

Compton Verney, Job No. 20180709

Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Lot and His Daughters*, about 1530, oil on panel, 55.9 x 39 cm (CVCSC:0332.N)

Like *Hercules and Antaeus*, the reflectogram did not reveal any distinct, carbon-based underdrawing. Again, the dark background and Cranach's linear, painted outlining of features could act to mask any drawing as some 'sketchy, freehand underdrawing' was 'partially visible'¹ in the reflectogram of the Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg's *Lot and his daughters* (1528). However, it is possible that an infrared transparent drawing medium, such as red paint or red chalk, may have been employed. The National Gallery, London, identified 'red outlines' on their Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Charity* (mid 1530s-1540s),² and 'red lines appearing to perform the role of underdrawing', executed in a liquid medium, were observed on their *Primitive People* (1527-30)³ and *Cupid Complaining to Venus* (1526-7)⁴. Heydenreich's study mentions Cranach's use of 'finely pointed red chalk' as a medium for underdrawing on a group of panels, identified through microscopic examination⁵. No carbon-based underdrawing was identified in reflectography on the Moravian Gallery, Brno's *Lot and his Daughters* (about 1528-1530)⁶ and drawing was 'barely visible' on the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen's *Lot and his Daughters* (1529)⁷ so the examined painting would seem entirely consistent with Cranach's oeuvre of this period.

Instead, the reflectogram revealed the artist's specific use of underpainting, particularly in the dark red draperies, and demonstrated the order of painting. As with *Hercules and Antaeus*, the composition was highly planned with the background brought around careful reserves for the figures, again suggesting that it had been underdrawn. And only minor pentimenti, such as the changes to the shape of Lot's feet/boots, are apparent, confirming this certainty in the planning process. A relative absence of underdrawing and dark underpainting of the red and green draperies, with a mixture of black with a little vermilion, was found on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (ca. 1530)⁸. Whilst 'a broadly brushed dark grey' underpaint was identified beneath the foliage in the reflectogram of *Samson and Delilah* (ca. 1528-20) with 'areas for the figures ... left in reserve'⁹. Ainsworth describes these painting techniques as 'typical systematic methods used by the artist, which were designed to facilitate rapid manufacture and ease of reproduction'¹⁰, which might seem an apt description for this popular subject, much-

¹ See Cranach Digital Archive catalogue entry http://lucascranach.org/DE_KSVC_M416 where the drawing lines are described as 'dark fluid drawing medium and brush' with 'no apparent alterations made during the painting process' by Smith, Sandner, Heydenreich, cda 2012.

² See Susan Foister, 'Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Charity*' published online 2015, from 'The German Paintings before 1800' www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/research/lucas-cranach-the-elder-charity p3.

³ See Susan Foister, 'Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Primitive People*' published online 2015, from 'The German Paintings before 1800' London, forthcoming www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/research/lucas-cranach-the-elder-primitive-people p3.

⁴ See Susan Foister, 'Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Cupid complaining to Venus*' published online 2015, from 'The German Paintings before 1800', London: forthcoming www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/research/lucas-cranach-the-elder-cupid-complaining-to-venus p4.

⁵ Gunnar Heydenreich, *Lucas Cranach the Elder: Painting Materials, Techniques and Workshop Practice*, Chicago University Press (2014), p106.

⁶ See Cranach Digital Archive catalogue entry http://lucascranach.org/CZ_KPNR-MGB_M12 Sandner, Smith-Contini, Heydenreich, cda 2016.

⁷ See Cranach Digital Archive catalogue entry http://lucascranach.org/DE_BStGS_WAF167 Smith, Sandner, Heydenreich, cda 2013.

⁸ Maryan Wynn Ainsworth & Joshua P. Waterman, *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350-1600*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, New York, (2013), Catalogue entry no. 13, p63.

⁹ Maryan Wynn Ainsworth & Joshua P. Waterman, *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350-1600*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, New York, (2013), Catalogue entry no. 12, p59.

¹⁰ Maryan Wynn Ainsworth & Joshua P. Waterman, *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350-1600*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, New York, (2013), Catalogue entry no. 13, p63.

