

Report on two paintings miscataloged as Jacob Roos 1682-1730

Adam's Auction Catalogue Description

Auction at Slane, 13th October, 2015, Lot 68

JACOB ROOS, called ROSA DA NAPOLI (1682-1730)

A Shepherdess with her Flock Beside a Ruined Arch;

A Goatherd with his Flock Beside a Spring

A pair, oil on canvas, 73.5 x 99.3cm and 72.2 x 99.5cm

One signed and dated 1706 on the majolica pitcher

Provenance: Purchased by Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness (1798-1868) for St. Annes, Clontarf, Dublin. Thence by descent to the present owner.

Jacob Roos, called Rosa di Napoli was born in Rome in March 1682, son of Philipp Peter Roos who was known as Rosa da Tivoli. He was born in Frankfort, Germany and enjoyed a successful career as painter of animals and landscapes. Jacob in turn adopted the style of his father. Unsurprisingly he lived and worked in Naples and Benezit observes that it is difficult to distinguish the sons work from his fathers. Seven large Italian landscapes are attributed to him and are to be found at the Résidence de Wurzburg. These two paintings were purchased by Benjamin Lee Guinness, grandson of the founder of the eponymous brewery for his home at St. Annes in Clontarf, Dublin.

Note: In this report, we refer to these works as the Shepherdess painting and the Goatherd painting.

FINDINGS

Adam's Auction

Our examination of the two Roos paintings reveals significant anomalies, which are in stark conflict with the description published by Adam's in their auction catalogue of the 13th October 2015. In Adam's catalogue description, much reliance is placed on the expertise of Dr. Herman Jedding. However, no reason for his attribution is given.

Sotheby's Auction

These paintings were previously consigned to Sotheby's, London, for auction where they were described on Sotheby's consignment label as the work of Philipp Pieter Roos 1657-1706 [Photo MPFA fd1]. It is assumed that the attribution to Philipp Pieter Roos (Rosa da Tivoli) was taken from a label fragment pasted on the back of the Goatherd painting [Photo MPFA fd2]. However, by the time the paintings appeared at Sotheby's auction on the 9th July 2015, their description had changed. The paintings were then described as the work of Jacob Roos (1682–after 1730).

This is a critical observation as it reveals that the description provided by the vendor on consignment of the paintings to Sotheby's was based on a fake label. The necessity to change the description of the paintings in Sotheby's auction catalogue essentially exposed these paintings as fakes. The anomalies described in this report show that the substituted attribution to Jacob Roos is false.

Fake Label, Signature and Date

The most significant of these anomalies is that the dated signature on the Shepherdess painting is forged [Photo MPFA fd3]. In fact, we found that these paintings have been forged on three separate occasions. Although most likely painted as innocent copies in the 19th century, a false label was added to the Goatherd painting. This fake label describes the artist as Rosa da Tivoli, the pseudonym of Philipp Pieter Roos 1657-1706. The addition of this label established the initial forgery.

The second forgery was made when a jug was added to the Shepherdess painting together with a fake Rosa signature and date of 1712 [Photo MPFA fd4]. We must bear in mind that both Philipp (Rosa da Tivoli) and Jacob (Rosa da Napoli) both signed their work with a Rosa signature. However, the Rosa signature added to the Shepherdess painting bears no resemblance to the genuine signature of Jacob Roos. As Philipp Pieter Roos died in 1706, he could not have painted a work dated 1712.

In the third forgery, the 1712 date was changed to 1706 in an attempt to amend the conflict with the Rosa da Tivoli label on the Goatherd painting [Photos MPFA fd5 & 6].

We have also established that the orange paint of the scroll immediately above the 6 is a later addition. As paint from the 6 sits on top of and below the added orange paint, it appears that the 6 is an addition added at the same time as the orange scroll [Sheldon Report].

The possibility of any of these additions being by the hand of Jacob Roos can be ruled out. If he had painted the work in the first place, he would have been well aware of the year in which he had painted it and a necessity to change the date in the second place would never have arisen.

