

ROGERS ART CONSERVATION, LLC
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CONSERVATION TREATMENT REPORT

Altar Painting - "Resurrection" by Cesare Porta
St. Mary's Catholic Church
95 Hasell Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Submitted by:
Catherine Rogers

January 24, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PRE-TREATMENT CONDITION OF PAINTING
2. CONSERVATION TREATMENT PROCEDURES
 - Removal of Surface Grime, Old Varnish and Previous Overpaint
 - Application of Isolating Varnish
 - Filling and Inpainting of Losses and Abrasions
 - Application of Finishing Varnish
3. CONSERVATION DOCUMENTATION

1. PRE-TREATMENT CONDITION OF PAINTING

The entire canvas dimensions are approximately (H x W): 150" x 69-1/4'. The canvas is a simple twill weave of a medium to heavy weight linen. Slubs and nubs are visible in the canvas with irregular threads that appear thicker. Cuts in the canvas are visible in the following areas: upper head of Christ/halo/background; Christ's drapery to right of Christ; "V" shaped cut in Angel's green drapery; around all three soldiers; and around helmet in lower, right corner.

An off-white/beige ground layer covers the canvas. The paint layer appeared to be consistent with oil paint medium and was applied in a thin to moderate thickness. Some paint losses are noted in the paint layer around the tacks and along the canvas cuts after the cleaning process. Otherwise, the paint layer was generally well adhered to the ground layer and remained stable and securely attached during the cleaning process.

Minimum areas of delamination or detachment of the canvas from the wall support were also noted. Thirty six tacks were also used in the attachment of the canvas to the plaster substrate wall in the areas where the canvas was cut. Scattered areas of convex bulges in the canvas are the result of excess glue and/or plaster between the canvas and the wall support.

A heavy layer of grime along with discolored varnish layers and areas of extensive previous restoration work mars the original surface of the painting. At least two different campaigns of overpaint on the original surface of the painting were noted. The surface coatings over the original paint surface typically followed a layering of grime, discolored varnish, overpaint, grime, discolored varnish, overpaint (older and more tenacious to remove than upper overpaint layer). The varnish layer is bloomed (more opaque and whitish coloring) in appearance due to moisture and the old restoration appears darker in appearance than the original paint.

2. CONSERVATION TREATMENT PRACTICES

Removal of the Surface Grime, Old Varnish and Previous Overpaint

The grime and old varnish layers were removed with an organic solvent mixture of acetone and mineral spirits and aqueous cleaning solution (2% solution of Tri-ammonium citrate, buffered to pH 7.0). The tenacious oil overpaint was removed with methylene chloride gel and citric acid gel. Areas of gel cleaning were cleared using a mixture of acetone and mineral spirits.

Under the previously overpainted areas, we noted abrasion in scattered areas of the painting, usually in dark passages such as the shadows and adjacent to the previously cut areas in the canvas. This abrasion in some areas could be the result of sandpaper use in past restorations.

An artist's signature executed in tan paint was uncovered in the lower left corner and reads, "C. Porta fecit". Some other marks are noted in the area below the signature also executed in the same tan paint but their meaning could not be deciphered. The gold leaf border on the face of the painting was removed under the artist's signature to determine if the gold leaf border was original to the execution of the painting. A painted tan border was discovered under the gold leaf border and appears to be contiguous with the original paint layer and indicates that the gold leaf border was added at a later time. This area was documented with digital images and then repainted with gold paint.

Application of Isolating Varnish

After the cleaning process, a varnish layer of Acryloid B-72 dissolved in hydrocarbon solvent (xylene) was applied by brush on the surface of the painting as an isolating layer.

Filling and Inpainting of Losses and Abrasions

Any losses of canvas (tack holes and canvas cuts) and paint layer losses were filled with a reversible vinyl fill material using a micro spatula, careful not to cover any of the original painting. The previously cut canvas areas were filled with reversible vinyl fill material and microcrystalline wax where needed, with care not to cover any original painting. In areas where the old fill was too high, the excess was removed mechanically with a scalpel. Any paint losses were inpainted with Gamblin Conservation Colors, pigments mixed with Aldehyde resin.

