

Shedding Light on an Eyckian Virgin: The Infrared Reflectography of The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*

This paper presents a brief interpretation of the infrared reflectography of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* housed in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. In particular, the work's *pentimenti*, additive painting technique and underdrawing are discussed. Comparisons are made with the previous technical analysis of the work and of other works in the Van Eyck group. The analysis of the work in the 1950s which described its technique as un-Eyckian was limited by the available technology and characterised by an inconsistent interpretation of Eyckian underdrawing style and painting technique. Infrared reflectography (IRR) reveals that aspects of the work's technique are consistent with aspects of Van Eyck's technique revealed by the IRR analysis of a number of his uncontested works. Conclusions regarding the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child's* much contested attribution are not possible on the basis of IRR alone. However, this analysis presents new findings about the work's technique on which to base a revised assessment of its attribution.

In 1999 this author undertook a Master of Arts degree by research at The University of Melbourne addressing the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child's* provenance, critical reception, scientific analysis, execution, composition, iconography and relationship to the works of the Van Eyck group and other versions of the composition.¹ As part of this research a request was made to the National Gallery of Victoria Paintings Conservation department to undertake the first IRR scans of the work. In the same year Professor Jaynie Anderson, Herald Chair of Fine Arts at The University of Melbourne, helped provide some of Australia's major art galleries, including the National Gallery of Victoria, with IRR equipment through an Australian Government grant.² The first scans of the work were made in September 1999 and a complete assembly was provided to the author in February 2000 (fig. 1).³ The latter assembly is the basis of this, the first interpretation of the work's IRR. Unfortunately, certain parts of the assembly in the area of the

¹ H. Hudson, *Re-examining Van Eyck: A New Analysis of the Ince Hall Virgin and Child*, Master of Arts thesis, School of Fine Arts, Classical Studies and Archaeology, The University of Melbourne, 2001.

² Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Research Infrastructure Equipment Facilities grant.

³ National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, inv. no. 1275/3, 26.3 x 19.4 cm. The IRR scans and assemblies were made in the National Gallery of Victoria Paintings Conservation Department by Michael Varcoe-Cocks, Conservator of Painting, using a Hamamatsu C2741 infrared vidicon camera and a Macintosh computer.

Virgin's mantle are slightly unfocussed and one area on the side of the chest facing the viewer is very dark, for unknown reasons. Nevertheless, new information about the underlying paint layers is now apparent which was not revealed by the infrared photography or x-radiography carried out under the direction of Paul Coremans during the work's scientific analysis in 1957-8, conducted at the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique in Brussels with the assistance of the National Gallery, London.⁴

Coremans was renowned for his technical analysis of Hubert and Jan van Eyck's works and was well placed to undertake the analysis of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*. He edited the 1953 publication presenting the results of the analysis of the Van Eycks' *Ghent altarpiece* conducted by a team of specialists under his directorship. In the publication, Paul Philippot wrote of the work's underdrawing:

...le dessin préparatoire révèle l'artiste en pleine création. Libre et spontané comme une écriture, il est beaucoup moins poussé qu'on ne le croit d'ordinaire. Bien des détails n'y figurent qu'à titre provisoire, comme le prouve la liberté qui sera prise à leur égard au moment de peindre. Dans les figures, très peu ou point de modelé en grisaille, mais presque toujours un clair-obscur largement esquissé en hachures au pinceau (Pl. III 2). De toute évidence, le dessin n'est jamais un camaïeu tyrannique qu'il reste à colorier, mais bien plutôt la mise en place générale de la composition, comparable à la sinopie des fresques médiévales. Certains motifs, d'ailleurs, ont probablement été peints alors que le dessin en était déjà caché par un ton de fond (Pl. LI).⁵

This assessment of Eyckian underdrawing could still be considered valid today. It is therefore surprising that Coremans' analysis of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*, co-authored by his colleagues Albert Philippot and Renée Sneyers, of only a few years later, adopted a quite different set of standards:

Une composition picturale flamand est supportée par un dessin précis. C'est à l'intérieur des forms limitées par celui-ci que le maître applique les diverses couches de couleurs, suivant

⁴ A revised précis of the 1957-8 technical analysis was published in U. Hoff and M. Davies, *The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Les Primitifs Flamands, I. Corpus de la peinture des anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux au quinzième siècle*, 12, Brussels, 1971, pp. 29-50.