Expertise

It is significant that all of the experts who have examined the Shepherdess painting in real life are in agreement that the work is not genuine. These include: Franck Baulme, Quai Voltaire, Paris, a specialist consultant and dealer in old master paintings; Maxime Kapusiak, Cité de la Roquette, Paris, a conservator with extensive experience in 18th and 19th century paintings; Sylvaine and Nessir Brans, Institut d'Art Conservation et Couleurs, rue de la Grange Batelière, Paris, art conservators and experts officially recognised by the Court in Paris; Libby Sheldon, Ebury Street, London, one of the most eminent pigment analysts in Great Britain [AppendixA & Attachments].

Conclusions

Not one sustainable fact confirming the authenticity of these paintings as the work of Jacob Roos has been established.

Considering the current rejection of the works by every expert who has examined the paintings in real life; the significance of the added signature and date; and the substantial anomalies described in this report, one can only conclude that the paintings are 19th century copies imitating the Roos family motif and that they are not by the hand of Jacob Roos 1682-1730.

Dominic Milmo-Penny
Director
Milmo-Penny Fine Art Ltd.
20th August 2018

NOTES

Adam's

It may well be that Dr. Jedding provided nothing more than an alternative suggestion following his rejection of the paintings as the work of Philipp Peter Roos.

It appears that Dr. Jedding has not seen the current paintings in real life and is unlikely to have any knowledge of the anomalies described here.

Sotheby's

Confirmation regarding the Roos consignment was provided by Benedetta Pedrana, cataloguer of 19th Century European Paintings, in an email dated 1st June, 2017. The paintings were not sold at Sotheby's auction.

Fake Label

The Goatherd painting bears a label describing the artist as Rosa da Tivoli, the pseudonym of Philipp Pieter Roos 1657-1706 [Photo MPFA fd2]. The information on this label is false. Philipp Pieter Roos died in 1706 and could not have painted a work dated 1712.

The label is a fragment repasted from another location, most likely from the original frame.

The label shows considerable age and may well pre-date the first forging of the Shepherdess painting.

Later Additions to the Shepherdess Painting

The white jug on which the signature and date is painted is a later addition to the Shepherdess painting. [Photo MPFA fd9 & 10].

Examination of the craquelure revealed the brownish green paint of the main body of the work below the jug. Additional losses in the same area facilitate inspection of the lower greenish brown layer.

We removed a chip of white and orange paint from the jug at the edge of the craquelure [Photo MPFA fd9]. The sample has been sealed and retained. It would not be possible to make such a separation of layers if the jug and signature had been painted at the same time as the rest of the painting as both layers would have fused into one. The uppermost skin of the brownish green layer of the main painting must have hardened sufficiently by the time the jug was added for such a separation to be possible. It is generally accepted that a time span of at least six months or so must elapse for an oil painting to become sufficiently dry for a later separation of layers to take place. However, the ease in which we were able to separate these two layers suggests that the drying time in this particular case was considerably longer, perhaps ten years or more to achieve a sufficient hardness for such an uncomplicated and precise separation to take place.

Forged Signature

If the jug is a later addition, so also is the Rosa signature and the date, which sit on top of it. It appears that the reason for the addition of the jug was to carry the forged signature thereby making it less detectable as an addition.

As the white paint of the jug mixes wet on wet with the blue of the signature, we can tell that they were both applied at the same time.

The Rosa signature on the Shepherdess painting is entirely removed from the genuine signature of Jacob Roos 1682-1730 as illustrated in Benezit's dictionary [Photo MPFA fd3].

Fake Dates

It is most likely that the first date added to the Shepherdess painting was 1712. The bottom part of the first 1 matches the same part of the third digit. [Photo MPFA fd5].

The fourth digit is undoubtedly 2 and the only conceivable number between the 7 and the 2 is 1 [Photo MPFA fd4].

Pigment analysis confirms that the 1712 date and the Rosa signature are in the same paint [Sheldon Report]. It follows that if the date is forged, so also is the signature.

The pigment analysis report points to a mismatch between the orange paint of the scrolls and the reds and yellows found elsewhere in the Shepherdess painting and specifically in the various shades of red and orange used for the shepherdess costume. PLM analysis found that the earth pigments of the orange scrolls are of a size and colour not found in the shepherdess costume. PLM also identified a bright yellow earth in the scrolls rather than the Naples yellow found elsewhere [Sheldon Report]. This points emphatically to the orange scrolls as later additions.

