Moving with the Magdalen

Late Medieval Art and
Devotion in the Alps

Joanne W. Anderson

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In memory of Hilda

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landscape, walking the pathways to images and devotional spaces proves indeed to be common ground.

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Abbreviations

ADT	Archivio Diocesano, Trento
ASB	Archivio di Stato di Bolzano
AST	Archivio di Stato di Trento
AV	*Atto Visitale*
BAC	Bischöfliches Archiv Chur
BHL	*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*
PL	Patrologia Latina
SBSAT	Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico-artistici, Provincia autonoma di Trento
TLA	Tiroler Landesarchiv (Innsbruck)

Introduction

In his *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont and the Canton Ticino* (1881), Samuel Butler observed that for northern Italians, 'their scheme [was] to take a mountain as though it had been a book or a wall and cover it with illustrations'.[1] He was referring to the landscape art of the *Sacre Monti*, or sacred mountains, that simulated pilgrimage to the Holy Land, with Varallo as its peak of achievement. Here paintings, sculpture, architecture and theatrical staging came together as a performative experience for locals, pilgrims and tourists alike. Moving up the pathways between the stages of this devotional complex, they experienced a spiritual ascendancy. But his remarks might well be applied to an earlier phenomenon that also made the most of its mountain setting, the cult of Mary Magdalen.

Mary Magdalen was popular in the Alps. From the late thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries, churches, chapels and altars dedicated to the saint appeared in the mountain valleys on or near to the principal transit routes that connected Europe. They were atop mountains, in their high ranges and nestled in their foothills and valleys. The devotional spaces and surfaces were adorned with mural paintings and altarpieces representing Mary Magdalen, typically with a full treatment of her post-gospel life.

Painted scenes of the Magdalen's apocryphal travel to Gaul and retreat to rocky wilderness for thirty years in contemplation held strong appeal for people living in and travelling through this vast landscape. Here, just like elsewhere in Western Christendom, devotional art was designed to protect, educate, inspire, console and even entertain. But in the Alpine chain such scenes also created a network of devotion by means of repetition: a repetition of site, imagery as well as the journey up and down the mountainous terrain in order to see and to pray. In this dynamic, the images had to resonate with the people who looked at them on a daily basis and with those who might only cast an eye once in passing. This was art and iconography for parishioners and pilgrims alike, whereby the local

was embedded in the universal. It is these two constituencies of parishioners and pilgrims, and the networks of devotion that are inherent to both, that provide a framework for this book on late medieval art and devotional practices linked to the cult of Mary Magdalen in the Alps.

But what kind of saint was Mary Magdalen? How did people living in the Alps know what they were looking at when an artistic workshop had completed the job? Did it match expectations with those coming and going from north, south, east and west who might encounter imagery of diverse content, styles and local tailoring? In sum, what can the artworks and the circumstances of their production tell us about devotional life in rural communities and how they connected with the wider world? To begin answering these questions it is worth revisiting what we know about the late medieval Magdalen.

The late medieval Magdalen

Whatever our contentions now, in the late Middle Ages Mary Magdalen was a composite saint. Across Western Christendom she was understood to be the Mary Magdalen mentioned in the Gospel of John (20: 1–18), the woman from whom Christ cast out seven devils (Mk 16: 9), and the unnamed sinner who wept over Christ's feet, dried them with her hair and anointed them with precious oils (Lk 7: 37–39). Mary Magdalen or Mary of Magdala is mentioned in all four gospels in relation to the Easter events, where she witnesses the Crucifixion and goes to Christ's empty tomb (Mt 27: 56, 28:1–11; Mk 15: 40, 47 and 16:1–11; Lk 24:10; Jn 20:1–18). None of these accounts are, however, consistent in the way the events are told with only John's version describing the crucial moment of recognition after Mary Magdalen meets Christ dressed as a gardener. It functioned as the source for the *Noli me tangere* (touch me not) scene so popular in the visual arts across the ages, but the piece of skin from Mary's forehead would also become venerated as a relic from the Middle Ages with a skull-shaped reliquary commissioned for its display (destroyed in the French Revolution). Luke named Mary Magdalen as the woman freed from demonic possession in verse 8, lines 1–3 implying by extension that she was a follower of Christ thanks to independent means. This Mary Magdalen was also Mary of Bethany, the saint who became known as the sister of Martha and Lazarus, thus furnishing her with a useful family backdrop in visual and textual traditions (Jn 11:1–45; 12:1–8).

Pope Gregory the Great was responsible for the composite resolution drawn from a 'muddle of Marys'. His homily delivered in San Clemente in Rome in 591 instructed the Christian faithful to understand Mary Magdalen as a sinner (read whore) but more importantly a model of redemption.[2] Christ had forgiven her sins because she loved the most. And for loving the most, she was rewarded by being recognized as anointer of Christ and as witness to his resurrection. To put it simply, if such a sinner could be forgiven then hope remained for others. Gregory's controversial decision was to set the course of history and it is intrinsically bound up with art and culture.[3] In grafting together various fragments of her identity, and those that belonged to others, he instructed Christians on how to see Mary Magdalen. This resulted in a way of representing her in devotional imagery, be it a painting, a sculpture or a book illustration, that was to take hold in the medieval period and would continue to our own times. Gregory had created an historical and emblematic figure, yet there was hunger to know more.

From the ninth century, two accounts were in circulation about Mary Magdalen's post-gospel life, the so-called *vita eremitica* and the *vita evangelica*. Separately they addressed her travel to southern France to evangelize and later repent in the wilderness, the latter drawing on the hagiography of the repentant prostitute, St Mary of Egypt. The cult of relics was on the rise at this time and soon enough numerous churches across Europe began to claim possession of the body parts of the saint.[4] The most important of these was the Benedictine Abbey of Vézelay in Burgundy, which became a pilgrimage centre for Mary Magdalen around 1050 under the auspices of Abbot Geoffrey. A new account, the *vita apostolica* explaining the presence of the relics emerged from the Abbey and this soon became the *vita apostolica-eremitica*, which united the previous efforts into a more coherent narrative that would persuade the devout of the veracity of the relics.[5]

What pulled all this material together, giving the story shape and thrust, is without doubt the later *Legenda aurea* or *Golden Legend*: a compendium of the lives of the saints, organized according to the liturgical year.[6] It was written by the Dominican archbishop of Genoa, Jacobus de Voragine, around 1260 and was designed to provide material for preachers' sermons in the parishes. It proved hugely successful in the short and long term with circulation throughout Europe in Latin and eventually vernacular languages, ensuring its impact in the lives of the faithful, including those in the Alps.

After describing the etymology of her name, Jacobus sets out his definitive account of Mary Magdalen beginning with her worldly affairs and route to

salvation through Christ. Thereafter, it is the stuff of legend. Mary and her siblings are cast out of Judea along with seventy-two fellow Christian martyrs in a rudderless boat with a watery grave their intended fate. Instead they land in Gaul, where they preach, convert and baptize the pagan populace. Mary Magdalen prays for the local rulers to conceive a child and when that happens they seek validation of the Magdalen's words from St Peter in Rome.[7] It is a journey of life and death, taking in the numinous sites of Jerusalem, and ends with the proof of the intercessory efficacy of the Magdalen. Her active missionary life is then replaced by a retreat to the wilderness to contemplate her sins for thirty years with no food or water crossing her lips. There she is divinely elevated and sustained by the singing of angels seven times a day according to the canonical hours. Finally, she returns to the Church to receive last rites and a proper burial. The penitent sinner is absolved, giving hope to all Christians that their sins too might be forgiven.

At the time of the *Golden Legend*'s compilation in around 1260, Vézelay Abbey was in possession of the authenticated relics of the saint giving it control of pilgrimage activity in their sacred precinct, in the surrounding countryside and in lands far beyond. The posthumous miracles that append Voragine's legend all derive from this Vézelian time, with cross-societal appeal, from royalty to beggar, crusading knights to clerks, men, women and children, the sick, the new born, the bereaved and the dead. The legend would prove resistant to later historical events, as evidenced in subsequent artistic production. The story was never altered, despite the cult moving south to Provence less than twenty years later after the royal house of Anjou cast fatal doubt on the authenticity of the relics in Vézelay Abbey. Chapter 1 addresses these issues in context, but a foregrounding of the tale is relevant here.

The *Golden Legend* states that the body of Mary Magdalen lay in Vézelay, after being taken from her marble tomb in Provence to Burgundy by the monk Badilus in the eighth century.[8] This divinely sanctioned *translatio* was motivated by the threat of Saracen marauders in the region; Mary Magdalen appeared to Badilus in a vision approving of his holy theft. The monks' acquisition of the relics by covert means gave power and status to Vézelay Abbey with papal bulls verifying their authenticity from 1050. Everything changed in 1279. Charles of Salerno, the future Angevin king of the Neapolitan Kingdom and then count of Provence, would prove that the body had never left his territory. Rather he argued it had been concealed in the sarcophagus of her companion from the Holy Land, Sidonius, as protection from the same Saracens that Badilus sought to

evade. They were to be found in a crypt in the church of Saint-Maximin, close to the grotto that was the site of Mary Magdalen's eremitical retreat. The devotional landscape was thus altered for Christians in Europe. While the grotto at La Sainte-Baume remained a pivotal anchor in pilgrimage practice, now the sacred relics were also close by in the crypt that would become part of a Dominican convent. Reliquaries displayed the body and the head, with the tombs capturing the devotional and artistic imagination. Vézelay was undermined and a new era of Magdalen devotion was beginning.

What then made the *Golden Legend* reliable for priests and artists who drew upon its accounts for image cycles and votive icons in all media of Mary Magdalen? Understandably, it was the stability of characters and types within an epic story. But most certainly it was also the stability of the distanced past set in known places, both near and far. From Jerusalem to Provence and eventually into the Alps, picturing Mary Magdalen with her travels and retreat, between urban and rural, became a means to sacralizing the landscape of everyday life.

Image, faith and place – Mary Magdalen in the Alps

In the late thirteenth century, the saint was given fresh purchase in devotional life by the new religious orders, namely the Dominicans and Franciscans, paving the way for one of the most recognizable yet malleable figures in art, literature and poetry. Her popularity was consolidated in a number of ways. First, by descriptions of her long golden hair and red robe, by the tears shed at Christ's feet and by the unguent vase containing precious oils carried as identifying attributes; they are physical markers that still help us to recognize the saint today, be it in a church or gallery. Secondly, by sacred settings that provide for emotional tableaux of bodily postures and gestures: humble prostration, anointing, weeping, praying, embracing the cross, lamenting, witnessing and the denial of touch (*Noli me tangere*). The repetition of these visual and literary types assured recognition across time, space and cultures.

Where things diverge, in the case of the visual arts, is narrative length (number of scenes), elements of content and emphasis, all of which relate to the geography of art and devotion to the saint. For urban areas in the Italian peninsula, the Provençal legend (popularly known as the Marseille or Provençal fertility miracle) was often represented in digested form: a single, sometimes multiscenic episode that would stand as visual shorthand within a compact image cycle. In

contrast, in rural areas and especially in the Alps, communities embraced a full telling of the story, scene by scene, often making room for posthumous miracles performed by the saint that might persuade of her efficacy and thus encourage the beholder to pray or make pilgrimage. What they typically relied on in terms of source material was the *Golden Legend* but it was conditioned by the local specifics of mountain culture and the working practices of artists and their assistants. Migration of artistic expertise and the circulation of visual types are among the bedrock principles of this book, which examines the development of Magdalen imagery in the Alps. In relevant chapters, it focuses on artists whose style and repertoires came to monopolize the location establishing a visual culture for the parishes into which the Magdalen was embedded.

This brief overview of the late medieval Magdalen is a preparation to understanding what made the saint so popular in the Alps. Late medieval viewers ostensibly knew what to expect in their imagery thanks to a long tradition of veneration of the saint. Mary Magdalen's feast day is on 22 July in the liturgical calendar and it has been important since 1228 when Gregory IX raised it to one of special prominence.[9] It was a date familiar across the Alps and it constituted a celebration day (as it still does now) for churches dedicated to the saint and their local communities. From the Aosta Valley in the west to Tyrol in the central-eastern territory of the Alps, such devotional practices were linked to the land and its seasonal rhythms. The villages of Carema and Prazöll, locations of Chapters 1 and 3, both produce Magdalen varietals of grape, with the church in Prazöll (near Bozen) providing for the vineyard workers' spiritual needs since its foundation in the twelfth century. In the Trentino valley and up in the Dolomites, the saint's feast day helped to regulate hay making, a high-summer activity, with even a mountain range taking on the name of the saint. Donations to churches on the feast day or throughout the year could be made in hard cash but the proceeds of the land were equally valuable. Oil was the most common gift given in perpetuity, creating a lasting bond between the saint, petitioner and natural world.

In this book, the majority of the churches studied bear a dedication to Mary Magdalen. Since the high Middle Ages, she was the patron saint of parish communities taking pride of place at the high altar and not just the dedicatory saint of side chapels. The earliest Alpine image of the saint is a slim glass window from the church of Sankt Magdalena in Weitensfeld in Styria, dating to the 1170s (Colour Plate 1). Here, Mary Magdalen is dressed like a deacon, or rather deaconess, in a diaphanous green chasuble over a white alb.[10] Her signature red cloak is

relegated to part of her headdress.[11] She swings a golden thurible from one hand while holding the familiar unguent vase in the other. It is an unusual representation that goes beyond her traditional role of anointer of the body of Christ. To make clear her identity and her pivotal role in the Christian story a label is written into her halo: S·MARIA MAGDAL[ENA]. When activated by light, the richly coloured glass would have projected an authoritative image of the patron saint assisting in the divine mystery of the Mass, with her greenness reflecting the sacred in the natural world.[12] Green was popular in the German-speaking territories and bore deep associations with love and chivalric culture, as well as spring and rebirth. This beautiful glass window anticipates the rationalization of the liturgical colours, where green became the *colour medias* or middle colour between white, black and red, and used for the dressing of clergy and altars on ferial and common days.[13] In this way, Mary Magdalen was from an early date present in the everyday life of the church, not just on her own feast day. This is a key concept for understanding Mary Magdalen in the Alps and will be explored throughout the book.

At the beginning of the Introduction, I quoted from Samuel Butler's *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont and Canton Ticino*, a nineteenth-century account of sites of pilgrimage activity in the mountains and the traditions of ritualized imagery and devotional practices. By virtue of his travels, Butler was also following some late medieval routes that networked major shrines and churches across Europe.

During the late Middle Ages, pilgrimage was a requirement of all Christian souls and was bound up with the doctrine of purgatory and the cult of relics. A journey was undertaken to help expiate one's sins or to pray for those of the dead, with a visit to a shrine on specific feast days earning the devotee or deceased a number of days or years out of purgatory. Individuals could make pilgrimage on behalf of those too sick or old to travel, while others felt emboldened to send a proxy in their stead.[14] Popes but also bishops granted indulgences and pilgrims travelled far and wide to visit key relics and collect their days of remission, large or small, in what is often termed the economy of salvation. They were purchasing grace through devotional activities, or indeed by material means in the form of money, gifts or the foundation of altars, chapels and churches.

Principal transit routes moved people across large distances, including along the Via Francigena or French way, which passed down the length of France, through the western Alps by several branches before entering Italy and heading towards Rome after passing through Siena. There were numerous pilgrimage churches near the route with precious relics and reliquaries to visit. A branch route off the Via Francigena met with the Camino de Santiago, which carried

pilgrims to Santiago da Compostela on the Iberian Peninsula to earn their pectoral shell, a material trace of the spiritual transaction of grace. This route also had mountain connections using secondary paths, known as the *Jakobswege*, across the Alps towards Innsbruck and the eastern transit route, known as the Via Claudia Augusta, which connected Italy on its Adriatic side to Germany.

This trans-European and intra-Alpine transit network was vital for the cult of Mary Magdalen in that it facilitated the flow of people and ideas: it was an established system of religious and socio-economic gain. This system shaped the kind of art produced in the Alps in relation to the Magdalen in that it set up a network of multiples that bore a relationship to the originary referent thus endowing them with a universal currency.[15] The primary and secondary routes throughout the mountains connected remote places with each other and with the high cult sites in France, namely Saint-Maximin and La Sainte-Baume in Provence, host to the prize relics and key pilgrimage sites from 1279 onwards. In this way, the painted walls or altarpieces depicting Mary Magdalen in sites dedicated to the saint throughout the Alps participated in a notional system of value transfer that was both spiritual and material.

Rather than bypassing the Alps then, historically perceived as a barrier or challenge to surmount for travellers between northern and southern Europe, the Magdalen cult took hold and began to flourish precisely because of a proximity that lent itself to the replication process. Part of this was the shared reality of a wilderness landscape. For the Christian faithful, Mary Magdalen lived a substantial part of her life in a cave, enduring the hardship of the mountains. Pilgrims flocked to visit this site (La Sainte-Baume) and experienced for themselves the spiritual ascendency that was part of the mythologizing of the mountains. This was easily replicated in the Alps, giving locals and travellers from further afield the opportunity to participate in a universal devotional experience. As such, pilgrimage and the role of the mountain constitute another key concept in the understanding of Mary Magdalen in the Alps and its permutations will be discussed at various stages in the book.

Researching Mary Magdalen

How we see, think and write about Mary Magdalen is as relevant as the historical investigations that each of us undertakes in the pursuit of knowledge. The first art–historical treatments of Mary Magdalen focused on iconography

within Western Europe or more specific national borders, with evolutionary frameworks conditioning their surveys, the first being *Maria Magdalena in der abendländischen Kunst*.[16] While many publications seek to capture the imagination with claims of ultimate authority or the revelation of divine secrets, they can lead to either profound insight or wild speculation.[17] Inevitably it is the fragments of history that fuel such ideas along with the most symbolic yet ambiguous vehicle for the cult of Mary Magdalen, the visual arts. Whether it is a wall painting in a mountainside church or an altarpiece now relocated to a museum, devotional artworks require context in order to provide us with hard evidence, but also scope for interpretation. In their own way, exhibitions and their catalogues also shape how we see or expect to see the saint, with typologies explored across artistic ages, in designated periods or specific oeuvres.[18]

Mary Magdalen enjoys a high place in popular culture but she is very much an academic subject with a long historical pedigree often bound up with nationalistic discourse. Chief among these are the magisterial work of Étienne Faillon in 1859, Hans Hansel in 1937 and Victor Saxer in 1959.[19] Faillon sought to restore the credibility of Mary Magdalen as an historical figure, amassing literary, visual and archaeological evidence that might testify to the legitimacy of the cult in Provence. The tombs were of particular import to Faillon and later apologists as much as they were in the late medieval period for the new iconography of Mary Magdalen, as will be discussed in Chapter 1 of this book. Hansel and Saxer were equally concerned with the origins issue in their historical work, mining the sources for a definitive account. For Saxer, it was the task of mapping the emergence of the legend into Western culture and its development up until the thirteenth century (what he termed a Magdalen 'fermentation'), when the pilgrimage to Vézelay went into decline. His meticulous work in the archives at Vézelay and the plotting of devotional shrines remain a valuable source today. To this we must add the more recent doctoral research of Neal Clemens Jr, which focuses on the cult at Saint-Maximin Provence with its new wave of pilgrimage and miracles.[20]

Professional scholars, students and the wider public can turn to two works in English that have brought greater accessibility and depth of insight to the subject: Susan Haskin's *Mary Magdalen: The Essential History* and Katherine Ludwig Jansen's *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Late Middle Ages*.[21] Both historians (of art and religion) establish the core facts and the disputes about the saint, from gospel origins to modern receptions, setting out dominant typologies and their pan-European success. They are impressive

in their reach and scholarly depth. Jansen's book focuses on the reception of
the mendicant religious orders in the late Middle Ages, deftly weaving together
rich seams of textual sources with the visual arts to show how they 'made' Mary
Magdalen through a process of historical recuperation, rehabilitation and
devotional identification. Alpine artworks feature frequently in her chapters but
the existence of interconnected sites and monuments across the mountains and
their local significance is not a relevant topic to her text.

Interdisciplinary approaches, as showcased in the edited collections and
books by Michelle Erhardt and Amy Morris, Peter Loewen and Robin Waugh,
Theresa Coletti, Anna Fedele and Penny Jolly, continue to reinvigorate the
study of the saint.[22] Gender, dress and performance, in the form of pilgrimage,
preaching, theatre and music, characterize these works, offering compelling and
far-reaching insight into the mutable identity and cultural logics of the saint
up to the present day. They have expanded the horizons for Magdalen research
and, significantly for this book, underline the existence and relevance of late
medieval artworks beyond the more familiar examples of Florence, Assisi,
Naples and Padua, including those in the Alps. Nevertheless, how the mountains
as a contact zone became fertile ground for the late medieval Magdalen cult and
its imagery through the auspices of the parishes alongside the transit networks
for Alpine travellers remains an uncharted territory.

Although past studies have touched upon works in this landscape and their
possible meanings, none have engaged with the questions of why mountain
communities prayed to Mary Magdalen, nor how mountains conditioned
their art and devotional practices in relation to the originating cult sites. In
repositioning Mary Magdalen as a pilgrim and parish saint, as both universal
and local, I want to rethink the priorities in the evaluation of aesthetics and
the function of late medieval art. What are these artworks and how and why
were they made? Why should we look at outlying areas and 'visual imagery' that
in most cases is not museum quality and has seen better days? One reason is
because, as Theresa Coletti has so cogently observed, 'the symbolic complexities
and ambivalences of the Magdalene figure […] may be better served […] [by]
deep contextualisation'.[23]

Moving with the Magdalen addresses this call for granular study. It is an art–
historical investigation of the will and the means to participate in the cult of
the saint through the investigation of art in the cultural context of the Alps,
exploring workshop practices and patronage, as well as sacred spaces and
iconography in which parish and pilgrimage networks intersected. The concept

of granularity immediately brings to mind the practice of microhistory whereby the case study stands as representative of a wider phenomenon, as pioneered by Carlo Ginzburg, Edward Muir and Natalie Zemon Davis.[24] Thomas V. Cohen, William Pooley and Elizabeth Cropper have reflected on microhistory as field and practice, with Cohen addressing its fate in the rise of global studies.[25] Although art history is expanding the field, by means of the global turn, it does so by means of comparative studies rather than macrohistories, whose events hinge on a single factor.[26] Bringing together microhistories offers a comparative viewpoint that can lead to more broad-ranging conclusions, as seen in recent publications on the Alps.[27] *Moving with the Magdalen* springs from such deep contextualization and responds to the renewed impetus in pre- and early modern mountain research that on the one hand keeps hold of regional diversity and cultural difference while on the other seeks a renewal of the concept of *Kunstlandschaft*, which will be discussed in this book's Coda.[28] Tracing concepts of the Magdalen across the late medieval Alps is a way of demonstrating the deep connections between art and devotional practices, and thus can influence the way we understand this important geography.

Book structure

Chapter 1 sets out the importance of pilgrimage for the development of Magdalen imagery in the thirteenth century and how the Alpine parishes contributed to its success over time. It examines the infamous 'discovery' of the saint's relics in 1279, described earlier, and the subsequent transfer of the cult from Burgundy to Provence, establishing how such geopolitical events generated a response in artworks that were produced along principal transit routes for merchants and pilgrims, especially the Via Francigena. The early Christian sarcophagi discovered in the crypt of Saint-Maximin by Charles of Salerno that functioned as relic containers are examined alongside late medieval artworks that responded to the discovery and a new iconography of the saint. The event particularly impacted on an altarpiece in the Aosta Valley produced by the leading artistic workshop in the region and consequently it is the focus of the chapter.

Chapter 2 considers the mountains where Mary Magdalen was a parish saint, an everyday presence for local communities, but also a powerful agent of sacred intervention for passing travellers. Those who administered the churches had a defining role in what artworks were commissioned and often found opportunity

to write themselves into an epic story in Christian history. In the Swiss Grisons, the Premonstratensian canons, a monastic order with pastoral mission, took a decisive role in the deployment of Magdalen imagery. This chapter focuses on the mountain-side chapel of Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch and its fourteenth-century fresco cycle to explore how the canons brought topicality to the tale. By exploring the dynamics of patronage in this parochial site of devotion and pilgrim's refuge, we can understand the intersections of popular saint cults with local administrative systems, and address the reciprocity between image, faith and place that is described in later chapters.

Chapter 3 moves Mary Magdalen to the fringes of urban life in late medieval Tyrol. Caught between German and Italian cultures and competing artistic traditions, the maintenance and control of the saint's cult and visual imagery became a matter of urgency for local communities. It focuses on the mercantile town of Bozen and its environs, and explores how the pairing of Mary Magdalen with St James the Greater participated in wider pilgrimage activity in Europe. In this chapter, emphasis is placed on the patronage of families within artistic and ecclesiastical networks for the cultivation of devotional art and the processes of renewal of such imagery over time and how this created a sacred topography. The chapter situates the Magdalen in the heart of community life as a saint with a local heritage mapped onto her international fame. It closes with a reflection on how the mountains represent a process of physical and spiritual ascent, and how the act of climbing to Magdalen sites replete with devotional imagery might have recalled the act of making pilgrimage to the grotto of La Sainte-Baume on the massif in Provence, the purported site of Mary Magdalen's eremitical retreat.

The relics of Mary Magdalen were a destination for pilgrims seeking redemption, first to Burgundy and then to Provence. Churches harnessed their alluring power across Europe creating a network of Magdalen devotion but they were also used to bolster other miraculous phenomena, as so happened in the Alps. In Chapter 4, the focus moves north of the Brenner Pass in Tyrol to demonstrate the power of Mary Magdalen in the authentication of pilgrim experience in the church of Sankt Oswald in Seefeld. While not the obvious place for the migration of the cult, the sacred site offered an ideal opportunity to instruct the faithful through a powerful exemplar about good Christian behaviour in response to a Eucharistic miracle. What looks like old-fashioned art, parochial in form and content, turns out to be a key participant in a trans-national imagery of redemption and concomitant networks of devotion.

Chapter 5 digs into the mountains for their numinous potential. Mary Magdalen's self-imposed exile in the wilderness has been an inspirational episode for pilgrims, poets and artists across the centuries and remains an important mode of enquiry for historians today. The journeys of late medieval Christians, actual and imagined, to the cave at La Sainte-Baume in Provence attest to the power of the mountains, the significance of the rocky landscape as place of spiritual retreat and renewal. For the miners of the Schneeberg in Mareit near the Brenner Pass in Tyrol, Mary Magdalen mattered in a very real and practical way. She offered active protection while they tapped the rich seams of silver, lead and zinc ore, but at the same time her contemplative life gave intellectual status to their manual activities. This chapter focuses on the altarpieces commissioned by the miners for the church of Sankt Magdalena and how their sculpted and painted surfaces connected the saint's story with their daily labours of moving up and down the mountain, resulting in an excavation of sacred iconography from its material history.

In Chapter 6, discussion turns to the pathways of transmission for Magdalen imagery in the Alps. What were the market demands, how did artistic workshops respond and why were they prepared to move from home for work? The Baschenis dynasty provides an ideal case study given their long-term strategy of operating between Lombardy and Trentino, travelling over the Rhaetian Alps, for rural commissions. This chapter focuses on the fraternal enterprise of Giovanni and Battista who were employed to decorate the church of Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano with a fresco cycle of the saint's expansive story. The paintings look local but their iconography suggests otherwise, providing powerful evidence of how spatial and iconographic logics might be dependent upon the generational knowledge of the itinerant painters. By comparing the painted programme in Cusiano to those surviving in the flagellant church of Bergamo, also dedicated to Mary Magdalen, we can reach an understanding of how imagery circulated in the Alps and to what end.

Chapter 7 gives final address to the appeal of Mary Magdalen in the Alps. It brings us back to the Grisons in Switzerland with a focus on the village of Pontresina in the Engadine Valley. The church was rededicated to Mary Magdalen around the mid-fifteenth century and a case had to be made for this choice. Across the walls of the nave, Mary Magdalen's sea journey and life in Gaul are played out in detail and with particular relevance for women and children in the village as the fertility miracle is given lengthy representation. In addition, it communicates how the fate of all souls was dependent on the Magdalen's

THE ALPINE PASSES

— Important land routes
= Pass

To Bruges, Cologne,
Frankfurt-am-Main
Basel
Rhine
Zürich
To Augsburg Nuremburg
Luzern
Arlberg
Innsbruck
To Paris,
Champagne fairs
Schöllenen bridge
Chur
Brenner
Geneva
1 *2*
3 *4* *5* *6*
To Paris,
Champagne fairs
Simplon
Bellinzona
7
Bozen
Rhône
Great St Bernard
Chiavenna
8
Adige
Chambery
Little St Bernard
Como
Bergamo
To Villach, Satzburg
via Pontebba and
Predit Passes
Isere
Mont Cenis
Susa
Ticino
Milan
Brescia
Verona
Venice
Mont Genevre
Po
Genoa
To Marseille
|| *Col di Tenda*

0   50   100
km

1 *St Gotthard*
2 *Lukmanier*
3 *San Bernardino*
4 *Sphigen*
5 *Septimer*
6 *Julier*
7 *Maloja*
8 *Monte Ceneri*

D

A   B   C

1   1

2

3

Figure I.1 The Alpine passes in the late Middle Ages (Drawing: Author).

divine intercession as linked to the phenomenon of resurrection shrines. This illustration of magical power is reinforced by examples of the saint's posthumous miracles in the fresco cycle; deeds recounted for pilgrims in the latter pages of the saint's life as recounted in the *Golden Legend*.

The final chapter of *Moving with the Magdalen* brings us full circle in connecting the Swiss church with the sites that hosted the relics and cult in France by way of its painted programme and underscores the common threads of a book about the making, mobility and meaning of images of Mary Magdalen in the late medieval Alps (Figure I.1).

Notes

1   Samuel Butler, *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont and the Canton Ticino*, 2nd ed. (London: A.C. Fifield, 1913), 176.

2   Gregorius Magnus, 'Homilia 33', in *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia*. PL 76 (Turnholti: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1849–1896), 1238–1246.

3   For disputes about Gregory's composite saint, at the time and in the centuries to follow, see Katherine L. Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Late Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 35, n34 and Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: The Essential History* (London: Pimlico, 2005), 250–252, 358 and 392–400.

4   See the exhibition catalogue Marina Bagnoli et al., eds., *Treasures of Heaven. Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (London: British Museum Press, 2011) and the companion website: http://www.learn.columbia.edu/treasuresofheaven/. Fécamp Abbey in Normandy possessed an arm relic of Mary Magdalen in 1191. It attracted the attention of Bishop Hugh of Lincoln, who was determined to get a piece for his collection, see Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 104.

5   BHL 5443–5449. For discussion of the *vite* and their reception by the mendicant orders as promotion of the *vita mixta* or mixture of active and contemplative lives, see Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, chap. 2, esp. 48–54. The earliest sermon based on this coherent narrative is from around the mid-tenth century and once attributed to Odo of Cluny, see BHL 5439.

6   Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Lives of the Saints*, vol. 1, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 374–383; Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Tavarnuzze: SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1998), 628–642. I will refer to both texts at pertinent times throughout this book, with the Latin provided in the footnotes.

7   The pairing of Mary Magdalen and Peter is frequently taken up in late medieval art and is discussed in the final chapter of this book.

8   Badilus is sent to Provence by the founder of Vézelay Abbey, Girart de Roussillon, first duke of Burgundy, who along with his wife, Berta, held a particular devotion to Mary Magdalen. Their *chanson de geste* is told in *Le Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*, written around 1150. See *Girart de Roussillon, ou, L'épopée de Bourgogne*, commentary by Marcel Thomas and Michael Zink, a*daptation in modern French from Roger-Henri Guerrand* (Paris: Philippe Lebaud, 1990).

9   In Germany, pilgrims visiting any Magdalen church on the Annunciation and Assumption of the Virgin, the Feast of Mary Magdalen, or the church dedication day, or in Easter week would receive an indulgence, see Amy M. Morris, 'The German Iconography of the Saint Magdalene Altarpiece', in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 85, n 29 and Hans Hansel, *Die Maria-Magdalena-Legende. Eine Quellen-Untersuchung. Erster Teil* (Greifswald: H. Dallmeyer, 1937). He notes that the cult rose without a specific centre, thanks to extra feast days (*Liebestätigkeit*) on 1, 10 or 11 March and with more indulgences.

10   A deaconess (*diaconissa*) devoted herself to the care of the sick and the poor of her sex. She was present at female baptisms, the interview of women and kept order in the women's part of the church. The office is referred to in Romans 16:1 and 1 Timothy 5:9–10, but it is the *Didascalia* of the Apostles (early third century CE, later the *Apostolic Constitutions*) that provides an interesting connection. In chapter 16, the duties of the deaconess are described with the final lines equating their ministry to she who served Jesus first; that is, Mary Magdalen. Although the *Didascalia* originate from the early Orthodox Church, deaconesses were also present in the Latin West, with their presence noted in Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries. See Aimé Georges Martimort, *Deaconesses: An Historical Study* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1986), 38 and 204–205. Martimort resists reading these passages as proof of female deacons in apostolic times. He also distinguishes them from women evangelizing, as recounted in the Acts of Apostles.

11   Colour symbolism is addressed in Susan Haskins, 'Mary Magdalen and the Burgundian Question', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 73, 2010 (2011): 99–135.

12   See Michel Pastoureau, *Vert. Histoire d'une couleur* (Paris: Seuil, 2013), 51–85.

13   See also Chapter 4. The liturgical colours were rationalized by Cardinal Lothar of Segni (Pope Innocent III, 1198–1216) in his *De Sacro Altaris Mysterio* of 1195: 'Restat, ergo, quod in diebus ferialibus et communibus, viridibus sit indumentis utendum, quia viridis colour medius est inter albedinem et nigredinem et ruborem.' Innocence III, 'De Sacro Altaris Mysterio,' *Opera Omnia*, vol. 4, PL 217, 802.

14 Pilgrimage by proxy became commonplace by the fifteenth century, see Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 296.

15 See Aden Kumler, 'The Multiplication of the Species. Eucharistic morphology in the Middle Ages', *Res* 59, no. 60 (2011): 179–191, esp. 190.

16 See Marga Anstett-Janβen, *Maria Magdalena in der abendländischen Kunst. Ikonographie der Heiligen von den Anfängen bis ins 16. Jahrhundert* (PhD diss., University of Freiburg, 1961) and idem, 'Maria Magdalena', in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 7, ed. Wolfgang Braunfels (Rome: Herder, 1974), cols 516–541; George Kaftal, *Iconographies of the Saints*, 4 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1965–86); Magdalen La Row, *The Iconography of Mary Magdalen: The Evolution of a Western Tradition until 1300* (PhD diss., New York University, 1982). I will return to this issue in the book Coda.

17 Michael Haag addresses these issues in *The Quest for Mary Magdalen. History and Legend* (London: Harper Collins, 2016). His book focuses primarily and productively on the early history, especially biblical accounts, and thus contributes in its own way to the idea of essential truth, and the appetite for new insight and revelations. The popular literature on Mary Magdalen is substantial. Many are concerned with disclosure, feminine power and lost authority.

18 A few monograph examples suffice: *La Maddalena tra Sacro e Profano. Da Giotto a Chirico*, curated by Marilena Mosco in 1986 for the Palazzo Pitti in Florence when it was European capital of culture; *Noli me tangere, Mary Magdalene: One Person, Many Images (Maria Magdalena in veelvoud)* curated by Barbara Baert in 2006 for the Maurits Sabbe Library in Leuven; *La Maddalena, tra peccato e penitenza*, curated by Vittorio Sgarbi in 2016 for the Museo-Antico-Tesoro della Santa Casa di Loreto in Ancona. Single-work exhibitions are also popular, such as Guido Cagnacci's *Repentant Magdalen*, a travelling loan from the Norton Simon Collection in Pasadena during 2016–17, host institutions being the Frick Collection in New York and the National Gallery in London.

19 Étienne Michel Faillon, *Monuments inédits sur l'apostolat de Sainte Marie-Madeleine en Provence et sur les autres apotres de cette contrée, Saint Lazare, Saint Maximin, Sainte Marthe*, 2 vols (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1859); Hansel, *Die Maria-Magdalena-Legende*; Victor Saxer, *Le culte de Marie-Madeleine en occident des origins à la fin du moyen âge*, 2 vols (Cahiers d'archéologie et d'histoire, 3) (Paris: Librarie Clavreuil, 1959).

20 See Neal Raymond Clemens Jr, *The Establishment of the Cult of Mary Magdalen in Provence, 1279–1543* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1997). Saxer dedicates a chapter to Saint-Maximin in *Le culte* but his work on the convent is mainly published in articles.

21   Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, first published as *Mary Magdalen. Myth and Metaphor*
     (London: Harper Collins, 1993); Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*. Jansen's book
     and related articles originate from her doctoral research, *Mary Magdalen and the
     Mendicants in Late Medieval Italy* (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1995).

22   Theresa Coletti, *Mary Magdalen and the Drama of the Saints: Theatre, Gender
     and Religion in late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania
     Press, 2004); Anna Fedele, *Looking for Mary Magdalen. Alternative Pilgrimage and
     Ritual Creativity at Catholic Shrines in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
     2012); *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*,
     ed. Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Penny Howell
     Jolly, *Picturing the Pregnant Magdalene in Northern Art, 1430–1550: Dressing and
     Undressing the Sinner-Saint* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); *Mary Magdalene in Medieval
     Culture: Conflicted Roles*, ed. Peter V. Loewen and Robin Waugh (London and New
     York: Routledge, 2014).

23   Theresa Coletti, 'Afterword', in Loewen and Waugh, *Mary Magdalene in Medieval
     Culture*, 287.

24   Bruno Latour's actor-network theory offers a similar granular approach by means
     of extremely detailed, albeit antihermeneutic, descriptions. See *Reassembling the
     Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
     2005).

25   See Thomas V. Cohen, 'The Macrohistory of Microhistory', in *The Journal of
     Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 47 (2017): 53–73; William Pooley, 'Native to the
     Past: History, Anthropology and Folklore', in *Past and Present* 229 (2015), https://
     doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtv038; Elizabeth Cropper, 'Galileo Galilei and Artemisia
     Gentileschi between the history of ideas and microhistory', in *Caravaggio.
     Reflections and Refractions*, ed. Lorenzo Pericolo and David Stone (Farnham:
     Ashgate, 2014), 227–251.

26   See *Comparativism in Art History*, ed. Jaś Elsner (London and New York:
     Routledge, 2017). For recent macrohistorical approaches, see John Onians,
     European Art: A Neuroarthistory (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University
     Press, 2016) and David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of
     Modernism* (London: Phaidon Press, 2003).

27   See Yoshihisa Hattori, 'Community, Communication and Political Integration
     in the Late Medieval Alpine Regions: Survey from a Comparative Viewpoint', in
     Communities and Conflict in the Alps from the Late Middle Ages to Early Modernity,
     ed. Marco Bellabarba, Hannes Obermair, and Hitomi Sato (Bologna: Il Mulino,
     2015), 13–38.

28   The mythical status and active role of mountains in art and religion is discussed
     by Albrecht Classen in 'Introduction – Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early

Modern Times: A Significant Domain Ignored For Too Long by Modern Research?' in *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age. The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 37–43. It also speaks to the anthropological recasting of nationhood by Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 49 and to the idea of an overarching Alpine artistic style and with that an art history, posed by Enrico Castelnuovo in his article, 'Pour une Histoire Dynamique des Arts dans la Région Alpine au Moyen Âge', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 29 (1979): 265–286.

Pilgrimage Politics and Late Medieval Art

On 9 December 1279, Charles of Salerno, member of the Angevin ruling dynasty of the Kingdom of Naples, 'discovered' the body of Mary Magdalen in a plain marble tomb – and not a historiated alabaster one – in Provence.[1] The saint had appeared in a vision to Charles confirming her true and final resting place and this led him to the crypt of Saint-Maximin on that fateful day. The relics were authenticated ten days later and retranslated into reliquaries for ritualized display.[2] On 3 April 1295, nearly twenty years later, Pope Boniface VIII ratified the relics of Mary Magdalen held at Saint-Maximin allowing Charles to institute the Dominican order as the guardians of the sacred site.

The discovery of the relics in Provence may not constitute a classic *furtum sacrum* or holy theft, in which the physical relics are taken and transported elsewhere, but his act was nonetheless political in stealing attention away from a previous tradition of the Magdalen cult and its attendant art and devotional practices.[3] Charles had challenged the authority of the Benedictine monks of Vézelay Abbey in Burgundy, who for over 200 years had claimed possession of the Magdalen's relics, as legitimized by successive popes since 1050. It was a canny manoeuvre for the body of one of Christianity's most important saints for political gain. But it also overturned the pilgrimage practices of hundred, if not thousands of people, from all walks of life across Europe who travelled from far and wide to venerate the relics at Vézelay in the hope of the remission of sins, of bodily cures, for personal devotion and for protection.

After the retranslation of the Magdalen's relics in 1279 and certainly by 1295, such pious practices were entirely reorientated to Provence and its key devotional sites. These sites were the church of Saint-Maximin with its crypt, which held the tomb of Mary Magdalen and her companions, as well as the grotto of La Sainte-Baume on the nearby massif, a place visited during the Vezelian years of pilgrimage. The incorporation of the grotto represented a measure of continuity between the two pilgrimage sites that would convince the authorities

and the faithful of its authenticity. Along with the new guardian order, namely the Dominicans, there was a redisplay of the relics to accompany the modified cult story and a fresh book of miracles was begun under the auspices of the third prior, Jean Gobi the Elder (1304–1328).[4] Such a change in circumstances reinvigorated the cult and its international appeal. It can also be traced in a series of artworks that codified the shift in the second half of the thirteenth century, which are to be found in Florence and Assisi, but also in a village in the Western Alps.

This chapter examines the importance of this shift in the development of the Magdalen cult and its contingent imagery between France and Italy. It focuses on a late-thirteenth-century sculpted altarpiece from the Aosta Valley, near Turin, an artwork that responded to the change in cult circumstances in a most material way. The altarpiece is to be situated within a series of influential occurrences: the compilation and circulation of Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* in the 1260s, the retranslation of the Magdalen's relics in 1279 and their papal approbation in 1295. More significantly, the chapter addresses the influence on the altarpiece of the late Roman tombs in which the Magdalen relics were discovered with a particular focus on their formal qualities. This will be aligned with the influence of more contemporary types of relic containers. These objects helped to legitimize the new location of Mary Magdalen's relics and, in doing so, codified a new iconography of the saint in this rural location.

A toll of devotion – Mary Magdalen in the Aosta Valley

The altarpiece in question depicting scenes from the life of Mary Magdalen was donated to the Museo Civico di Arte Antica in the Palazzo Madama, Turin in 1867 (Colour Plate 2).[5] The original entry record of the museum notes that the large composite panel, dated to around 1295, is from the village of Carema, located at the southern mouth of the Aosta Valley. A more precise provenance of the altarpiece is unknown due to a lack of documentary records noting such information prior to its entry into the Madama collection.[6] In contrast to mural paintings that often lie below layers of whitewash quietly waiting to tell their stories of lost visual cultures and patterns of devotion in the space that they physically defined, panels move and altar dedications change, often destroying vital contextual information. To make matters more complicated, the parish church of Carema has always borne a dedication to St Martin and no Magdalen

chapels in churches exist in the immediate vicinity. Given that the provenance of the altarpiece is relatively firm, the question of why Mary Magdalen is even more pressing.

In medieval times, Carema was a small but strategically placed toll point on one of the most important pilgrimage routes in Europe, the Via Francigena. This route ran between Canterbury and Rome, with branches that connected it to other important sacred destinations, including Santiago da Compostela and the cult of St James. One of these branches passed through Switzerland and entered Italy through the Aosta Valley, with Carema a potential stopping point.[7] The village fell under the feudal rule of the Vaillese family, but also served the vying lords of nearby Pont-Saint-Martin and Castruzzione, whose bridges and converging roads channelled merchant and other profitable footfall for the easy collection of taxes in this mountainous terrain.[8] At such points of convergence, local communities were sustained by contact with a wider world. This included pilgrims travelling to cultic sites to see precious relics and experience places of contemplation, which might lie beyond the mountains in southern France or closer by at the *Sacra Monte* of Biella near Vercelli.[9] Given its geographic locale and relative proximity to Provence, Carema was a prime location for devotion to Mary Magdalen with the production of the altarpiece evidencing a reaction to new patterns of pilgrimage.

The main corpus of the altarpiece is comprised of two horizontal planks of wood measuring around 205 cm in length and 143 cm in height. It is sculpted entirely from Swiss pine (*cembra pinus*) and retains much of its original polychrome with some traces of gilding. Four iron bolts at the outer extremities suggest that wing panels were once present, substantially extending the structure and its decorative potential. These wings would have closed around the central panel, making the altarpiece a container whose sacred content was revealed on appropriate feast days, as with the near-contemporary retable at Cismar Abbey (Grömitz, Schleswig-Holstein).[10]

Each painted figure, decorative feature and architectural superstructure of the altarpiece was individually carved and attached by glue and nails, including the miniature liturgical and dining apparatus in their respective scenes. Looking at the altarpiece obliquely, the dramatic cast of figures and their settings project strongly outwards from the support, creating a highly texturized surface with a depth of field enhanced by pockets of shadow and revelations in light. Such enlivened materiality both impels and sustains close contemplation of each episode by its bold configuration.

The sacred story is organized from left to right then right to left (boustrophedon style) along the horizontal. It begins on the lower register with the scene of Anointing in the House of the Pharisee. Mary Magdalen is crawling under a long table to anoint the feet of Christ, much to the shock of his fellow diners. She is squashed into this space, with her limbs spilling out audaciously onto the frame mouldings and into our space. The sculptor ensures that we look at the key action of Mary drying her spilt tears with her hair, despite the constraints of her position and clothing. Face, hand and foot are pivoted out towards the viewer. Christ also gestures downwards to her devotional act, encouraging emulation; an action familiar to pilgrims who had experienced crawling underneath or inside sacred shrines.[11] The Magdalen's act is thus a guide to penitential postures and ritualized behaviour. The Anointing is the largest scene of the Carema altarpiece with the greatest number of protagonists and is read right to left. To pull the eye back, we next encounter Mary Magdalen as myrrhophore. This time she looks directly out to the viewer with comely smile, blushed cheeks and heavily lined eyes. There is also a shift from horizontal to vertical positioning, a bodily rhetoric that declares her change in status from sinner to saint as confirmed by the presence of her halo. Mary is garbed in a red robe and blue dress. She holds an unguent vase, one of her key visual attributes, in her left arm while referring to it elegantly with her right. It is the only single-icon sculpture in the programme and occupies the midway point of the arcade (arch 5 of 11). The column to her immediate left also extends down to the edge of the dining table, ensuring that this icon serves as a resting point before moving into the next section. There we see the three Marys (Mary Magdalen, Mary Salome and Mary of Cleophas) arriving at Christ's open tomb to anoint his body, as two soldiers sleep by its side.[12] An angel sits lightly on the edge of the tomb with legs crossed, arm stretched towards the folds of the empty shroud; a detail one can only appreciate from a close and elevated range. The lower register of the altarpiece is completed by the scene of Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalen in the garden, known as the story of the *Noli me tangere*. A single tree orchestrates their encounter, with its gentle curve enclosing the Magdalen as she kneels before her saviour (legs spilling out onto the frame again). Only her hands break the spatial divide by extending across the trunk. However, along with her eye direction and the upward thrust of Christ's flag of the resurrection, the viewer is pointed onwards to the upper register.

The story continues with the Magdalen's self-imposed exile in the wilderness, during which time her hair came to cover her entire body; an iconographic detail drawn from her apocryphal legend, marking a shift from the gospel-based

accounts depicted before. This exile is visualized in two compartments articulated with tri-lobe round arches. In the right-hand side compartment, Mary Magdalen peeks out of a rocky cave as symbolic of a wilderness landscape that has spatial depth, to receive the heavenly manna (bread and wine from a flask) brought by a flying angel located in the quatrefoil above. On the left, the hirsute saint is lifted to the heavens by a pair of tumbling angels. Such a celestial experience is conveyed by the absence of any earthly setting, but also through contrast with her cave-dwelling existence in the previous compartment.

The large central compartment under the main gable presents Mary Magdalen kneeling at an altar to receive her last communion; highly appropriate for a devotional object designed to sit on an altar. The Eucharistic wafer, individually carved, is placed delicately in the saint's mouth by Bishop St Maximin, her compatriot from Judea as recounted in the *Golden Legend* (Colour Plate 3).[13]

An acolyte stands behind St Maximin holding the episcopal crozier, another well-handled detail that draws attention to the para-liturgical equipment set on the altar. Moving left to the final compartment, we encounter the death of Mary Magdalen. Her body, clad in thick waves of hair, lies prostrate at the base of the dividing column, almost like a Tree of Jesse, with delicately carved wrists neatly crossed. Two angels (badly damaged) in the upper left section carry the Magdalen's soul in a cloth of honour up to heaven, which, following visual conventions of the time, is symbolized by an eidolon or small person (*assumptio animae*).[14] Two more angels swing censers in the quatrefoil above and to the right of the scene. We thus end with the body of the saint, her relics, on display after a series of tableaux that cover the key themes of penitence, redemption, revelation, vision, authentication and sanctity. This imagery was ideal for passing pilgrims and profitable for the local community.

In its original state, the altarpiece would have been a sumptuous-looking object remarkable for its bravura carving and delicate finish that pointed away from its local materials of manufacture. It is attributed to the Oropa Master and his workshop, a group of artisans active throughout Piedmont and the Aosta Valley up until the 1330s.[15] Prior to his work in Carema, the Master had just completed his first big commission for the Eusebian Sacellum at Santa Maria di Oropa in Biella (from where he takes his name), a pilgrimage site in the neighbouring valley, which would eventually become a *sacro monte* or sacred mountain simulating pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[16] The Master was evidently used to travelling for work and had been engaged in at least one presitigious commission that was linked to the cult of relics, pointing not only to the business

practice of artisans and the economics of demand, but also to matters of style standards and expectations for sacred types.

Pilgrim's progress and experiential objects

According to the new claim of 1279, Mary Magdalen's relics had found their final resting place in a late-fourth-century Roman sarcophagus in the hypogeum or underground tomb, below the church of Saint-Maximin (of Trier) in Provence. The body of a saint, whole or in parts, was instrumental to the success of a shrine. Such relics attracted the faithful from near and far for their curative potential and miracle-working properties.[17] In the case of Mary Magdalen, a great many claims and counterclaims of the possession of her relics were made in western Europe by religious orders and secular powers who were eager to harness the traces of her physical presence in the West for economic and political gain.[18] She was after all a pillar of apostolic faith, alongside Christ in Jerusalem, Peter in Rome and James the Greater in Santiago de Compostela. However, up until 1279, the Magdalen hotspot had been Vézelay Abbey in Burgundy.

To recap from the Introduction to this book, the *vita eremitica* explained that the monk Badilus had been sent to Provence by Girard de Roissillon, the founder of Vézelay Abbey, in the eighth century to save the body of the saint from Saracen marauders. Badilus was led to the correct tomb and duly carried the holy treasure from that container back to the abbey. Vézelay claimed possession of the relics from around 1050 and received papal approbation to this effect eight years later.[19] The bull made the abbey a major stopping point for medieval Christians on the move, including those who amassed there for the second crusade in 1146 in the presence of King Louis VII of France. As institutional anchors, the papacy and monarchy engendered confidence in the legitimacy of the sacred site and increased its international standing. It generated pious donations of financial and symbolic worth, including relics and reliquaries. But by the thirteenth century things were falling apart. It was difficult to gain access to the relics, the miracles were patchy, and so when it came to the issue of the origins of the Magdalen cult, how and why did the relics end up in Vézelay, a long shadow was cast on their authenticity. The situation was further exacerbated by the accounts issued by the monks themselves, accounts that had a palimpsestic function: each new layer over-wrote or adumbrated the next. Questions led to doubt and with that to opportunism.

As long observed in the historical and historiographical literature, the eleventh to thirteenth centuries represent *the* decisive era in Magdalen devotion, of its 'fermentation'. But it was the thirteenth century that proved to be the turning point in the late medieval cult, due to an historical contingency that hinged on the fragility of relic guardianship. Thus, in December 1279 Charles II made his move: a discovery or holy theft of sorts based on the correction that the body of Mary Magdalen had never left the region of Provence. Her body had been swopped with that of her companion Sidonius and so Badilus had removed the wrong body from the right sarcophagus.

To counter Vézelay, Charles claimed that the relics lay in the crypt below the church of Saint-Maximin (of Trier) in Provence. This Roman funerary site would become the crypt of the new Dominican basilica of Saint-Maximin, begun in 1295, as part of the enshrinement process instigated by the transfer of cult and a change of spiritual guard under royal sponsorship.[20] The tomb was one of four marble containers appropriated for late medieval Christian purposes, none of which bore imagery directly related to the saint or her companions Maximin, Marcellus or Sidonius (Lazarus and Martha, siblings of Mary Magdalen, were buried elsewhere in the region) (Figures 1.1–1.4). This, it was claimed, caused confusion for the 'liberator' sent from Vézelay, Badilus, described in the *vita evangelica* and in later compilations.

The *sculpturis historicis* of the 'Magdalen' five-niche columnar sarcophagus does not display any Magdalen imagery. Instead it is enriched with Passion and martyr iconography, including a Crux Invicta in the central niche.[21] This might

Figure 1.1 Sarcophagus of Mary Magdalen, fourth century AD, marble. Crypt of Saint-Maximin, Provence (Photo: Photothèque CCJ – CNRS/Aix-Marseille Université).

Figure 1.2 Sarcophagus of St Maximin, fourth century AD, marble. Crypt of Saint-Maximin, Provence (Photo: Photothèque CCJ – CNRS/Aix-Marseille Université).

Figure 1.3 Sarcophagus of Marcellus, fourth century AD, marble. Crypt of Saint-Maximin, Provence (Photo: Photothèque CCJ – CNRS/Aix-Marseille Université).

seem odd at first to modern eyes, but such details were unimportant to medieval pilgrims seeking ocular and haptic contact with an archaic reliquary.[22]

The four tombs were of crucial importance to the new pilgrimage site as experiential objects of historical authenticity and were to be displayed accordingly. After all, they pre-dated the transfer of the relics from Provence to Vézelay Abbey by Badilus in the eighth century, strengthening the counterclaim of Charles of

Figure 1.4 Sarcophagus of Sidonius, fourth century AD, marble. Crypt of Saint-Maximin, Provence (Photo: Photothèque CCJ – CNRS/Aix-Marseille Université).

