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THE SAINT SEBASTIAN BY ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO

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The Saint Sebastian by Andrea del Castagno recently acquired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art is a strikingly simple picture. Castagno has painted the saint as a thin and wiry youth, tied naked to a tree trunk. Deeply wounded by the arrows of his executioners, he stands alone on the top of a hill against a clear blue sky, his head raised up toward an angel who brings him the crown and palm of martyrdom. Behind him in the distance a river flows through a green valley, and beyond on the horizon is a range of barren hills. The solid and sculptural feeling of the figure, the straightforward, almost violent action of the angel, and the unusually broad and spacious landscape in which the scene is set immediately command attention. The picture is a significant addition to the collections, not only because of its quality but also because of its importance in the development of painting during the Renaissance.

The painting was executed as a votive image, commissioned either as an offering in gratitude for Saint Sebastian’s intercession against the plague or to decorate a chapel dedicated to prayers for protection against this disease, which ravaged Florence and the rest of Italy during the fifteenth century. It was a constantly recurring scourge of the period: Vasari tells us how Piero della Francesca left Borgo San Sepolcro and sought refuge from the plague at Bastia; Dürer gave up his projected visit to Mantegna because it was raging in Mantua; and we know that many of the great of the day succumbed to it, among them Castagno himself.

Our panel was probably placed on the altar of a chapel dedicated to Saint Sebastian, or hung on the pillar of a church. It is best seen when one’s eyes are about at the level of the horizon, which indicates that it was originally in a high position. It may have been one of the panels of a polyptych made up of several saints on either side of a Madonna. In such altarpieces, however, the figures are almost always on the same level and of the same size, which would not be possible in this case. There is nothing on the back of the panel that would show that it was formerly attached to anything else.

The worship of Saint Sebastian as a “plague saint” is characteristic of the Renaissance but was not common in earlier times. As the story is told in the Acta Sanctorum and the Golden Legend, Sebastian, a Roman soldier converted to Christianity, was most successful in persuading other Christians to sacrifice all human ideals and sentiments in favor of martyrdom. To the sophisticated Romans his intransigent and sectarian arguments must have sounded somewhat like the Communist party line when it is carried to extremes today. The Emperor Diocletian, hearing of his activities, condemned him to be put to death by his archers. They took him to the Palatine Hippodrome, shot him until he looked “like a hedgehog,” and left him for dead. But Irene, a devout woman, nursed him and brought him back to life (an incident in the story so beautifully represented by Georges de la Tour in the painting from Berlin recently exhibited in this Museum). Soon afterwards he confronted the emperor on the steps of the temple of Hercules and reproached him publicly for his persecution of the Christians. This time the emperor had him clubbed to death and thrown into the Cloaca Maxima, the great sewer of Rome, so that the Christians would not revere him as a martyr. On the following day, however, the saint revealed the whereabouts of his body to Saint Lucy and asked that he be buried near the apostles.

At first, in the early Christian churches, he is represented among the other martyrs, fully clothed, holding his attribute, an arrow. During the Middle Ages he became the patron saint

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of archers and continued to be shown in the same way, as in a stained-glass window of Strasbourg cathedral or a statue at Freiburg in Breisgau. The first record of his having the power to prevent the plague is to be found in the inscription in San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome, which relates how the building of a chapel in his honor put an end to a terrible outbreak in 680 A.D. But he does not seem to have been generally venerated for this reason until the end of the Middle Ages.

It is at that time that representations in which arrows play an important part begin to appear more often. Since Old Testament and classical times they had been symbols of disease and death (Job 6. 14; Ezekiel 5. 16; Iliad i. 37). Sometimes the saint is shown covering a kneeling crowd with his cloak to protect them from the shafts which the Almighty rains down from above, as in the fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli in Sant' Agostino at San Gimignano. The scene with the archers is the most frequent. In this he is naked, tied to a column and shot at by his tormentors in the presence of the emperor, as in the panel by Semitecolo (dated 1367) in the library at Padua or the fourteenth-century triptych in the cathedral of Florence.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century there appears the type to which our picture belongs, in which the saint is shown alone, wounded by arrows, sometimes with an angel. Here the subject has become symbolic of man's body afflicted with disease. This was in accord with the new Renaissance preoccupation with man's physical nature, as is the youthful appearance of the saint, who had previously almost always been shown with a beard. In the 1430's, Donatello had transformed John the Baptist in a similar way.

Andrea del Castagno is, unfortunately, one of the least known of fifteenth-century painters. The recorded facts of his life are few. It now appears probable from documents that he was born at San Martino a Corella, in the Mugello, in 1423. This is more than twenty years later than was formerly believed, which explains why such an original painter was not mentioned by Alberti, in 1435, among the great Florentine innovators. According to the story of his beginnings Castagno was, like
Giotto, a young shepherd who first showed his talent by drawing animals on stones. At an early age he was noticed by Bernardetto de' Medici, who brought him to Florence.

In 1440, when only seventeen years old, he was commissioned to paint the rebels who had fought against Florence at the battle of Anghiari, in effigy as hanging criminals, on the walls of the Palace of the Podestà. These frescoes have since disappeared. Two years later he signed the series of saints in the vault of the chapel of San Tarasio in San Zaccaria, Venice. In 1444 he was commissioned to design a stained-glass window for the cathedral, and a few months later, at the age of twenty-one, he matriculated in the painters’ guild. In 1449 he painted the altarpiece of San Miniato fra le Torri, the Assumption of the Virgin, now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum collections and recently exhibited here. In 1456 he painted his last work, the large equestrian portrait of the condottiere Niccolò da Tolentino, in the cathedral. He died of the plague in 1457.