⁵ P. Philippot, "Vision et exécution Eyckiennes", in P. Coremans (ed.), *L'Agneau Mystique au laboratoire: Examen et traitement, Les Primitifs Flamands, III, Contributions à l'étude des Primitifs Flamands*, 2, Antwerp, 1953, pp. 95-6, quoted with permission of the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique.

*une structure et des matériaux que constituent un constante et ce malgré les variants de détails d'artiste à artiste. Ce n'est nullement le cas ici: on n'entrevoit nulle trace de dessin précis, et les couches colorées sous-jacentes débordent parfois largement des formes limitées en surface. C'est le cas en plusieurs endroits et notamment pour le vert sous-jacent du baldachin que l'on retrouve sous le fond brunâtre. Ces constatations font penser à une imitation en surface.*⁶

However, IRR sheds new light on the technique of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*, providing evidence for a different interpretation than Coremans', Phillipot's and Sneyers' one. The green paint of the baldachin which became visible through losses in the brownish paint of the back wall after the cleaning of the work, was not the result of the artist loosely applying paint in a superficial imitation of an Eyckian composition. IRR shows a clear change in the composition which infrared photography had not.⁷ In an early stage of the execution of the work the artist painted two bundled curtains hanging from the front corners of the baldachin, one on each side, apparently using the same copper green paint as was used for the baldachin and cloth of honour (figs 1 and 2).⁸ Judging from the shadow visible in the IRR on the right side of the left bundled curtain, the execution had reached an advanced stage, possibly of glazing with copper resinate.⁹ Similar bundled curtains are represented in many fifteenth century miniatures and panel

⁶ P. Coremans, A. Phillipot and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, [1958], p. 7, unpublished, Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique file, quoted with permission of the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique.

⁷ The bundled curtains are not visible in the infrared photograph presumably because infrared photography could not sufficiently penetrate the grey paint of the back wall, which includes black, with which the curtains were overpainted.

⁸ U. Hoff and M. Davies, 1971, p. 30. The green paint of the baldachin was identified as malachite in the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique's reports. However, in view of the prevailing tendency at the Institut in the 1950s to identify a copper green pigment as malachite without specific testing (see: J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer's comments in B. Heller and L.P. Stodulski, "Recent Scientific Investigation of the Detroit Saint Jerome", in M. Ainsworth (ed.) *Petrus Christus in Renaissance Bruges: an interdisciplinary approach*, New York/Turnhout, 1995, p. 147) the description "copper green" might be more reliable.

⁹ For the identification of a copper resinate layer in the green paint of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* see: F.I.G. Rawlins, R.J. Plesters, and M. Hey, *Report from Mr F.I.G. Rawlins, National Gallery Laboratory, London: Examination of samples from the Van Eyck (?) "Virgin and Child" in the collection of the Melbourne Art Gallery*, 15 May 1958, p. 3, unpublished, National Gallery of Victoria Library.

paintings.¹⁰ The miniature *Jean Miélot in his study* (*Le Miroir de la salvation humaine*, Flemish, late fifteenth century, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Fr. 6275, fol. 96v.) shows how the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* baldachin might have looked in an early stage of its execution.¹¹ The inclusion of the curtains would have made the Virgin's setting more regal, however, they would have interrupted the direct relationship between the viewer and the Virgin and Child. By painting out the curtains the artist brought the viewer into a more direct visual relationship with the Virgin and Child, an arrangement appropriate for a small panel painting evidently intended for personal devotion.

Jan van Eyck (subsequent references to Van Eyck mean Jan) painted out details of his compositions in a number of his works.¹² A previously uncited example of this practice was found by this author in the *Lucca Virgin and Child* housed in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt. The Institut kindly provided the image illustrated here (fig. 3). The IRR assembly shows that Van Eyck painted a figure of a bearded young man below the rear, left lion on the Virgin's throne. This figure was painted over with the gothic niche and cornice on the throne in the final paint layers.

A major *pentimento* in the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* which was observed in the 1958 x-radiography and which was also interpreted as evidence of poor execution, may be viewed differently in the light of the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his wife*, published by the National Gallery, London in 1995. The x-radiography of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* made in 1958¹³ clearly shows the top surface of the window alcove painted in an x-ray absorbent pigment,

¹⁰ C. Eisler ("What Takes Place In The Getty Annunciation?", *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts*, 6th Series, Vol. 111, 1998, pp. 199-200) mentioned a number of early Netherlandish panel paintings and miniatures in which bundled curtains are shown attached to various kinds of baldachins in the vicinity of the Virgin.

