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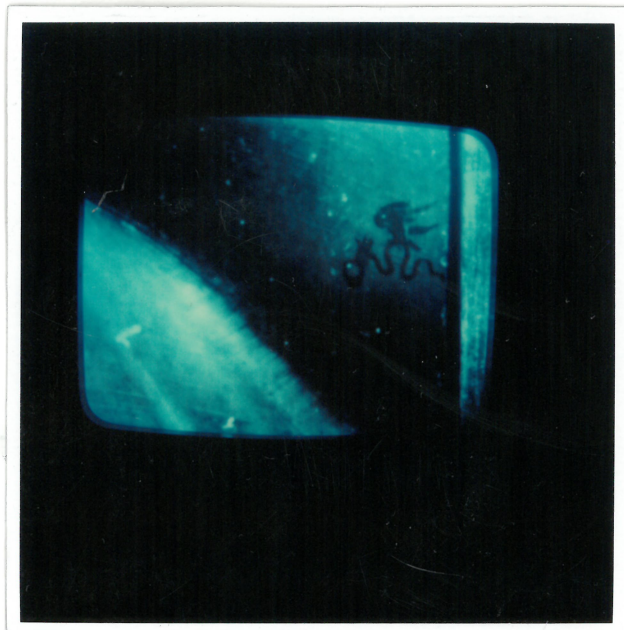
R E S U L T O F E X A M I N A T I O N
=====

of a painting

"Martin Luther in his deathbed"

by

L u k a s C H R A N A C H d. Ae.
(Kronach 1472 - 1553 Weimar)



infrared reflectogram of the monogram.



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Basel, april 13, 1983.

Report of the results of a scientific examination with microscope and daylight, with magnifying glass and ultraviolet light, with infra-red reflectography on a painting (64,8 x 51,1 cm) tempera on wood (oak), with a supporting construction (wood) on the back, representing: "Martin Luther in his death-bed", by Lukas CRANACH d.ä. (Kronach 1472 - 1553 Weimar).

Condition of the painting:

This painting is in a good condition and has been resto-red twice. The state of conservation however is endangered by the construction on the back, which makes it impossible for the painting to "work". Some of the small cracks now visible are caused by this problem and in the future more will show up.

The whole problem, a typical 19th century solution, is caused by the repair of the crack in the middle and its repair with the construction on the back.

The painted panel must have been under great tension in its old frame and must have been broken by a fall or a big impact or an accident. The results of the tension are still visible in the right upper corner and the results of the impact or fall in the paintlosses around the big crack.

The restorations of the big crack and the smaller (later) ones, are more or less in matching colors, but in stead of stippling them in, they are painted over. When the painting is cleaned again they easily can be removed and the cracks can get their proper treatment.

Another advise is to remove the cross-laths of the supporting construction, so the panel can work again.

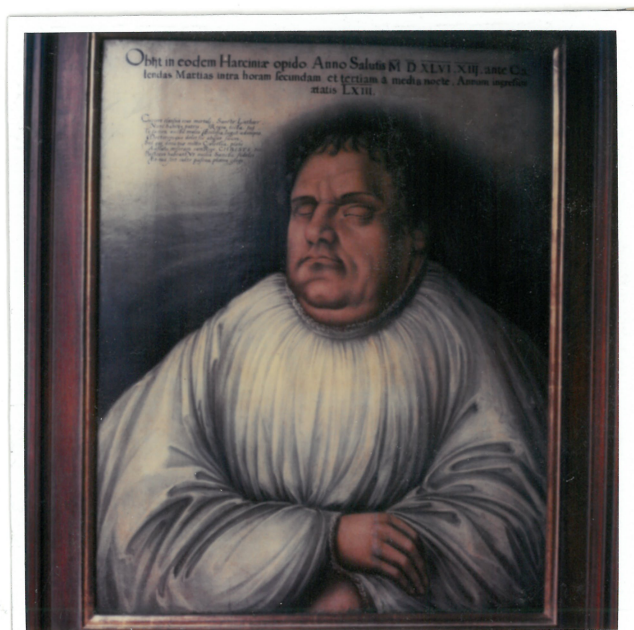


Photo 1.
Normal light photo(polaroid) of the panel-painting.



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Construction of the painting:

An oak-panel (prepared with an animal glue) carries a planed and polished chalk and gypsum (in animal glue) layer.

On the layer of chalk and gypsum is a thin grey paint-layer, partially absorbed by the first.

On this grey layer of paint there is one layer of white-lead on which (above) the letters have been painted and more down the pillow and the shadow, the incarnate of the face (direct on the grey) which was mixed before painting and where only the details had to be painted on.

