

LAYERS OF TECHNIQUE AND INTERVENTION

GIOVANNI BARONZIO'S CRUCIFIXION: TECHNIQUE, MATERIALS AND INTERVENTIONS

The technical examination of Giovanni Baronzio's, also known as Giovanni da Rimini, Crucifixion, dated in the second quarter of the 14th century concentrated on: (1) the identification of the original materials and techniques, (2) the evaluation of the work's state of preservation, and, (3) the integration of non-destructive analytical techniques to study its complex history of interventions.

The application of X-Ray Radiography (XRR), Digital microscopy, Ultraviolet (UV) and Infrared (IR) imaging, Fiber-Optics Reflectance Spectroscopy (FORS), Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) and X-Ray Fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF), Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) provided a comprehensive technical study of the small in size painting (45,4 x 26,9). Results confirmed the consistency of original pigments with those used by Italian Renaissance artists on panel paintings: lead white, earth pigments, cinnabar, minium, carbon and iron black, copper green and blue, gold leaf as well as the use of the estofado technique (the artist scratches through a paint layer to reveal another layer of contrasting color or material). The wooden surface was prepared with a thick layer of calcite. Furthermore, results identified three major phases of intervention such as retouching and overpainting due to the deterioration of large areas of the original composition.



LIGHT ON THE MATERIALITY OF EL GRECO



Advanced technical imaging has allowed APAC Labs to literally shed new light on the most intriguing aspect of the work of El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos): his artistic development and transformation as he travelled between Crete, Italy and finally Spain during the 1560s and 1570s. Utilizing imaging techniques like Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), research work focused on a series of early works by El Greco to address the artist's growing sensibility to the material qualities of painting surfaces as a means to facilitate iconographic narrative.

In collaboration with museums and collections, the study of works like the Herakleion Baptism, the Syros Dormition, the Herakleion View of Mt Sinai, Benaki Museum's St. Luke painting the Virgin and the Visitation of the Magi, among others, addressed the materiality of the great master's art, issues of his technique and artistic development, the identification of pigments, as well as aspects related to the works' conservation.

Ever evolving as an artist, El Greco experimented with materials and used the application of color pigment and moulding brush strokes to animate his paintings, manipulate the reflection of light and thus emphasize the visual narrative of his works.