¹¹ Illustrated in E. Hall, *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage And The Enigma Of Van Eyck's Double Portrait*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1994, p. 85, figure 39.

¹² J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer and M. Fairies ("La *Vierge au Chancelier Rolin* de Van Eyck: examen au moyen de la réflectographie à l'infrarouge, *La Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 1990, p. 43) write that Van Eyck showed Rolin with a purse in the underdrawing of the *Rolin Virgin and Child*, however this does not appear in the final paint layers. E. Melanie Gifford ("Van Eyck's Washington Annunciation: Technical Evidence for Iconographical Development", *The Art Bulletin*, March 1999, Vol. LXXXI, No. 1, p. 112.) wrote that Van Eyck initially executed pilasters on the back wall in the underdrawing of the *Annunciation*, painted those out with a light tan paint layer embellished with red decorations, and then overpainted this layer with the roundels visible in the final paint layers.

¹³ Illustrated in U. Hoff and M. Davies, 1971, Plate L.

probably lead-white, or possibly lead-tin yellow based. In the final paint layer the top of the window was extended beyond the top of the picture plane. Of this *pentimento* Coremans, Philippot and Sneyers wrote:

*Au coin supérieur gauche du tableau à la fenêtre la radiographie (cf) décèle un changement de composition exécuté en pleine pâte, donné en cours d'exécution de l'oeuvre. De tels changements se retrouvent fréquemment dans les tableaux anciens et notamment dans ceux du XVe siècle flamand. Cependant dans ce cas, la modification apportée – soit l'écart vis-à-vis de la composition originale, en substance du dessin – à un sens plastique qui correspond à une vision améliorée de l'artiste. Ici, ce n'est nullement le cas comme en de nombreux autres endroits du tableau, le peintre a hésité fâcheusement pour arriver finalement à une perspective de piètre qualité; le base de la composition picturale – le dessin correct et précis – fait défaut à cet endroit comme d'ailleurs sur toute la surface du tableau.*¹⁴

It is interesting to compare their negative assessment of the *pentimento* in the window of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* with Rachel Billinge's and Lorne Campbell's assessment of the *pentimenti* in the window of Van Eyck's *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his wife* which are visible in IRR:

...there are changes in the architecture. The cross-bar in the window seems to have been drawn lower. The shutters on both sides were originally drawn to match the lower position of the cross-bar. The dark shadow in the reflectogram near the top of the window is more of a problem to interpret. The underdrawn lines run parallel to the painted ceiling joists and can be read as a continuation of the ceiling. This seems improbable since it would have made the ceiling lower and Arnolfini unusually tall. *It is more likely that the lower window required an area of blank wall above it meeting the ceiling joists in the region of the dark line which crosses the painted shutter, and that the bottom edge of the dark area marks the top of the drawn shutter [italics added].*¹⁵

In the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his wife* the windows on the left of the domestic rooms have been elevated in the paint layers beyond the top of the picture fields (figs 4 and 5). In the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* the artist showed the top of the window in

¹⁴ P. Coremans, A. Philippot and R. Sneyers, [1958], p. 8.

¹⁵ R. Billinge and L. Campbell, "The Infra-red Reflectograms of Jan van Eyck's Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his wife Giovanna Cenami (?)", *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, Vol. 16, 1995, p. 50.

the painting stage and then extended it beyond the top of the picture plane in the final paint layers and a similar change was made in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his wife*. In the latter work it is more difficult to verify whether such a change occurred between the underdrawing and painting stages or in the painting stage. This is because the x-radiograph of the latter work is difficult to read due to interference from x-ray absorbent material on the reverse of the panel.¹⁶ The significance of this correlation in the *pentimenti* of the two works is a matter for conjecture. However, taken together with the similarities in aspects of the two works' execution, compositions, iconography and the close dates in the signatures¹⁷ it may be hypothesised that the two works were executed in quick succession or concurrently, and that the *pentimento* in the earlier work was transferred to the later one or that the changes were made simultaneously. Alternatively, these correspondences may be a coincidence.