The white of the shirt has been painted on the grey and been modelled with black and white on this white, with here and there a trace of yellow.

The hands are painted with the same incarnate as the face on the basic white of the shirt.

Used pigments:

Incarnate is a mixture of white-lead, cinnabar (vermillion) and ochre.

The other colors are lamp-black (very fine structure), white-lead, burned sienna or ochre and traces of leadtintyellow and cinnabar.

The Painting and the text:

The construction and the used pigments are typical early 16th century, as is the painted image and are all very expensive.

There is no underdrawing and the painting has been made from the original corps in the bed or from the gypsum death-mask. It has been made with the eye and hand of an experienced painter and the heart of a close friend. The text has been painted later, but with the same black and the same hand as the rest of the painting.

The monogram:

The feathered snake looking to the right is his monogram in quite a lot of paintings. Here it is painted on the half-wet under lying layer and has been cracked (very fine) in the aging proces of the paint layers. The used pigment is the same black as in the shirt and even the same brush (medium), with two hard hairs, has been used.

Conclusion:

A nice early 16th century panel painting by Lukas CRANACH in a rather good condition. The used techniques and materials scientifically seen are doubtless the techniques and materials used in Cranach's time and the originality of the monogram, in an untampered area (see the infrared reflectogram), show that its origin must have been in the hands of that Master.


G.J.A. Kooiman
scientific director.





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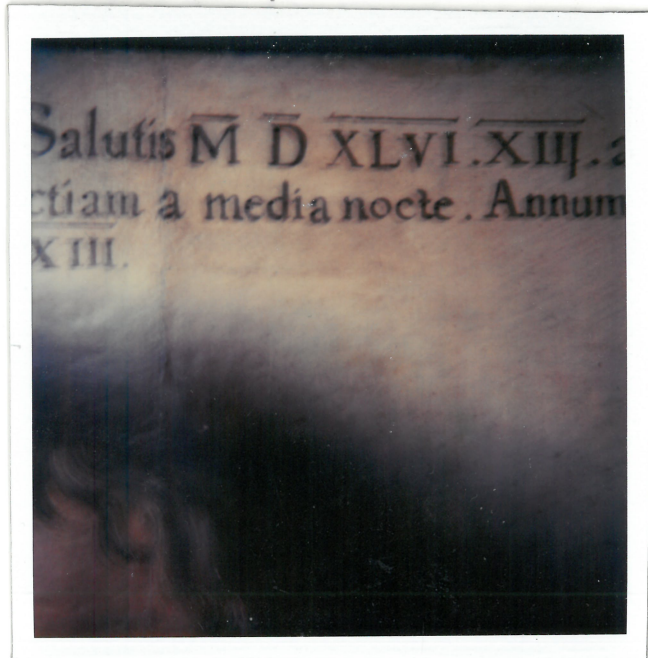


Photo 1. →

Photo 2. ↓



Photo 4. ↓



↓ Photo 3.



↓ Photo 5.