As the blue paint of the 6 sits beneath and on top of this orange paint, it is clear that the 6 and the scrolls are later interventions added to the Shepherdess painting at the same time.

Brush-Print Anomalies

When we compare the light blue of the 1 and the 7 to the dark blue of the 6, apart from the mismatch in colour, we also find an entirely different brush-print [Photo MPFA fd5]. In the light blue, the paint application is streaked. This is caused by a separation of the hairs of a stiff brush combined with a fluid paint mix. These characteristics are absent in the dark blue paint of the 6, which has been applied with a different brush and a different paint mixture [Photo MPFA fd6].

Infra Red and Ultra Violet

Tampering with the signature and date is further confirmed under infrared and ultra violet light [Photo MPFA fd8 & 14].

Extensive repainting of the sky is similarly confirmed. The same sources also identify a connection between the repainted sky, the shepherdess costume and the added 6 [IACC Report]. There is significant evidence to suggest that this took place immediately after the paintings were lined.

X-rays

There is a significant mismatch in the x-rays of the signature, the date, and the bodice of the shepherdess costume [IACC Report]. The x-rays of the Shepherdess painting show a consistent distribution of lead white paint, particularly in the various animals depicted. [Photo MPFA fd11].

There is no reason why the same consistency should not be found in the signature, the date, and the costume. However, the x-rays indicate that there is no lead present in either the date or the costume whereas lead is immediately obvious in the x-ray of the signature [Photos MPFA fd12 & 13]. This suggests that these three elements were painted in a different paint mixture with only the paint of the signature containing a significant element of lead white. Notwithstanding the likelihood that indigo blue was used for all three passages, one can only conclude that all three passages were painted in different paint mixtures and at different times.

Impasto

In both paintings, there is a degree of impasto far removed from what one would find in European paintings from the early 1700s [Photo MPFA fd16]. In our recent survey of every painting hanging in the National Gallery of Ireland from 1680 to 1730, not one example with raised impasto was recorded. In fact, the opposite was found. Surface flatness is a hallmark of paintings from this period. This key factor in establishing the age of the current paintings is entirely missing. In fact, these paintings have all the appearances of work from the 19th century.

Craquelure

There are significant variations in the craquelure pattern of both paintings. The entire sky in both works has been repainted. In these passages, the original craquelure has been partially filled in by the over-paint. It is significant that the craquelure in the over-paint is of an entirely different pattern, the extent and finesse of which suggests that the overpainting is relatively recent and probably dates to the time when the paintings were lined.

As the white jug appears to have been added to the original copy within ten years or so of it being painted, this section of added paint has formed a craquelure, which follows the main body of the original copy below.

Although it appears that the craquelure of the added 6 follows this same pattern, it is more likely that the wide crevices in the 6 were avoided during application of the addition. This is suggested by unopened micro fissures, visible only under strong magnification, which follow the pattern of the finer secondary crevices of the paint below [Photo MPFA fd15].

Lining of Both Paintings

Both paintings have been lined and it is significant that there is no evidence of a flattening of the 6 resulting from the lining process [Photos MPFA fd6, 7 & 15].

Soft Paint

We found an inexplicable softness of paint in four areas chosen at random from the top and left rebate areas of each painting [Photo MPFA fd17]. If these works had been painted in 1706, they should now be as hard as glass and capable of withstanding such a test.

Pigmented Varnish

A test to the edge of the Shepherdess painting revealed that the work is coated with a heavily pigmented varnish, which dissolves in white spirit. The exposed paint looks remarkably clean and shows none of the characteristics of paint from the early 1700s. The exposed paint uncovered in this test is remarkably similar to the paint surrounding the R in the Rosa signature [Photo MPFA fd7].

The pigmented varnish gives a false appearance of age and obscures much of the tampering and anomalies described here. [Photo MPFA fd4, 5, 6 & 7].

Canvas

At the bottom left of the Goatherd painting, a small section of the original canvas is exposed. The matching warp and weave threads suggest that this is a machine made canvas similar to that widely available in the 19th century. [Photo MPFA fd18].