Other compositional changes are apparent in the IRR of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*. The area of the Virgin's mantle to the right of the opening on the carpet appears to have been executed initially folding over itself, but was executed in the final paint layers as a flat expanse. Other small folds of the mantle that are visible in the x-radiography directly above this area are not visible in the final paint layer, having been painted out. Some changes appear to have occurred between the drawing and the painting stages. The Infant's left hand appears to have been drawn with its fingers straight, however it was painted with its fingers curled. The Infant's right foot appears to have been painted a little higher than it was underdrawn. The area of carpet on the right appears to have been painted short of the underdrawn finishing point. The bottom of the rear bench support appears to have been adjusted downward a little. This may have occurred in the painting stage or between the drawing and the painting stages. The Virgin's jewelled collar seems to have been painted a fraction higher than it was underdrawn. The edge of the mantle appears to have been underdrawn a little closer to her body in the area of her lap and the shape of the edge may have been altered in the drawing stage as well. The folds of the mantle in the bottom left area appear not to follow the summary underdrawing. One change clearly occurred in the underdrawing stage. The area of the Virgin's robe where it is revealed between the edges of the mantle on the carpet first appeared in the underdrawing as a curved shape, but was altered to a small triangle between the sides of the mantle. This triangle was heavily hatched, perhaps to

¹⁶ L. Campbell, *The Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Schools*, London, 1998, p. 182.

¹⁷ For a fuller discussion of the correspondences between the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his wife* see: H. Hudson, 2001, pp. 69-72.

emphasise the change to the composition. In the painting stage the blue of the robe was painted to extend down beyond the small triangle area.

There is evidence for a partly additive painting technique in the IRR and the x-radiography of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*. Some details appear not to have been underdrawn and to have been painted over previously painted parts of the composition. IRR shows no underdrawing for the carafe on the bench. X-radiography also shows the left edge of the bench running across the area where the carafe is painted. This suggests that the carafe was painted over the completed bench. The appearance of the chest is difficult to interpret in the IRR, however, x-radiography shows a pale horizontal line bisecting the top of the chest, level with the height of the bench running across the back wall. The chest may have been painted over the completed bench. The light brown vertical member of the window frame may have been painted over the edge of the grey window reveal, as the IRR shows a dark area on the right half of the window frame possibly due to the admixture of black pigment in the paint of the wall over which the window frame may be painted. The edge of what may be a shutter attached by hinges to the wall outside the window was painted over the completed sky and the top of a tree, as seen through tiny losses in the paint layer, visible with the aid a microscope. It would not be surprising if this and other small features, such as the fruit on the windowsill, were executed in an additive painting technique.

The new evidence of numerous and major *pentimenti*, and to a lesser extent the evidence of an additive painting technique, alters existing notions of the relationship between the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* and other versions of the composition. The closest known variant of the composition is a panel painting referred to in the literature as the *Verdura Virgin and Child*¹⁸ (current location unknown¹⁹) judged to be a fifteenth²⁰ or sixteenth²¹ century Netherlandish

¹⁸ G. Carandente, *Collections d'Italie, I. Sicilie, Les Primitifs Flamands, II, Répertoire des peintures flamandes du quinzième siècle*, 3, Brussels, 1968, pp. 46-7.

¹⁹ Professor C. Strinati, (Il Soprintendente per i Bene Artistici e Storici di Roma, personal communication, 18 March, 2000) stated that the Barons de Gemmis in Rome, whose family once owned the work, had no knowledge of it.

²⁰ W. von Bode, "Jan van Eyck Bildnis eines burgundischen Kammerherrn", *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, Vol. XXII, 1901, p. 122, n. 1; Hugo von Tschudi, "Versteigerung der Sammlung des Herzogs von Verdura", *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, Vol. XVII, 1894, p. 244.

²¹ F. Elsig, "30. *La Virgen con el Niño de Ince Hall*, c. 1433", in M. Natale (ed.), *El Renacimiento Mediterráneo*, ex. cat., Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, 31 January-6 May, 2001 and Valencia, Museo de Belles Arts de València, 18 May-2 September, 2001, p. 264.

painting, on stylistic grounds as well as its oak support and *barbe*.²² In 1971 Ursula Hoff, then Assistant Director at the National Gallery of Victoria, wrote that the *Verdura Virgin and Child* was not a copy of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* and reiterated this opinion in 1995, stating that “minor differences” between the paintings “have allowed the assumption that both the Ince Hall *Madonna* and the *Verdura* picture are copies of a lost original by Van Eyck.”²³ However, the *Verdura Virgin and Child* is almost certainly a copy of the Melbourne painting, since its composition follows a significant number of the numerous changes that occurred in the execution of the Melbourne painting, revealed by x-radiography and IRR, discussed above. Notably, the baldachin and window of the *Verdura Virgin and Child* follow the forms in the final paint layers of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*.