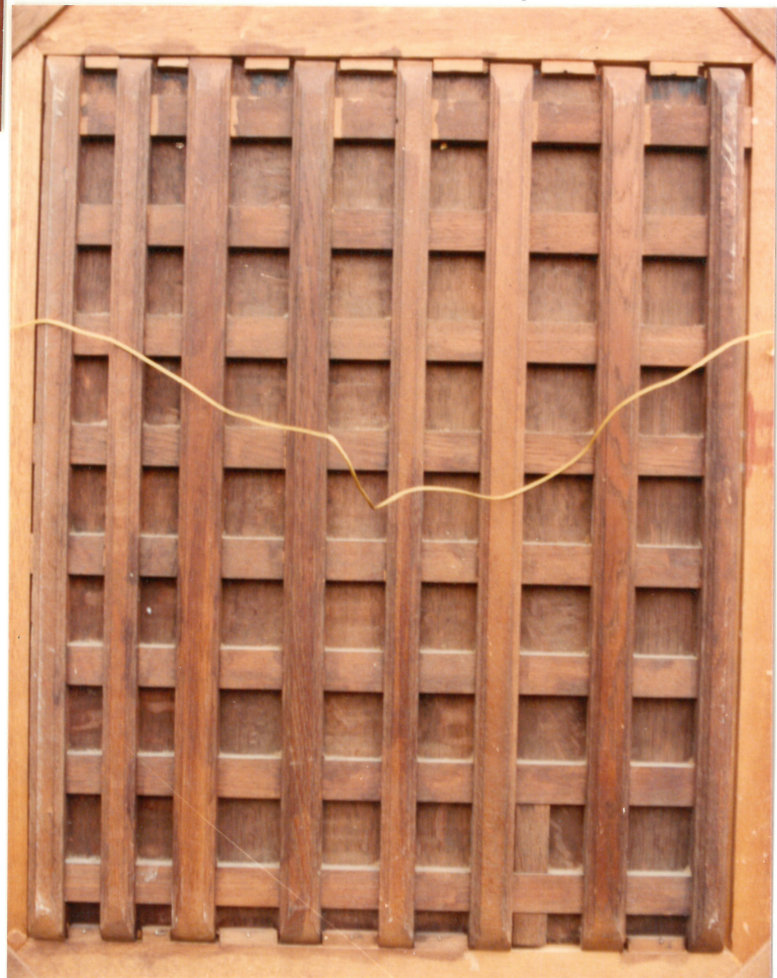


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Photo 2.
Normal light photo of the painting.

Photo 3.
Normal light photo of the back of the
painting, showing supporting frame.





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Text photo's on page 4.

Photo 1.

Normal light photo of the hands showing the crack through the centre of the panel. The discoloring is due to the different material qualities of the used paint (i.e. the combination of the binding medium and the pigment).

Photo 2 and 3.

Infrared reflectograms of the face showing no trace of underdrawing at all, so the painting must have been made after the dead model or after the gypsum death-mask of Martin Luther. Eventually a very thin underdrawing with a silverstift can have been used, but the free and easy way in which specially the head has been painted does not show this. Mostly underdrawing is very strictly prescribing a composition that only has to be followed and then often lacks the spontaneity this painting shows.

Photo 4.

Normal light photo of the text right from the crack ⁷ were a ⁵retoration or overpainting is showing.

Photo 5.

The infrared reflectogram of the same area as photo 4 shows that the restoration is only a very thin overpainting of a recent date.



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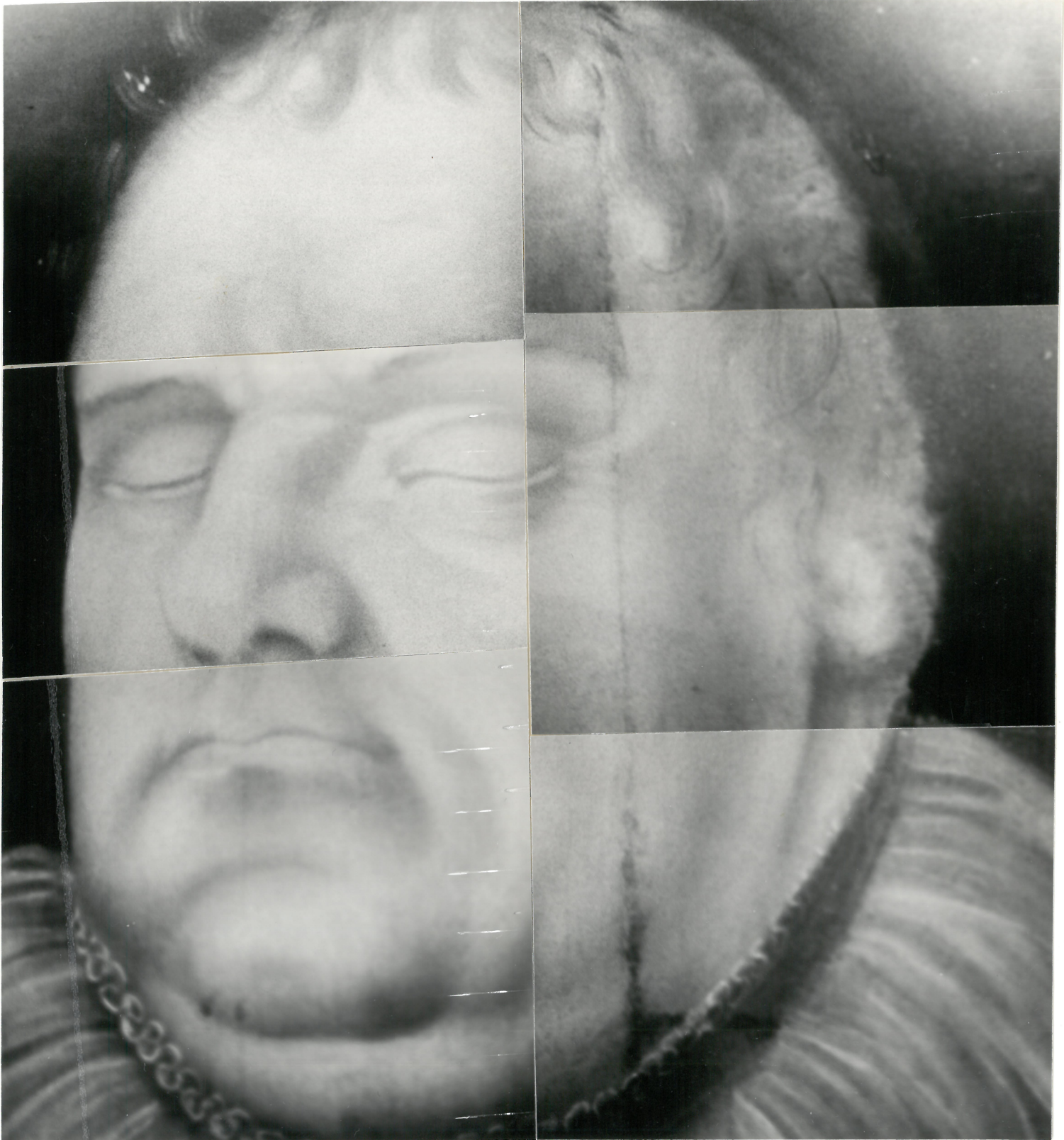
Photo 4.
Normal light detail photo of the head of Luther.