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repeated by the artist. Similarly, the panel support seems to conform to Heydenreich Format C¹¹ (it may have lost a little from the top and bottom since *barb* edges are only present at the left and right) and Heydenreich talks about the artist's use of these standard sizes between 1521 and 1535 hypothesising that they were introduced 'to optimise work processes in his workshop, which operated like a factory'¹².

The reflectogram also gives some information about the good condition of the picture with losses mostly confined to the upper edge. The winged serpent monogram is only just legible in the reflectogram due to the fine, brown paint employed.

Bibliography

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Karen E. Thomas, 'Technical Observations on the Early German Paintings Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art' in Maryan Wynn Ainsworth & Joshua P. Waterman, *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350-1600*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, New York, (2013), p69.

Gunnar Heydenreich, '... that you paint with wonderful speed: Virtuosity and Efficiency in the Artistic Practice of Lucas Cranach the Elder' in Bodo Brinkmann (Ed.), *Cranach*, Royal Academy of Arts, (2008)

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John Oliver Hand, *German Paintings of the Fifteenth through Seventeenth Centuries*, National Gallery of Art Washington, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

¹¹ Gunnar Heydenreich, 'Artistic exchange and experimental variation: studies in the workshop practice of Lucas Cranach the Elder' in Volume 43, 1998 - Issue sup1: Contributions to the Dublin Congress, *Painting Techniques, History, Materials and Studio Practice*, 7-11 September 1998, p106.

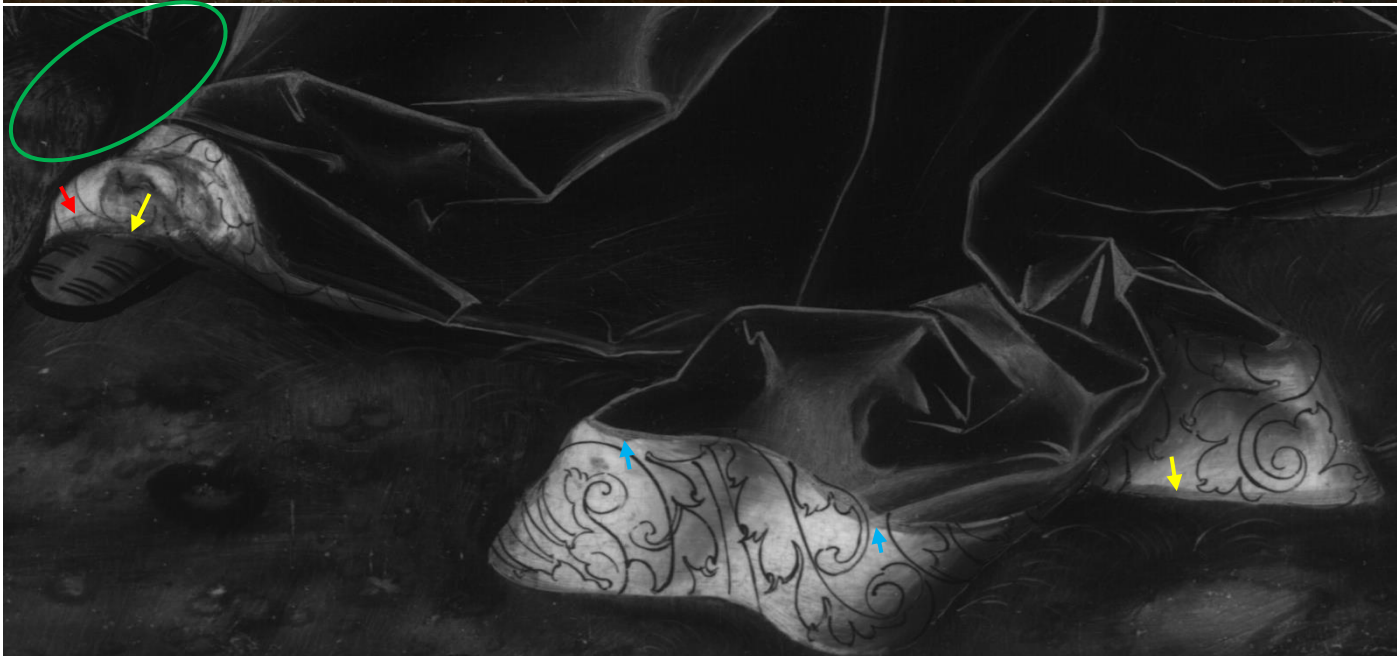
¹² Jana Herrschaft & Gunnar Heydenreich, 'A *Lucretia* by Lucas Cranach the Elder at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum', *Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao Bulletin*, no. 8, 2014, pp85-109 https://www.museobilbao.com/uploads/salas_lecturas/archivo_in-56.pdf The Bilbao *Lucretia* was also found not to have a carbon-based underdrawing in infrared but Heydenreich suggests the drawing may have been quite limited and possibly done in a red chalk p14.