Another version of the composition, the *Covarrubias Virgin and Child* (Museo Paroquial, Iglesi de San Cosme y San Damian, Covarrubias/Burgos), has been thought by some authors to be a modified copy of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*, while others have seen it as a copy of a lost independent work by Van Eyck. The *Covarrubias Virgin and Child* has been said to be dated 1452, though this has never been verified.²⁴ The new evidence of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*’s major *pentimenti* in the baldachin increases the likelihood that the *Covarrubias Virgin and Child* is indeed a modified copy of it. The Master of the Covarrubias Virgin and Child is thought by some authors to have worked in Bruges at the same time as Van Eyck, or shortly after, and to have copied his compositions on a number of occasions.²⁵

Philippot and Sneyers, having stated that there was no trace of a precise drawing in the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* in 1958, modified their observation in 1971, noting underdrawing in the sleeve, the girdle, the lower edge of the robe where it is revealed by the mantle on the floor and in certain folds of the mantle, on the basis of the same infrared photography evidence.²⁶ IRR suggests that the underdrawing is even more extensive. Underdrawing seems to be present in, though not necessarily limited to, the figures, the drapery, the carpet, certain shadows and

²² U. Hoff and M. Davies, 1971, p. 40. Hoff described the *Verdura Virgin and Child* as the work of a Flemish painter on the basis of its oak panel and *barbe*.

²³ U. Hoff and M. Davies, 1971, p. 39; U. Hoff, *European Paintings before 1800 in the National Gallery of Victoria*, Melbourne, 1995, p. 105.

²⁴ See: E. Bermejo, “31. *La Virgen con el Niño, en an interior*”, in M. Natale (ed.), 2001, pp. 272-4.

²⁵ B. Brinkmann and J. Sander, *German Painting before 1800 at the Städel*, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, p. 19.

²⁶ U. Hoff and M. Davies, 1971, p. 31. Coremans had passed away in the years between the analysis and its publication.

possibly the bench and architecture. The underdrawing defines many contours, and to a lesser extent volumes and shadows. It is generally very fine and appears pale in the IRR, while certain details are more heavily indicated, appearing darker in the IRR. The fine, tapered appearance of certain small strokes in the mantle suggests that the underdrawing may have been executed in a liquid medium with a very small brush.

In the Infant's proper right thigh and calf a small amount of hatching is apparent as slightly overlapping strokes, running parallel to the contour of the leg, defining the shadow on the viewer's right (Fig. 6). Part of this area was covered in the paint layer by the Infant's white cloth. Just below the Infant's right foot, as it was painted, a dark scalloped line appears to define the position of His toes in the underdrawing. In the Infant's proper left hand a series of strokes appears to define His fingers held straight. A number of short strokes in the Infant's torso near His neck may define the contours and suggest, in a summary way, the shadows. The white cloth, where it falls over the mantle to the left of the Infant seems to have at least some underdrawing, visible as a single stroke running alongside the fold in the drapery as it was painted.

The Virgin's proper left sleeve shows a series of strokes in the underdrawing which seem to indicate the position of wrinkles in the fabric, which were not followed closely in the final paint layers (fig. 6). The shadow between the Virgin's girdle and Her mantle on Her proper right side seems to have a series of dark strokes in the underdrawing fanning out from the bottom left angle. The girdle itself and the folds coming from it appear to be underdrawn. In the mantle, underdrawing defines some of the contours of the folds. A series of short strokes at an angle to the main contour in a lower, horizontal fold on the right appears to be underdrawing suggesting a shadow. A series of closely drawn, evenly spaced, rounded strokes just to the left indicates both volume and shadow. An inverted "Y" shaped configuration appears in the IRR to the left of the mantle's opening, near the ground. This may be underdrawing which was not closely followed in the paint layers. A shadow to the right of the Virgin appears in the IRR as a series of diagonal strokes running from top left to bottom right. There may also be a few very small strokes running in the opposite direction in the same area, at the very edge of the mantle, possibly constituting a limited amount of cross-hatching.