Application of Finishing Varnish

After the inpainting was completed, the painting was brush varnished with UVS matte varnish (Regalez 1094), a synthetic varnish that would not discolor or change in solubility over time.

Conservation Team:

Catherine Rogers of Rogers Art Conservation, LLC

Craig Crawford of Crawford Conservation, Inc.

Project Date: January 10, 2022 - January 24, 2022

3. CONSERVATION DOCUMENTATION



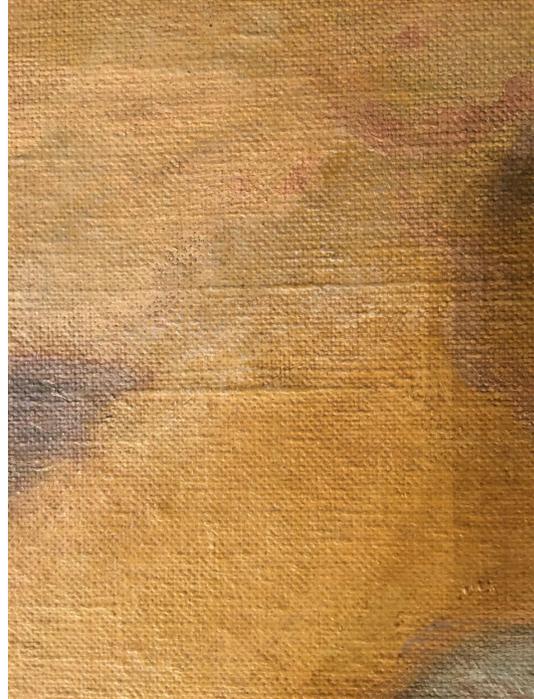
Before Treatment



After Treatment



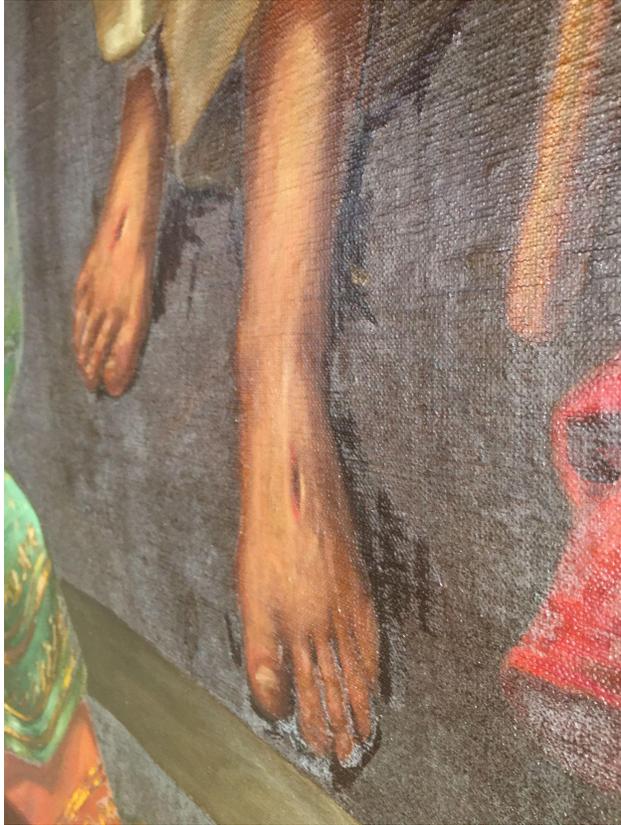
Detail of Cuts in Canvas and Tacks



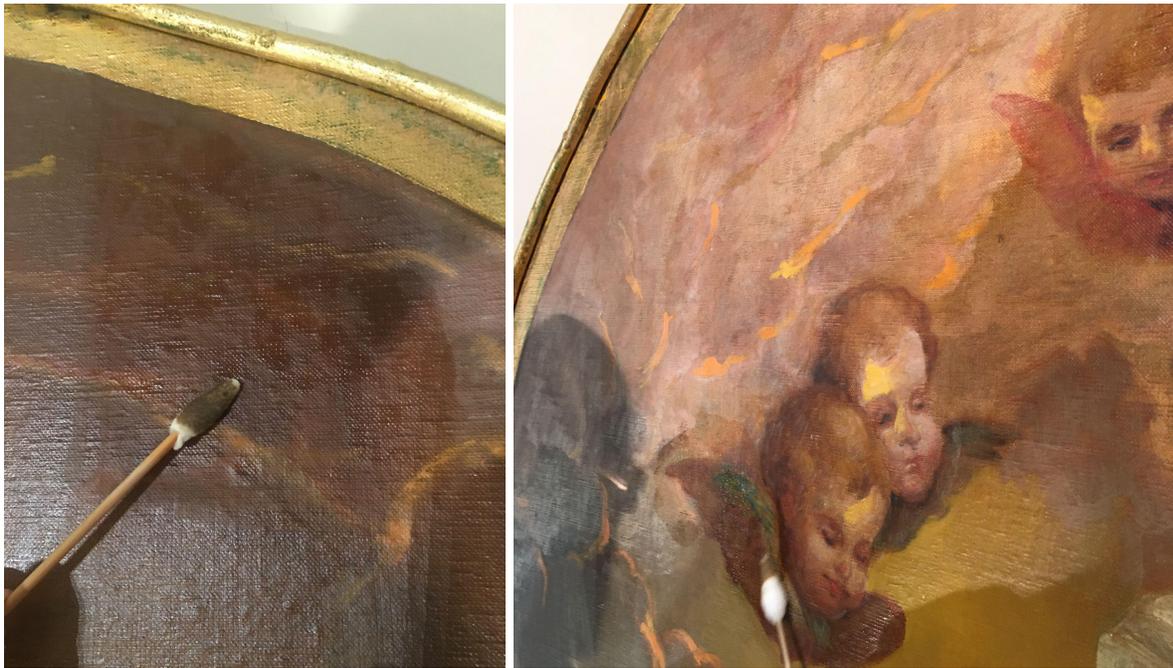
Detail of Canvas Weave



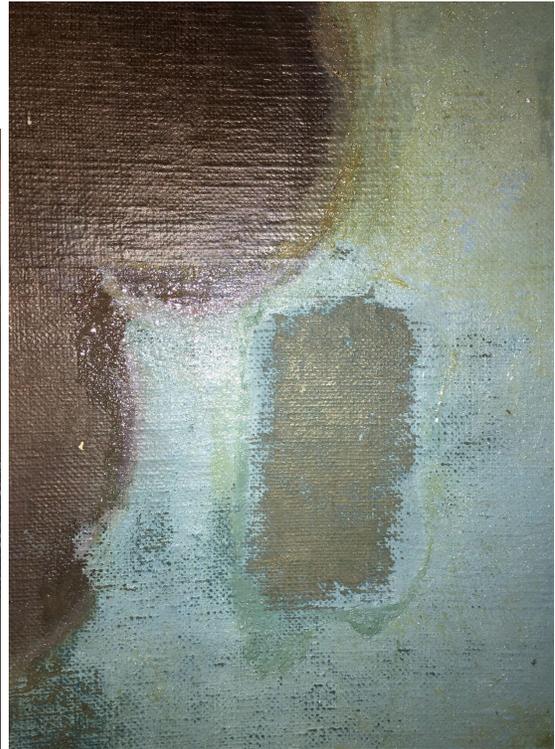
During Treatment, Detail of Damage (possible sanding) around old canvas cuts