Both paintings appear to have been reduced from their original size. For example, in the Shepherdess painting, an uneven and brittle paint edge runs through the right foot of the shepherdess.

Provenance

The attribution of these paintings to Jacob Roos was invented in 2015, three-hundred-and-nine years after they were supposedly painted.

The paintings do not have a provenance tracing to the artist. The St. Anne's provenance referred to in Adam's auction catalogue is not documented and shows an overwhelming gap of one-hundred-and-twenty-nine years between the proposed date of 1706 and the purchase of the St. Anne's property in Clontarf by Benjamin Guinness in 1835.

It is difficult to understand why the paintings were not included in the 1939 auction of the *entire* contents of St. Anne's.

On the back of the Shepherdess painting, the number 1688 is written in chalk. [Photo MPFA fd19]. We can discount this as lot number 1688 in the Benjamin Guinness dispersal sale conducted by Jackson Stops and McCabe from the 9th to the 23rd October 1939 at St. Anne's. Lot 1688 in that sale was 'Le Petit-Trianon', a book by Gustave Desjardins.

All of the paintings from the Benjamin Guinness collection were sold on Monday, 16th October 1939. The oil paintings commenced at lot 1200. The watercolours were lots 1271 to 1363. The sale was advertised as the *entire* contents of St. Anne's.

Removal of Labels

There is no explanation for the partial removal of the ‘mascau 1932’ labels on the backs of both works. [Photos MPFA fd20 & 21]. The label remnants are solidly adhered to the stretcher bars, which rules out accidental loss. The word mascau may form part of a title rather than a name. The word means masked in Romanian.

Two other intact labels record the initials WM 910 p-p and WM 922 p-p [Photos MPFA fd22 & 23]. These have the appearance of inventory or warehouse labels. An inscription in chalk, PZP5D, is probably related to these [Photo MPFA fd24].

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APPENDIX A - PHOTOGRAPHS



'Shepherdess painting'



'Goatherd painting'

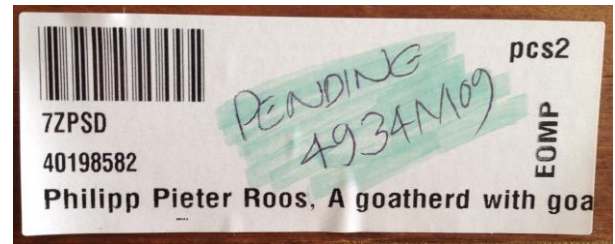


Photo MPFA fd1. Sotheby's label attached to the Goatherd painting. The label confirms that the paintings were not consigned as the work of Jacob Roos 1682-1730.

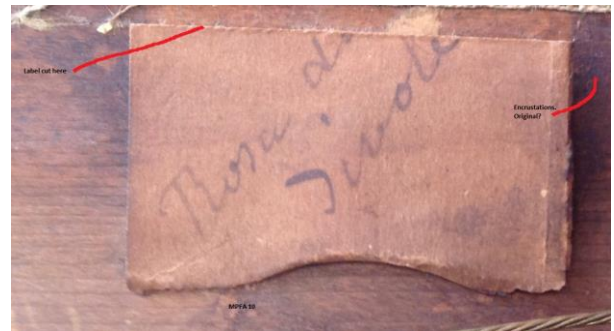


Photo MPFA fd2. Label fragment attached to the Goatherd painting. Rosa di Tivoli is the pseudonym of Philipp Peter Roos 1657-1706.

The label has been cut along the edge indicated in red. The ridge to the right of the label suggests that it was originally attached elsewhere.



Photo MPFA fd3. The style and handwriting of the 'signature' and 'date' are entirely removed from the genuine signature of Jacob Roos 1682-1730. The Jacob Roos signature on the right is copied from E. Benezit, Dictionnaire Peintres, Sculpturs, 1976 ed., vol. 9, p.76.



Photo MPFA fd4. The 1712 date, added at the same time as the white jug.