Salerno.[23] We might also remember that their discovery in 1279 came quick on the heels of the compilation of the *Golden Legend*, which accounted for the first transfer to Vézelay, although at that point the case of mistaken identification had not been made. Charles was quick to display the Magdalen relics publicly and in opulent reliquaries, including one for her head made of gold, crystal and studded jewels. But the tombs were not only objects of devotion. As the original containers of ritualized remains that conform to structural and compositional typologies, they also shaped ideas about *how* the Magdalen was to be imaged in the immediate aftermath of the Angevin coup.[24]

Art in an age of Magdalen fermentation

Before 1279, Mary Magdalen occupied a prominent place but often played a deferential role in the arts. For example, on the sculpted tympana of the main portals at Vézelay Abbey and Ste. Marie-Madeleine in Neuilly-en-Donjon

in France she performs her anointing role at the feet of Christ. The portals served as thresholds between sacred and profane domains, with the sculpted Magdalen mediating the devotional experience of pilgrims through her humble pose and tears of contrition.[25] In a pan-European context, the most popular representations of the Magdalen were her biblical roles: as the washer of Christ's feet, as myrrhophore in the company of the other Marys at the tomb of Christ or the *Noli me tangere*, which presented her as first witness to Christ's resurrection. Such imagery was displayed on public buildings and objects, such as doors and stone crosses, for didactic effect; glass is a notable exception with its inclusion of apocryphal episodes (e.g. Auxerre c. 1230). It was also ubiquitous on para-liturgical objects, in manuscript illuminations, wax seals or pewter pilgrim badges, each reinforcing these dominant ways of seeing the saint.[26]

Unfortunately, no late medieval paintings and sculpture survive from the Dominican basilica of Saint-Maximin in Provence to explore the influence of the tombs discovered in 1279.[27] But if we look further afield, we can find works that demonstrate that the tombs had a profound impact on the visual arts when it came to depicting Mary Magdalen at this time.

The earliest impact can be found in Italy, and in particular the first visualizations of the Magdalen legend produced in the mendicant heartlands of Umbria, Tuscany and the Neapolitan Kingdom.[28] Two seminal works are the Magdalen Master's tall gable panel of *c.* 1280 now in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence and the fresco cycle in the Lower Church of the Franciscan basilica in Assisi, produced by Giotto's workshop in the 1320s. The panel painting, of uncertain but likely Florentine provenance, was produced in the immediate aftermath of Charles of Salerno's relocation of the body of Mary Magdalen (Figure 1.5).

The panel presents the hirsute saint surrounded by eight scenes of her life that correspond to the *Golden Legend*. Significantly it concludes in the lower right corner with her funeral where we can see the intact corpse lying in a strigilated sarcophagus. In his account, Voragine only describes the saint receiving an appropriate burial (*honorifice sepeliuit*) with minimal reference to the appearance of the tomb.[29] This presented a challenge to the painter. For certain, it was possible for him to look to sarcophagi in his vicinity, such as those in the Pisan Camposanto. However, the choice of decoration was significant. Strigilation was visual shorthand for the antiquity of the subject represented (the stripes are also easy to depict on a practical level). It is therefore not insensible to suggest that the painted tomb and its decoration pointed to the archaeological record in

Figure 1.5 Magdalen Master, Mary Magdalen *Vita* Panel, *c*. 1280, tempera on wood. Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence (Photo: SCALA, Florence; Courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali).

southern France: to the tombs that since 1279 purportedly contained the sacred relics. News from pilgrims who had recently visited the crypt would have carried the knowledge that at least one, the tomb of Marcellus, carried the strigilation pattern.

The seven-scene fresco cycle displayed across three walls of Bishop Pontano's funerary chapel in the lower church of Assisi substantiates a kind of indexicality of pilgrimage practice and the renown of the new pilgrimage destination in Provence.[30] The cycle includes a condensed depiction of the Marseille fertility miracle, circulated widely through the *Golden Legend* (Figure 1.6).

The lunette of the west wall in fact brings together two pilgrimages in one scene: firstly, the journey of Mary Magdalen and her fellow Christians to Gaul in a rudderless boat and secondly, the governor of Marseille discovering on the voyage home from his pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem that his son has survived years of abandonment at the breast of his dead mother. We see her lying on her side towards the viewer enclosed in a voluminous robe, much like the sculptural effigy of a tomb monument. The painting represents two tests of faith: for the expelled

Figure 1.6 Giotto and workshop, Chapel of Mary Magdalen. The Voyage of Mary Magdalen to Marseille, 1320s, fresco. Church of San Francesco, Assisi (Photo: SCALA, Florence).

Christian and for the pagan governor. Both tests were predicated on miraculous interventions and the promise of resurrection. Their location above a side entrance to the Magdalen chapel alongside the scene of the *Noli me tangere* was significant. Placed side-by-side, the double pilgrimage and the *Noli me tangere* offered to pilgrims and other devotees and the friars typological Magdalens who embodied a spiritual transition over time and space. They also reinforced the status of the Provençal legend and made a latent connection between two pilgrimage churches: San Francesco in Assisi and Saint-Maximin in Provence.

The respective cycles of both Tuscan artworks visually codify the transfer of the Magdalen cult to Provence in 1279 in a way that contextualizes the Carema altarpiece. They document the Magdalen's Provençal mission with scenes of travel, preaching, miracle working and eremitism, rather than only weeping at the foot of the cross or being a myrrhophore at Christ's tomb. This reconfiguration of the saint in imagery was fundamental.[31] The new religious orders preferred to depict Mary Magdalen's story in fairly consistent scene numbers and subject matter and, in the case of fresco cycles, occupied a common location in their churches: typically a side chapel near or beyond the choir screen. For the Assisi frescoes, this place in sacred space underscores historical continuity. The paintings were located in a pilgrimage church for the 'new' saint Francis, who would later come to be called a second Magdalen.[32] The pictures of the Magdalen's journeys of faith in harsh environments, be it across seas or in mountains, were designed to mediate the spiritual experience of pilgrims visiting Francis's tomb in the crypt.[33] It could also remind devotees of pilgrimages already taken or perhaps those in the planning that lay beyond the Alps and would require a journey along the key land transit routes that connected the Italian Peninsula with the rest of Europe.

Italy was a fertile breeding ground for Magdalen devotion, thanks to the socio-religious and political structure of the city-states and their increasing emphasis on civic religion, collective tertiary activities and personal piety all fostered by the mendicant orders. This situation tells us a lot about ritualized life in urban Italy and more widely, the European networks of devotion within which they operated. What happened in Provence in relation to Mary Magdalen's relics was parsed in Florence through the power of images to such an extent that she became a second patron saint in all but name.[34] She was commonly represented alongside John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence. Two notable examples attributed to Giotto and/or his workshop are the former high altarpiece of Santa Reparata, dated *c.* 1310, and the fresco paintings of the Magdalen chapel, today

in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, dated to the 1330s. What happened in the Alps, however, enriches our understanding of the pilgrimage-based cult and its contingent imagery in the late medieval period.

The numerous village churches dedicated to Mary Magdalen in Alpine valleys and foothills make her as much a parish as pilgrimage saint. In this dual capacity, the churches served their local communities on a daily basis but were also stopping points on or near to the major transit routes functioning as a complement to the high-profile end destinations, such as Assisi, Rome, Santiago di Compostela and of course Saint-Maximin in Provence. Pilgrims or indeed local parishioners could move from Magdalen church to Magdalen church as part of their journey, or simply to one Magdalen church on a regular basis, with the mountain location playing its role in ideas about physical and spiritual ascendancy. What the Carema altarpiece helps us to understand is how artworks and their sites functioned as preparation for, remembrance of or substitution for the original shrine in a wider imagined community of devotion.[35]

Carema was located on a branch of Via Francigena and within reach of Provence when travelling through the Maritime Alps. Its altarpiece depicting the life of Mary Magdalen engaged with the fame of the tombs by way of its structural form constructed a decade or so after the translation of the relics. It functioned as an indexical marker of pilgrimage activity at other shrines. More pointedly, it was a contemporary reference to the authenticating authority of the early Christian sarcophagi in Saint-Maximin in Provence, locus of the cult of Mary Magdalen as sanctioned by the papacy in 1295.

While years of wear and tear from pilgrim's touch have left the Magdalen tomb in the crypt of Saint-Maximin in a desultory condition, the other three retain greater integrity that makes clear that all four could have offered formal and stylistic guidance to the Oropa Master and/or his patron seeking to forge a material connection between the Magdalen altarpiece and her relics. The altarpiece and the tombs share a horizontal format, the propensity for regular compartments through intercolumniation and the linear distribution of individual figures that keeps them flush to the surface. There is equally a relationship of scale, with the altarpiece measuring 205 cm in length and 143 cm in height, akin to the dimensions of the tombs.[36] The figures on all five objects share not only a clear articulation of form and gesture to ensure legibility, but also a care in articulating folds in fabrics and in the depiction of the little props that enlivened their respective scenes: from crockery and para-liturgical equipment on the altarpiece to birds and animals on the tombs.

Flat horizontal retables were the norm for churches in the Alps during the late thirteenth century. As such, the gabled structure of the Carema altarpiece must have looked particularly unusual for an object of its scale at the time of its production in around 1295.[37] Its unusual appearance finds comparison with the gables of the carved and painted Madonna tabernacles that were a specialty in the Aosta Valley and Piedmont in the same period.[38] However, structural developments in panel painting in Italy around 1270, namely the gabled ancona, must also have made their impact. This Italian format would have met the northern tradition of winged altarpiece resulting in a new type. In doing so, it points us to the potential for hybrid forms in a cultural contact zone.[39]

The new Italian format came hand-in-hand with the rise of the new mendicant orders and the depictions of their saints, Francis and Dominic, and the increasing importance of a dramatic backdrop to the performance of the liturgy that took place behind the altar. Gables commonly give emphasis to the most important religious icons, Christ, the Virgin Mary or dedicatory saint. But in Carema, there is a substantial difference. The three gables preside over narrative sequences, calling out three fundamental moments in the life of Mary Magdalen: the saint's eremitical retreat to the mountain wilderness, as represented by the cave, her last communion from St Maximin and her death, all of which correspond to the pilgrim's progress in Provence: the passage to the grotto, to the altar and to the crypt where her relics were discovered in 1279. This brings us back to the structural form of the tombs and the impression they made on the Carema altarpiece and other later artworks.

The Carema altarpiece is a hybrid object between northern winged retable and Italian ancona-type, but the appearance of gables may allude to and compensate for an element of the sarcophagus that was missing. The lid of the 'Magdalen' sarcophagus is described in the *Golden Legend* as being replete with Magdalen imagery. Jacobus de Voragine does not go into detail but this brief mention was to prove tantalizing for later generations of artists and scholars. For example, a manuscript illumination attributed to Jean Wauquelin (after 1448) suggests that the lid was pitched in form thus providing extra verticality and two gabled ends (Figure 1.7).[40]

While it is certainly not an authentic documentary record of the tomb's shape, the image does point to a timeless desire to make the sarcophagus in the crypt of Saint-Maximin a Magdalen object, both inside and out. It suggests that the tomb once carried imagery from her legend on the lid (thus following the *Golden Legend* account) with Wauqulin's image enhancing the archaeological record. In

Figure 1.7 Jean Wauquelin (attrib.), Badilus removes the body of Mary Magdalen from its tomb in Provence, illumination from the *Roman de Girard de Roussillon*, Cod. 2549, fol. 139 (Photo: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna).

the illumination, we see the monk Badilus extracting the Magdalen's body from the broken end of the tomb but not to the detriment of a series of five roundels on the lid that include scenes of *Noli me tangere*, hunting and preaching.[41] The meaning of the depiction cannot be in doubt as an inscription reads *Hic jacet corpus beate Marie-Magdalene*.[42] The tomb remains both declaration and proof long after its discovery, at least in the artistic imagination, thus providing a purview for the strategy employed for the Magdalen altarpiece at Carema.

Any argument for a connection between cult objects distanced in both time and space depends upon the accessibility of the originating site, the agency of the viewer (be it pilgrim, artist or patron) and the mode of information transmission and interpretation. We know that pilgrims had been visiting the Magdalen grotto in Provence since the twelfth century, most famously Raimondo of Piacenza in the 1170s, and so it is likely that on discovery of the crypt in 1279, the tombs

were quickly made accessible to ensure word spread throughout Christendom.[43] Substantial indulgences were granted for the Magdalen's feast day of 22 July and the relic translation day of 5 May. There were even local and international 'rates' of indulgence: 40 days remission for Provençals and 100 days for foreigners.[44] This managed experience was not without precedent.

Pilgrims had visited the region even earlier, since at least the eleventh century to venerate the tomb of St Victor at Marseille, a church that also hosted the relics of the Holy Innocents (brought to Provence in 414 by John Cassian). The church of Saint-Maximin, which would become the principal locus of the Magdalen relics from 1279, was a dependent of St Victor and inherited some of these prized relics of the Holy Innocents. This may explain the presence of Massacre of the Innocents imagery on one of the tombs in the crypt of Saint-Maximin, that of Maximin himself, a companion of Mary Magdalen and Bishop of Aix.[45] The accessibility of the pilgrimage site of Saint-Maximin during the thirteenth century led to a widespread diffusion of the Massacre scene, called the Provençal or smashing type.[46] Artists were evidently able to enter the crypt and look at the tombs, taking away information about their iconographical content. In sum, this example suggests a process of artistic transfer from an image prototype in the crypt to more distant locales through the agency of artists.

Formal borrowings could also happen on a structural level. The processes of artistic transfer in the pilgrimage context in Provence described above find a parallel in the round churches that replicated the formal properties of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem since the twelfth century across Europe. Christopher S. Wood points us to the plan of the structure as the true essence rather than any perfect simulacrum, arguing 'essential identity flowed evenly through all the various performances'.[47] In this he draws upon the seminal analysis of Richard Krautheimer who noted the 'indifference' towards precise imitation of form between prototype and copies when discussing replications of the Holy Sepulchre in Europe. Alongside obvious similarities in structural form, what actually mattered for medieval builders, their patrons and the worshipping Christians was the replication of content and function. Caution must always be exercised when using any deductive approach but by using exemplars as evidence – be they model books, travelling artists or patrons – we are provided with a basis for speculation about the use of structural similarities as a vehicle for the transmission of some essence of the original content and function.[48]

For the Carema altarpiece in the late thirteenth century, it is plausible that the Oropa Master was equally receptive to an object's genius loci and was more than

capable of replicating or performing its charge (essence), in aesthetic, formal or iconographic terms. The altarpiece bears a resemblance to the prototype object (the tomb) and displays imagery according to the prototype's declared content and function in a pilgrimage context. But we might also factor in local stimuli. The Oropa Master was operating in a region with strong Roman history and a landscape littered with the archaeological remains of the past. From triumphal arches to fragmentary *stelae*, the visual language and grammar of Roman art was familiar and compelling. Tombs were markers of a distinct funerary culture and they found fresh purchase and form in medieval Christianity and the veneration of saintly relics. The Oropa Master probably looked to the tombs, but he would also have been influenced by smaller metal reliquaries that shared the same form.

It is likely our artist was familiar with such reliquary chasses. These objects were imported from Limoges, the main centre of production, down the Via Francigena to the Cathedrals of Aosta and Vercelli during the medieval period. A comparison of these luxury objects with the Carema altarpiece reveals a clear emulation of precious materials and microarchitecture.[49] The altarpiece shares the same sense of structure and rhythm as the reliquary box through its engaged microarchitecture and use of alternating polychrome. In production, both evidence the craftsmen's attention to detail and the ability to work on miniature scale – for the altarpiece it is by means of the little shrine-like edifices that occupy the spandrels of the arches, the stencilled patterns in the apertures of the shrines and the design and texture of the various cloths, trees and rocks (Figure 1.8).

But it is also a matter of compositional layout, narrative flow and symbolic significance. There is a shared horizontal format spread over two registers, the gabled 'roof' and the flat surfaces. Crucially, both place emphasis on the materiality of devotion. A reliquary chasse is a container of saintly remains and its structure mimics that of large-scale sarcophagi, reinforcing the family resemblance for the Carema altarpiece. With its wing panels closing over the main visual field, which is populated by figures who play out the life and death of Mary Magdalen in an insistently corporeal way, the altarpiece occupies a middle ground between tomb and chasse, a participant in a dialogue of formal and material reciprocity with the charged relics in Provence.

Of course Carema did not preserve the body of the saint and there is no surviving evidence to suggest that the church of Saint Martin possessed a good relic of the saint. However, the church was located on a strategic point on an

Figure 1.8 Limoges goldsmith, Reliquary Chasse of St Catherine, 1215–20. Museo del Tesoro del Duomo, Vercelli (Photo: SCALA, Florence).

established route to and from Provence since at least 1170.[50] Strengthening the presence of the saint in the valley, an altar was dedicated to Mary Magdalen in 1291 in the cathedral of Aosta by Bishop Nicolo Bersatori. Moreover, a tomb monument raised for Bishop Bonifacio di Valperga was placed next to the altar, with a sculpted effigy that shows stylistic affinity with the *oeuvre* of the Oropa Master and his workshop. There were also private Magdalen chapels in the nearby villages of Arnad, Ville and Estillan (Pont-Saint-Martin).[51] Given this ecclesiastical context and the Oropa Master's ability to emulate and render international form and opulent materials in carved wood, it seems that he was specifically tasked with crafting an altarpiece in Carema that served to point to precious relics in Provence. If so, he gave the artwork meaning through its form; through its performance of the charged objects in the crypt of Saint-Maximin. In lieu of inscriptions that feature in other artworks discussed in this book, the highly readable format of the Carema altarpiece could serve to instruct the local laity and appeal to passing footfall just like the shrines in Biella and Provence did. It has a pictorial language designed to transcend cultural boundaries.

Scaling up the map

The Carema altarpiece was clearly designed for visibility, *supra altare*, on account of its hybrid form and large scale. Most likely it was for the high altar of the parish church of Saint Martin in Carema, appropriately enough another pilgrim saint.[52] This suggests that the patron, either individual or collective, capitalized on the Oropa Master's growing reputation based on his instrumental role in crafting the new pilgrimage shrine at Biella. It was a real opportunity to leverage this success by creating a visual connection with the Magdalen cultic site in Provence that would resonate with the local population and appeal to passing pilgrims. With the Papal approbation of the relics at Saint-Maximin in Provence occurring on 3 April 1295, it would have been a perfect time to commission a new altarpiece setting out and celebrating the saint's story of penitence and redemption for a church located on a key nodal point, a tax toll. It likely explains the centralized position of the saint's last communion, with its focus on St Maximin, who proffers the viaticum to the kneeling and diminutive Mary.[53] It speaks to the 'historical' dimension of the cult and its geographic locale alongside a reinforcement of church hierarchy and dogma in the parish context.

The Carema altarpiece is a useful entry point to any study of the cult of Mary Magdalen in late medieval Europe, not just the Alps. It is a beautifully crafted object that almost certainly responded to a spike in the cult's timeline. Its dynamic carved figures give immediacy and presence to an exciting and epic story told in 'tomb format'. The altarpiece has been discussed in relation to contemporary production and devotional contexts in central Italy. However, this devotional object also now marks the beginning of an Alpine story told across 200 years of art. While the next stopping point is east in the Swiss Grisons and with a master painter who shares much stylistic affinity with the Oropa équipe, a brief coda can be offered to this chapter which presented an artwork dedicated to Mary Magdalen as an indexical marker of pilgrimage activity.

Two way-side monuments dedicated to Mary Magdalen appear in the following centuries that reinforce the importance of the Alpine roads. In Buttigliera Alta, situated west of Turin and on a branch of the Via Francigena, an elegant fresco cycle was commissioned around 1395 for a chapel in the hospital church of Sant' Antonio di Ranverso (Colour Plate 4).[54]

Although sadly damaged, visitors were treated to images of the Magdalen's voyage to Provence, her evangelizing of the local population and her encouragement of the governing couple's pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land.

It was a voyage that would lead to not only woe but also a happy ending, as described at the outset of this chapter, and it sustained the gaze of nobles from the nearby city as well as providing spiritual succour to the tired, sick and destitute who sought refuge under the care of the Antonine monks. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Maritime Alps, the little pilgrimage church of Saint Erige in Auron illustrates the continued importance of the Magdalen pilgrimage trail.[55] Set between the double apses, a projecting aedicula on fictive supporting columns offers an immersive display space for Magdalen imagery dated 1451 (Colour Plate 5).[56]

From a distance in the nave, we are faced with a striking picture of the preaching saint who admonishes a courtly gathering in a garden setting. 'Inside' the aedicula, however, we focus on the penitential saint replete with her trademark golden hair who stands below a tri-lobed arch. Just as in Carema, she clasps her hands in prayer while two tumbling angels begin to raise her to the heavens. To complete the votive complex and remind us of nearby Provence and the shrine of Mary Magdalen, two little pilgrims are painted onto the surfaces of the supporting consoles; pilgrims who direct their prayers and their feet, towards the waiting saint.

Notes

1   As described by various witnesses, including Ptolemy of Lucca (Bishop of Torcello) Bernard Gui (Bishop of Lodeve) and Philippe de Cabassole (Bishop of Cavaillon and Chancellor to Queen Joan I of Naples), see Étienne Michel Faillon, *Monuments inédits sur l'apostolat de Sainte Marie-Madeleine en Provence et sur les autres apotres de cette contrée, Saint Lazare, Saint Maximin, Sainte Marthe* (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1859), vol. 1, 681 and vol. 2, 775, 777 and 782.

2   See Victor Saxer, 'Philippe Cabassole et son Libellus hystorialis Marie beatissime Magdalene. Préliminaires à une edition du Libellus', in *L'État Angevin: Pouvoir, culture et société entre XIII et XIV siècle* (Rome: Ecole Francaise de Rome, 1998), 193–204.

3   See Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978 and 1990).

4   See Clemens Jr, *The Establishment of the Cult of Mary Magdalen*, 124–172.

5   Inv. No. 1053/L. My thanks to Dr Simone Baiocco for arranging access to and photography of the altarpiece, also for consultation of the museum documentation. See Enrica Pagella, *Il Palazzo Madama: Museo Civico d'Arte Antica* (Torino: Allemando, 2008), 73–74.

6   The fifteenth-century pastoral visitations of Bishop Gillaren are curiously silent on the Carema altarpiece. See Bruno Orlandoni, *Architettura in Valle D'Aosta. Il Romanico e Il Gotico dalla costruzione della cattedrale ottoniana alle committenze di Ibleto e Bonifacio di Challant 1000–1420* (Scarmagno: Priuli & Verlucca, 1995), 275–276. For issues of art patronage in the region, see also Riccardo Passoni, 'Arte e committenti in Aosta: problemi trecenteschi e verifiche sul gotico internazionale', in *Aosta: progetto per una storia della città*, ed. Marco Cuaz (Aosta: Musumeci Editore, 1987), 241–252, esp. 242.

7   For the history of the 'French way', see Renato Stopani, *La via Francigena. Una strada europea nell'Italia del Medioevo* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1998).

8   See Norman John Pounds, *An Economic History of Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 2013), 390. The Roman bridge at Pont-Saint-Martin and the landscape of the Aosta Valley captured the imagination of the Romantic painter J.M.W. Turner in 1836 while travelling across the Alps to Turin (Fort Bard Sketchbook. Tate, Turner Bequest CCXCIV 75 a, ref. D29352). Turner would later also visit and paint Bozen in the Dolomites, the locality of Chapter 3.

9   For an overview of pilgrimage in the Western Alps, see André Vauchez, 'Culte des saints et pèlerinages aux dernier siècles du Moyen Âge (v.1200–v.1500)', in *L'Image des Saints dans les Alpes Occidentales à la fin du Moyen Âge*, ed. Sylvie Aballéa and Frédéric Elsig (Rome: Viella, 2015), 13–24.

10 Sculpted wooden retables with wing panels (painted or sculpted) were commonly produced in the German-speaking lands during the late medieval period, many with bespoke relic compartments. For the origins and development of the genre, see Rainer Kahsnitz, *Carved Splendor. Late Gothic Altarpieces in Southern Germany, Austria, and South Tyrol* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2006). For their popularity in the Aosta Valley and Piedmont, see n. 38.

11 For the interactive potential of tombs, see James Buslag, 'Performative Thaumaturgy: The State of Research on Curative and Spiritual Interaction at Medieval Pilgrimage Shrines', in *The Sacred and the Secular in Medieval Healing. Sites, Objects and Texts*, ed. Barbara S. Bowers and Linda Migl Keyser (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 219–265.

12 As recounted in Mk 16:1.

13 Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 381; Maggioni, *Legenda aurea*, 638.

14 See Deborah Markow, *The Iconography of the Medieval Soul* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1986).

15 The Oropa group travelled over a 100-mile radius in the region, undertaking prominent commissions in Valdengo, Vercelli and Aosta, telling us not only about the business practice of artisans and the economics of demand, but also about style standards and expectations for sacred types. For a critical survey, see Vittorio

Natali, 'Il Maestro di Oropa, pittori fuoriusciti di Avogadro', in *Arti figurative a Biella e a Vercelli. Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Vittorio Natale and Ada Quazza (Biella: Eventi & Progetti, 2007), 129–142.

16   The literature on the Biella devotional complex over the centuries, including its 'upgrade' in 1480 to *sacro monte*, is substantial. For an historical overview, see Mario Trompetto, *Storie del Santuario di Oropa* (Biella: Giovanacci, 1978). For a socio-religious perspective, see Silvia Beltramo, 'L'Ospitalità religiosa nei santuari italiani tra medioevo ed età moderna', in *L'accoglienza religiosa tra tardo antico ed età moderna. Luoghi, architteture, percorsi*, ed. Silvia Beltramo and Paolo Cozzo (Rome: Viella, 2013), 135–156.

17   The *Liber miraculorum beate Marie Magdalene,* composed in the early fourteenth century, is discussed at length by Clemens Jr, *The Establishment of the Cult of Mary Magdalen*, 124–172. He pays particular attention to 'gradual healing' miracles, whereby the flow of sacred power inherent in the relics is complemented by the coming and going of pilgrims from the shrine itself. He cites examples of healing miracles that allow pilgrims to return home and inform the local community, thus extending the reach of the saint (147–158).

18   Saxer, *Le culte*, 68 and 73; Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 108–113.

19   Issued by Pope Stephen X: 'Abbatiam Viziliacensem, ubi sancta Maria Magdalene requiescat, tibi concedimus in possidendum.' In Privilegium Stephani X papae per quod confirmat Omnia monasteria, bona jura et privilegia monasterio Cluniacensi antea concessa [Bullar., Cluniac., 15]. PL 143, col. 883. Further Papal Bulls were issued by Lucius III, Urban III and Clement III.

20   Mary Magdalen became a patron saint of the Dominican order in 1297, a great match for friars with a preaching mission, with convents and altar dedications and their contingent artworks manifesting both corporate and individual devotion. See also Chapter 3. Of course, the Magdalen held widespread appeal in the age of new religious orders that fostered a personal, humane experience of Christianity not least through the power of the visual arts. For the phenomenon of the 'mendicant Magdalen', see Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*.

21   For discussion of the tomb iconography, see Michel Fixot, *La Crypte de Saint-Maximin La-Sainte-Baume. Basilique Sainte-Marie-Madeleine* (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 2001), esp. 16–19.

22   Neither were such details important for later apologists, such as Joseph Bérenger, canon of Marseille and Ajaccio. In his 1925 paper, *Sainte Marie-Madeleine en Provence*, he draws upon interdisciplinary evidence to make a passionate, deeply sarcastic yet ultimately delusional case for the authenticity of the presence of Mary Magdalen in Provence. His paper is now available in translation by Paul Ferguson, *Did Mary Magdalene visit Provence? An examination of the literary*

and archaeological evidence for St. Mary Magdalene's presence in south-eastern France (Peterborough: Fast-Print Publishing, 2015). This renewed interest in the archaeology of Mary Magdalen is noted by Victor Saxer in his essay on the literary life of the tombs: 'La Crypt et les Sarcophages de Saint-Maximin dans la Litterature Latine du Moyen-Age', *Provence Historique. Revue Trimestrielle* 5, no. 21 (1955): 196–231. Such descriptions were fuelled over the centuries to the claims and counterclaims for the authenticity of the relics.

23 For an incisive examination of this 'drama of presence' practice, see Jaś Elsner, 'The Christian Museum in Southern France: antiquity, display, and liturgy from the counter-reformation to the aftermath of Vatican II', *The Oxford Art Journal* 32, no. 2 (2009): 181–204, quote 204.

24 A sculpture of the reclining Magdalen (no longer extant) in the grotto of La-Sainte-Baume, part of the Provençal pilgrimage site, proves equally influential for artworks produced on either side of the Alps in later years. See Maddalena Spagnolo, 'Correggio's Reclining Magdalen. Isabella d'Este and the Cult of St Mary Magdalen', *Apollo* 157 (2003): 37–45 and also Jeryldene Wood, 'Vittoria Colonna's Mary Magdalen', in *Visions of Holiness*, ed. Andrew Ladis and Shelly E. Zuraw (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 194–212.

25 For the tympanum in the context of pilgrimage, see Alexandra Gajewsky, 'The abbey church at Vézelay and the cult of Mary Magdalene: "invitation to a journey of discovery"', in *Architecture, Liturgy and Identity*, ed. Zoë Opačić and Achim Timmermann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 221–240.

26 For example, the seals of Vézelay show the *Noli me tangere* (illustrated in Faillon, *Monuments inédits*, col. 862), likewise the tenth-century Ottonian ivory reliquary (British Museum London: PE 1855,1031.1) which also has scenes of the crucifixion and the three Marys at the tomb. The censing Magdalen is also represented on a marble relief on the sarcophagus of Saint Celsus (mid to late fourth or early fifth century CE) in Santa Maria presso San Celso, Milan, which anticipates the censing Magdalen in the glass window of Sankt Magdalena in Weitensfeld (see Introduction). My thanks to Lisa Rafanelli for pointing me to this comparison.

27 The building project was never completed as successive campaigns were interrupted by various disasters, including the plague in 1348.

28 See Sarah Wilkins, 'Imaging the Angevin Saint. Mary Magdalen in the Pipino Chapel in Naples', *California Italian Studies* 3 (2012): 1–27.

29 See n. 21.

30 See Donal Cooper and Janet Robson, *The Making of Assisi: The Pope, the Franciscans and the Painting of the Basilica* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2013); Lorraine Carol Schwartz, 'Patronage and Franciscan Iconography in the Magdalen Chapel at Assisi', *The Burlington Magazine* 133

(1991): 32–36 and *The Fresco Decoration of the Magdalen Chapel in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi* (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1980).

31 The Magdalen Master panel is indicative of the popular *Vita* type, pioneered by the mendicant orders. For a nuanced testing of its relationship with coeval panels depicting St Claire of Assisi and St Margaret of Cortona, see Joanna Cannon, 'Beyond the limitations of visual typology: reconsidering the function and audience of three vita-panels of women saints c.1300', *Studies in the History of Art* 61 (2002): 290–313.

32 The substitution is made at the foot of Christ's Crucifixion cross, with Francis taking the privileged place of Mary Magdalen. Daniela Bohde has recently argued for the reverse, i.e., that Mary Magdalen takes Francis's place and that this invention first occurs in the Arena Chapel in Padua (UCL History of Art seminar, March 2017). I am grateful to Professor Bohde for allowing me to cite her forthcoming article.

33 The Magdalen Chapel has been proposed as a holding tank for pilgrims, as part of a system of chapels designed for their circulation. See Janet Robson, 'The Pilgrim's Progress: reinterpreting the Trecento Frescoes in the Lower Church at Assisi', in *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, ed. William R. Cook (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 39–70.

34 For the legacy of Magdalen devotion in Florence, see Sarah Wilk, 'The Cult of Mary Magdalen in Fifteenth-Century Florence and Its Iconography', *Studi Medievali* 3rd series, 26, no. 2 (1985): 685–698 and Heidi J. Hornik, 'The Invention and Development of the "Secular" Mary Magdalene in Late Renaissance Florentine Painting', in *Mary Magdalen in Medieval Culture*, ed. Loewen and Waugh (2015), 75–98.

35 Henry Luttikhuizen, 'Still Walking: Spiritual Pilgrimage, Early Dutch Paintings and the Dynamics of Faith', in *Push Me, Pull You*. Vol. 1. *Imaginative and Emotional Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, ed. Sarah Blick and Laura Gelfland (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 197–225. Although primarily concerned with *ductus* (journeying through the work of art), Luttikhuizen argues for the process of pilgrimage, the spiritual and physical perambulations (including the rosary held by St Lucy) as the desired outcome, rather than actually achieving teleological salvation. In this spiritual microcosm, anticipation and preparation are everything. These ideas are discussed further in Chapter 7. See also Mary Carruthers, 'The Concept of Ductus or Journeying through a Work of Art,' in *Rhetoric beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Carruthers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 190–213.

36 Of course the altarpiece would have been made to fit the destination altar.

37 Gabled altarpieces appeared in the fourteenth century. This has led some scholars to suggest that the Carema altarpiece should be dated to the second quarter of that century.

38 Orlandoni, *Architettura in Valle D'Aosta*, 274–284. The altarpiece typologies include
    the Madonna tabernacle from the chapel of Grand Aury, Arvier and a hypothetical
    reconstruction of a large-scale winged altarpiece.

39 The gables suggest knowledge of contemporary production in the central Italian
    regions, resulting in a fusion of artistic traditions in this border territory. For the
    development of the late medieval Italian altarpiece, see Scott Nethersole, *Devotion
    by Design: Italian Altarpieces before 1500* (London: National Gallery, 2011) and
    for a geographically specific case study, Joanna Cannon, 'The creation, meaning,
    and audience of the early Sienese polyptych. Evidence from the Friars', in *Italian
    Altarpieces*, ed. Eve Borsook and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi (Oxford: Clarendon
    Press, 1994), 47–79. For examples of Aostan tabernacle Madonnas and other
    altarpieces in the Palazzo Madama in Turin, see Enrica Pagella, ed., *Tra Gotico e
    Rinascimento. Scultura in Piemonte* (Torino: Città di Torino, 2001).

40 See the *Roman de Girard de Roussillon*, commissioned by Philip the Good, Duke of
    Burgundy, Vienna ÖNB, Cod. 2549, fol. 139. Girard was the first duke of Burgundy
    and founder of Vézelay abbey. Along with his wife, Bertha, he investigated the
    history of the relics of Mary Magdalen in Provence in order to bring them to
    Burgundy. His 'agent' was of course Badilus.

41 Interestingly, the *Vie de le Magdalene* by Godefroy de Batave and Francois
    Demoulins de Rochefort, produced in *c.* 1516 (BnF, ms. Fr. 24.955), is also
    illustrated with roundels that include a scene of hunting. It was inspired by a
    pilgrimage made by Louise of Savoy, mother of the French king Francis I, to the
    Magdalen devotional complex in Provence. For an analysis of the imagery of
    the manuscript in the context of royal patronage, see Barbara J. Johnston, 'The
    Magdalene and "Madame": Piety, Politics, and Personal Agenda in Louise of Savoy's
    Vie de la Magdalene', in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies*, ed. Erhardt and
    Morris, 269–293.

42 The phrase was used by Bernard Gui and Philippe de Cabassole, among others who
    were present during the invention of the relics. See Faillon, *Monuments inédits*,
    vol. 1, 792. De Voragine refers to various sources for this legend at the end of his
    narrative. In the paragraph dedicated to the patrons of Vézelay Abbey, Gerard Duke
    of Burgundy and his wife, he includes a description of the Magdalen tomb. It is
    marble and bears an inscription with carved imagery inside and out. See Granger
    Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 381–382.

43 See Diana Webb, 'Raimondo and the Magdalen: a twelfth-century Italian Pilgrim
    in Provence', *The Journal of Medieval History* 26, no. 1 (2000): 1–18. Jerome Münzer
    (1460?–1508), from Feldkirch in Tyrol, provides a later account of the Magdalen
    sites in Provence as part of a pilgrimage route in his *Itinerarium*. See Eugène
    Déprez, 'Jérome Münzer et son voyages dans le midi de la France en 1494–1495',

Annales du Midi 48 (1936): 56–79. Other pilgrimages are discussed by Clemens Jr, *The Establishment of the Cult of Mary Magdalen*, 265ff.

44   Ibid., 84.

45   Faillon calls it the Sarcophagus of the Holy Innocents in his *Monuments inédits*, vol.1, cols 733–760.

46   E. Baldwin Smith, *Early Christian Iconography and a School of Ivory Carvers in Provence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1918), 62–68.

47   See Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction; Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago, IL and London: Chicago University Press, 2008) and Richard Krautheimer, 'Introduction to an Iconography of Medieval Architecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1–33, esp. 6 and 20.

48   See Robert W. Scheller, *Exemplum. Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle* Ages *(ca. 900–ca. 1470)*, trans. Michael Hoyle (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 27–33.

49   As argued by Elena Rossetti Brezzi, in Pagella, *Tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, 32 (cat. no. 5), with regard to the contemporary Villeneuve retable, also attributed to the Oropa Master's workshop (Museo Civico d'Arte in Turin).

50   See Orlandoni, *Architettura in Valle D'Aosta*, 169.

51   These chapels could not have accommodated such a large work, ruling them out as potential locations for the Carema altarpiece.

52   The nearby parish church of San Maurizio in Fenis (Aosta Valley) had a sculpted Magdalen altarpiece on the high altar, which indicates that the normative correlation between titular saint and high altar dedications could be dismissed in the region.

53   This may have affected the positioning of the Magdalen icon in the lower register, which is slightly off-centre.

54   The paintings are attributed to Pietro di Milano, working in the ambit of Giacomo Jacquerio, who was painter to the Savoian court. For discussion of the church on the pilgrimage route, see Barbara Debernardi, ed., *La Via Francigena dal Moncenisio a Sant'Antonio di Ranverso sulle orme degli antichi viandanti* (Comune di Sant'Ambrogio: s.n., 1997).

55   For an anthropological account of the Magdalen pilgrimage trail and the significance of making the journey for women, see Fedele, *Looking for Mary Magdalene.*

56   See Elena Romanello, 'Il maestro di Lusernetta e alcune considerazioni sulla pittura tardogotica pinerolese', *Bollettino della Società Piemontese di Archeologia e Belle Arti*, N.S. 51 (1999 [2001]): 275–300.

Regulating the Mountain Parish Saint

In the Alps, Mary Magdalen was a touchstone for pilgrims and other travellers as recounted in Chapter 1, which united a sculpted altarpiece with the originating cult sites in Provence. But she was also a parish saint, constituting an everyday presence for local communities. Those who administered dedicatory churches had a defining role in the commissioning of artworks depicting the life of Mary Magdalen, and they found opportunity to write themselves into the saint's popular legend. In the Swiss Grisons, the Premonstratensian canons, a monastic order with a pastoral mission, took a decisive role in the deployment and regulation of Magdalen imagery. This chapter focuses on the mountain-side chapel of Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch and its fourteenth-century fresco cycle, attributed to the leading painter of the region, in order to explore how the canons brought topicality to an iconography that was by this time well established.[1] By exploring the dynamics of patronage in a little chapel that served the local parishioners, it underscores the intersections of popular saint cults with local administrative systems, and in doing so, reinforces the reciprocity between image, faith and place that is characteristic of the Magdalen cult in the late medieval Alps.

Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch and its paintings

The small settlement of Dusch lies in the Domleschg Valley, southwest of the diocesan capital of Chur on a secondary route between the various Alpine passes that carried travellers from Rhaetia to northern Italy (Figure I:1).[2] Having walked up from the valley floor, past the village of Paspels, local or visitor enters the Chapel of Sankt Maria Magdalena through a wooden door in the south wall (Figure 2.1). The fresco cycle depicting the life of Mary Magdalen is found directly opposite, stretching the length of the room (Colour Plate 6a).

Figure 2.1 Sankt Maria Magdalena. Dusch, Graubünden (Photo: Author).

The cycle occupies the upper level of the wall and is set within a decorative frame of interlacing vine leaves and repeating organic shapes. Rows of irregular blocks of alternating colours and patterns run above and below the cycle, creating the visual texture and effect of a sumptuous wall hanging. The paintings are attributed to the Waltensburg Master and his workshop, an artist brought to the Zürich court from the area around Lake Constance.[3] The Master was mainly active in the northern part of the Grisons between 1330 and 1350 but the numerous surviving works across the valleys of the lower canton attest to his mobility and monopoly, as in the case of the Oropa Master discussed in the previous chapter.

The Master's simple, yet elegant style mirrors the illustrations found in the famous Codex Manesse, a book of epigrammatic poetry and balladry produced in Zürich from 1300 to 1340, with its 137 *Minnesängers* who embody courtly ideals (Figure 2.2). The contemporaneous figures are notable for their almond-shaped eyes and tilted heads to the thick striated cords of hair carved like those of wooden sculptures, all of which feature in the Magdalen cycle in Dusch.[4] In both book and mural painting, the figures are light and lively in line and colour,

Figure 2.2 Codex Manesse, *Johannes Hadlaub*, 1300–1340, Cod pal. germ 848. Fol.120*r*. University of Heidelberg Library (Photo: Public Domain).

yet grounded by memorable gestures, gazes and activities that point outwards to everyday life. Such forms were easy to transfer from painted pages to painted walls, creating a genealogy of image types and style across the mountainous territory.

The five episodes of the Magdalen cycle in Dusch are presented in a single continuous strip with common blue background and rocky ground. This design strategy allows for a clear left to right flow of the narrative towards the altar, with figures, buildings or objects placed back-to-back so as to provide subtle scene divisions. It is therefore possible to distinguish between the different times and places of the constituent events: (1) Raising of Lazarus, (2) Anointing in the House of Simon the Pharisee, (3) Preaching to the Governor of Marseille and His Wife, (4) Celestial Nourishment in the Wilderness and (5) Last Communion.

The cycle is compact in design yet it presents many of Mary Magdalen's identities in late medieval culture: acolyte, sibling, penitent, preacher and ascetic, but also parishioner, and thus one of Christ's flock. The hagiographical sources for these roles lie in the Gospels of Luke and John (scenes 1–2) and Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (scenes 3–5). The ratio of scenes in relation to their textual source is clearly weighted towards the apocryphal legend, which held great appeal for the laity and those charged with the cure of their souls.

Although today's visitor encounters the fresco cycle in an airy interior with exposed rafters, in the late Middle Ages the chapel probably had a flat wooden ceiling. Stone walls speak to the long arm of the church and its permanence in the landscape but rural architecture for small settlements in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was kept relatively simple.[5] In Dusch, the aula measuring approximately 6 × 4 m with rounded apse (around 2.5 m) would have met the basic needs of a modest congregation and its celebrant priest. Only three slender windows (around 65 × 20 cm) perforate the thick walls. Their concentration on the southeast corner of the building harnesses the natural light, given the orientation of the church. Placement of the Magdalen cycle on the liturgical north wall therefore ensured the best possible illumination of its stories with their colourful expression.

Like most other catholic churches in this region, the interior decoration of Sankt Maria Magdalena was whitewashed in the post-Reformation years. However, a pilgrim's inscription on the castle-cum city of Marseille in the third episode of the cycle bears the date 1666, suggesting that it may not have been applied until the late seventeenth century. The paintings were rediscovered in 1940, along with an Annunciation on the triumphal arch, fictive drapes in the lower register

of the apse and, on its curved vault, the tetramorphs in roundels with some fragmentary decorative borders.[6] Losses were inevitably sustained. However, we can assume that the vault carried a Christ in mandorla, as is seen in the Reformed church in Casti-Wergenstein, also decorated with paintings attributed to the Waltensburg Master (*c.* 1330–40). No traces of paint were found on the open surfaces of south and west walls, but patterns of disposition in other churches open up the possibility in this respect.

The layout of Sankt Maria Magdalena and its interior decoration conforms to one of two patterns seen throughout the diocese of Chur.[7] The first applies to churches where the narrative cycles spread beyond the reserved north and south walls of the nave, for example Sankt Maria in Pontresina, subject of Chapter 7 of this book. Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch belongs to the second group where distinct divisions of liturgical space are maintained. The apse symbolizes the expression of divine will through the male Church. It therefore displays the apostles, the evangelists, church fathers and Christ in Majesty. The triumphal arch represents the bridge between this sacred space and that of the laity, hence the typical inclusion of Annunciation imagery and prophets, while the walls of the nave or aula are predominately reserved for narrative cycles of the life of Christ, the saints and the Last Judgement. As with our chapel, narrative cycles in the Alps tend to be found on the northern side, enjoying sunlight throughout the day, while Last Judgements feature on the south.[8] Given the available wall surface in Dusch, its south wall may have at one time conformed to this arrangement, completing an intense visual experience of the journey to the light of salvation or indeed to the darkness of hell.

The didactic quality of the paintings was well advertised to the world. Outside the chapel, a giant St Christopher is painted on its southern wall. The patron saint of travellers is frontally posed, with large staring eyes that look out across the valley and the road leading towards the Julier-Septimer Pass that linked the Grisons to Italy. In late medieval times, making ocular contact with Christopher, even at a great distance, promised protection and last rites to those in mortal peril.[9] With Christ on his shoulder and walking staff in hand, he would stand ever watchful, but he also signalled the possibility of refuge that could be found inside for travellers. Bonded to the walls by virtue of the medium, such mural paintings thus performed an important role in the sanctification of the landscape; images were actived by human encounter and thus preserved in the cultural memory.

Having tramped up the side of the valley via Paspels and taken the little path to the chapel above Dusch from a south-easterly direction, locals and travellers

alike would have met Mary Magdalen inside. The paintings governed and guided, but they also entertained thanks to the rendering of her legendary apostolate and subsequent mystical experience. In order to arrive at such an evaluation, it is crucial to emphasize a particular detail that grounds this universal saint in the local administrative system of this mountain parish.

A habit of choice

In the fourth episode of the cycle, Mary Magdalen receives a basket of bread from an angel (Colour Plate 6b). She leans out of the cave and grasps the round handle with her right hand, while her left supports its weight from below, mirroring those of the angel. Her eyes are trained on the heavenly manna but they also direct the viewer's attention to an act of witness below. Nestled between two trees is a man of the cloth kneeling in prayer. At first, a beholder familiar with the hagiography might think this man is the desert hermit, who, according to the *Golden Legend*, witnessed the episode. However, his white habit with hood and tonsured head mark him out as a Premonstratensian canon. Remarkably, it is an occurrence rarely seen in other Magdalen cycles, including those that are associated with the more popular mendicant orders renowned for their rehabilitation of and identification with the redeemed sinner-saint.[10] The inclusion in Dusch thus visually links this painted cycle and its sacred story to contemporary time and place, and specifically to Churwalden Abbey (*Sylvia Augeria*), a double house of the order located in the neighbouring valley.[11]

A papal confirmation of the possessions of Churwalden Abbey survives from 1208.[12] The inventory lists '*in villa Usces curtem unam*'.[13] The house and farm in Dusch would have been obliged to pay an annual tithe to the abbey in the form of natural goods or money.[14] A chapel is not mentioned, but later thirteenth-century documents that refer to a priest in Dusch ('*Han. plebanum in Vsse*') in 1260 and a vicar of Dusch ('*vicario de Usshe*') in 1285 imply its incorporation into the parish.[15] It is unlikely that either man received a locally raised benefice given the low population levels, but a private endowment from a lay potentate linked to the Premonstratensian order would be entirely consistent practice. By 1508, matters become clearer.

The land register (*Urbar*) of Churwalden states that 'the following churches are our possessions, the two chapels of Sankt Lorenz and Sankt Maria Magdalena situated in the parish of Tomils, which together with their tithes, yields and goods are ours' (Figure 2.3).[16] The painting of the eremitical episode in the chapel
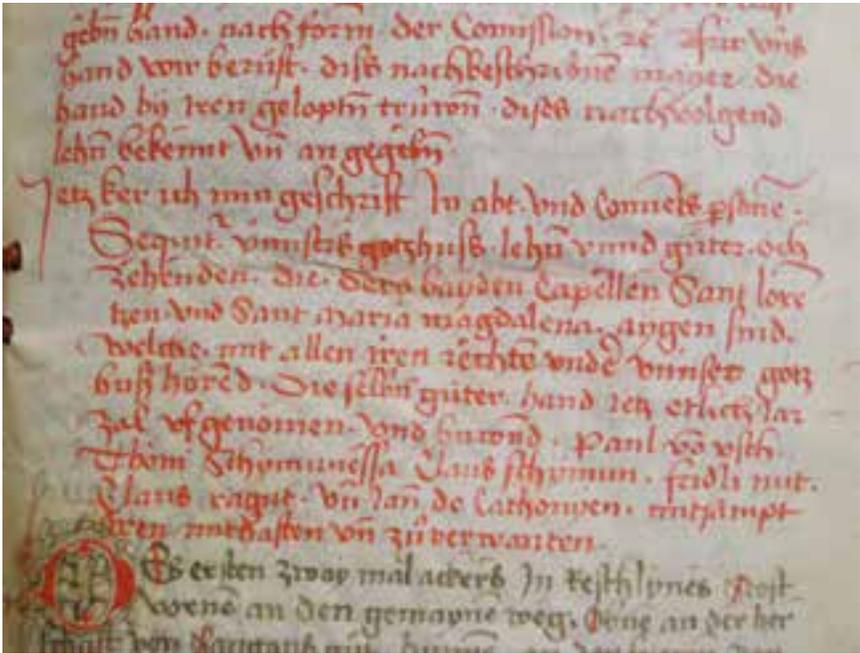
Figure 2.3 Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch listed as possession of Churwalden Abbey. BAC, 532.01.02, *Urbar des Klosters Churwalden* (1508), fol. 49*r*. Bischöfliches Archiv, Chur (Photo: Author).

might be said to visually codify this relationship in the fourteenth century. For locals and the occasional passers-by the kneeling monk signposted patronage and parish administration.

The Premonstratensian order was founded by Norbert of Xanten at Prémontré (near Laon) in northern France, in 1120–21. Norbert was an ascetic of noble birth, who eventually became Archbishop of Magdeburg, leaving the governance of his order to Abbot Hugh of Fosse. The canons are distinguished by their white woollen habits with hoods, as represented in the Dusch painting and in the earliest known image of Norbert in the abbeys of Knechtsteden in North Rhine-Westphalia and San Severo and Martiro in Orvieto, both in the medium of fresco. The order received papal approbation in 1128 leading to a rapid expansion across Europe, including the Swiss Grisons. The canons followed for the most part the rule of St Augustine and in the early days they were renowned for their strict abstinence from meat, in addition to the traditional calendar of fasting and other bodily mortification.[17] Their regular status is important. They were

not cloistered from the world like the Benedictine or Cistercian orders, despite borrowing their structure of governance. Rather the canons took on preaching and pastoral duties in the parishes that comprised their territory, while at the same time observing the monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.[18] For this reason and in conjunction with their missionary success in eastern Europe, they are often viewed as a precursor to the mendicant orders.[19]

Within this context of semi-monasticism and the ideal of the desert retreat, devotion to Mary Magdalen in the mountain parish is not unexpected. As discussed in the introduction to this book, the twelfth century witnessed a great fervour for the penitent saint as her Western legend was embellished and disseminated throughout France, not least thanks to the rivalry between the pilgrimage houses of Vézelay, the Benedictine abbey in Burgundy, and Saint-Maximin, a Dominican convent in Provence established by the royal patronage of Charles II of Anjou. Their claims and counterclaims for the possession of the body of the saint both raised and developed her profile in Christian Europe, with the preaching and eremitical retreat appealing to those wishing to take their holy vows and minster to laity. It is against this backdrop of faith and place that we should view the chapel and its images in Dusch.

Art and the Premonstratensian order

The Premonstratensians remain one of the lesser-studied religious orders from an art historical perspective, not least due to the paucity of surviving commissions from the late Middle Ages.[20] They are not renowned for significant artistic patronage and there are few academic appraisals to abjure such a judgement and reputation. Although there is no widespread visual evidence of a specific devotion to Mary Magdalen or the promulgation of her cult through the liturgy, a number of convents and houses were dedicated to the saint during the expansion of the order. A priory was founded in Anvers in 1135 and in Bohemia an abbey of nuns was dedicated both to Mary Magdalen and Wenceslas.[21] Those houses dedicated to Mary Magdalen were often, though not exclusively, found with double dedications, as is the case in Flaesheim (with the Virgin Mary), Knechtsteden (with Andrew) and Lac de Joux (with the Virgin Mary) in Switzerland, while the house in Pleineselve in France is dedicated to the Magdalen alone.[22]

A fifteenth-century copy of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* that once belonged to the Premonstratensian abbey of Steinfeld near Euskirchen (North Rhine-Westphalia) helps to contextualize the Dusch fresco cycle with its 'portrait' of the canon in the eremitical scene.[23] The manuscript contains the apocryphal life of Mary Magdalen, illustrated by thirty-four coloured pen and ink drawings. It suggests an order-wide familiarity with the cult of the saint and its visual representation. The high number of drawings in the *Speculum* is indicative of the narrative expansion found in the Magdalen fresco cycles of the fifteenth century in the central-eastern Alpine regions. Moreover, the portable format of the manuscript and the copying culture imbedded in monastic libraries provides us with a possible scenario for the dissemination of representational types that may well have begun in the previous century.

Against this backdrop, the Dusch cycle is the first visualization of the Magdalen cult under the aegis of the Premonstratensians and unique in the mural cycle format. The overt self-representation shown in the eremitical episode is a confident statement of association with the saint and of the order's patronage in the region.