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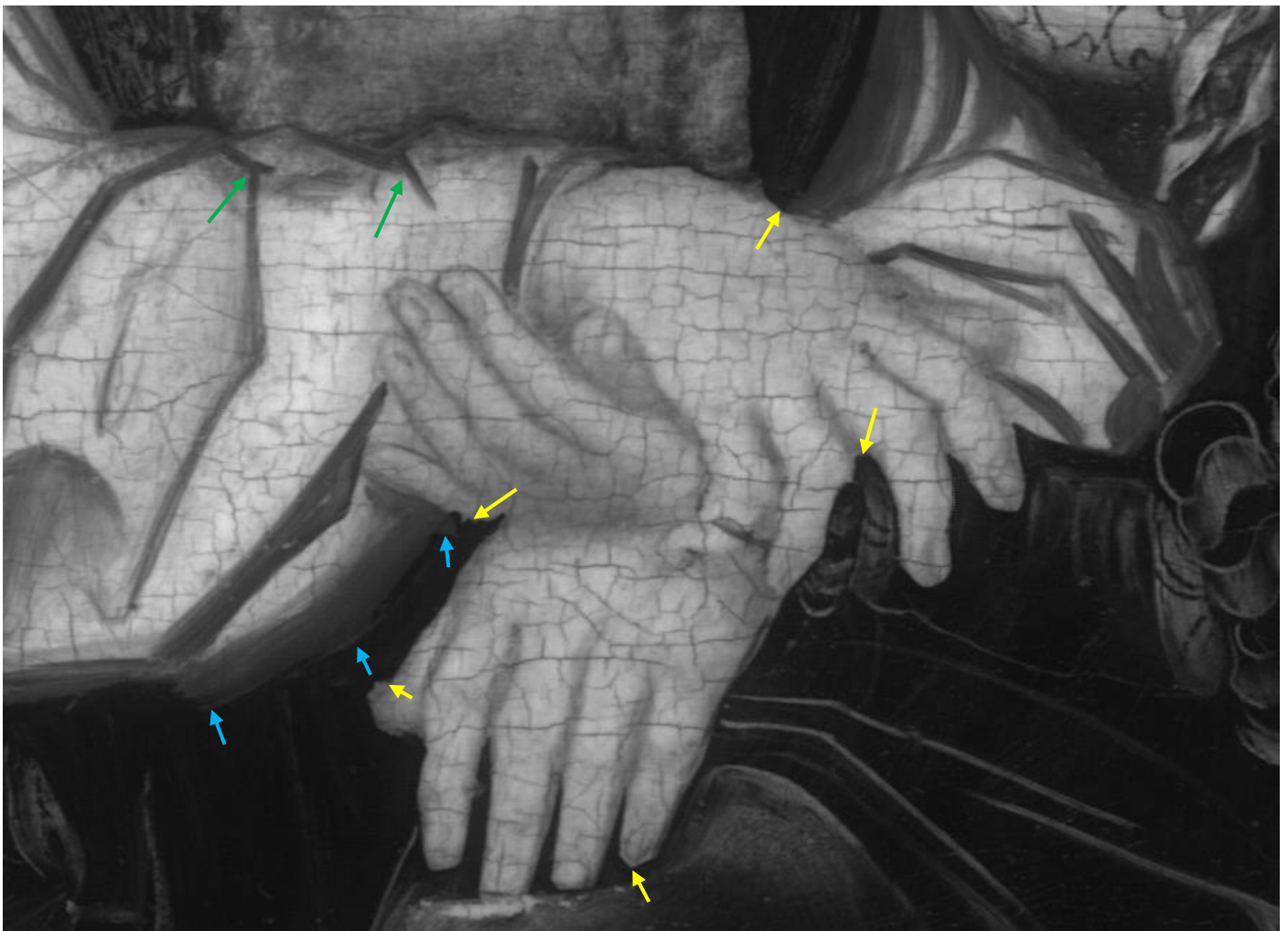
IRR detail of Lot's feet showing dark underpainting for the foreground brought around the figures (yellow) and dark underpainting for the red dress, which is loosely laid in and does not respect the curved folds (blue). The boots are reserved much smaller (yellow) and toes are indicated (orange). There is also a liquid line which is not followed in the paint and may represent underdrawing (red). The very dark appearance of Lot's blue costume also suggests it is underpainted in grey/black layer. The winged serpent is only faintly visible (green).

