

Bilddatenbank: Glossar 1.1

Stand: 13.01.2026

Attributes

	Attributes	Explanation
Krückstock/ Stab	Crutch/ Staff	<p>The crutch, or staff, is a frequently encountered attribute in the images contained in this database, appearing even in the earliest depictions of Saint Anthony. Initially, the staff seems to have been a hermit's staff, well suited to the aged figure of the Desert Father. With the foundation of the Antonite Order, this hermit's staff appears to have been fitted with a Tau-Cross, and sometimes assumed the form of a crutch. An analysis of the images thus reveals a wide spectrum of different types of staffs and crutches, which the saint is sometimes shown leaning upon or which lie beside him. In certain cases, a sick person is depicted leaning on a crutch, here, the effects of Saint Anthony's Fire on the sufferer's hands and feet are often visible.</p> <p>Because the staff and the crutch cannot always be clearly distinguished, particularly when the staff does have the shape of a Tau-Cross, they have been classified as a single attribute.</p> <p>Literature: Ekkart Sauser, Antonius Abbas (der Große), Stern der Wüste, Vater der Mönche, in: Wolfgang Braunfels (Hg.): Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie 5, Freiburg 1994, cols. 206–218.</p> <p>(Rebecca Hoppe)</p>
Feuer	Fire	To be added
Buch	Book	To be added
Kranke	Sick	To be added
Pilger	Pilgrim	To be added

Votivgaben	votive offerings	<p>Within the database are numerous examples of votive offerings, most commonly in the form of hands or feet. These are frequently affixed to a building in the background or suspended from a cord or string positioned in the upper section of the image. Such votive offerings were presented by the faithful to God or to a saint in fulfilment of a vow, either to seek assistance in a time of distress or to express gratitude for a favour already granted. Depictions of organs and body parts, like arms, feet, eyes, or lungs, as well as objects associated with particular ailments function as indicators of the location of an injury or the seat and nature of a disease.</p> <p>Literature: Toni Durrer, Votivbrauchtum und Medizin in der Innerschweiz, in: Historischer Verein Zentralschweiz (ed.): <i>Der Geschichtsfreund: Mitteilungen des Historischen Vereins Zentralschweiz</i> 135 (1982), pp. 5–87. (Rebecca Hoppe)</p>
Hände	Hands	<p>The most common votive offerings depicted in the images of the database consist of hands and feet, unsurprising when one considers that the disease known as Saint Anthony's Fire in particular caused the limbs of the afflicted to decay and perish.</p> <p>Literature: Hans-Georg Enzenroß, <i>Das Antoniusfeuer. Die Geschichte einer vergessenen Krankheit</i>, in: <i>Beiträge zu Kultur, Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> 41 (2018), pp. 106–113. (Rebecca Hoppe)</p>
Füße	Feet	<p>The most common votive offerings depicted in the images of the database consist of hands and feet, unsurprising when one considers that the disease known as Saint Anthony's Fire in particular caused the limbs of the afflicted to decay and perish.</p> <p>Literature: Hans-Georg Enzenroß, <i>Das Antoniusfeuer. Die Geschichte einer vergessenen Krankheit</i>, in: <i>Beiträge</i></p>

		zu Kultur, Geschichte und Gegenwart 41 (2018), pp. 106–113. (Rebecca Hoppe)
Dämonen	Demons	<p>Demons are a common occurrence in our data, as they are a staple of the pictures depicting the temptation of Saint Anthony. They are depicted as women and mythical beasts or monsters. Anthony is said to have encountered a variety of temptations throughout his eremitic life in the Egyptian desert.</p> <p>Literature: Peter Gemeinhardt, Antonius. Der erste Mönch. Leben – Lehre – Legende, München 2013, pp. 182–196.</p> <p>Heinrich Trebbin, Sankt Antonius. Geschichte, Kult und Kunst, Frankfurt am Main 1994.</p> <p>Otto Westheider/Michael Philipp (eds.), Schrecken und Lust, Die Versuchung des heiligen Antonius von Hieronymus Bosch bis Max Ernst, Hamburg 2008.</p> <p>(Nathalie J. A. Schmidt)</p>
Schwein	Pig	<p>The pig is a very common attribute of Saint Anthony. It does not relate to Anthony's <i>vita</i>, but can be directly traced to a privilege of the Order of Saint Anthony: they were allowed to freely raise pigs in towns and cities, which had to be provided for by the general public. Often, they would receive piglets as donations. Those pigs were usually marked with a bell and a Tau cross, which is reflected in our data.</p> <p>Literature: Laura Fenelli, Pigs in Medieval Cities: Saint Anthony's Unusual Attribute, in: Alice M. Choyke/Gerhard Jaritz, Animaltown. Beasts in Medieval Urban Space, Oxford 2017, pp. 52–58.</p> <p>(Nathalie J. A. Schmidt)</p>
Totenschädel	Skull	<p>The skull is a motif for the common trope of <i>Memento mori</i> (remember that you have to die). It serves as a reminder of the inevitability of death. Sometimes it can be found with other common motifs of the trope, e.g. an</p>

		hourglass. but in almost all of our examples, the skull is found in close proximity to a <u>→ book</u> . (Nathalie J. A. Schmidt)
Hahn	rooster	The rooster is not very common according to our present data, but it appears in a prominent example: The Isenheim altarpiece (no. 272). There, and in another example, a rooster is featured among the offerings brought to Saint Anthony. There are several possible interpretations, it might, for example, signify a repentant sinner. (Nathalie J. A. Schmidt)
Rosenkranz	rosary	To be added
Heiligenschein	nimbus	To be added
Kreuz	cross	To be added
Kruzifix	crucifix	To be added
Tau	Tau	To be added

Surrounding area

	Surrounding area	Explanation
Gebäudekomplex	complex of buildings	
Vegetation	vegetation	
Zaun	fence	
Wald	forest	
Berge	mountains	
Wüste	desert	
Wiese	meadow	
Gebäude	building	
Höhle	cave	
Wolken	clouds	
Kirche	church	
Stadt	city	
Bäume	trees	
Fluss	river	
Säule	pillar	
Gewässer	bodies of water	
Küste	coast	
Ruine	ruin	
See	lake	
Bett	bed	
Thron	throne	