An Islamic tent in S. Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara*

This article presents a unique late thirteenth-century fresco in the apse of S. Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara, which might be the only surviving full-size representation of a portable Islamic tent to have survived to our day. The tent, painted to represent a baldachin over the high altar, recalls descriptions of the Andalusi silk and gold tents seized by Spanish armies from the Almohad camps during the wars of Christian expansion into al-Andalus in the thirteenth century, some of which were sent across Europe as diplomatic gifts. In its extraordinarily precise, illusionistic details, the fresco appears to depict an existing, rather than an imagined, object and could therefore be the only extant visual testimony of the practice of displaying and reusing such precious Islamic structures in a Christian context.

by FEDERICA GIGANTE

The presence of Islamic textiles – both actual examples and representations of them – in European churches of the late medieval period is a well-known phenomenon.[1] The survival of such textiles, both from the eastern and the western Islamic world, is largely due to their usage as wrappings for relics or for the bodies of the social elite. An example is the shroud of St Josse, a silk samite saddle cloth from Khurasan bearing the name of an emir who died in 961, which was donated by Stephen of England to the abbey of Saint-Josse-sur-Mer in 1134 and used to wrap the relics of the patron saint.[2] Protected by its location in the reliquary, it remains today the most complete and well-documented piece of Iranian textile of the tenth century.

Not only saints but also rulers were wrapped in precious Islamic silks for their burial. Numerous examples are found among the royals burials of the monastery of Santa María la

* This article is dedicated to the memory of Jon Thompson who made me fall in love with textiles and without whom this article would not exist.

[1] B. Klesse: *Seidenstoffe in der italienischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Bern 1967; A. Contadini: 'Artistic contacts: current scholarship and future tasks', in *idem* and C. Burnett, eds: *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, London 1999, pp.1–60; R.E. Mack: *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600*, Berkeley 2002; M. Spallanzani: 'Tappeti orientali a Firenze nel Rinascimento', in C. Schmidt Arcangeli and G. Wolf, eds: *Islamic Artefacts in the Mediterranean World: Trade, Gift Exchange and Artistic Transfer*, Venice 2010, pp.89–104; M. Spallanzani: *Oriental Rugs in Renaissance Florence*, Florence 2007; and L. Monnas: *Merchants, Princes and Painters: Silk Fabrics in Italian and Northern Paintings, 1300–1550*, New Haven and London 2009.

[2] G. Fellinger: 'Enveloppé de mystères, nouvelles considérations sur le suaire de saint Josse', in R. Rante and Y. Lintz, eds: exh. cat. *Splendeurs des oasis d'Ouzbékistan*, Paris (Musée du Louvre) 2022, pp.210–13; and S. Makariou: 'Suaire de saint Josse', in *idem*, ed.: *Les Arts de l'Islam au musée du Louvre*, Paris 2012, pp.114–17.

Real de Las Huelgas, near Burgos, from between the end of the twelfth and the mid-fourteenth century, representing one of the largest repositories of Andalusi textiles.[3]

Islamic textiles are also a constant presence in Italian paintings of the late medieval period, for example as a backdrop of images of the Virgin and Child from the latter decades of the thirteenth century and early fourteenth century. The hanging textile – often bordering on the upper edge by a band of pseudo-Arabic calligraphy – usually covers the back of the Virgin's throne. In the early fourteenth century Islamic carpets started to be depicted at the feet of the Virgin in more crowded compositions, such as *Madonna and Child with saints and angels* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1335–40; Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena).[4] Both the hangings and the carpets demarcate the sacred space in which the saints are present.

Narrative paintings from this period offer a glimpse into the use of such hangings in a late thirteenth-century ecclesiastic context. The Upper Church of S. Francesco, Assisi, is a case rich in examples. In several of Giotto's scenes of the Life of St Francis, textiles decorate the walls or hang from the ceilings; that these are of Islamic origins can be inferred by the bands of pseudo-Arabic calligraphy bordering them. Their patterns, moreover, match surviving textiles from the Iberian Peninsula, suggesting an Andalusi provenance.[5] One such case is a fragment of the burial tunic of Don Felipe (d.1274) in S. Maria, Villalcazar de Sirga (Palencia) (Fig.5). Its pattern and Kufic inscription almost exactly match a painted hanging suspended from the wall in the *Vision of Pope Gregory IX* (Fig.4), painted just a couple of decades after Felipe's death.[6] The textile has been repurposed as a burial tunic but the Kufic inscription (now appearing as a mirror image) would originally have run along the edge of the fabric as in Giotto's fresco.

This practice of decorating church walls with textiles, and often with Islamic ones, was so widespread that it left traces on church walls. The dado zone of Assisi's Upper Church is draped in painted Islamic textiles (Fig.7), which is particularly interesting considering the presence in the church's treasury of two long pieces of thirteenth-century textile, probably made in the *tiraz* workshops of Palermo under Norman or Svevi rule, which were donated by

[3] M. Gómez Moreno: *El panteón real de las Huelgas de Burgos* (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Diego Velázquez, 1946); F. May: *Silk Textiles of Spain: Eighth to Fifteenth Century*, New York 1957; C. Herrero Carretero: 'El museo de telas medievales de Santa María la Real de Huelgas: Colecciones textiles de Patrimonio Nacional', in J. Yarza, ed.: *Vestiduras ricas: El monasterio de Las Huelgas y su época, 1170–1340*, Madrid 2005, pp.119–38; and M.J. Feliciano: 'Muslim shrouds for Christian kings? A reassessment of Andalusi textiles in thirteenth-century Castilian life and ritual', in C. Robinson and L. Roushi, eds: *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, Leiden 2005, pp.101–31.

[4] M. Spallanzani: *Rugs in Late Medieval Siena*, Florence 2014, p.94. See also J. Mills: *Carpets in Pictures*, London 1975; and D. Kim: 'Lotto's carpets: materiality, textiles, and composition in Renaissance painting', *The Art Bulletin* 98 (2016), pp.181–212.

[5] Klesse, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.34.

[6] D.G. Shepherd: 'The Hispano-Islamic textiles in the Cooper Union Collection', in *Chronicle of the Museum for the Arts of Decoration of the Cooper Union* (1943), pp.355–401; May, *op. cit.* (note 7), p.96, fig.66; C.M. Thurman: *Textiles in The Art Institute of Chicago*, Chicago 1992, pp.14–15, no.143; K. Otavsky and M.A.M. Salim: *Mittelalterliche Textilien I: Agypten. Persien und Mesopotamien. Spanien und Nordafrica*, Riggisberg 1995, pp.185–87, no.104; and A. Weibel: *2000 Years of Textiles*, New York 1952, no.85.