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Photo 5.

Infrared reflectogram assembly from the head of Luther, to be compared with photo 4 on page 5. This assembly shows that there is no underdrawing, it also shows the restores crack right from Luther,s left eye. This is an partially overpainted restoration.





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Photo 6.
Normal light detail of the face.



Photo 7.
Infrared reflectogram detail of the eyes of Luther, to be compared with photo 6, 8 and 9.



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Photo 8.
Infrared reflectogram detail of the right eye of Luther, to be compared with photo 6 and 7.



Photo 9.
Infrared reflectogram detail of the right eye of Luther, to be compared with photo 6 and 7. Like in photo 5 there is no visible underdrawing.

Photo 10.
Infrared reflectogram detail of the mouth of Luther. The dark lines of the craquelure pattern, superimposed by dust in the varnish, give an indication of the age of the painting.



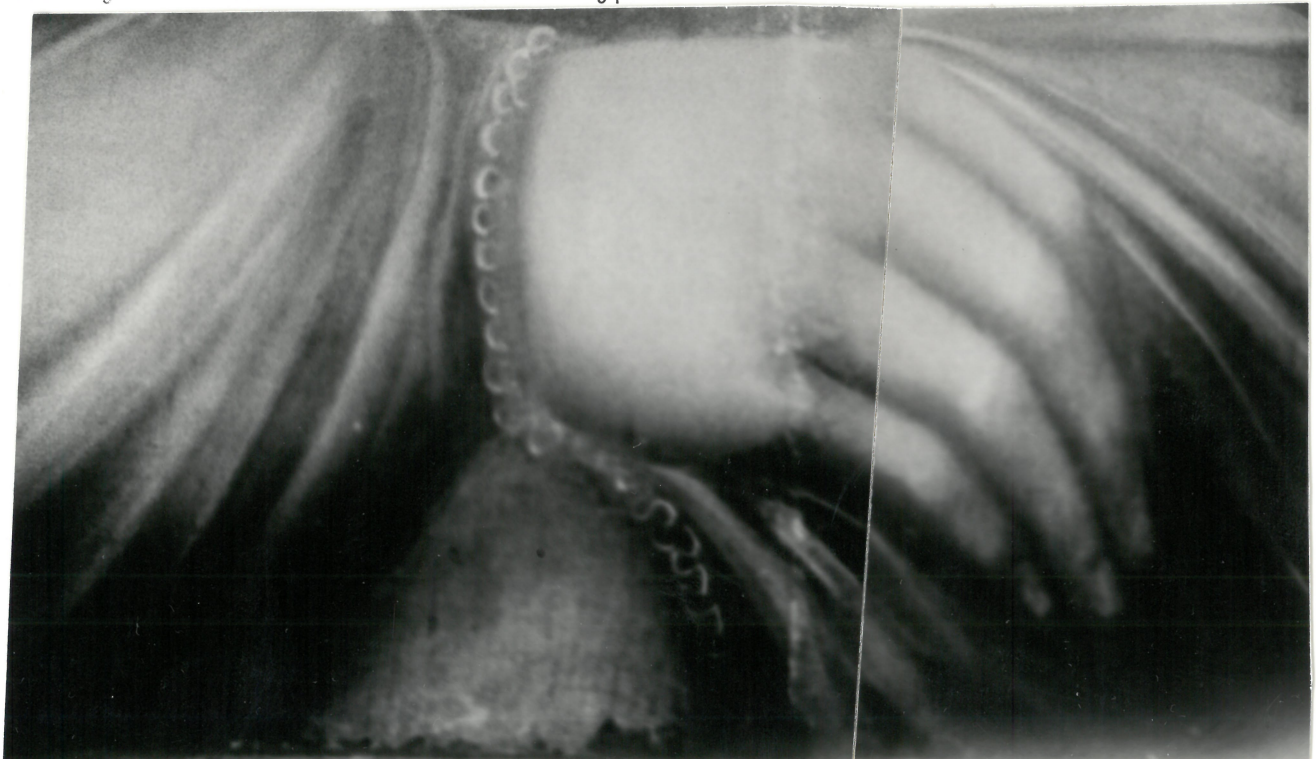


