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### Mobilising mob mentality: the miracle of the relic of Saint Andrew

For 'Twice Upon a Time: *Magic, Alchemy and the Transubstantiation of the Senses*', the Call for Papers cast the context for the conference in the following terms:

... Western tradition remains cautious of unreasoned sensorial data, treating it with illusory trepidation. While this paradigm has proven an efficient methodology, it has installed a discriminatory partition between that which can be rationalised or mathematized and that which is 'only' sensory.<sup>1</sup>

This paper takes a backward glance to a pre-Enlightenment age, when 'unreasoned sensorial data' was accepted as part and parcel of everyday life. It touches on the unquestioning belief in the supernatural power of holy relics, exemplified here by a 'miraculous' event brought about by a sacred fragment from the head of Saint Andrew the Apostle (first century AD).<sup>2</sup> The occasion was orchestrated by Pope Pius II, the learned humanist Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (b.1405-1464); the setting, the village of his birth, Corsignano, which he renamed Pienza, after himself.<sup>3</sup> As well as thus creating a memorial for posterity, the buildings and streets of Pienza - indeed also the surrounding countryside - provided the scenography for his ultimate foundational act, the performance of religious ritual in time and space, lifted onto a cosmographical plane by the endowment of the relic on the occasion of a holy feast day falling at the autumnal equinox.

As well as charting Pius's *modus operandi* to extrude optimum effect - hence personal kudos and a place in history - from the holy relic, this paper also addresses the culturally embedded cultic superstition and ritual behaviour in which Pius partook and on which he was drawing. Finally, it is found that Pius had an implicit understanding of tropes of human behaviour identified by Elias Canetti, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, in his study of *Crowds and Power*.<sup>4</sup>

To give a flavour of intellectual context, Aeneas Piccolomini had composed in 1457 his *Historia rerum ubique gestarum (A History of Things and Events Everywhere)*,<sup>5</sup> a compendium of all the scientific and geographical knowledge of the time, later owned and used by Christopher Columbus.

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<sup>1</sup> Call for Papers, "Twice Upon a Time: *Magic, Alchemy and the Transubstantiation of the Senses*", 26-27 June 2014, The Centre for Fine Art Research, Birmingham School of Art.

<sup>2</sup> On the arrival from Patras and the temporary sojourn in Italy of the relic of the head of Saint Andrew, see Ruth O. Rubinstein, "Pius II's Piazza S. Pietro and St. Andrew's Head", in *Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, Papa Pio II. Atti del Convegno per il quinto centenario della morte e altri scritti*, ed. Domenico Maffei, (Siena: Accademia senese degli intronati, 1968), 221-44. Pius removed the mandible (lower jawbone) from Saint Andrew's head in order to permanently retain a fragment of the relic on Italian soil, in advance of the sacred head being returned to Patras; Jan Pieper, *Pienza. Il progetto di una vision umanistica del mondo* (Stuttgart/London: Axel Menges, 2000), 124. In splitting relics, the power of each part, it was believed, was as full of potency as the original whole; Joe Nickell, *Looking for a Miracle: Weeping Icons, Stigmata, Visions & Healing Cures* (New York: Prometheus, 1993), 73. Pius bestowed on Pienza the relic of Saint Andrew's mandible in the Italo-Byzantine, silver gilt 'body-part' reliquary in which Saint Andrew's head had arrived from Patras; pictured in Rubinstein, "Pius II's Piazza", her Fig. 9.

<sup>3</sup> The wide literature on Pienza is summarised by Christine Smith, *Architecture in the Culture of Early Humanism: Ethics, Aesthetics and Eloquence 1400-1470* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 98-119.

<sup>4</sup> Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Steward, (London: Phoenix Press, 1960).

<sup>5</sup> Pius II, *Historia rerum ubique gestarum* (Venice: Iohannem de Colonia, 1477).