John of Brienne, the king of Jerusalem.[7] Depictions of textiles decorating the walls of buildings are also in secular sites and were, in fact, a widespread occurrence throughout Europe.[8] A parallel phenomenon is also present in the Islamic world, where, for example, the Alhambra, Granada, are covered by stucco decorations that seem to imitate textile hangings, testifying to a Mediterranean-wide practice.[9]

With regards to the Italian ecclesiastical context, written sources further help in reconstructing the presence of Islamic textiles in the late thirteenth century. Textiles of possible Central Asian origins are found, for example, in the papal inventories of 1295, described as '*panni tartarici*' ('tartar cloths').[10] As textiles were deemed precious and in many contexts could be used as currency, they feature prominently in gift-giving practices.[11] Already in the ninth century Pope Gregory IV gave fourteen Andalusi silks to the church of St Mark in Rome,[12] whereas in the thirteenth century Pope Gregory IX sent textiles of probable Islamic origins to S. Francesco, Assisi.[13] The 1341 inventories of the Assisi Basilica does indeed mention 'a dark Tartar drapery with small golden roundels'[14] that clearly recalls the textiles depicted on the lower portion of the Basilica's walls (Figs19 and 20)

A painted textile that has hitherto not received enough attention is found in the Benedictine convent church of S. Antonio in Polesine. The female community was founded in 1249 by Beatrice II d'Este, the daughter of Marquis Azzo VII. The Este family had newly established themselves as rulers of Ferrara after a Guelf coalition expelled the rival Salinguerra family from the city in 1240, thus favouring the ascent to power of Azzo VI, Beatrice's grandfather. In 1257 the community was given permission 'to go to live a short distance from a small chapel called S. Antonio, situated on the same small island, and there build a new church'.[15] Works for the new church started immediately and were still underway in 1287.[16] Between the late thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century the church was

[7] R.B. Fanelli: *Tesoro della Basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi*, Assisi 1980, p.78.
[8] Monnas, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.23–29.
[9] O. Bush: *Reframing the Alhambra*, Edinburgh 2018, pp.175–226.
[10] M. Rogers: 'To and fro: aspects of Mediterranean trade and consumption in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries', *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 55–56 (1990/91), pp.57–74, at p.62; and J. von Fircks: *Panni tartarici: Seidengewebe aus Asien im spätmittelalterlichen Europa*, Berlin and Riggisberg 2024, pp.145–47.
[11] A. Shalem: 'The textile contextualised', in *idem*, ed.: *The Chasuble of Thomas Becket: A Biography*, Munich 2017, pp.80–109, at p.98; M.J. Feliciano: 'Muslim shrouds for Christian kings? A reassessment of Andalusi textiles in thirteenth-century Castilian life and ritual', in C. Robinson and L. Roushi, eds: *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, Leiden 2005, pp.101–31.
[12] J. Herald: 'Spanish silks', in J. Harris, ed.: *5000 Years of Textiles*, London 1993, pp.176–79, at p.176.
[13] Mack, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.33.
[14] '*un drappo tartaresco bruno con piccoli dischi d'oro*', *Inventario della sacrestia della Basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi*, ed. S. Nessi, Padova 1991, p.173.
[15] '*di poter passare ad habitare poco distante ad vna picciola Chiesetta detta Sant'Antonio, sittuata nella medesima Isoletta, ed ivi fabricare vna nuoua Chiesa*', M.A. Guarini: *Compendio historico dell'origine, accrescimento e prerogative delle chiese e luoghi più belli della città e diocesi di Ferrara*, Ferrara 1621 pp.296–97; and G.A. Scalabrini: *Memorie istoriche delle chiese di Ferrara e de' suoi borghi*, Ferrara 1773, pp.276–77.
[16] In 1287 the church was still under construction as a payment was instated '*pro constructione et aptatione dicti loci Sancti Anthonii*' ('for the construction and adaptation of the said place of St Anthony'), W. Montorsi: *Statuta Ferrariae anno 1287*, Ferrara 1955, p.94.

decorated with a fresco cycle that is still visible in the eastern apse and the two lateral chapels. In addition, some undecipherable fragments are preserved on the walls of the nave (Fig.1).

This first phase of decoration, in the late thirteenth century, consisted of scenes from the Life of Christ in the upper registers of the two side chapels and a painted textile in the lower registers (Fig.6); the lateral walls of the central apse were decorated with a depiction of hanging textiles below a canopy or tent structure depicted in the lunettes underneath the wall arch (Figs.2 and 3).[17] The walls were partly repainted with figurative scenes in the early fifteenth-century scenes, thus obscuring the earlier textile, which emerges from underneath the overpainted fresco, falling in full drapes to the bottom (Fig.8). It can also be seen above the later frescos, suspended from the impost below the vaults (Figs9 and 12). The fabric is embellished with blue eight-pointed stars inscribed in roundels, the centre of which was originally picked out in gold leaf.[18] The yellow interstices between the roundels is decorated with rhomboids (Fig.11). A band with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions runs along the edge of both the top and bottom border.[19] A great effort has been made to give the textile a life-like appearance, even including fringes attached to the bands with the inscription, which can be seen on the top (Fig.8) and the bottom border (Fig.12).

It seems that, originally, the decorative scheme covered all three walls of the central apse and there was probably no other decoration. This can be inferred from the fact that the painted textile covers the lower section of all three walls and that its upper portion is visible in at least three different locations above the later paintings (one of which appears behind a damaged portion of it). Moreover, the later figurative scenes on the right wall occupy only the upper half of the wall, leaving its middle portion with the painted textile visible (Fig.3). It must also be noted that the two doors on either side of the central wall are a later addition.

The two lunettes below the wall arch of the side walls depict a conical structure divided into two tiers, yellow above and pinkish/red (likely originally red) below, both of which are decorated with floral motifs and studded with precious and semi-precious stones (Fig.10). Here too, the illusionism of the painting is emphasised by including the stitching that keeps the stones in place. We can presume that the lunette in the central arch of the apse, now covered by a sixteenth-century fresco of the Annunciation, would have been identical to the two lateral ones, although at present this is impossible to confirm. The canopy in the side lunettes has formal similarities with ceiling decorations of the type found at the apex of the apse of S. Maria in Trastevere (Fig.15) or in the thirteenth-century Aula Gotica of S. Quattro Coronati, Rome. Decorative devices such as these, however, tend to resemble semicircular fans, often inverted with the fan opening upwards and, generally marginal to the composition. The S. Antonio

[17] For a summary of the critical studies on the iconographic cycle, see L. Caselli: *Il Monastero di Sant'Antonio in Polesine: Un approccio storico-artistico in età medievale*, Ferrara 1992, pp.45–53.
[18] C. Guerzi: 'La decorazione duecentesca del monastero di Sant'Antonio in Polesine', *Proporzioni* 6 (2005), pp.7–30, at p.14.
[19] For similar patterns, see Klesse, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.167–70, nos.5–12.

fresco, with its illusionistic conical canopy, possibly reproduced on three sides of the apse, creates the impression of a three-dimensional structure, a round form adapted to a rectangular space.[20]

The vaulted ceiling, now covered by a later grotesque, originally depicted a blue sky with golden stars – as in the two lateral chapels (Fig.13). It is visible in the spandrels of the rib-vault, where recent restoration has exposed the underlayer (Fig.14).[21] The same blue sky also appears in the gaps below and between the two tiers of the upper canopy of the tent structure. The impression of an open sky behind the tent is further reinforced by the presence of (now faded) red/brown birds visible through the gaps of the canopy's folds (Fig.10). It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the original decorative scheme of the apse took the form of a baldachin or tent comprising a blue and golden drapery wrapped around the three walls and topped by a double-tier bejewelled conical canopy. In the background was a blue sky covered in stars and birds, giving the overall impression of an open tent erected *en plein air* (Fig.16)