To found a chapel was of course no small financial venture for any community, but in the case of the tiny hamlet of Dusch it would have been difficult without contribution from a larger authority, be it lay or ecclesiastical.[24] The most obvious source is the Premonstratensian canons at Churwalden Abbey, on account of their twelfth-century settlement in the region. However, the founding might also have involved the local nobility. If this is the case, one might also assume the involvement of the Vaz family, who held feudal tenure of the land from the Bishop of Chur.[25] Archaeological excavations in the 1960s revealed Churwalden to be the primary burial ground of the Vaz, who are first documented in 1135. They prove to be generous benefactors and so may well have been responsible for the import of the Waltensburg Master and his workshop to the Grisons.[26] His courtly style established standards of taste and authority throughout key *loci* of the diocese, namely Chur cathedral, Churwalden Abbey along with its filial chapel in Dusch and Sankt Georg in Rhäzüns, in addition to many other parish churches in the region.[27]

As feudal lords, the Vaz held the rights for the founding of any religious building on their land. If the Dusch Magdalen Chapel was established in the late twelfth century by a third party, it would certainly have required their approval. But the chapel must also be understood as a marker of strategically placed piety: as potential founders, the Vaz would be responsible for the initial expenses

incurred in the building of the chapel, furnishing it with the basic liturgical vessels (portable objects) and carrying out the consecration of the altar. They may also have provided an endowment for the altar (*beneficium*) that would cover the costs of a priest, who may always have been a Premonstratensian canon or a priest appointed by the order.[28] When the Vaz dynastic line died out in 1338, the chapel was probably transferred to the complete control of the abbey, as confirmed in their 1508 land register. The date of 1338 would in fact provide a more precise *terminus ante quem* for the commissioning of the Dusch fresco cycle and suggest consequently that it had little do with the Vaz, even if they were responsible for initially luring the artist into the mountains. Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, the Premonstratensians used the imagery of Mary Magdalen as an explicit claim of sovereignty.

Imaging Mary Magdalen in a mountain parish

Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch and its mural cycle are operant within parish networks spread across the Alpine territories, just like the other sites discussed in the present book. These networks constitute an 'imagined community' by virtue of shared socio-religious and cultural practices that are embedded within visual imagery: imagery that was understood as intelligent design for the steering of local devotional priorities and that of travellers moving through the mountains.[29] The situation calls attention to the potential for strategic visual practices in landscapes of movement and exchange, where chapels not only served a local community, but also might offer respite and renewal to people from other lands as they passed through the valley. The presence of a preaching Mary Magdalen in the Dusch fresco cycle is an example of such a strategy. As will be discussed below, in replacing the visual 'short-hand' for the fertility miracle performed by Mary Magdalen, as recounted in the *Golden Legend*, with a scene of religious and secular conflict (the Magdalen preaching to the pagan rulers of Marseille), the Dusch cycle aimed for local topicality but not at the expense of universal comprehension.[30]

The fresco cycle begins with the Raising of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha of Bethany (Colour Plate 7a). Christ's miracle is described in the Gospel of John (11:38–44) and is a relatively common inclusion in Magdalen image cycles during the late Middle Ages.[31] At first glance, there appears to be little derivation from the conventional mode of representation in the Dusch painting

but a closer inspection of the iconography suggests otherwise. Although all of the key protagonists have been included in the scene, there is a shift in setting, composition and sequencing.

The Raising of Lazarus is set in the cemetery of a church with a large bell tower. A tri-lobed tree, embellished with golden leaves, stands behind the nave at equal height adding to the natural setting. It is a marked contrast to the rocky wilderness and cave tomb represented in contemporary artworks south of the Alps: namely in the fresco cycles of the Arena Chapel in Padua; the Magdalen chapels of San Francesco in Assisi, San Lorenzo Maggiore in Naples, the Palazzo del Bargello and the Rinuccini Chapel of Santa Croce, both in Florence; as well as the Magdalen Chapel of San Domenico in Spoleto, the majority of which predate Dusch. The Raising of Lazarus is also present on the Magdalen Master panel of *c.* 1280, discussed in Chapter 1 of this book, with Christ performing his miracle in the foreground of a tower. However, in this case it would seem to be more representative of a secular urban environment rather than a rural parish one, due to the presence of city walls and the fine dress of the attendant audience, reminding us that each artwork is designed for a target audience.[32] The point can be extended to the Bethany sisters, who are absent from the scene in the Florentine panel but present in Dusch.[33]

In Dusch, we see Lazarus wrapped in his funeral bandages rising rather sprightly from his green sarcophagus at the command of Christ.[34] At the far left of the scene, Mary and Martha stand behind him expressing their emotional state through common gestures of prayer and grief.[35] In contrast, the Magdalen is distinguished from her sister by means of her height, white veil, red halo and green dress. Although a precedent can be found for their placement behind Christ in the illumination of the same subject from the eleventh-century *Golden Bible* of Henry III, it is unusual to represent the sisters as active followers when tradition preferred to see them kneeling humbly before their Lord.[36] It begs the question of why this iconographical formulation was chosen for the small mountain chapel.

Spatial dynamics and viewing experience provide one explanation. The scene is directly opposite the entrance to the chapel, located in the southwest corner, and so its task was to orientate devotees towards the altar. By placing the sisters at the extreme left of the composition behind Christ and making them face and gesticulate to the right, they effectively steered real bodies in real space; it is a pictorial strategy that also gives thrust to a conventional left to right narrative flow. It was equally important to meet an upright Mary Magdalen on entering

sacred space having passed under the watchful gaze of St Christopher painted on the wall outside. Just like the Christian giant, Mary Magdalen operates as a steady guide for spiritual and physical journeys. As one travels along the length of the interior, one moves in the saint's own time and space, stopping for moments of sustained contemplation located in the narrative programme.

Such visual directives are reinforced by the following scene, the anointing of Christ's feet by Mary Magdalen, Luke's unnamed sinner (7:37–50) (Colour Plate 7b). It is a fairly standard formulation of the subject matter with Christ accompanied by an apostle on his left and a young male companion sitting to Simon's right, who wears a funnel-shaped hat common in the German tradition to indicate his Jewish status.[37] Conforming to the aforementioned spatial dynamics, a right-facing Mary Magdalen humbly prostrates herself under the table and uses her hair to dry Christ's feet which she has just washed with her tears. The banqueting table is replete with dishes of fish, drinking vessels, bread and knives, however, one important object is missing from the scene – the unguent vase. As the symbolic attribute of Mary Magdalen, the absence of the vase is in itself curious but even more so when considering that it is a key signifier for the decoding of the scene. Its precious contents are mentioned in all gospel accounts of Christ's anointing, with particular emphasis in those of Matthew and Mark where the Magdalen is criticized for her expensive and wasteful gesture (Matt 26: 6–13 and Mk 14: 3–9). It is a visual hint that things are not quite as they should be in the fresco cycle and it is confirmed by a departure from the expected narrative structure of the programme. This takes us back to the matter of reciprocity between image, faith and place.

The contrition and conversion of Mary Magdalen, titular saint of the chapel in Dusch, is preceded by the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. It is a rare inversion that poses complications in terms of iconographic flow. The washing of Christ's feet is the traditional and primary vehicle for the representation of the conversion of Mary Magdalen and should therefore be first in the cycle (if used) when not preceded by a scene from her worldly life.[38] The Dusch cycle confuses this hagiographical trope by suggesting that her conversion occurs through the miracle of her brother's resurrection: this is reinforced by the presence of her halo. It may have resulted from the gospel sources themselves, as the scene of resurrection in John is followed almost immediately by the sisters anointing the head of Christ in the house of Bethany (Jn 12:1–8). What is represented on the wall of the Dusch chapel would therefore be a conflation with the more popular image inspired by the Gospel of Luke.[39] It is likely that the Waltensburg Master,

the painter of the fresco cycle, was responsible for the transmission of many of the innovations in the composition and content, given his substantial experience in the Alpine region. However, with no earlier works depicting the life of the Magdalen having survived by his hand, or any other workshop in the area for that matter, his role in the pictorial dynamics must necessarily be tempered with the agenda of the Premonstratensian canons.

The first and second scenes of the cycle are representative of the biblical life of Mary Magdalen and common to most fourteenth-century artworks, but in Dusch they are a significant first pairing that juxtaposes the active and contemplative roles of the Magdalen. The Premonstratensian canons led a strongly active life in the area surrounding their houses, often taking on priestly duties in the parishes, and so they may have wished this duality to be emphasized in the Dusch cycle from the outset, despite any narrative incongruity. After all, according to both gospel and apocryphal sources the Magdalen had followed Christ and ministered in Gaul before her self-prescribed retreat for thirty years of contemplation. Because of the biblical origins of both scenes in the cycle, there was no opportunity to include a depiction of a member of the order but that is not to say their presence could not be imprinted in the concept.

Returning to the unusual choice of setting for the opening scene of the fresco cycle (the Raising of Lazarus), it is possible that the church was meant to resemble the Premonstratensian abbey of Churwalden as it was known in the fourteenth century, particularly the placement of the tower (Figure 2.4). The Waltensburg Master was certainly familiar with its architectural aspect, having painted there himself prior to the Dusch commission.[40] The church would be not only a signifier of ownership in its own right, but also a necessary balance to the more blatant moment of self-representation to come in the fourth scene of the cycle.

The theme of the active life of the Premonstratensian order, including the cure of souls, is taken up in the third scene of the cycle: the evangelical mission of Mary Magdalen. Mary stands like a giant before the governor of Marseille and his wife, who are seated behind the walls of their city (Colour Plate 8a). The saint preaches in order to effect conversion: her hand gesture and the clasped book she carries convey and signify her spoken authority.[41] Iconographical precedents survive in the stained glass window of Auxerre Cathedral (*c.* 1230) and the Magdalen Master panel (*c.* 1285) in Florence, although in the latter work, Mary Magdalen holds her unguent vase rather than a book to encapsulate her powerful words.[42] More closely related in terms of presentation and date is a

Figure 2.4 Churwalden Abbey. Churwalden, Graubünden (Photo: Author).

miniature from a German devotional manuscript dedicated to Mary Magdalen that contains a version of her legend, miracles, five sermons, antiphons and hymns.[43] The Magdalen, wearing the Triple Crown, is placed on the left of the scene and raises her left hand in a gesture of teaching towards the governor of Marseille and his wife who stand before her.[44] Similar to Dusch, the scene is located outdoors and the Magdalen is distinctly larger than her pagan audience, a point I will return to shortly.

If one scene was to be chosen to represent the Western legend of the saint prior to her eremitical retreat, it was the miraculous discovery of the rulers' child on the rocky island, a leitmotif of the Marseille fertility miracle, as discussed in the previous chapter with regard to the Magdalen Chapel in the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi. What is striking is that like the earlier Magdalen Master panel, the Churwalden canons elected to assert the Magdalen's evangelism.[45] As we shall see throughout this book, preaching Magdalens were popular in the Alps, and this is symptomatic of cultural contact with northern European types that found less purchase in late medieval Italy.[46] The church did not sanction female priests and it struggled to maintain its position when contradicted by

one of their most powerful saints in text and image.[47] The Premonstratensian order did not allow its canonesses to administer the sacraments or preach to their own community, let alone in the lay parish context. Nor is the order known for the emergence of any female saints from its own ranks.[48] And yet in representational terms there seems to have been little problem in fusing Mary Magdalen's 'traditional' biblical origins (as witness) with her apocryphal missionary life in France by any of the regular or mendicant orders, including the Premonstratensians, so as to increase her resonance with private patrons or the lay viewing public.

A second possible scenario for the selection of this episode in the Dusch cycle and its particular representation lies in the territorial conflicts between the Bishop of Chur and the noble families during the early fourteenth century. In the painting, the governor and his wife sit within their fortified castle, a ubiquitous edifice in the Grisons and more broadly the Alpine regions.[49] However, rather than asserting lay seigneurial rights and dominance, the image suggests a conceding to Church authority (here the bishopric of Chur and the Premonstratensians) as represented by the large preaching Magdalen – she is *Ecclesia* triumphant. It is a striking symbolism found in many of the Alpine Magdalen cycles that may well reflect the ever-present tension between lay and ecclesiastical territorial rights.

Having presented the active life of Mary Magdalen as embedded in local administrative systems, the fourth scene of the cycle turns to her contemplative retreat in the wilderness. In essence, the narrative is drawn from the *Golden Legend*, but it strikes a local tone by equating the Premonstratensian canons with the hermit priest who witnessed the miraculous elevation of the saint to heaven. Voragine describes a hermit priest called Zosimus living a solitary existence near the cave of Mary Magdalen where she had spent the last thirty years without food or water as penance for her worldly sins. Her long golden hair grows all over her body, which is a borrowing from St Mary of Egypt, another desert penitent, to preserve her dignity, but also to mark her out as 'other'.[50] One day God allows the priest to see the elevation of the saint by angels – seven times a day according to the canonical hours – during which times she receives celestial nourishment by way of their singing and music. The hermit was allowed to see this miracle so that Mary Magdalen could convey the prophecy of her death, one year hence, and that he should inform St Maximin, now Bishop of Aix, that she would appear in the crypt of his cathedral in order to receive her last communion.[51]

The metamorphosis of the witness in the Dusch painting from desert hermit to Premonstratensian canon, and thus from universal to specific context,

underlines the order's status as an intermediary between the penitent saint and any petitioning devotee who happens to enter the chapel and look to the painting for direction. Mary Magdalen is depicted in the cave, a solution deployed in many other image cycles and individual votive paintings in Europe at this time.[52] However, rather than being nourished by the singing of the heavenly choir, as explained at the beginning of this chapter, Mary receives a basket of bread from an angel. It is a practical moment of quotidian life feeding into a universal story of spiritual nourishment and bodily satiety. Other comparative artworks depict an angel flying in to feed the Magdalen, but in all cases the spiritual being carries a single Eucharistic wafer.[53] In Dusch, the topicality of the bread basket would be understood not only by the local laity, but also by passing travellers who sought comfort from the often harsh physical conditions that came with a crossing of the Alps. It is equally important to bear in mind that the chapel served people who worked the land to make bread and wine, as well as producing dairy products from animal husbandry. Their animals fed on the grass of the lush Alpine meadows, and so the imagery of the chapel was embedded in its immediate environment.

The fourth scene brings us once again to the kneeling Premonstratensian canon, dressed in his white habit, as witness to the miracle of Mary Magdalen's body being sustained over a thirty-year period. As stated earlier, the order needed to assert its ownership of the chapel as well as their responsibility for *cura animarum* in the years after the demise of the Vaz, feudal lords and patrons of Churwalden Abbey and its possessions.[54] The banner held between the hands of the canon in the painting reinforces such a claim. Although bereft of any inscription, it is a deliberate space for painted words and the only planned occasion within the cycle. It is unlikely to have borne a simple commentary on the content of the scene or otherwise a banner would have been present in all five scenes, much like the Magdalen paintings in the pilgrimage church at Gschnitz in Tyrol, discussed in the coda to Chapter 3. The most likely scenario is a proclamation of identity and association with the penitent saint, comparable to the illumination of Bruder Eberhard von Sax, found in the near-contemporary Codex Manesse, discussed earlier in the chapter, which shares not only the courtly style of our painting, but also its compositional formula (Figure 2.5).

As with her evangelism, Mary Magdalen's retreat to the desert would have had distinct resonance for the Premonstratensians. Their abbey of Churwalden was located outside of the urban settlement of Chur, high up on a forested mountainside; the word *Wald* or forest indicates its situation in a nearby

Figure 2.5 Codex Manesse, *Bruder Eberhard von Sax*, 1300–1340, Cod pal. germ 848, fol. 48*v*. University of Heidelberg Library (Photo: Public Domain).

wilderness. It seems likely therefore that the Magdalen's desert withdrawal, in conjunction with the preaching in Marseille, is the visual culmination of the order's identification with the strict asceticism of Mary Magdalen and their self-view as sanctioned mediators of both her active and contemplative lives.

The fifth and final scene of the fresco cycle depicts the last communion of Mary Magdalen (Colour Plate 8b). While it is relatively common to most cycles of the late medieval period throughout Europe – albeit not as a terminus – in Dusch it is once again tailored to the needs of the Premonstratensian order. The *Golden Legend* describes how Mary Magdalen was carried by angels to St Maximin in the crypt of Aix cathedral, but visual renditions of the event inevitably tend to deviate in their interpretations.[55] The hagiographical account has the Magdalen radiating with heavenly blinding bliss, and an acceptable solution in the visual arts was to continue representing the saint made resplendent by her bodily covering of golden hair, associated as it is with her divine revelation in the wilderness. In terms of setting, the liturgical rite of last communion is often performed at the Magdalen's retreat in the wilderness rather than in the specified ecclesiastical environment. What was clear for all artists was that St Maximin should be represented in his episcopal capacity and vestments.

In Dusch the scene is reasonably faithful to the apocryphal literature. The church setting is implied by the presence of the altar rather than an actual building, and it bears the required liturgical vessels for communion, namely cross, chalice and candle. Mary Magdalen kneels correctly on the footpace. Two angels hover over the figural group reminding the viewer of their role in transporting her from cave to crypt.

To materialize Mary Magdalen in the earthly realm, the Waltensburg Master has returned her to the green robe and white headdress seen in earlier scenes (1–3), as was appropriate for a laywoman receiving the host within the church. She kneels in prayer before St Maximin who wears a richly patterned cope but is notably minus the Bishop's mitre. Instead he bears a tonsured head, just like the assisting cleric who kneels behind Mary Magdalen and holds a twisted *doppieri* candle used during funerary rituals. What appears to be a minor deviation of the presiding Bishop is in fact an exceptional mode of representation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, an explanation is found in the statutes of the Premonstratensian order.

From the outset all Premonstratensian houses were administered by provosts (*praepositus*) as opposed to abbots; a mark of humility that most likely reflected the mission of Norbert himself.[56] During the celebration of Mass, the provosts

did not wear the mitre.[57] The lack of an episcopal signifier in the Dusch painting would therefore visually communicate the chapel's dependence upon Churwalden Abbey and the Premonstratensian's overall identification with Mary Magdalen, this time within the structure and celebration of the liturgy. It is not for nothing that this scene of communion is closest to the altar in the chapel itself.

Art and the sacralizing of the mountains

Mural painting is a public art with inherent didactic functionality. It projects statements that shape perceptions and contingent behaviours. But it is also the site and vehicle of a complex set of relational values, those of patrons, makers and viewers, accrued over many years. Unlike other examples, such as the fifteenth-century *Speculum* manuscript from Steinfeld abbey discussed at the outset of this chapter, which presents an extended treatment of the Magdalen's legend in a format suited to individual and private consultation, the Dusch Magdalen cycle is selective. Although three out of five scenes have been given over to the representation of the Western legend, it is likely that the lay community of the local manor would have required exegetical guidance from their priest, namely a Premonstratensian canon, to facilitate a narrative 'expansion' of the cycle. Indeed, to assist this process, the canons represented themselves in the pivotal eremitical scene creating a visceral connection between the miracle in the wilderness and the daily experience of life in a remote rural parish. Any devotee understood that his or her behaviour was watched over and their petitions heard by the Magdalen, through the mediation of the canons. For the Premonstratensians themselves, it was an approbation of their contemplative retreat married with active clerical responsibilities.

The Vaz family probably founded the chapel in Dusch as part of their feudal responsibilities, but a territorial conflict with the bishopric of Chur may well have arisen well before the Waltensburg Master was commissioned to paint its walls around 1350, with their demise leading to a transfer of ownership to the Premonstratensian canons. With that transfer came an opportunity not only to assert identity, but also to sacralize the mountainous landscape through the legend of Mary Magdalen: it is notable that all the scenes are depicted against a blue backdrop, which has the effect of dissolving the walls of the church and embedding the saint in the natural world. On a more practical level, such a

wayside chapel helped when it came to the co-dependent factors of weather
and access. The high number of filial chapels established in remote areas of
rural parishes in the late medieval period was directly related to the difficulties
parishioners faced in accessing the mother church during bad weather,
an impasse that could last up to six months of the year. It was more rational
that one priest would travel to a chapel to celebrate Mass than for an entire
community to make that journey, no matter how small.[58] In the case of Dusch,
the cure of souls fell to the Premonstratensian canons thanks to the proximity of
their abbey in the neighbouring valley and their own policy of participation in
parochial regulation. Self-representation in painted pictures therefore reminded
parishioners exactly where they stood in this local administrative system.

But this confluence of image, faith and place is also about occasional access
by passing travellers. In view of the chapel's location, which commands a view of
the valley floor and the road traversed between the Alpine passes and with the
ever-watchful St Christopher depicted on the southern exterior wall, the chapel
was also intended to function as a point of refuge and solace. With no surviving
documents regarding the consecration of the altar and any endowments, the
possibility of indulgences granted to visitors to the chapel or patronage by the
local community must remain one of conjecture. Nor is it possible to ascertain
the involvement of the local community in the construction and maintenance of
the building itself. However, the surviving graffiti of 1666 on the preaching scene
of the Magdalen cycle may be indicative of a longer tradition of veneration by
the so-called '*popoli vaganti*'.

It can only be assumed that the Premonstratensian canons were responsible for
the Magdalen dedication, perhaps in accordance with the personal devotion of
their founder.[59] However, by the time the chapel had passed into the total control
of Churwalden Abbey (after 1338), the canons were undoubtedly responsible for
the content of the mid-fourteenth century paintings. Nevertheless, their identity
and agenda was given expression by the hand of the Waltensburg Master, an
itinerant painter probably imported from southern Germany through the
agency of the Vaz family. That his work is found throughout the diocese, be it
autograph or workshop, confirms not only his stylistic dominance, but also his
affordability for the rural commissioners.

In 1992, Andrew Martindale ruminated that 'naturally not all parishioners
can hope to have their churches painted by Giotto […] [however] for those with
ears to hear and eyes to see, a church in its building and decoration provided
direct access to the experience, mystical and intellectual, of the great truths of

the Christian faith and of the means to salvation'.[60] The parishioners of Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch were probably unfamiliar with the name or fame of Giotto, and would have been in no position to hire him. Situated on the north side of the Domleschg Valley in the Swiss Grisons, overlooking a transalpine route to the diocesan capital of Chur, the little chapel would hardly have tempted any artist of that calibre or his subsidiary workshops to down their brushes and head north to the Alps. Yet, this is to overlook what is at stake in the discourse of image, faith and place. For the Waltensburg Master and his workshop that took on the job in around 1350, it offered a similar opportunity to any mainstream commission in Florence or Padua. With his latent ability to convey a clear and compelling visual narrative within a lavish framework, Dusch and the Premonstratensians had struck gold. Where to draw the intellectual borderline in the creation of the artwork between artist and advisor is open to debate but it is without question that the Waltensburg Master played his role in moving Mary Magdalen firmly into the mountains. The next chapter will continue with the question of image circulation and artistic agency in the mountains of South Tyrol, focusing on the networks of devotion built around the intertwined cults of Mary Magdalen and St James the Greater in and around the important Alpine town of Bozen. By exploring multiple sites and shared ways of seeing, Mary Magdalen is to be understood as embedded in the landscape and cultural memory as both a local parish and an international pilgrim saint.

Notes

1   First discussed by Arnold Nüscheler, *Die Gotteshäuser der Schweiz. Historisch-antiquarische Forschungen. Bistum Chur*, vol. 1 (Zurich: Orwell, Füssli and Co., 1864), 99 and Erwin Poeschel, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Schweiz. Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Graubünden. Räzünser Boden, Domleschg, Heizenberg, Oberhalbstein, Ober- und Unterengadin*, vol. 3 (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1940), 115.

2   The route from Chur to the Engadine Valley was controlled by the Bishop. See Randolph C. Head, *Early Modern Democracy in the Grisons. Social Order and Political Language in a Swiss Mountain Canton, 1470–1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 36. It would have taken travellers to Pontresina, location of Chapter 7.

3   His name derives from the Passion cycle still preserved in the church at Waltensburg (Vuorz in Romansch dialect) to the west of Chur. The village is situated high above the valley floor, offering a strategic vantage point for the castle of Jörenberg, which takes its name from the nearby fortified church of St Georg.

4   The Codex Manesse (Cod. pal. germ 848, University of Heidelberg Library) is a collection of ballads and epigrammatic poetry written in Middle High German. It was compiled by Rüdiger Manesse and his son over a forty-year period. The digitized codex is available at: http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg848.

5   For the establishment of Christianity in the Alps and its rapid expansion in the early Middle Ages through church building, see Randon Jerris, 'Cult Lines and Hellish Mountains: The Development of Sacred Landscape in the Early Medieval Alps', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studie*s 32, no.1 (2002): 85–108.

6   Since their initial exposure, the paintings have been the subject of two restoration campaigns. See Erwin Poeschel, *Zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte Graubündens* (Zurich: Kommissionsverlag Berichthaus, 1967), 83–86 and *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Schweiz. Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Graubünden. Chur und Kreis fünf Dörfer*, vol. 7 and supplement to vol. 3 (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1948), 437–448, and Alphons Raimann, *Gotische Wandmalereien in Graubünden. Die Werke des 14. Jahrhunderts in nördlichen Teil Graubündens und im Engadin* (Disentis: Desertina Verlag, 1983), 305–310.

7   Simona Boscani Leoni, *Essor et fonctions des images religieuses dans les Alpes. L'examples de l'ancien diocèse de Coire (1150–1530)* (Bern, Berlin and Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 204–206.

8   Ibid., 207–208. The logic of basic light conditions is wisely placed ahead of traditional arguments for the moral and therefore gendered connotations often applied to the nave walls (left for women, right for men). As confirmation, the windows in Dusch are found on the south, east and west walls, not the north.

9   For an accessible summary, see Marta Paraventi, 'San Cristoforo, protettore dei viandanti e dei viaggiatori. Indagine sull'iconografia in Europa e in Italia con particolare riferimento alle Marche', in *In Viaggio con San Cristoforo. Pellergrinaggio e devozione tra Medievo e età moderna* (Florence: Giunti, 2002), 53–82. The perceived power of Christopher to bestow the last rites in medieval Europe anticipates the larger socio-religious phenomenon known as the *Ars moriendi,* or the Art of Dying Well, circulated in two popular Latin texts of 1415 and 1450, that provided clear instruction to this effect. On this topic see Paul Binsky, *Medieval Death. Ritual and Representation* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 30–50 and Brigitte Dekeyzer, 'Ars moriendi: l'art de mourir', in *Entre paradis et enfer: mourir au Moyen Âge, 600–1600*, ed. Sophie Balace and Alexandra de Poorter (Antwerp: Fonds Mercator, 2010), 212–225.

10 Self-representation of the donor also occurs in the Magdalen cycle in Gschnitz, see Chapter 3.

11 It is dedicated to St Michael and the Virgin Mary.

12 For further reading on Churwalden, see Erwin Posechel, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Schweiz. Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Graubünden. Herrschaft, Prättigau,*

Davos, Schanfigg, Churwalden, Albulatal, vol. 2 (Basel: Kirkhäuser, 1937), 216–249; Raimann, *Gotische Wandmalereien*, 217–219; Adolf Gaudy, *Die Kirchlichen Baudenkmäler der Schweiz. Graubünden*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth, 1922), 36–37.

13 *Bündner Urkundenbuch 1200–1272*, vol. 2, ed. Historisch-Antiquarische Gesellschaft von Graubünden (Chur: Bischofberger, 1947), 35 and nr. 516.

14 The document lists the assets of the abbey's territorial possessions, including meadows, alpine land, a mill and many vineyards. See *Bündner Urkundenbuch* (1947), nr. 516 (519), 34–35. The term *villa* can refer to the areas of old settlement (*Höfe*), which were worked by serfs and managed by lords or their agents, or smaller autonomous peasant farms, see Head, *Early Modern Democracy in the Grisons*, 25–26.

15 *Bündner Urkundenbuch,* 486 and nr. 1037.

16 '*Sequiter unsers gotzhus zins von den gutern, die gehorend den zwayen capellen Sant Lorentzen und Sant Maria Magdalena in Tumilser kirchspel gelegen, welche mitsampt iren zehended, zinsen und gutern unsers gotzhus aygen sind.*' BAC, 532.01.02, *Urbar des Klosters Churwalden* (1508), fol. 49*r*. Presentation rights were probably held by the abbey. Its choice of cleric, be he a vicar, curate, chaplain, priest or indeed one of their own canons, would ensure the pastoral care of the resident laity. Pluralism was a likely occurrence in these situations on account of the number of small chapels in a parish and the low level of remuneration received by a beneficiary due to the tithe being paid to the abbey. On a similar situation in rural Trentino, see Emanuele Curzel, 'Alpine Village Communities, Ecclesiastic Institutions, and Clergy in Conflict: The Late Middle Ages', in *Communities and Conflicts in the Alps*, ed. Bellabarba, Obermair and Sato, 91–100.

17 Richard Southern describes them as part of the 'severe school of thought, which insisted on rules of abstinence, silence, manual labour, and psalmody' as opposed to the 'broad' interpretation followed by the order of St Rufus. See Richard William Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 242.

18 Archdale Arthur King, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders (Carthusians, Cistercians, Premonstratensians, Carmelites and Dominicans)* (London: Longmans Green, 1955), 199–200. Under the section Private Masses, it is stated that the white canons were permitted to celebrate Mass in the *curiae* or *granges* with the laity receiving the host. Pope Clement III allowed the canons to operate within parishes. For a useful introduction see, Joseph A. Gribbin, *The Premonstratensians in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press), 1–19 and 132–173 for discussion of education and pastoral mission.

19 The initial life of post-Cluny religious communities, which included the Premonstratensian order, has been characterized as 'apostolic poverty' due to their

insistence on simpler liturgical rites and dependence on manual labour instead of the traditional financial resources that came from being landlords or through rents earned from vineyards, mills and tithes. See Constance Hoffman Berman, 'Women and the Practice of Asceticism and Contemplation. Introduction', in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance Hoffman Berman (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 210. Reformation of these ideals was however inevitable as can be seen in the case of Churwalden which did rely on external revenue.

20 For a useful historical summary, see *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, vol. 7 (Rome: Edizione Paoline, 1983), cols 720–750 and more recently Ludger Horstkötter, 'Prämonstratenser', in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 27 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 167–171.

21 See Katherine L. Jansen, 'Mary Magdalen and the Contemplative Life', in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance Hoffman Berman (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 252 and 265, n. 16. Despite noting the connection between the female branch of the Premonstratensian order and the Magdalen, Jansen does not make reference to the Dusch cycle. Wenceslas was the patron saint of Bohemia suggesting that the Magdalen dedication was the particular choice of the house located near Prague (possibly Doxan or Lunewic).

22 As noted above, a representation of a Premonstratensian canon (possibly Norbert) is included in the apse of Knechtsteden Abbey, founded in 1130.

23 Anstett-Janβen, *Maria Magdalena in der abendländischen Kunst*, 286–287. MS. germ. fol. 245 is now held in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin. See Hans Werneger, *Beschreibende Verzeichnisse der Miniaturen und des Initialschmukes in den deutschen Handschriften bis, 1500* (Leipzig: Weber, 1928), 50–55.

24 See Immacolata Saulle-Hippenmeyer, *Nachbarschaft, Pfarrei und Gemeinde in Graubünden, 1400–1600* (Chur: Desertina, 1997), 49–53 for the financial resources required for the founding of a church or chapel. See also Chapter 6 of this current book.

25 For a recent and useful summary of the family history and their tumultuous relationship with the Bishops of Chur and other noble families, see Boscani Leoni, *Essor et fonctions*, 292–295. For a lengthier consideration, see Jürg L. Muraro, 'Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Freiherren von Vaz', *Jahrbuch der Historisch-antiquarischen Gesellschaft von Graubünden*, 100 (1970): 1–231.

26 Florian Hitz, *Die Prämenstratenserklöster Churwalden und St. Jakob im Prättigau: Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Kolonisationstätigkeit* (Chur: Verlag Bündner Monatsblatt, 1992) and Johan Jakob Simonet, *Geschichte des Klosters Churwalden* (Chur: Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1922–3) and *Obervaz. Geschichte der Freiherren von Vaz, der politischen Gemeinde und der Pfarrei Obervaz* (Ingenbohl: s.n., 1915). The Vaz had acquired territorial rights in the Rhine Valley and those of the Friberg family in Waltensburg, see Boscani Leoni, *Essor et fonctions*, 292–293.

27 For the other sites of artistic output by the hand of the Master or his workshop, see Horst F. Rupp and Simona Boscani Leoni, eds., *Die Waltensburger Meister in seiner Zeit* (Lindenberg: Joseph Fink, 2015). The dominance of a single master and his workshop is common to the Alps, as seen in Chapters 1, 6 and 7.

28 For the dependence of rural churches on the elite laity and/or nearby religious communities for the commissioning of painted decoration, see Boscani Leoni, *Essor et fonctions*, 48.

29 See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 49 and Castelnuovo, 'Pour une Histoire Dynamique', 265–286.

30 The more favoured scenes relate to the rulers' pilgrimage to Rome and the actual miracle on the island, as is the case in the Trecento Magdalen cycle in the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi (discussed in Chapter 1), and those of the Palazzo del Podestà (*c.* 1330s) and of the Rinuccini Chapel in Santa Croce (1360–70) in Florence.

31 The scene is included in the stained glass cycles of Auxerre and Chartres, the panel cycle by the Magdalen Master (discussed in Chapter 1) and the fresco cycles of the Magdalen Chapels of San Lorenzo Maggiore in Naples (*c.* 1295–1300), San Francesco in Assisi, the Palazzo del Podestà in Florence and San Domenico in Spoleto (*c.* 1400), the Rinuccini Chapel in Santa Croce in Florence, Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano (*c.* 1470–97, discussed in Chapter 6) and Sankt Maria in Pontresina (*c.* 1477–95, discussed in Chapter 7).

32 For bibliography, see Miklós Boskovits and Angelo Tartuferi, eds, *Dipinti. Dal Duecento a Giovanni da Milano*, vol. 1 (Florence: Giunti, 2003), 151–156, cat. 27 and fig. 70.

33 Magdalen La Row mistakenly identified the figure in red unwrapping Lazarus with the Magdalen in the Accademia panel. It would certainly have been a unique iconography were the figure not clearly a man on account of his short tunic, dark hose, uncovered head and most crucially the lack of a halo. See La Row, *The Iconography of Mary Magdalen*, 183.

34 Anstett-Janβen (*Maria Magdalena in der abendländischen Kunst*, 201) described him as naked and that it is a most unusual occurrence in the iconographical tradition of this subject. However, thanks to the efforts of the second restoration, the edges of the bandages around the face of Lazarus are now visible. The depiction of Lazarus in the act of stepping out from his sarcophagus is repeated only in Giovanni da Milano's later Magdalen cycle in the Rinuccini Chapel in Santa Croce, Florence.

35 Martha in particular displays the gesture of grief by holding her left wrist. See François Garnier, *Le Langage de L'Image au Moyen Âge. Signification et Symbolique* (Paris: Leopard d'Or, 1982), 200–201.

36 For a facsimile and discussion of the bible, see Albert Boeckler, *Das Goldene Evangelienbuch Heinrichs III* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1933).

37 The distinctly shaped hat is also worn by the Jewish persecutors in the fourth scene of the Prazöll cycle, locus of Chapter 3, whereas the Pharisee is depicted in his traditional head shawl in the second.

38 As in the case of the fresco cycles of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll and Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano and in the winged altarpiece of Sankt Maria Magdalena in Mareit (see Chapters 3, 6 and 5, respectively). For the influence of religious drama from the German-speaking areas on the development of Magdalen visual hagiography, see Chapter 6, also Joanne W. Anderson, 'Mary Magdalene and her Dear Sister: Iconographic Innovation in the Late Medieval Mural Cycle in Santa Maddalena in Rencio (Bolzano)', in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies*, ed. Erhardt and Morris (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 45–73 and 'Devotional and Artistic Responses to the Cult of Mary Magdalen in Trentino-Alto Adige, *c*. 1300–1500: The Case of Cusiano', in *Visible Exports/Imports: New Research on Medieval and Renaissance European Art and Visual Culture*, ed. Jill Farquhar, Emily Jane Anderson and John Richards (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 161–180.

39 Interestingly, the resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain is almost immediately prior to the episode of the washing of Christ's feet by the unnamed sinner in Lk 7:7–17.

40 He would have known the earlier, more simply structured Romanesque building. Despite the fire in 1472, the tower survived in its entirety and the external walls of the church were retained as a structural guide for the new building, begun in 1477. The church in the Dusch painting also bears resemblance to Sankt Jakob in Prättigau, filial abbey to Churwalden.

41 Anstett-Janβen (*Maria Magdalena in der abendländischen Kunst*, 202) remarks on the originality of the composition of the preaching scene and claims that it remained unique to Dusch. However, comparison to the Waltensburg Master paintings of the life of St George in the church of Sankt Georg in Rhäzüns shows the temporal rulers seated within the buildings of their dominion. Such formulaic repetition is symptomatic of a regional visual culture.

42 The choice of attribute is reflective of the overall penitential character of the panel painting and its inscription: 'Ne desperetis vis qui peccare soletis exemploque meo vos reparate Deo.' In addition and giving consideration to the early date of the panel and its status as the first cyclical exponent of the Magdalen's legendary life in the painted visual arts, the inclusion of the unguent vase instead of the book may have been an appropriate prompt for the viewer regarding her presence at the tomb of Christ.

43 MS British Library Add. 15682. It was copied in German by Bertholdus Heyder. See Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 75 and 'Mary Magdalen and the Contemplative Life', 288, n. 51.

44 In the illumination, Mary Magdalen carries an unguent vase rather than the Gospel, similar to the Magdalen Master panel in Florence. Three members of the Marseille court also sit at the feet of their rulers, each holding a rosary, affirming the devotional function of both image and book.

45 As in the cycles of the Magdalen Chapel of San Francesco in Assisi, the Rinuccini Chapel of Santa Croce and the Magdalen Chapel of the Palazzo del Podestà, both in Florence.

46 Only the Magdalen Master panel and the fresco cycle in the Magdalen Chapel of San Domenico in Spoleto depict the saint in the act of evangelizing the pagans of Gaul.

47 Catherine of Alexandria also preached the faith. For women's eligibility to speak publicly on religious matters, see Alcuin Blamires, 'Women and Preaching in Medieval Orthodoxy, Heresy, and Saints' Lives', *Viator*, 26 (1995): 135–152. For an iconological examination of Mary Magdalen as preacher, see Diane Apostolos-Cappdona, 'From *Apostola Apostolorum* to Provencal Evangelist. On the Evolution of a Medieval Motif for Mary Magdalene', in *Mary Magdalene in Medieval Culture*, ed. Loewen and Waugh (London: Routledge, 2014), 163–180.

48 There are only two *beate*: Gertrude (1227–97) and Bronislawa (1203–59).

49 For example, during the late Middle Ages, there were at least 100 castles and other fortified building in the Trentino. For their names and distribution, see Marco Berotti, 'L'aristocrazia nel tardo medioevo', in *Storia del Trentino*. Vol. 3. *L'età medievale*, ed. Andrea Castagnetti and Gian Maria Varanini (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 439.

50 Mary of Egypt was a prostitute from Alexandria, who repented for her sins in the desert after being refused entry to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The insertion into Mary Magdalen's legend finds its origins in the compilation of the *vita eremitica* during the ninth century. The concordances between the legends of these two Marys were sufficient for a transfer of iconographical properties in the visual arts. The most famous is the bodily clothing of hair but Zosimus the priest, who hears Mary of Egypt's confession, also finds a new home in Magdalen imagery.

51 See Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend,* 380–381.

52 Despite the surface abrasion, it is possible in situ to distinguish the mouth of the cave around the body of the Magdalen and a small tree to her right.

53 See the comparative scenes in the fresco cycles of Sankt Maria in Pontresina (Chapter 7) and San Lorenzo Maggiore in Naples, the Magdalen Master panel and the triptych by Andrea di Cione now in Delaware (Alana Collection).

54   A conclusion also reached by Boscani Leoni, *Essor et fonctions*, 300.

55   Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend,* 381.

56   Jakob or Konrad II would have been the provost of Churwalden at the time of the paintings' production. See P. Norbert Backmund, *Monasticon Praemonstratense*, vol. 1 (Straubing: Attenkofer, 1949), 70–72.

57   The mitre was by no means a general feature in the liturgical vestments of the Premonstratensian canons throughout the Middle Ages, see King, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders*, 202–203.

58   See Curzel, 'Alpine Village Communities', 91–93.

59   For reference to the personal devotion of Norbert to Mary Magdalen, see Saxer, *Le culte*, 120–121.

60   Andrew Martindale, 'Patrons and Minders', in *The Church and the Arts*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 143–178, esp. 144.

Networks of Devotion in Bozen

ad lumen … stam. Mariam Magdalenam supra Plazadelle …
Alhaida de Zollstange, 17 August 1318, ASB, n. 306[1]

The epicentre of Mary Magdalen's Western cult lay in Provence from the late thirteenth century but as the previous chapters have established, it also gained a foothold in the Alps by means of strategic positioning of sacred sites on pilgrimage routes or by embedding itself in local parish administration. Artworks stand testament to this initial diffusion and diversification in the Maritime and Swiss Alps. The present chapter shifts the lens of enquiry to South Tyrol, in the central Western Alps, known as the land in the mountains (*Land im Gebirge*).[2] Devotion to Mary Magdalen flourished in this locale, one that is characterized by overlapping German and Italian cultures and competing artistic traditions, with the visual imagery of the saint gaining potency over time thanks to the workings of various networks. The chapter carries on from Dusch in the Swiss Grisons, discussed in Chapter 2, to demonstrate the entanglement of such networks: firstly, how even small Magdalen sites are embedded in 'large' international pilgrim networks, while at the same time holding an important status in parishes for the local community, and secondly as nodes in power networks as represented through patronage.

The focus falls specifically on the small church of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll, atop the vine-clad hills that encircle the town of Bozen, during the fourteenth century (Figure 3.1).[3] Mary Magdalen's place in pilgrimage networks from this geographic vantage point is found in the pairing of the saint with relatable types, namely the international cult of St James the Greater at Santiago de Compostela, and another of a more distinct local character. Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll evinces these networks, with its devotional artworks actively embedding the church in both a regional and wider European pilgrimage landscape. The church was recipient of donations from local residents across the century, but it also enjoyed the direct patronage of one prestigious family, the von Brandis, which

Figure 3.1 Sankt Magdalena. Prazöll/Rentsch, Bozen (Photo: Author).

resulted in the connection of Sankt Magdalena to other churches in Bozen that benefitted from their sponsorship.[4] The cult of Mary Magdalen is thus placed at the heart of local social networks with the related art functioning as a 'deposit of social relations', continuing the correlation between image, faith and place.[5] With its focus on familial, artistic and ecclesiastical networks this chapter places the Magdalen in the heart of community life, a saint with a local heritage mapped onto her international fame.

Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll – Renewing the parish saint

Midway through the fourteenth century, sufficient funds were raised to replace the wooden ceiling of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll near Bozen, founded in 1170–74 with a stone barrel vault.[6] It increased not only the height of the nave, but also the space available for pictorial decoration. The finished look was very similar to the Arena Chapel in Padua, which had enjoyed widespread fame since 1305, including the neighbouring Alpine territories. For Bozen, this monument of artistic achievement was highly influential in terms of architecture, iconography and style, as will be seen elsewhere in this chapter.

The structural transformation of Sankt Magdalena was in all likelihood appropriated by the noble family von Brandis, probably around the time of the marriage of Randold to Margaret Botsch around 1380, resulting in a renewal of its decorative programmes (I will return to the question of patronage below) (Colour Plate 9). This decorative campaign replaced a scheme of early-fourteenth-century mural paintings, which survive in part in the choir and on the triumphal arch. In the middle of the apse, Mary Magdalen is depicted as the patron saint of the church with the apostles standing to either side. Her identity and hence status is declared by an inscription in her halo (*S. Maria Magd*) and she is depicted frontally – in contrast to the male apostles – holding her unguent vase while looking directly out into the nave. The painting is characteristic of the gothic linear style (*Zagenstil*) practised by German artists that found great popularity in Alpine Tyrol and was dominant in the local visual culture.[7] No traces of a narrative cycle dedicated to Mary Magdalen in this style in the nave of the church survive. However, what is evident is that during the second half of the century a shift in the importance of this church occurred and it led to the commissioning of a new programme of wall paintings throughout, including an expansive treatment of the life of Mary Magdalen.

The fresco cycle depicting the life of Mary Magdalen wraps around the congregational space of the nave in ten sequential scenes (Figures 3.2 and 3.3). It is a format that encourages a mobile engagement with the paintings, both of the eye and of the body of the devotee as they move around the interior of the church. Each scene is set within a painted frame, while the whole cycle benefits from the illusionism of projecting consoles that increase both the sense of height and spatial depth. The narrative begins on the southeast wall with the Conversion of Mary Magdalen by her sister Martha, a rare episode that addresses both her worldly dalliances and receptivity to divine revelation. It is not recounted in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, despite the rest of the cycle predominantly drawing upon this popular late medieval source.[8]

Moving westwards along the nave, the Conversion of Mary Magdalen is followed by scenes of the Anointing in the House of the Pharisee, the Expulsion of the Christians from Judea in a rudderless boat, Mary Magdalen Preaching to the Governor of Marseille and his wife, and completing this side, Mary Magdalen admonishing the couple in a dream for their lack of hospitality towards the exiled Christians. The narrative then continues directly opposite on the north wall, beginning with the departure of the couple to Rome in the guise of pilgrims.

Figure 3.2 Magdalen fresco cycle, *c.* 1370–90, south wall of nave. Sankt Magdalena, Prazöll (Photo: Bettina Ravanelli).

Figure 3.3 Magdalen fresco cycle, *c.* 1370–90, north wall. Sankt Magdalena, Prazöll (Photo: Bettina Ravanelli).

The fertility miracle central to their pilgrimage experience, and recounted in the *Golden Legend*, is then depicted over three scenes, the latter incorporating the return of the rule of Marseille to the governor, who had entrusted it to Mary Magdalen in his absence. In the painting, the docked boat bearing the reunited family can be seen at the far left. The final two scenes of the cycle depict the elevation of the saint by angels in the wilderness and her divine manifestation in the oratory of Aix cathedral to partake of her last communion, an episode that symbiotically returns the devotee in the actual church to the apse and high altar; a shared characteristic with the chapel in Dusch, discussed in the previous chapter.

The Magdalen fresco cycle occupies the upper register of the nave with the lower one given over to the Passion of Christ. That cycle begins on the triumphal arch with the Agony in the Garden wrapping around the nave to finish on the opposite side with the Resurrection. Both cycles are interrupted by a monumental scene of the Last Judgement at the west end of the nave, further evidencing the influence of the Arena Chapel and Giotto's paintings on artistic production in Bozen and its environs.[9] The barrel vault in Sankt Magdalena, in contrast to the chapel in Padua, displays Christ in a mandorla, the four Church Doctors

and the four Evangelists. To the right of the door on the north wall, there is a votive image of St James the Greater with a kneeling pilgrim and in the adjacent window embrasure, St Oswald holding his attributes of a ring and a raven.

The paintings have been attributed to the workshop of the Second Master of Sankt Johann im Dorf, another artisan whose name is lost to time despite his substantial productivity.[10] He was an exponent of the Paduan court painter, Guariento d'Arpo, who exported his style to the Tyrolean region thanks to a commission to decorate the St Nicholas chapel in the Dominican convent of Bozen with sacred pictures.[11] This work, which dates to the 1360s, required the hiring of local talent, including our master's master, the First Master of Sankt Johann im Dorf.[12] On account of the apprenticeship system with its handing down of skills and repertoire, the adoption of an Italianate style became a generational phenomenon in the region, albeit blended with the northern gothic linear style that continued to find favour. In the church of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll, both painting style and architectural setting testify to the pattern of artistic transfer from Italian Padua to Tyrolean Bozen from the time of Giotto, who represents the first wave of diffusion.[13] By extension, they constituted a mark of distinction for patrons as a means of participating in this long-term shift in aesthetic preferences. The stylistic appeal of larger international trends already indicate that this church had more than mere local significance; before turning to matters of local patronage and social networks, the following section looks at how Sankt Magdalena intersects with larger pilgrimage networks and how the local patrons fostered this situation in order to cement their position in regional networks of faith.

International networks and the pairing of pilgrimage saints

Bozen is found on the ancient Roman road between Verona and Augsburg, the Via Claudia Augusta and at the confluence of three fast-flowing rivers, the Talfer, the Eisack and the Etsch, the latter connecting it with the towns of Trento and Verona in Italy.[14] During the late Middle Ages these transport routes facilitated trade, political campaigns and pilgrimages north and south of the Alps. However, those travelling east or west towards the Holy Land or the Iberian Peninsula also found Bozen a natural point of stoppage and exchange.[15] Its hostelries and churches offered respite and contact with fellow travellers, including Felix Faber, the Dominican friar from Ulm, who travelled to the Holy Land twice during the fifteenth century crossing the Alps via Bozen.[16]

Apart from such written reports, many material survivals give testimony of those visiting Bozen. One such example is an epitaph panel at the base of the bell tower of the main parish church (*Stadt Dom*), dating between 1390 and 1410, which shows a recumbent pilgrim who has been hit on the head by a bell (Figure 3.4). It

Figure 3.4 Epitaph panel of Ulrich, late fourteenth-century, fresco. Cathedral-Parish Church, Bozen (Photo: Author).

likely represents a personal tragedy, given the dedicatory inscription. However, it may also be a public warning to pilgrims in Bozen to be mindful of their soul and perhaps even more so of their physical person. In the image, a large purse hangs from the pilgrim's belt in full view to any prospective thief.[17] Other sacred sites and contingent pilgrimage imagery reinforce the importance of pilgrimage to the Alpine town.

In this 'land in the mountains', Mary Magdalen was a saint for those travelling near and far. As discussed in Chapter 1, Mary Magdalen's tomb had become a major destination on the late medieval map of devotion, first at Vézelay Abbey in Burgundy and then the Dominican convent of Saint-Maximin in Provence. Its salvic potential was propounded in the *Golden Legend* and kept current by pilgrim accounts and miracle books produced by the guardian monks and friars at the respective sites. Artworks produced in the Alps in later years responded to the power of the tomb through visual representation or material emulation, creating devotional networks by means of association.

But pilgrimage was also constitutive to the saint's legend proper. In the *Golden Legend*, although the governor of Marseille cursed Mary Magdalen's name for the death of his wife and the abandonment of his child during their pilgrimage to Rome, the saint was good to her word and brought everyone home safely. The travelling family was protected by the sign of the cross that the Magdalen placed on their backs. The fertility miracle, enacted during the couple's pilgrimage, enjoyed widespread representation in the visual arts, including those commissioned for Alpine churches. It shaped perceptions of Mary Magdalen's intercessory efficacy and by extension the power of her relics. It was also a reminder of the obligations of all Christians at this time to undertake pilgrimages, enduring physical and spiritual hardship, for the collection of indulgences that would reduce their time in purgatory. Local cultic sites promised days and years out of this liminal space but it was in Jerusalem, Santiago and Rome, especially during Jubilee Years, that multiple lifetimes could be earned.

Pilgrimage was also a recognizable activity. The prime signifier of Christian pilgrimage in the visual arts was a shell, along with a sober hat, a cloak and a walking staff. The badges of cultic sites were purchased on completion of a journey and often worn en masse as part of identity performance.

In the fresco cycle of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll, the Marseille pilgrims are represented in two scenes illustrating their return journey (scenes 7 and 8) and on both occasions they have a shell sewn onto their hats (Colour Plate 10). Only the men wear them; the wife of the governor never physically makes the journey

and thus cannot collect the material marker. While the shells operate as visual signifier for pilgrimage within the Magdalen's legend, in this case to Rome and the holy shrine in Jerusalem, they also alert the viewer to the specific pairing in the church of Mary Magdalen and St James the Greater, who features in the pictorial register below.

As mentioned earlier, a large votive image of James the Greater, patron saint of pilgrims, is found on the inside of the north wall, to the right of the door (Colour Plate 11). It is coeval with the production of the Magdalen cycle and was executed by the same master and workshop. Given the poor condition of the paintings in Sankt Magdalena, it is easy to mistake James for the Magdalen herself. Both wear red cloaks and have golden hair.[18] However, when the painting was a crisp new product in the early 1380s it would have left devotees in no doubt as to whom they were looking at.

James is dressed in red robes and holds a walking staff. In his right hand he holds an orb-like object that on close inspection turns out to be a *pecten jacobaeus* or scallop shell. He proffers it to a kneeling male pilgrim, who is dressed in brown robes with a hood and leans on a walking staff. The image has immediate synergy with the Magdalen cycle thanks to its spatial disposition. James is painted directly below the completion of the pilgrimage made by the rulers of Marseille, with the family depicted as acknowledging and confirming the intercessional powers of Mary Magdalen.

In the church, Mary Magdalen and James are presented as pilgrimage saints who have particular efficacy for those participating in this Christian obligation, one that demands a physical and spiritual journey from the devotee. The power and resonance of the saintly pairing are reinforced by their placement near the liminal space of the doorway.

A votive image of Mary Magdalen occupies the exact same position (and is of comparable size) as James the Greater on the outside wall of the church (Colour Plate 12).[19] Thus before entering the church, devotees met Mary Magdalen at the door after making the journey up the hill. The image is set above a block of stone that bears resemblance to an altar with surviving remnants of a painted frame that follows the shape of the doorway.[20] The Magdalen sits in a rocky landscape in her red robes, with unguent vase held in her right hand. With her left, she points down to the lower right corner of the painting. The lower section of the plaster is lost leaving us only to speculation, but she could be presenting a donor to the tomb of Christ with the stone block functioning as site of votive offerings before entering the church.

A wall then separates the two votive images of the pilgrimage saints in Sankt Magdalena. However, the act of walking through the doorway brings them together in a performance of double-identity. One passes through the door and under an image of Christ's face (*Volta Santa*) moving from Mary Magdalen to James on the other side before encountering the sacred stories of the Magdalen's legend disposed across the walls of the nave. In this sense, the pilgrimage pairing acts as mode of preparation for a spiritual journey in visual form.

Mary Magdalen and the regional pilgrimage context

The pairing of Mary Magdalen and James the Greater in Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll is symptomatic of a South Tyrolean trend of representing Mary Magdalen with pilgrimage saints of international and local renown in numerous churches.[21] Significantly, it speaks not only their importance in Europe-wide pilgrimage networks, but also their relevance on a smaller, local scale.