Piccolomini explicitly expressed there his indebtedness not only to Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*, of which he owned a fine copy,<sup>6</sup> but also to Strabo,<sup>7</sup> whose *Geographia* he had in two manuscript volumes.<sup>8</sup> Strabo stresses throughout his entire *Geographia* the interconnectedness of all terrestrial and celestial phenomena. For Pius and his intellectual circle, which included architect and polymath Leon Battista Alberti and cosmographer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli, this interconnectedness was a given: geography, mathematics, astronomy and theology all melded together in a seamless continuum. Now practised as divergent forms of scholarship, these disciplines in the fifteenth century shared common roots and common modes of inquiry. It should be mentioned at this point that the coterie around Pius II was vitally interested in astronomy. His close and trusted friend, theologian and cardinal, Nicholas of Cusa prefigured Copernicus in positing a universe which did not have the earth at its centre. The Greek Cardinal Bessarion, who could himself compute planetary positions, was in 1462 presented with an astrolabe by his friend, the German astronomer Regiomontanus.<sup>9</sup> Pius's own attitude to astronomy and astrology (confused and enmeshed in the fifteenth century)<sup>10</sup> can be inferred from his disapproving observation that of all the scholars whom Alfonso of Naples consulted, one never saw an astrologer (*astrologos*) amongst them.<sup>11</sup> A relative of Pius, Alessandro Piccolomini (1508-1578), was to produce the first star atlas to be published in the west.<sup>12</sup>

This encyclopedic and holistic conception of *rerum ubique gestarum* – of the universe and everything in it – is epitomised by Pius's all-encompassing vision for Pienza, former Corsignano. The future pope had grown up in this tiny agricultural village, since his immediate family, an impoverished branch of the noble Piccolomini of Siena, had been exiled from its native city since 1368,<sup>13</sup> his sense of injustice surely contributing to his drive for dynastic and self-aggrandisement. The transformed settlement of Pienza is renowned as an early example of renaissance town planning actually brought into existence and still extant today. As, however, I have argued elsewhere,<sup>14</sup> with the donation to the tiny city of a holy relic, Pius simultaneously instituted for it a new feast day and an annual procession to be repeated into perpetuity, on each occasion of which Pienza's inhabitants were kinaesthetically reminded of the full scale of their benefactor's patronage.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The whereabouts of this volume no longer known, Pius's ownership of it is recorded in his nephew's will: Alfred A. Strnad, 'Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini; Politik und Mäzenatentum im Quattrocento', *Römische historische Mitteilungen* 8-9 (1964-6), 101-425, here 355.

<sup>7</sup> Pius II, *Opera omnia* (Basle: Per Henrichi Petri mense Augusto, 1551), fols. 281-386, here 282.

<sup>8</sup> Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Chigi J.VIII.279 and Vat. lat. 2051.

<sup>9</sup> David A. King, *Astrolabes and Angels, Epigrams and Enigmas: from Regiomontanus' acrostic for Cardinal Bessarion to Piero della Francesca's Flagellation of Christ* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007), 7-9.

<sup>10</sup> Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance: The Zodiac of Life*, trans. Carolyn Jackson and June Allen (London/Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).

<sup>11</sup> Pius II, *De dictis et factis Alphonsi regis memorabilis*, part-transcribed in Berthe Widmer, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Papst Pius II: Ausgewählte Texte aus seinen Schriften* (Basle: Schwabe, 1960), 416.

<sup>12</sup> Alessandro Piccolomini, *De la sfera del mondo. Dele stele fisse* (Venice: Volpini, 1540).

<sup>13</sup> Fabrizio Nevola, *Siena: Constructing the Renaissance City* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2007), 72-3.

<sup>14</sup> Susan J. May, 'Pienza: Relics, Ritual and Architecture in the City of a Renaissance Pope', in *Foundation, Dedication and Consecration in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Maarten Delbeke and Minou Schraven, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 99-128.