The border of pseudo-Kufic inscriptions, which decorates the textile depicted on the walls, suggests that is modelled on Islamic originals. This particular type of pseudo-Arabic calligraphy, labelled 'tall-short-tall syndrome' by Richard Ettinghausen, consists of two confronted uprights framing a central shorter unit, which is usually arched or hollow. This might derive from the practice of embellishing the word *Allah* (الله) between the two central *lams* (ل) – that is, the two Ls – and the subsequent stylisation that resulted from this process.[22] This particular motif became popular on textiles produced across a wide geographical area stretching from Anatolia to Spain.[23] Indeed, the textile depicted in the lower section of left chapel (Fig.6), although it does not include an inscription band, closely recalls the textile hanging in Pietro Lorenzetti's *Birth of the Virgin* (Fig.17), which does include a pseudo-Kufic inscription (similar to that of the textile found in the apse of S. Antonio in Polesine), suggesting it also depicts an Islamic original.

The colour of the textile depicted in the apse, with its deep blue, rich yellow and added gold leaf detailing, recalls the blue and gold effect known from medieval royal contexts. Mosaics from the Byzantine and Umayyad periods used blue and gold contrast for monumental inscriptions, and this colour scheme was also used for royal and official Qurans such as the Blue Qu'ran (ninth–tenth century; multiple locations), as well as for imperial edicts and

[20] A. Draghi: *Gli affreschi dell'Aula gotica nel monastero dei Santi Quattro Coronati: Una storia ritrovata*, Milan 2006, pp.77–78.
[21] A. Sorrentino: 'Ferrara, S. Antonio Vecchio: restauro di affreschi', *Bollettino d'arte* 33–34, no.4 (1948), pp.365–67, at p.366.
[22] R. Ettinghausen: 'Kufesque in Byzantine Greece, the Latin West and the Muslim world', in M. Thompson, ed.: *A Colloquium in Memory of George Carpenter Miles*, New York 1976, pp.28–47, at p.29. Finbarr Barry Flood has confirmed this hypothesis by quoting a *hisbah* (doctrine) manual from the thirteenth or early fourteenth century, which refers to the practice of removing or stitching out some letters from the word *Allah* on carpets, F.B. Flood: 'Images incomplete: prescriptive piety as material practice in Islamic art', in *Regionality: Looking for the Local in the Arts of Islam, Historians of Islamic Art Association, Fifth Biennial Symposium, London, 20th October 2016*.
[23] Guerzi, *op. cit.* (note 22), p.14, spotted a close similarity with the pseudo-Kufic reproduced around the thirteenth-century reliquary Madonna of S. Maria Maggiore, Florence, traditionally attributed to Coppo di Marcovaldo.

correspondence.[24] It was equally used for such European royal garments as the early eleventh-century mantle of Emperor Henry II (Diözesanmuseum, Bamberg), as well as for Islamic textiles such as the so-called Fermo Chasuble (Museo Diocesano, Fermo), which is said to have belonged to St Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury (1118–70). Indeed, it is interesting to note that the latter, also worked with roundels and a blue and gold colour scheme, is believed originally to have been a tent or canopy before being turned into a liturgical vestment.[25] The textile depicted in the apse of S. Antonio in Polesine thus probably came from an elite – if not royal – context, which would have been appropriate for a church of such illustrious foundation.

It is difficult to assign the origin of the design of the roundels featured on the textile in the fresco to geographical area. Roundels, which in the sources are usually referred to as *pallia rotate*,[26] are as common in Islamic textiles as in Sassanian or Byzantine ones, and form part of a pan-Mediterranean taste.[27] For example, the most famous and earliest datable Islamic textile, known as the Marwan silk (diverse locations), made in the eastern Mediterranean or Central Asia in the eighth century, already features roundels with eight-petalled rosettes that resemble the S. Antonio textile.[28] The roundel design is also a feature of Andalusi silks, such as the Oña silk (Monastey of San Salvador, in Oña, near Burgos), one of the earliest surviving fragments, dating to the reign of al-Raḥmān III (reg. 929–61).[29] Indeed, it is the Andalusi silks from the thirteenth century that have most in common with the S. Antonio textile.

The silk and gold pillow cover of María de Almenar, daughter of the count of Urgel Armengo (Fig.18) provides a case in point. It was found in a Christian funerary context, in Santa María la Real de Huelgas.[30] The cover is formed of three pieces sewn together lengthwise but the fabric was originally a textile panel decorated with blue and gold roundels and framed

[24] A. George: 'Calligraphy, colour and light in the Blue Qur'an', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 11, no.1 (2009), pp.75–125, at p.95.
[25] A. Simon-Cahn: 'The Fermo Chasuble of St Thomas Becket and Hispano-Moresque cosmological silks: some speculations on the adaptive reuse of textiles', *Muqarnas* 10 (1993), pp.1–5; A. Shalem: 'Architecture for the body: some reflections on the mobility of textiles and the fate of the so-called Chasuble of Saint Thomas Becket in the Cathedral of Fermo in Italy', in A. Payne, ed.: *Dalmatia and the Mediterranean, Portable Archaeology and the Poetics of Influence*, Leiden 2014, pp.246–67; A. Shalem, ed.: *The Chasuble of Thomas Becket*, Chicago 2017; *idem*, *op. cit.* (note 15), pp.81–82; see also R.B. Serjeant: 'Material for a history of Islamic Textiles up to the Mongol Conquest, *Ars Islamica* 13 (1948), pp.75–117, at p.107.
[26] A. Cabrera-Lafuente: 'Técnicas textiles de la Edad Media: elementos de estudio y evolución histórica', *Diseño de moda, teoría e historia de la indumentaria* 2 (2016), pp.7–17, at p.9.
[27] E.R. Hoffmann: 'Interactions across cultures and media in the Mediterranean during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in D. Knipp, ed.: *Siculo-Arabic Ivories and Islamic Painting 1100–1300*, Munich 2011, pp.99–119. Guerzi, *op. cit.* (note 22), is the only scholar to my knowledge to have studied the uniconic textile decoration of St Antonio, compares it to the Roman tradition of painted textiles on walls and ascribes it to the Byzantine area of influence. It is certainly the case that Byzantine and Islamic textiles of the thirteenth century are sometimes difficult to tell apart as they share much of the same decorative vocabulary, although the evidence analysed here points more to the Islamic, than Byzantine world.
[28] A. Cabrera Lafuente and M. Rosser-Owen: 'Following the thread: revisiting the Marwān ṭirāz', in R. El-Sayed and C. Fluck, eds: *The Textile Centre Akhmîm Panopolis (Egypt) in Late Antiquity: Material Evidence for Continuity and Change in Society, Religion, Industry, and Trade*, Wiesbaden 2020, pp.69–81; and L. Mackie: *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th–21st Century*, Cleveland 2015, p.52.
[29] M. Ali-de-Unzaga: 'Nuevos datos sobre el bordado de Oña: testigo ineludible de la historia, la política y la cultura entre al-Andalus y Castilla', in R. Sánchez Domingo, ed.: *Oña: Un milenio. Actas del Congreso Internacional sobre el monasterio de Oña (1011–2011)*, Oña 2012, pp.562–73.
[30] See note 3 above.

by two bands of pseudo-Kufic script, which now appear as a mirroring central band.[31] It was designed to feature the same overall decorative pattern, the same colour scheme and the same pseudo-Kufic inscription border – consisting of two tall uprights and a central loop, although here much more richly decorated ─as the painted drapery in S. Antonio in Polesine.