By the 1380s, the cult of Mary Magdalen enjoyed considerable presence in Bozen and the surrounding area, across parish, mendicant and private sacred space. In the Dominican church of Bozen, located in the centre of town and along the road from the parish church, a double portrait of Mary Magdalen and James the Greater is painted above an altar in one of the choir screen chapels (Colour Plate 13). The painting is coeval with those produced for Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll and once again, probably executed by the same master, forging artistic ties between the two sacred sites. Unfortunately the majority of the painted plaster of the Dominican image is lost, including half the figure of James, but what remains is enough to make an identification of the pairing: James with his red cloak and walking staff, Mary Magdalen with her pinkish-red robe, golden hair and unguent vase. They are set in fictive architecture and are part of a series of saints who stand below a votive scene, possibly a Man of Sorrows or the Virgin and Child. Such choir screen chapels were available for family sponsorship, just as in other provinces, and a record survives for this particular altar that confirms the dedication. On 6 January 1342, the widow Gerwiga, her daughter Katreyn and her late husband's mother (called Aut) met in the Dominican chapter house to arrange the donation of 10 Pf. B. Meraner money for a weekly Mass on Wednesdays at the *sant Marien Magdalenen* altar in the convent (the altar at the right of the choir screen in the *ecclesia laicorum*).[22] There is no record of whether donations were made to St James at the same altar, but archaeological evidence

indicates that people from Bozen had either travelled to the Iberian Peninsula or had come into contact with those who had made the journey: a tomb with a souvenir scallop shell from the shrine at Compostela was discovered in the recent excavations at the Dominican church.[23]

Some thirty years earlier Mary Magdalen was depicted in the St Katherine chapel of the same convent (accessed from the cloister), this time dressed in yellow and carrying a tall monstrance. It is an unusual mode of depiction for the Magdalen but it is the typology set up across the triumphal arch of the chapel that matters. Mary is partnered with Romedius (seen on the left side of the arch), a local saint whose shrine in the mountains of the Val di Non in neighbouring Trentino was visited by pilgrims from Bozen and elsewhere in the region (Figure 3.5).[24] Why the two saints were brought into dialogue might

Figure 3.5 St Romedius and Mary Magdalen, *c.* 1340, fresco. St Katherine Chapel, Dominican Church, Bozen (Photo: Fondazione Rasmo – Zallinger, Fondo fotografico, scatola 73, nr. 4937/3564).

seem rather arbitrary, but like Mary Magdalen, Romedius had retreated to a cave after giving away all of his possessions. He thus conformed to a recognizable and comparative model of sanctity.

As set out in Chapter 1, Charles of Salerno installed the Dominican order as guardian of the Magdalen relics in Provence in 1290. The Dominicans claimed Mary Magdalen as one of their patron Saints in 1297, nearly twenty years after the discovery and retranslation of the saint's body and seven years after the Pope Boniface VIII had authenticated the relics. In Bozen, Mary Magdalen's feast day of 22 July and its octave were already being observed by 1273, evidencing the early significance of the saint to the preaching order.[25]

However, it was not just the mendicants who had a stake in the local cult. A chapel bearing a dedication to Saints Mary Magdalen and Paul was founded by Gottschalk Knoeger, a judge and political confident of Mainard II, ruler of the County of Tyrol (*dominium comitis Tyrolis*). The chapel was located on the road next to the cemetery of the parish church, a privileged location for a man of considerable status (Figures 3.6 and 3.7).[26] There is no record of any decoration inside, however on 4 October 1382, an oil lamp is donated for the lower half of the chapel in order to illuminate the tombs (*ossa defunctorum*) of the priests (*socii plebis*), which might suggest the presence of devotional artworks to enrich

Figure 3.6 Matthäus Merian, View of Bozen, 1649, engraving (Photo: Wikimedia Commons).

Figure 3.7 Postcard of the chapels of St Nikolaus and St Maria Magdalena, before 1939 (Photo: Author).

the architectural space.[27] What is certain is the visible place of the chapel in the urban topography. In documentary records, it is frequently cited as a fixed coordinate when establishing place of residence.

Widening the lens to the environs of Bozen, by 1390 there are reports of Magdalen relics in the chapel of castle Runkelstein near the town, which was also part of Gottschalk's devotional portfolio. On 31 October 1390, Bishop-Prince George I von Liechtenstein (*Gregorius episcopus Lisiensis, vicarius in pontificalibus*) certified the consecration of the castle chapel and its altars. The relics of various saints are listed, including those of Mary Magdalen and James the Greater, and two wooden sculptures of the Crucifix and the Flagellation of Christ.[28] Gottschalk probably acquired the Magdalen relics around the same time he founded his chapel in central Bozen.

Ten kilometres southeast of Bozen, in the village of Pfatten (Vadena), paintings depicting the life of the saint could be found in the church of Sankt Maria Magdalena. These were executed by workshops hailing from Bozen indicating the town's significance as a centre of artistic diffusion. Only scenes of the saint's retreat to the wilderness, her elevation by angels and last communion survive from the church that was steadily ruined by repeated floods (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8 Bozen School, Last Communion of Mary Magdalen, *c.* 1410–20, fresco. Civic Museum, Bozen (Photo: Author).

Yet, the fragments now held in the Civic Museum of Bozen make clear that they once belonged to larger programmes that slipped quietly under the whitewash during the seventeenth century until their rediscovery in 1886.[29] As in the church at Prazöll, the interior decoration was a process of successive decorative campaigns, this time spread across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The process provided a fixed form and continuity to the cult, rooting the Magdalen in local landscape and cultural memory. James the Greater had his role to play too. In 1337, Sankt Maria Magdalena in Pfatten was recipient of a donation in his name raising the likelihood of an altar dedication or votive image.[30] It also led to a shift in devotional priorities. When the church, located in the fluvial plain, was eventually abandoned, the Magdalen dedication was transferred to a new church built higher up in the village. It carried with it a confraternity established in Mary Magdalen's name in 1747 along with a papal indulgence but more significantly it was also dedicated to James.

This overview demonstrates how Mary Magdalen was commonly paired with other pilgrimage saints in this region. It is evident that people from all levels of

society were keen not only to participate in her cult but also to connect it with other such sacred manifestations, whether they were local saints or those from further afield. This devotional practice came in a variety of forms: from relics to altar endowments, from the construction of entire chapels to the execution of large painted programmes.

Moving back into Bozen and its immediate environs, what emerges from this charting of sacred topography is that the church on the edge of town, namely Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll, was the ideal place to play out this paradigm. The church was located up a hill requiring a physical climb that could simulate a spiritual ascension that was central to the pilgrimage experience. It had a venerable foundation date of 1170–74 and a culture of renewal when it came to building fabric and sacred images. What brought all the elements together was the patronage of the noble family of von Brandis. Their intervention put Sankt Magdalena on a par with other churches and chapels in and around the town that enjoyed similar high-ranking sponsorship. These included the mercantile Botsch family, thirteenth-century émigrés from Oltrarno in Florence, who patronized the baptismal church of St Johann im Dorf, as well as the Franciscan and Dominican convents in Bozen and the aristocratic von Weinecks who displayed their arms on the church of St Vigil unter Weineck nestled on the southern hills, just over the river from the town centre.[31]

Family patronage and networks – The von Brandis

The von Brandis family probably became patrons of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll in the late fourteenth century, in the 1380s, after the marriage between Randold von Brandis and Margaret Botsch, who hailed from the wealthy banking and mercantile dynasty from Florence. We know as much thanks to the presence of the von Brandis heraldry on the triumphal arch of the church. Their red lion rampant on silver ground appears on a fabric being woven by the Annunciate Virgin, a subtle integration of identity into the iconographic programme (Colour Plate 9).[32] This heraldry was added at the same time as the new fresco cycle depicting the life of Mary Magdalen was created, suggesting that from the 1380s onwards the von Brandis family and the wider community who endowed and used the church were participating in a religious and cultural *zeitgeist*.[33] They were already familiar with the saint's image rendered in the local gothic linear style in the apse and the other paintings on the triumphal arch from earlier in the century, including St

Michael Archangel weighing the souls above the right-hand side altar, below the bell tower. But now the titular saint had moved from this symbolic clerical space behind the high altar into the 'people's part of the church'.[34]

While the images depicting Mary Magdalen and James on either side of the doorway of Sankt Magdalena discussed earlier are representative of a widespread habit of pairing these two pilgrimage saints in the locality, their function may be quite specific. James, on the inside, is depicted presenting his shell to a kneeling pilgrim while Mary Magdalen, one the outside, appears to be pointing to something or someone at her feet. It is evident that the inclusion of James the Greater was a pictorial strategy designed to symbolically connect Bozen with the international shrine in Compostela. However, it might also have constituted a reference to a specific individual from the von Brandis family, namely the aforementioned Randold. Little is known about Randold or his wife Margaret beyond their marital status or whether they ever travelled to Compostela.[35] However, his guise as a pilgrim in the decorative scheme of Sankt Magdalena would not be unique or out of place. A useful comparison is found on the west wall of the St James chapel in the Franciscan basilica of Sant'Antonio in Padua. There the donors, Bonifacio Lupi and his wife Caterina dei Francesci, are presented to the Virgin as pilgrims by their patron saints, James the Greater and Catherine of Alexandria. The painting is by the artist Altichiero da Zevio and dated 1373–79. Another earlier pairing of Mary Magdalen and James the Greater is found on the front portal of the former tomb of Cangrande Scaglieri of Verona (d. 1329), this time in connection to the feast days on which the potentate died and was buried. More proximate, in Bozen it was quite common for donors to dress humbly in votive images, or even as a pilgrim: for example, on the parish church we find them present in Crucifixion scenes above the western portal and on the northern wall of the bell tower of the parish church (*Stadt Dom*), the latter being affixed to the image of Ulrich the pilgrim being hit by a bell, discussed earlier in this chapter.[36]

The strategy of representing individuals by personally meaningful saints and not necessarily their namesakes might provide a clue as to what was at stake in Prazöll. If Randold was represented kneeling before James the Greater, then it follows that Margaret may have once knelt before Mary Magdalen on the other side of the wall. It was a standard mode of depiction in late medieval visual culture, as we have seen, but the von Brandis could also resort to their own family devotional practices as a model. But what made the church such an attractive option?

Devotional networks and strategic patronage

In this 'land in the mountains', Mary Magdalen was a saint for those travelling near and far. Whether patron, vineyard worker or traveller, a small pilgrimage could be made to the church of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll, nestled as it is in the vine-clad hill that surrounds the town of Bozen, by ascending the steep hillside.[37] Once inside, they would be able to view the colourful paintings that spoke to a world beyond the immediate locality. As described at the beginning of this chapter, the surviving mural paintings from the first decorative campaign of around 1300 are mainly found on the surfaces of the apse.[38] Mary Magdalen is represented in the centre of a row of apostles that runs across all three walls behind the altar. She stands frontally, looking out to the nave with unguent vase held prominently in both hands. To resolve any doubt of her identity among this retinue of Christ's chosen men, her name is written in her halo. She is apostle of apostles and patron saint.

This painting of Mary Magdalen probably benefitted from the *galeta* of oil gifted in perpetuity on 23 June 1295 from the land of one Ruebe, who lived in Prazöll (*de Placedelle*) for use on the first Sunday of Lent (*casalare dominica*).[39] It would have fed a lamp just like the half (*dimidiatus*) *galeta* of Alhaida, mentioned in the epigraph to this chapter, who lived in the easternmost quarter of Bozen, and thus very close to the church in Prazöll; this liquid volume represented proceeds of a vineyard located in another part of the high Atesin region.[40] Only a few weeks later, on 9 October, Gisla Schmiedin, a smith's wife (*fabrissa*) of the town, willed an annual *starium* of oil from two nearby vineyards to the church.[41] Finally, on 17 September 1346, we have record of the widow Liublina (formerly married to a tailor) and her heir willing one *galeta* of oil to the parish church and one *starium* to the chapel of Mary Magdalen (*capella ste. Marie Magdalene super Plazdelle*). They had been lent a vineyard by the administrator (*fabrice*) of the parish church of Bozen, glebe land which had reverted to the church in lieu of unpaid taxes.[42]

These archival records of late medieval lives pertaining to Sankt Magdalena document the process of embedding a church in its landscape and in the collective economy.[43] The modest donations raised by the proceeds of cultivation by ordinary men and women ensured perpetual light and prayers in a sacred site of their choosing over successive generations. For Ruebe, the church may have been erected within living memory, likewise the decoration of its walls. For Alhaida, Gisla and Liublina, Sankt Magdalena was probably a more established fixture on their mental map of devotion within the parish of Bozen.

Such donations of oil to the church throughout the late medieval period are evidence of sustained devotion to the saint in the local community. Renewal and increased prominence evidently motivated the investment of the von Brandis family who, by at least the 1380s, saw an opportunity to use the chapel and its dedication to Mary Magdalen to project their identity. Although their art was for a church on the vine-clad hillside of Bozen, they chose to adopt a successful model of patronage already practiced in town that extended the potential for social gain.

When the new fresco campaign was underway in the 1380s, Randold was newly married to Margaret, daughter of the merchant-banker Botsch, also known as Niccolo de' Rossi.[44] As this name suggests, he was of Italian origins and more specifically Florentine with his émigré family hailing from Santa Felicita in Oltrarno.[45] Botsch, as he was known locally, was highly influential in the socio-economic life of Bozen and served at the Court of Tyrol, which sat in nearby Meran.[46] Both his marriages were with local noblewomen and he made sure of similar high-ranking matches for his daughter, Margaret, providing her with a good dowry.[47] Although St Margaret was the patron saint of childbirth and would have been the ideal choice as Margaret von Brandi's namesake saint, Mary Magdalen evidently offered an opportunity for the noble family to extend their devotional portfolio.[48]

When the von Brandis family acquired rights of sponsorship of the rural church, they were probably already in possession of a private chapel, once again in the Dominican church. It was dedicated to St Thomas (probably Aquinas) and located first left of the choir screen on the lay side.[49] Only traces of the original decoration survive on the entrance arch but it would have been brightly painted with stories of the saint and other votive imagery, including double donor portraits, in accordance with the rest of the church. It most likely emulated the two funerary chapels held by Margaret's natal family: the St John Chapel beyond the choir screen and the previously mentioned St Nicholas Chapel at the liturgical west end of the nave. Margaret's father, Botsch, is depicted with his first wife Gerwiga on the altar wall of the St John chapel, with the couple presented to Christ by John the Evangelist and John the Baptist. Similar donor portraits are found in churches throughout Bozen and were commissioned by leading mercantile and noble families, attesting to the success of this devotional practice.

The de' Rossi arrived in Bozen from Florence in the late thirteenth century. Their swift rise in status throughout the fourteenth century reflects an overall change in the social topography of the Alpine town; the most significant being

the rise of the mercantile class in religious and civic life. The commercial activities that secured the family its fortunes also paid for artistic commissions that gave lasting form to their name and legacy. Botsch knew the value of strategic patronage of churches and chapels that guaranteed the repetition of his heraldry in Bozen and it is probable that his daughter and her marital family emulated this practice accordingly. Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll may have been on the edge of town but it was part of this cultural expansion.

To recall, Mary Magdalen and James the Greater were painted on the choir screen of the Dominican church, representing the devotional priorities and practices of the friars and the laity who prayed within the sacred precinct. But around the same time, the visual typology was migrated to the church of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll. A short journey out of town and up the hillside would take the patrons or local residents into the painted worlds of this church which operated not only as a pilgrimage site in Bozen's sacred landscape but also as a marker of one family's identity and their hope for salvation. This is borne out by the Magdalen narrative in the church.

Mary Magdalen's story began with her conversion by her sister Martha, a scene that brought high drama and panache to this rural church space. After a series of events charting the active, voyaging life of Mary Magdalen (her preaching and miracle working in Marseille and on pilgrimage with the governor and his wife), the cycle concludes with two scenes focusing on a quieter, contemplative journey. The first represents her self-exile in the wilderness, a familiar episode by this time with the Magdalen resplendent in the garb of her own golden hair. The second scene returns the saint to the fold of her parish church by angelic transport with a focus on the moment that Mary Magdalen receives her final host from St Maximin in the oratory of Aix cathedral. This divine reception is found at the east end of Sankt Magdalena, nearest the altar. It also coincides with the scenes of Entombment and Resurrection in the Christ cycle in the lower register, creating typological synergy. This interdependency of imagery continues on the same register onto the triumphal arch. From witnessing Mary Magdalen's final earthly moments, the eye is led up to the depiction of Abel offering a lamb to heaven, which receives blessing from the hand of God. In comparison, on the other side of the arch the worldly life of the Magdalen follows on after the offering of Cain, which is rejected by a hand shaped into a fist. It is not without significance then that Martha's role as annunciate shares the same side of the arch as Gabriel. This atypical inversion of the Annunciation iconography (Virgin on left, Gabriel on the right) allows Mary Magdalen's final moments to be depicted on the same

side as the Virgin, who is busy weaving the heraldry of the von Brandis family.[50] The unfinished fabric hanging on the loom would have reminded Randold and Margaret that the pilgrimage of their own souls was still in the making and that they too must move with the Magdalen to reach salvation.

Up the mountain with the Magdalen

Pilgrimage practice and parish life are the guiding frameworks for this book but they are not mutually exclusive jurisdictions in the shaping of the cult of Mary Magdalen in the late medieval Alps. The saint was a specific yet universal presence, a daily and occasional helper for those at home or those passing by as part of larger journeys. After discussing the distinctive formulation of the saint's cult and imagery in Bozen as part of socio-religious networks, some reflection on the actual journey up to such sacred sites in the mountains and the processes of replication inherent to pilgrimage practice is necessary, one shared on both an international and a local level. This involves a shift to the pilgrimage church of Sankt Maria Magdalena in Gschnitz, also in the Tyrolean Alps (Figure 3.9).

The church is found high above the Gschnitz Valley, some 24 km southwest of Innsbruck near the Brenner Pass. Once inside the church, of Romanesque foundation, and turned round to the north wall of the nave we encounter a melange of mural paintings depicting scenes from the life of Mary Magdalen set below a large arch.[51] They depict Mary Magdalen anointing the feet of Christ in the House of the Pharisee, the city of Marseille in miniature form with a busy seaport in the background, the elevation of the hirsute Magdalen by angels on top of a mountain replete with small church and finally, receiving her last communion from St Maximin. A man kneels at the base of the mountain between a church and the model city, his eyes raised towards the Magdalen reminding devotees of their own journey up the mountain to the church (Colour Plate 14).

The paintings have been attributed to Master Leonhard Scherhauff of Brixen, a skilled and prolific artist in the region, and are dated to 1460.[52] His task was to give visual form to deep-seated religious devotion and his paintings present a lively configuration. Speech banners were once filled with Middle High German words indicating that they were once speaking paintings (*visibile parlare*); they displayed condensed texts that mirrored the equally condensed imagery that could serve the needs of the expectant pilgrim.

Figure 3.9 Sankt Maria Magdalena, Gschnitz (Photo: Eckart Marchand).

The iconography of the paintings is typically categorized into three scenes but there is some ambiguity. The kneeling man, taking on the role of the hermit of the *Golden Legend*, directs his prayers towards the elevated Magdalen as conveyed by the two vertical speech banners. He is undoubtedly the donor of

the cycle but just as in Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll, such imagery also facilitated an expression of his self-identification. Given that the man kneels between the church and city, this self-identification operates on a spectrum between the hermit and the governor of Marseille, who was to become a pilgrim in the context of the legend.[53] The noble man, or burgher, depicted in the painting probably undertook many journeys in his lifetime and would have sought the protection of Mary Magdalen, a most efficacious saint, who was present in the mountains and in the air, just as was implied by the paintings in Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch, shaped as it was by the Premonstratensian canons (see Chapter 2).

As in Prazöll and most of the Magdalen churches discussed in this book, Sankt Maria Magdalena in Gschnitz was proximate to a branch of the great pilgrimage route across Western Europe, the *Jakobsweg* or St James's Way leading to Santiago di Compostela.[54] The pathway (which is still traversed today near to the busy motorway) and its nodal points that linked the various branches north, south, east and west provided the basic infrastructure for the movement of people and with that their religious beliefs and visual expectations. The churches and shrines that survive on or near to this transport network, including the church in Gschnitz, are the archaeological traces of this devotional practice. They are sited on steep mountainsides, necessitating physical exertion, a hardship that is intended to intensify the spiritual experience. Petrarch may well have said that 'people are moved to wonder by mountain peaks […] but in themselves are uninterested' when writing of his ascent (undertaken or not) of Mount Ventoux in France but his words, quoting St Augustine on mental images, nonetheless speak to the inner transformations that were metaphorically associated with the experiment of climbing.[55] It is tempting to romanticize *every* medieval pilgrimage as something deeply felt, personal and pure, but Petrarch's observation also distracts from the importance of 'mindless' aspects of ritualized behaviour; that some pilgrimages were made significant by virtue of simple rote, basic refuge or general obligation.[56] Whether mindful or mindless, these journeys mapped a sacred geography in the mountains and were fed by the regional wellsprings of cultic structures and images. The church in Gschnitz with its Magdalen paintings was one such 'well' that required physical effort to reach: it is located at an altitude of 1661 m, the steep pathway (now known as the Jubilee Trail) running under the Schönberg.[57] Such pilgrimages were replicated at numerous sites across the mountains, generating an imaginary landscape. This encompassed an imagined community of devotees in which the divine was 'self-manifest' in the natural environment.[58] For the cult of Mary Magdalen, as set out in the introduction to

this book, the Alps were a *sacro monte*, with each journey to a Magdalen site a conscious or unconscious replication of the original pilgrimage experience in Provence. This process was then visualized in the paintings belonging to the respective churches.

The following chapter explores a case of conscious replication of the original pilgrimage experience at Mary Magdalen's tomb and grotto. It moves the focus north to Seefeld in Tyrol, where a bleeding host miracle in the church of Sankt Oswald offers an unexpected opportunity to align Magdalen imagery with pilgrimage practice in a newly raised parish church. There, as in Gschnitz and Prazöll, physical ascent, the act of walking up to such churches, as preparation for spiritual enlightenment, becomes another key factor in explaining why Mary Magdalen's late medieval cult flourished in the mountains.

Notes

1   Hannes Obermair, *Bozen süd – Bolzano nord: Scritturalità e documentazione archivistica della città di Bolzano fino al 1500. Regesti dei fondi comunali 1210–1400*, vol. 1 (Bolzano: Bolzano city, 2005), 196.

2   See Gioia Conta, *I luoghi dell'arte. Bolzano, Media Val d'Adige, Merano*, vol. 1 (Bolzano: Provincia Autonomo di Bolzano Scuola e Cultura Italiana, 1998), 18.

3   The church is included in the regional surveys of Karl Atz and Adelgott Schatz, *Der deutsche Antheil des Bisthums Trient. Topographisch-historisch-statistisch und archäologisch beschrieben. Das Decanat Bozen*, vol. 1 (Bozen: Alois Auer & Comp., 1903), 85–87 and Josef Weingartner, *Die Kunstdenkmäler Südtirols. Bozen*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Österreichische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1926); the Magdalen paintings are documented in the 7th edition (1961), 107–108.

4   For Alpine challenges to the centre and periphery model through networked communities, see Hannes Obermair, '"Bastard Urbanism"? Past Forms of Cities in the Alpine Area of Tyrol-Trentino', *Concilium medii aevi* 10 (2007): 53–67 and Anne Radeff, 'Réfutation du système des lieux centraux dans le pays de Vaud (Suisse) au Moyen Âge: montagne (Jura, Alpes) et Plateau', in *Petites villes en montagne de l'antiquité au XXe siècle. Europe occidentale et centrale*, ed. Jean-Luc Fray, Pierre Cornu and Patrick Fournier (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2013), 39–53.

5   Michael Baxendall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 1.

6   In Codex B of the *Libri Traditionum*, it is recorded that 'Otacher von berg' in 1170–74 donated a vineyard situated at '*Placedelle*' to the cathedral chapter of Brixen, in

the presence of Bishop Heinrich II. See *Die Traditionsbücher des Hochstifts Brixen vom Zehnten bis in das Vierzehnte Jahrhundert*, ed. Oswald Redlich (Innsbruck: Wagner Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1886), 176, n. 502b. Entry as follows: '*Dominus Otacher de Monte dedit nobis vineas Placedelle ad oblationem quam ipse solebat singulis annis dare, eo tenore, ut proximus heres eius consanguinitatis hoc post obitum eius habeat et similiter faciat. Huius reu testes sunt: Ludvvich, Kadelhoch, Gotsalch, Walthere, Meriboto, Heriboto. Hoc factum presente Heinrico Brixinensi episcopo. Ad investituram autem idem testes qui supradicti sunt.*' The Magdalen dedication may have been chosen at the behest of the vineyard workers, underlining the correlation between the fecundity of the natural world and devotion to the Magdalen, who witnessed twice the regeneration of life, see Helmut Stampfer, *La chiesa di Santa Maddalena presso* (*Bolzano*: Edizione Propria, 1988), 6. Haskins (*Mary Magdalen*, 224) suggests an association of her fertility powers with the pagan goddesses Isis and Cybele. Archaeological finds, including fragments of crockery indicate that the hill east of Bozen has been populated since pre-historic times.

7   The linear style is similar to that practised by the Waltensburg Master, discussed in Chapter 2. See Waltraud Kofler-Engl, *Frühgotische Wandmalerei in Tirol. Stilgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Linearität in der Wandmalerei von 1260–1360* (Bozen: Sturzflüge, 1995). The presence of German and Italian artists working in Bozen points to a long-term tradition of mobility and cultural exchange in and across the Alps.

8   See Anderson, 'Mary Magdalene and her Dear Sister'. The scene is also discussed by Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 161–162 and Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 160–161.

9   A scene of Last Judgement also based on the version painted by Giotto in the Arena Chapel in Padua can be found in the Chapel of St Katherine in the Dominican church in Bozen, see *Atlas Trecento. Gotische Maler in Bozen*, ed. Andrea De Marchi, Tiziana Franco, Vicenzo Gheroldi, and Silvia Spada Pintarelli (Bozen: Temi Editrice, 2001), 136–145, esp. 139.

10   For those whose names did achieve posterity, see Angela Mura, 'Südtiroler Malerfiguren in archivalischen Quellen des 14. Jahrhundert', in *Atlas Trecento*, 292–298.

11   The St Nicholas chapel (east wall of the nave of the Dominican church) was demolished after 1820, with most of the surviving fragments of the decorative scheme destroyed during the Second World War bombing. Pre-1944 photographs are held in the Rasmo-Zallinger Fondazione, City Archive, Bozen and form the basis of all scholarly discussion of Guariento's influence on the local schools in Bozen.

12   See Zuleika Murat, *Guariento: pittore di corte, maestro del naturale* (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2016). It is debatable as to whether Guariento was present in Bozen to execute or supervise the work.

13 The second wave was facilitated by the work and influence of Venetan artists Giusto de' Menabuoi, Guarniento d'Arpo and Altichiero da Zevio.

14 See Werner Kreuer, 'Strassen-Spuren: der Weg der Via Claudia Augusta über die Alpen von der Antike zum Mittelalter', in *Pässe, Übergänge, Hospize. Südtirol am Schnittpunkt der Alpentransversalen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Leo Andergassen (Lana: Tappeiner, 1999), 42–49.

15 The annual fairs held in Bozen on Mezza Quaresima and the feast day of San Genesio (25 August) began in the thirteenth century. Improvements in the road networks led to the addition of a further two important fairs over the next 200 years.

16 Bozen features in his travel diary of 1483–84. See *Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae* Sanctae, *Arabiae et Egypti Peregrinationem*, ed. Konrad Dietrich Hassler, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Societas Litteraria, 1843–49).

17 Its inscription reads: *Hic obit(us) fuit Ulricius MCCC.*[…]. See De Marchi et al., *Atlas Trecento*, 17–19. It also points to the importance of church bells in shaping the experience of time and space. For an investigation of this image in its local context, see Victoria Zikos, *Ex-Voto, Epitaph or Public Imagery: The Case of the Pilgrim Ulrich* (MA diss., The Warburg Institute, 2017).

18 There are significant differences in the handling of their features. The Magdalen's lips typically form a cupid's bow, her loose hair always falls thickly over the front of her shoulders and her voluminous outer robe (post-conversion) is held together at a central point on her neckline by a diamond shaped fastening, none of which apply to the votive image of James. The latter's masculine bearing compares convincingly to the votive image of St Oswald, the apostles in the apse and in the Last Judgement.

19 A new portal was added to the west wall in the seventeenth century, destroying the lower section of the Last Judgement. Today, the church is accessed through the original entrance on the north wall.

20 No other fragments survive that would point to a former and comprehensive programme or series of votive images on the rest of the wall surface. This does not exclude the possibility, given the later enlargement of the nave windows and refreshments of plaster.

21 We might recall from Chapter 1 that Mary Magdalen and St Francis were brought into dialogue by virtue of their pilgrimage houses and relics in Italy and France with the visual arts reinforcing the bond.

22 TLA, Archiv Trautson-Auersperg, n. 272a. My thanks to Hannes Obermair for access to his unpublished *Bozen Süd – Bolzano Nord*, vols. 3–4, 136.

23 See Alberto Alberti, Gino Bombonato, and Lorenzo Dal Ri, 'Scavi e ritrovamenti archeologici nel complesso dei Domenicani di Bolzano', in *Domenicani a Bolzano*, ed. Silvia Spada Pintarelli and Helmut Stampfer (Bolzano: Comune di Bolzano, 2010), 82–83.

24 The Sanctuary of St Romedius is found above the village of Sanzeno in the Val di
    Non. For a discussion of the saint and shrine, see Fiorenzo Degasperi, *San Romedio:
    Una via sacra attraverso il Tirolo storico* (Trent: Curco e Genovese, 2015).

25 On 7 August 1273, the dedications of the newly founded convent (*novella plantatio
    ordinis fratrum predicatorum in Bolzano Tridentine diocesis*) are ratified by
    Bishop Leo Rattisbonis in Regensburg, see Obermair, *Bozen Süd – Bolzano Nord*,
    vols. 3–4, 72.

26 '*Intra septa plebis sancte Marie in Bozano ad honorem beati Pauli apostoli et
    beate Marie Magdalene.*' See Josef Riedmann, 'Gottschalk von Bozen, Richter
    von Enn-Neumarkt (†1334). Ein Kapitel aus der Geschichte des Unterlandes im
    Mittelalter', in *Das Südtiroler Unterland*, ed. Südtiroler Kulturinstitut Bozen (Bozen:
    Verlagsanstalt Athesia, 1980), 111.

27 See Obermair, *Bozen süd – Bolzano nord*, 399–400, vol. 1, n. 842. The seventeenth-
    century pastoral visitations note an antependium, a wooden candelabra and a
    crucifix, a statue and a lamp, as well as the presence of tombs, see ADT, AV 18 1647,
    309*r*; AV 19 1674, 99*r* and *v*; AV 26, 108*r* and 111*v*.

28 Obermair, *Bozen Süd – Bolzano Nord*, vols. 3–4, 132. The castle had just passed
    out of Gottschalk Knoeger's family following the death of his daughter, Agnes. It
    was bought in 1390 by the mercantile Vintler family. See *Castel Roncolo. Il maniero
    illustrato*, ed. Città Di Bozano (Bolzano: Athesia, 2000), 3–5.

29 Fragments from the three decorative campaigns were transferred to the Civic
    Museum in Bozen in 1930. See Weingartner, *Die Kunstdenkmäler Südtirols.
    Bozen*, 373. For a full discussion of the paintings and bibliography, see Joanne W.
    Anderson, *The Magdalen Narrative Fresco Cycles of Trentino, Tyrol and the Swiss
    Grisons, ca. 1300–ca. 1500* (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 2009), chap. 3.

30 See Archangelus Simeoner, 'Notizie', *Kunstfreund* 2 (1886): 7. The church of Pfatten/
    Vadena is first mentioned in 1337 but was probably founded earlier. See Georg
    Tengler, *Vadena. paesaggio e storia* (Vadena: Comune di Vadena, 1991).

31 See De Marchi et al., *Atlas Trecento*, 218–243.

32 For this discovery and the patronage of the church, see Joanne W. Anderson, 'St.
    Magdalena in Rentsch bei Bozen: Ein neuer Vorschlag zur Auftraggeberschaft
    im 14. Jahrhundert', *Der Schlern* 88 (2014): 40–44 and 'The Loom, the Lady and
    Her Family Chapels: Weaving Identity in Late Medieval Art', *Journal of Medieval
    Clothing and Textiles* 15 (2019). The von Brandis counts still have their official
    residence at Lana near Meran, with the Leonburg retaining its twin medieval towers.

33 For the dating of the paintings, see Tiziana Franco, 'St Magdalena', in De Marchi et
    al., *Atlas Trecento*, 176–184.

34 Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*
    (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 111. In contrast to the
    late medieval English parish context, it is not known for sure whether screens or

walls in Italy or the pre-Alps uniformly divided the internal space of rural parish churches. For a surviving example, see Tiziana Franco, 'Sul "muricciolo" nella chiesa di Sant' Andrea di Sommacampagna "per il quale restavan divisi gli uomini dale donne"', *Hortus artium medievalium* 14 (2008): 181–192. My distinction between clerical and lay space implies a perception on the part of the patron and congregation of a symbolic division. See also Chapter 2.

35 Randold was born in 1366. Margaret's birthdate is unknown but she had been married once before and died in 1387. The family history is documented in the *Archiv der Grafen von Brandis* (Niederlana), vol. 1, ed. Emil von Ottenthal and Oswald Redlich (Vienna: Kubasta and Voigt, 1888).

36 All illustrated in De Marchi et al., *Atlas Trecento*, 16–19.

37 The city of Bozen/Bolzano lies in a natural basin, with Prazöll/Rentsch/Rencio belonging to the area known as Soprabolzano/Oberbozen (1221 m). It can be reached on foot by steady ascension using the scenic Oswald footpath or more directly by way of a steep incline off the via Renon (or by funicular). Oberbozen is populated by many hamlets with small churches dating from the same period as Sankt Magdalena. It also provides access to the stretches of Alpine meadows further above which were used for grazing during the late Middle Ages: a source of income in addition to viniculture.

38 The paintings were discovered in 1958. See Nicolò Rasmo, 'Gli affreschi medioevali di S. Maddalena a Bolzano', *Il Cristallo* 3 (1961): 139–145. They were subject to restoration in 1958–59 with the upper layer of the apse dating from the late fourteenth-century and depicting the Coronation of the Virgin and below the seated apostles (minus Mary Magdalen) removed, transferred to a new support and displayed in the Civic Museum in Bozen. See *Atlas Trecento*, 158–185.

39 Obermair, *Bozen süd – Bolzano nord*, vol. 1, 125–126, n. 117. Ruebe also endows the church of St Johann im Dorf (*ecclesia sti. Johannis*) and donates 100 *brachia* of linen to the parish: 25 going to the hospital church, Heilig-Geist-Spital (*sti. Spiritus*) for the sick and 75 for the pastoral care of the remaining poor.

40 Obermair, *Bozen süd – Bolzano nord*, vol. 1, 196, n. 306. Alhaida makes half *galeta* donations for the illumination of the parish church, St Johann im Dorf and St Oswaldus, describing all four churches as guardians (*tutores*). Six Bern pounds, to be paid annually on the anniversary of her death (*per anniversarius in die obit mei*), are promised for the celebration of masses and the distribution of alms in the form of bread (*panem*) and cheese (*caseus*) to the poor (*Christi paupers*).

41 Obermair, *Bozen süd – Bolzano nord*, vol. 1, 197, n. 310. Gisla in fact divides two *galeta* of oil between six churches in the area surrounding Bozen making each individual *star* worth just under a kilo. These payments are separate from the single *galeta* of oil destined for the parish church. On her death, five *lire* are to be distributed annually to the poor, the money being taken from the same vineyard.

42 Obermair, *Bozen süd – Bolzano nord*, vol. 1, 310, n. 609. The *fabrice* (*Kirchpröpste* in German) were community officials who administered the property of the church as well as other tasks that often had nothing to do with the building proper, i.e. collection of taxes, revenue for water supplies, fines and upkeep of hospitals. See Daniela Rando, 'La Chiesa e il villaggio in area alpine (secoli XIV–XV)', in *Il Gotico nelle Alpi: 1350–1450*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo and Francesca de Gramatica (Trent: Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2002), 52–59.

43 For late medieval economic life in Bozen and Gries, see Hannes Obermair and Volker Stamm, *Zur Ökonomie einer ländlichen Pfarrgemeinde im Spätmittelalter: Das Rechnungsbuch von Gries (Bozen) von 1422 bis 1440* (Bozen: VSL, 2011).

44 Their marriage followed the death of Margaret's first husband, Jakob Fuchs. See Anderson, 'The Loom, the Lady and Her Family Chapels'.

45 See Gustave Pfeifer, '"Neuer" Adel im Bozen des 14. Jahrhunderts Botsch von Florenz und Niklaus Vintler', *Pro Civitate Austriae* 6 (2001): 3–23.

46 He is known in most legal documents by his naturalized name Botsch, a sign of his efforts to integrate into a principally German-speaking region. The migration of Florentines to Trentino and Tyrol began in the late thirteenth century, with a society established in Bozen itself to protect their legal rights and assert the prestige of their original cultural identity. Indeed Botsch never loses the epithet, *de Florentzia*.

47 After the County of Tyrol passed to the Habsburgs in 1363, the Botsch family acquired the title *milites* and were entitled to possess land and castles. The Vintlers, another prosperous mercantile family, struggled to achieve the same acceptance, despite their acquisition of castle Runkelstein in 1385. They finally achieved their goal in the sixteenth century.

48 There was no move to rededicate the high altar. See Chapter 7 for an alternate scenario.

49 Excavations suggest that it was constructed in the mid-fourteenth century, along with the St Nicholas Chapel near the entrance of the church which was also sponsored by a leading local family.

50 See Don Denny, *The Annunciation from the Right: From Early Christian Times to the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977) and Anderson, 'Mary Magdalene and her Dear Sister', 59. A servant in the Anointing scene of the Magdalen cycle also wears the livery colours of the von Brandis.

51 They were discovered and partially restored in 1959, with further work undertaken during 1970–73. The paintings are discussed in Elisabeth Nagy, *Sankt Magdalena im Gschnitztal* (unpublished master's report, Leopold-Franzens University, Innsbruck, 2005).

52 The date is painted directly below the kneeling man. For further reading on this Tyrolean painter, see Magdalena Hormann-Weingartner, 'Neues zum Werk des Meisters Leonhard von Brixen', *Der Schlern* 75 (2001): 342–346.

53   For other examples of such self-identification, see Chapter 2.

54   The literature on St James and the late medieval pilgrimage to Santiago is vast. For a good introduction, see Kathleen M. Ashley and Marilyn Deegan, *Being a Pilgrim. Art and Ritual on the Medieval Routes to Santiago* (Farnham: Lund Humphries, 2009). The medieval pilgrimage path passed through Tyrol via Bozen towards Innsbruck before moving west. The cathedral of Innsbruck is dedicated to St James, and is representative of a trend of such dedications in the region.

55   See St Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Helen Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 187. In this it is congruent with the concept of *solvitur ambulando*, or the potential of walking for free-association and with that problem solving. It originates with Diogenes of Sinope, the ancient Greek biographer of philosophers, who walked about when Zeno of Elea challenged him about the reality of motion. Zeno argued, *reductio ad absurdum*, that the evidence of the senses was illusionary. The metaphorical significance of Petrarch's ascent of the mountain as a means to inner self knowledge is posited by Albrecht Classen, see 'Introduction – Rural Space in the Middle Ages', 40–43.

56   On the significance (or not) of routine activities, see Edward L. Shieffelin, 'Problematising Performance', in *Ritual, Performance, Media*, ed. Felicity Hughes-Freedland (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 194–207 and Frits Staal, 'The Meaninglessness of Ritual', *Nvmen* 26, no. 1 (1979): 2–22.

57   The name refers to one of the most beautiful views in the region, up the Stubaital between the rivers Ruetz and Sill.

58   For a comparative case of the imagined landscape and decentralized pilgrimage networks, see Diana Eck, *India. A Sacred Geography* (New York: Harmony Books, 2012), 1–41. For a discussion of the Alps in early modern literature and its transition into the intellectual campaigns of the modern period, see Martin Korenjak, 'Why Mountains Matter', *Renaissance Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (2017): 179–219.

4

Framing Pilgrimage Practice in Tyrol

After she expired, so powerful an odor of sweetness pervaded the church
Life of Mary Magdalen, Golden Legend[1]
que inibi altissimus demonstrare miracula dignatus est, singularis causa
devotionis magna populi confluat multitude

Pope Sixtus IV, 20 November 1472, St Peter's Rome[2]

The late medieval cult of Mary Magdalen was strong in the Alps thanks to a particular resonance with the sacred landscape. Simply put, with much of her apocryphal life spent in the wilderness, the mountains were a natural fit for devotional art and ritualized practices. As we have seen so far, dedicatory churches stand as marker of deep-seated beliefs, pilgrimage practice and socio-religious networks, but in this chapter the iconography of Mary Magdalen is positioned as a frame for a separate religious phenomenon that brought pilgrims to a parish church. The story is worth rehearsing.

On 25 March 1384, Maundy Thursday and feast day of the Annunciation, a host miracle took place in the church of Sankt Oswald, Seefeld in Tyrol.[3] Local knight Oswald Milser demanded the largest wafer during Communion at the high altar, as a public symbol of his political and social authority. The serving priest could only oblige such arrogance but when the consecrated bread came into contact with Milser's tongue it began to bleed: a punishment for his attitude of affront to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.[4] Legend has it that Milser sank dramatically into the stone floor up to his knees. He then grabbed the high altar for support, but its surface became as pliant as wax, trapping his hands. The sculpted tympanum of the main portal of the church (1468–1472) captures the turning point in the tale, when the priest removed the bloody host from Milser's mouth and returned its preserved form to the paten.[5] The knight's vassal gives a shoulder of support, but also rather amusingly raises the hemline of his master's tunic to reveal the still impounded legs. Humiliated but crucially

humbled after this divine intervention, Milser retreated to nearby Stams Abbey, a Cistercian and pilgrimage foundation, where he was to repent and commit the rest of his days to the service of God.[6]

The sculptural relief above the portal and Jörg Kölderer's *Andachtsbild* or devotional image (*c.* 1500–1502) painted for Emperor Maximilian I, which still hangs in the choir of the church and includes contiguous Latin and German accounts of the miracle in its lower section, draw attention from devotees, visitors and scholars alike (Colour Plate 15).[7] They stand as lasting testaments of artistic endeavour and high-ranking patronage made possible by the blood miracle, and how it was marketed to parishioners, pilgrims and passing travellers over the years, including the early modern French philosopher, Michel de Montaigne.[8] But it was also to generate other penitential imagery in the intervening years that renewed the reputation of the cultic site. Milser's tale was one of sin, contrition, redemption and grace, and these central doctrines found affinity with the hagiography and imagery of Mary Magdalen.

Mary Magdalen's relics in Provence were high on the list for pilgrims seeking redemption from all across Europe. Churches, near and far, harnessed the potential of this activity by commissioning artworks that replicated the experience on a local scale, creating a network of devotion; a strategy that could bolster other miraculous phenomena. This chapter explores the authenticating power of Mary Magdalen in the church of Sankt Oswald in Seefeld. While not the obvious place for the migration of the cult, the international saint offered an ideal exemplar for good Christian behaviour in response to the Eucharistic miracle. What looks like old-fashioned art, parochial in form and content, is in fact an active participant in a transnational imagery of redemption that reinforced the place of Mary Magdalen in the Alps between the local and the universal.

Framing local history

The Magdalen mural cycle is located in the easternmost bay of the north wall of the choir of Sankt Oswald. Its seven scenes are displayed across three registers and separated by simple white frames: Mary Magdalen Anointing the Feet of Christ in the lunette; Noli me tangere, Elevation by Angels in the Wilderness and Blessing at the Cave of La Sainte-Baume in the middle register; her Last Communion, Death and Funeral in the lower register. Each is a concordance, in principle, with the

biblical and apocryphal accounts of the saint, popularized in the visual arts in the late medieval period. The iconography reveals its full significance in light of the scenographic context of the church and will be discussed as such below. However, it is worth noting at this stage the absence of any scenes of preaching or miracles, living or posthumous, creating a stress on the saint's gospel authority and eremitical life (*vita eremitica*).

The Magdalen cycle is one of three painted programmes on the north wall that correlate with the 1384 bleeding host miracle (Figure 4.1). Nearest to the high altar is the life of the titular saint, Oswald of Northumbria (d. 642), recounted in six scenes. His journey to holy martyrdom by dismemberment, as recounted in *Der Heiligen Leben* (late fourteenth century), includes distributing bread and wine to pilgrims and the poor. Alongside his reputation for humility despite his kingly status, it offers a more positive role model than the miscreant Milser who shares his name.[9] To the right of this cycle is a near-destroyed Passion of Christ, comprised of approximately thirteen scenes. While only the Agony in the Garden, Christ before Pontius Pilate (sinopie) and the Mocking of Christ remain legible, the Passion being an Easter programme neatly prefaces its neighbour, the Magdalen cycle.

Figure 4.1 View of choir with Oswald, Passion and Magdalen mural cycles, after 1432. Sankt Oswald, Seefeld (Photo: Author).

All three cycles were produced *a secco* after 1432 by the same artistic workshop, as confirmed by comparisons of figure style and decorative borders.[10] Together they display a meshing of northern Italian, German and Bohemian traditions in form and content. The orchestrator of these artistic confluences is unknown (a by now familiar scenario), but his familiarity with other Magdalen imagery, and the cult in general, in this geographic area is assured – he would certainly have known about Sankt Magdalena in Leutasch, a few miles north of Seefeld, founded by the canons Regular of the Order of St Augustine.[11] Common to the other situations investigated in this book, one church was not enough to sustain a workshop longer than a single summer, necessitating migration and with that the transmission of ideas and visual repertoires. Seefeld's position on the Via Claudia Augusta, like Bozen to the south of the Brenner Pass (discussed in the previous chapter), would have eased access to bustling regional centres and lucrative valleys, peppered with Magdalen dedications. It also guaranteed exposure to the latest trends and prevailing traditions in religious art.

In addition to their regionally informed imagery, both Magdalen and Oswald cycles are notable for their fragmentary scene descriptors in Middle High German, suggesting lay presence and circulation in the sanctuary of the church.[12] Those of the Magdalen cycle are set below the scenes and are simple descriptors: the Anointing is the most complete and reads 'Here Mary Magdalen was worshipping' (*da wart Maria Magdalena werbert*); the Elevation describes her encounter with angels in the wilderness (*da eil[] []a die engel Mariam in der wuel*) (Colour Plate 16).[13]

Beyond such shared features of narrative disposition, artistic idiom and inscriptions, the Magdalen cycle is distinguished from its neighbours by the hallmarks of private patronage. Unlike its adjacent peers, the paintings that comprise the Magdalen cycle are displayed within a recessed niche.[14] Moreover, there are two heraldic shields in the lower corners of the decorative frame of the cycle that lies flush with the wall of the choir. Traces of a splayed eagle, a Habsburg symbol consistent with the guardianship of the church after 1384, are visible in the right shield, while the left contains a fragmentary schematic shape. Below the frame there are remnants of letters, indicating the former presence of a dedicatory or patronal inscription. Later repainting is always a possibility, as with the scene descriptors, but the provision of space for the presentation of arms coeval with the decorative scheme is unquestionable.[15] Such personalization is borne out by the votive imagery that frames the Magdalen cycle in its articulated space.

The internal embrasures of the arch are decorated with a complementary programme of eight saints with their identifying attributes, and they stand within their own fictive niches. On the left, the sequence commences with the crowned Virgin Martyrs, Catherine of Alexandria, Ursula and Agnes and terminates with a female saint wearing a white headdress who may be Martha, the sister of Mary Magdalen (Colour Plate 17). Her attribute is lost but a comparison with the vase-bearing Martha on the left interior shutter of Lucas Moser's Tiefenbronn altarpiece of 1432 lends credibility to the identification (Figure 4.2). Moving to the right embrasure, saints Barbara, Dorothy of Caesarea and Apollonia are followed by a beardless Bishop-saint, the only male presence in the lineup (Colour Plate 18). Again the Tiefenbronn altarpiece helps us out. The right interior shutter displays a clean-shaven Lazarus, the other Bethany sibling, with mitre and crozier.[16] The white frames surrounding each saint align with the registers of the Magdalen cycle (two for the lunette on either side), and this cohesion establishes a gloss on the central imagery, and by extension an intercessional dialogue between the heavenly figures and the devotee below.

A number of the votive saints are drawn from a popular cult in the Alps, the Fourteen Holy Helpers or *Nothelfer*. They offered protection against a variety of daily ills and trials, including toothache, plague, perilous journeys or bad weather, and as such were an interchangeable group, depending upon the requirements of the patron.[17] Mary Magdalen was often co-opted into the cult of the Holy Helpers in the Alpine territories.[18] In Seefeld this alignment and choice of intercessors helped foster typological connections with the Eucharistic miracle.

The onomastic choice and positioning of Dorothy of Caesarea particularly strengthens the relationship between the cycle and the miracle of 1384. She likely stands as a corrective to Dorothy of Starkenberg, the wife of Oswald Milser who also fell victim to the sin of pride. Legend states that on hearing her husband's fate she screamed, 'I'd rather believe that roses blossomed on this barren trunk'. Three roses immediately grew from the tree causing the lady to lose her mind and flee to the nearby mountains.[19] Near the top right of the cycle embrasure, St Dorothy is garbed in penitential purple and carries roses in her basket, a convenient concordance between local legend and standard attribute. She is also alone among her companions in looking directly at the Magdalen cycle. Positioned below Barbara, with her proffered chalice and host, and at an angle to the anointing Magdalen in the lunette of the cycle and the elevated saint

Figure 4.2 Lucas Moser, Mary Magdalen Altarpiece, 1432, panel, 300 × 240 cm, (detail). Sankt Maria Magdalena Church, Tiefenbronn (Photograph courtesy of the Denkmalpflege, Baden-Württemburg; Amy M. Morris).

in the middle register, Dorothy gazes upon the perfect model of humility and its heavenly rewards.[20]

Such visual and spatial distinction is continued through the opposing bays of the south wall of the sanctuary. Instead of complementary mural cycles, we find the bell tower entrance, and proceeding eastwards, two arches with lancet windows. The easternmost window casts its light on the Magdalen cycle. It may have carried a visual programme replete with donor portraits and arms, as can be seen in other churches of the region.[21] The surviving church accounts for Sankt Oswald record the donation of funds by a nobleman in 1465 for such a purpose: '*Mer hab ich gebn dem glaser fier Pfund vo(n) Grauff Eberhartz glass wegn als erz v(er)setzt hat.*'[22] While the exact location of the window is unspecified in the document and the original glass lost, Eberhardt was clearly continuing a tradition of noble family patronage in Sankt Oswald generated by the fame of the host miracle.[23]

Indeed family patronage began with the host relic itself. The wafer was set in the *lunela* of a silver-gilt monstrance, gifted by Parzival von Weineck in the early 1390s, with his arms displayed prominently on the foot.[24] What display strategies were in force for the cult object in the fourteenth-century church are unknown, but it generated enough pilgrim footfall to attract the attention of the Habsburg Counts of Tyrol. In the year of the miracle, it gained the patronage of Leopold III, Duke of Austria, Styria and Carinthia and first Habsburg administrator of the Tyrolean dominion. He paid an annual endowment of 3 Berner Marks to the high altar on 9 July 1386 and this was continued by his son, Frederick IV. Only four years later, Leopold requested a daily Mass in perpetuity, paying by four cartloads of wine together with 4 *mr* Berner.[25]

Under Habsburg guardianship, Sankt Oswald was elevated to a parish. On superseding his father to the dukedom of Tyrol, Frederick turned the scope of patronage to the church itself. He envisaged a larger, more impressive building that would attract and accommodate pilgrims and other travellers using the mountain pass, as well as the enlarged population of Seefeld. A monumental shrine was thus erected to the local *cause célèbre* over a 50-year period. It would go on to receive the patronage of Sigismund of Tyrol and his first wife, Eleanor Stewart, daughter of James I of Scotland, with their impaled arms placed in stone above the main portal to the church. Pilgrimage from the royal court of Innsbruck, which required a substantial journey up the mountainside, brought fame and lustre, but it also attests to the belief in such cultic sites that promised generative miracles long after the originating event.[26]

The choir was completed by 1432, with the latter incorporating a chapel for the all-important relic below the bell tower. Jörg Kölderer's miracle panel, mentioned earlier, confirms the location of the chapel and that it had an opening onto the south aisle of the nave protected by an iron grille. If we look closely at the painting, we can see a pilgrim kneeling before the grille and directing his devotions towards a gold-gilt monstrance that contains the gleaming host. Its proportions are massively exaggerated to give it prominence in a busy composition, while a comparison with the design of the actual monstrance suggests that Kölderer gave the receptacle an imaginative upgrade for the benefit of his patron and publics. It has gained two adoring angels on either side of the central chamber and the microarchitecture above the knop showcases rising pinnacles, crockets and swirling forms.

The reimagining of the fourteenth-century events taking place in the fifteenth-century interior of Sankt Oswald in Kölderer's panel, itself dated to the early sixteenth century, is decidedly problematic for any reconstruction of the church interior. There is always a bending of the truth for effect within the confines of the frame. What was the fate of the Magdalen cycle and its role in the protean visual culture of the church? Perhaps the mural paintings of the north wall were simply omitted from the picture to give dramatic emphasis to Milser's unworthy act at the high altar, or it may document their disappearance below layers of whitewash by 1502.[27] But it is not quite a dead end. A glimpse of a second altar with retable (which remains in place today) in the panel painting prompts us to consider the liturgical topography of the choir.

The overlooked pastoral visitations of 1736 reveal that the church in fact had four altars in the choir.[28] In addition to the high altar dedicated to St Oswald, there was a second altar to the Holy Cross, a third to St Ulrich and a fourth to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Fourteen Holy Helpers.[29] Placement of one of these now-lost secondary altars below the Magdalen niche is likely, given that the decorative frame is approximately 160 cm from the ground and incorporates a cross of consecration.[30] A fruitful comparison with the coeval Tiefenbronn altarpiece by Lucas Moser serves our purpose once more, this time in terms of setting (Figure 4.3). Not only is the altarpiece placed on an altar, it is also cohesive with the surviving mural painting to its immediate left in form and scale, which dates from 1400. The winged altarpiece has a concealed depth that is shared in the Seefeld cycle by merit of its architectural niche, with the central scene of both artworks of paramount importance for their liturgical associations.

