

K0007 - Examination summary, 1990

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
PAINTING CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

EXAMINATION SUMMARY June 5, 1990

Antonio Vivarini
St. Apollonia Destroys a Pagan Idol
Tempera/panel
1939.1.1 (118) Samuel H. Kress Collection

DIMENSIONS: H.: 59.4 cm (23 3/8") W.: 34.7 cm (13 5/8")

SUMMARY

The painting is on a single poplar panel with vertical grain. The shape has been altered to a rounded arch with a squared-off top. There is evidence in the configuration of the scene that the panel originally terminated in a pointed ogive curve, as seen in Antonio's *The Resurrection of a Female Saint at Sassano da Gropo*. The remains of an originally-unpainted wooden border, visible in the x-radiograph, are covered by fill and overpaint. A cradle with eight fixed vertical and nine horizontal members is attached to the verso of the panel. The x-radiograph reveals extensive worm tunneling, and the picture surface is bumpy and irregular. The smooth surface of the gesso is inscribed to mark the ladder, the balcony, and the arches of the architecture under the balcony. The underdrawing, executed on the gesso prior to paint application, is revealed by infrared reflectography. The contours and placement of light and shade are described with a liquid material used in single lines, cross-hatching, and parallel hatching. Some slight changes are observable from the drawn to painted stages, especially at Apollonia's knee. The gesso has worm exit holes and cupped crepeforms that is predominantly horizontal. The paint has smooth, thin layers except where deep color was desired, giving the layers a thickness which protrudes slightly from the surface plane. Small brushes were used, blending adjacent strokes but leaving small gaps between compositional elements. The paint is badly shaded. The features are reinforced, as are many of the linear elements which define parts of their anatomy. A deeply discolored green layer over the greens may be discolored copper resinates. The outer 2.5-3.0 cm of the top portion of the panel is repainted. The numerous small loss areas are sketched on the accompanying photo-copy and are visible in the infrared reflectogram as dark spots in light areas, white spots in dark areas. The glazes and reinforcements are not visible in the reflectogram. The picture is varnished, with a variable matt and gloss surface. It is estimated that the lower varnish is a natural resin, the upper layer is synthetic. The upper varnish is toned with black.

CONSTRUCTION

The picture is on a wooden support, analyzed by Michael

IDENTIFIER

DOC14334

ARCHIVAL ITEM TYPE

Conservation Report

CREATOR

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

DATE

1990

CITATION

National Gallery of Art, Painting Conservation Department Records

1 RELATED ART OBJECT

K7

Giovanni d'Alema

Saint Apollonia Destroys a Pagan Idol

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

RECORD LINK

KRESS COLLECTION DIGITAL ARCHIVE

<https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/archival/DOC14334>