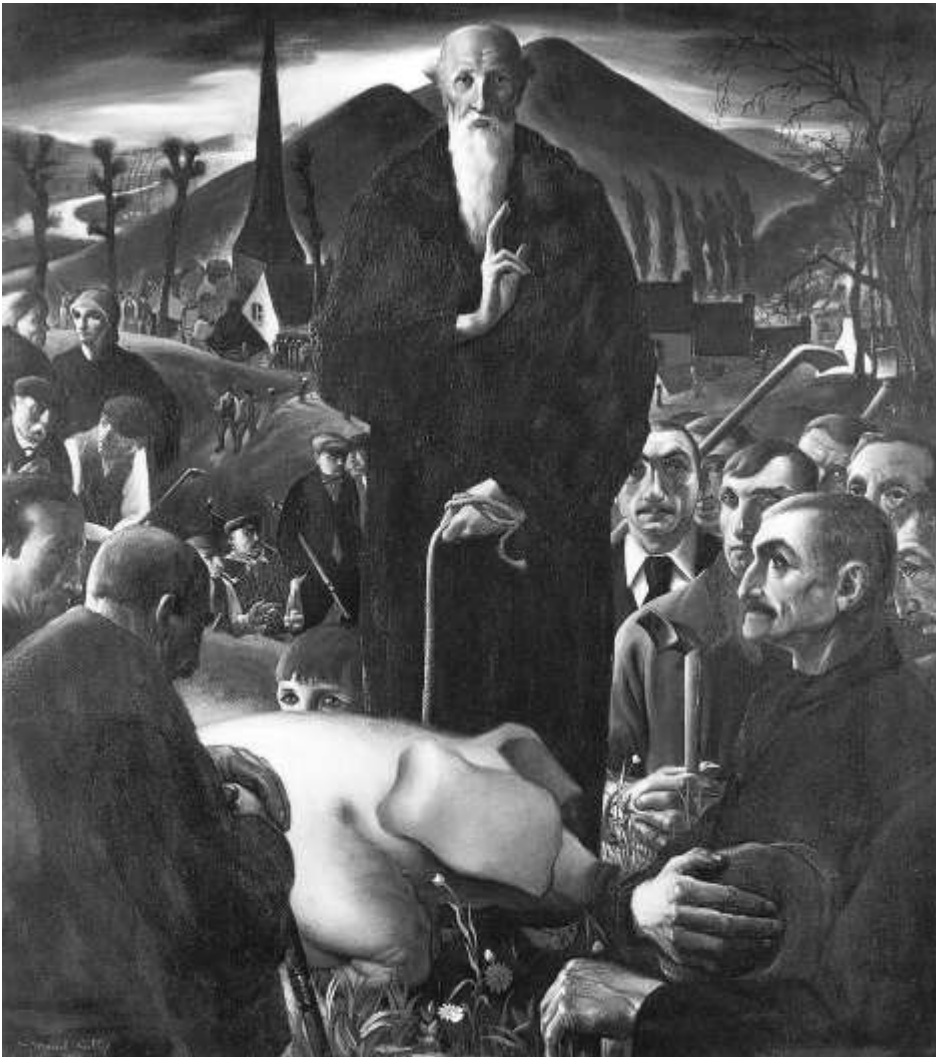


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So happy to know that after two years at the IRPA (Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Bruxelles), the statue of St Anthony is restored and back in Havré, although not yet really at home. The chapel where one could visit the statue is now a refuge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

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

And the link with 'jeu de crosse'?



*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-Arts, Mons*

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*

*<https://ancientgolf.dse.nl/pdfs/el%20canson.pdf>, 2022*

*<https://www.rtb.be>, 2022*

*<https://www.sudinfo.be>, 2022*

*<https://www.facebook.com/barbefosse>, 2022*

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