There is no surviving documentary reference to a significant Magdalen relic, altar dedication or feast day Mass at Seefeld but this should not be seen as a

Figure 4.3 Interior of Parish Church of St Maria Magdalena in Tiefenbronn, after restoration (Moser altarpiece to far right of apse), 1960 (Photograph, courtesy of the Landesmedienzentrum Baden-Württemberg).

strike against the importance of the cycle in this pilgrimage church, as argued by Amy Morris in the case of Tiefenbronn.[31] The visual arts document cultic practice and gain cogency from their local context. With the choir only newly completed, the Magdalen cycle held a privileged place in a church that owed its changed fortunes to the Holy Week miracle of 1384. Discussion must therefore turn to the iconography, and how the saint's biblical and apocryphal lives offered a timeless parable against the sin of a minor noble.

The universal – local saint

Mary Magdalen was the perfect saint to offer a corrective to the sin of pride enacted by Oswald Milser in this Alpine church. First, her apocryphal life reinforced the importance of proper spiritual preparation for the partaking of communion, be it part of the Divine Office performed in the wilderness or the

viaticum received at the altar of a church. She could lead pilgrims on how to approach the body of Christ with due humility and accept the grace that would be bestowed, as described in the gospels. Secondly, the Magdalen's privileged role as anointer of Christ, after the weeping of penitential tears, forged a link to the ritual practices of Maundy Thursday, the day of the miracle.[32] In the fifty years in which the church was undergoing its rebuild, there was also a maintenance of the visual culture, of the objects and idea that gave shape to the church as a monument to *Corpus Christi*, including the privately endowed Magdalen cycle.

The cult of the Eucharist strongly resonated with the life of Mary Magdalen as recounted in the *Golden Legend* and the Middle German poem, *Der Saelden Hort*, originally illustrated around 1390 and known through two later copies.[33] As we have seen in earlier chapters, the saint's acts of anointing and receiving the holy body, moving from worldly sinner and Paschal witness in Judea to penitent anchorite in the wilderness of Gaul, served as exemplar for both religious and lay devotees across Europe. Her intercessional power in matters of fertility (the Marseille miracle) or the efficacy of her saintly relics for a variety of ailments or atonement of sins gave her widespread appeal for pilgrims. Likewise, this promise of spiritual influence held weight for parishioners in their daily lives, as we shall see later in Chapter 6.

Scholarship has noted how patrons and practitioners of late medieval visual arts were quick to develop a corresponding iconography for Mary Magdalen that became relatively standardized in urban commissions connected with the mendicant orders.[34] As this book makes clear, image cycles in the Alps broke free of such strictures. Numbers of scenes increased, while iconography and design were innovatory. Seefeld is an anomaly in this group apropos its concentrated format, eschewing of popular miracle-working episodes and the reintroduction of an authoritative gospel moment, the *Noli me tangere*, in the redemption sequence that would anticipate later German works (a point I will return to). Its sacramental iconography is nuanced, and speaks to regional confluences and local concerns. More pointedly, that the church fell under the patronage of the Habsburg rulers of Tyrol and its subject nobility allowed for the cult of the Magdalen to become an expression of *Landespatriotismus*, whereby pilgrimage became the means to circulate images of this universal saint.[35]

The sequence begins with the *Anointing* in the lunette of the upper register of the cycle, some 7 m high (Figure 4.4). The centrally placed, kneeling Magdalen dries the feet of Christ with her hair after washing them with her tears. It is her first act of public contrition, but also recognition after renouncing her worldly

Figure 4.4 *Mary Magdalen Anointing the Feet of Christ*, after 1432. Church of Sankt Oswald, Seefeld (Photo: Author).

ways. In turn, she is received and presented as an exemplar of true love and devotion by Christ, as conveyed by his didactic gesture and the brief description in the frame.[36] But here literary and artistic conventions part company. Magdalen hagiography places the Anointing in the House of the Pharisee, and this is replicated in most pictorial cycles in the European tradition with the setting subject to geographical variances.[37] German artworks typically depict the repast outdoors, while Italian versions opt for an indoor setting. In the latter, the open-faced room is typically dominated by a large rectangular table with the diners sitting on the far side and Christ to the immediate left; its horizontal format constructing and emphasizing the humiliating crawl of the penitent sinner-saint.[38]

As a cross-cultural product, the Seefeld Anointing challenges such precise categorization. The action takes place inside a crenellated palace, with a group of men seated at a circular table replete with rounds of bread.[39] The Pharisee has been displaced from what should be his table and now stands to the left. In his place, we have the twelve apostles (as distinguished by their haloes) whose presence invites an alternate interpretation of the scene as the Last Supper, which took place on Maundy Thursday.[40] No Italian or German Magdalen

hagiographical programme can provide an iconographic precedent for this arrangement, driven as it is by local context. However, the architectural setting of this elision, with its two side vignettes, and the round table recalls Pietro Lorenzetti's Last Supper (*c.* 1320) in the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi, or more directly in terms of subject matter, the scene of Anointing in Giovanni da Milano's Magdalen cycle (1365) in the Guidalotti-Rinuccini Chapel in Santa Croce, Florence, demonstrating our master's receptivity to Italian fourteenth-century visual formulae.

The Last Supper witnessed the breaking of bread and the pouring of wine, the body and blood of Christ. But it also included the humble act of Christ washing his disciples' feet (Jn 13:14–16). Both are evident in the Seefeld Anointing; however, it is the honorific Magdalen who assumes Christ's latter role. She is in the process of drying his feet after washing them with her tears. Her exceptionally large, white alabaster vase is placed directly below him, the heady mix of expensive spikenard soon to be sacrificially poured. The cycle thus opens with an honouring of the body of Christ and a humble act of penitence by a woman of rank and wealth, as implied by her fur-lined robe. This is a conflation of Easter and Magdalen narratives surely devised by patron, painter and clerical advisor to visually recollect the host miracle of 1384, an event that took place on that same day in the liturgical calendar.

Colour choice in the paintings reinforces this interpretation in its concordance with performed rituals on Maundy Thursday in the German-speaking lands, including the County of Tyrol. Mary Magdalen's green mantle is a departure from the traditional red, signifying fiery love (*caritas*), cultivated in mendicant ideology and its dependent arts on the Italian peninsula, yet it found considerable purchase in the Alps and beyond. While possibly acknowledging her part in the resurrection and the springing forth of life, a local significance may lie with the day of the host miracle in 1384, Maundy Thursday. The German translation is *Gründonnerstag* or Weeping Thursday, more commonly referred to as Green Thursday.[41] In anticipation of Easter Sunday, penitents were given green branches to mark the completion of the Lenten process as part of the cleansing process.[42] It is also possible that the celebrant priest wore green vestments.[43] Mary Magdalen in her green attire, drying the tears she has wept onto the feet of Christ would be understood both visually and materially as an exemplar (as directed by St Dorothy in the arch embrasure) for those seeking absolution in the sanctuary of Sankt Oswald; one given greater cogency by the recollection of the infamous miracle which took place on the same day in that sacred space.

The redemption narrative continues in the middle register with the *Noli me tangere* (Jn 20:17) (Figure 4.5). It is a rare inclusion in Magdalen mural programmes by this date, yet is surely chosen on account of the saint's starring role as Paschal witness, and her humble attitude in recognition of the miracle of the resurrection.[44] The *apostolorum apostola*, still garbed in green, kneels before Christ in a cultivated garden demarcated by a neat wooden fence. He is not disguised as the gardener described in the gospel text and lacks the spade often represented in the visual arts to this effect. The presence of the unguent vase confirms that Mary Magdalen has come to anoint the dead body of the Saviour, an act of touch. Instead she encounters him resurrected, announced by his flag, but not yet risen to his Father and so she must stay her hand. Words thus articulate the moment of reckoning in the Evangelist's account: her 'master' to his 'touch me not'. Their importance to the painting is emphasized by the presence of speech banners, the only ones in the entire cycle. Mary Magdalen and Christ are given active voices, in contrast to the passive narrative descriptors in the frames. In articulating the moment through visualized words, pose and gesture, the *Noli me tangere* pulls the devotee to a true recognition of divine presence. Ocular engagement precedes a tactile one, reminding that the consecrated

Figure 4.5 Mary Magdalen mural cycle, middle register, after 1432. Sankt Oswald, Seefeld (Photo: Author).

host, the body of Christ, must be taken only after the four stages of penitential obligation.[45] It is a point reinforced by the adjacent Agnes on the left embrasure of the arch who tenderly carries the lamb, the sacrificial *agnus dei* and symbol of humility.

The sightline of the kneeling saint in the *Noli me tangere* connects with her next privileged reception of the divine, the Elevation by Angels, the most popular apocryphal episode in Magdalen imagery of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In contrast to the previous scene she is now hirsute, signalling a transition from the *vita apostolica* to the *vita eremitica*. The hair takes the form of a suit, which conceals her breasts and knees; a contrast with the episode of the saint's last communion on the outer right shutter of the Tiefenbronn altarpiece but entirely consistent with the elevation on the former altarpiece of St Mary Church in Gdańsk, *c*. 1430. In bodily terms, she thus conforms to the exotic qualities of the wild woman typology, popular in the German-speaking territories, but not the overt sensuality and sexuality that would emerge in the later fifteenth century, enhanced by the use of classical contrapposto.[46] However, her description in the painting is also a question of continuity with past models. The Seefeld Magdalen recalls the sculptural rendition in the basilica of SS John in Toruń from the late fourteenth century, particularly the covered body, delicate countenance and three-quarters pose as she is raised aloft. While it is unlikely that our master saw this particular work directly, we should assume the currency of such a vision, given its widespread articulation in sermons and hagiographical literature.

The episode takes place during her thirty-year eremitical retreat to the wilderness, as recounted in the *Golden Legend* (but not *Der Sailden Hort*) and here represented as a verdant valley between rocky mountainsides, a sacralizing of the Alpine landscape that lies beyond the walls of the church. Once again we see the Magdalen renouncing somatic nourishment as atonement for her former sins, her spiritual well-being externalized in physical terms, aligning the consumption of the metaphysical host with sacred beauty.[47]

A gift for artists and patrons alike this divine transformation served the 'inner eyes' of the humble devotee[48]: a sustained meditation on the highest of communions in the safety of the church precinct. The touch of the Seefeld angels enhances these qualities. It is reverential yet emphatic, drawing the eye to different parts of the saint's mystically sustained body and her halo. The meditative qualities of the painting are reinforced through the V-shape of the mountains, an unprecedented arrangement that not only encloses but

also displays the elevated saint. Her penitential experience is circumscribed. Centrally positioned in the cycle, the votive image acts as 'a visual support for the sacrament of Communion', reinforcing the likelihood of an altar below with a dedication to the saint.[49] Comparison with the high altarpieces of Sankt Magdalena in Mareit (two valleys south of the Brenner Pass and to be discussed in the following chapter) and later that of Tilman Riemenschneider for Sankt Magdalena in Münnerstadt (1492) indicate the success of this visual formula and the long-term appeal of the authoritative iconography of the saint in the German-speaking territories.[50]

The Seefeld cycle thus had a dual function: to provide a dignified back drop to the performance of the sacrament of the Eucharist directly below and to connect with the disrupted rite in 1384. This was achieved in terms of iconography and composition, with the saint's three-quarters profile in the scene of Elevation turned towards the frontally positioned high altar, locus of the original sin and by then a contact relic for pilgrims. Mary Magdalen looks down through the *Noli me tangere* in the direction of the high altar. Votive image and overall programme are anchoring themselves to and reminding devotees of that defining event.

The circumscribed experience for patron and pilgrim links to the next eremitical episode. At the far right of the middle register, Mary Magdalen kneels in the mouth of the cave of La Sainte-Baume, the popular pilgrimage site in Provence, well known through circulating accounts since 1170.[51] In the painting she receives a blessing from the hermit who lived nearby, but only saw her when she was preparing her soul for death. It is a case of revelation at the appropriate time, and one reinforced pictorially given that his back is turned to the scene of Elevation.[52]

Notwithstanding degradation of painted surfaces, a comparison between the two eremitical Magdalens reveals that her hair has darkened and skin turned grey around the eyes. Painterly aesthetics are employed as a fundamental communicator of her waning life force, indicating that substantial time has now passed since the previous scene. The hermit is to take a message to Maximin, Bishop of Aix and one of the Magdalen's companions from the holy land, that in a year's time she will appear in his cathedral to receive last communion and funeral rites.

These eschatological processes are played out in the cycle's lower register (Figure 4.6). Just like the scenes of Anointing and Elevation above, their extended treatment is significant in formulation. For although it is comprised of three separate scenes like the middle register, they take place within a single

Figure 4.6 Mary Magdalen mural cycle, lower register, after 1432. Sankt Oswald, Seefeld (Photo: Author).

architectural structure of gothic style. It is an ambitious design that attempts to resolve issues of space and narrative, with reasonable success. Although we might cite as inspiration the newly vaulted choir of Sankt Oswald, our master once again appears to have looked to the arts of the past. It is here that discussion turns to the revival of visual solutions developed by the Paduan artist, Guariento d'Arpo, during the late fourteenth century.

A comparison with the choir frescoes by Guariento in the church of the Eremitani in Padua, dated *c.* 1360–1365 offers compelling evidence of the Seefeld Master's interest in fourteenth-century art.[53] He was clearly impressed by the architectural settings of the scenes of Philip Convoking the Bishops and Priests and the Vestition of Augustine on the north wall of the choir and how they explored space from different perspectives (Figure 4.7). The projecting superstructure in the Convocation offered a confident solution for the lower register of the cycle in Seefeld, while the Vestition accommodated a polyscenic narrative, including the repetition of Monica, mother of Augustine. Her variations on a pose across different times were also expressed within a constrained space, a shared challenge for our master. Given two options, his solution was to conflate.

Figure 4.7 Guariento, Scenes from Lives of Philip and Augustine, 1361–5, fresco, (detail). Church of the Eremitani, Padua (Courtesy of the Ufficio Diocesano per L'Arte Sacra e i Beni Culturali Eccelsiastici, Padua; Photo: Author).

What makes this point all the more striking, art historically, is the process of the reception. Like Altichierio da Zevio, Guariento was evidently considered a 'living force' in the fifteenth century on the other side of the Alps.[54] As discussed in the previous chapter, he had already shaken up the local schools in Bozen from the 1360s onwards, by way of the wall paintings for the Dominican church. They attest to his fascination with architectural complexity, space and ornament, ideas that enjoyed great diffusion via the Masters of Sankt Johann im Dorf and Sankt Vigilius, and Hans Stotzinger.[55] However, none of their translations presage the precise conflation in Seefeld. It is either a coincidence or our master saw the prototype.[56] Given Seefeld's proximity to the Via Claudia Augusta and the Brenner Pass, the lowest crossing point of the Alps, such travel was perfectly feasible.

Guariento's visual strategies helped the Seefeld master to solve the problem of a sustained meditation on the final rituals enacted upon Christian body and soul in the parish church of Sankt Oswald; one recently conferred baptismal and

burial rights. From the left we find the Magdalen kneeling in prayer before Bishop St Maximin as she receives her last communion. She is now garbed solely in a blue dress (the cuffs are visible in the *Noli me tangere*) and her hair has returned to normal proportions. This non-hirsute guise at the altar is at odds with coeval German and north Tyrolean iconographical interpretations, including the wall paintings of the nearby pilgrimage church of Sankt Magdalena in Gschnitz (two valleys north of the Brenner Pass) and the Tiefenbronn altarpiece. And while it is indebted to fourteenth-century models, for example in the Nuremberg Graduale (134*r*) and the fresco cycle in Dusch in the Swiss Grisons, discussed in Chapter 2, the fact that she is not returned to her original fur-lined robes indicates intentionality of design.[57] The angels who transported her from the wilderness to the oratory, as described in the apocryphal legend and typically depicted in other pictorial cycles, are also missing.[58] It would seem that the painter was charged to convey her earthly presence at the performance of the sacrament. Situated directly below the *Noli me tangere*, where contact was first denied, Mary Magdalen demonstrates how after the thirty-year penance played out in the scenes above she is now suitably prepared and worthy to receive *Corpus Christi*.

The middle scene focuses on the ensuing moment of her death after receiving the viaticum – a rare liminal moment in Alpine and pan-European contexts. The saint kneels on a wooden board placed in front of the marble step before the altar, in a final act of humility, a feature picked up in the Münnerstadt altarpiece nearly sixty years later.[59] As she does so, she slightly turns towards the picture plane, creating an immersive experience for those who would have kneeled before the now-lost altar contemplating their own sins. It was an experience that would have been all the more intensified by the surrounding Holy Helpers, chosen and thus poised to intercede.

Unbeknown to the chanting Bishop and his candle-bearing acolytes and clerics who stand behind the saint, an angel has appeared before the altar with a cloth of honour to carry away the Magdalen's soul. Comparative cycles typically represent the eidolon or little soul already in the cloth and being transported upwards to heaven. But it is the transformative process that matters here, for her soul is fully prepared to be received by the divine's spiritual agent. With lessons learnt from Guariento's Monica, repetition of setting, dress and posture from the previous scene slows everything down for the contemplative gaze. The posture of the Magdalen also relates to her original anointing act in the lunette directly above, grace being channelled in a vertically downward motion through the pivotal scene of elevation and on to the altar below.

The final scene remains in the same ecclesiastical space but is viewed from a different perspective, as in the Eremitani Vestition, allowing the devotee to witness the body of the saint as it lies in its porphyry sarcophagus. Maximin presides over the funeral ceremony, his crosier symbolizing doctrinal authority and jurisdiction, while his clerics face out and chant from the shared antiphonary. Lazarus, also a Bishop, contributes to this mise-en-scène from the wings.

We might remember that the episode of the Magdalen's funeral was first represented on the central Italian Magdalen Master panel dated to around 1280, just after the saint's body had been 'discovered' in 1279 by Charles of Salerno, transferring the cult from Vézelay in Burgundy to Saint-Maximin in Provence. It reappears in the lengthy mural programmes of the late fourteenth- through fifteenth-century Alps but with a change in significance and function.[60] As discussed in Chapter 1, the Magdalen Master panel addressed concerns over relic authenticity after the Angevin holy theft. Using the gabled panel format pioneered by the new mendicant orders and aspirant communities, the entombed hirsute Magdalen visually ratified connections to the established pilgrimage destination of La Sainte-Baume and the basilica of Saint-Maximin, where the translated relics were held; papal sanction would come in 1295.

The Seefeld mural in contrast belongs to a parish church in the Alps, the likely product of private dynastic endowment but with appeal to pilgrims who saw the church, with its legend, contact relics and respondent artworks, as a destination on the map of devotion. Mary Magdalen is thus depicted bound in neatly prepared funerary linen and the tilted angle displays her corporeality as part of a local authentication, an assertion of real presence and proximity in lieu of the actual relics much like the Carema altarpiece from the Aosta Valley. The painting emphasizes proper burial process and care of the host body, *intero*, after the departure of the soul. The material remains are after all the locus of the prayers of the living and of profound concern; they offered a vital connection between this world and the next.

Martha and Lazarus, who stand in the lower wings of the Magdalen niche and face out towards the viewer, reinforce these final rituals. Although bereft of her attribute, the positioning of Martha's hands and particularly the gathering of the robe by her right to avoid direct contact with a sacral object bears out the earlier comparison with the Tiefenbronn altarpiece. If she was originally carrying an alabaster vessel, then both image cycles stand testament to an acceptance of Martha's status as myrrhophore in Church exegesis and the visual arts during the fifteenth century; an elision of her presence at the resurrection of Lazarus – who

is represented directly opposite in the right embrasure of the Seefeld cycle – with that of Christ.[61] Understood as a privileged witness in the Easter story, she now bears oil for the anointing of her sister.[62]

It is a fitting framework for this redemptive cycle that is itself a gloss on receiving the divine on the feast of Maundy Thursday. Mary Magdalen anointing the feet of Christ created an important link with the foot washing that would take place on the day of penitence, which is the day on which the miracle happened, and it looked forward to her encounter with the resurrected Christ, as played out in the scene below. It is worth recalling, in this light, that Magdalen homilies were given during Holy Week across Christendom with Augustine famously describing on Easter Sunday the women's privileged position in the salvation narrative as '*per feminam mors, per feminam vita*'.[63] While the originating sin in Seefeld lay with Milser, rather than Eve, the universally celebrated Mary Magdalen exemplified the route to redemption.

The imagery of redemption

The iconography of Mary Magdalen offered an ideal reception of the Milser miracle for later generations of parishioners and pilgrims. Her tale of redemption was derived from the gospels, giving it ultimate authority but also hope in Holy Week. It was a bridge between the 25 March and the moveable feast of Easter, key events in the liturgical calendar at Seefeld. Who better to anoint the feet of Jesus than the woman who had fallen so low? Her tears reminded penitents of the foot washing on Maundy Thursday, while green coloured their journey from satisfaction to absolution. Who better to teach about restraint than she who was told not to touch? Selfish pride would be replaced by humble devotion. Such a controlled programme ruled out the apocryphal scenes of worldly sin, perilous sea-journeys, evangelical mission and miracle working of Italian and northern Magdalen cycles, yet these omissions are important to the successful translation of the host-miracle narrative. Like the injured host in the monstrance, the Magdalen as divinely sustained being was a miracle on display. What grounds the cycle in the choir of Sankt Oswald, aligning it with collective memories and ritual performances, are the temporal sacraments enacted in church space. They promised the reward of communion and anointing that was given to Mary Magdalen and, eventually, Oswald Milser, as part of their last rites.

The Seefeld mural cycle carries a memory of a specific date, place and most importantly an idea about the humility required in the presence of the divine. However, it is also a contributor to the enduring and widespread appeal of Mary Magdalen and the importance of the cross-cultural Alps in sustaining her late medieval identity that is grounded in image, faith and place. The Seefeld cycle has a peer in Lucas Moser's altarpiece, in terms of structure, liturgy and, for the most part, iconography. And while both strike their own paths according to local context, together they herald the format and content of the Münnerstadt Magdalen altarpiece, completed by Tilman Riemenschneider in 1492. A hirsute Magdalen in the central niche links symbolically to the celebration of the Mass at the altar below, while the selected wing scenes emphasize her gospel authority and the rewards of penitence. In doing so, it reminds us of the importance of wall paintings, alongside prints, panels and sculpture, in the development and circulation of ideas for religious art in this mountainous terrain.

The Seefeld cycle certainly enhances our understanding of the Magdalen's status as 'figurehead for eucharistic devotion' and its intertwining with the wild woman typology, but it also prompts new questions of iconographical paradigms and geographical parameters in art historical studies.[64] The paintings blur the boundaries between German and Italian production, and thus warn against taxonomic certainties. After all, they were produced by a travelling artisan who not only carried in hand and mind knowledge of visual repertoires, but also had the ability to tailor them to specific requirements, as evidenced by his site-specific references to Guariento's Eremitani frescoes.

The revival of past arts for the accessibility of a local phenomenon gives new meaning and value to this little-studied mural cycle. It is not canonical, the tale end of a seemingly generalized tradition of Magdalen imagery common to the late medieval Italian peninsula. There is greater fluidity in conception and meaning in the iconographical programme. The architectural niche provides the structural depth of a winged altarpiece, with the helper saints providing an exegetical framework for the viewing publics. But there is more at stake. By sublimating the historicity of the local host miracle through a universally revered saint who played a starring role in the doctrine of salvation (rather than the dedicatory, Oswald, whose humility was apt but not bound to the liturgical rites of Holy Week), the cycle becomes a monument of personal endeavour. It was likely commissioned by one of Sankt Oswald's rich aristocratic benefactors, perhaps one of the Habsburgs or an allied family, and played an intended role in the wider decorative scheme of the choir and church as a whole. Indeed, along

with the developing architecture, and later sculpture and panel painting, the mural cycle offered a resolute response to the events of 1384.

A tale about past lives began this chapter, exploring why a mural cycle of Mary Magdalen appeared on the walls of Sankt Oswald in Seefeld, a parish and pilgrimage church that found fame through a bleeding host miracle. But the case study does not standalone in its localized representation of Mary Magdalen in the Alps by means of art and devotional practices. In the next chapter, we move from the role of local sacred history in cult building to its place in local working life, focusing on miners in the mountains and how Mary Magdalen participated in their physical and devotional lives.

Notes

1   Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 381.

2   Papal Bull, Nr 80, Diözesanarchiv, Brixen, Konsistorialarchiv. This chapter was previously published as 'Mary Magdalen and the Imagery of Redemption: Reception and Revival in Fifteenth-Century Tyrol', *Predella. Journal of Visual Art* 35 (2015): 77–97. Open access: http://www.predella.it/index.php/cerca/2014-05-20-06-07-38/51-issue-35/283-index-35.html

3   Seefeld lies on the Alpine pass between the mountains of Mieming, Wetterstein and Karwendel, 20 km northwest of Innsbruck (Austria).

4   For the origins of the legend, see N. Mayr, 'Oswald Milser oder wie eine Mirakellegende entsteht', *Tiroler Heimatblätter* 57 (1982): 102–109. For the Europe-wide paradigm of bleeding hosts that find origin in tales of Jewish profanation see, Mitchell Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom. Violence and Memory and Visual Culture at the Host Miracle Shrines of Germany and Austria* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2012), 9–11.

5   The portal was sculpted by masters of the Innsbruck lodge, under the direction of Andre von Tiers and financed by Archduke Sigismund of Tyrol, whose arms appear in the canopy.

6   Milser founded a Holy Blood chapel at Stams. It was lost during the eighteenth-century rebuild.

7   For discussion of Kölderer's panel, see Gert Ammann and Günther Dankl, eds., *Heiltum und Wallfahrt* (Innsbruck: Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, 1988). For arts patronage, see Andrea Schiechl, 'Who Was (or Were) Jörg Kölderer? Innsbruck Court Painter and Tyrolean Master Builder', in *Maximilian I and the Age of Dürer*, ed. Eva Michel (Munich: Prestel, 2012), 81–89.

8 Montaigne arrived in Seefeld on 23 October 1580, during a period of ill health for which he was seeking any cure, including visits to important pilgrimage sites. He saw the contact relics at Sankt Oswald, read the descriptions on Kölderer's panel and learned first-hand of a miracle that had purportedly taken place the day before, when a man was saved from choking on his food. See Michel de Montaigne, *Journal de voyage*, ed. Fausta Garavini (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 136–137. Peter Canisius, the Jesuit saint wrote about the miracle in his *Von dem hoch und weitberhümpten Wunderzeichen, so sich… auf dem Seefeld… zugetragen* (Dillingen: Johannes Mayer, 1580), by the request of Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol.

9 On the continental dimensions of St Oswald's cult see most recently, Marianne E. Kalinke, *St. Oswald of Northumbria. Continental Metamorphoses* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005). As a warrior king, St Oswald would have appealed to the Counts of Tyrol who moved their court from Meran to Innsbruck in 1420. Their patronage of the church is discussed below.

10 It is most likely that the paintings were added after the completion of the choir. They were discovered in 1950–1951, have no documentary references and have hitherto received scant attention. See Johanna Gritsch, *Kulturberichte* 30 (Friday, 28 July 1950): 6, and *Seefeld Tirol* (Munich: Schnell & Steiner, 1961), 3 and 6; Lene Weingartner, 'Neuentdeckte gotische Wandgemälde in Tirol', *Tirol. Nature-Art-People-Life* 26 (Summer 1964): 17; Anton Triendl, *Seefeld/Tirol. Parish Church of St Oswald* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2006), 10.

11 For a map of the Magdalen image cycles in the area, see Figure 2.1 in Anderson, 'Mary Magdalene and her Dear Sister', 46. Sankt Magdalena in Oberleutasch was founded in 1190 by the Augustinian monastery of Polling in Upper Bavaria. It has undergone several rebuilds with no surviving imagery from the late medieval period.

12 Those of the Oswald cycle are restricted to the lower decorative strip and feature below and between the roundels depicting saints Oswald and Nicholas. It suggests that the story of Mary Magdalen required some explication.

13 The texts were perhaps inspired by religious plays performed in Innsbruck, such as the Thuringian Easter play of 1391. Full text published in *Das Innsbrucker Osterspiel: Das Osterspiel von Muri. Mittelhochdeutsch und Neuhochdeutsch*, ed. and trans. Rudolf Meier (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1962).

14 The architectural space implies that the cycle was planned for during the first building phase of the new church, financed by Duke Friedrich IV. A cross of consecration is incorporated in the frame of the cycle; a demarcation of its sacrality, see n. 30.

15 An inscription accompanies the Marian cycle on the south nave wall of the parish church of Terlan in South Tyrol, including date of execution (1407) and the

names of patrons and artist. See Leo Andergassen, *Arte sacra a Terlano* (Bolzano: Pluristamp, 1994), 27.

16 The Tiefenbronn Martha and Lazarus are securely identified by inscriptions in their haloes. I will return to the iconographical significance of Martha at the end of the chapter.

17 See Marina Testa, *I quattordici santi ausiliari: origini e sviluppo del culto in Alto Adige* (Bolzano: Provincia Autonoma, 1996) and Leo Andergassen, 'Vierzehnheiligen in Südtirol – Kultgenese und Verehrungstradition', *Der Schlern* 66 (1992): 681–732. The cult of the Holy Helpers originated in southern Germany, with the first images appearing in the choir of Regensburg cathedral in *c.* 1304. In 1448 a sanctuary dedicated to the *Vierzehnheiligen* was founded in the diocese of Bamberg in response to the bubonic plague.

18 Laura Dal Prà, 'La cultura dell'immagine nel Trentino. Il sacro', in *Le vie del Gotico. Il Trentino fra Trecento e Quattrocento*, ed. Laura Dal Prà, Ezio Chini and Maria Botteri Ottaviani (Trento: Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Servizio Beni Culturali, 2002), 57–59.

19 The story of Milser's wife is recounted in Anon., *Wunder der Furcht und Liebe in der gegen vierhundert Jahre mit Gnaden Scheinbaren Hostie zu Seefeld Landes Tyrol…* (Innsbruck: Joh. Thom von Irattner, 1773), 23–26.

20 Barbara was invoked against sudden death by lightning, in reference to her own father's death when attempting to decapitate her with a sword. The chalice and host offer the promise of last communion, an appropriate gloss on the prophecy enacted by the Magdalen's anointing and a correlation with the overall redemption narrative. See below for further concordances between the Holy Helpers and the Magdalen imagery.

21 For example, the Hanstein window with its donors, Hans Laun and Amelie von Rugendorf, found in the north side of the nave (second bay west) of the pilgrimage church of St Leonhard in Tamsweg (Austria). See Ernst Bacher et al., *Die Mittelalterlichen Glasgemälde in Salzburg, Tirol und Vorarlberg*, ed. Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi Österreich IV (Vienna: Böhlau, 2007).

22 TLA, Kirchenbaurechnung der Kirche Seefeld, HS. 5325, Teil 13, fol. 93*r*. See Paul Frankl, *Peter Hemmel. Glasmaler von Andlau* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1956), 28 and Bacher et al., *Die Mittelalterlichen Glasgemälde*, 462 and 464–468.

23 The renown of the blood miracle was spread by pilgrim badges and prints, including the hand-coloured woodcut now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington (Rosenwald Collection, inv. no. 1943.3.643) and a badge in a private collection, illustrated in Ammann and Dankl, *Heiltum and Wallfahrt*.

24 My thanks to sacristan Andrea Neuen for kindly allowing access and photography.

25 In the same year Parzival von Weineck donated five cartloads of wine from his land in the Etsch Valley for two annual masses in Sankt Oswald.

26 Eleanor made frequent visits to Sankt Oswald in Seefeld at the urging of her husband, probably in relation to his desire to have a child. Although there are no images of the Marseille fertility miracle in the Magdalen cycle, the alignment with the bleeding host with its generative qualities may have been cause enough. See Chapter 7, n. 33 for further discussion of Eleanor and fertility miracles as part of a reception history.

27 The Holy Blood Chapel built above the sacristy on the north wall was completed by 1516, on the orders of Maximilian I, with a window perforating the Passion cycle.

28 'habet 4 (*sic*) altaria in choro ecclesie'. Brixen, Diözesanarchiv, *Protocolli Visitali* 1736, fol. 82*v*.

29 '2 altare S. Crucis… ex parte Evangelisti, 3tius altare in honore S. Uldalricis, 4tius altare ex parte Epistolae in honore di B[eate] V[ergine] et 14 ausiliatori' (*sic*), ibid. Earlier visitations do not include such detailed descriptions; the fifteenth-century visitation is lost. Since the dedication of the fourth altar changes to just the Virgin Mary in Heaven in the 1757 visitation, it is possible that one of the altars carried a dedication to Mary Magdalen on completion of the choir.

30 For a good introduction to the function of the crosses, see Andrew Spicer, '"To show that the place is divine": consecration crosses revisited', in *Images and Objects in Ritual Practices in Medieval and Early Modern Northern and Central Europeed*, ed. Krista Kodres and Anu Mänd (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 34–52.

31 The Tiefenbronn altarpiece has a dedicatory inscription that names Mary Magdalen (alongside Anthony and Erhard), confirming the dedication of the altar below. It also provides a persuasive argument for the original content of the corpus. See Amy M. Morris, *Lucas Moser's 'St-Magdalene Altarpiece': Solving the Riddle of the Sphinx* (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2006), 120–123.

32 A priest and twelve choristers would re-enact the washing of the apostles' feet. See Robert W. Scribner, 'Ritual and Popular Religion in Catholic Germany at the Time of the Reformation', in *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London and Ronceverte: Hambledon Press, 1987), 23 and n. 24.

33 Most often it is in connection with the feast of *Corpus Christi*. Blessed Juliana's vision of *c*. 1230 in Liège and her subsequent petitions led to *Corpus Christi* being ratified by Papal Bull in 1264, with the liturgy including a mass and an office for the feast and its octave. See Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 188. For the *Saelden Hort* as iconographical model, see Amy M. Morris, 'The German Iconography', 75–104, esp. 93.

34   For further discussion and bibliography, see essays in Erhadt and Morris, *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies* and Loewen and Waugh, *Mary Magdalene in Medieval Culture.*

35   See Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Towards a Geography of Art* (Chicago, IL and London: Chicago University Press, 2004), 149–150.

36   For a discussion of the *computatio digitorum*, see Anderson, 'Mary Magdalene and her Dear Sister', 59–64.

37   Morris, 'The German Iconography', 88–89.

38   For example, in Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll (see Chapter 3), also the dedicatory chapels in the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi, the Palazzo del Podestà in Florence, San Lorenzo in Naples and San Domenico in Spoleto. It is also present in the Brancacci chapel in San Domenico and the Pipino chapel of San Pietro a Maiella, both Naples.

39   A round table at the *Last Supper* and the prominent display of the Eucharistic wafer by Christ is found on the predella wing of the Pulkau Passion Altarpiece (1520). Although not directly connected in terms of production, it testifies to the regional currency of such associations and artistic formulae in pre-Reformation Europe.

40   A similar conflation appears on the sculpted west entrance tympanum of Ste. Marie-Madeleine, in Neuilly-en-Donjon, dated 1125–1150, with the horizontal format of the sculpted table and the twelve apostles necessitated by their position on the lintel. The scene is part of a larger programme of redemption through female archetypes, namely Eve and the Virgin Mary.

41   Latin *dies viridium*. It originates from the Middle High German, *greinen* or *weinen* (to weep), see Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 9 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1971), 878.

42   Altars were washed on this day as part of cleansing rituals, see Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2004), 88.

43   See Karl Adam Heinrich Kellner, *Heortologie oder die geschichtliche Entwicklung des Kirchenjahres und der Heiligenfeste von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart* (Freiburg: Herder, 1911), 51ff.

44   The scene is typically found in Christ life cycles in the fifteenth century, see Chapter 7.

45   Contrition, confession, satisfaction and absolution, as ratified by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.

46   Morris, 'Lucas Moser's "St-Magdalene Altarpiece"', 166. See also Joanna Antunes, 'The Late-Medieval Mary Magdalene. Sacredness, Otherness and Wildness', in Loewen and Waugh, *Mary Magdalene in Medieval Culture*, 116–139, esp. 118–121 and Michelle Moseley-Christian, 'From Page to Print: the transformation of the "wild woman" in early modern Northern engravings', *Word and Image. A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry* 27, no. 4 (2011): 429–442.

47 With the obvious exception of Donatello's Mary Magdalen (*c.* 1457) and respondent artworks in the Florentine context.

48 Herbert Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Peterborough and Plymouth: Broadview Press, 2004), 167. In the *Golden Legend* the Magdalen's daily elevations were concealed from all human sight until one year before her self-prophesized death. For the safety of viewing rather than touching the consecrated host, but also how that spiritual or ocular viewing was theologically problematic, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 86–90.

49 Morris, 'Lucas Moser's "St-Magdalene Altarpiece"', 159.

50 See Julien Chapuis, *Tilman Riemenschneider. Master Sculptor of the Late Middle Ages* (New Haven, CT and Yale: Yale University Press, 1999), 208–221. See Chapter 5 for the Mareit altarpieces.

51 Webb, 'Raimondo and the Magdalen', 1–18. See Chapter 1.

52 The hermit may represent the theological advisor of the cycle, given that he is proportionally dominant in the episode and carries a book in his left hand.

53 For the dating of the cycle, see Louise Bourdua, 'De origine et progressu ordinis fratrum heremitarum: Guariento and the Eremitani in Padua', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 66 (1998): 191–192 and Janis Elliott, 'Augustine and the New Augustinianism in the Choir Frescoes of the Eremitani, Padua', in *Art and the Augustinian Order. Art in Early Renaissance Italy*, ed. Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 99–126, esp. 101.

54 John Richards, 'Oblivion Deferred: Altichiero in the Fifteenth Century', *RIHA Journal* 73 (2013): para. 4, accessed 15 August 2016, http://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2013/2013-jul-sep/richards-altichiero. The detached fresco depicting the Madonna and Child enthroned with a kneeling donor being presented by Anthony Abbot, from the cathedral of St Stephen in Vienna (now in the Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. 13924), attests to the diffusion of Altichiero's style beyond the Alps at the turn of the century. See Andrea De Marchi, Tiziana Franco, and Silvia Spada Pintarelli, *Trecento, Pittori gotici a Bolzano* (Bolzano: TEMI Editrice, 2000), cat. no. 31.

55 Tiziana Franco, 'Tra Padova, Verona e le Alpi', in De Marchi, Franco and Spada Pintarelli, *Trecento, Pittori gotici a Bolzano*, 149–165. Stotzinger was probably from southern Germany but his artistic formation, like the Urban IV Master, was indebted to northern Italian trends. See Andreas Besold, 'Il gotico internazionale: Influssi nordici', in De Marchi, Franco and Spada Pintarelli, *Trecento, Pittori gotici a Bolzano*, 195–197.

56 The architecture and battle scenes in the Oswald cycle suggest that the master also looked at the frescoes by Altichiero in the chapel of San Giacomo in the basilica of

Sant'Antonio in Padua (from 1372). The great pilgrimage church was a showcase for the arts of the fourteenth century.

57 The Nuremberg Graduale is illustrated in Morris, 'The German Iconography', 91.

58 The angels are present in the final episode of the Magdalen cycle in Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll, painted before 1387. See Chapter 3.

59 The board extends beyond the column to the right suggesting it is of sizeable proportions. The artist has been at pains to render distinct the grained wood in contrast to the polished marble of the altar, an insistent materiality that clearly bore import in the context of the church. A symbol of humility would align well with the performance of penitence in Seefeld.

60 The scene (fragmentary) is also present in a little-known mural cycle in Copertino (Lecce) in southern Italy, see Sergio Ortese, 'Il ciclo della Maddalena nel Castello di Copertino, in Percorsi di Conoscenza e Tutela', in *Studi in onore di Michele d'Elia*, ed. Francesco Abbate (Pozzuoli: Paparo, 2008), 95–109. Ortese proposes a private commission context on account of surviving heraldry.

61 See Allie M. Ernst, *Martha from the Margins: The Authority of Martha in the Early Christian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), esp. section 2.2.4.

62 In the *Golden Legend*, Martha sprinkles holy water over the dragon of Tarascon to end its terrorizing of the town, and so the aspergillum became her standard attribute in the visual arts. In church ritual, it is used to sprinkle holy water on the altar after the rite of entrance for Sunday Mass, in reference to Psalm 51, 'Asperges me, Domine, hyssop'.

63 Augustine, 'Sermo 232', in *Opera Omnia…*, PL vol. 38, 1107–1112, esp. 1108. The influence of the Augustinian canons, and the writings of their founder, may have come via the monastery in Polling, see n. 11, or Wilten Abbey, a Premonstratensian foundation in Innsbruck.

64 Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 224 and n. 85. The alignment of the Magdalen cult with the miracle in the choir adds further nuance to the phenomenon of host-miracle sites in the German-speaking territories.

5

Mining Devotion in the Mountains

So far Mary Magdalen has been positioned as a networked entity in the physical and devotional landscape of the Alps, moving within and across parish and pilgrimage contexts. In the process, the saint became a spiritual presence over the mountainous territory with artworks pointing to this form of protection and surveillance through their iconographical programmes. Whether the sculpted altarpiece of Carema or the mural paintings of Dusch, Bozen or Seefeld, the saint's mystical elevation by a chorus of angels in the landscape features prominently and in conjunction with the rocky cave which provided her with refuge, both of which had resonance with the mountainous territory. The vertical movement of the saint's body between earth and sky proved to be popular with late medieval parishioners in the Alps, from those who worked the land to those who ruled or administered the faith. Staying in the 'land in the mountains', this chapter adds a further dimension to how the Magdalen cult became embedded in mountain life and culture, namely through the intersection of the materiality of art, devotion and the mining industry.

In Colour Plate 19, two miners are at work on a mountain. One is pushing a loaded truck reinforced with iron bands out of a mine adit.[1] The wooden struts are painted brown to differentiate from the dark tones of the receding tunnel and its rocky mouth. The other worker is kneeling and about to strike a blow into the mountain surface, his mallet swinging up to meet the readied pick. These tools are the traditional symbols of mining but it is not just technology that makes the men emblematic. Both are dressed in inordinately bright colours for such a dirty, grimy job: from jaunty red beret to yellow-striped hose and darted sleeves. They are clothes of prosperity linked to the productivity of the mine but this vignette of real-life industry also speaks to heavenly riches. Above the workers hover (seemingly unbeknown) the enormous naked feet of Mary Magdalen, which as our gaze rises upwards transform into hairy legs made resplendent by the application of gold leaf. These tiny workers are seemingly excavating the very

cave of the saint, her wilderness retreat for thirty years, according to apocryphal legend.

Mary Magdalen's self-imposed exile in the wilderness was an inspirational episode for pilgrims, poets and artists across the centuries and remains an important mode of enquiry for both historians and the faithful today. Their journeys actual and imagined to the Magdalen's grotto at La Sainte-Baume in Provence attest to the numinous power of the mountains and the significance of the rocky landscape as place of spiritual retreat and renewal. For the fifteenth-century miners of the Schneeberg Mountain (2355 m) in Mareit, southwest of the Brenner Pass, Mary Magdalen mattered in a very real and practical way. The saint offered protection while they tapped the rich veins of silver, lead and zinc ore. This chapter focuses on the altarpieces commissioned by the community of miners (*Knappen*) for the church of Sankt Magdalena (*Knappenkirche*) and how their sculpted and painted surfaces connected the saint's legend with the miners' daily labours of moving up and down the mountain, an extraction of sacred iconography from the material history of the landscape.

Mining the iconography of Mary Magdalen

The miners' church of Sankt Magdalena in Mareit is found on the Magdalen hill in the Ridnaun Valley and in the vicinity of the important town of Sterzing in South Tyrol (Figure 5.1).[2] It is first mentioned in 1273 when Bishop Heinrich of Chiemsee (the German diocese northeast of Innsbruck) endowed the high altar of the *Capella Sancte Marie Magdalene* with a forty-day indulgence for those faithful who contribute to the restructuring of the chapel after it was ruined by fire.[3] On 17 October 1452, Nicholas Cusanus, presbyter, cardinal and Bishop of Brixen, granted another indulgence of forty days to the '*ecclesia … beate Marie Magdalene in Mareydt …* ' when penitence and confession was to be taken on specific feast days, including that of the patron saint.[4] Further indulgences were granted on 30 June 1471 and 16 June 1482 with the latter likely relative to a rebuilding of the church by the miners of the Schneeberg.

Each endowment carried its own individual significance but together, as seen in Chapter 3, they are invaluable evidence of communal responsibility for the construction and maintenance of a local church dedicated to Mary Magdalen in rural parish context. In this respect it enhances our understanding of the

Figure 5.1 View of Sankt Magdalena, Mareit (Photo: Author).

Magdalen churches in Prazöll and Pfatten and those in Cusiano and Pontresina in the chapters to follow, which went through similar structural and decorative developments during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, yet lack specific documentation that would evidence such a process.

The high altarpiece belonging to the second (post-fire) church was commissioned from Hans Harder, of nearby Sterzing, in *c.* 1470–80 (Colour Plate 19). It was produced before the one described in the introduction to this chapter. Harder (documented *c.* 1465–85) was a pupil of Hans Multscher (*c.* 1400–1467), a prestigious painter and sculptor who worked primarily in Ulm but also in Sterzing where he produced his famous altarpiece for the parish church high altar (1456–8). Harder was also the master of a large workshop. In the central panel of his altarpiece for the miners in Mareit stands a large wooden sculpture of Mary Magdalen, elegantly holding her unguent vase. She is dressed in fine clothing with a scarf woven through her hair to sumptuous and exotic effect. The interior surfaces of the altarpiece shutters are painted with scenes from the saint's apocryphal life. On the upper panel of the left wing is the conversion of Mary Magdalen through the preaching of Christ; an iconography also chosen for the contemporary cycle for Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano in Trentino, as we shall see in Chapter 6. On the upper panel of the right wing of the altarpiece is the penitent saint Anointing the feet of Christ in the House of the Pharisee. The lower left panel presents the *Noli me tangere*, while its partner on the right shutter is the saint's Elevation by angels in the wilderness, replete with rocky outcrops.

The altarpiece is now found on the north wall of the nave of the same church, having been displaced in the late fifteenth century.[5] As noted above, Sankt Magdalena was restructured from 1480–82 by the miners of the community: this included new rib vaulting and three additional altars. Several new altarpieces were commissioned, including the eventual replacement for Hans Harder's high altar by another local master, Matheis Stöberl, also of Sterzing, which is dated to 1509 (Colour Plate 21). A painted cartouche with an illusionistic tear declares manufacture of this devotional object on the proper left side: '*Das Werck hat g[e]macht Me[i]ster Matheis Stöberl, 1509.*' Stöberl trained in the workshop of Hans Schnatterpeck, whose skills enjoyed high demand throughout the region. With this kind of quality assurance, Stöberl's services would have come at a cost. In this respect and in tandem with the emblematic miners at the Magdalen's feet, the altarpiece became not only a monument to belief but, as we shall see, an indexical marker of prosperity generated by the local mining industry.

This larger, more ambitious and sophisticated work similarly features a central sculpture of Mary Magdalen, but this time in the company of Saints George and Laurence. They are saints with metallurgic appeal, be it in the form of the soldier's armour and sword or the martyr's gridiron on which he professed his faith. As described earlier, two tiny miners are at work below their enormous

heavenly guardians. It is an overlay of micro- and macrocosms but also an act of self-translation by the miners into the skein of the sacred narrative akin to what we have already seen in Dusch: whether miner or regular canon, they both have themselves depicted in the iconographic programme to connect the sacred legend with their daily lives and environment. The interiors of the shutters are painted with four episodes from the life of Mary Magdalen, just like the first altarpiece by Hans Harder. As such, it stands testament to the continued devotion of the community towards their patron saint and the relationship between the two works of art. The narrative begins on the upper left and right panels with the Anointing in the House of the Pharisee and the Raising of Lazarus, and this formatting is mirrored in the lower sections with the *Noli me tangere* and the Last Communion of the Saint.[6] This final scene, which sees the saint appear in the oratory of Aix cathedral by means of angelic transport from the wilderness, visually connects with the central sculpture of the altarpiece. In doing so it creates opportunity in the devotional imagination to bring the Magdalen into the real space of the rebuilt church of Sankt Magdalena in Mareit, with its simple yet increased gothic aspect. Given that the church was the recipient of indulgences since the 1450s, commencing with those from Nicholas Cusanus, it is not a stretch to think how the historic networks of patronage and devotion might intersect with the pictorial dynamics of the altarpiece.

That the prestigious altarpiece by Matheis Störbel was a material container, a thing to excavate or mine for its spiritual treasures is echoed in its physical structure. The shutters close over the main corpus, concealing the near-life-size saints for important feast days much like a large-scale reliquary. The predella box below reinforces this ritualized functionality. Bishop Saints Nicholas and Erasmus (or Elmo) are represented on the fixed lateral panels bearing their respective symbolic attributes of three golden balls and the windlass. On the outer panels of the shutters are Saints Vitus and Anna as throne to the Virgin and Christ (the *Anna Selbdritt* type). On the internal panels we find Christopher, the patron saint of travellers, and an arrow-pierced Sebastian, who guards against the bodily affliction of plague. Taken together, and as representatives of the popular Holy Helpers Cult (*Vierzehnheiligen*) encountered in the previous chapter, the saints might be seen as a statement of strength in the harsh mountain conditions predicated on the transactional and transformative power of metal. St Nicholas's balls represent money from minted gold with which he saved three daughters from penury and prostitution; the arrow heads pierced Sebastian's body but did not kill the saint, an anti-porosity that boded well given the medical risks of

working in the mines.[7] Even the windlass of Erasmus is deployed as a direct reference to those devices used in mine shafts, as illustrated on the title page of Ulrich Rülein von Calw's *Ein Nüzlich Bergbüchlein* of 1527 and throughout Georgius Agricola's *De re metallica* of 1556, which represent the earliest codifications of the art of mining and metalworking (Figure 5.2).[8]

For Rülein von Calw, the movement of heavenly bodies influenced the seams of gold, silver and copper in the ground. Towards the end of his little book on the art of mining and geology, which takes the form of a dialogue between an apprentice miner (*Knappius*) and a seasoned worker, Daniel, there are woodcut illustrations of the planetary gods, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Venus and Mercury, along with the sun and the moon, whose celestial bodies influenced the production of the different ores. Venus, for instance, influences copper, because the goddess was born in Cyprus, an island known for its copper production.[9] This is ostensibly a book about the fecundity of the mountains that operates between natural science and philosophy. Its Aristotelian system of heavenly bodies pulling on the mineral resources of the earth can provide a scientific and cultural framework for the depiction of Mary Magdalen on Stöberl's altarpiece, looming large above her cave in the wilderness to the complete ignorance of the industrious miners below (Figure 5.3). The saint's body, which is materialized in golden form by means of gold leaf application, exerts an influence not only on their working bodies but also on the ritual activities performed in the church, just like the planets that are personified as figurative gods in the mining handbook.

The visualization of heavenly influences over mining or extraction activities continues in the predella of the altarpiece. The painted panels of protector saints enclose a sculpted vignette of the Lamentation centralizing the role of the Magdalen. Particular attention is paid to the contents of her unguent vase. She sticks her fingers deep inside the pot to extract the perfumed ore that will be pressed into the bleeding wounds of Christ. Such treasures extracted from the earth have salvic value and could be understood as a sublimation of the menial activity of the miners that would lead to significant riches. All figures bar Christ are clothed in a divine sheen thanks to the liberal application of gold leaf, a sheen intensified by the gilded gothic tracery and the surface of the back panel which is articulated with sgraffito. Mary Magdalen's golden hair and the gold beading in her exotic headdress, however, are opulent magnets, drawing attention to the dedication of the church, altar and altarpiece. Salvation is materially manifested in the predella sculptural group through the care of the damaged body of Christ and the intercession of a favoured woman.

Figure 5.2 *De re metallica libri XII*. Facsimile reprint of the edition published: Basileae: Froben, 1556 (Brussels: Culture et civilisation, 1967), p. 213 (Courtesy of the Warburg Institute; Photo: Author).

Figure 5.3 Matheis Stöberl, Mary Magdalen Altarpiece (detail), 1509. Sankt Magdalena, Mareit (Photo: Author).

The divine mystery reaches its climax in the crown of the altarpiece. The thinly stretched pinnacles of the two-tiered ensemble close the distance between the ground and vault of the apse. In among its fine gothic tracery stand the

Virgin and Child honoured by a rayed mandorla and two flanking angels. On the sides are Saints Barbara (with host and chalice) and Catherine (with sword and wheel). They top two further pairs of Holy Helpers who are aligned vertically on the lateral sides of the main corpus and only made visible when the shutters are closed. The crowning piece is Christ, bearing his flag of the resurrection. In all, the altarpiece fits tightly below the central point of the polygonal vault marked by a blue roundel. It is a spectacular feat of carving and physically dominates the space of the apse. Glistening in the flicker of candlelight, it would have been prized in both material and spiritual terms.

There is no visual or documentary evidence of any wall paintings from any period of the church's history that might have provided a scenographic context for the two altarpieces that celebrated the titular saint. However it might be contended that this precise context lay beyond the whitewashed church walls. On a beautiful day, with vibrant blue skies and green grass, the mountains would easily have become like a painted backdrop for the altarpiece, much in the way Samuel Butler memorably described in later centuries, as related in the introduction to this book (his *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont and the Canton Ticino*, 1881). However, the mountains were also a sublime geological phenomenon, one to be mined by the masters of artifice for their patrons. For the miners of Mareit, such natural beauty in their working landscape was surely symbolic of the larger cosmos and its divine ordination. The mountains promised material depth and wealth with rich seams of revenue to explore. This wealth paid for an altarpiece that could bring the saint out of her cave and into their church, as represented by the central sculpture and on the right wing panel where the saint's last communion takes place in a similarly conceived church space. It was an act of mining sacred iconography that found its roots in industry.