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Photo 11.
Normal light photo of the hands of Luther, showing the restored crack over the hands and the paintloss on the bottom (centre) of the painting.

Photo 12.
Infrared reflectogram assembly of the hands of Luther in the bottom of the painting. The restored crack is here visible in white (compare with the crack in photo 5), it clearly shows that this is an other type of restoration.





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Photo 13.
Infrared reflectogram detail of
the now visible monogram of Lukas
Cranach the Elder (a feathered
ring-carrying snake) in a comple-
tely untouched area.



Photo 14.
Normal light photo of the text
left from the head of Luther.
These texts and the other one seem to be original and also untouched (see photo's 17,
19 and 20).

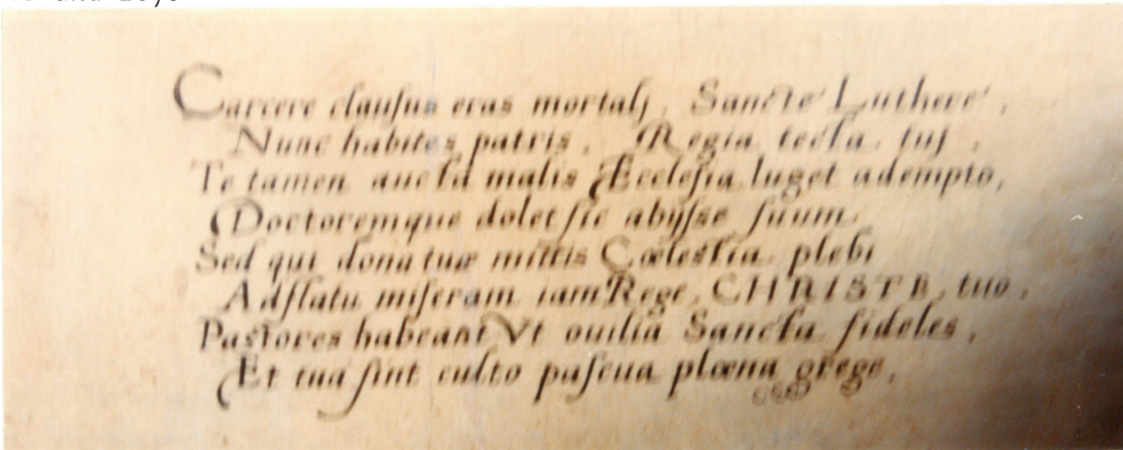
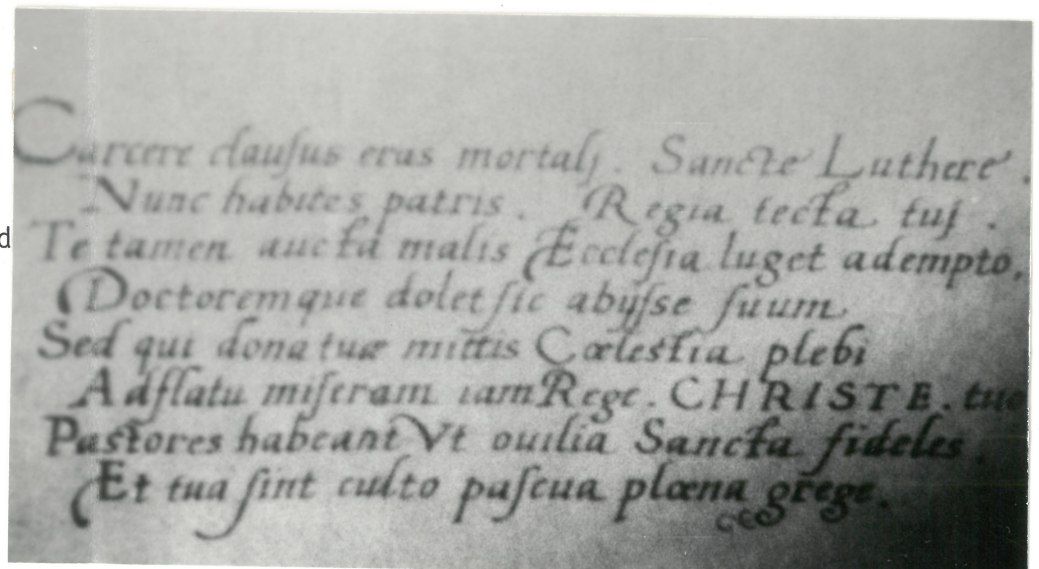


Photo 15.
Infrared reflectogram
detail of the same area
as photo 14.
The text is untouched and
has never been restored.





