



MADONNA AND CHILD WITH SAINTS

ART-HISTORICAL NOTES AND RESTORATION

Dated 31 July 1481 (1481 DIE VLTIMA IVLII) and formerly attributed to Vittore Crivelli, the polyptych is of the highest technical and formal quality, suggesting that both the conception of the scene and the execution of the figures should be attributed to Carlo. The face of St Silvester, identifiable by comparing him with the figure of the same name in the Massa Fermana polyptych of 1468, seems to be a mirror image of that of St Peter in the Brera Pinacoteca, a fragment of a triptych painted by Carlo for the Church of St Dominic in Camerino (1482). This is not to rule out a role, albeit a minor one, for the less talented of the two brothers in working with Carlo on the polyptych for the Church of St Martin in Monte San Martino (Macerata) painted in the same period.

Although it has been partly tampered with and lost some elements of its poplar-wood structure and its elaborate lime-wood frame, the paintings of the polyptych preserve mostly intact all the elements which help us to make an almost certain attribution.

In its rigorous technique, everything has been executed to a high standard of craftsmanship, from the choice of materials to the various carefully performed phases of the execution, which contributes to endowing the subject and hence the picture with vigour.

The drawing is the body and structure of the painted surface and it described an infinite number of details.

A wide range of pigments has been used, such as the indigo which can be a preparatory base, a component of different applications, and also a light final glaze applied when the picture had already been mounted in its frame.

Freed from the heavy paints which used to darken it, the surfaces reveal themselves and regain their proper balance with the frame, thanks to a new and more suitable system of assembly.

Reflectography highlights a very rich preparatory drawing, highly detailed in its shading and St Jerome's anatomical features, such as the expressive lines on his face and the rendering of his hair, beard, and eyes. The fabric of his cloak, finely and more lightly drawn than his flesh, displays a very high level of detail. A pen was used to create the preparatory drawing and the shading. An examination by false colour infrared reading also testifies to the work's high technical quality. The damask cloth placed behind the figure of the Madonna displays a pink colouring which becomes more intense in the upper portion due to the presence of pigments such as indigo.