'bonum argentum de Sneberch' – Working and praying at the coalface

During the late Middle Ages, Tyrol became Europe's most productive mining region. The rich seams of *Tauerngold*, silver and copper, also salt, in the mountains brought wealth to its rulers, most especially the Habsburgs.[10] But silver was the real money earner. In 1484, Archduke Sigismund, who we met in Chapter 4 and was known by the epithet *Münzreiche*, minted a new heavy coin, the *Gulden groschen*, drawing upon expertise from Venice.[11] The metal and mineral

resources were made accessible thanks to breakthroughs in technology and engineering practices, from extraction to smelting and refining.[12] The potential for big profits facilitated the migration of a skilled workforce. In combination with entrepreneurial firms, such as the venture capitalist Fugger family, who bankrolled Europe, and the privileges granted by ruling potentates, this mineral wealth boosted local populations and community cohesion. Hall and Schwaz are the most internationally famous examples in the Tyrol. However the Ridnauntal with its Schneeberg was another great mining zone that cascaded its benefits down to the valley communities, including the main town of Sterzing.[13]

Mining brought infrastructure, money and knowledge to the Ridnaun Valley. Since 1237 it had been known that silver lay in the Schneeberg but it was only in the 1480s that the industry prospered, with the miners rumoured to wear the precious ore as nails in their boots.[14] Waterwheels powered winches, bellows and hammers for post-extraction processing. A foundry once existed near the church of Sankt Magdalena in Mareit where we would expect such equipment. Mining required intelligence in the selection of site and its logistical management, and so a mountain science (*Bergwissenschaft*) with its experts (*Bergmann*) was developed and was held in high regard, even by university men.[15] But it also required brute labour. During the late Middle Ages this workforce was migratory in a way similar to the trades of stonecutting and artmaking practised across the Alps. For the recipient communities, this migration naturally meant more bodies to feed and souls to curate.[16] Integration could be managed on a temporary basis, set within the lifespan of a smaller mine, or more permanently in a larger site with dedicated accommodation and syndicates for the management of the work in the nearest town.[17] In this way it facilitated participation and representation in the socio-religious and cultural life of the locality.[18] For example, north of Sterzing is the village of Gossensass, which although founded in the early thirteenth century only lived up to its name (*Gotzen* or *Knappen* and *Sitz* means Miners' Residence) in the same period as our Magdalen church got its revival. Closer was Sankt Martin am Schneeberg in the Passeier Valley, a former miners' village (*Knappendorf*) at the summit of the mountain with a small church dedicated to the eponymous saint. Today a seasonal adventure mine and shelter hut operate together as a museum, bringing a more modern kind of industry to the area, that of tourism and hiking, with access by the traditional mode of walking. Visitors now swell numbers on a daily basis but in its late medieval heyday, Sankt Martin's population of miners peaked at around 1000 reminding us that in past times the mountain valleys were sites of high productivity and exchange.[19]

The mountain village of Sankt Martin had a hospital and its people enjoyed a good supply of milk, butter, cheese and meat in the summer thanks to a local herd of cows. In winter victuals were brought up from the Ridnaun Valley. It was vital for the strength of the workers, all four foods being dense in energy, but as discussed above it formed a bond between nature, man and art; and like most ecosystems it relied on the relative stability of its constituent parts.

Historians of mining have recently placed emphasis on the socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of contemporary 'artisanal' mining and what it might in turn tell us about pre- and early modern practices. Both past and present practices share an economy of scale and, in most cases, technology.[20] Mining is an activity that shapes language and behaviour. In this context, cultic sites and their ritualized imagery can be thought of as the intersection of industry and belief systems. And in this way, mining becomes another nodal point in the devotional networks across parish and pilgrimage contexts that concern this study of Mary Magdalen in the Alps.

To this discourse of cultural logics, we must also add matter. Imagery commissioned for miners' churches was no free-floating entity caught up in a nexus of social relations. They were handmade objects, artefacts crafted from the natural resources available to the artists and assistants working in the region of production or acquired from further afield. Such raw materials were plentiful in the late medieval Alps for all artistic media. Lime, sand and water from its mountains and rivers to make plaster for frescoing walls, earth pigments drawn from the ground to slick into their wet surfaces, forming shaped ideas. Wood from vast forests of varying species to be grown, cut and seasoned before carving into the volumes and voids of a sculpted altarpiece. Gold and silver to be extracted from seams, smelted and moulded before hammering into tissue-like leafs for the embellishment of prepared surfaces. Basic foodstuffs, such as eggs, milk and cheese acted as binders in the cooking processes of artmaking. All of this was powered on the energy of the artist forging a relationship between body and object, be they creator or viewer.

In this entanglement, as described by Pamela Smith, mining and artmaking are brought into a shared sphere of creation and meaning; they operate as a continuum.[21] We might recall that Mattheis Stöberl labelled his commission for the church of Sankt Magdalena in Mareit, '*Das Werk*' alongside his name and date within the cartouche, painted prominently onto the right side of the altarpiece predella (Figure 5.4). The painted paper is ripped at the bottom, with the broken line rising up to the 'i' of *Matheis* and the curled up edges creating

Figure 5.4 Matheis Stöberl, Mary Magdalen Altarpiece (detail). Sankt Magdalena, Mareit (Photo: Author).

cast shadows on the altarpiece below. It is a self-conscious display of skill and virtuosity that is amplified in the carving and gilding of the sculpted interior. By means of emulation of metals, the technology of art aestheticizes the material,

practical and physical processes of mining. Having been placed on the high altar in order to direct the devotions of the workers, the altarpiece thus became an embodiment of the strength of community spirit, galvanized around a powerful and internationally recognized saint. It is a process in which iconography can be said to possess its own materiality.

Before the miners came to Mareit and placed a new artwork on the high altar, the church was adorned with the simple yet elegant work of Hans Harder, as discussed at the outset. As part of this earlier work, four painted scenes provided a spectrum of Mary Magdalen's life that resonated with parishioners. The scene of her conversion while listening to Christ preaching from a wooden pulpit inside a medieval church probably originated from mystery plays performed in nearby Sterzing.[22] The *Noli me tangere* and Elevation by Angels on the lower panels acknowledge the outside world with the plentiful green grass and surging rocky outcrops but they are a far cry from the dramatic faces and ravines or snow-capped peaks of the Alps that might lead us to think that the paintings are direct observations from the locality. This more universal approach to the narrative is reinforced by typology in the scene of Elevation. The artist eschews the popular full hair suit for Mary Magdalen exemplified in Seefeld for loose tendrils of hair that expose her thin, pale limbs. They are more synonymous with contemporary Italian convention or in the later work of Quentin Massys (Philadelphia Museum of Art).[23] In Harder's altarpiece, Mary Magdalen is not a saint who radiates spiritual health from a diet of heavenly manna. Nor is there a cave to connect her sacred body with the mountains, denying the landscape import and agency. This would change with the second high altarpiece, commissioned from Matheis Stöberl. The very interiority of Stöberl's altarpiece for the miner's church functions both iconographically and structurally. However, it might also point us to the metaphorical threat of this darkened space and how the eremitical retreat of Mary Magdalen is connected to a tradition of classical thought.

Plato's allegory of the cave is an epistemological enquiry into the nature of perception and the boundaries between fiction and reality. This perception is parsed by kinetic imagery. In his thought experiment, a group of prisoners who have been held in a cave since birth must kneel facing the wall and are forbidden from ever turning around. The only illumination in the cave comes from a fire lit behind the prisoners. It causes shadows that the prisoners see before them and duly interpret as reality. Plato argues that on release from the cave, a prisoner would adjust to reality, albeit painfully, and understand the causal relationship of the imagery in the cave. This pain, if witnessed, would dissuade others in

the cave to leave and to resist any change demonstrating the suggestiveness of the human mind, its openness to a meta level of existence (in the imagination) and in consequence its susceptibility to political control through faith. The consequences of such an experiment has bearing on how we understand Mary Magdalen in the mountains in the context of mining.

Mary Magdalen lived in the wilderness for thirty years according to apocryphal legend but most preachers, artists, poets and writers chose to represent this retreat with a cave.[24] The mouth of the cave in the late medieval visual arts varies in size and shape. Sometimes it looks like a tomb opening with small round arched entrances, in other instances it is more of a thick jagged line through which the saint would squeeze her body or kneel before as a kind of rocky proscenium. On the Carema altarpiece discussed in Chapter 1, it is a proper sculpted cave, much like the painted cave that is just visible in Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch, as described in Chapter 2. In Stöberl's work in Mareit, a work that centralizes the saint during her wilderness years, the cave might well be identified with the very rocky surface from which the miners emerge in the central section, with the giant hirsute saint floating in the sky above.

In all instances, these visualizations and materializations speak to the transformative potential of the cave as a space, although this time it is about visions rather than illusions. Mary Magdalen chose to stay inside this cavity to contemplate her sins. We might imagine her without firelight, conjuring up mental imagery on the walls drawn from her life experience to move past the material realm and onto higher truths. It would be a repository of salvaged images of dancing, flirting, crawling, weeping, anointing, witnessing, preaching and praying, all the standard Magdalen iconographical types known to Western art, as a means to occupying the long hours of a seemingly endless stretch of time. Mary Magdalen was no participant in immurement thanks her seven daily elevations by a chorus of singing angels. This vertical ascension provided regularity and relief to the wilderness years. Yet there is no escaping the idea of self-imprisonment for spiritual labour leading to heavenly treasure. This self-imprisonment probably appealed to the miners who worked below the ground in the excavation of the earth's mineral wealth and who were exposed to all its risks.[25] On the altarpiece we see the miners busy at work, unaware of Mary Magdalen's presence above them. Unlike the hermit described in Voragine's *Golden Legend* and as seen in our other case study artworks, the miners are

not a collective witness to this repetitive and ritualized moment of divine revelation. Rather they make clear by their state of obliviousness while busy at work of the saint's long-lasting protection of their mountain environment. For the miners, it was more a case of illusions than visions, putting them squarely in Plato's cave.

The dichotomy of the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, the active and contemplative lives, is a well-rehearsed trope when it comes to Mary Magdalen, as we saw in Chapter 2. It refers to the biblical passage where Jesus announces that by sitting at his feet to listen to wise words, Mary has chosen the better part.[26] She is contrasted to Martha, her sister, who is more socially engaged through her household activities. While such a binary was already challenged in the late Middle Ages, it retained its intellectual premise in other domains of knowledge.[27] When it came to science, and more specifically mining, the classic dichotomy parsed the rising social status of practical knowledge that was prized by men such as Georgius Agricola, mentioned earlier in relation to mining treatises. Science could only be practised and advanced through active study, and not in isolated contemplation.[28] For mountain miners then, Mary Magdalen offered the ideal model of the *vita mixta*, a reconciliation of such binaries that gained popularity in the late Middle Ages.

That Mary Magdalen emerged unharmed from her cave by the end of her wilderness years was of symbolic import. The integration of the episode into the iconography and physical structure of Matheis Stöberl's altarpiece of 1509 was surely evidence of the strong weight placed on her intercessory power by the miners. On account of its wealth generation, mining was a political industry with its workforce at the mercy of capitalist agendas. Working conditions were harsh with the threat of injury or death by accident or illness ever present. Rockfalls or equipment failures were frequent and chronic respiratory diseases such as the *Bergsucht* or slow death became common on account of the persistent damp.[29] Dust-infused conditions ensured low life expectancy, as disturbingly illustrated in Hans Moler's xylograph of 1532; the miner's body has become literal skin and bone.[30] Late medieval miners never opted for blind acceptance of this harsh reality but they distanced themselves from small stakeholder control for more unionized, corporate responses. We might well ask if the miners of Mareit prayed before the altarpiece with its idealized imagery of their daily lives as a mode of wilful self-delusion and as a participation in the meta-reality of the sacred sphere created by the work of art.

Mary Magdalen and the miners

Mary Magdalen was not the designated patron saint of miners. That task was charged to Barbara, who numbers among the fourteen Holy Helpers, due to her association with lightening and explosives but also her strength, as represented by the tower she typically carries in hand as symbolic attribute.[31] But there was good rationale for the miner's choice in Mareit. It undoubtedly encompassed the original dedication of the church and its high altar to Mary Magdalen, as a sign of liturgical and devotional continuity. However, it seems likely that the miners chose their heavenly protector with the harsh working conditions of the mountains in mind. The saint had lived in rocky, unforgiving surfaces, testing the stamina but also the agility of her body, mind and soul. Mary Magdalen may have endured thirty years of isolation in her mountain but the miners could still relate on a daily basis. Single-file pathways dictated quiet journeys up the mountainside and once in the mine, conversation was minimal to reduce the inhalation of dust and noxious fumes; it was also drowned out by the noise of excavation. But Mary Magdalen's biblical years could also be mined for their symbolic value.

The exhumation of her brother, Lazarus, on the orders of Christ associated Mary Magdalen with the springing forth of life from the ground; an association that easily extends to painted scenes of Last Judgements ubiquitous in Alpine churches, where we see the human souls pushing the stone lids of their tombs through the derma of the earth ready to ascend to cool grace or be cast down into the fiery furnace of hell. Looking closely at the tomb lid in the scene of Lazarus's resurrection on Stöberl's altarpiece for the church in Mareit, we can see the stone chiselled with a heraldic shield and an inscription (Figure 5.5).[32] Both mountain rock and painted slab thus find equivalence as products of human activity and with that an expression of aspiration on the part of the miners for a similar fate on the final day of reckoning.

Mary Magdalen was venerated with weekly masses and on her feast day and its octave, a high point in the liturgical calendar that coincided with longer nights and more favourable weather and so by extension, working conditions. The saint's connections with rocky landscapes and her full embrace of a harsh mode of living prove to be an ideal match for the miners, legitimizing the money spent on the upgrade of the old church and the lavish new high altarpiece. Inevitably, Mary Magdalen could not protect her community from the fatal wounding that comes with the decline of their industry. Yet, the little

Figure 5.5 Matheis Stöberl, Mary Magdalen Altarpiece (detail), Sankt Magdalena, Mareit (Photo: Author).

church of Sankt Magdalena in Mareit continued as a locus of devotion gaining more artworks depicting the patron saint over the centuries.[33] Mining may be finite but in this sacred landscape such time capsules of belief speak to past endeavours and as a consequence the permanence and continuity of devotional practices.

Both Magdalen altarpieces of Mareit lack depictions of the Provençal legend. However, the discourse of the cave and its representation below her sculpted feet in Matheis Stöberl's work of 1509 were still able to forge a connection across the Alps, connecting Tyrolean mountains with grotto and shrine in the massif of southern France. This points to the importance of artists and their workshops in crafting and disseminating Magdalen imagery in this territory in line with the expectations of the patrons. In the next chapter, I examine the role of artists in the transmission of Magdalen imagery, building on the material discussed in Chapter 4, this time from the perspective of replication of iconographic solutions between a flagellant confraternal church in Lombardy and a rural church in the mountainous terrain of Trentino.

Notes

1　From the Latin *aditus* meaning entrance. Adits indicate a horizontal tunnel leading to a body of ore inside the mountain or hill. It forms part of the infrastructure required for drift mining, which also incorporates the tapping of veins or lodes that have reached the surface.

2　See Josef Weingartner, *Die Kunstdenkmäler Südtirols. Eisacktal, Pustertal und Ladinien*, vol. 1, 6th ed., ed. Josef Stadlhuber (Innsbruck, Vienna: Tyrolia, 1977), 191.

3　Max Siller, 'Die Urkunden des Pfarrarchivs Mareit', *Der Schlern* 1 (1979): 446–464. The manuscript is from the folder of Latin Documents.

4　Ibid., 450.

5　David Hofmann, *Die Knappenkirche St. Magdalena in Mareit – Ridnaun Südtirol* (Bressanone: Athesiadruck, 1994), 34.

6　The outer shutters are painted with scenes from the Passion of Christ: Agony in the Garden, Flagellation, Cross Carrying and Crucifixion.

7　According to the *Golden Legend*, the widow of Castulus, Irene of Rome, healed Sebastian's wounds. His martyrdom was meted out by cudgel blows. See Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend*, vol. 1, 96–101.

8　*Ein Nüzlich Bergbüchlein* (Erfurt: Johann Loersfelt, 1527) and its predecessor, *Eyn wohlgeordnet und nützlich büchlein, wie man bergwerk suchen und finden soll* (Worms: Peter Schöffer, 1518). Ulrich Rülein von Calw (Kalbe) was a physician, mathematician and mining engineer operating in Saxony. Both texts are interspersed with illustrations of miners working, diurnal diagrams and ore shafts before finishing with the influence of the pagan gods. For a digitized copy of the 1527 book, see: http://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/12328/7/0/. For an English translation, see Ulrich von Kalbe, *Bergbuchlein, The Little Book on Ores. The First Mining Book Ever Printed*, trans. Anneliese Grunhaldt Sisco and Cyril Stanley Smith (s.l.: Oxshott, 2014). Georg Agricola, *De re metallica libri XII*, Facsimile reprint of the edition published: Basileae: Froben, 1556 (Brussels: Culture et civilisation, 1967). Agricola used the *Bergbüchlin* as source and reference.

9　Gold is made by the sun (*sol*), silver by the moon (*luna*), tin by Jupiter, iron by Mars, lead by Saturn and quicksilver by Mercury. 'Daniel' explains that ore or metal is made of the moistures of the earth (matter of the first order) and of vapours and fumes (matter of the second order) which becomes quicksilver (female seed) and sulphur (male seed) in the conceptual act of making ore or metal. See Kalbe, *Bergbuchlein. The Little Book on Ores*, 15–17.

10　From the Hohe Tauern mountain range in Austrian Tyrol.

11 He exported two experienced goldsmiths to the mint in Tyrolean Hall, see Alan M. Stahl, 'Mint and Medal in the Renaissance', in *Perspectives on the Renaissance Medal*, ed. Stephen K. Scher (New York: Garland Publishing Inc and The America Numismatic Society, 2000), 140. For the importance of silver, see Peter Spufford, *Money and its Use in the Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 373.

12 Extraction of mineral ore dates, however, to prehistoric times telling us much about the human ecology of the Alps. See Peter Anreiter et al., eds, *Mining in European History and its Impact on Environment and Human Societies* (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2010).

13 Fabricius, 'father' of archaeology and a contemporary of the mineralogist Georgius Agricola, mentions the importance of the silver-rich mountains in his *Hodoeporicorum sive ITINERVM totius ferè Orbis LIB.VII* (Basilae: Johannes Oporinus, 1560), 316–318. Interestingly, he notes the miraculous host in Seefeld (*Sehefeldum*), discussed in Chapter 4, a few pages later bemoaning that the monstrance is not made of gold. http://digitale.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/vd16/content/pageview/1687261.

14 It is mentioned by the Notary Jakob Haas from Bozen. See Hans von Voltelini, *Die Südtiroler Notariats-Imbreviaturen des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Acta Tirolensia 2) (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1899), 492. For a comprehensive and nicely illustrated history of the mountain's mining industry, see Hans Michael Voelckel, *Chronik vom Schneeberg. Ein mittelalterlicher Erzbergbau hoch über dem Passeier* (Innsbruck: Südtirol Verlag, 1978).

15 Alongside Ulrich Rühlein von Kalbe and Georgius Agricola, we can add the Swiss physician, Paracelsus (1493–1541) whose medical and alchemical theories engaged with folkloric knowledge and manual work, and Vannoccio Beringuccio (*c.* 1480–1539), who enriched his treatise, *De la pyrotechnica* (1540) with a lifetime of experience in mining and metalworking. Mining was also prone to superstition, through divination or phantoms, but these early modern writers largely eschewed them.

16 Romedio Schmitz-Esser, 'Travel and Exploration in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2015), 1680–1705. Mining in the Ridnaun Valley continued until 1988. A museum at the Schneeberg (Moos in Passeier) is dedicated to the industry and its history.

17 For a succinct account of corporate development and workers' rights, see John U. Nef, 'Mining and Metallurgy in Medieval Civilisation', in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. 2 – *Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages*, ed. Michael Postan and Edwin E. Rich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 735–745.

18 The hardwiring of mining into cultural memory is evidenced by local religious plays. In the Venus play written by Vigil Räber in 1511 (in Bozen) for performance in Sterzing, a miner (*Arczknapp*) character takes to the stage with the lines (135–144): '*Got gruess euch, venus tugentleich!/Ich pin ein arczknab waidenleich; / Ich trag auch gar ain freyenn muet / vnd kan woll gebinnen guet,/Ich khan erpauen silber vnd gold,/darum solt ir mir wesn hold./Vnd wer ich nun eur fueg,/so wolt ich vns des gbinnen gnueg/Vnd wolt mich auch dess nit weren,/das ichs gar schon mit euch wolt verzen.*' Forty-one people play a role in this comical satire of the trades, with the miner being ridiculed for his rough language and emphasis on the precious ore that might buy the goddess's 'favour'. For the full play, see *Sterzinger Spiele. Die Weltlichen Spiele des Sterzinger Spielarchivs nach den Originalhandschriften von Vigil Raber und nach der Ausgabe Oswald Zingerles (1886)*, ed. Werner M. Bauer (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1982), 206–236.

19 See Gian Maria Varanini, 'Città alpine del tardo medievale', in *Il Gotico nelle Alpi, 1350–1450*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo and Francesca de Gramatica (Trento: Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2002), 34–51. To neglect this fact is to misrepresent the rich cultural heritage of the Alps and its importance to art history, as championed by the late Enrico Castelnuovo. He discusses the issue of population size in his essay, 'Les Alpes au début du XVe siècle: une Kunstlandschaft?', in *Historische Landschaft – Kunstlandschaft? Der Oberrhein im späten Mittelalter*, ed. Peter Kurmann and Thomas Zotz (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2007), 19–30, esp. 23.

20 See Robert Burt, 'Economic and Social Structures in Mining Settlement from Pre-Modern to Modern Times – Was Mining a Good Thing?' and the papers in Session VIII – Language and Culture, in Anreiter et al., *Mining in European History*, 25–60 and 367–394.

21 Pamela Smith, 'The matter of ideas in the working of metals in early modern Europe', in *The Matter of Art. Materials, practices and cultural logics* c. *1250–1750*, ed. Christy Anderson, Anne Dunlop, and Pamela H. Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 42–68. Smith's essay examines the theory and codification of mining, ancient to modern, and its sociocultural implications. For metal into art, see also Irma Passeri, 'Gold coins and gold leaf in early Italian paintings', in Anderson, Dunlop, and Smith, *The Matter of Art*, 95–115.

22 See n. 18. The influence of religious theatre on Magdalen visual imagery is discussed in Chapter 6.

23 It is distinctive from the more sensual yet idealized type of Magdalen portrayed by Gregor Erhart (limewood sculpture of 1502–03, Louvre, Paris), Albrecht Dürer (woodcut of *c*. 1504–05, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection 1943.3.3598) or indeed Titian (oil on canvas of *c*. 1531, Pitti Palace, Florence) which although provocative to modern eyes were commissioned in strictly devotional circumstances. For discussion of the reclining Magdalen type

and its reception, including gender bias towards male patrons, see Maddalena Spagnolo, 'Correggio's Reclining Magdalen: Isabella D'Este and the Cult of Mary Magdalen', *Apollo* 157 (2003): 37–45 and Ulrich Söding, 'Von der Spätgotik zur Renaissance: Meisterwerke der Skulptur in Ulm und Augsburg nach 1494', in *Kunst und Humanismus. Festschrift für Gosbert Schüssler zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Wolfgang Augustyn and Eckhard Leuschner (Passau: Dietmar Klinger, 2007), 105–132.

24 In late medieval sermons, the words *Aspirum herenum, rupes, spelunca, desertum or antrum*, all imply desert or cave. See Jansen, 'Mary Magdalen and the Contemplative Life', 257.

25 Late medieval preachers often presented Mary Magdalen as an anchoress, with her mystical retreat to the wilderness particularly pertinent to lay and religious women. Ibid., 249–271.

26 Lk 10:38–42. Depictions of this episode are rare in the late medieval period. It is painted by Giovanni da Milano, as the opening scene in his Magdalen cycle (1365), in the Rinuccini Chapel in Santa Croce Florence. See Michelle Erhardt, 'The Magdalen as Mirror: Trecento Franciscan Imagery in the Guidalotti-Rinuccini Chapel, Florence', in Erhardt and Morris, *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies*, 21–44.

27 See Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, chap. 3, esp. 50–52.

28 It is grounded in the dialectical tensions between the study of eternal and transient forms (grounded in Aristotle's *De partibus animalium*) that characterized early modern science. See Owen Hannaway, 'Laboratory Design and the Aim of Science: Andreas Libavius versus Tycho Brahe', *Isis* 77, no. 4 (1986): 584–610.

29 See Emily R. Kelly, 'Paracelsus the Innovator: A Challenge to Galenism from On the Miner's Sickness and other Miner's Diseases', *UWOMJ* 78, no. 1 (2008): 70–74.

30 Illustrated in Joseph Braunbeck, *Der strahlende Doppeladler: Nukleares aus Österreich-Ungarn* (Graz: Leykam, 1996), 148. For the resultant 'burial culture', see Michael Martin, 'Allgegenwärtiger Tod. Arbeitsbedingungen und Mortalität im Ruhr-Bergbau bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg', *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 34, no. 4 (2009): 154–173.

31 As evidenced by place names around former mining areas, e.g. *Barbarasiedlung*. See Isolde Hausner, '"Rudnicha", "Zelesna", "Ferraires", "Mons metallicus", "Arziperge"… – What Else? A Cultural Historical Survey on Toponyms as Witnesses of Mining Activities in Austria', in Anreiter et al., *Mining in European History*, 367–372.

32 The heraldic shield is empty and the inscription comprised of single letters and numerals, suggesting it is a generic feature rather than referring to a specific individual.

33 There is a statuette of the Magdalen in a credence near the right-side altar. The side altarpieces, dating from the late sixteenth century, but with later neogothic additions, depict the Virgin Mary but still speak to the miners' active world.

Alpine Workshops and Artistic Transmission

From wall paintings and sculpture to stonecutting and construction, the late medieval Alps were a boon territory for artisans willing to travel to ply their trade. A single valley could yield a high number of churches, chapels, castles and houses leading to opportunities for workshop monopolies and with that the rise of distinctive visual cultures. All the devotional artworks depicting Mary Magdalen discussed so far in this book are indicative of such market dynamics in the mountains. Available artistic labour, whether solicited or fortuitous, produced imagery for sites that served community needs that were both inward and outward looking in terms of their devotional networks. In this supply and demand model, modes of workshop practices (their typologies) and the pathways of transmission matter, and not least in the case of the church of Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano (Figure 6.1).[1]

Cusiano is a small village located in the Val di Sole in the upper reaches of the diocese of Trento. It is one of a series of closely plotted settlements that follow the course of the river Noce as it powers its way down the valley, with modern traffic passing by on the National Road.[2] This is because Cusiano lies on a key transit route across the boundaries of Trento, Brixen and Bergamo via the Tonale Pass (1883 m) in the Rhaetian Alps. During the late medieval period this pass also connected Lombardy with the Inn Valley, taking travellers to Innsbruck via Bozen, using the Brenner or Reschen Passes, which not only tells us about connectivity and cultural contact in the Alps in general, but also that the Magdalen churches discussed in this book were more networked than first appearances might suggest.[3]

The church of Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano is an important wayside station on the larger devotional map for the saint in the Alps. It is built on top of a rudimentary structure that dates from the fourteenth century and was the work of stonemasons from Lombardy, providing an early pointer to a history of migratory skills.[4] Stepping off the road and into the church around 1490,

Figure 6.1 View of Santa Maria Maddalena. Cusiano, Val di Sole, Trentino (Photo: Author).

parishioner and traveller alike would have met the patron saint newly painted in a fresco cycle charting her life and travels in exuberant fashion.[5] The frescoes look 'local' due to their comely style, yet the iconographical content suggests otherwise. So how did it get there and what dictated its appearance? This chapter focuses on the role of itinerant artists in the transmission and adaptation of Magdalen imagery: what they imported from their point of origins in terms of disposition, subject matter and style and how they responded to an existing Magdalen culture in local parish life.

Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano – History and decoration

The polygonal presbytery of Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano plays host to a near-complete fresco cycle comprising thirty continuous scenes from the life of the titular saint (Colour Plate 22).[6] It is a very high number in regional, but also European terms, suggesting a demand for something impressive by the local community and with that a supply of creativity and variation.[7] The commission was dictated in part by the church itself.

Santa Maria Maddalena was built before 1368, when it was mentioned in reference to an ecclesiastical beneficiary.[8] Later in 1573 it was described as *'sub cura plebes'*, a reference to the nearby collegiate church of San Vigilio in Ossana.[9] In terms of building fabric, today the church has a single nave with pentagonal presbytery, both with ribbed vaults, an adjoining square-set sacristy and a bell tower at the western end. Originally, however, it had a wooden truss ceiling, as was common to most fourteenth-century churches in rural Trentino.[10] On the exterior, south side is an open shrine, built towards the end of the 1400s and dedicated to St Roch, a saint who would have offered protection against the pestilence for both passing and resident supplicants.

The lateral walls of the nave retain substantial sections of early-sixteenth-century frescoes, as well as fragments contemporary to those painted in the presbytery. On the north wall of the nave, there is a possible Pentecost scene (only the heads of the apostles survive) and it has been given a later dating based on style, which is of a lesser quality than those of the choir.[11] On the south, starting from the east end is either a Man of Sorrows or Sunday Christ (only a slither of the right side of the painting is still visible) as was common in the Alps, accompanied by what was a lengthy inscription, and a depiction of the Last Supper (Figure 6.2).[12] In the central section of the wall are large painted panels

Figure 6.2 Traces of Sunday Christ with inscription, *c.* 1470–97, fresco. Santa Maria Maddalena, Cusiano (Photo: Author).

with votive representations of Saints Stephen (as deacon), Vigilius (first Bishop of Trento and martyr), Roch, Sebastian (as Roman praetorian) and Anthony Abbot.[13] A signature is visible in the upper frame of the martyr votive paintings: […] *opus f.f. Guelmus dictus Minoius* […].

Along with Mary Magdalen, Saints Roch, Sebastian and Anthony Abbot were venerated as efficacious protectors against contagious diseases. Their multiple representations in the church, inside and out, strongly convey the real and prolonged anxiety held by communities in the Alps.[14] A particularly virulent strain of the plague hit the Val di Sole in 1510 with devastating consequences for the parishes of Ossana and Malé. Although Cusiano itself escaped, the effects of the disease were felt in nearby Pellizano, suggesting that the villagers' prayers for intercession by these saints would have been considered well justified. Indeed the paintings may have been a communal commission on the basis of a perceived successful petition.[15]

The pastoral visitation of 1579 mentions the consecration of three altars in the church of Santa Maria Maddalena, all of which are present today.[16] The former high altar is dedicated to the titular saint and decorated with a painted image of her elevation by two angels before a cloth of honour. The side altars are dedicated to Anthony Abbot (right) and Sebastian (left), with an early-sixteenth-century representation of each on the wall behind (Figure 6.3). These paintings are by a different hand to the fresco cycle in the presbytery. Mary Magdalen is portrayed on the wall behind the left altar, holding her unguent vase and a book. The proximity of this imagery to the high altar and the fresco cycle depicting the life story of the Magdalen indicates an ascribed value to repetitious representations within these sacred walls.[17]

The visitation of 1751 records a consecration of the altars on 20 October 1497.[18] Assuming that the church was founded before 1368, it is likely that around the end of the fifteenth century the Bishop was reconsecrating the altars after the completion of the stone vaulting of the presbytery and the subsequent campaign of fresco decoration, weighting the latter's execution towards the 1490s.[19]

All the paintings in the church, bar those hidden by the Baroque marble high altarpiece in the presbytery, namely the Magdalen fresco cycle, were to be covered with whitewash 'to make the walls brighter' by instruction of the *coadjutor* Bishop during his visitation in 1617.[20] The order was repeated in 1672, implying a situation of non-compliance sixty years earlier: a valuable corrective to any notion of swift reform in rural parishes.[21] The first restoration of the church under the direction of the Soprintendente alle Belle Arti di Trento

Figure 6.3 Anthony Abbot and Mary Magdalen, early sixteenth century, fresco. Santa Maria Maddalena, Cusiano (Photo: Author).

in 1938 exposed the brightly coloured paintings with their accompanying inscriptions written in Latin and fifteenth-century local Italian vernacular. A second intervention from 1997 to 2000 revealed more artistic works in the nave, including those behind the side altars.

The Magdalen fresco cycle

The programme begins with a didactic pairing: Mary Magdalen's romantic dalliances at court (1) and her conversion through the preaching of Christ from an outdoor temporary pulpit (2) are set in two facing lunettes on the north and south walls (Figure 6.4). The cycle then shifts to sequential rectangular frames (three per register with three registers per wall on the north and south walls; the arrangement is irregular on the three angled walls), to pack in more detail. This includes scenes of Anointing, the Raising of Lazarus and the charitable acts of the Christians, their exile from Judea and sea journey to southern Gaul, their refuge and missionary work in the city of Marseille, the ruling couple's pilgrimage and fertility miracle (including scenes of Rome and Jerusalem), Mary Magdalen destroying the pagan idol, her baptism of the rulers of Marseille and presence at mass conversions in Gaul. The cycle then moves to Mary Magdalen's retreat to the mountain wilderness, and finally concludes with the saint's death, funeral and possibly some posthumous miracles.[22] It is a lot of ground to cover and the progression of the narrative across the presbytery walls is not immediately obvious. After commencing with the facing lunettes, the cycle returns to the north wall to run along the upper register. The story continues on to the same level of the northeast, east, southeast and south walls before spiralling back round to the north wall and the middle register. It travels right round again to above the sacristy door on the south wall and then for a final time to the north wall at the level of the lower register and its three lost scenes. Symmetry with the two lunettes at the beginning is achieved when the story moves straight back over to the lower register of the south wall with its concluding scenes.

Each scene is individually framed, with most enlivened by a green and/or red internal border articulated by stencilled designs. The scenes come in different shapes and sizes depending on placement on one of the five walls that rise up into the vaults. These vaults are painted with images of the church fathers, while the window embrasures carry those of Holy Helper saints (*Vierzehnheiligen*), who have featured in previous chapters. All narrative action happens in the
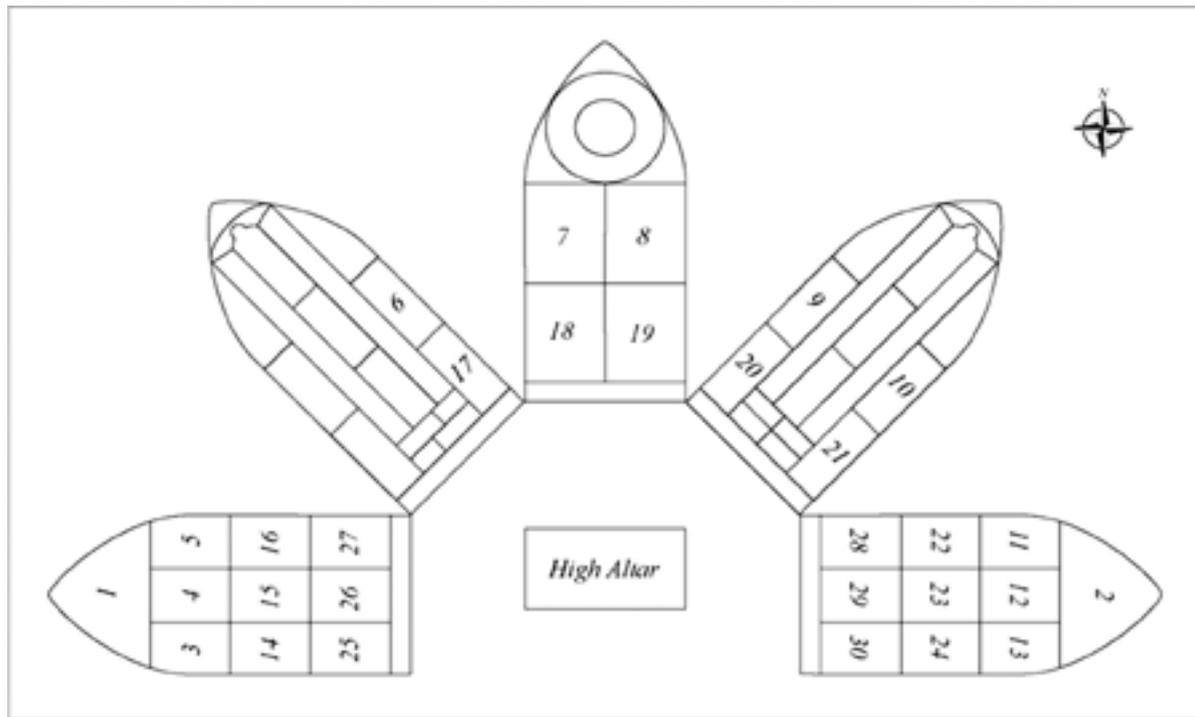
1. Worldly Life 2. Conversion through Preaching of Christ 3. House of Simon 4. Raising of Lazarus 5. Act of Charity 6. Expulsion from Holy Land 7. Adrift at Sea 8. Taking Shelter Outside Marseilles 9. Challenge of Faith by Prince 10. Blessing the Pregnant Princess 11. City Keys 12. Birth of Son and Death of Princess at Sea 13. Princess and Son left on Rocky Island 14. Prince before St Peter in Rome 15. Prince and St Peter in Jerusalem 16. Miraculous Discovery of Princess and Son 17. Return to Marseilles 18. Preaching to Marseilles 19. Baptism of Marseilles 20. Baptism of Aix 21. Retreat to the Wilderness 22. Penance in the Wilderness 23. Elevation by Angels 24. Hermit as Witness 25. Destroyed 26. Destroyed 27. Destroyed 28. Entombment 29. Funeral 30. Partially Destroyed

Figure 6.4 Layout of Magdalen fresco cycle with key to scenes (Diagram: Author).

foreground of each scene in a way that compounds the very dense visual aspect. The cycle demands bodily presence in or near the presbytery in order to follow the pictorial pathway, a strategy that keeps the public very much in the picture.[23]

Overall, the fresco cycle blankets the presbytery, creating a dazzling, slightly dizzying, prospect on entering the church and as one approaches its east end. What concentrates the eye is the depiction of the elevation of the hirsute Mary Magdalen by angels, painted on the front of the old high altar (Colour Plate 23a). Rather than depicting the saint in the wilderness, as is common to most representations, this second version of the supernatural event (the other is embedded in the cycle itself) is abstracted from its context by way of a fictive cloth of honour hanging behind the Magdalen and the two angels. It reminds the devotee that the altar is not only dedicated to the saint and holds a relic but also that this was the moment when Mary Magdalen encountered the divine.[24] The image thus constitutes a sublimation and permanent reminder of the celebration of the Eucharist for the parishioners of Cusiano.

This busy *vita* cycle of the titular saint could easily have been painted on the nave walls, as seen previously in the churches located in Dusch and Prazöll (see Chapters 2 and 3).[25] Such flat, even surfaces allow for regular compartments and smooth directional flow of the narrative. Scaffolding was easier to erect and more assistants could be put to work making it a quick and cheap job. The polygonal presbytery in Cusiano, by contrast, presented spatial and logistical challenges in the planning and production stages, namely a lack of regularity and uniformity across the walls.

The choice of location for the fresco cycle in the church was no haphazard accident or ill-advised judgement on the part of the patron. It is obvious that the presbytery was entirely appropriate for a church dedicated to Mary Magdalen. However, the decision to put this dense programme into such a complex arrangement surely originates with the artists responsible for the work and their family experience gained from a similar artistic enterprise. To pursue this line of enquiry, we must take a journey up the Val di Sole, cross the Rhaetian Alps via the Tonale Pass and descend through Valcamonica into Bergamo, another region renowned for its artistic riches.

Art and artistic enterprise

The Magdalen fresco cycle of Cusiano is attributed to the brothers, Giovanni and Battista de Baschenis, members of a prolific dynasty of painters who hailed from Lombardy.[26] Giovanni and Battista were part of the smaller dynastic branch

of Lanfranco Baschenis, along with Antonio and Angelo; the second branch stemmed from Cristoforo and comprised of Dionisio, Simone I, Cristoforo II, Simone II, Filippo, Cristoforo Baschenis il Vecchio, Cristoforo Baschenis il Giovane, Pietro and most famously Evaristo.

The Baschenis lived and worked in the Averara Valley, near Bergamo, before market forces pushed the smaller branch of the family to migrate east in the mid-fifteenth century towards emerging opportunities in the diocese of Trento; namely the upper valleys of Giudicare, Val Rendena, Val di Non and Val di Sole.[27] A boom in church building or restructuring, as in the case of Cusiano, facilitated this opportunity and the family workshop would dominate production between 1450 and 1677.

Working in the Alps demanded strategy and there are a number of typologies for how workshops operated across substantial terrain. So far we have seen, in Chapter 1, the local master and workshop: this type dominates commissions in the region, with the strong likelihood that he had a specific place of manufacture for bespoke sculpted altarpieces – wall paintings naturally being completed in situ. Alternatively, a master might be imported from another locality and deployed to specific commissions within the region leading to a time-sensitive domination by means of the workshop system. This was the case of the Waltensburg Master in Dusch, as seen in Chapter 2. A third type is the master influenced by a foreign style by means of the generational process; his master or 'grandmaster' is the original point of contact. As we saw in Chapter 3, set around Bozen, this leads to hybrid forms that are modulated and disseminated by the local school. In the final chapter of this book, a fourth type occurs: the seasonal workshop that stays in circulation. For this type, migration is characterized by the act of passing through, meeting the spontaneous demands of a specific parish or valley. The Baschenis offer a fifth type of workshop practice, this time of long-term migration to a 'promised land'. Their migration is according to a documented surplus in the home territory and a newly identified market further afield – we know that demand was high in the valley of Trentino due to a sustained building campaign by the bishopric since the twelfth century – but that they will depart when supply is in surfeit; after all, rural parishes might well live with their art for longer periods of time than their urban counterparts. Once a church is painted, demand drops, and only a change in circumstance will open up new opportunities.

What unites these workshop typologies is the principle of home: a single point of origin from which the seasonal migration of labour springs and

eventually returns, even if it is a couple of centuries later. Many were single-family enterprises but pluralistic organizations were particularly advantageous for sustained and successful practices, especially in the face of competition. There is unquestionable common ground with late medieval guild structures across Europe but what is interesting about the Alpine territories is how the principle of home was applied in a vast landscape, bringing the near and far together. It continued into the early modern period. A prime example is the Auer Zunft, a federation of master builders and handworkers from Bregenzerwald in the Voralberg (high Austria), founded around 1650.[28] Members were drawn from the villages in the area, with Au as centre of the federation, who also formed a religious brotherhood. Working for the collective good was the priority. No matter the distances between home and the site of contract, workers were required to spread the labour among their brethren. Family inheritance ensured the honouring of contracts and with it a continuity of designs. Returning to the orchestrating principle of seasonal migration from a single point of origin, it was traditional practice of the Auer federation to meet around springtime on the red mountain (*Rotenberg*) at Hittisau before fanning out to worksites in the region to implement agreed designs and standards. It was a highly formalized system for the diffusion of labour, form and style, and it was a system that sprang from late medieval practices.[29]

For the fraternal enterprise of Giovanni and Battista Baschenis, which was responsible for the Magdalen paintings in Cusiano, home was in Lombardy, and specifically the Val Brembana.[30] Giovanni returned there in 1486 for fresco work before travelling back to Trentino in 1490 for a job in Cunevo.[31] He then joined up with Battista in 1496 to paint in a castle chapel in Tassullo, a little higher up the Val di Non. It is therefore likely that their combined services were requested in Cusiano in the nearby Val di Sole during the period 1490–96, although it is entirely possible that it occurred in the late 1470s, prior to Giovanni's return to his home land, given their early activity in the Val di Non (specifically Segonzone nell'Anuania).

In the brothers' workshop there was a division of labour according to ability that reinforces our picture of organized practice. One brother specialized in the depiction of figures and the other in the decorative and ornamental features, facilitating swift completion and consistency in production. They had assistants (*garzoni*) for the preparation of plaster, grinding of pigments, and construction of scaffolding, wall preparation and illumination. Maintaining a medieval workshop in the Alps was as pragmatic a task as elsewhere, and so the brothers

probably hired their assistants and 'runners' in each locality. Commissions probably included upfront payment of materials and labour, alongside basic board and lodgings. With expediency the order of the day, keeping the workshop on site for the duration was beneficial to both sides.[32]

We might say that these purveyors of sacred images rejected rootedness in favour of what Pappano and Rice have called 'craft labor and craft life as forms of practice, bodies of knowledge, and realms of experience', though in this case it is not restricted to urban scenarios.[33] The scholars suggest that oral and performative traditions underpin the cultural formulations of the artisan due to limited literacy levels. In the case of Cusiano, it is tempting to concur. As argued elsewhere, the opening two scenes of the Magdalen's Worldly Life and Conversion bear a strong relational value to mystery plays produced in the German-speaking territories.[34] From the rose crown (*Rosenkranz*) worn by the Magdalen as a decoration for her golden hair to the wooden pulpit depicted in the scene of her conversion, the artistic brothers would have been familiar, and perhaps party to (by means of set painting or even acting) an existing Magdalen culture fostered locally and in the wider region.[35] It is worth noting that people, the actors of the narrative, are given priority in each scene of the Cusiano fresco cycle. This is reinforced compositionally. They are packed tightly into the pictorial space and pushed to the foreground, with architectural and landscape settings kept to a functional minimum, imbuing the cycle with a resounding theatrical presence.

The Baschenis are known for their distinctive 'naïve' painting style, often described as *arte povera*, their subject matter (especially saints), method and materials and proclivity towards rural commissions far from the major regional centres of Trento, Rovereto and Bozen.[36] Their painting style is often viewed rather dimly as lacking exposure to the more sophisticated artistic developments of the area, a situation compounded by the fact that it was a family concern: style being passed from father to son. While this observation might hold a grain of truth, such a limited focus on supposed stylistic stagnation sidesteps a productive business model; one that not only led to veritable monopolies, but also created a circulation system for images drawn from a wide range of cultural sources across northern Italy and the pre-Alps, beginning with their native Lombardy. This circulation system required patrons and so it is crucial to think about who offered the opportunities to Giovanni and Battista in the Val di Sole.

In all probability, rates would not have been particularly high for a workshop of this standard and so it certainly was not a prestigious commission that brought

Giovanni and Battista to the parish of Ossana.[37] The concept of a fixed price economy is not appropriate to the late medieval rural environment, given that it strips away the nuance of small-scale societal decision-making processes.[38] More persuasive is the likelihood that they were attracted to the area on the basis of multiple commissions, namely the Chapel of San Michele in Ossana Castle owned by the Federici family, Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano and probably San Vigilio in Ossana, prior to its reconstruction, where we find evidence of their work. This body of evidence would stand testament to their monopoly and efficiency.[39] In the eyes of the parish and the commune, the skills of the Baschenis brothers could be secured in economic fashion to celebrate the life of Cusiano's patron saint in visual form.

That the presbytery of Santa Maria Maddalena received its vaulting and decoration in advance of the nave is indicative of the devotional priorities of the community and the parish at large. It was after all the most sacrosanct space within the church. However the lengthy building development may also be a reflection of the financial resources available at that time.

Patrons and the commission

The question of costs has a bearing on the patronage of the Cusiano fresco cycle and its function. While documents specific to the construction and decoration of Santa Maria Maddalena are unfortunately lacking, those relating to the churches in nearby Ossana offer some useful insight.

On 16 August 1500, a meeting of the local community mayors of Ossana, Fucine and Cusiano and the parish priest was called in regard to the ongoing reconstruction of the mother church, San Vigilio in Ossana.[40] The meeting was presided over by Bertolodo Federici, feudal lord of Ossana Castle, who was appointed by the bishopric of Trento.[41] Its aim was to agree the necessary financial contributions expected from each community that would go towards the construction of the bell tower and the maintenance of the new church in general.[42] Although both Cusiano and Fucine had their own chapel and would have received Mass there at least once a month, along with any baptismal and burial services, they were still obligated to attend services in the parish church and to assist with its upkeep.[43]

The parish of Ossana was wealthy thanks to the high yields and incomes raised within the expansive boundaries, including those of its *capellae filialae*,

but much of it passed to the episcopal court in Trento, as part of the due tithe, rather than to the local parish or civic authorities.[44] The Commune of Ossana contested this ruling in 1470 when it requested that the Bishop exempt its priest, Don Ambrogio Blaspelrem (again a canon of Trento) from the payment. From their perspective, it was revenue that should be kept in the community in order to contribute to the maintenance of a reasonable benefice and inevitable building costs.[45]

When it comes to spiritual incentives for contributions to construction costs in the parish, we can turn to the church of Sant'Odorico in Ossana. Although no trace of the building founded by Venturino, resident of Cusiano, survives, an indulgence of twenty days was offered by Bishop Enrico of Trento in 1317 '*ad fabricam ecclesie*': presumably this was related to monetary donations but local labour may also have been duly rewarded.[46] It is a process that bears comparison to Sankt Magdalen in Mareit, discussed in Chapter 5, which is indicative of the spiritual 'tools' utilized by the Church for its necessary expansion in rural areas, such as the Alps.

Later evidence from the church of Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano might confirm this collaborative model of patronage, namely a series of small shields located at the crossing points of the nave vaults. Starting from the presbytery end of the nave they depict a red cross on a white background (possibly the Habsburgs), the heraldry of the Federici, the heraldry of Bishop princes of Trento, a green shield (largely destroyed and illegible) and the final shield bearing two shaking hands (with stigmata), most likely that of the Capuchin friars, a reformed branch of the Franciscan order.[47] The heraldic shields were added after the completion of the nave vaulting in the late sixteenth century. Nevertheless, they are probably indicative of a continuing financial and spiritual interest in the filial church by the feudal lords of Ossana initiated a century earlier. Furthermore, the fact that Cusiano had raised a benefice to retain the services of a chaplain in 1386, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, indicates the rising importance of the church, based on a likely growth in population and an increase in rents, yields and donations.[48] Devotion to Mary Magdalen was also strong in this village and throughout the region as linked to the landscape – the Val di Non lies at the foothills of the Catena Maddalena, a range of mountains named for agricultural practices that fell on 22 July, the feast day of Mary Magdalen.[49]

What relation such communal patronage bore to the decoration of the church is evident throughout the narrative content of the Magdalen cycle and in its precise spatial location.[50] Both speak to the primacy of the local community in

the life of the church in all capacities, and the formation of a group identity. However, it does not inform us about the agency of the artists in the ways we might expect, such as a contract, records of payment or official meetings to discuss the production process. For insight into this aspect, it is necessary to return to the working strategy of the Baschenis brothers and in particular, how iconographic transmission from their homeland shaped the Magdalen cycle's structure and visual resonance.

Pathways of transmission

The fraternal painters, Giovanni and Battista Baschenis de' Averaria were probably familiar with the disciplinati church of Santa Maria Maddalena in the present-day *città bassa* of Bergamo, then a political and cultural hub under the rule of the Venetian republic; as noted earlier, Giovanni returned to his home valley in 1486, which lies just to the north of Bergamo. The church was completed between 1344 and 1346, and is an astonishing monument to late medieval Magdalen devotion (Figure 6.5). Although it is now deconsecrated and serves as

Figure 6.5 Interior, Ex-Disciplinati Church of Santa Maria Maddalena, Bergamo (Photo: Author).

a civic exhibition space, the choir and its lateral apse chapels retain their dense, layered arrangement of cultic images commissioned by the confraternity during its years of ritual activity.[51]

The triumphal arch showcases an assemblage of work from different periods. The mid-sixteenth-century paintings of the life of Mary Magdalen by Christoforo de' Baschenis the Younger are chaotically interspersed with those from earlier periods by other artists working in the city. This assemblage of artworks reinforces the idea of organized disorder of wall paintings (narrative and iconic) discussed by Joanna Cannon, with the layers accumulating during the passage of time and across changing stylistic preferences in a process of accomodation.[52]

It is likely that our Baschenis brothers knew about the wealth of devotional artworks in this confraternal church, either in person or through recollections and drawings shared down the generations within the larger family workshop.[53] Indeed, the father of Giovanni and Battista, Antonio de' Baschenis (son of Giacomo and grandson of Lanfranco) is documented as active in Bergamo in 1451 making him a potential repository or conduit of knowledge.

A fourteenth-century portrait of the flagellants can be seen high up on the right side of the triumphal arch of the church (Colour Plate 23b). It is shaped to emulate a horizontal gabled altarpiece that is pasted onto the wall. Below the judging Christ who is poised to cast plague-ridden arrows, Mary Magdalen and the Virgin Mary extend their robes over the heads of the kneeling brethren; an adaptation of the Madonna of Mercy (*Madonna della Misericordia*) type. Four other saints help to hold up the protecting fabric, but only the women actually touch their charges in what is a delicate overlapping of hands and heads. The *bianchi* are all hooded bar the two lead figures, whose exposed faces are highlighted by the presence of haloes. The next pair carries small sculptures of the crucified Christ, a detail that speaks to bloody processions performed in public spaces, but also to the meta-level of the living presence of Christ in the divine mystery that would be celebrated in the church.[54] The confraternity's identification with Mary Magdalen continues directly below. Alongside a picture of the Magdalen (hirsute and in profile) at the foot of the cross, one of the nimbed brethren kneels in profile before Christ's tomb, in place of the patron saint. His hood is pushed back to reveal his face, which is being blessed by Mary Magdalen, with one hand holding his head, the other blessing his forehead.[55] An angel observes from the left side of the tomb. Finally, a giant Christopher stands to the right of the entrance to the choir, extending his apotropaic care to those who enter and leave the sacred precinct.

The Magdalen imagery intensifies in the choir. To the left of the high altar, ghostly traces of a fourteenth-century fresco cycle are visible (Colour Plate 24).[56] The fresco cycle presents an extended treatment of the Magdalen's life in accordance with Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (*c*. 1260). It is highly damaged due to later architectural developments in this space but the surviving fragments and their layout indicate some twenty-five to thirty scenes (Figure 6.6). These include the Magdalen preaching and conversion of the pagan populace, her destruction of the pagan idol and an extended treatment of her eremitical retreat, the content of which I will return to shortly (Colour Plate 25a).[57]

Such scenes appealed to the flagellant community who wished to co-opt Mary Magdalen into the genesis of their penitential practices.[58] After all, she was witness to Christ's Crucifixion and the torture visited on his body. For late medieval artists it created an opportunity to transfer the leitmotif of the Magdalen drying Christ's feet in the House of the Pharisee (Luke's unnamed sinner, who had wept tears of contrition) to Golgotha where her golden tresses could intermingle with his blood as it ran down the cross.[59] The Magdalen's assault on her own body through somatic depravation in the wilderness was equally pertinent to the confraternity in that it represented a slow internalization of their intense lashing spectacles. To reinforce this impression we can look to the multiple votive icons of the eremitical Magdalen that were added to the choir

Figure 6.6 Scenes from the Disciplinati Magdalen cycle, fourteenth century, fresco. Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti in Bergamo (Photo: Author).

and its apsidal chapels over time, creating repetitious encounters for members of the confraternity who moved within the sacred space.