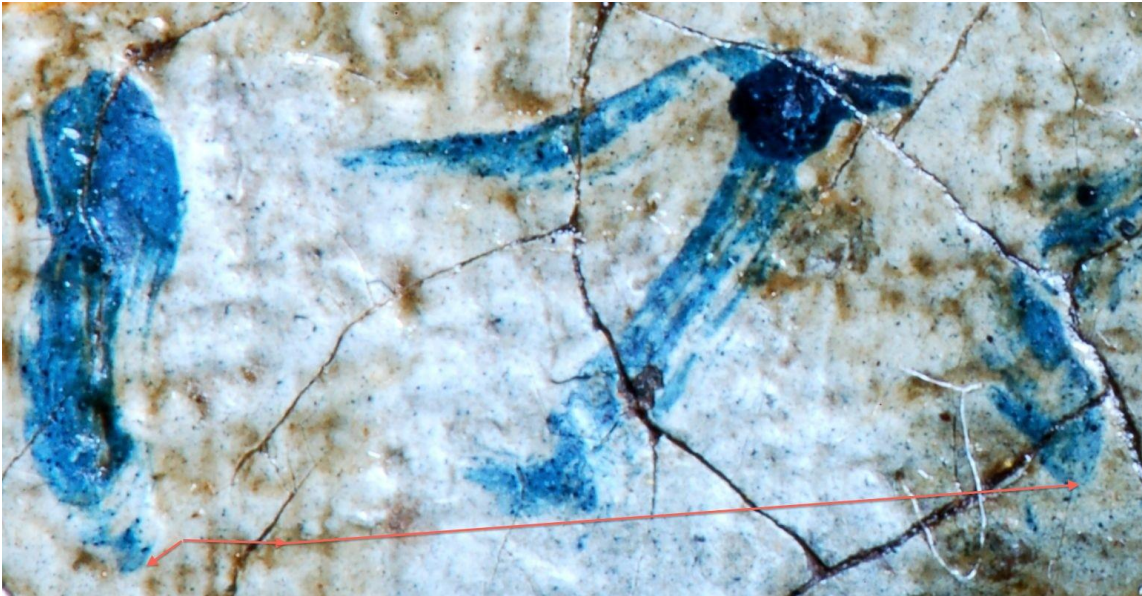


Photo MPFA fd5. Indicated in red, the tail of the first 1 matches the tail of the third digit.

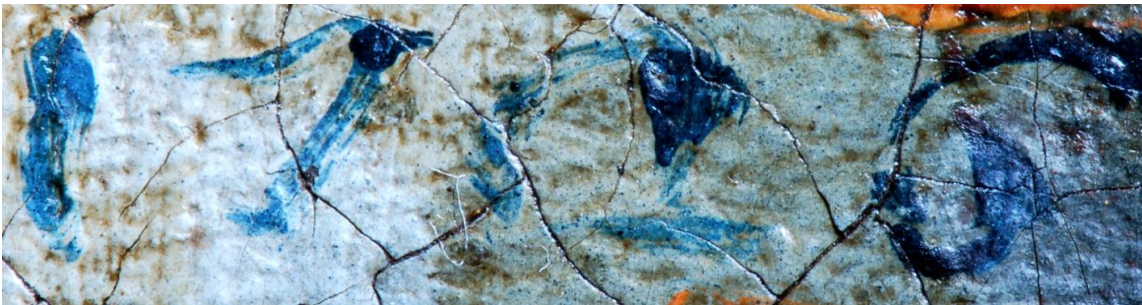


Photo MPFA fd6. The fourth digit cannot be read as anything other than 2. The only conceivable number between the 7 and the 2 is 1. It is assumed that the top of the third digit was removed when the 6 was added.

The mismatch in colour with the 6 is patently clear. The irregular spacing and misalignment of the 6 is also obvious. The brush-print of the light blue 1712 is entirely different to the dark blue of the 6.



Photo MPFA fd7. Indicated in yellow, there appears to be an attempt to blend the added 6 with the signature and date. Circled in black in the photograph, a lighter application of the dark blue paint was added to the third digit in an attempt to form a 0.



Photo MPFA fd8. Source IACC Report. Detail of jug added to the Shepherdess painting photographed in infrared fluorescence. The 6 stands out as a later addition to the previously added jug.