Other contemporary Andalusi textiles featuring roundel patterns in blue and golden yellow bordered by bands of pseudo-Kufic inscription of the tall-short-tall type found in Christian contexts are the silk and gold tunic of Bishop Don Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada (1209–47), made before 1247,[32] and the thirteenth-century silk and gold cope (Victoria and Albert Museum, London) used to wrap the body of Prince Felipe of Castile (1231–74).[33] It is interesting that, in the course of the thirteenth century, the decorative patterns of Andalusi silks made use of black or white contours in order to accentuate contrasting colours, exactly as is the case in the painted textile in S. Antonio in Polesine, which has roundels that are encircled by a white line, recalling woven fabrics (Fig.11).[34] Although none the surviving textiles from the thirteenth century match exactly the one painted in S. Antonio in Polesine, it might be worth considering other visual sources, such as painted Andalusi textiles.

As mentioned earlier, the lower section of the frescos in the Upper Church of S. Francesco, Assisi, is covered in painted textiles and there are several more textile representations in the background of the figurative scenes, some of which match fragments of Andalusi silks. Extant Andalusi textiles also correspond with painted textiles in other paintings by Giotto, notably the background cloth in the crucifix of S. Maria Novella (1290), which closely resembles a fragment in the Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg, made in Spain or north Africa in the thirteenth century.[35] It is therefore highly probable that other painted textiles featuring in the Assisi basilica are also copies of lost originals rather than invented patterns, and that the originals were of Andalusi origin.

The painted drapery surrounding the walls of the apse of Assisi's Upper Church (now mostly concealed by wooden choir stalls) is thus extremely relevant for this analysis (see Fig.5). It features a band of pseudo-Naskh calligraphy that is so convincingly drawn that one is tempted to decipher Arabic words in it (Fig.19). Most importantly, the pattern of this textile is strikingly similar to that of S. Antonio in Polesine: it is composed of blue roundels filled with eight branches of floral motifs (here four of them split into two) on a yellow background with blue rhomboid shapes in the interstices (Fig.20). This parallel further suggests that the

[31] J. Yarza, ed.: *Vestiduras ricas: El monasterio de Las Huelgas y su época, 1170–1340*, Madrid 2005, pp.224–25, no.43; and J.D. Dodds: exh. cat. *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, Granada (Alhambra) and New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1992, pp.322–33, no.90.
[32] Yarza, *op. cit.* (note 35), pp.197–98, no.32; and Dodds, *op. cit.* (note 35), pp.330–31, no.94.
[33] Inv. no.796-1893. M. Rosser-Owen: *Islamic Arts from Spain*, London 2010, p.45; L.E. Miller, A. Cabrera Lafuente and C. Allen-Johnstone, eds: *Silk: Fibre, Fabric and Fashion*, London 2021.
[34] Herald, *op. cit.* (note 14), pp.176–79.
[35] Klesse, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.34, and p.47, no.24

Assisi and the Ferrarese textiles are both copied from an original textile pattern, probably of Andalusi origin.

It is relevant in this context to note that the archaeological material found during excavations carried out in the convent of S. Antonio in Polesine has demonstrated the presence of imported wares from both the eastern and western Mediterranean. The stratum corresponding to the thirteenth century contained fragments of what was probably a Mamluk stonepaste bowl with underglaze blue decoration,[36] while in the fourteenth-century stratum a further Mamluk bowl[37] as well as fragments of either Andalusi or Mudejar lustreware were found.[38] [Christine, can you combine these footnotes into one?] The sources all recall the luxurious lifestyle at the convent, 'built in the year 1268 [. . .] later embellished, adorned and restored over time with paintings, sumptuous furnishings and a great quantity of precious silver'.[39] A royal Andalusi drapery would not be out of context.

The S. Antonio in Polesine fresco, however, does not merely depict a drapery covering the walls, the apse also features a canopy, a double conical fabric structure occupying the two side lunettes of the lateral walls (and originally probably also that of the eastern wall), giving it the overall impression of a tent (Fig.16). The double-tier structure is typical of tents found throughout the Islamic world; the upper tier serves as a removable cover for a smoke-hole.[40] European tents do not feature this double roof as they do not have smoke-holes. The earliest surviving examples of smoke-hole covers for Islamic tents are dated much later, to the Ottoman period, but are very similar to the structure depicted in the fresco and its colour scheme (Fig.21).[41]

A few stylised representations showing what western Islamic tents might have looked like can be found in the twelfth-century ceiling of the Cappella Palatina, Palermo,[42] as well as in some miniature paintings of the *Libro de los Juegos* – a treatise on dice and board games composed in 1283 under the patronage of Alfonso X of Castile El Sabio – and of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* – a collection of poems and musical scores also commissioned by Alfonso.[43]

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[36] S. Nepoti: 'Periodo I (XIV secolo): Le ceramiche', in Chiara Guarnieri, ed.: *Sant'Antonio in Polesine: Archeologia e Storia di un Monastero Estense*, Borgo San Lorenzo 2006, pp.91–113, at p.96.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] S. Nepoti: 'Periodo II. Fase 1 (XV secolo): Le ceramiche', in Guarnieri, *op. cit.* (note 40), pp.117–33, esp. pp.126–27.
[39] '*fabbricata l'anno* 1268 [. . .] *abbellita poi, adornata, e ristabilita col corso del tempo, di Pitture, di arredi sontuosi, e di preziosi argenti in gran numero*', G. Baruffaldi: *Vita della B. Beatrice Estense*, Venice 1723, p.53.
[40] P.A. Andrews: *Felt Tents and Pavilions: The Nomadic Tradition and its Interaction with Princely Tentage*, London 1999, I, p.xxxii.
[41] *Ibid*., p.xxix; and N. Atasoy: *Otağ-ı Hümayun: The Ottoman Imperial Tent Complex*, Istanbul 2000, p.156. See also A. Dimming: 'Fabricating a new image: imperial tents in the late Ottoman period', in C. Gruber, ed.: *Islamic Architecture on the Move: Motion and Modernity*, Bristol 2016, pp.220–86.
[42] E.J. Grube and J. Johns: *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina*, Genova and New York 2005, pp.140–41, nos.28.1, 28.2 and 28.8.
[43] K. Kennedy: *Alfonso X of Castile-León: Royal Patronage, Self-Promotion and Manuscripts in Thirteenth-Century Spain*, Amsterdam 2019, pp.131–74; J. O'Callaghan: *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa Maria: A Poetic Biography*, Leiden 1998; 'Alfonso X, the Learned', in *Cantigas de Santa Maria: an anthology*, ed. S. Parkinson, Cambridge 2015, pp.1–18; and D. Rodríguez: 'El libro de los juegos y la miniatura alfonsí', in A. el Sabio: *Libros del ajedrez, dados y tablas*, Madrid and Valencia 1987.