The churches dedicated to Mary Magdalen in the Alps can be thought of as capsules of long-term devotion. They are places where generative ideas are replayed and recycled through art; even in Sankt Oswald in Seefeld (discussed in Chapter 4), where the cult of the Magdalen was contingent to a separate host miracle and its sustained ritual framings and practices. A similar scenario is at play in the Magdalen church in Bergamo but this time the notion of replay goes beyond a single church, valley or even region due to the migration of artisanal workshops. The east end of the flagellant's church would furnish any jobbing painter with enough Magdalen stock imagery to transpose to new locations. The process not only went by the book with correspondences to the *Golden Legend*, by which I mean the universal recognizability of the saint, but also offered examples of more bespoke fashioning. As the devotional practices in this confraternal church continued over the years, there was a demand for new images that were variations on a theme. It was a culture of accretion that allowed local artists to copy but also to import and export imagery, including our Baschenis family in this case to Alpine Trentino.

Stock types and topicality

A range of commonalities unite the churches dedicated to Mary Magdalen in Bergamo and Cusiano that help to identify a process of transfer between the two localities. Both churches share a high density of Magdalen imagery in their respective east ends. Their narrative fresco cycles both have a high number of scenes with a preference for dynamic compositions at the front of the picture plane. They also share numerous iconographic priorities from the legend of Mary Magdalen, including her sea travel, preaching, pilgrimage, iconoclasm, baptism and eremitism. Some of these priorities are indicative of the transfer of stock types, whereas others are topical, suggesting a process of adaptation from Bergamo to Cusiano by the painters and patrons. These stock types include, the expulsion from the Holy Land, Mary Magdalen preaching to the pagan populace (scene 18 in the Cusiano cycle) and the destruction of the pagan idol which happens beside a new church building, which in turn is elided with the scene of baptism in Marseille (scene 19).[60] New additions to the Cusiano cycle were the Worldly Magdalen (scene 1) and the Conversion of Mary Magdalen through the

Preaching of Christ (scene 2) in the lunettes, the scene of Christian charity and the pagan rulers' refusal of hospitality (scene 8). This last section of the chapter will focus on two episodes that demonstrate innovation and adaptation in the process of transfer between the two churches: the scenes of the ruling couple's pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Mary Magdalen's retreat to the wilderness.

Both the Bergamo and Cusiano fresco cycles constitute lengthy realizations of the legend of Mary Magdalen. This might create an expectation for a like-for-like transfer of imagery by the artists, here the Baschenis brothers, to ensure the swift completion of the job but as always context is everything. In the Alpine rural valley, as opposed to the urban setting of Bergamo, pilgrimage as representative of sacred travel was evidently important to the parish clergy and laity. This can be adduced from the two scenes depicting the governor of Marseille's pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem that were added to the narrative and are found on the middle register of the north wall of the presbytery. Pilgrimage was chosen for good reason. Visualizing Rome and St Peter forged a connection between parish and papal court. It offered the opportunity to depict the tiara and keys that identified Peter as pope. Equally, they could represent a cardinal and other clergy who vouchsafed the faith of Mary Magdalen by offering Christian comfort to a man who had lost both his wife and newborn child at sea on the way to Rome.

The depiction of Jerusalem in scene 15 of the fresco cycle is critical to its didactic function. In this image, the governor of Marseille in the company of St Peter is visiting the key sites that all pilgrims desired to experience first hand when taking such a voyage: Jerusalem, Golgotha with its crucifixion cross, the church of the Holy Sepulchre and the tomb of Christ (Colour Plate 25b). Giovanni and Battista Baschenis, the painters, had no model to follow from the Bergamo church only the legend itself. As such, they prioritized the city, a hill with a cross, a church on a hill and in the foreground a big stone tomb with a gabled lid. A large cross in front of the tomb draws our eye to the one held by St Peter, a repetition that indicates the sacred significance of the episode.

Unfortunately the middle register of the north wall was damaged by damp leading to the loss of the painted surface (the entire lower register is also gone), including the specific labels and scene description for the imagery. However, even without these handles, which I will return to below, this unusual scene probably functioned as a form of virtual pilgrimage.[61] The different sites to visit in the picture correspond to a mental *sacra monte* in this mountain valley church, one that replicates the actual journey to the Holy Land that local parishioners would probably never physically take themselves. To satisfy the obligation of

pilgrimage, devotees in rural valleys could travel to local shrines that offered easier opportunities for the collection of indulgences, such as the shrine of San Romedio near Bozen, discussed in Chapter 3. On the northern Italian peninsula, they could travel to the *sacra monte* in Biella, a recreation of the Holy Land experience, or even pass over the Alps to visit the Magdalen high cultic sites in Provence. What is interesting to note in this respect is that the scenes of the governor's pilgrimage corresponds to those of Mary Magdalen's retreat to the mountain wilderness in Provence – they appear on the same register on opposite walls of the presbytery, allowing viewers both to connect and to move in their imaginings between the different sacred geographies.

When it comes to the depiction of Mary Magdalen's retreat to the wilderness, what travels over the mountains from Bergamo to Cusiano in the repertoire of the artists is the sustained treatment of the subject and the retention of a highly popular Magdalen type: the penitent ascetic. For the flagellants in Bergamo, the type appealed to their practices of bodily mortification leading to spiritual enlightenment; a retreat into the choir of their church to meditate on the imagery of mystical elevation could melt away the bustle of urban life. Thirteen separate frescoed icons of the penitent Magdalen participated in this experience and there were two scenes depicting her wilderness retreat in the fresco cycle: in one she receives heavenly manna while in her cave, and the other depicts her elevation by angels.[62] As mentioned earlier, the disposition of this repetitive imagery created opportunities for meditative encounters as the devotee moved within the sacred precinct.

For the parishioners in Cusiano, the three scenes that describe the saint's retreat to the wilderness are a continuation of the creation of a virtual pilgrimage to Jerusalem depicted on the north wall opposite. This was achieved through images that worked in combination with their explanatory texts. What follows are the scene descriptions in Italian vernacular and the 'speech' captions in Latin which do not quote or interpret from the *Golden Legend* directly.[63]

The first scene on the southeast wall (21), and at a slightly lower level than the same register on the south wall, depicts Mary Magdalen walking barefoot in the mountain wilderness (Colour Plate 26). The Baschenis have picked out rough stones on the valley floor in their painting, but also a little church on a hill in the top right corner, which replicates the composition in the scene of Jerusalem. While the holy spirit in the form of a dove flies above, Mary asks God to avert her eyes so that she can see ('*Averte oculos meos ne videant*') with the commentary describing how being on her own she can live a blessed life and not be seen by another

creature ('*Como la beata M. Mag.na se parti sola per fare vita beata e non essere veduta da creatura alcuna*'). It is an image that reconciles physical seeing with inner seeing. Also the benefit of walking in a mountain retreat to reach spiritual enlightenment made all the more powerful by virtue of the Alpine landscape that lay outside of the church.[64] The inner journeying by the wandering eye is continued in the second scene of Mary Magdalen's eremitical retreat with the devotee required to move or look right and up to the middle register of the south wall (22). Deep in the mountain range, Mary kneels in prayer having left behind the grass, tree and little church. Her banner proclaims that her sins are before her daily ('*Peccavi coram te quotidie*') while the descriptor emphatically tells us that she went to the very barren and high mountain cave and stayed there for thirty years ('*Como la B.Maddalena ando suzo lo monte aspero crudo et alto e stete per trenta ani*').

The saint is garbed in a white dress with dark grey robe rather than her long golden hair, as we might expect from regional visual traditions and especially the type preferred in the flagellant church in Bergamo. The white dress is repeated in the third scene depicting her elevation in the wilderness by a choir of angels (23) and witnessed by the hermit a scene later (24). She rises like a symbol of innocence, a soul reborn and satiated as confirmed by the surviving text of her banner ('*Satiaborum cū … *'). The unusual representational choice may indicate a desire to connect with the lived experience of local parishioners. For example, there were a high number of hermitages established in the diocese during the late Middle Ages, which functioned as watchful outposts of the Church as well as sites of contemplation and abstinence. It is significant that although the three scenes in the fresco cycle in Cusiano depict similar landscapes they are three distinctly separate moments that visualize the passage of time. What we see is a pictorial device designed to enhance slow contemplation and experiential understanding, be it the flagellants who remember the desert saints as inspiration for their ritualized practices or the parishioners in Cusiano, who might identify with the Magdalen's isolation due to their situation high up in a mountain valley, often cut off from the world during heavy snow and rain fall. For all these reasons both churches opted for repetition of the eremitical imagery around the high altar, with Cusiano applying the hirsute Magdalen to the stone altar block itself.

The Baschenis brothers were the likely vehicles for the transmission of the saint's iconography and its concentrated presentation to the church in Cusiano, assuming their exposure to the Magdalen paintings in the flagellant church of Bergamo and in particular, their concentration in the choir and extended

presentation. Given the widespread popularity of Mary Magdalen in parishes across the Alps, it would have made sense for them to have the saint's iconography up their working sleeves. But added value came in the form of new scenes and the addition of painted text, no doubt at the behest of the clergy in the local parish, which reveals much about the didactic and performative function of the paintings.

What distinguishes the paintings in Cusiano from their counterparts in Bergamo is the presence of these painted words. The pictures speak in tongues, inside and out: to recap, Latin populates the speech banners that hang beside their respective mouthpieces, while vernacular Italian provides a running commentary below each scene. Each frame or banner is ruled with ochre paint with the black gothic letters scribed using notarial abbreviations and devices. Each commentary commences with the refrain, '*Como la Maddalena*' ('How the Magdalen … '), establishing a rhythmic pattern and explicatory tone. They are also individually numbered, with the ascending Arabic numerals matching the pictorial sequence of the episodes of the cycle. They are given in full or contracted form: *Capitolo 2* or *Cap. 21*. It is thus clear by their pictorial presence that the words were to be looked at, spoken aloud, and even tallied in the mind as one moved around the choir.

This kind of interaction between texts and images is known as *visibile parlare* or visible speech. Dante employed this rhetorical device in his *Purgatory* (10.94–96) when speaking of poetry in relation to art, specifically bas-relief sculpture. He pointed to its ekphrasic origins in the classical concept of *ut pictura poesis*, in which painting and poetry are said to share the same creative inspiration.[65] This interaction is a mainstay of Western art history, ancient to modern, with its related debates of dependency and equivalence. However, it also folds in the role of design between patron and painter. Compared to the classical reception of Domenico Ghirlandaio, who was working at this very time in the city of Florence, or the later painted poetry of Titian, the artistic production of the Baschenis brothers directed by rural clergy and probably a local notary might seem like a mechanical exercise in the pursuit of didactic clarity.[66] Yet in all cases we are compelled to ask, whose voice are we seeing or hearing and who is doing the looking and listening?[67]

It has been argued that the inscriptions accompanying the Magdalen fresco cycle in Cusiano were not included for the clergy who had no need of such instruction by virtue of their education and culture. Nor were they for the lay literate person. Rather they were intended for those of middling

education, who could read but without the help of these short texts would not be able to understand the painted subjects. Is this why even Mary Magdalen, the patron saint of this village, requires a name label in the opening scene of worldly pleasure? (Figure 6.7)[68] Was the saint's busy life of travel, preaching and miracles too complicated to follow? For sure, parishioners and passers-by had to deal with multiple protagonists (*Lazaro, Martha e molti cristiani*) and move between diverse locations or activities (*Marsiglia, Civitas aquensis,* Jerusalem and Provence) in a complicated visual arrangement in the presbytery. But was it really the first time they had seen the Magdalen's story in pictorial form? It is a curious situation that informs our ideas about responses to pictures, but also literacy in the provinces and the importance of painted words in the education of the laity.

The Latin phrases that issue from protagonists' mouths, float in banners or are inscribed in haloes are pithy and memorable: '*Lazare veni foras*'; '*Ecce alieni insurexerunt*'; '*Deus Charitas est*'; '*Tota pulcra es anima mea'; 'Proba verum*'; '*Quem fecit bona*'; '*Averte oculos meos ne videant*' (Figure 6.8). There is a sense of wonder in the scene descriptions, with the local dialect connecting with the parishioners through the language of their daily life. Each refrain begins with

Figure 6.7 Giovanni and Battista Baschenis, The Worldly Magdalen (1), *c.* 1470–97, fresco. Santa Maria Maddalena, Cusiano (Photo: Author).

Figure 6.8 Giovanni and Battista Baschenis, Painted speech: *Tota spes mea in te dne* (8), *c.* 1470–97, fresco. Santa Maria Maddalena, Cusiano (Photo: author).

Como meaning 'how': '*Como J X contento la Mag.na faciendo resusitar Lazaro suo fratello za da Quattro giorni morto*'; '*Como la Mad.na pervenne in Marsiglia con la compagnia e queli de la citade noli volero albergare et alora soto uno ponticello che se domanda vano.*'[69] The Cusiano scripts are to be read, but also read out loud, reminding us that 'medieval letter script was understood to represent sounds needing hearing'.[70]

It is likely that the clergy and painters, Giovanni and Battista Baschenis, drew upon the *Golden Legend* for the full story of Mary Magdalen. However, the presence of 'chapter' numbers at the end of each (surviving) scene description in combination with the decision not to use the available direct quotes in Voragine's text points us to the role of mystery plays in the creation of these talking pictures. Surviving director's scripts from the German-speaking territories (including Bozen) with their verses and lines are comparable to the fresco cycle in that they are symbols on a page and arranged in a versified format designed to put words in actors' mouths and so facilitate live performance. Cusiano may have been located in a high northern valley of the diocese of Trento but like Bozen, this was a contact zone for German and Italian cultures thanks to its proximity to the Tonale and Mendola Passes.[71] Some villages in the high Val di Non, next to the Val di Sole, have been German speaking since the late Middle Ages, and so it is possible that religious plays in Latin and German may have been performed in the parishes by travelling troubadours, representing an early version of the popular *Volksschauspiele*, simple folk plays put on in Alpine regions up until the twentieth century.[72] Alternatively, the painters may well have known about plays in the larger centres of Trento and Bozen. The opening scenes of the fresco cycle, depicting the worldly Magdalen and her conversion through the preaching of Christ, belong more to the theatrical stage than the pages of the *Golden Legend*.[73]

In this regard, the paintings of Cusiano represent a material history of *visibile parlare*, the crafting of spoken speech from the pulpit to the stage to the walls. The storehouse of Magdalen imagery may have found its origins in flagellant devotional practices but it soon became enmeshed with another kind of public spectacle, of theatre and parish sermons, thus evidencing a process of adaptation.

* * *

This chapter has explored the transmission of Magdalen imagery through the migration of an artistic workshop across the Rhaetian Alps, with the aim of understanding how supply met demand. The working practices of the Baschenis brothers depended on a home base from which they might diffuse skills and

Figure 6.9 Giovan Battista Guarinoni di Averaria, Man of Sorrows, sixteenth century, fresco. Ex-Church of Santa Maria Maddalena, Bergamo (Photo: Author).

image repertories, this being representative of a type of migratory workshop in the late medieval to early modern Alps. By extension, it facilitated the transfer of imagery between urban and rural communities, reconciling universal types with local devotional preferences. But it was a two-way process. As noted at the outset, Giovanni and Battista Baschenis painted a Man of Sorrows (Sunday Christ) in Santa Maria Maddalena in Cusiano, just where the nave meets the triumphal arch on the south wall. It is a large votive icon set above an extensive and elegantly painted text.

A similar image is found in the flagellant church in Bergamo, this time on the triumphal arch, painted by Giovan Battista Guarinoni di Averaria, a sixteenth-century member of the Baschenis dynasty (Figure 6.9). While it interrupts the more sophisticated Magdalen cycle by Christoforo de' Baschenis dispersed across the triumphal arch, the painting's presence suggests continued Baschenis movement between the two regions and their churches (Figure 6.5); there is a marked continuity in composition and style from the Cusiano version, painted before 1490.[74] This is suggestive of a sustained circulation of imagery that was supported by a tried and tested system of artistic migration that challenges the hierarchies of centre and periphery.

In the seventh and final chapter of this book, the focus moves to the Engadine Valley in the Swiss Grisons where another Italian workshop was employed to decorate a church newly dedicated to Mary Magdalen. While little is known about the origins of this migratory labour force, the imagery they left behind reveals much about local parish belief in the generative power of the saint on the cusp of the Reformation.

Notes

1   This chapter includes previously published material. See Anderson, 'Devotional and Artistic Responses to the Cult of Mary Magdalen', in Anderson, Farquhar and Richards, *Visible Exports/Imports*, 161–180.
2   The nearest settlement is Pellizano, a five-minute walk from Cusiano.
3   See Janet L. Nelson, 'The Setting of the Gift in the Reign of Charlemagne', in *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 123. The hospice of St. Bartholomew, founded in the thirteenth century by the Bishop prince of Trento, Frederico Wanga, overlooks the Tonale and was a place of respite for weary

travellers. In 1279, the refuge provider ('*D.ni Giselbertus provisor Hospitalis S. Bartolomeo dei Tonallo e Bazane*') was also the priest of Ossana ('*clericus de Vulsana*'), see Udalrico Fantelli, *Ossana. Storia di una communità* (Fucine di Ossana: Tipolitografica, 2005), 104.

4   There was a mining industry at Monteclassico, 10 kilometres from Cusiano, reinforcing the connection between Mary Magdalen and the mountains explored in Chapter 5.

5   The church and its fresco cycle are found in Simone Weber, *Le chiese della Val di Sole nella storia e nell'arte* (Trento: Artigianelli, 1936), 19–20. While not without error, the first sustained consideration is by Quirino Bezzi, 'Gli Affreschi di Giovanni e Battista Baschenis de Averaria nella Chiesa di S. Maria Maddalena a Cusiano', *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche* 49, no. 2 (1970): 358–372. In Magdalen scholarship, the entire cycle or individual scenes are discussed by Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 82 and 160, Sara Piccolo Paci, *Le vesti del peccato. Eva, Salome e Maria Maddalena nell'arte* (Milano: Ancora, 2003), 65–71 and Elena Ferrari-Barassi, 'The Narrative of Saint Mary Magdalene in the Church of Cusiano, Italy', *Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography* 32 (2007): 103–112. My own article was published in 2012, see n. 1.

6   The cycle was discovered under a layer of whitewash in 1910 and restored in 1938–9. See below for the post-Reformation fate of the paintings.

7   The murals cycle of Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll (Chapter 3) has ten scenes, Sankt Oswald in Seefeld (Chapter 4) has seven, Sankt Maria Magdalena in Dusch (Chapter 2) five and the altarpiece from Carema (Chapter 1) eight. This may indicate a general trend for larger narrative programmes over the course of the period 1290–1500. Sankt Maria in Pontresina has 18–19 scenes in its Magdalen programme (Chapter 7). It may be symptomatic of the popularity of certain saints in the long Middle Ages, although we should not exclude the possibility of one-upmanship within the region, networks of devotion coming hand-in-hand with competitive strategies.

8   Giovanni Ciccolini, ed., *Inventari e Regesti degli Archivi Parrocchiali della Val di Sole. La Pieve di Ossana*, vol. 1 (Trento: Rerum Tridentinarum Fontes, 1936), 2. The church is mentioned in 1323, according to Weber, *Le chiese della Val di Sole*, 19.

9   Ciccolini, *Inventari e Regesti*, 2; Giangristosimo Cristoforetti, *Atti Visitale di Bernardo Cles 1537–8* (Bologna: EDB, 1989), 250.

10 Anna Maffei and Michelangelo Maffei s.a.s, *Relazione tecnica. Inerente al restauro degli affreschi della chiesa di Santa Maria Maddalena, Cusiano (TN)* (unpublished restoration report, Archivio restauri, SBSAT [1996]) and Bruno Bronzini et al., *Arte e devozione nelle chiese della Val di Sole* (Trento: Publilux, 1983), 63–67.

11 The 1997–2000 restoration by the SBSAT did not reveal any other late medieval decoration on this wall or on the west.

12 The iconography was meant to warn against work on Sunday or blasphemy. For its development in Alpine churches in the fifteenth century, see Dominique Rigaux, 'Le péché et l'espérance. Un catéchisme en images sur les murs des églises alpines', in *D'une montagne à l'autre*, ed. Dominque Rigaux (Grenoble: Université Pierre Mendès, 2002), 357–385.

13 Anthony's traditional attributes are the tau cross, a bell and a small pig referring to the use of pig fat as a treatment for St Anthony's fire (Ergotism).

14 Dominique Rigaux, 'Les conditions de la commande de peintures dans les paroisses des Alpes à la fin du Moyen Âge. Approche iconographique', in *Economia e arte secc. XIII-XVIII*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 2002), 496–497.

15 There is no evidence of any donor figures or family insignia on any of the votive paintings to suggest that they were an individual commission intended for public veneration. For a recent comparative study of the formation of group identity in Alpine villages through art and architecture, see Massimo Della Misericordia, *Divenire comunità: comune rurali, poteri locali, identità sociali e territoriali in Valtellina e nella montagna lombarda nel tardo medioevo* (Milano: UNICOPLI, 2014).

16 ADT, AV 11 1579, 122*v* and AV 33 1766, 150*r*.

17 For the significance of the dual symbols, see Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 96–99. For the jar as encoded object as linked to the Magdalen's apostolate and preaching, see Apostolos-Cappadona, 'From Apostola Apostolorum', 174–175.

18 ADT, AV 22 1751, 225*v*.

19 A second, and probably later, hand corrects the date to 1503 a few pages earlier, but this does not affect the proposed dating. Two painted consecration crosses are found on the walls of the presbytery. See Chapter 4, note 30.

20 Pietro Belli demands that the local authorities conceal the images that are outside of the choir: 'sbianchieziar li muri all'interno della chiesa, acciò riesca più illuminosa, scancellandosi quelle figure che sono fuori dil choro.' ADT AV Libro B 1617, 203*v*.

21 The coadjutor notes that the church nave is still covered in paintings: 'Corpus ecclesiae fornicatum, et depictum, integrum etiam quod muros laterales, praeter unam rimam supra portam maiorem.' ADT AV Libro 9B 1617, 203*r*; AV 16 1672, 197*r* and *v*.

22 The fresco cycle has suffered losses over the centuries. The final scene on the lower register of the south wall was damaged by the insertion of a doorway leading to the new sacristy in 1591. The north wall remains vulnerable to damp and at some point lost a scene in its lower register.

23 For a wide-ranging discussion of the bystander in art as mediator between viewers and images, see Beate Fricke and Urte Krass, eds., *The Public in the Picture. Involving the Beholder in Antique, Islamic, Byzantine, Western Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Zürich: Diaphanes, 2015).

24 An authentication of the relics of Mary Magdalen (and Saints Candido, Benigno, Vittorina and Concordia) was carried out by Cardinal Gaspare 'de Carpenedo', vicar general of the pope on 1 March 1673, an event documented 10 September 1673 by the local notary, Melchiore Gaggia. See Ciccolini, *Inventari e Regesti*, 5. There are no earlier references.

25 In Prazöll, the late fourteenth-century frescos in the apse depicted a coronation of the Virgin and in the register below, a series of seated apostles (minus Mary Magdalen). They were removed to the Civic Museum during the 1950s restoration. The previous decorative campaign had a crucifixion and series of apostles with Mary Magdalen in the centre, and these remain in situ. See Chapter 3.

26 A number of paintings are given a loose attribution to Giovanni and Battista Baschenis by Nicolò Rasmo, *Affreschi del Trentino e dell'Alto Adige* (Milano: Electa, 1971), 223. No signature, contract or tangential record survives for the paintings in Cusiano, probably due to later structural changes to the church. They signed their work (a Last Supper) in the church of San Udalrico in Corte Inferiore di Rumo in the Val di Non – *Johannes et Baptista de Averaria pinxerunt 1471* – and in the church of Santi Filippo and Giacomo in Segonzone (in the apse) – *Johannes et Baptista c(ons)anguinei de Averaria 1473 die 28 augusti* – giving us concrete evidence of their joint enterprise. Occasionally they do work independently.

27 For a comprehensive study of the Baschenis dynasty and their working practices, see Silvia Vernaccini, *I Baschenis de Averaria: pittori itineranti nel Trentino* (Trento: Temi, 1989)and more recently William Belli, *Itinerari dei Baschenis: Giudicare, Val Rendena, Val di Non e Val di Sole* (Trento: Provincia autonoma di Trento, 2008).

28 See Norbert Lieb, *Die Voralberger Barockbaumeister* (Munich: Schnell & Steiner, 1976) and Herlinde Löhr, *Die Voralberger Barockbaumeister. Neue Forschung* (Lindau: self-published, 2002).

29 This model of migration with its ritualized practices and creation of visual cultures would eventually demise only to be memorialized in the nineteenth-century concept of *Kunstlandschaft*, where art defines geography and geography defines art as part of nationalistic discourse of longing for an un-alienated premodern past. See the Coda to this book for further reflection.

30 This was true for their cousins from both branches of the dynasty, all of who travelled for work, purveying the distinctive Baschenis style and repertoire. While there is no evidence to suggest an annual meeting of the family, like the *Auer Zunft*, their patterns of work avoiding contemporaneous overlap are suggestive of collective organization and communication. This does not exclude reworking of sites over the years by members of the same family, as is the case in the villages of Pelugo and Pellizano.

31 The church of San Lorenzo in Cunevo bears his sole signature, *Johannes de Averaria, 1490.*

32 For the working practices of artisans and artists, see Vernaccini, *Baschenis de Averaria*, 37–45, 48 and Michelle O'Malley, *The Business of Art: Contracts and Commissioning Contexts in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 77–96.

33 Margaret A. Pappano and Nicole R. Rice, 'Medieval and Early Modern Artisan Culture', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, no. 3 (2013): 473–485, esp. 474.

34 Anderson, 'The Case of Cusiano' and 'Mary Magdalene and her Dear Sister', 45–73.

35 Matheis Stöberl, who we met in Chapter 5, acted in the Sterzing plays by Vigil Raber, giving us food for thought when it comes to his other cultural production. Widening the lens, Masaccio is documented as painting sets in the Carmine church in Florence during the decoration of the Brancacci Chapel in the 1420s. See Nerrida Newbigin, 'Playing the Piazza. Peter, Paul and Santa Maria del Carmine', in *The Brancacci Chapel. Form, Function and Setting*, ed. Nicholas A. Eckstein (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2007), 139–155.

36 Bronzini et al., *Arte e devozione*, 126.

37 Vernaccini, *Baschenis de Averaria*, 48. She affirms a communal approach to financing the decoration of village churches in the upper Trentino valleys.

38 Why economic anthropology (which looks to broad histories rather than market structures) is a more appropriate approach to late medieval rural economies is discussed by Volker Stamm, 'Was ist historische Wirtschaftsanthropolgie?' *Geschichte und Region/Storia e regione* – special issue on *Ländliche Ökonomien/ Economie rurali*, ed. Hannes Obermair 24, no. 1 (2015): 11–31.

39 Fragments of gothic script comparable to those found in the Magdalen cycle of Cusiano have been found in the remains of the castle chapel, see Fantelli, *Ossana*, 253–254.

40 The work was carried out between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries by Lombard stone masons.

41 The Bishop princes held the right to appoint the Trentino nobility. For their various ranks and titles, as well as a useful bibliography, see Pietro Marsilli, 'Apparire per essere. Aspetti della committenza artistica nobilare in Trentino fra Quattro e Cinquecento', in *D'une montagne à l'autre*, ed. Dominque Rigaux (Grenoble: Université Pierre Mendès, 2002), 143–171, esp. 145–147.

42 Archivio Parrocchiale Decanale di Ossana: (1291–1944). Inventario, ed. Coopartive Koinè su incarico della Provincia Autonoma di Trento (Trento: s.n., 1995), no. 31, 61.

43 Unlike in Bozen, there is no evidence to suggest that the parish of Ossana had appointed a *fabrice* for the physical maintenance of San Vigilio and to coordinate the administration of the properties attached to its daughter chapels, see Chapter 3.

44 Despite its considerable size, the raised income in 1309 from the parish of Ossana was twenty Veronese *marche*; however, the canon Bongiovanni di Bologna, working on behalf of the Trento Cathedral Chapter, calculated that San Vigilio of Ossana was required to pay to the Bishop ten Veronese *marche*, a substantial proportion. See Emanuele Curzel, *Le pievi trentine. Trasformazioni e continuità nell'organizzazione territoriale della cura d'anime dalle origini al XIII sedolo (studio introduttivo e schede)* (Bologna: EDB, 1999), 185–186.

45 In 1268, the priest of Ossana complained that the benefice was insufficient, placing the parish in the hands of the Trento Cathedral canon, Odorico Scolastico, Vicar General to the diocesan Bishop. *Ambrosius Blaspelrem canon. trid.* should be equated with Ambrogio Schlaspeck (despite the incongruity of surname – interpretations of the source material are divided), priest in Ossana from 1464 to 1472. He originated from the diocese of Salzburg, was a canon of Trento, familiar of the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick III and chancellor to Bishop Gregory of Trento.

46 The indulgence is recorded on 5 September 1317 by the notary, Bongiovanni di Bonadrea, in the *Quaternum rogacionum*: 'Die, loco et testibus suprascriptus. Prefatus dominus episcopus concessit indulgentiam XX dierum usque ad annum benefacientibus ad fabricam ecclesie Santi Odorici quam hedificare incepit Venturinus faber de Buen de valle Camonica habitator Cusiani plebatus Valsane, hedificare utique in pertinenciis Valsane, in loco qui dicitur.' Cited from, *Il 'Quaternus rogacionum' del notaio Bongiovanni di Bonandrea (1308–1320)*, ed. Daniela Rando and Monica Motter (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997), 159. For the indulgence industry in the context of medieval England, see Robert N. Swanson, *Indulgences in Late Medieval* England. *Passports to Paradise?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. 61–64. For a pan-European appraisal, see Robert. N. Swanson, ed., *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits. Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe* (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2006).

47 The insignia of the order depicts two arms crossed over a large T with the hands bearing stigmata – one arm is bare, the other is covered in the sleeve of a monastic habit, while both appear out of a small cloud. Like the Cusiano shield there is also a type of fleur-de-lys at the bottom. An inscription runs round the periphery of the Capuchin shield – *in si[g]nia prae clara minorum*. The mendicant order arrived in the Val di Sole (first at Cles, then Terazolas) during the eighteenth century and so has no bearing on the Magdalen fresco cycle at the time of its commission or execution. See, *I Frati Cappucini in Val di Sole* (Trento: Provinica dei Frati Minori Cappuccini, 1995). The monastery itself was founded in the 1520s and so after the execution of the Cusiano Magdalen cycle.

48   For community involvement in the rural parishes of the Trento diocese, see
     Emanuele Curzel, 'Le istituzioni ecclesiastiche', in *Storia del Trentino*, vol. 3. *L'età
     medievale*, ed. Andrea Castegnetti and Gian Maria Varanini (Bologna: Il Mulino,
     2004), 552–557.

49   Haymaking at the foot of the mountain was only permitted after 22 July. In
     the village of Casada, in the Dolomites, the high-summer date marked the end
     of haymaking to allow for migration of labour, see Anna Comis and Isabel
     Comis Degenaars, *Casada. History of an Italian Village and its People* (Tucson:
     Wheatmark, 2015), chap. 6 (n.p).

50   On this topic, see most recently, Emanuele Curzel, 'Sul ruolo economico delle
     chiesa di villaggio nel tardo medievo. Notizie da libri di conti dell'area trentina',
     Geschichte und Region/Storia e regione – special issue on *Ländliche Ökonomien/
     Economie rurali*, ed. Hannes Obermair 24, no. 1 (2015): 62–72 and Cecilia Nubola,
     'Giuspatronati popolare e comunità rurali (secc. XV–XVIII)', *Acta Histriae* 7 (1999):
     391–412.

51   The first codification of the statutes is in 1336. See Andreas Dehmer, '"Sub Vexillo
     Sanctae Mariae Magdalenae". Bilder, Banner und Bruderschaften der hl. Maria
     Magdalena im Bergamaskischen, 1300–1800', *Das Münster* 2 (2005): 206–214. For
     the classic study, see Lester K. Little, *Libertà, carità, fraternità: confraternite laiche a
     Bergamo nell'età del Comune* (Bergamo: P. Lubrina, 1988).

52   See Joanna Cannon, *Religious Poverty, Visual Riches. Art in the Dominican Churches
     of Central Italy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New Haven, CT: Yale
     University Press, 2013), 277–296. Cannon argues for the accommodation of
     different devotional needs of the laity and the friars, and the contingent artistic
     strategies for harmonizing the walls, such as the use of *basamenti*.

53   The role of drawings and other strategies of visualization for the transmission of
     artistic knowledge are discussed in Scheller, *Exemplum*, 1–90. See also Melanie
     Holcomb, 'Strokes of Genius: The Draftsmans' Art in the Middle Ages', in *Pen
     and Parchment. Drawing in the Middle Ages* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale
     University Press, 2009), 26–33.

54   They likely represent Peter Damian (left) and his follower Domenic Loricatus
     (right), both revered for their bodily mortification as part of ritual penitence;
     neither was officially canonized but venerated as such, hence the haloes in the
     painting. The rayed brother is possibly Raniero Fasani, a Franciscan hermit in
     Umbria who founded a flagellant confraternity.

55   Fra Angelico also paints a Dominican friar in his resurrection scene at San
     Marco in Florence (*c*. 1440–1442), but there the friar occupies a different space
     to Christ, encouraging the friar in the actual cell (no. 8) to mentally place himself
     in the picture. The same dynamics are at play in Bergamo but with less regard for
     appropriate distancing.

56 The upper strata of the plaster was removed by the *strappo* method, transferred
    to canvas and deposited in the Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti in Bergamo.
    For the Magdalen cycle, ex-church and flagellant confraternity in Bergamo, see
    Miklós Boskovits, ed., *I Pittori Bergameschi dal XIII al XIX secolo. Le origini*
    (Bergamo: Poligraphice Polis, 1992), 410–414; Dehmer, 'Sub Vexillo Sanctae Mariae
    Magdalenae', 206–214; Carlo Agazzi, 'Una gloriosa confraternità Bergamesca',
    Bergomum 8 (1934): 15–39.

57 Mary Magdalen's presence in scenes of iconoclasm is rare in narrative cycles
    produced by the mendicant orders, likewise in those from the Alpine territories
    based on the surviving evidence.

58 Likewise for the confraternity in Borgo San Sepolcro, whose processional banner,
    painted by Spinello Aretino in around 1400, is conserved in the Metropolitan
    Museum of Art, New York. One of the brethren carries the discipline in the
    Bergamo image of the kneeling confraternity.

59 See Bridget M. Heal, *Paradigm of Penitence: The Presence of Mary Magdalen at the
    Foot of the Cross in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Crucifixion Imagery from
    Tuscany and Umbria* (MA diss., University of London: Courtauld Institute of Art,
    1996). The intermingling of hair and blood would become a trope in late medieval
    art.

60 The Bergamo cycle has lost the majority of its opening scenes from the top two
    registers as result of the new rib vaulting. Identification in this case is based on
    comparative work. The remainder of the cycle can be reconstructed from the
    surviving fragments.

61 For an excellent study of this practice, see Kathryn Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimage in
    the Convent. Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols,
    2011) and more recently, 'Virtual Pilgrimage through the Jerusalem Cityscape',
    in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and
    Hanna Vorholt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 381–393. It is first used by Sheila D.
    Campbell, 'Armchair Pilgrims: Ampullae from Aphrodisias in Caria', *Medieval
    Studies* 50 (1988): 539–545. Manuscripts and pilgrim badges are more common
    modes of mental travelling, see Meghan H. Foster-Campbell, 'Pilgrimage through
    the Pages: Pilgrim's Badges in the Late Medieval Devotional Manuscripts', in *Push
    Me, Pull You*. Vol. 1. *Imaginative and Emotional Interaction in Late Medieval and
    Renaissance Art*, ed. Sarah Blick and Laura Gelfland (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 227–277.

62 They are followed by a scene of the last communion, with the hirsute Magdalen
    transported to the oratory of Saint-Maximin's cathedral in Aix by the same angelic
    chorus.

63 See Chapter 7 for a cycle that does make use of verbatim quotes from the *Golden
    Legend*.

64   See Luttikhuizen, 'Still Walking'.

65   It is first used by Horace in his *Ars poetica*. The literature is vast on this topic but an excellent introduction is found in Eckart Marchand, 'His Master's Voice: Painted Inscriptions in the Works of Domenico Ghirlandaio', *artibus et historiae* 66 (2012): 99–120 and Richard Tarr, '"Visibile parlare": The spoken word in fourteenth-century Italian painting', *Word and Image* 13, no. 3 (1997): 223–244. For painted vernaculars, see Claudio Ciociola, ed., '*Visibile Parlare*'. *Le scritture esposte nei volgari italiani dal medioevo al rinascimento* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1997).

66   See Andrea Giorgi, Stefano Moscadelli, Diego Quaglioni, and Gian Maria Varanini, eds., *Il notariato nell' arco alpino. Produzione e conservazione delle carte notarili tra medioevo e età moderna* (Milano: Giuffrè 2014).

67   Questions also posed by Giovanni Pozzi, 'Dall'orlo del "visibile parlare"', in Ciociola, '*Visibile Parlare*', 21.

68   The scene description states, '*Como Maria Maddalena stava 'ntel suo castelo e si dava ale pompe e ale vanita del mondo.*' It is clear enough but the painters still add *Maria Maddalena* below the figure. In scene 2, in the opposite lunette, the inscription states, '*Como Maria Maddalena ando alla predica de J. X cum Martha sua sorella…*' with '*Y H S*' and '*M Maddalena*' added below the figures.

69   'Como' corresponds to the French 'Comment' and the Latin 'Qualiter', see Enrica Cozzi, 'Per una cataloga dell'area Italiana nord-orientale itineraries essenziale', in Ciociola, '*Visibile Parlare*', 417.

70   Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 285.

71   Bozen and Cusiano are separated by some 30 miles via the Mendola Pass (1360 m).

72   Hansjürgen Linke, 'Germany and German-speaking central Europe', in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe: New Research in Early Drama*, ed. Eckehard Simon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 207–208. The overall number of medieval plays from the German-speaking areas is vast and of those 162 are religious plays written in German. This number, however, is not viewed as a true reflection of a time when plays were performed in nearly every town and in regions for which no evidence survives.

73   See Anderson, 'The Case of Cusiano', 167–169.

74   See Fiorella Cichi and Liliana De Venuta, *Il movimento dei battuti e le danze macabre della Val Rendena* (Calliano (TN): Manfrini, 1993), 80–81. The painting is given a fourteenth-century dating in this publication but Guarinoni was active during *c*. 1548–1579.

Devotion and Resurrection in Pontresina

By the end of the fifteenth century, imagery of Mary Magdalen was diffuse throughout the Alps. The saint had found purchase in the devotional lives of pilgrims, parishioners, priests and religious orders, even resident miners, thanks to her association with mountains as a site of physical retreat and spiritual ascendency. Each community moved with the Magdalen in their daily lives and prayers, engendering a latent connection with her retreat into the wilderness, as described in the *Golden Legend*, but also with the actual cave in Provence which was by now a well-established destination for pilgrims. As explored in the previous chapter, viewers of the Magdalen imagery in the church of Cusiano were encouraged to make a virtual pilgrimage that transported them between Marseille, Rome and Jerusalem before arriving at the tomb of Mary Magdalen in the final scenes nearest the high altar, which was itself decorated with an image of the mystical saint. By replicating forms and ideas about the saint across the Alps, both site and images generated a sacred landscape. But what kind of miracle potential did these mountain-based communities invest in their images? What were they meant to do and how did they gain authority?

This final chapter returns to the Swiss Grisons nearly 200 years since the enquiry began to reinforce the miracle potential of Mary Magdalen in the context of shifting devotional priorities in a local parish. For this we turn to the interior walls of the nave of Sankt Maria in Pontresina and its fresco cycle painted by an itinerant workshop from northern Italy (Colour Plate 27a).[1] Its extended portrayal of the Magdalen's evangelical mission and miracles performed in life and after death speaks to the realities of village life and, in particular, women's anxieties about fertility, infant mortality and the cure of souls. While it might easily point to superstition and folkloric tradition, historically synonymous with local belief systems and small-mindedness, this would be an impoverished account of how a rural parish mobilized its visual resources. What this chapter will demonstrate

instead is how the supernatural power of 'mother Magdalen' was contained by the eschatological framework of Christian salvation: specifically by a Christ life cycle and Last Judgement with swaddled infants in limbo painted around the four walls of the nave. By revealing the strong inter-relation of text and image in key scenes, we can better understand the intersections of cultic belief and Church doctrine in rural churches, about women of the parish and modes of authority as represented in the figures of the Virgin Mary, Peter, first apostle and most importantly, Mary Magdalen.

Mother of the parish

Mary Magdalen was never a wife or mother. Cast as a fallen woman, the closest she came to achieving either state was through her perceived intercessory efficacy by women facing the trials of motherhood. Knowledge of this supportive role for laywomen in any given parish likely originated with the *Golden Legend*, compiled by Jacobus de Voragine in *c*. 1260. Its use in sermons and translation into vernacular tongues on both sides of the Alps ensured the widespread circulation and localized reception of the saint's curative skills, especially for pregnant women.[2] Alongside her inspirational redemption through the agency of Christ, it recounts Mary's miraculous intervention on behalf of the pagan governing couple of Marseille, who would conceive a child after years of infertility in return for their conversion to Christianity.

This apocryphal miracle was fundamental to the decoration of the mountainside church of Sankt Maria in Pontresina. Inside we find a simple structure with plentiful wall space for large-scale sequential paintings that emphasize the saint's female-orientated, miracle-working potential. On the west wall of the nave, the devotee meets and travels with the governing couple on their pilgrimage in order to verify Mary Magdalen's faith across multiple scenes, with the crucial episodes set on the rocky island gaining particular prominence in iconographic and spatial terms. I will discuss the programme in more detail below but it is worth pointing out here that the entire interior of the church is rich in depictions of women suggesting that specific issues are at stake. As such, this section now turns briefly to the construction of female spirituality in relation to Mary Magdalen and its active role in local devotional practices. It also looks ahead to how and why the female body was evidential proof for the supernatural power of the saint.

Taken as an historical figure, Mary Magdalen does not conform to any religious or social conventions designed to control unmarried women in art or literature. To operate outside of the norms of the female life cycle (mainly marriage and childbirth), she takes on the masculine mantle of evangelism and an eremitical retreat more typical of church fathers or hermits, such as Jerome, Paul the Anchorite or Anthony Abbot. At the end of her life she then returns to the patriarchal infrastructure of the church where she receives last communion from her old companion from Judea, Bishop St Maximin. Despite this model of displaced femininity, Mary Magdalen has been described by Katherine Jansen as a 'generative' force in matters of fertility, especially conception, infant nourishment and midwifery, shoring up her status as a protector saint.[3] It is evident that perception of her body being divinely sustained by supernatural forces, and specifically the singing of angels, while being raised to the heavens seven times a day was proof enough for those seeking a similar spiritual yet deeply somatic intervention.

The Pontresina fresco cycle was participant in a European wide trend for representations of Mary Magdalen that might be described as maternal, making it ostensibly representative rather than exceptional. However, there is more to be gained from examining this kind of imagery and its function in the local context and it comes down to which saints were chosen to protect and advocate for the community. St Margaret of Antioch may have burst through the belly of a dragon and the Virgin Mary experienced a virgin birth but Mary Magdalen could bring 'real' people back from the dead.

Picturing a new patron saint

Although the church in Pontresina was originally dedicated to Sankt Maria (the Virgin Mary) from at least 1450 and retains that nomenclature today, from around the 1470s and coinciding with the enlargement of the building and cemetery, it was rededicated to Mary Magdalen (Figure 7.1). As a baptismal and burial church it was at the heart of village life. It was also a filial church of the parish of Samedan, the mother church being Sankt Peter.

Local endeavour seems the most probable scenario for the expansion of the church building, as with many of the churches discussed in this book.[4] Alms, charitable donations, endowments or outside investment could be paid in coins, but also in natural goods, such as butter or fat – the Upper Engadine relied

Figure 7.1 Sankt Maria. Pontresina, Upper Engadine Valley, Graubünden (Photo: Author).

primarily on animal husbandry for income. Any land owned by the church would have raised significant finances either through rental or perpetual interest attached to pledged properties.[5] Churchwardens (*Kirchenpfleger*) would have

been responsible for organizational duties as well as administering funds for all necessary liturgical furnishings, altar endowments and lights for the church.[6]

The Magdalen dedication of the church remained in place for an undetermined time. An entry from the *Registrum librorum horarum* of 1522, an account book belonging to the diocese of Chur, records the purchase of a common breviary.[7] A payment was made on 2 July of four Rhenisch *guildern* by churchwarden Peter Thome of *Sancte Marie Magdalene* in Pontresina and not *Sancte Marie*. Thereafter the archives fall silent.[8] Why the church was rededicated is unclear. Possible reasons are the widespread popularity of Mary Magdalen in the Alps, a need to distinguish from all the other Marian dedications nearby or perhaps a substantial donation from a private benefactor that came with specific conditions. What we do know is that it must have happened after the restructuring of the church and burial ground in 1477 and before the new decorative programmes, including the Magdalen fresco cycle, which were completed in 1497.[9]

Not every member of the village would have been necessarily versed in the legend of Mary Magdalen, so it probably made sense to have a full and authoritative visual narrative for the 'catechising [of] the congregation'.[10] For this, the artistic workshop and their advisor depended upon a Latin copy of the *Golden Legend*, as will become clear later in this chapter.[11]

The change in dedication is pictorially conveyed in a rather unusual manner on the triumphal arch of the church. Two Marian votive images belonging to former side altars might suggest to the viewer the enduring dominance of the original dedication were it not for the inclusion of a kneeling figure in the left-hand image (Colour Plate 27b). This image points to something more transitional. Although there are heavy surface losses, it is possible to discern the presence of a female figure with long blond hair and a red dress, and crucially a halo, kneeling to the right of the enthroned Madonna; properties that we associate with conventional representations of Mary Magdalen. Confirmation of her co-presence with the Virgin Mary is found in the annunciation imagery directly above, where the Magdalen stands witness to Gabriel's visitation. Her bodily presence on the periphery of this sacred scene with unguent vase in hand suggests that her status as anointer of Christ is an equivalence to that of his mother. This can be interpreted as evidence of 'cradle to grave' care, whereby the Virgin saw Christ into the world as a new born infant and Mary Magdalen is there at his death and resurrection, as depicted above the doorway of the church.

Mary Magdalen had assumed many of the qualities associated with the Virgin Mary over the centuries, such as her purity and maternal role. In this

light, the kneeling Magdalen in the votive image can be understood as receiving approbation from the Virgin (and the Christ child) in her new role as patron saint of Pontresina. It is an act of bestowal upon the saint who must now bear the mantle of protection in the cycle of life. I will return to this role and its development within the eschatological discourse of the visual programmes in due course. But first it is crucial to examine in what way Mary Magdalen justified her promotion and how she might have garnered the prayers of local parishioners, especially women. For this, discussion turns to the fresco cycle proper, painted on the west wall of the nave.

Reconstructing the life of Mary Magdalen

The fresco cycle depicting the life of Mary Magdalen contributes to the colourful interior of Sankt Maria, which comprises a Christ cycle beginning on the upper register of the west wall, that continues round the north and south walls, until it ends with scenes of *Noli me tangere* and Pentecost above the main portal. Mary Magdalen is represented multiple times throughout the Christ cycle. The choir of the church is decorated with Christ in a mandorla surrounded by the four Evangelists with a series of apostles and fictive drapery below. The triumphal arch wall displays images of the Annunciation, two votive images of Virgin Mary Enthroned (either side of the choir), Saints Sebastian and Michael Archangel, and the Trinity. The flat wooden ceiling is enlivened with alternating decorative patterns with a central boss carrying the image of an alpine ibex and an inscription reading, *In nomine domini amen 1497*, providing the *terminus post quem* for the entire decorative scheme. Outside on the south façade, there are paintings above the portal. An image of St George and the Dragon, which sits above another framed image of the Virgin Mary nursing the infant Christ with St Peter and a local Bishop saint who stand to either side. There are also fragments of a giant St Christopher from an earlier period, reminding local and passers-by alike, that the saints were always watching the valleys below.[12]

   The eighteen, possibly nineteen scenes that constitute the Magdalen cycle are individually framed to distinguish the sequential events in the saint's story recounted in the *Golden Legend*. These are spread over two registers. The cycle covers a major portion of the wall surface of the west end but it eschews the monumentality of the other cycles discussed in this book in favour of a more picturesque approach; the sea journey to Rome, as part of the pagan couple's

pilgrimage, is particularly attentive to the representation of the coastline and sky. While the quality of execution is variable, at times indicating multiple hands at work, overall the style is quite refined, with a figurative elegance akin to the fourteenth-century fresco cycle produced for the flagellant church in Bergamo, discussed in the previous chapter. It gives credence to the workshop's northern Italian origins but also to the circulation of design concepts and subject matters through the seasonal migration of labour.

Such pictorial qualities help to shape our understanding of artistic practice in outlying areas but they also point us to the original appearance of the cycle, which is already complicated by its parlous condition. The cycle suffered mass surface losses from the removal of whitewash applied during the Reformation, the insertion of a nineteenth-century wooden gallery replete with staircase and panelling (later removed), and the more invasive cutting out of seven scenes from both registers to reveal an underlying Romanesque plaster layer, discovered during the twentieth century.[13]

These seven scenes were remounted and displayed on the north wall of the nave, where they are still visible today (Colour Plate 28a).[14] Such a collapse in the integrity of the cycle impacted on simple numbers: some historians counted eighteen scenes, others nineteen. It also had ramifications for the iconography. The subject was identifiable, the life of Mary Magdalen, but not necessarily the specifics. For example, the saint's retreat to the wilderness was badly damaged and misconstrued, but the word '*Meministi*' or 'I remember' was recorded, giving us a first pointer to the use of direct speech drawn from *Golden Legend*, and thus how text might relate to image.[15] Condition also impacts on the rare posthumous miracles, although the description of a now lost scene of the Magdalen appearing to the governing couple in a dream, which forms part of the Marseille miracle, during the 1930s restoration contributes valuably to our working knowledge.

A reconstructive diagram that returns all scenes to their rightful place and outlines key details assists with identification and organization of the scenes (Figure 7.2). It can also lead us to see how Mary Magdalen was validated as the new patron saint. The first thing to note is that we are contending with another unusual narrative disposition. It begins with the expulsion of the Christians in a rudderless boat on the middle register of the north wall of the tower and continues across the west wall with the Magdalen's arrival and preaching in Marseille, the blessing of the pagan pilgrims and their tragedy at sea. The story then picks up on the middle register of the west wall of the tower, drops to the
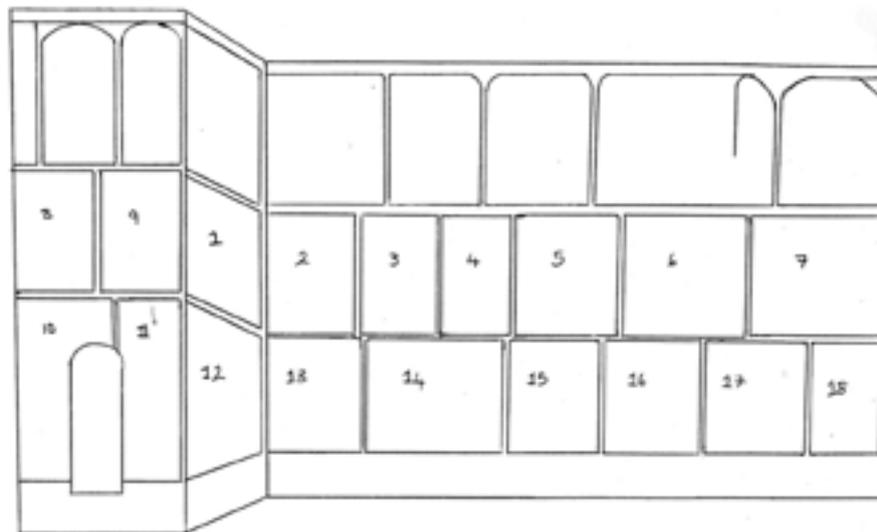
Key
(1) Expulsion from the Holy Land (2) Arrival and Preaching in Marseille (3) Dream? (lost) (4) Ibid (5) Intercessory Challenge (6) Blessing of Royal Pilgrims (7) Birth of Son and Death of Princess at Sea (8) Princess and Son left on Rocky Island (9) Prince before St Peter in Rome (10) Prince and St Peter before the Sepulchre in Jerusalem (11) Miraculous Discovery of Prince and Son (12) Return to Marseille (13) Reception in Marseille (14) Mary Magdalen receives the Host from Angel / Hermit witnessing Angelic Choir or Elevated Saint (15) Funeral (16) Posthumous miracle: resurrection of un-shriven knight (17) Posthumous miracle: restoration of sight at tomb in Vézelay (18) Posthumous miracle (continued).

Figure 7.2 Layout of Magdalen Cycle in Sankt Maria, Pontresina (Diagram: Author).

lower register with the miraculous events that take place on the rocky island, before moving round onto the north wall with the family's return journey to Marseille and the welcome offered by Mary Magdalen along the west wall. It then charts her wilderness retreat, death and funeral, finishing with two posthumous miracles. These latter scenes depict the resurrection of the unshriven knight from Aquitaine, the blind pilgrim led to the tomb of Mary Magdalen which leads to the restitution of his sight and lastly, a crowned figure in a similar ecclesiastical space as the one before.[16] Posthumous miracles in such high numbers are rare in monumental cycles, and not just in the Alps. But as we shall see, they were vital to the unifying strategy of this cycle; namely the authentication of the supernatural powers of the new patron saint.

Why the cycle did not start on the western face of the bell tower is a fair question but in fact the choice makes perfect sense. The Christian's expulsion from the Holy Land falls directly below the scene of Mary Magdalen Anointing the feet of Christ in the House of the Pharisee, part of the Christ-narrative cycle painted in the register above. To remind, this cycle wraps around the upper registers of three walls of the nave (west, north and south) finishing above the portal, with Mary Magdalen featuring in many of the scenes. The Anointing, as will become clear, is emblematic of an integration of pictorial programmes within this church, and a combination of visual data that required systematic planning for specific effect.[17] That effect was the legitimization of the miracle-working Magdalen, who might intercede in the generation and preservation of life.