<sup>15</sup> Pius's other processions are treated in Fabrizio Nevola, "'La piu gloriosa solemnità che a di de padri nostri giammai fusse veduta': Feste ed apparati urbani durante il pontificato di Pio II Piccolomini", in *I luoghi del*

My claim that processions were part of Pius's vision for Pienza is partially grounded in the premise that he *thought* in terms of movement through space, evident from many passages in his autobiographical *I commentarii*.<sup>16</sup> In his descriptions, the forward dynamic and consequent transitoriness of the world as visually experienced is almost cinematographic. In philosophical discourse, it was Pius's close friend, Nicholas of Cusa, who encapsulated the idea that perception of the universe is relative to the place of the observer.<sup>17</sup> Pius's general conception of the urban landscape as a series of vistas seen on the move stemmed from his early career as secretary to a number of prominent ecclesiastics and subsequently to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, in all of whose service he travelled extensively through Italy and Europe, as far north as Scotland. Time and time again the young Piccolomini witnessed - from within - grand entries amidst meandering processions of visiting dignitaries. Taking account too of the layout of Pienza (Fig. 1) and some of its architectural features, such as the unifying effect of cornices, uninterrupted string courses, and perhaps a continuous bench along the main thoroughfare (Fig. 2),<sup>18</sup> I have argued that Pius conceived of the revamping of the small city in terms of its potential for processions, with vistas appearing like a series of theatrical stage sets (Fig. 3), all aimed at culminating on the dedication day in a grand finale of sacred ritual under the gothic vaults of its new cathedral.

In terms of when to schedule the inaugural procession, this was an age when dates in the year were invariably and as a matter of course understood by reference to saints' days. Pius was thus accustomed to planning important visits and events to coincide with festivals marked out in the religious calendar.<sup>19</sup> The choice of the feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist (29 August 1462) as the day on which to dedicate Pienza's new cathedral and to donate the holy relic was influenced to a certain extent by the rate of building. Pius had witnessed work-in-progress on the construction of his summer residence there, the Palazzo Piccolomini, during his travels in September 1460 and was personally up-dated during a visit to Rome by the architect Bernardo Rossellino in July 1461.<sup>20</sup> By the time of the prolonged stay at Pienza by Pius and his entourage from June or July to September 1462, the pope could report that:

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*Sacro. Il sacro e la città fra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Fabrizio Ricciardelli, (Florence: Mauro Pagliai: Polistampa, 2008), 173-88.

<sup>16</sup> Pius II, "The Commentaries of Pius II", trans. Florence A. Gragg, intro. and notes by Leona C. Gabel, in *Smith College Studies in History*, 5 vols (Northampton, MA: Dept of History of Smith College, 1936-57), henceforth Pius II. For the Latin, see Pius II, *Pii II Commentarii rerum memorabilium que temporibus suis contigerunt*, ed. Adrianus Van Heck (Vatican City: 1984).

<sup>17</sup> 'Non enim apprehendimus motum nisi per quandam comparationem ad fixum'; Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia* XII 162 6-7, in *Nicolò Cusano, Opere Filosofiche, Classici della Filosofia*, ed. Graziella Federici-Vescovini, (Turin: Unione Tipografico Editrice Torinese, 1972), 147. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) returned to the idea that lived body and lived place link up with each other through the simple basic action of walking; Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley, L.A.: University of California Press, 1998), 224-30.

<sup>18</sup> Charles R. Mack, *Pienza: The Creation of a Renaissance City* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 128, 150, 157.

<sup>19</sup> A *Missale Romanum* was made for Aeneas Silvius in 1456 and illuminated by Benozzo Gozzoli. Fols 1r-6v comprise a calendar recording saints' days and religious feasts and showing the seven-day phases of the moon. The missal contains annotations in Pius's own handwriting: Codex G III 11, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

<sup>20</sup> Mack, *Pienza*, 40-1.