In one of the four surviving manuscripts of the *Cantigas* (Fig.22) we can see a stylised group of tents from the Almohad camp topped by a double conical structure featuring a similar colour scheme of red and yellowish as the one in the fresco of S. Antonio in Polesine,[44] as well as other tents, likely modelled on Andalusi types, depicted in some more details. Red and yellow were indeed the colour associated with Almohad power and the top of the tents of the Almohad chiefs, the *qubbāt*, were indeed red, as was that used by the Prophet Muḥammad.[45]

The similarity of such Andalusi tent depictions with the painted textile in S. Antonio in Polesine suggests that this might represent not simply an Andalusi drapery pattern but an existing Andalusi tent. The striking similarities in the overall decorative structure and colour scheme of the frescoed textile with one of the few potential surviving Andalusi tent fragments, the previously mentioned Fermo chasuble, probably made in al-Andalus between the 1030s and 1120s, strengthens this suggestion.[46] This hypothesis is further corroborated by the parallels between the Ferrarese textile pattern and the Andalusi silks analysed above, especially the painted silks of thirteenth-century Italian churches, suggesting that these were exactly the type of Andalusi textiles circulating in Italy.

The life-like depiction of applied precious or semi-precious stones on the top of the tent at S. Antonio in Polesine, also raises the question of possible models. There are, unsurprisingly, very few surviving jewelled textiles from the Islamic world, but one such survival is the mantle of the Norman King Roger II of Sicily (1095–1154), which subsequently was used as the coronation robe of the Holy Roman Emperors (Fig.23); an Arabic inscription places it at the court of Roger II in Palermo c.1133–34. It is made of silk, embroidered with gold and applied with pearls, gemstones and cloisonné enamel and therefore can offer some idea of what such gems may have looked like when incorporated into fabric.[47] It is known that high-status Islamic tents from the period were bejewelled, such as the tent of Berke Khan (1209–66), the grandson of Genghis Khan, who in c.1263 welcomed the embassy of the Mamluk Sultan Baybars in a vast tent covered with rich silk ornamented with pearls and jewels.[48]

The written sources further elucidate the presence and circulation of Islamic and, particularly, Andalusi tents in late medieval Europe. Tents, especially Islamic royal tents – made of silk, gold or silver brocade and sometimes set with precious and semi-precious stones

[44] Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de El Escorial, MS T-1-1, cantiga 181, fol.240r.
[45] M. Fierro, 'Red and Yellow, Colors and the Quest for Political Legitimacy in the Islamic West', in J. Bloom, *Color in Islamic Art and Culture*, London, New Haven 2012, pp. 78–97 (84); A. Stockstill: 'The red tent in the red city: the Caliphal Qubba in Almohad Marrakesh', p.
[46] R. Schorta: 'The embroidery of the Fermo Chasuble reconsidered – reconstruction of its original shape', in Shalem, *op. cit.* (note 29), pp.66–79, at p.77; and Simon-Cahn, *op. cit.* (note 29), pp.1–5.
[47] I. Dolezalek: *Arabic Script on Christian Kings: Textile Inscriptions on Royal Garments from Norman Sicily*, Berlin and Boston 2017, pp.4–10; C. Vernon: 'Dressing for succession in Norman Italy: the mantle of King Roger II', *Al-Masq. Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 31, no.1 (2018), pp.95–110, at p.98; and M. Andaloro, ed.: *Nobiles officinae: perle, filigrane e trame di seta dal Palazzo Reale di Palermo*, Catania 2006. See also L. Mackie: 'Jeweled Islamic textiles: imperial symbols', in S. Marjorie, ed.: *Silk Roads and Other Roads*, Northampton 2002, pp.92–100, esp. pp.92–93. Regarding the jewelled aesthetic in textiles, see E. Dospěl Williams: 'Gems in cloth and stone: medium, materiality, and the Late Antique jeweled aesthetic', *The Textile Museum Journal* 45 (2018), pp.22–39.
[48] Andrews, *op. cit.* (note 44), p.561.

– were among the most prized gifts in diplomatic exchanges, the most prominent royal insignia on campsites and the most sought-after spoils on battlefields.[49] For example, Arab chronicles reported that Ramiro II of León (d.951) and Fernán González of Castile (930–70) took the tent of Caliph ʻAbd al-Raḥmān III (890–961) after defeating him at Simancas, Spain, in 939.[50]

Because of its high value, gifting a tent was a means to show particular favour to the recipient. Gifts of tents are recorded from the early Islamic period, both between Muslim rulers in the eastern and western Islamic world and between Muslim and Christian rulers.[51] In the thirteenth century this was typical of the nomadic cultures of the Mongols and Timurids, who used tents as princely gifts.[52] This practice is also found in non-nomadic cultures. For example, the Mamluks and the Marinids exchanged large ornate silk ceremonial tents in 1338;[53] one such gift recorded in a painting was the tent sent from Iran by Shah Tahmasp to celebrate the newly enthroned Turkish sultan Murad III in 1576 (Fig.24).[54] Tent gifts are also found in an Andalusi context: Caliph al-Ḥakam II (915–76), for example, is recorded to have given his general Ghālib a most marvellous tent with instructions as to how and where to put it up.[55]

Tents were also used as diplomatic gifts destined for Europe. Probably the first ever recorded and most famous such gift is the one sent by the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd to Charlemagne in the early ninth century.[56] Indeed, upon his death Hārūn al-Rashīd's treasuries included over 150,000 tents, including 4,000 ceremonial tents, all stored in the imperial Abbasid treasury.[57] Such exchanges persisted in later periods. In the fifteenth century Sultan Qāytbāy (r. 1468–96) sent Lorenzo de' Medici a striped ceremonial tent, described in the inventories as 'magnificent', like himself.[58] European rulers also sent tents as diplomatic gifts to their Muslim counterparts: Louis IX, for example, is recorded to have sent a tent as part of his embassy to Güyük Khan (1206–48), another grandson of Gengis Khan, in 1248.[59] Tents, especially those of silk and precious metal brocade, were thus recognised throughout Europe as valuable possessions and prized gifts.

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[49] For the ritual and symbolic nature of Almohad tents, see A. Stockstill: 'The red tent in the red city: the Caliphal Qubba in Almohad Marrakesh', in eds D.F.P. Blessing and B. Baudiez, eds: *Textile in Architecture from the Middle Ages to Modernism*, pp.12–26.

[50] 'Muqtabis V', in *Crónica del Califa 'Abdarrahman an-Nasir entre los años 912 y 942. al-Muqtabis V*, eds. M.J. Viguera and F. Corriente, Zaragoza 1981, p.257; and Ali-de-Unzaga, *op. cit.* (note 33), pp.562–73, at p.567.