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Photo's 16, 17 and 18 are normal light photo's of the text in the upper part of the painting. Except for the part (overpainted) right from the crack, under the text, nothing is restored and/or reinforced.

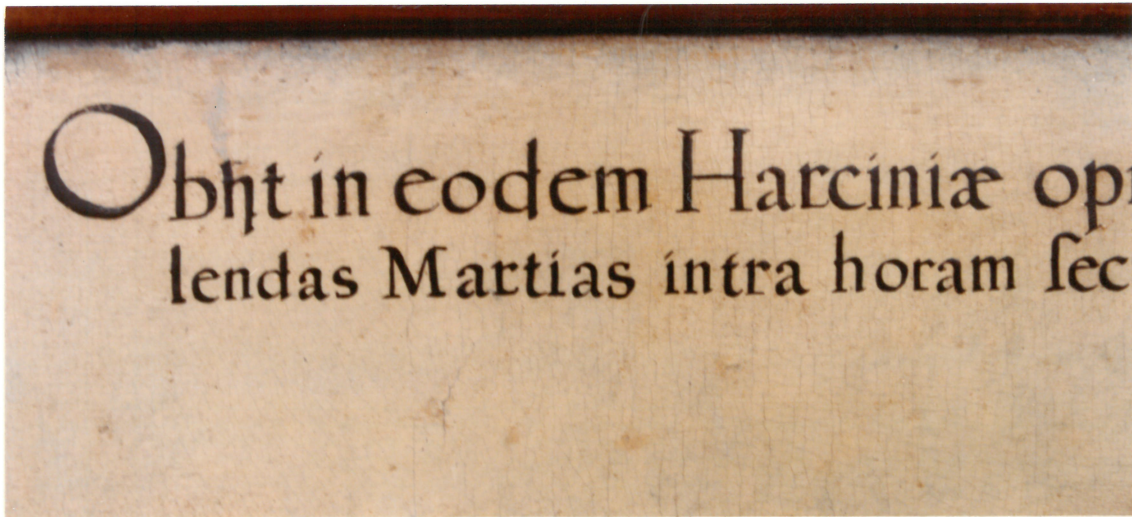


Photo 16.

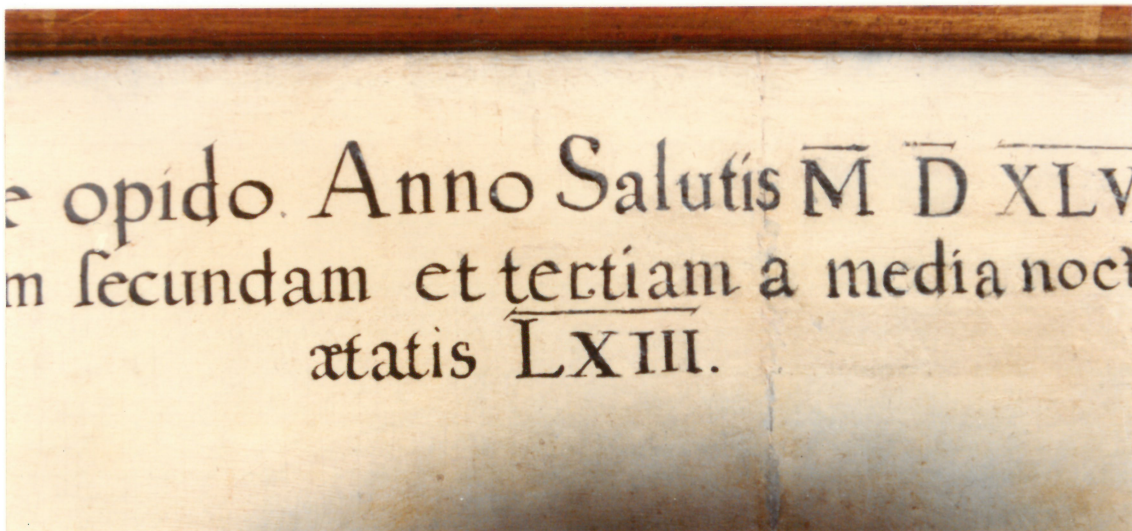


Photo 17.