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IRR detail of the seated daughter's skirt showing the extremely dark underpainting (blue), which suggests the same admixture of black with a little vermilion 'followed by an opaque vermilion of varying thicknesses depending on the need for light of shadow' identified on the Met's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, ca. 1530 (Maryan Wynn Ainsworth & Joshua P. Waterman, *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350-1600*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, New York, (2013), Catalogue entry no. 13, p63.). The laying in of the foreground/foilage has, again, been done first and brought around the general reserves for the figures – although this does not include the foot which has been painted out over the foreground (yellow) and may represent a pentimento. Again, the dark appearance of Lots' blue costume suggests a similar grey/black underpaint (green) and there is a fine line, not visible at the surface which might represent underdrawing (red).

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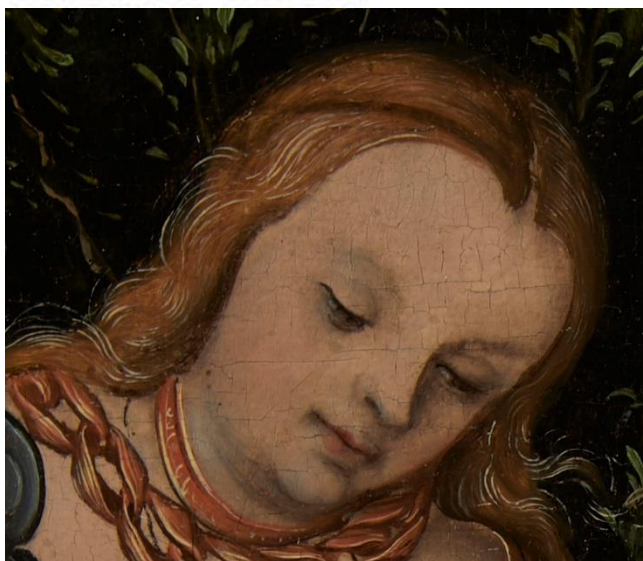
IRR detail of Lot's hands showing the careful reserves for the flesh paints, with the costumes painted around the hands demonstrating the order of painting (yellow), and the difference in construction between Lot's red sleeves and his daughter's red dress. Lot's sleeves are painted more directly without the dark underpaint seen in the dress and, as a result, appear pale in the reflectogram. Instead, the shadowed folds appear added at a final stage (green). Again, his blue costume appears dark like the red dress suggesting a dark underpaint, with the bright blue scumble of the upper paint added after the shadows of the red sleeves (blue).

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IRR detail of Lot and his daughter showing the relative absence of carbon-based underdrawing but careful use of reserves with the background brushed around the figures (yellow indicates brush texture). The neckline of the dress is not underpainted (green) and the gold chain appears reserved (blue).

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IRR detail of the standing daughter showing the careful reserve for the head, which includes the hair (yellow) – although this extends out over the foliage background (green).

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IRR detail of the standing daughter's hand showing the careful reserve left in the costume for the hand and cup. No obvious drawing lines or pentimenti are apparent demonstrating the high level of planning.

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IRR detail of the distant figures which, as expected, are painted directly over the already realised background.



IRR detail of the distant city, which also appears directly painted without reserves.