[51] Ahmad ibn al-Rashīd Ibn al-Zubayr: *Book of Gifts and Rarities Kitāb al-hadāyā wa al-tuhaf: selections compiled in the fifteenth century from an eleventh-century manuscript on gifts and treasures*, transl. and ed. Ghādah Hijjāwī Qaddūmī, Cambridge MA 1996, pp.84–85, no.46, and p.87, no.55.

[52] Andrews, *op. cit.* (note 44), pp.566, 559 and 794.

[53] Bush, *op. cit.* (note 13), p.257.

[54] Mackie, *op. cit.* (note 32), p.19, note 46.

[55] ʿĪsā ibn Aḥmad 'al-Rāzī: 'Anales Palatinos del Califa de Cordoba al-Ḥakam II, por ʿĪsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī (360–364 AH = 971–975 JC), §119', published in E. García Gómez: 'Armas, banderas, tiendas de campaña, monturas y correos en los « Anales de al-Ḥakam II » por ʿĪsā al-Rāzī', *Al-Andalus* 32 (1967), pp.163–79, at p.170.

[56] Andrews, *op. cit.* (note 44), p.573; F. Buckler: *Harunu'l-Rashid and Charles the Great*, Cambridge 1931, p.36.

[57] Mackie, *op. cit.* (note 32), p.30, note 9.

[58] Rogers, *op. cit.* (note 14), p.62.

[59] H. Reindl-Kiel: 'Pracht und Ehre: Zum Geschenkwesen im Osmanische Reich', in K. Kreiser and C. Neumann, eds: *Das Osmanische Reich in Seinen Archivalien und Chroniken: Nejat Goyuc zy Ehren*, Istanbul 1997, pp.184–87; and Andrews, *op. cit.* (note 44), p.573.

Tents also made their way into Europe as booty. Paying mercenaries taking part in anti-Muslim expeditions in textiles was common practice and a tent was a highly sought-after prize.[60] This was particularly the case during the Iberian wars between the Christian north and the Muslim south. Written sources reported that splendid Almohad tents, together with banners of gold and silver, were seized as trophies of Christian victories and quickly entered into circulation in Europe.[61] A most remarkable example occurred in 1212, when Alfonso VIII of Castile, after his victory at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, sent Pope Innocent III in Rome a silk tent belonging to the defeated Almohad caliph Muḥammad al-Nāṣir (1199–1213). A contemporary chronicle reported that:

> also, the king of Castile sent to said Pope Innocent letters about such a great victory that had been granted from heaven to the Christian princes. He also sent him honourable gifts from the spoils taken from the Saracens, that is a tent entirely in silk and a banner embroidered with gold, which was hung in the basilica of the first of the apostles [St Peter's] in praise of Christ's name.[62]

Unfortunately, these sources do not mention whether the Almohad tent was ever erected in the Constantinian basilica alongside the banners. That the erection of tent structures of Islamic origins over a church's main altar was indeed an existing practice, and one which saw some continuity over time, is provided by a later example, namely the presence in the sixteenth/seventeenth century of an Islamic bejewelled tent that used to be erected on special occasions as a baldachin over the altar of the church of Santo Stefano dei Cavalieri in Pisa. This, originally part of the upper structure of a Turkish war pavilion, is described as a golden cloth decorated with pearls and precious stones, showing that it was exactly such golden bejewelled tents, as the one depicted in Sant'Antonio, that were selected to use as altar baldachins.[63]

Since at least the thirteenth century enemies' spoils were a feature around a church's altar, as Guillaume Durand (1230–96) explains 'banners as well are erected above the altar so that the triumph of Christ – thanks to which we too hope to triumph over the enemy – be always

[60] Shalem, *op. cit.* (note 15), p.103; B. O'Kane: 'From tent to pavillions: royal mobility and Persian palace design', *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), pp.249–68, at p.251.
[61] Herald, *op. cit.* (note 14), pp.176–79.
[62] '*Idem rex Castelle de tanta christianis principibus celitus concessa uictoria dicto Innocentio pape litteras mittit. Mittit etiam de acceptis Sarracenorum spoliis eidem honorabilia exenia, tentorium uidelicet totum sericum et uexillum auro contextum. Quod in principis apostolorum basilica in laudem nominis Christi appensum est*', Richard of San Germano: 'Ryccardi de Sancto Germano notarii Chronica', in C.A. Garufi, ed.: *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, Bologna 1937, VII.II, p.35; see also May, *op. cit.* (note 7), p.56.
[63] Ferrante Capponi to Cosimo III de' Medici (15 July 1671), Archivio di Stato di Pisa, Ordine dei Cavalieri di S. Stefano 2209, no. 99, in Marco Gemignani, "The Capture and Preservation of Enemy Ensigns by the Order of Saint Stephen," in *The Flags of the Church of Saint Stephen of the Kinghts in Pisa. Their History, Meaning and Restauration*, ed. Marco Gemignani, Pontedera 2015, pp.25–108 (37).

remembered inside the church.'[64] Indeed, other spoils sent to Rome by those who took part in the battles against Almohad forces were also hung in St Peter's:

> many good and brave men from the kingdom of France took part in this battle, and also the king of Aragon, a most valiant knight, who sent to Rome, as a sign of victory, the lance and the banner of the aforementioned Mummilinus [Muḥammad al-Nāṣir]. These, still found to this day in a prominent spot in the church of St Peter, perpetually represent the favour and mercy of Christ, with which he made his own victorious in the aforementioned battle, despite them being fewer than the enemies.[65]

Interestingly, Pope Innocent IV (reg.1243–54) sent many luxurious gifts to the convent of S. Antonio in Polesine from those that once decorated St Peter's:

> the gift of Pope Innocent IV was entirely suitable to the dignity and position he held as the universal Father of the Holy Church. Thus, in order to mark the joy experienced at the foundation of the new monastery and the gathering of so many spiritual daughters, and especially of Beatrice, the illustrious scion of such a famous and worthy prince of the Holy Church, he enriched it with many spiritual and sacred gifts [. . .] and rare relics that adorned the sanctuary of Rome.[66]

By 1255 the convent had received many gifts, and most notably, textiles: 'to adorn and beautify their Church, very rich in quantities of silverware, and draperies of the finest silk and gold fabrics, and other furnishings of great value'.[67] The model for the Sant'Antonio in Polesine fresco could have reached Ferrara as part of such illustrious gifts.

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[64] '*Vexilla etiam super altare eriguntur, ut triumphus Christi iugiter in ecclesia memoretur per quem et nos de inimico triumphare speramus*', G. Durand: 'Guillelmi Duranti *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, I–IV', in A. Davril and T.M. Thibodeau, eds: *Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis CXL*, Turnholt 1995, p.44, 32.359–62. The present author would like to thank Francesco Davoli for his assistance with the Latin translations.

[65] '*Huic bello interfuerunt multi boni et fortes viri de regno Francie, et rex Arragonie, miles probissimus, qui in signum victorie lanceam et vexillum ipsius Mummilini Romam misit, que, adhuc in ecclesia beati Petri in loco eminenti posita, favorem et misericordiam Christi qua suos, licet paucos respectu hostium, in predicto bello victores fecit, in perpetuum representant*', William the Breton (c. 1165 – c. 1225): *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton historiens de Philippe-Auguste*, ed. H.F. Delaborde, Paris 1882, I, pp.241–42.