The bottom edge of the right side of the carpet was underdrawn with a single, thick line. The left corner of the room and the edge of the window alcove may be underdrawn, as these lines appear comparatively darker than the surrounding area of the walls in the IRR, however, this is difficult to verify as the pigment on the surface may be responsible for this effect.

Notwithstanding the limited sample of underdrawing arising from the small size of the work and the lack of clarity in parts of the IRR assembly, points of comparison can be found

between the appearance of the underdrawing in the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* and the underdrawing and drawing in Van Eyck's works. The extremely fine quality of the majority of the underdrawing, apparently executed with a small brush in a liquid medium, is broadly comparable with the appearance of the underdrawing in Van Eyck's *Dresden triptych*.²⁷ The underdrawing of the Infant's right foot may be compared with the underdrawing of the Infant's left foot in the IRR of the *Rolin Virgin and Child* (Louvre, Paris).²⁸ In both works the Infant's toes are indicated in the underdrawing by a dark, scalloped line while the foot is painted a little higher up than it was drawn. The series of short strokes at an angle to the contour in a lower horizontal fold of the drapery in the mantle, is comparable with similar hatching in a lower horizontal fold of the drapery in the IRR of the *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* (Galleria Sabauda, Turin).²⁹ The short rounded strokes in the Virgin's left sleeve are comparable with the short rounded strokes in the woman's left sleeve in the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his wife*. The scratchy looking hatching in the Infant's proper right thigh is comparable with the scratchy looking hatching in the fingers of the first drawn version of the man's proper right hand in the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his wife*. The shadow to the right of the Virgin is similarly placed to the one on the right of the Saint in the *Saint Barbara* (Musée des Beaux Arts, Antwerp) although the hatching is principally in the opposite direction.

The new evidence of *pentimenti* and underdrawing revealed by the IRR of the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child*, taken together with a reassessment of its materials and technique undertaken by this author at The University of Melbourne and summarised in the catalogue of the exhibition *El Renacimiento Mediterráneo* held at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid in 2001, where the work was exhibited as from the workshop of Van Eyck,³⁰ is sufficient to question existing interpretations of this painting. Could Van Eyck have painted the *Ince Hall Virgin and Child* as was believed by generations of art historians prior to 1957? Could Van Eyck's studio have

²⁷ M. Faries, "The Underdrawing In Jan Van Eyck's Dresden Triptych", in H. Verougstraete and R. van Schoute (eds) *Le dessin sous-jacent et la technologie dans la peinture, Colloque XII, La peinture dans Les Pays-Bas au 16e siècle, Pratiques d'atelier, infrarouges et autres méthodes d'investigation*, Louvain 1997, published 1999, p. 229, note 10.

²⁸ For the underdrawing of the Infant's foot in the *Rolin Virgin and Child* see: J.R.J. Van Asperen de Boer and M. Fairies, 1990, p. 38 and fig. 3. Anne van Buren (A. H. van Buren, J. Marrow and S. Pettenati, *Heures de Turin-Milan: Commentary*, Lucerne, 1996, p. 315) described the shrinkage of forms between the underdrawing and the paint layer, particularly in legs, as a characteristic of Van Eyck's works.

²⁹ IRR image in the possession of Professor J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer.

³⁰ H. Hudson, "Aspectos técnicos de *La Virgen con el Niño de Ince Hall* (part 2) in F. Elsig, 2001, pp. 267-9.

worked on a painting such as this in 1433? The analysis of the work's IRR may not answer these questions on its own, but it certainly provides evidence for a new assessment of the work's relationship to other works in the Van Eyck group. Only a detailed discussion of every aspect of the work and its relationship to other versions of the composition and works in the Van Eyck group can provide a basis for re-assessing the work's attribution. This paper demonstrates, first, that the analysis of the work undertaken in the 1950s was inconsistent with the analysis of Van Eyck's technique undertaken in that period, second, that some of the negative interpretations that arose about the work at that time resulted from a limited knowledge of the work's materials and technique, which in turn was due in part to the limitations of the technology available at the time, and third, that aspects of the underdrawing and *pentimenti* in the work revealed by IRR are comparable with features in the IRR and visible drawing of Van Eyck's own works.

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