All of these buildings except the bell tower which was still unfinished were completed from foundation to roof in three years.<sup>21</sup>

The buildings to which he refers include the Palazzo Piccolomini, the lower and upper churches of the cathedral and the sacristy. The *campanile* at that time was built to only two-thirds of its intended height, however the well (Fig. 4) had already been completed and the piazza had been 'paved with bricks laid on their sides in mortar'.<sup>22</sup> Although construction or refurbishment was to extend to at least forty buildings by the pope's death in 1464, by August 1462 the cathedral and its environs were sufficiently advanced to perform the dedication ceremony and officially 'show off' the new nucleus of the recently elevated city to its inhabitants and, more importantly, the curia.

The choice of the feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist was, moreover, subject to a further consideration. In his seminal studies of ritual behaviour, Richard Trexler has shown that through the middle ages and renaissance astrologers were routinely consulted to read the configuration of the stellar sphere before governmental or military events were planned, in order to ensure the stars' beneficence on the saint's day in question. Religious processions were likewise planned according to the conjunctions of the heavens: for example Florence's official herald, Francesco Filarete, was regularly consulted on such matters.<sup>23</sup>

In his study of the architecture of Pienza's cathedral and its piazza, Daniele Del Grande has shown that, according to the Julian calendar (which was still in use until its reform by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582), the day of the feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, 29 August, was also the calendrical date of the autumnal equinox, one of the two points in the year when day and night are purportedly of equal length.<sup>24</sup> For the pope and his cardinals, astronomical events were laden with religious symbolism. The regularity of the seasons was teleological evidence of divine order, the calendrical succession a temporal sign, by contrast, of God and eternity.<sup>25</sup> Solar imagery was widely applied in descriptions of Christ: the birth of the sun in the winter solstice symbolised the birth of Christ, the coming of the spring his Resurrection, the vernal equinox his conception, the autumnal equinox his forthcoming sacrifice, winter the season of his death.<sup>26</sup> The coincidence of the feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist with the autumnal equinox, namely the coincidence of a religious festival with a significant astronomical and symbolical event, would have made the date of 29 August an especially auspicious one for the dedication ceremony of the new cathedral. As will become clear below, the astronomical phenomenon would have manifest consequences during the dedication proceedings.

The day's events on 29 August 1462 can be envisaged with the aid of the *Pontificale Romanum*, a ceremonial handbook written by Agostino Patrizi Piccolomini, erstwhile secretary to Pius II, extended

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<sup>21</sup> Pius II, Book 9, Vol. 35 (1951), 603.

<sup>22</sup> Pius II, Book 9, Vol. 35 (1951), 601.

<sup>23</sup> Richard C. Trexler (ed.), *The Libro Cerimoniale of the Florentine Republic by Francesco Filarete and Angelo Manfredi* (Geneva: Droz, 1978), 49. See also Richard C. Trexler, "Ritual Behaviour in Renaissance Florence: the Setting", *Medievalia et Humanistica* 4 (1973), 125-44, here 134-7.

<sup>24</sup> Daniele Del Grande, "Pienza: la 'città di Pio'", in *La rifondazione umanistica dell'architettura e del paesaggio: Pio II, la città, le arti*, ed. Giuseppe Giorgianni (Siena: Protagon, 2006), 17-31.

<sup>25</sup> Saint Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 4:46.

<sup>26</sup> As often repeated in early Christian literature; George M. A. Hanfmann, *The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks*, 2 vols (Cambridge M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1951), here 1, 201.

family member, clerk of papal ceremonies for twenty years, canon of Pienza cathedral and finally its bishop.<sup>27</sup> The work puts into written form the traditional ritual procedures of the pope and curia that had been practised for centuries.