[66] '*Il dono poi del Sommo Pontefice Innocenzo IV tutto fù confacente alla dignità, ed al grado che sostenea di Padre universale di S. Chiesa. Che però a fine di contrasegnare il giubbilo provato nella fondazione del novello Monastero, e dell'aggregazione di tante figliuole spirituali, e principalmente di Beatrice, Rampollo illustre d'un Principe così famoso, e benemerito di Santa Chiesa, la arricchì di molti doni spirituali, e sacri* [. . .] *e rare Reliquie, che impreziosissero il Santuario di Roma*', G. Baruffaldi: *Vita della B. Beatrice Estense*, Venice 1723, p.46.

[67] '*in adornare, ed abellir la Chiesa loro molto ricca di quantità d'argenterie, ed apparamenti di finissimi drappi di seta, ed oro, ed altre supellettili di molto prezzo*', Guarini, *op. cit.* (note 19), p.298.

Another clue that the tent textile depicted in the apse of Sant'Antonio in Polesine had been seen by the fresco's creator or was physically present to inspire the depiction is the contemporary figurative cycle in the side chapels as well as the later fresco phase, which obscured the tent depiction. Several scenes are embellished with a type of textile that is strikingly similar to that depicted in the central apse. The same pattern of roundels with inscribed floral decorations and rhomboids in the interstices is found, although in simplified form and with different colour schemes, in the *Annunciation*, the *Assumption* (Fig.25), the *Enthroned Virgin* and the *Coronation*.

A similar such interplay between painted textiles is also found in the church of S. Maria Novella, Florence. Around 1285 the Brotherhood of S. Maria dei Laudesi commissioned Duccio di Buoninsegna to paint an icon for their chapel, the so-called Rucellai Madonna (Fig.26), and also decorate its walls.[68] The chapel was sold fifty years later to the Bardi family, who redecorated it. However, some of the original fresco is visible today under the detached later layers and reveals a textile pattern covering the lower section of the wall (Fig.27).[69] This is identical (although in slightly simplified form) to the textile around the throne of the Rucellai Madonna: a typical interlaced Andalusi motif complete with pseudo-Kufic inscription.[70] The fact that both the panel made for the chapel and the walls of the chapel themselves depict the same textile pattern suggests that an existing cloth could have inspired both decorations. Intriguingly, the sides of the S. Maria Novella chapel depict a hanging textile (now barely visible) with blue roundels on a yellow background, similar to the fresco in S. Antonio in Polesine. All of this evidence supports the possibility that the tent depicted in the fresco of St Antonio in Polesine did indeed exist in some form and, at some point, may have been physically present in the convent church.

In the thirteenth century the presbyterium of a church would usually have been screened off from view with ephemeral partitions, including veils and curtains.[71] Precious hangings, such as the *tetravela* (sets of four veils to cover the four sides of the ciborium) were used to conceal the altar from view either permanently, during Mass or for specific liturgical periods. Guillaume Durand explained that during Lent

[68] A. Bagnoli *et al.*, eds: *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, Siena 2003, pp.152–57.
[69] L. Bellosi: 'The function of the "Rucellai Madonna" in the Church of Santa Maria Novella', in V.M. Schmidt, ed.: *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, New Haven and London 2002, pp.147–159, esp. pp.154–56; P. Hills: *The Light of Early Italian Painting*, New Haven and London 1987, p.100; and J.H. Stubblebine: *Duccio di Buoninsegna and his School*, Princeton 1979, I, pp.24–25, and II, nos.551–53.
[70] L. Monnas: 'Imitation and imagination: figured silks in the paintings of Duccio, Simone Martini and Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti', in C. Campbell, J. Cannon and S. Wolohojian: exh. cat. *Siena: The Rise of Painting 1300–1350*, New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art) and London (National Gallery) 2024–25, pp.200–15, esp. pp.200–02; and Klesse, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.53, no.23, and p.176.
[71] V. Bedros and E. Scirocco: 'Liturgical screens, east and west: liminality and spiritual experience', in K. Doležalová and I. Foletti, eds: *The Notion of Liminality and the Medieval Sacred Space*, Brno 2019, pp.69–88, esp. pp.80–85.

> according to the custom of certain places, only two veils or curtains are retained at that time, one of which is placed around the choir, and the other is hung between the altar and the choir so that what is within the Holy of Holies is not visible.[72]

It is remarkable that the corner of a veil, painted as if drawn in front of the altar, is visible in the fresco at S. Antonio in Polesine (Fig. 9). Indeed, in the context of a convent, such veils were often hung from beams and placed at the entrance of a church's apse as a way to restrict the nuns' view of the priest during Mass, a practice documented in other convents.[73]

A Islamic tent in Sant'Antonio in Polesine could have served as a *tetravela*, re-adapted to Christin use, as indeed it would later happen in Pisa. It is possible that such a tent was part of a diplomatic gift made to the Este, who had played an essential role in brokering alliances between Guelfs and Ghibellins at a time in which tents were recognised as emblems of royal authority and luxury.[74] Moreover, such *tetravela* became standard in papal donations to churches from the ninth century, with those found in St Peter's made of silk and studded with gold and pearls.[75] It is thus equally possible that such ephemeral structures were part of the multiple papal donations received by S. Antonio in Polesine.

If a tent existed as a physical structure and was placed – perhaps only on certain occasions – in the apse of the church, its *trompe-l'œil* depiction could have served as a visual reminder of its splendour. As demonstrated above, such interplay between painted and actual textiles can be found throughout Europe and the Islamic world in the late medieval period. In the Alhambra, for example, traces of silk threads have been discovered on nails still embedded into walls, testifying to the practice of using actual fabrics on top of painted representations of them.[76] The walls of the apse of S. Antonio in Polesine are studded with nails and brackets, and it is certainly possible that they would have served as structural supports for a hanging textile.

The fresco in Sant'Antonio in Polesine is a unique testimony to the widespread the use of Islamic textiles in thirteenth-century Italian churches. In its original design, the apse of the convent was decorated only with painted drapery and a canopy of Islamic provenance, an aniconic design that is exceptional. The overall scheme and pattern of the painted textile structure recalls descriptions of Islamic tents and matches representations of specific Andalusi

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[72] '*et secundum morem quorumdam locorum duo tantum uelamina seu cortine tunc retinentur, quorum unum ponitur per circuitum chori, aliud suspenditur inter altare et chorum ne appareant que sunt intra sancta sanctorum*', G. Durand: 'Guillelmi Duranti Rationale divinorum officiorum, I–IV', in A. Davril and T.M. Thibodeau, eds: *Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis CXL*, Turnholt 1995, p.45, 34.380.

[73] Sible de Blaauw and Klára Doležalová: 'Constructing liminal space? curtains in Late Antique and Early Medieval churches', in Doležalová and Foletti, *op. cit.* (note 72), pp.47–67, at p.52; and C.H. Lawrence and J. Burton: *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, London 1984, p.207.

[74] P. Baker: *Islamic Textiles*, London 1995.

[75] 'Liber Pontificalis 98.50', in *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne, Paris 1892, p.29; and de Blaauw and Doležalová, *op. cit.* (note 74), pp.51–52.