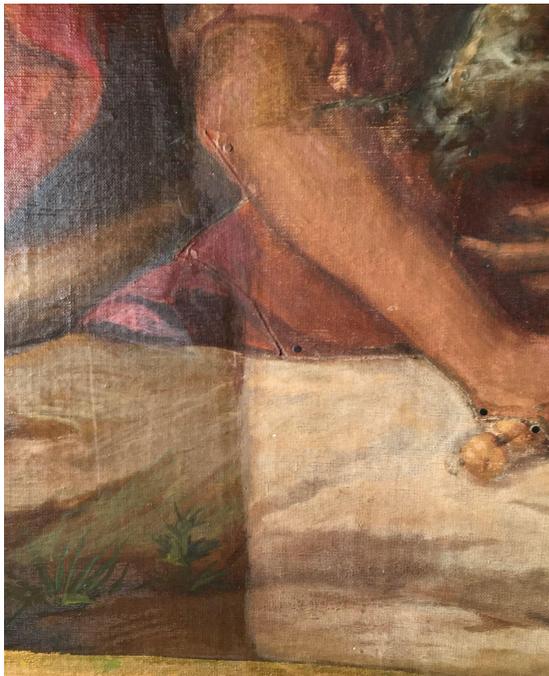
Bloom in Varnish Layer and Darkened Overpaint around Christ's Feet