Photo MPFA fd9. This photo shows a detail from the added jug. Indicated in yellow is the first digit of the date, which locates the site. Indicated in red, the photo shows losses to the paint edges, which expose the brownish green paint layer below the added paint of the jug. Under magnification, the texture and pattern of the lower layer is distinct and matches that of the brownish green foreground in the foreground to the left of the jug. Indicated in blue is the site where we carried out a test in which we removed a chip of paint. It would not be possible to make such a separation of layers if the white paint of the jug had been applied at the same time as the main body of the work. Indicated in green is the site of a further test. We found under magnification that white spirit and a minimum degree of manipulation caused the white paint layer to crumble into a powder. If the white paint had aged for 312 years, it would have withstood this test.

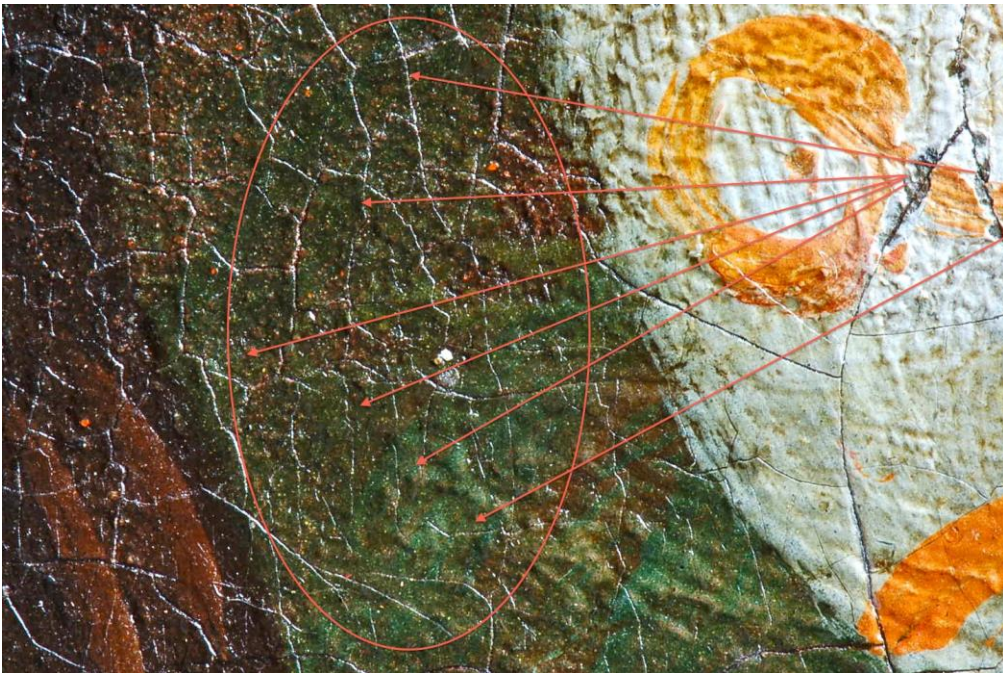


Photo MPFA fd10. Indicated in red, this photo shows the main body of the work to the left of the jug and how the overall texture matches the layer in the crevices of the craquelure to the right.



Photo MPFA fd11. Detail from x-ray IACC 1745/RX2. The lighter areas demonstrate an even distribution of lead white paint.

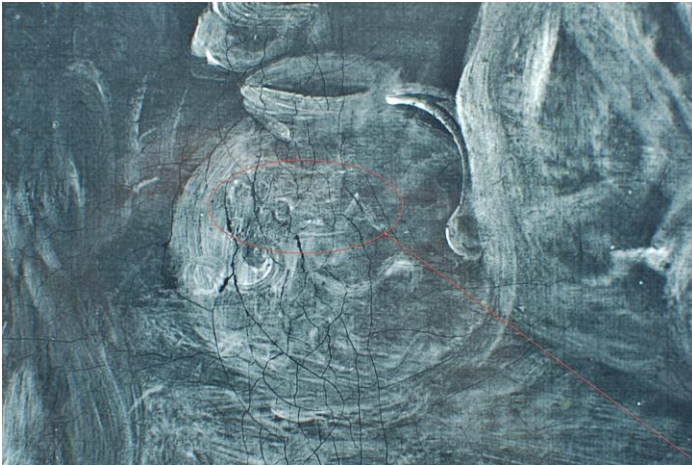


Photo MPFA fd12. Detail from x-ray IACC 1745/RX2. Indicated in red, the lead white contained in the 'ROSA' inscription is visible. The date is invisible.