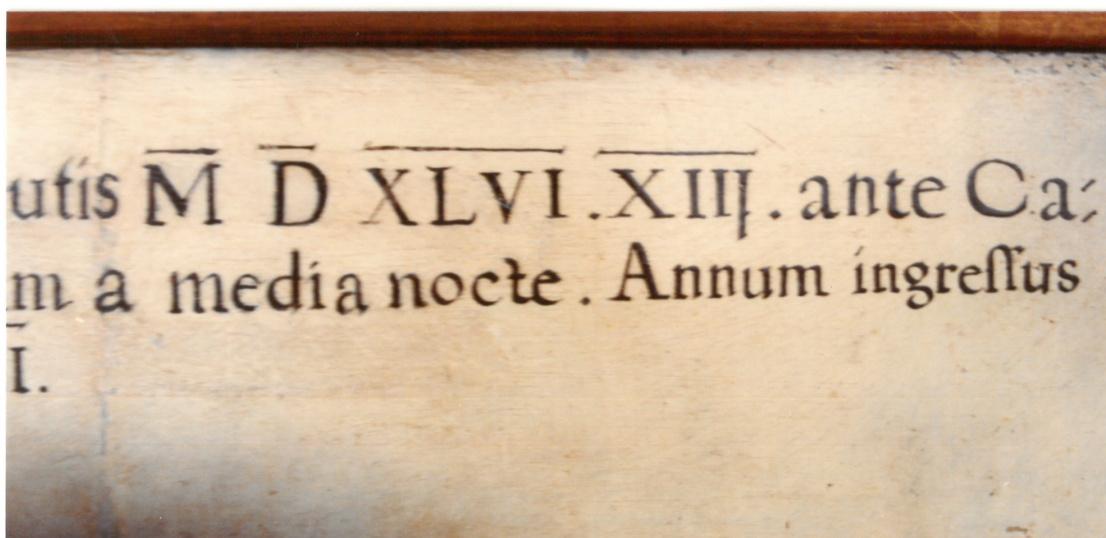


Photo 18.



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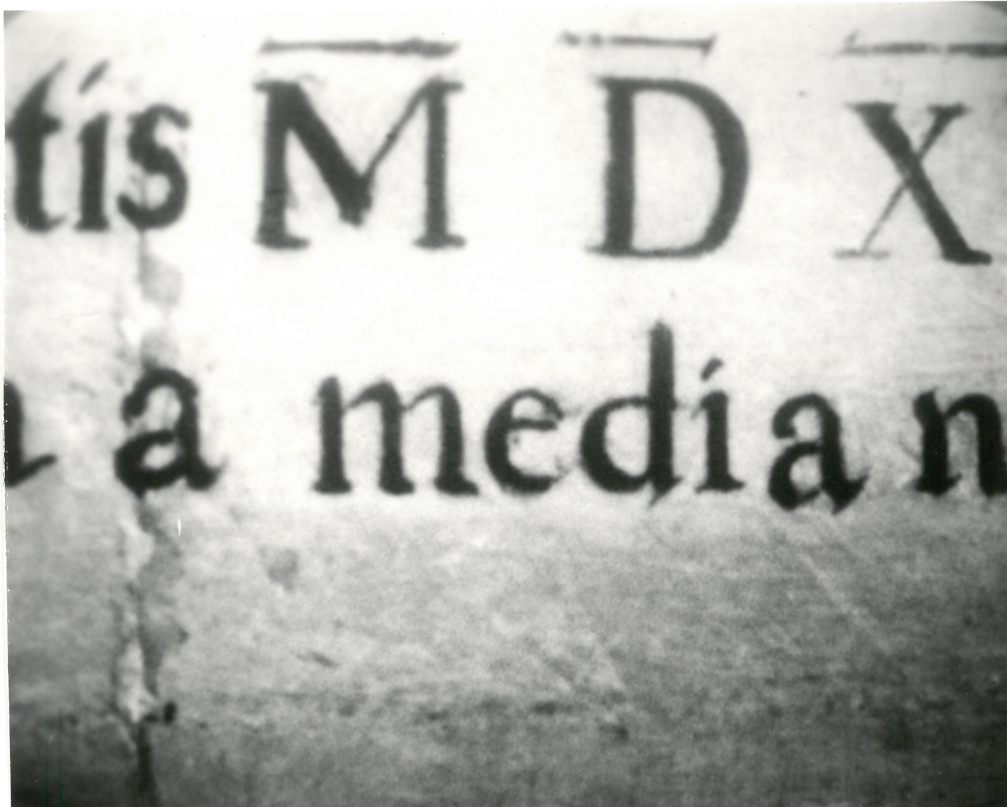


Photo 19.