Details of Grime and Varnish Removal



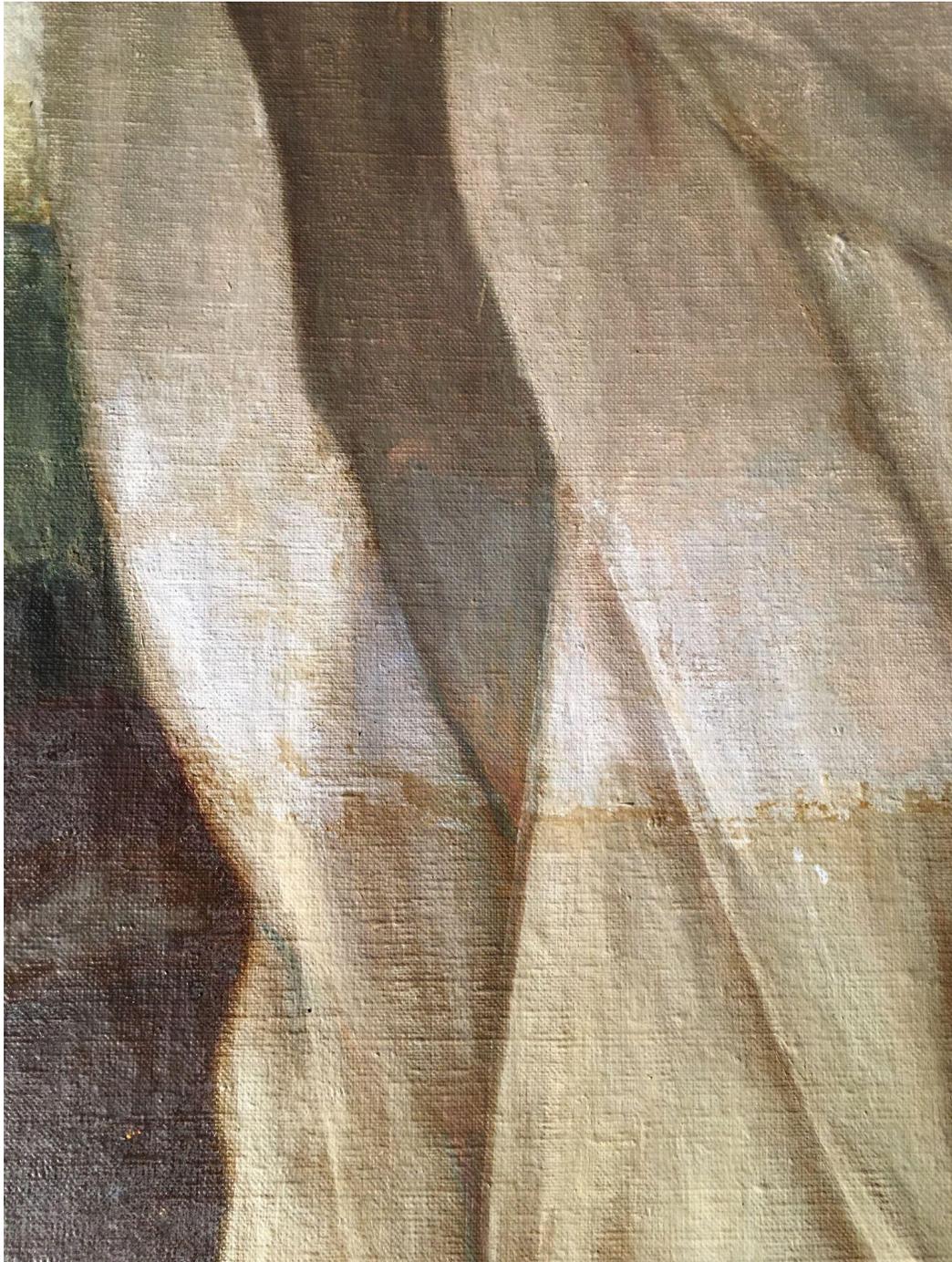
Details of Overpaint Removal



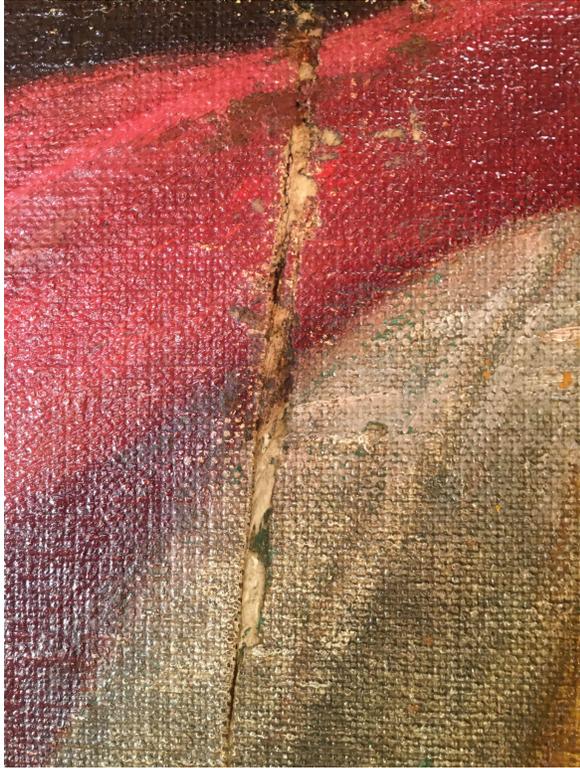
During Cleaning



Grime and Discolored Varnish Residue



During Cleaning: upper section has most of grime, varnish and overpaint removed; middle section has grime and varnish removed but “white” overpaint remains; lower section is not yet cleaned.