Without doubt in the case of Pienza the procession gathered in the piazza in front of the cathedral (Fig. 1), with the imposing flank of the Palazzo Piccolomini rising immediately to the left (Fig. 4). The adjacent well, literal and metaphorical fountain-head for the populace, announces by way of an inscription on its *all'antica* well-head the name of the new city's founding father, 'PIVS PP II MCCCCLXII' (Pius Pontifex Pientinus II, 1462).<sup>28</sup> According to custom, processions were preceded by a sermon, probably given on this occasion by the city's bishop-elect, Giovanni Cinughi, the intention of which was to invoke an atmosphere of heightened spirituality and emotion, the presence of a holy relic often eliciting tears.<sup>29</sup> At a parallel moment at the first public appearance in Rome of the relic of Saint Andrew's head, Pius recorded that there was no-one who did not weep:

... there was profound silence except for the sobs of those who beat their breasts and could not control their tears.<sup>30</sup>

In the medieval and early modern period, the dignity of any place was customarily measured according to the number and importance of its holy relics. These, furthermore, were believed to have the ability to perform miracles, bringing about *inter alia* healing, levitation and holy apparitions.<sup>31</sup> To be in the presence of a sacred relic was to have a direct and open line of communication with God, without the need of cleric as intermediary. Sites housing sacred relics thus took on special cultural agency as gateways to the divine, deriving large economic benefits from miracle-seeking visitors. The principles moreover for demonstrating discernment of a supernatural presence were known to literate and illiterate alike, women and men, clergy and laity. The public was a witting participant in shedding communal tears: these were the visible manifestation of invisible emotions, an outward communication of the inner movement of the heart in response to an unearthly power.<sup>32</sup>

Patrizi's handbook helps conjure the animation, festive colour, sounds and aromas of a small city embellished with tapestries, flags and ceremonial garb, and decked out with strewn flowers, fragrant herbs and hung branches. In the forefront of the parade went standard bearers carrying banners. Four honorary equerries followed, carrying caps of crimson velvet atop long staffs. Before the papal cross went two master ushers carrying silk-covered rods; immediately after it followed twelve

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<sup>27</sup> Compiled under the pontificates of Sixtus IV (1471-84) and Innocent VIII (1484-92), the *Pontificale Romanum* is transcribed in Latin, with commentary in French, in Marc Dykmans, *L'oeuvre de Patrizi Piccolomini ou le cérémonial papal de la première renaissance*, 2 vols (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1980), here 1, 7-15. Apart from references to the founding and naming of Pienza, the only eye-witness report of the proceedings on 29 August 1462 is a cursory note by Pius II, quoted below (n.41).

<sup>28</sup> Architectural precedents for the buildings around the piazza are discussed by Fabrizio Nevola, 'Architettura civile' in *Pio II e le arti. La riscoperta dell'antico da Federighi a Michelangelo*, ed. Alessandro Angelini, (Milan: Silvana, 2005), 182-213, here 184-98.

<sup>29</sup> For the name of the bishop, Mack, *Pienza*, 77. On the pre-processional sermon, Trexler, *Public Life*, 353-4.

<sup>30</sup> Pius II, Book 8, Vol 35 (1951), 529.

<sup>31</sup> Nickell, *Looking for a Miracle*.

<sup>32</sup> William A. Christian Jr, 'Provoked Religious Weeping in Early Modern Spain', in *Religious Organization and Religious Experience*, ed. John Davis, (London: Academic Press, 1982), 97-114

footmen with lighted torches. Two clerks carried silver lanterns with perpetually-burning candles.<sup>33</sup> The pope was borne aloft in the *sedia gestatoria* beneath a *baldacchino*, a portable fabric canopy, emblazoned with the Piccolomini crest.<sup>34</sup> Judging by events in Rome, Pius himself carried the reliquary.<sup>35</sup> If crowds pressed too close to the pontiff, his almoner scattered a few coins out to the people, while servants-of-arms with silver staffs ran back and forth keeping order. Finally, the local clergy wearing white vestments brought up the rear.<sup>36</sup>

Thus the procession must have edged forward in flamboyant splendour, east along the present-day Corso Rossellino, with occasional breathtaking views of the pope's beloved, wooded Monte Amiata fleetingly glimpsed between shady buildings (Fig. 3). Making an anti-clockwise circuit within the city walls, the column would eventually find itself back in the square, in front of the majestic, classical facade of the *duomo* (Fig. 5). This was a suitable venue for the enactment of a *sacra rappresentazione*, a sacred drama, customary during such occasions, with the silver gilt reliquary doubtless taking centre stage.