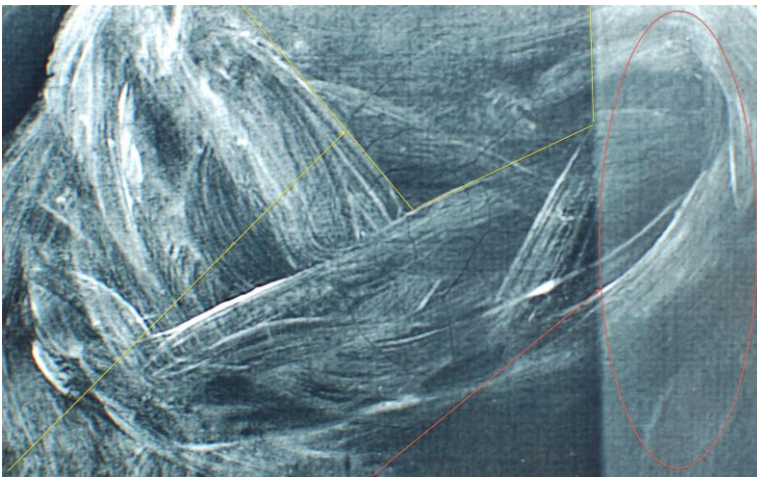


Photo MPFA fd13. Detail from x-ray IACC 1745/RX2. Indicated in yellow, there is no lead white visible in the blue of the shepherdess costume. Indicated in red, the canvas stretcher is to the right

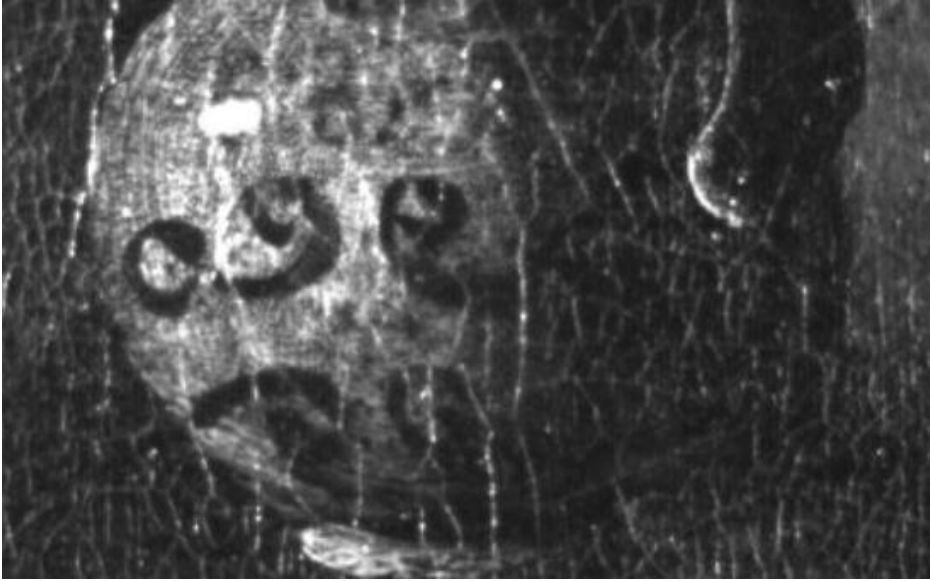


Photo MPFA fd14. Detail from the added jug. In this ultra violet reflectograph, the ROSA inscription is visible but the date is not. The dark colouring of the scrolls suggests that they are additions. The detail is copied from the IACC report.



Photo MPFA fd15. Detail showing upper tail of the added 6. Although it appears that the craquelure of the added 6 follows the pattern of the paint below, it is most likely that the wide crevices in the 6 were avoided during application. This is suggested by unopened micro fissures, visible only under strong magnification, which follow the pattern of the finer secondary crevices of the paint below.