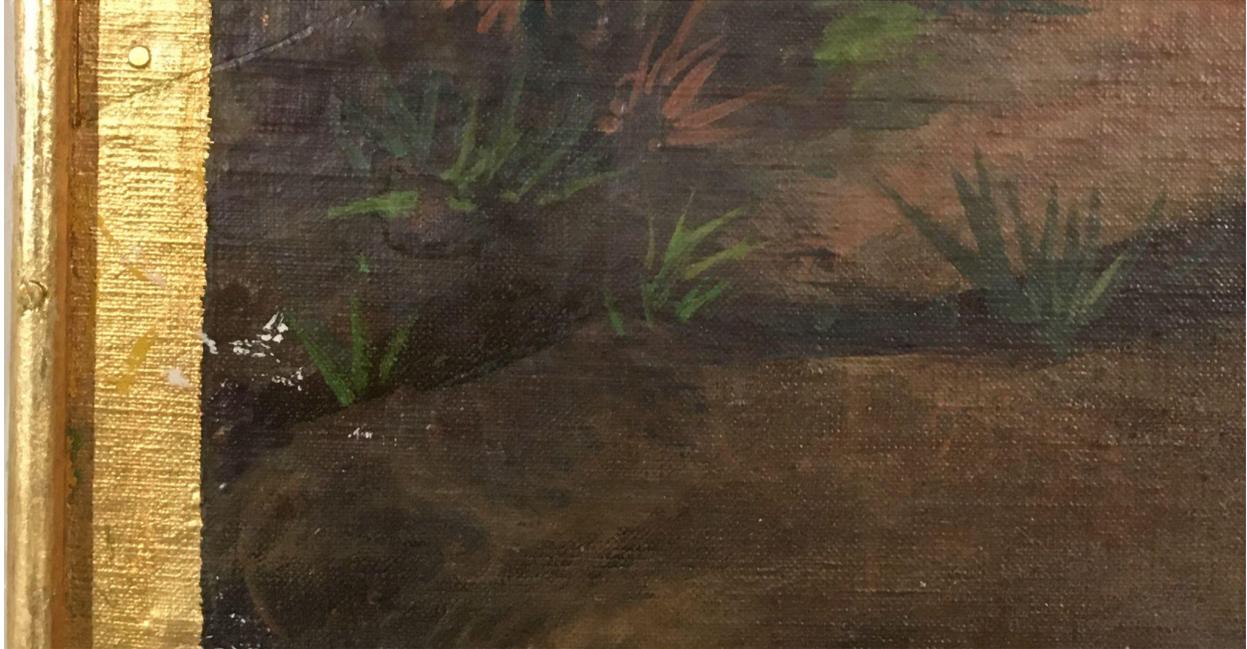
Cut in canvas with old fill material



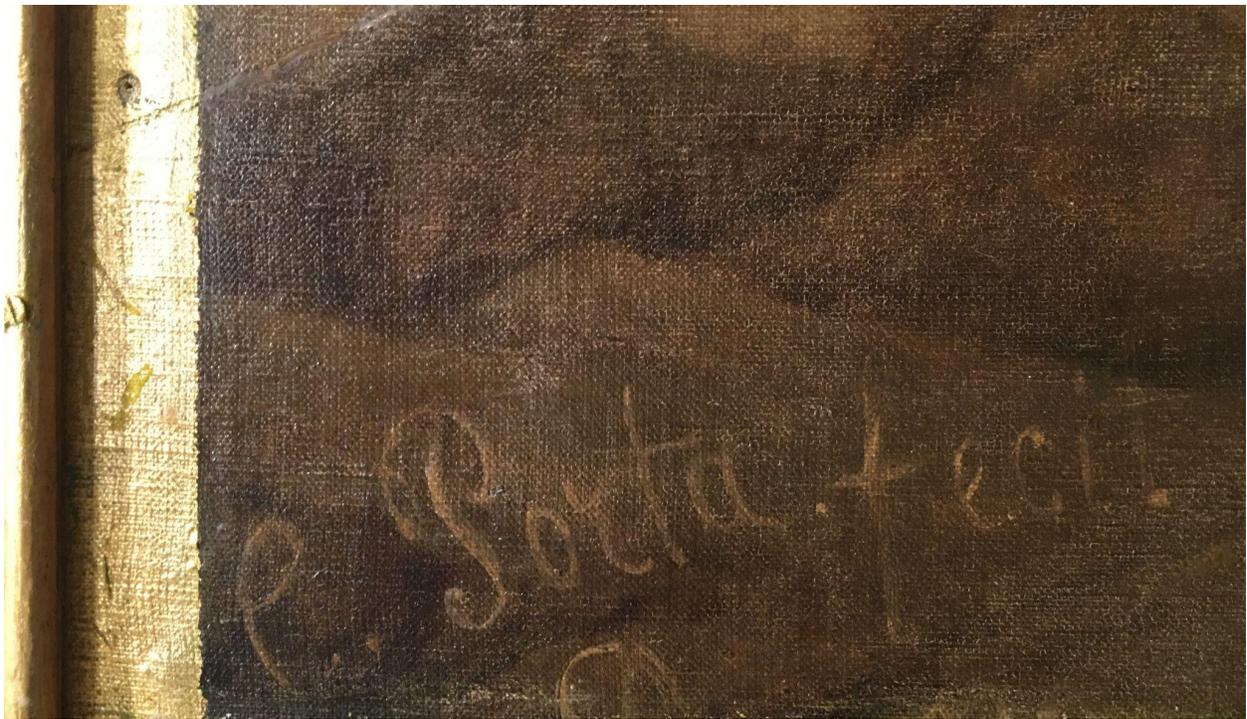
Gold border area around perimeter removed to expose brown paint border