It will be recalled that 29 August was also the date in the Julian calendar of the autumnal equinox. If we suppose that participants regrouped around the town square in time for mid-day, they would then be witness to a 'miracle' performed by the holy relic of Saint Andrew, whereby the cathedral operated as a colossal sun dial casting its great, dark shadow to fall fully, squarely and exactly into the articulated grid of the piazza, the oculus of the facade echoed by the central, white, paved circle.<sup>37</sup> A phenomenon not recorded in the *Commentaries*, this astonishing 'performance' was nonetheless unlikely to be a coincidence.<sup>38</sup> Needless to say, calculations that could calibrate the orientation and height of the newly-built church and the size and tilt of the recently-cleared and paved piazza with the astrological equinox meridian would require the greatest mathematical minds of the age. The names of those in Pius's circle qualifying for this epithet barely need repeating: one thinks above all of Cusa and Toscanelli.<sup>39</sup> Gillian Beer's observation can be applied to this moment, that cosmology and the natural sciences have often rubbed shoulders with the unstable territory of the supernatural.<sup>40</sup> The possibility that the pope had his cathedral designed to register its presence every spring and autumn equinox on the grid of the piazza belies Pius's aspirations that his papal city should participate in some small way in the divine rhythm of the universe.

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<sup>33</sup> Dykmans, *L'oeuvre de Patrizi*, 1, 181-2 paras. 494-5.

<sup>34</sup> Dykmans, *L'oeuvre de Patrizi*, 1, 182 para 496; 183 para. 498.

<sup>35</sup> Pius II, Book 8, Vol 35 (1951), 534, 536.

<sup>36</sup> Dykmans, *L'oeuvre de Patrizi*, 1, 183-4, para 499.

<sup>37</sup> Del Grande, "Pienza" 24.

<sup>38</sup> Del Grande, "Pienza" 26. Two reasons for its absence from the *Commentaries* are put forward in May, "Pienza: Relics, Ritual and Architecture", 123. These pertain to the surreptitious manner by which Pius acquired the holy relic for Pienza (see n.2), and his failure to address a reform of the Julian calendar. As Pius and his circle were well aware, the vernal and autumnal equinoxes marked in the Julian calendar were, by 1462, eleven days adrift from the actual astronomical occurrences. This latter is also explicated by Del Grande, "Pienza", 26-8.

<sup>39</sup> Del Grande favours Toscanelli, "Pienza", 30. Around 1468 Toscanelli calculated the gnomon for Florence cathedral which records the summer solstice to within half a second; Francesca Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps: Art, Cartography and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2005), 54. Eamonn Canniffe notes the correlation between the facade of Pienza cathedral and the grid of the piazza, commenting that 'theatrical attitudes were a significant component of renaissance urbanism'; *The Politics of the Piazza: The History and Meaning of the Italian Square* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 83-88.

<sup>40</sup> Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9.