Generating faith

What makes the fresco cycle of Sankt Maria Magdalena in Pontresina (as it was then) truly remarkable is its pronounced emphasis of the Marseille miracle: ten out of a total of eighteen scenes. This stands in striking contrast to many of the cycles depicting the life of Mary Magdalen found south of the Alps, where a single scene was deemed representative.[18] In the fifth scene of the cycle, Mary is given her first generative role in bestowing fecundity on the barren couple (Colour Plate 28b). This is set in a double narrative. On the left, the saint has been asked to prove the strength of her faith by praying to her god for the conception of a child – a challenge she accepts, as indicated by her emphatic gesture: an index finger pointing to the heavens. The right-hand side of the scene is an imaginative

interpretation of the *Golden Legend*, with an angel hovering above to receive the saint's intercessory prayers. It bears strong relation to the equivalent scene in the fresco cycle of Santa Maria Maddalena in Bergamo, discussed in Chapter 6, making it a possible point of origin or reference for the artistic workshop and an indication of their role in matters of text to image interpretation.

The direct communication between Mary Magdalen and a heavenly messenger would have sent a clear signal about divine approbation. It also served as an instruction to prayer for all women of childbearing age in the local community but particularly those whose fertility was problematic. It is a chain of influence that visually connects with the Marian imagery on the triumphal arch of the church, specifically the Annunciation of Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary who is reading at her desk. As noted earlier, Mary Magdalen stands next to the archangel, witnessing this divine event. This proximity creates an associative chain that will be brought to its teleological conclusion in the scene of Last Judgement painted across the south wall.

Mary Magdalen's second role as midwife is found in the next scene depicting the pagan couple's pilgrimage to Rome. Although heavily pregnant and knowing her husband's misgivings, the governor's wife insists on making the journey. The perils of childbirth for both women and their babies during the late Middle Ages is well documented, as are the typical sources of their prayers of intercession: the Virgin Mary as the highly venerated mother of god or more pertinently, Margaret of Antioch, whose escape from the belly of the dragon symbolized triumph over the terrifying pains of labour. Having never experienced motherhood herself and thus similar to the Virgin who did not experience labour pains, Mary Magdalen conveyed her generative and protective qualities through the miraculous survival of both mother and child on the rocky island over the course of two years. It is for this reason that infant nourishment features strongly in the pictorial cycle.

Having persuaded the sailors not to throw his wife's body overboard to calm the storm, the governor watches them make arrangements on the rocky island. A large caption bubble issues from his mouth, densely packed with text. Crucially, it is a text that replicates the direct speech of the governor in the *Golden Legend*:

> O Mary Magdalene, you brought ruin upon me when you landed at Marseille! Unhappy me, that on your advice I set out on this journey! Did you not pray to God that my wife might conceive? Conceive she did, and suffered death giving birth, and the child she conceived was born only to die because there is no one to nurse him. Behold this is what your prayer obtained for me. I commended my

all to you and do commend me to your God. If it be in your power, be mindful of the mother's soul, and by your prayer take pity on the child and spare its life.[19]

The baby, now tightly swaddled, has lost his source of food and is therefore condemned to the same fate as his mother. He is placed at her dead breast taking the nipple in his mouth, in what might seem to beholders – especially women of the parish – a futile though instinctive act. The maternal anxieties of infant care are discernible. Whether a singular event, like the death of a mother, or in times of famine when milk dries up, feeding becomes a preoccupation. What is required is hope contingent to prayer. In the fresco cycle, Mary Magdalen takes on the role of wet nurse for the governess, which is a generative act. She is not visibly present in the picture but that is exactly the point: absence reinforces her supernatural power. In fact, Mary Magdalen does not feature in any of the scenes depicting the pilgrimage of the pagan couple, an absence common to all late medieval images of the subject matter.

It is only in the posthumous miracles of the Pontresina fresco cycle, now found on the north wall of the nave, that the saint is visualized in spiritual action. The death of the unshriven knight is case in point (Colour Plate 29). As recounted in the *Golden Legend*, he was killed in battle before he could make his annual pilgrimage to the saint's relics at Vézelay Abbey. Mary Magdalen brings him back to life in order that he might confess and receive the viaticum. In the background of the painting in Pontresina, the saint hovers above the altar to which the prayers of his desperate parents are directed. In the following scene, the saint is present but in her monumental stone tomb. The blind man has been led there wishing one day he could see the church and is rewarded with renewed sight.[20] We see him walking away with head aloft in the fragment still attached to the lower register of the west wall.

The generative intervention, as instrumental to the Marseille miracle, is thus an act of mental picturing for the viewer. They had to imagine the saint facilitating life and nourishment, a practice already encouraged by Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi* (*c.* 1418) in the German-speaking territories and by other devotional manuals popular on the Italian peninsula, such as the *Meditationes vitae Christi* (*c.* 1336–44).[21] But it was also a painter's solution for something that was near unimaginable: a spiritual agent breastfeeding a child while the mother lay dead might well border on notions of witchcraft.[22] To avoid this outcome, devotees could preferably interpret this lactation miracle as being on a par with the Virgin Mary feeding the Christ child: the type known as the Virgin *lactans*, which is painted on the south façade of the church.

The narrative of the fresco cycle progresses to the governor arriving at the papal court in Rome in what is undoubtedly the most sophisticated (and readily published) scene. We see him kneeling before St Peter *in cathedra*. Painted words are in play once more as an authoritative tool and I will return to their content below. In the next scene, the pilgrims travel to Jerusalem to see the tomb of Christ, similar to the cycle in Cusiano discussed in the previous chapter, before returning home via the rocky island two years later. If evidence was required that the governess's body had been able to sustain life thanks to the intervention of Mary Magdalen, the viewer found confirmation here.

In this picture, the governor holds a living and much larger child in his arm, while the bare breasts of his wife, who has been newly restored by Mary Magdalen, remain exposed (Colour Plate 30). Once again, the master painter and the advisor insert speech captions to explain the inexplicable. The governor states:

> O Mary Magdalene, how happy I would be, how well everything would have turned out for me, if my wife were alive and able to return home with me! Indeed, I know, I know and believe beyond a doubt, that having given us this child and kept him alive for two years on this rock, you could now, by your prayers, restore his mother to life and health.[23]

To which his wife replies upon being asked if she is alive:

> Great is your merit, O blessed Mary Magdalene, and you are glorious! As I struggled to give birth, you did me a midwife's service and waited upon my every need like a faithful handmaid … [I] am just coming from the pilgrimage from which you yourself are returning. And as blessed Peter conducted you to Jerusalem and showed you all the places where Christ suffered, died, and was buried, and many other places, I, with blessed Mary Magdalene as my guide and companion, was with you and committed all you saw to memory.[24]

The third maternal role played by Mary Magdalen, mentioned in the above quote from the *Golden Legend*, is that of the handmaiden or *guardadonna*. Documentary sources for the period define this role less clearly than that of the midwife but it was no less important or well paid. According to Louis Haas, this woman was employed to see to the needs of the mother during birth, as an assistant to the midwife, with her services usually retained for a period afterwards.[25] In the context of the Magdalen legend and its expression in painted form, it would accord with the saint's physical care of both the governess and her child on the island as well as a spiritual one. After being 'restored' by Mary

Magdalen, in word and image, the governess recounts to her husband that she took the pilgrimage with him in spirit to Rome and Jerusalem, seeing everything that he did, and most importantly in the company of Mary Magdalen. The saint's function as carer in these liminal spaces, the realm of spirits, is thus understood in the eyes of the pagan couple who convert on their return to Marseille (an internal reading) and in the devotional practices of the actual audience for the cycle in the church (an external reading).[26]

There are no documents to tell us how people responded to the paintings inside the church of Sankt Maria in Pontresina, only that great care was taken to represent the events of the patron saint's life, visually and textually. For example, it was meaningful that the Marseille miracle was represented on the west wall of the bell tower – it would have been the first imagery encountered in close proximity on entering the church. Parishioners and other visitors would have climbed up the pathway from the village, passing through a gateway in the wall that encircled the consecrated burial ground of the cemetery before arriving at the church portal protected by the ubiquitous Alpine saints, George and Christopher. They would have crossed the threshold into sacred space and the first imagery encountered was that of pilgrimage and miracles. One may have entered the church under the throne of the Virgin Mary but inside the church it was Mary Magdalen who promised cure of all souls. It is by means of *visibile parlare* (discussed at the end of Chapter 6), of the painted words, that faith, pilgrimage and miracle are expounded. They are written in the language of the church but universalized through the language of art.

Cradle to grave care

This chapter has touched upon the eschatological framing of the Magdalen paintings, namely the Christ cycle, and how this reinforced the saint's place in a heavenly chain of influence. As one follows the Magdalen legend on the west wall, it only takes a moment to look up and find confirmation of the identity of the new patron saint and thus confirm her place in the grander scheme of things. This was achieved in typological fashion.

Significantly, Mary Magdalen is identified as the unnamed sinner who anointed Christ's feet in the House of the Pharisee by means of her green dress (Colour Plate 31). It takes place above the expulsion of Mary Magdalen and her other Christian companions from the Holy Land, where she is also dressed in

green.[27] The Anointing scene functioned as exemplary model for the village regarding the importance of penance and the ensuing reward of salvation. It also confirmed Mary Magdalen's validity and miracle-working potential through the life of Christ and his miracles that run along the upper register. Above the second scene of the Magdalen cycle, where we see Mary preaching to the citizens of Marseille, is the resurrection of Jairus's daughter.[28] In this scene, Mary Magdalen along with her sister Martha converses with Christ after his miraculous intervention. It is a rare inclusion in late medieval iconography but the presence of Mary Magdalen is even more so and has no textual foundations, gospel or apocryphal. In contrast, the linking of Martha with the miracle might be explained by way of the *Golden Legend.* In the life of Mary Magdalen, Martha is described as having been cured from the issue of blood because Christ loved Mary; it implies that Martha was a follower of Christ's miracles. This may seem convoluted but there is an evident attempt by the painter and the patron to elide two miraculous episodes that will bring together Christ and Mary Magdalen in a move to grant her spiritual authority. The sisters are present again at the burial of Lazarus and when Christ visits their home having heard of the death of their brother. They then go on to feature in a further two scenes related to Lazarus's resurrection on the north wall of the church, an unusual extension of this particular story. Mary Magdalen eventually features alone at Christ's empty tomb, this time in a red robe and carrying her pyx/unguent vase (replicating her representation on the triumphal arch) and in the *Noli me tangere* with Christ as gardener at the end of the cycle on the south wall. The lower register of the south wall is lost but probably depicted the Crucifixion, in which Mary Magdalen would obviously play a prominent role.

In all cases, the saint is witness to a miracle, with particular emphasis on resurrection. Such repetition enables a process of transference whereby parishioners became witness to a visual approbation of the Magdalen's authority as the new patron saint of Pontresina. This was achieved by a stress on scenes of motherhood as well as resurrection. That approbation first came from Christ and then his first apostle, Peter, who the devotee could see on his papal throne once standing in the church.

These crossing points in the visual programmes of the nave at critical junctures pave the way for the teleological conclusion of the Last Judgement, a monumental and rather spectacular rendition of humanity's fate (Colour Plate 32a). Found along the entire length of the south wall of the nave, albeit with some intrusion from the Christ cycle in the middle register, it depicts the

standard elements of the blessed and the damned. Christ presides as judge in a mandorla in the centre of the wall while a giant Archangel Michael herds the damned towards the gaping maw of the leviathan by the church portal; a monstrous creature that is fed by a large seated devil. The cross is presented by angels to Christ's left who are followed by rows of supplicating saints beginning with the Virgin Mary; a similar arrangement would have been represented on his right, possibly led by John the Evangelist. Ostensibly it is a standard rendition of a standard feature in ecclesiastical decoration. However, closer inspection of the elect in the lower section of the painting reveals two highly unusual and prominent features: a chain of female saints and other women in the foreground and behind them, a huddle of swaddled babies in a cave. This visual emphasis on women and the salvation of infant souls suggests that a particular audience was being held in mind.

The larger figures belonging to the first row of the Last Judgement are all women, bar the man at the head, St Peter (Colour Plate 32b). What is critical is their placement close to the actual church floor and sequential mode of depiction. Peter leads Mary Magdalen by the wrist, leaving her left hand free to carry a tall metal pyx. Barbara, who carries a model tower, holds her cloak. Catherine of Alexandria tucks her arm into that of Barbara while she holds a studded broken wheel in her free hand. Clare of Assisi, bearing a monstrance with host and two Clarissan tertiaries huddle close together and bend their heads sympathetically towards the other female saints. There is an economy of scale in this female chain, at the end as much as in the beginning. A drop in size of the right-hand nun takes the viewer's eye along to the lay women and children standing at the end of the chain, who may represent members of the Pontresina community: they are dressed in contemporary clothing and lack haloes. Stepping back from the image what we see are bodies tightly pressed together, with overlapping garments and limbs, all benevolently supporting each other in a systematized depiction of sorority.

The linking gestures between female saints, religious and laywomen find resonance in the Magdalen cycle itself, where the saint takes the hand of the governess prior to the sea journey. It is a rare contact between sacred figure and mortal soul that finds comparison in the same scene in the Cusiano Magdalen cycle (Chapter 6). To the laywoman, however, it would have been a recognizable gesture of empathy and support within the sacred space of the church: a visual connection across the nave where the congregation would stand in family groupings, in bodily proximity, to listen to the words of the ministering

priest. Given the placement of the pictured women near the floor in the Last Judgement, it is not hard to visualize one's own place in the chain as an embodied manifestation of faith.

The gender dynamics of this cycle as representative of the hierarchy of the Church are evident in the depiction of the men in the Last Judgement. A Bishop, two cardinals, two Franciscan friars and a group of laymen stand in rows behind the women. They have no demonstrable physical contact with the saintly line up, including a pope (possibly Sixtus IV, given the presence of Franciscan friars and nuns) who stands directly behind the Magdalen. Surely the leader of the Catholic Church would be the one led by St Peter towards the heavenly gates among a general group of the elect who are not segregated by gender, as seen in the wall painting of San Vigilio in Cles, in the Val di Non (Trentino). However, in Pontresina the opportunity was taken to assert not just Mary Magdalen's status as patron saint to the congregation but also to give weight to her high place in the chain of heavenly intercession. She enjoys near parity with the Virgin Mary on the triumphal arch and throughout her own narrative cycle, while in the Last Judgement she must petition Christ through his first vicar on earth. This is borne out in the Magdalen cycle itself when the governor of Marseille presents himself at the papal court in Rome (9). The speech banner that I alluded to earlier makes use of St Peter's direct speech in the *Golden Legend*, where he verifies the faith of Mary Magdalen (Figure 7.3):

> Peace be with you! You have done well to trust the good advice you received. Do not take it amiss that your wife sleeps and the infant rests with her. It is in the Lord's power to give gifts to whom he will, to take away what was given, to restore what was taken away, and to turn grief into joy.[29]

Looking back to the dialogue between the governor and Mary Magdalen prior to the pilgrimage, it is clear that she tells him directly that her faith is built on 'the daily miracles and preaching of my teacher Peter, who presides in Rome!'[30] As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the visual programme in Sankt Maria utilizes the authority of Peter as representative of the Church to legitimize the popular cult of Mary Magdalen, the new dedicatory saint. Peter is deployed in the Magdalen cycle itself to achieve this very goal and he is present in the Last Judgement, leading Mary Magdalen by the wrist.

Peter and Rome were commonly visualized in Alpine churches during the late Middle Ages, as a means to breaking down the geographical distance between rural communities and that most important urban and spiritual centre. On a

Figure 7.3 The Governor of Marseille at the Papal Court (detail), before 1497, fresco. Sankt Maria, Pontresina (Photo: Foto Flury).

more local level, the imagery could also operate as virtual pilgrimages, moving the devotee across sacred geography while remaining in their home locality, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, in Sankt Maria in Pontresina the combined authority of papal figure and place was necessarily bound up with cultic belief. More specifically it pertained to infants and the fate of their souls as already indicated by the extensive treatment of the death of the governess of Marseille in the Magdalen fresco cycle.

By visually portraying key events from the Magdalen legend at length, all village women at any stage of motherhood, as well as her family, would have been reassured that their prayers and offerings were to a saint who held exceptional and proven powers of intercession. It is equally implied by the frequent representation of infants inside and outside of the church. How far that intercessional chain might extend is set out in the Last Judgement. In that sacred landscape, with the hills populated by angels and demons, the proximity of the swaddled infants to the lines of the blessed and behind the valiant efforts of Michael Archangel, are suggestive of a defensive strategy for vulnerable souls.

Infant mortality and the state of souls were pressing concerns in late medieval Europe. With it came the desire and necessity for the swift baptism of newborns to avoid their souls spending eternity in limbo (*Limbus puerorum*).[31] Bernardino of Siena sermonized upon the importance of the liturgical rite of baptism in 1425, with clarification by the Council of Florence in 1445.[32] By the late fifteenth century, the threat of witchcraft had compounded matters and such superstitions were rife in the Alpine valleys.[33] The vulnerability of un-baptized babies to witches was widely feared, and no doubt the *Malleus Maleficarum*, written by the Dominican friars, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Springer in 1486, heightened tensions.

A healthy birth for both mother and baby meant that the parish priest could administer rites of baptism after an exorcism in the porch of the church (boys on the right side of the priest, girls on the left). However, in emergencies, such as the death of the mother or imminent death of a newborn, and in the absence of the male cleric, it fell to the midwife. With the fate of a young soul in the balance combined with the threat of witches, it is not hard to imagine that midwives were held in suspicion due to their access to a baby prior to its baptism, despite their sanctioned status as assistants to the clergy.[34] As has been pointed out, they certainly knew where to find the buried bodies of dead infants.[35] With this in mind, parental anxiety may have given rise to another cultic phenomenon, that of resurrection sanctuaries.

The practice of 'reviving' dead babies to perform the rite of baptism in pre- and early modern period is recorded across Europe.[36] Newly deceased infants were taken to sanctuaries where they would be temporarily 'resuscitated' by officials, who were more than often women and more specifically midwives. They looked for various signs of life that were enough to declare a living breathing soul that could receive the sacrament. After receiving the rite of baptism and enduring a 'second death', parents could return home, often over long distances, and inter their child in consecrated ground. This ritual premised on a belief in miracles and sympathetic magic is well documented from the early sixteenth century until its suppression in 1725. However its popularity in rural areas is symptomatic of a long-standing tradition, as evidenced in Jacques Gélis's impressive study.

During the fifteenth century, bereaved parents had access to a number of sanctuaries in the Alps. Tschagguns on the western reaches of Voralberg (bordering Graubünden) and moving east, Serfaus, Tschengls, Trens and Maria Waldrast in Wipptal, a famous pilgrimage site south of Innsbruck and thus close to Gschnitz and Seefeld discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.[37] For the bereaved

of Pontresina, the sanctuary of the Madonna di Tirano (*Thiran*) was close by within the Grisons but still demanded a crossing of the Alps from the Engadine to the Valtellina using the Bernina Pass (2328 m). This sanctuary was one of the new pilgrimage sites that arose in the late Middle Ages with people from Samaden [Samedan] (*uno di Somadeno de Agnedina*) documented there in the early sixteenth century.[38]

Parents were willing to travel vast distances and suffer harsh conditions to get their miracle, and even participate in larger pilgrimages as a way of thanks. It was a form of penitence akin to pilgrimage practices that are deeply connected to the mountains by way of physical and spiritual ascents.[39] In this light, it is evident that the sacred space of such sanctuaries and those of the originating parishes encompassed the landscape through the movement of such purposeful bodies, namely those of the parents, which returns us to the idea of the late medieval Alps as a form of *sacro monte* as set out in the introduction to this book.[40]

The fascinating subversion of the rite of baptism that fed on a prevailing anxiety about the fate of infant souls takes us back to the Last Judgement in the church of Sankt Maria Magdalena in Pontresina. Behind the rows of saints the painter has depicted a group of swaddled infants held in a reptilian cave. Conventionally un-baptized souls were represented by Old Testament saints, usually Adam, Moses or Noah, who are rescued when Christ descends into Limbo. But in Pontresina, it is the vulnerable young who occupy this liminal space. Their appearance might suggest that they are the Holy Innocents, but they are evidently without haloes or wounds. It was common in late medieval art to represent a soul as swaddled infant, akin to an eidolon, but not huddled together in Limbo. It makes the absence of a Massacre of the Innocents scene in the Christ cycle in the upper register of the nave walls a curious occurrence, suggesting the avoidance of depicting such a violent end.[41]

The swaddled infants are held tightly in suspension in the Last Judgement. Even though their fate still rests in the balance they are protected from the infernal side of landscape by Michael Archangel with Mary Magdalen leading the way out with the help of St Peter. For sure, Sankt Maria Magdalena in Pontresina was not a resurrection sanctuary but its new patron saint came with a reputation for enabling such miracles from her own apocryphal legend. She was also a co-opted Holy Helper (the *Vierzehnheiligen* cult), one of those saints petitioned to protect against sudden death, bad death or other mortal misfortunes. The imagery of this church in Pontresina thus points to a negotiation of miracles and orthodox religion in the parishes.[42]

Informing and reforming the parishes

Popular devotion and folk practice establish a cultural framework for the paintings in the Magdalen church of Pontresina. However, it is worthwhile returning to the *Golden Legend* as the dominant literary source on which to map these beliefs. To recap, the paintings, speech banners and inscriptions evidence a strong adherence to the narrative and verbatim use of direct speech from the legend of Mary Magdalen, the most legible of these being St Peter's words to the governor in Rome, quoted above. In fact all of the speech banners throughout the church are written in Latin and from the traces that remain attached to the Christ cycle that runs around the top register of the nave it would seem that the scene descriptions for each frame were the same. The singular use of Latin runs in direct contrast to the cycles of Seefeld and Cusiano, discussed in Chapters 4 and 6, with their use of both the language of the Church and the vernacular of the region. Such singularity in Pontresina might be explained by the fact that in late medieval Graubünden, Ladin Romantsch was a spoken language only.[43] The first edition of the *Golden Legend* was published in Basel in 1470 and it is likely that this event facilitated a wide dissemination of an affordable text into smaller rural parishes.[44] The parish records for Pontresina are sadly lost and so there is no record of a copy of the *Legend*. But as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the church officials were able to acquire a costly common breviary in 1522 and this may be indicative of their past purchasing power.

Up until now discussion has focused on how Mary Magdalen was proclaimed as patron saint of a mountainside church, as part of a rededication campaign, and in what way this spoke to matters of fertility, childbirth and the care of infant souls. In doing so, it places a premium on the decorative programmes of the church interior as participant in village life. From cradle to grave, Mary Magdalen was there for her flock, with her universal story taking on local significance in a way that is qualitatively and quantitatively different to the strategy developed for the Magdalen cycle in Sankt Oswald in Seefeld, explored in Chapter 4. It begs the question of who was responsible for such a determined visual protocol.

The importance of the sacraments in the life of parish churches in Graubünden and the imagery that gave them permanent visual representation coincides with the reforms of two Bishops of Chur in the late fifteenth century: Ortlieb de Brandis (1458–1491) and Heinrich de Hewen (1491–1505). Simona Boscani Leoni has noted that the publication of the *Breviarium curiense*, a breviary or missal, by Ortlieb was aimed at ensuring an orthodox administration of the daily

divine offices across the rural parishes of the diocese of Chur.[45] The 1522 breviary purchased by Sankt Maria Magdalena in Pontresina was probably a later version suggesting its successful imposition. In the decretals of 1459, Ortlieb stresses the importance of baptism as the first and most important step into the church. This was followed by the *Directorium pro clero* (1490) to make uniform the celebration of the Mass and the relevant feasts days. The incipit of the *Directorium* outlines his instruction that the diocesan Bishop should give clear and unequivocal indication to the faithful about deviations from orthodoxy.

Heinrich de Hewen continued his predecessor's reforms energetically with more statutes regulating the parish network and its clergy in order to control the life of the parishioners in matters of confession and regular worship; however, it was met with resistance by the turn of the century. It seems that attempts at centralization by the Church contributed to the development of rural communes and a desire for religious and political autonomy, in what Boscani Leoni terms, 'l'existence d'un fort sentiment religieux populair'.[46]

The fresco cycle depicting the life of Mary Magdalen in Sankt Maria Magdalena in Pontresina and its visual correlation with the life of Christ and the Last Judgement might well be interpreted as indicative of the imposition of the orthodox baptismal liturgy, especially for newborn infants whose souls were in jeopardy. It is an anxiety that is encapsulated in the rare image of swaddled infants in limbo. Sankt Maria Magdalena was, after all, the burial church for the village of Pontresina and so without the rite of baptism being performed by the priest, or in his absence the midwife, any infant who perished would have been refused burial in the consecrated ground.

There are no heraldic arms inside or outside of the church. No donor paintings and no inscriptions that claim episcopal patronage. As noted from the outset, a communal effort is the most likely scenario for the church's foundation, enlargement and maintenance.[47] To suggest that Ortlieb or Heinrich had a role to play in the design of the visual programme remains in the realm of speculation. Nevertheless, if the church were to fall within their jurisdiction and reforming strategies, it would indicate a local frame of reference for the rededication of the church and its new visual environment. By extension it might help us to understand the agency of the images in their local and universal capacities.

Mary Magdalen's maternal qualities are stressed by means of a lengthy presentation of the Marseille miracle. Having listened to the legend, village women at any stage of motherhood would have been reassured that their prayers and offerings were to a saint who held exceptional and proven powers of

intercession. Powers that by this stage enjoyed a venerable prestige thanks to the reputation of the high cult sites in Provence. As Katherine French has observed, women of the parish tended to focus on 'their concerns about marriage, fertility, family, and salvation – concerns that medieval society and the clergy expected of women'.[48] It is no wonder then that the women of Pontresina took Mary Magdalen to heart.

In this Alpine church, Mary Magdalen was a miracle worker whose cult was framed by orthodoxy. She was present at or instrumental in the miracle of resurrection four times. Christ reviving Jairus's daughter and her own brother, Lazarus, the governor of Marseille's wife in the apocryphal tale and finally by means of posthumous intercession on behalf of the unshriven knight who had made an annual pilgrimage to the saint's relics in Vézelay. To seal the deal for the village community and in doing so also connect with the Provençal sites, a further two posthumous miracles were included in the cycle, one of which shows pilgrims praying at the saint's tomb. Pilgrimage and prayers directed to Mary Magdalen might bring forth miracles with her authority sanctioned by St Peter, who represents the official Church as first pope; a pairing reinforced by the parish church in Samedan, dedicated to Sankt Peter. Female intercession and authority may well gain legitimacy in painted form but a question mark remains over women's official role between life and death in this Alpine valley.

Sankt Maria Magdalena was located above a transit route north to the bishopric of Chur and south to Lombardy via passes with pathways leading to numerous sacred sites. Whether it was travel to a resurrection sanctuary for the salvation of imperilled infants or a journey to another pilgrimage shrine, in this mountain landscape one moved with the Magdalen.

Notes

1   In 1139 the village is referenced as 'ad pontem sarisinam'. It came under the
     jurisdiction of the bishopric of Chur with the Ponte-Zarasino the ruling family
     until 1244, when it was handed over the Planta-Zuorz. There is no documentary
     evidence (visual or textual) connecting the Planta-Zuorz to Sankt Maria. See *Codex
     diplomaticus: Sammlung der Urkunden zur Geschichte Cur-Rätiens und der Republik
     Graubünden*, vol. 1, ed. Theodor von Mohr (Chur: L. Hitz, 1848), 161 and 334.
2   As part of her roster of posthumous miracles, Mary Magdalen saves a pregnant
     woman from drowning during a sea storm by holding her chin above the water. The

child is given to a religious institution, as fulfilment of the mother's desperate vow to the saint. See Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 382. The Dominicans exported the Vézelian miracles to Saint-Maximin in Provence, with new ones recorded in their *Liber miraculorum*, including those for women and children. See Clemens Jr, *The Establishment of the Cult*, 46. He notes that, in 1500, the Dominican friar, Silvestro da Piero Mazzolini, borrowed the miracles but removes all references to Vézelay itself in his *Vita de Sta. Maria Maddalena con varie annotationi* (Bologna) because pilgrims knew what to expect.

3   See Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 294–303.

4   The Chapel of San Spiert in Pontresina, founded in 1490, was privately funded but soon ran into difficulties despite receiving approval from the Bishop of Chur. Bereft of books, chalices and other required liturgical equipment an appeal was made to the faithful for donations in return for the three years indulgence if they attended on the feast days of the Holy Trinity, Archangel Michael and the First Sunday of Lent. See Leonhard Juvalta-Cloetta, 'Zur Geschichte der Kirchen in Pontresina', *Bündnerisches Monatsblatt* 3 (1931): 83–87. He attributes its failure to the rise in fortunes of Sankt Maria Magdalena, which had burial grounds.

5   See Saulle-Hippenmeyer, *Nachbarschaft, Pfarrei und Gemeinde,* 49–53. Cattle could be grazed on the pastures and meadows on the Pontresina side of the Bernina Alps in 1554, see Juvalta-Cloetta, 'Zur Geschichte der Kirchen', 83–84.

6   On the role of churchwardens in general, see Peter Blickle, *Communal Reformation. The Quest for Salvation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (New York and London: Humanities Press International, 1992), 165 and Katherine French, 'Women Church Wardens in Late Medieval England', in *The Parish in Late Medieval England*, ed. Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), 305.

7   The breviary (or *Breviarium sive ordo officiorum per totam anni decursionem*) comprised a calendar of liturgical and saints' feast days, the canonical hours of Mattins and Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sexte, None, Vespers and Compline, as well as a range of gospel texts, prayers and psalms, see Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours. English People and their Prayers 1240–1570* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 5.

8   BAC, *Registrum librorum horarum*, 1521, 46–47: 'Capitulum valle Engadine' – 1522. Bishop Siegler Andr. Gablan began the register in 1521. The parish archive for Sankt Maria/Sankt Maria Magdalena, along with other important communal documents, was destroyed in 1720. No pastoral visitations survive. One record, however, confirms the dedication to the Virgin Mary on 20 April 1450.

9   The church went through three building stages. The third campaign was completed in 1477, as noted on the entrance arch of the new cemetery wall. See the historical

surveys of Nüscheler, *Die Gotteshäuser der Schweiz*, 123 and Oskar Farner, *Die Kirchenpatrozinien des Kantons Graubünden* (Munich: Reinhardt, 1925), 145. It is given more extensive treatment with reference to the paintings in Poeschel, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Schweiz,* 358–368 and in Oskar Emmenegger, *Sta. Maria in Pontresina* (Bern: Gesellschaft für Schweizerische Kunstgeschichte, 2000). It is not mentioned by Ulrich Campelli in his *Raetiae alpestris topographica description [1573]*, ed. Christian Immanuel Kind (Basel: F. Schneider, 1884). The Engadine minister's survey of the region is normally reliable.

10   Roy Strong, *A Little History of the English Country Church* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), 44.

11   Latin was used for all serious business in the Engadine but otherwise the local dialect, Ladin Romantsch, was the language of communal life. See Head, *Early Modern Democracy*, 43. Romantsch remains an official language of the canton today.

12   See also Chapters 2, 3 and 6. For the presence and function of Christopher imagery in the Alps, see Joanne W. Anderson, 'Arming the Alps through Art: Saints, Knights and Bandits on the Early Modern Roads', in *Travel and Conflict in the Medieval and Early Modern World*, ed. Gabor Golléri and Rachel Willie (Routledge, 2019), chapter 4 forthcoming.

13   The fifteenth-century plaster applied throughout the church was discovered in 1912. By 1913, when the Belgian restorer Charles Lefébure arrived, some of the paintings were already visible, as he noted in, 'The Chapel of Santa Maria at Pontresina (Open letter to a Citizen of Pontresina)', *The Alpine Post*, n. 518 (1927), unpag.; full details in Oskar Emmenegger, *Pontresina Sta. Maria*, unpublished restoration report (File S32, Graubünden DMP, Chur). Christian Schmidt, from Zürich, revealed the Magdalen paintings above the wooden gallery before 1913. Lefébure's removal of the wooden gallery in 1934 led to the discovery of the thirteenth-century plaster and paintings. He concluded that a number of the Magdalen scenes could be sacrificed due to their ruinous condition. For his full report, see 'Les Fresques de la Chapelle Sta. Maria a Pontresina', in *XIVe Congrès International d'Histoire de l'Art (section I)* (unpublished typescript, 1936), 1–16.

14   The funeral of Mary Magdalen is placed out of sequential order.

15   Lefébure notes the presence of a dragon in the eremitical scene and the word '*Meministi*'. He interprets the dragon as a symbol of the Magdalen's former worldly life and thus as consistent with the rest of the programme. Its inconsistency with the *Golden Legend* is a mute point.

16   See Victor Saxer, 'Miracula beate Marie Magdalene Vizeliaci facta. Étude de la tradition manuscrite des recueils de miracles de la Madeleine à Vézelay', *Bulletin philologique et historique* 8 (1959): 69–82.

17 The deliberate crossing points of the Magdalen and Christ cycles in Pontresina find comparison with Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll, discussed in Chapter 3, where the last scene of the Magdalen cycle bring the saint into dialogue with the Annunciate Virgin, while the first scene matches Martha with the Annunciating Gabriel. This strategy is also inherent in the Virgin Mary and Christ cycles of the Arena Chapel in Padua. See Michel Alpatoff, 'The Parallelism of Giotto's Paduan Frescoes', in *Giotto. The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, ed. James H. Stubblebine (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 156–169.

18 For example in the mural cycles of San Francesco in Assisi, the Palazzo del Podestà and the Rinuccini Chapel in Santa Croce, both Florence, and those of San Lorenzo Maggiore and San Pietro a Maiella in Naples. The cycle in the chapter house of San Domenico in Spoleto is a rare instance where we find a stretched narrative.

19 'O Maria Magdalena, cur ad perditionis et miserie mee cumulum Marsilie partibus applicuisti? Cur infelix admonitione tua hoc iter arripui? Petistine dominum ut mulier mea hac de causa conciperet, ut periret? Ecce enim concepit et pariendo mortem subiit; conceptumque est natum ut pereat, cum non sit qui enutriat. Ecce quod prece tua obtinui! Tibi cui mea Omnia commendaui deoque tuo commendo: si potens est, memor sit anime matris et prece tua misereatur ne pereat natus.' Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 378; Maggioni, *Legenda aurea*, 634.

20 A speech banner floats above the kneeling pilgrims. It is illegible but there are three lines discernible that leave enough space for the direct speech (in Latin) in the *Golden Legend*: 'O holy Mary Magdalene, if only I could sometime be worthy to see your church!' ('O sancta Maria Magdalena, utinam aliquando merear ecclesiam tuam uidere') Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 382; Maggioni, *Legenda aurea*, 641.

21 See *The Imitation of Christ: the first English translation of the 'Imitatio Christi'*, ed. B. J. H. Biggs (Oxford: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 1997) and *Meditations on the life of Christ: an Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. Ital., 115. Translated by Isa Ragusa. Completed from the Latin and edited by Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961).

22 For a nuanced account of witchcraft and female networks of knowledge in the persecutions of Eichstätt, see Jonathan B. Durrant, *Witchcraft, Gender and Society in Early Modern Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), esp. chap. 6 on healing which encompasses midwifery.

23 'O beata Maria Magdalena, quam felix essem, quam mihi cuncta prospera aduenissent si mulier respiraret et mecum repatriare ualeret! Scio equidem, scio et procul dubio credo quod tu, qui puerum dedisti et in hac rupe per biennium pauist, poteris matrem prece tua pristine restituere sanitati.' Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 379; Maggioni, *Legenda* aurea, 635.

24 'Magni meriti es, beata Maria Magdalena, et gloriosa, qua in partus mei pressuris obstetricis implesti officium et in omnibus necessitatibus ancille tue seruitium expleuisti… Viuo equidem et nunc primo de peregrinatione de qua et tu uenisti uenio et sicut beatus Petrus te Iherosolimam duxit et omni loca in quibus dominus passus est, mortuus et sepultus et alia plura loca ostendit, sic et ego una cum beata Maria Magdalena duce et comite uobiscum fui et singular loca conspexi et conspecta memorie commendaui.' Granger-Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 379; Maggioni, *Legenda aurea*, 635–636.

25 Louis Haas, *The Renaissance Man and His Children. Childbirth and Early Childhood in Florence 1300–1600* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1998), 43–44. In this mode, Mary Magdalen is the equivalent of a modern doula, a woman who provides support, help and advice during the pregnancy or birthing process of another woman (from Greek doulē, meaning female slave). See also Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 295.

26 The church doorway as liminal space is discussed in Chapter 3. See also Elina Gertsman and Jill Stevenson, eds, *Thresholds of medieval visual culture: liminal spaces* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014).

27 For discussion of the symbolic value of Mary Magdalen's robe colours, see the Introduction, 6-7 and Chapter 4, 118-19.

28 Matt 9:18–26 (the official's daughter); Mk 5:21–43 (official named as Jairus); Lk 8: 40–56 (official named as Jairus).

29 'Pax tibi fiat. Bene uenisti et utili consilio credidisti nec moleste feras si mulier tua dormit, si puerulus cum ea quiescit. Potens est enim dominus cui uult dona dare, data auferre, ablata restituere et merorem tuum in gaudium commutare.' Granger Ryan, *Golden* Legend, 379; Maggioni, *Legenda aurea*, 635.

30 'Equidem illam defendere presto sum, utpote quotidianis miraculis et predicatione magistri mei Petri qui Rome presidet roboratam.' Granger Ryan, *Golden Legend*, 377; Maggioni, *Legenda aurea*, 632.

31 See Adriano Prosperi, 'Battesimo e identità tra Medio evo e prima età moderna', in *Unverwechselbarkeit. Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft*, ed. Peter von Moos (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), 325–354.

32 Bernardino preached that prior to baptism an infant was considered to have no soul: 'Gli innocenti. Non di quegli che sono affogati ne' privai o uccisi in corpo per forza di medicine che non ànno l'anima, non s'intende per loro, ma per quegli ch' ànno l'anima pel santo battesimo: quegli sono gl'innocenti' (*Prediche* IV) in Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1980), 368–369, n. 2. The decree of the council of Florence of 4 February 1442 states that baptism should take place 'as soon as it is possible' rather than at designated points in the liturgical calendar.

33   For a useful survey of the phenomenon and scholarly approaches, see Vincenzo Lavenia, 'The Alpine Model of Witchcraft. The Italian Context in the Early Modern Period', in Bellabarba, Obermair and Sato, *Communities and Conflicts in the Alps*, 151–164.

34   Silvano Cavazzo, 'Double Death: Resurrection and Baptism in a Seventeenth-Century Rite', in *History from Crime*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 19–20. He notes the presence of witchcraft in the Swiss Confederacy, especially Bern and Basel.

35   See Durrant, *Witchcraft, Gender and Society,* 193–196. He checks revisionist histories that base themselves on the searing denouement of the *Malleus*, referring back to David Harley, 'Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-Witch', *Social History of Medicine* 3 (1990): 1–26.

36   See Jacques Gélis, *Les enfants des limbs: mort-nés et parents dans l'Europe chrétienne* (Paris: Louis Audibert, 2006). The first documented occurrence is in Hallum, Frise in 1172. For focused Alpine studies, see Fiorella Mattioli Carcano, 'I santuari del ritorno alla vita, segni di sacralizzazione alpine con particolare riferimento alle dioceci di Novara, Aosta e del Vallese', in *Segni della Religiosità popolare sulle alpi occidentale* (Vercelli: Club Alpino Italiano, 1998), 53–100; Catherine Santschi, 'Les sanctuaires à répit dans les Alpes occidentales', *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 79 (1985): 119–143; Oskar Vasella, 'Über die Taufe totgeborener Kinder in der Schweiz', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique Suisse* 60 (1966): 1–75.

37   Sigismund of Tyrol sends his wife, Eleanor Stewart of Scotland to Maria in Waldrast to pray for the conception of a child in 1477 (Innsbruck, TLA Sigm. 4a 181.17). She was to give two wax votive offerings in the shape of an infant (*zwey wachsy pild in tegenskindweyse*).

38   See Iso Müller, *Die Churrätische Wallfahrt im Mittelalter. Ein Überblick* (Basel: Krebs, 1964): 75–78. He quotes from the Mirakelbuch of 1507 (n. 46). The Grisons lost Valtellina in 1623. Other sanctuaries documented in Switzerland are Saint-Gall, Oberbürin, Friburg, Chatillens, Neufchatel and Lausanne and in the Aosta Valley, at St Marcel.

39   The correlation to pilgrimage practice is discussed by Gélis, *Les enfants des limbs*, 52–55. See also his, 'Les sanctuaires "à rèpit" des Alpes françaises et du Val d'Aoste: espace, chronologie, comportements pelegrins', *Archivio storico ticinese* 114, no. 12 (1993): 183–222.

40   See Dawn Marie Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place in Medieval Europe* (New York and London: Routlege, 2003), 47. She discusses maternal anxiety and the resurrection of children in relation to the twelfth-century miracles of Our Lady at Chartres. Sacred space is conceived in and beyond the church through the directed prayers of supplicants, even at long distance.

41   There is no missing gap for a Massacre scene in the Christ cycle. Unswaddled souls are depicted in the eleventh-century *Last Judgement* in Torcello Cathedral, a coeval fresco in Sant'Angelo in Formis and the 1453–54 panel painting by Enguerrand Quarten (Musée de l'Hospice, Villeneuve-des-Avignon). Depictions of the Holy Innocents as the elect are typically shown being led to the altar or placed underneath, as in the late-thirteenth-century frescos of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome and Santa Maria in Vescovio, Torri in Sabina. The iconography would appear to be a development of the eleventh-century Vatican tondo where the Innocents are being led to the altar. My thanks to Anthea Stevens for this observation. See Anthea Stevens, *Sine macula sunt: the Holy Innocents and their Portrayal in Italian Art* c. *1200 to* c. *1500* (PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 2010).

42   See Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

43   See Otto Clavadetscher, 'I documenti notarili in cammino da Sud a Nord', in *Communicazione e mobilità nel Medioevo. Incontri fra il Sud e il Centro dell'Europa (secoli XI–XIV)*, ed. Siegfried de Rachewiltz and Josef Riedmann (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997), 393.

44   The *Golden Legend* was printed in both Latin and other vernacular languages throughout Europe, see Jacques Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time: Jacobus de Voragine and the Golden Legend* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), ix–xiii. If a copy was not purchased for Pontresina, they may have used one owned by the parish church in Samaden [Samedan].

45   Boscani Leoni, *Essor et Fonction*, 327. It accords with the decisions taken by the General Council of Basel (1431–1449), in particular the perfection of the pyramidal structure imposed on the organization of the dioceses and archdioceses which aimed towards central control through provincial councils and diocese synods.

46   Ibid., 329–330.

47   A priest probably came from nearby Samedan. By 1525 the church had a *Frühmesser*: a priest who presided over the first mass of the day and was independent from the main priest of the parish. See Nüscheler, *Die Gotteshäuser der Schweiz*, 123.

48   Katherine French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion after the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 321.

Coda: The Alps as *Kunstlandschaft*

In his *Geschichte der Bildenden Künste der Schweiz* of 1876, Johann Rudolf Rahn wrote that there was no art in the mountains during the Middle Ages.[1] He continues that Alpine art was mediocre as it was just a meeting place where everybody mixed, thus not developing an autochthonous style. However, he also says that the little merit Swiss art has is precisely due to the country's character as a melting pot. From this more positive perspective, it speaks to a coming together of different people, ideas and styles that was inherently conditioned by the centrality of the country within Europe. Essentially, it played host to the intersections of pathways from the Romanic and Germanic spheres. In this framework, travel was a way of life for Alpine artists, and so to appreciate the value of their artworks one had to experience them by foot and not in a book.

Rahn's views on Swiss art and art history were shaped by his distinctive methodology as a *Kunstwanderer*, or art walker, whereby experiential experience was part of his documentation and interpretation of monuments in the landscape.[2] In this regard, we are not far away from the words of Samuel Butler, who I quoted at the beginning of this book, conjuring up as he did a mental picture of a landscape defined by the ambulatory experience of its devotional artworks.[3] Butler may have been guilty of romanticizing the Alpine *Volk*, bemoaning its artistic poverty in relation to the national heroes and defined schools of Italy, but he recognized on his travels that such artworks were deeply rooted in socio-religious ritual practices.[4] Butler's pathways through the Alps were struck for reasons different to those of Rahn. Nevertheless, for both men the act of walking in the mountains was crucial to their thinking and this translated into how they viewed the production and value of late medieval art in their books.

My book has explored the cult of Mary Magdalen in the Alps within the frameworks of pilgrimage and the parish church. As each chapter has made clear, the imagery of the saint held a relational value to the mountains in experiential terms for parishioner or pilgrim. An ascent was often required to reach the

dedicatory church or artwork. Once inside, the imagery would equate that exertion with the trials endured by the saint and the other protagonists who populated her legend. This imagery was adapted to fit the specifics of the local context but not at the expense of an international, universal outlook. The sculpted altarpiece made for Carema in the Aosta Valley may have once sat on a parish church altar, but it was responding to the relics and tomb of the saint newly discovered in Provence. For Sankt Magdalena in Prazöll in South Tyrol, Mary Magdalen was a traditional patron saint for the vineyard workers but a new pairing with St James the Greater in the fourteenth century brought larger devotional networks into play that appealed to one noble family in particular. Over the Brenner Pass in Mareit, local miners celebrated the eremitical Magdalen in their altarpiece of 1506, finding affinity in their working life with her wilderness years. Half way up the Schneeberg, their church was a monument to the protection such a saint might offer from the air above or the earth down below. Such an appeal to the miracle-working Magdalen continued in Pontresina in the Engadine Valley of the Swiss Grisons during a period of parish reformation. The emphasis on the Marseille fertility miracle and swaddled infants in limbo took us beyond valley and village life to a widespread practice of journeying to resurrection sanctuaries for the salvation of young souls.

What these studies have demonstrated is that during the late medieval period, the Alps constituted a networked landscape, not simply a physical boundary between north and south. Its pathways were a circulation system for people, ideas and imagery, much like Rahn's notion of a melting pot. As noted in the introduction, early studies of Mary Magdalen imagery began with grand narratives of origins and evolution in the Western tradition. Then, however, they were split up according to modern nation states with regional borders playing their part in the systematizing of art and iconography. Both approaches left aside the regional particularities or local specifics of the Alps in an attempt to bring together all known examples. But such static models do not work here. This is not to advocate a 'proto-globalized' perspective on the Alps whereby everything is in constant flux as part of modern market dynamics. Rather the Alps have their own spatial and temporal mechanisms that underpin the potential for circulation and exchange.

This alternate model opens up new pathways for research with a first question being what kind of network was in play in the late medieval Alps when it came to artistic production? An interlinked one, yes, but there were often large stretches of time in between the commissioning of artworks. The past may well be a foreign

country but the Alps retain and maintain their artistic monuments, offering an opportunity to understand how art shaped and reflected the environment and the lives of its inhabitants. How then did they relate artistically if produced by different hands and at different times?

As established in Chapter 6, the artistic workshops that operated over substantial territory were conduits for the diffusion of skills (altarpiece carpentry, plastering and painting walls) and visual typologies. But more importantly, as artists travelled through the landscape they were witness to other crafted monuments from different times and in different styles. Their coexistence demanded an experiential understanding of art in relation to landscape. Some communities lived with their imagery for long periods of time, pushing us to think about the durational properties of art and the pace of change in outlying areas. How was walking and climbing involved in the function of an image? Where did imagery stand in relation to the landscape before the advent of landscape painting as genre? Did it delineate the edges of the landscape with the insides of churches an alternate space or were they in the landscape, a virtual extension of the lived experience? The Alps hardly developed a coherent 'style', yet its art history is held together by the experience of the people who lived and travelled through its terrain.

Telling the story of Mary Magdalen in the Alps from the perspective of great art and great artists is probably not the most productive means to understanding its value to art history. Rather we are better off situating the imagery in the culturally shared networks created across time and space in the mountain chain and what they can tell us about how and most importantly why they were made, used and retained. Mary Magdalen was a universally recognized saint with an international cult meaning that, despite the mixing of styles from different places and in different times, an autochthonous iconography and functionality of art brought them to a common ground. What this book in the end offers, in response to a call in recent scholarship, is a deep contextualization of Mary Magdalen in the bigger picture of the cultural Alps.

Notes

1   'Die Schweiz ist arm an höheren Werken der bildenden Kunst […] Das Ganze der schweizerischen Denkmäler bietet ein Bild voller Widersprüche, aus dem nur schwer und nach längerer Umschau der Hinblick auf festere Richtungen und die

mannigfaltigen Einflüsse sich öffnet, die von hüben und drüben zusammentrafen und seit der romanischen Epoche der Kunst unseres Landes ein völlig kosmopolitisches Gepräge aufdrückten. […] Nicht im Gebirge, dessen Schönheit alljährlich den Zug der Fremden herbeilockt, hat das Mittelalter die Zeugen seiner Kunst hinterlassen. Selten auch da, wo jetzt Handel und Wandel ihre Mittelpunkte finden. Dort nicht, weil die Rauheit der Natur und die Bedürfnisslosigkeit ihrer Bewohner eine künstlerische Blüthe verhinderten […].' In Johann Rudolf Rahn, *Geschichte der Bildenden Künste in der Schweiz von den Ältesten Zeiten bis zum Schlusse des Mittelalters* (Zürich: Hans Staub, 1876), v and 3.

2   See Johann Rudolf Rahn, *Kunst- und Wanderstudiern aus der Schweiz* (Zurich: Friedrich Schulthess, 1888) and Emil Maurer, 'Drei Köpfe – drei schweizerische Kunstgeschichten: Bemerkungen zu Johann Caspar Füssli, Jacob Burckhardt und Johann Rudolf Rahn', *Unsere Kunstdenkmäler: Mitteilungsblatt fur die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft für Schweizerische Kunstgeschichte* 38, no. 3 (1987): 378–380.

3   Butler, *Alps and Sanctuaries*.

4   Surprisingly Butler did not read Rahn, the most famous Swiss art historian of his time. See Clarice Zdanski, 'Samuel Butler, Local Identity, and the Periodizing of Northern Italian Art: The Travel Writer-Painter's View of Art History', in *Samuel* Butler. *Victorian against the Grain: A Critical Overview*, ed. James G. Paradis (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 223–250, esp. 232. For debates on the value of *Volkskunst* in nineteenth-century national discourse, see Matthew Rampley, 'Vernacular Cultures and National Identities: The Politics of Folk Art', in *The Vienna School of Art History: Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847–1918* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2013), 116–140.

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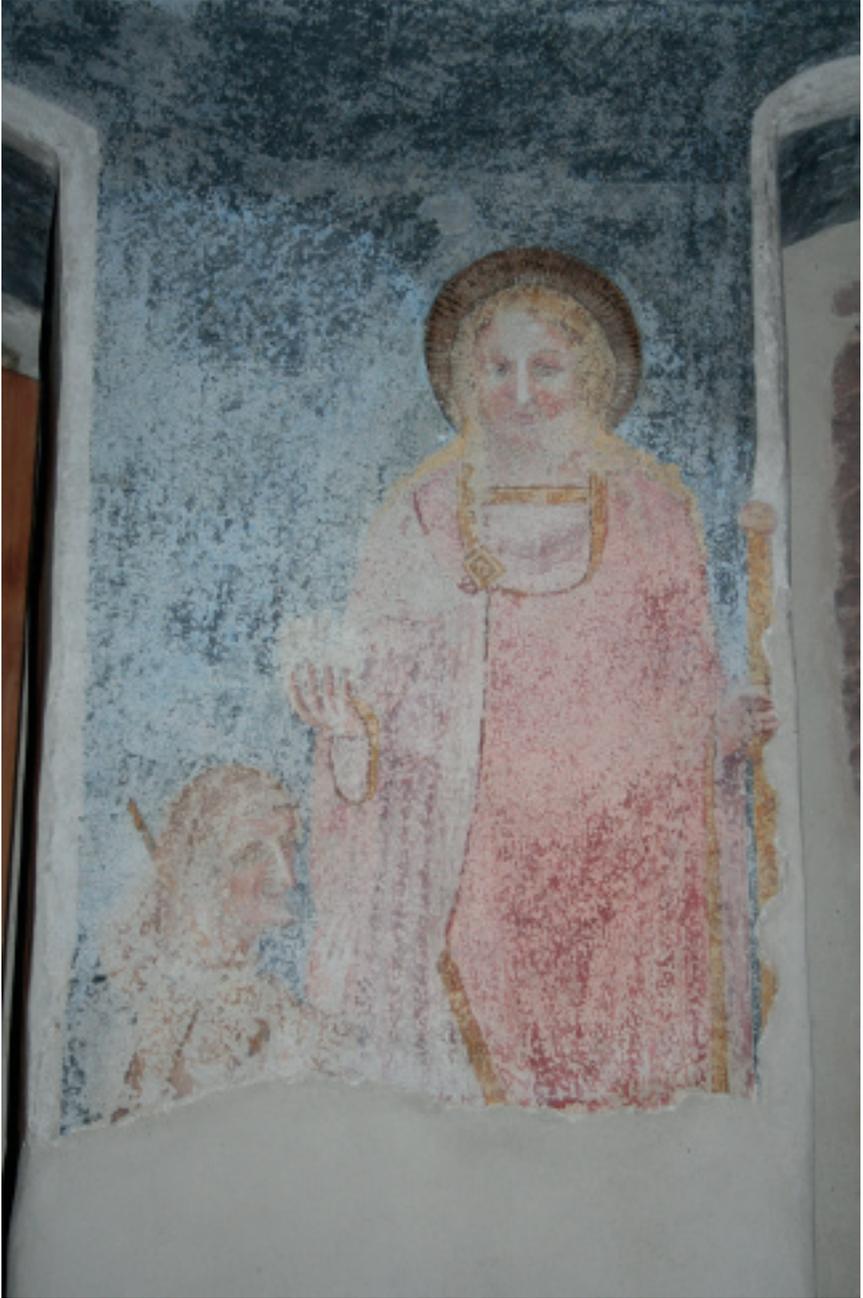
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