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*This issue of Predella comprises six essays that explore how artists and patrons interacted with the Trecento during the fifteenth century, dealing both with subject matter and style. Some authors have interpreted the insistence on the Trecento as a deliberate choice of models by patrons and painters. In other cases, however, the relationship with the previous century could be more complex and difficult to unravel. Overall, the survival of the Trecento questions the more traditional and widely accepted historiographic caesurae, in particular regarding the origins of the Renaissance in the Quattrocento and the extent of its break with the late Middle Ages.*

This issue of Predella comprises six essays that explore how artists and patrons interacted with the Trecento during the fifteenth century. The project began with a dedicated session at the Renaissance Society of America's annual conference in 2012 enriched by Machtelt Israels' response and grew over the years to encompass research on northern Italy from Tuscany to the Tyrol.

The original brief was to consider how Trecento art in particular was 'received' during the Renaissance and consequently the call used the term 'reception'. Colleagues responded by undertaking a visual quest and by re-reading fundamental studies written by Erwin Panofsky, Johann Huizinga, Ernst Gombrich and Jacques Le Goff. Consequently, their essays use a multitude of expressions beyond 'reception' (particularly in the essays by Joanne Anderson, Fabio Massaccesi and Zuleika Murat), and it seemed appropriate to rephrase this thematic section to the 'survival' of the trecento. This may appear an odd choice but what I had in mind was Jean Seznec's brilliant book *La survivance des dieux antiques (The Survival of the Pagan Gods)*<sup>1</sup>. Seznec himself had felt the need to explain his title in his introduction as follows: «As the Middle Ages and the Renaissance come to be better known, the traditional antithesis between them grows less marked». Although he was thinking more about the iconographic survival of the mythological tradition than style, his words echo the findings of our authors who judiciously opted for descriptors such as 'relaunch', 'revival', 'after life', 'persistence', 'resistance' and the – cultural, historical, and art-historical – concept of 'continuity'.

The essays do grapple with the two issues of subject matter and style. Gabriele Fattorini's work, for instance, focuses on the persistence of the theme of the *Assumption* in Siena. Beginning with an image invented in the Trecento and depicted on one of the city gates, it was repainted, then renewed and finally replaced in the sixteenth century and is only known through the writings of Bernardino da Siena. Through a meticulous investigation of technical and scientific analysis and a close reading of art historical criticism such as Ghiberti or Vasari, Fattorini brings to the surface 'lost' works or buried trecento layers. The result enables the reader to retrace how the Trecento model survived despite sustained campaigns of repainting to maintain and preserve the miraculous and/or as a result of specific contractual obligations.

Padua comes to the fore in Paolo di Simone's essay on the theme of illustrious men (*uomini famosi*) and the triumphs of Caesar in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and Andrea Mantegna's reliance on Jacopo Davanzo's lost frescoes on this theme resonates with Zuleika Murat's own essay, as we will see below. But the legacy of the genre stemmed from wider areas, and di Simone's essay touches, amongst other things, on the unknowable sources such as the numerous lost fresco cycles from the Trecento, including the stories of Attila in Milan, and Christine de Pisan's famous painted room of the deeds of the great, modeled on fourteenth-century Lombard and Veneto mural cycles.

Joanne Anderson's contribution is solidly anchored in the north and centres on a little known fresco cycle in Seefeld in the Tyrol, demonstrating how Trecento models from both north and south of the Alps were sought after even in remote and relatively isolated regions. The Paduan painter Guariento di Arpo, who grew up with Giotto's Arena Chapel in his gaze, emerges as a key source some seventy years after the execution of his cycle of the life of Saints Philip, James the Less and Augustine of Hippo in the Eremitani. Indeed, Guariento furnished the anonymous northern master of Seefeld with novel architectural settings to convey the passage of time. Aside from this discovery, her essay reminds us that fourteenth-century miracles, relics and reliquaries also had a significant impact on later cults and their subsequent depictions. The survival of the 'whole' Trecento should therefore come under closer scrutiny.

By turning our attention to Rome as does Gerardo da Simone, we discover that its two most noteworthy fifteenth-century painters, Lorenzo da Viterbo and Antoniazio Romano, were no different from their northern cousins. They too relied

on the Trecento for perspectival tricks and iconographic schemes, but whereas the first painter opted for Siena as a model, the second relied on Florence, and particularly the earlier part of the century.

Like Sez nec, some of our authors have interpreted the deliberate insistence on the Trecento by patrons and painters as persistence. The patrons are deemed to be critically important for the choice of models (of materials, composition or typologies), particularly in the essays of Fabio Massaccesi and Zuleika Murat. The works they address in Padua and Bologna are remarkable for their complex fictive architectonic spaces, which are evidently more intricate than Seefeld. Whilst in Padua the spatial experiments are appreciated by jurists, politicians, diplomats, poets and possibly the Augustinian Hermits, in the Bolognese case study we are indebted to the intervention of the local Franciscans. Such diversity suggests to me that the interest in the Trecento could be fairly mainstream.

Patterns do emerge as to what fourteenth-century features were particularly attractive and occasionally we discover why. In Padua as Murat reminds us, Michele Savonarola praised no fewer than five Trecento painters' use of perspective: Giotto, Guariento, Giusto de' Menabuoi, Altichiero and Jacopo Avanzi. In other cases, however, the relationship with the previous century could be quite complex and the motives more difficult to unravel. During the remodelling of an altarpiece for the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena (as Gabriele Fattorini informs us) a predella by Sano di Pietro was commissioned to complement a pentaptych by Simone Martini. We do not know whether Sano was chosen precisely because his trademark look would not create a disjuncture with the companion piece, or whether the upper 'older' areas were valued for devotional reasons.

Overall, these essays confirm that numerous fifteenth-century artists and patrons did not hesitate to look back to the Trecento and even earlier, to what was projected from Giorgio Vasari onward as a distant age not worthy of attention. This survival questions the more traditional and widely accepted historiographic *caesurae*, in particular regarding the origins of the Renaissance in the Quattrocento and the extent of its break with the previous century. Moreover, the authors challenge the notion that a revival of the Trecento during the fifteenth century was incompatible with antiquarianism. It is hoped that these six essays will encourage further research on the survival and reception of the Trecento in other territories and historical moments.

- 1 J. Seznec, *La survivance des dieux antiques. Essai sur le rôle de la tradition mythologique dans l'humanisme et dans l'art de la Renaissance*, London, 1940; revised edition translated as *The Survival of the Pagan Gods. The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, New York, 1953.