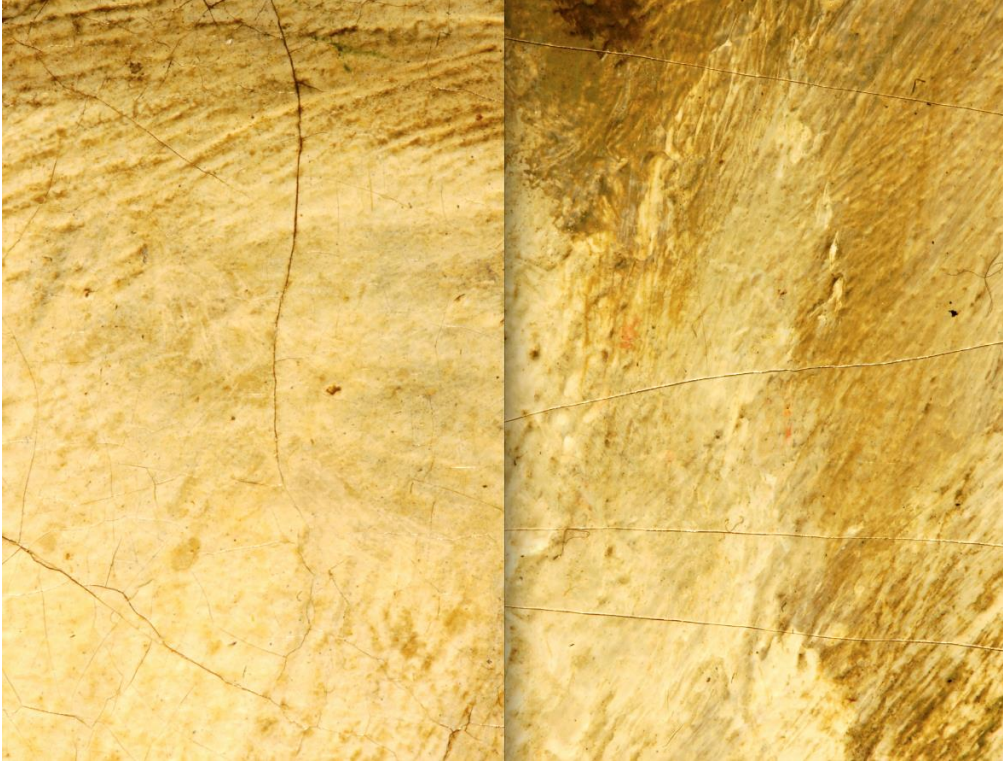


Photo MPFA fd16. In comparison of the paintings to 19th century impasto and craquelure, we found many similarities. On the left is a detail taken from half way along the back of the goat in front of the shepherdess. We compared this to a detail chosen at random from a painting by Charles Wynne Nicol, exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1885. The Nicol painting happened to be the nearest painting to hand. Both paintings display many similarities in texture, craquelure, and impasto.



Photo MPFA fd17. Four tests for hardness of the paint are illustrated above. The site of each test was chosen at random from the top and left rebate areas, two from each painting. Micro tests across both paintings show a similar degree of softness in the paint, which in some places is as soft as unset putty. If these paintings were from the early 1700s, the paint would now be more than hard enough to withstand such a test. The softness of the paint points to work from the late 19th century.



Photo MPFA fd18. Detail from bottom left of the Goatherd painting, the original canvas is indicated in yellow. The threads suggest a 19th century mass-produced canvas. Indicated in red, the lining canvas is to the left with a vertical line of restoration paint to the right.



Photo MPFA fd19. On stretcher bar of the Goatherd painting, this appears to be a lot number



Photo MPFA fd22. Two inventory or warehouse type labels.



Photo MPFA fd20. Remnants of two labels dated 1932.



Photo MPFA fd23. Both are from the Goatherd painting.



Photo MPFA fd21. Both are from the Goatherd painting.



Photo MPFA fd24. Inscribed in chalk on the frame housing the Goatherd painting, PZP5D is probably related to the paper labels above.