[76] A. Fernández-Puertas: *La Alhambra*, London 2001, p.90.

tents. Although the sources do not reveal whether there was such a tent in Ferrara, the life-like nature of the depiction suggests there might have been, whether this was the gift of a diplomatic embassy, the fruit of military conquest or a repurposed object. Despite the many unknown factors, the fresco of Sant'Antonio in Polesine is the only known detailed and full-size representation of what appears to be an Andalusi tent. It is also the only example of the deployment of a portable Islamic structure in an Italian church of the late thirteenth century, and as such a valuable testimony to the mobility of such artefacts, the great esteem in which they were held and the readiness with which they were integrated into Christian Europe.

Illustrations

Fig. 1 View of apse and side chapels. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 2 Leftt-hand wall of the apse. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 3 Rightt-hand wall of the apse. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 4 Giotto, St. Francis appearing to Pope Gregory the Great in a dream (c.1296-97), Upper Basilica, Assisi

Fig. 5 Fragment of the burial tunic of Don Felipe (d. 1274), Spain

Fig. 6 Left-hand chapel textile decoration. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 7 Hanging Islamic textile, early 14th century. Assisi, Upper Basilica

Fig. 8 Detail of lower part of hanging textile. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 9 Detail of top part of hanging textile. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 10 Jewelled border of tent roof. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 11 Detail of textile. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 12 Detail of top fringes. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 13 Ceiling of right-hand chapel. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 14 Corner of vault showing starry blue ceiling. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 15 Apse mosaics (13th century).. Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome

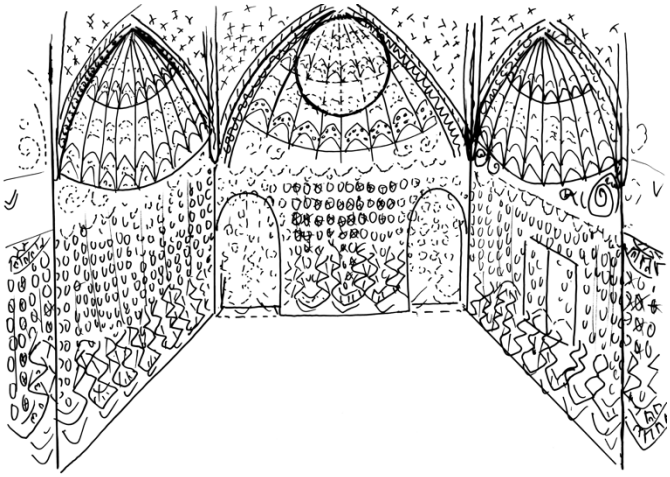

Fig. 16 Line drawing of original apse decoration. St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara (artist Federico Botana)

Fig. 17 Pietro Lorenzetti, Birth of the Virgin, St Savinus altar (c.1342). Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena

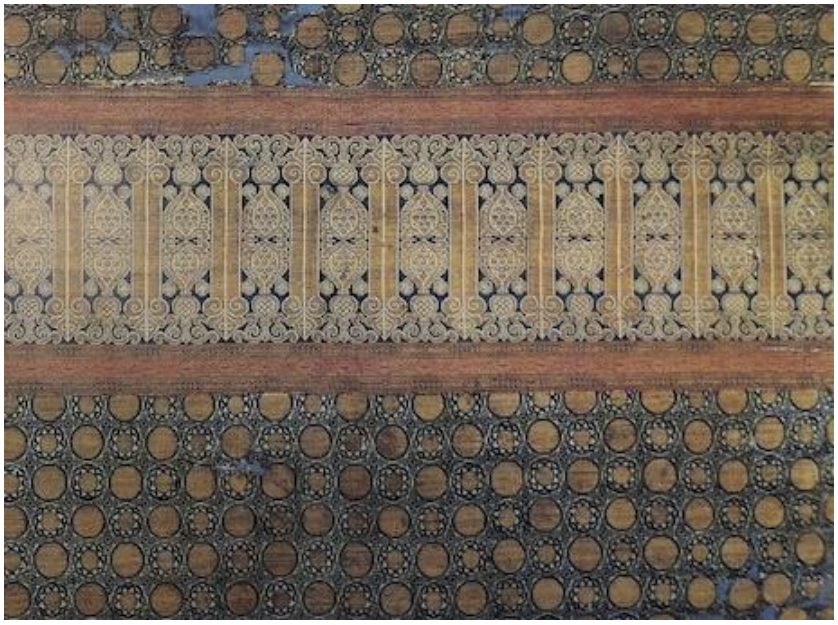

Fig. 18 Pillow Cover of María de Almenar, Almoravid period (c.1200), silk and gold thread, Museo de Telas Medievales, Monasterio de Santa María la Real de Huelgas, Burgos

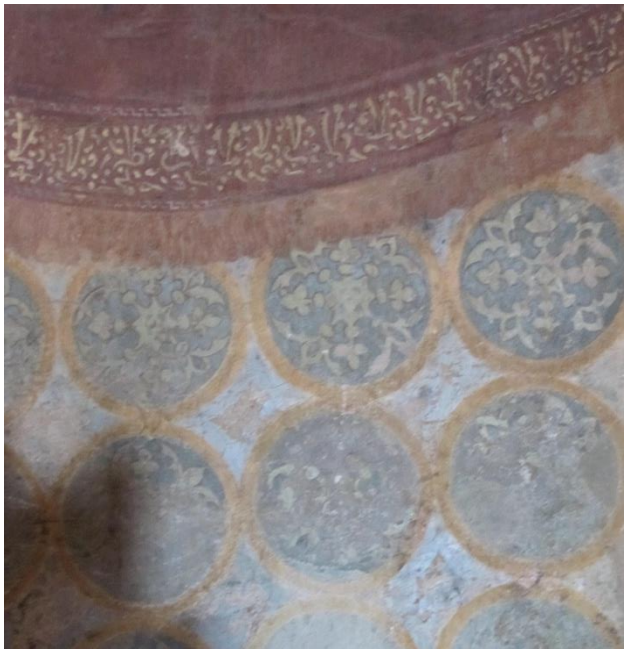

Fig. 19 Detail of top border of textile. St Francis Basilica, Assisi

Fig. 20 Detail of textile decoration. St Francis Basilica, Assisi

Fig. 21 Top of an Ottoman tent. Atasoy, *Otağ-ı Hümayun*, 2000, p. 156

Fig. 22 Depiction of an Islamic tent. *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, El Escorial, Ms. T-1-1, fol. 222r

Fig. 23 Detail of Mantle of Roger II. Imperial Treasury, Vienna

Fig. 24 The Persian ambassador presenting Sultan Murad III a tent as a gift. 16th century. Illumination on parchment. (Istanbul University Library, MS FY 1404 Istanbul, fol.43b).

Fig. 25 Assumption of the Virgin. Left-hand chapel, St Antonio in Polesine, Ferrara

Fig. 26 Duccio di Buoninsegna, Madonna Rucellai (c.1285), Galleria degli Uffizi

Fig. 27 Textile pattern decoration of the Bardi Chapel, S. Maria Novella, Florence. c.1285.