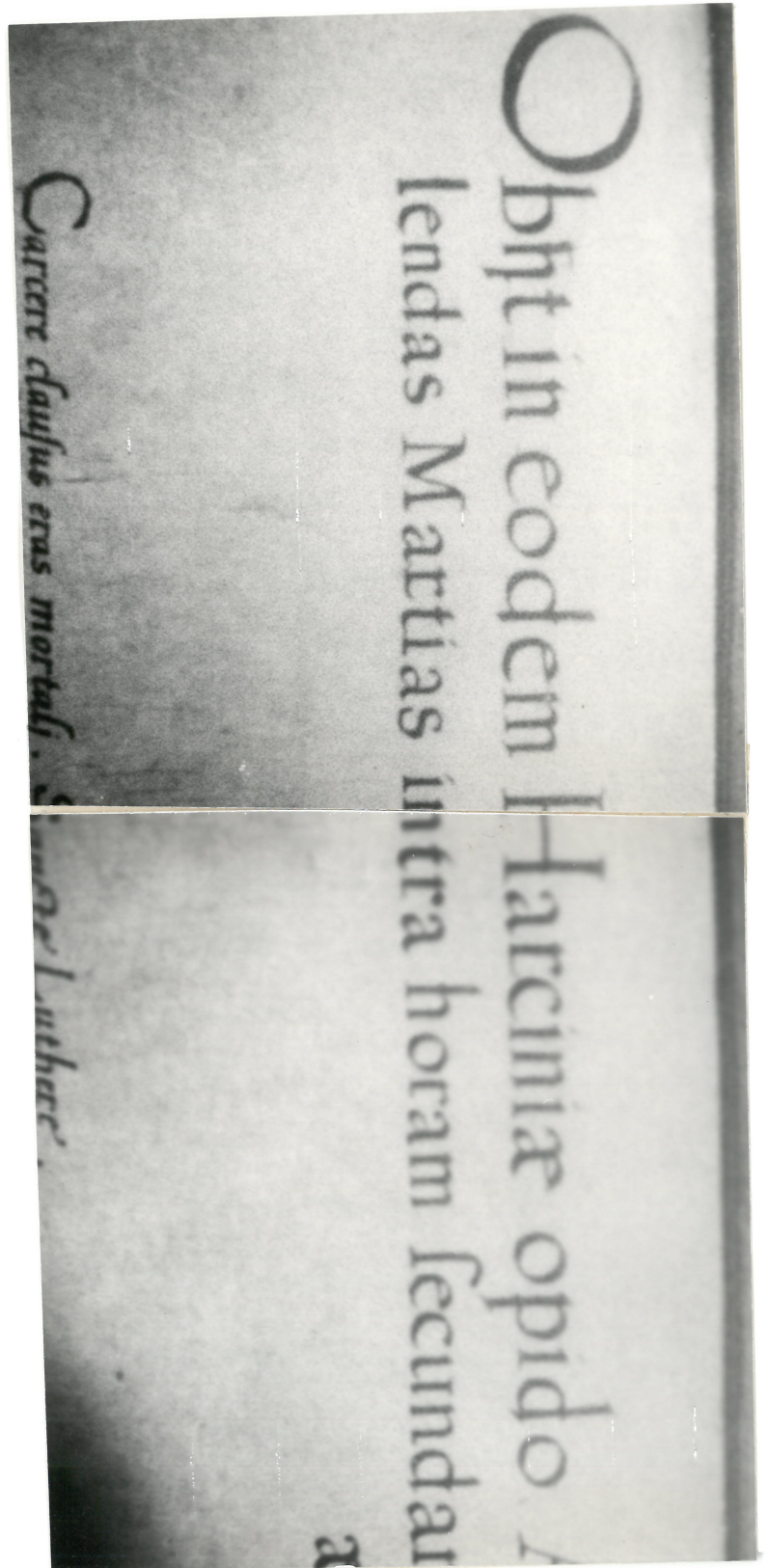
Infrared reflectogram detail of the text in the upper part of the painting. Compare with the photo's 17 and 18 in the area where the overpainting is visible. In my opinion this has happened when the big crack was restored and can be cleaned away as soon as the painting needs cleaning.



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Photo 20.

This is an assembly of infrared reflectograms of the text in the upper part of the painting. It can be compared with the photo's 16, 17 and 18. Also here is shown that no part of the text ever has been restored and/or been reinforced.



Anno Salutis M̄ D̄ XLVI. XIII. ante Ca.
n et tertiam a media nocte. Annum ingressus
statis LXIII.