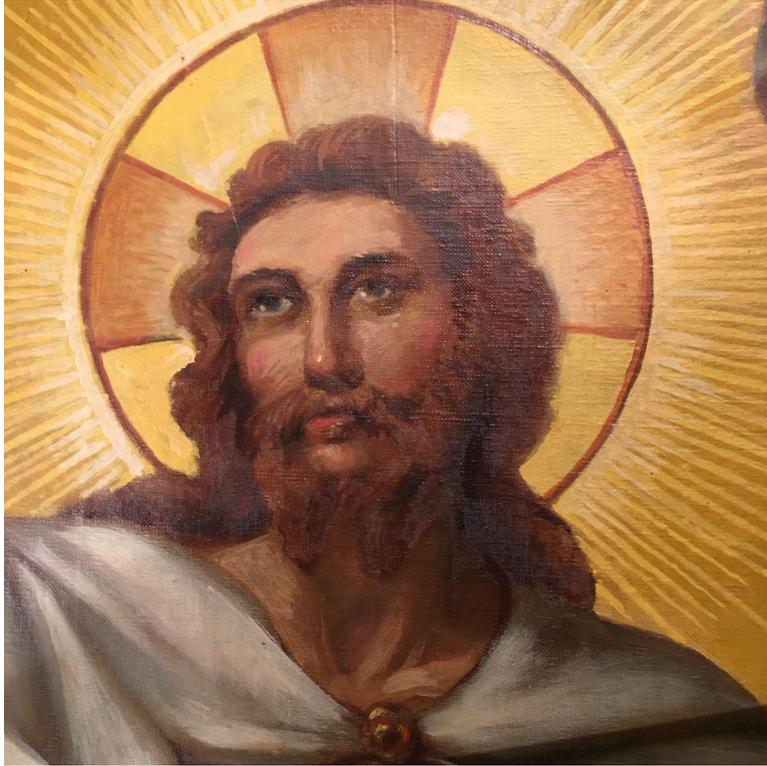
Before, During and After Treatment Detail of Angel



Before Treatment Detail of Lower Left Corner



After Treatment Detail of Lower Left Corner with Artist's Signature Revealed



Before Treatment, Detail of Christ



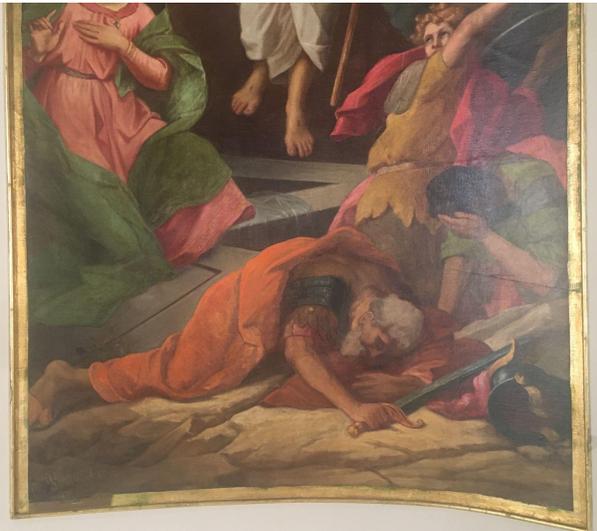
After Treatment, Detail of Christ



Before Treatment, Detail with Overpaint



After Treatment, Detail



Before Treatment

After Treatment