The formal proceedings of the day were brought to a close inside the cathedral. Agostini Patrizi's ceremonial details the sprinkling of holy water, burning of incense, and the procession into the nave that would have ensued, to the accompaniment of the canticle *Te Deum laudamus*.<sup>41</sup> One imagines the scene as Pius described it at the equivalent moment in Rome:

The faces of all expressed solemnity, reverence, and devotion. There was not a single unseemly gesture and the procession of cardinals passed with such dignity that the watching crowds ... were stirred to worship.<sup>42</sup>

Mounting the steps to a chorus of chanted hymns, Pius 'anointed the front of the high altar and when the relics of the saint had been deposited in it he affixed the seal'.<sup>43</sup> In Rome, and surely again here, Pius and the cardinals wept, their eyes streaming 'with tears of joy and adoration' for the relic of Saint Andrew.<sup>44</sup> For saying of the mass, Pius was enthroned in his pontifical *cathedra*,<sup>45</sup> still extant in the centre of the choir chapel below its enormous (by Italian standards) gothic window (Fig. 6). The light flooding through the chapel window has the effect of creating an aureole above the pope with, in the right conditions, a shadow of the peak of Pius's 'sacred mountain', Monte Amiata, silhouetted against the glass.<sup>46</sup> It was against this blaze of almost incandescent light before the eyes of the congregation that the host was elevated in the act of transubstantiation.<sup>47</sup> Thus formal ritual drew to a close, giving way, as was customary, to outdoor games, dancing and feasting.

As has been suggested, Pope Pius II was a charismatic diplomat and shrewd politician: he knew how to put on a show, how to win 'hearts and minds'. That Easter, for the arrival in Rome of the relic of Saint Andrew's head, Pius had insisted that for the two-mile procession, 'all should go on foot': those who 'were too old or ill ... were to walk as far as they thought they could, choosing the place from which they estimated that their feet would carry them to Saint Peter's'.<sup>48</sup> The import of the occasion for each participant was thus to be experienced as a panoramic spectacle unfolding with each new step. Pius well understood what Elias Canetti identifies in his study of the psychopathology of power, namely, the unifying effect of a large number of people directed forward in movement to a common destination.<sup>49</sup> As Canetti further observes, the ritual itself, 'the movements of the priests in their stiff, heavy canonicals, their measured steps' is 'the element in any religion which has the most immediate effect on an assembly of believers'.<sup>50</sup> It seems perfectly consistent with Pius's character and ambition that in his own memorial to himself he would seek to make a public statement of such vast proportions, not only stage-managing the time, place, architectural backdrop, panoramic mise en scène, curial and local players, but also recruiting the relic of an apostle of Christ and the fall of the 'miraculous' equinoctial shadow, with all of its macrocosmic symbolism, to play a part in his foundational act.

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<sup>41</sup> Dykmans, *L'oeuvre de Patrizi*, 1, 188 paras 516-7.

<sup>42</sup> Pius II, Book 8, Vol 35 (1951), 533.

<sup>43</sup> Pius II, Book 9, Vol 35 (1951), 604.

<sup>44</sup> Pius II, Book 8, Vol 35 (1951), 527.

<sup>45</sup> Pius II, Book 9, Vol 35 (1951), 602; Henk van Os, "Painting in a House of Glass: The Altarpieces of Pienza", *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 17:1 (1987), 23- 38, here 35.

<sup>46</sup> Del Grande, "Pienza", 27.

<sup>47</sup> Van Os, "Painting in a house of glass", 35.

<sup>48</sup> Pius II, Book 8, Vol. 35 (1951), 531.

<sup>49</sup> Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, 29.

<sup>50</sup> Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, 155.







Fig. 2. Present-day Corso Rossellino, Pienza, facing east (photo: author).



Fig. 3. Monte Amiata viewed from the present-day Corso, looking south along present-day Via dell'Amore, Pienza (photo: author).



Fig. 4. Bernardo Rossellino, Palazzo Piccolomini (east facade) and well (both built 1459-62), viewed from Piazza Pio II, Pienza (photo: author).





Fig. 5. Bernardo Rossellino, cathedral facade across Piazza Pio II, Pienza, built 1459-62 (photo: author).

Fig. 6. Pienza cathedral, interior view of nave toward high altar (© Photo SCALA, Florence 2010).

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