Although nothing definite has come down to us about his masters, critics generally agree that he probably began with a conservative painter of the type of Paolo Schiavo. Baldinucci and Lanzi both speak of him as studying Masaccio’s frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel; and he also appears to have been strongly influenced by Donatello and Uccello. He is said to have been a fine draughtsman, to have had a good sense of modeling, and to have been much interested in foreshortening. According to Vasari he was a crude colorist.

More than twenty-five paintings have been described by various authors as the work of Castagno, but many of these have disappeared. Of those which still exist ten are frescoes and four are panels. Besides the works already mentioned in connection with documents concerning his life—the saints in San Tarasio, the Assumption of the Virgin, and the Niccolò da Tolentino—the following are those generally accepted as being by his hand.

**Frescoes:**

- Madonna with Saints, Angels, and Two Small Children Offering Flowers (formerly in Castello di Trebbio, now in the Contini Bonacossi collection, Florence).
- Crucifixion (Angeli Monastery, Florence).
- Pietà, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Entombment, and Last Supper (Sant’Apollonia, Florence).
- Series of Famous Men and Women (formerly in the Carducci Villa, Legnaia, recently in the Strozzi Palace, Florence).
- Trinity with Saint Jerome and Two Holy Women, and Christ and Saint Julian (Santissima Annunziata, Florence).
- Crucifixion (formerly in the Angeli Monastery, Florence, now in Sant’Apollonia).

**Panels:**

- Crucifixion (National Gallery, London).
- Resurrection (Frick Collection, New York).
- David, painting on a leather shield (National Gallery, Washington).

There is a variety of styles in these paintings that has made it difficult for historians to agree on a chronological order for them. But Castagno’s whole activity as a painter did not last more than eighteen years at the most. He is said to have been precocious; even so, it is hardly likely that he had developed a mature style when he
died at the age of thirty-four. A young man learning to paint in the Florence of his day, witnessing the experiments and innovations of such giants as Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Masaccio, would naturally himself have tried every kind of style in seeking that which would suit his talents best.

With so little to judge by and such variety of style, it is a problem to place the Saint Sebastian in relation to the other paintings of Castagno. The small number of panels makes it especially difficult. The tempera technique allows more detailed and finished work and creates differences in style in comparison with the broader and more spontaneous technique of fresco.

To establish the place of our picture in Castagno’s work it will be necessary to proceed by isolating in it those qualities of the painter’s style and method which are basic to his way of seeing and working and which must, therefore, be present to some extent in all of his work. They will be found in the emotional content of his pictures—in his way of expressing meaning—and in the different ways in which he defines form.

Broadly speaking, Castagno can be said to have painted two kinds of pictures, those in which the figures are statuesque and restrained, such as the heroes and heroines of the Villa Legnaia or the two saints of the Berlin Assumption, and those which are moving and dynamic, such as the apostles in the Last Supper of Sant’Apollonia or the Saint Jerome of the Annunziata. The figure of Saint Sebastian clearly belongs to the former group, whereas the angel has affinities with the latter. A similar mixture of types exists in the Berlin Assumption, where the swirling movement of the Virgin and her attendant angels contrasts with the immobility of Saint Julian and Saint Miniato.

The combination, as we see it in both these types, of emotional restraint and powerful form is the chief characteristic of Castagno’s style. He has not the awe-inspiring majesty of Masaccio, nor the expressive qualities of Donatello, nor the decorative sense of Uccello, but his figures have a strength and simplicity that set them apart in their period. This is already noticeable in what is still visible of the vault of the San Tarasio chapel in Venice. It is fully developed in the Sant’Apollonia frescoes: in the heads of Saint John and the dead Christ in the Entomb-

*The details on this page are from Castagno’s Assumption of the Virgin*
ment, in the youthful Christ of the Resurrection, and above all in the Last Supper, where the gestures of figures such as Saint Thomas, Saint James, or Judas are marvels of dignity and reserve. It is difficult to see the “brutality” which has been ascribed to these paintings by nineteenth-century criticism.

The keynote of Castagno’s representation of Saint Sebastian is restraint. The scene is reduced to its simplest terms: no executioners, no emperor, no architecture. The story is told by the physical appearance of the saint, his strong young body deeply wounded by the arrows, by the direct flight of the angel, who comes down like a bolt from heaven, and by the setting high above a distant landscape with a broad horizon. There is no distortion, no violence of expression. One feels that sentiment is consciously and willfully suppressed.

The Saint Sebastian is an excellent example of Castagno’s feeling for plastic form. Drawing was to him a secondary part of his art. He was
more sensitive to volume than to line—a sculptor painter rather than a draughtsman. When he used line it had vitality and strength but always a certain stiffness and lack of feeling. He rarely used it to define roundness, but rather as a continuous outline marking the boundaries within which he modeled form by light and shade. Perhaps he derived this sense of outline from Uccello, with whom it was a characteristic. Obvious examples of it are in the legs of the Saint Sebastian, his neck, and his face. Line is used to define form only in the toes of the right foot and to a very limited degree in the bend of the arms and on the left hip.

This silhouette outline recurs in varying degrees in many of his works: in the legs of the Saint Julian and in the heads of the Berlin Assumption, in the bodies of Christ and the thieves in the London Crucifixion, and in the head of Queen Tomyris from the Villa Legnaiia. But Castagno clearly did not feel at ease in the use of line, and as he developed, it occurs less and less. In the Annunziata frescoes and in the Niccolò da Tolentino it has practically disappeared.

As we look at this picture, the first thing that draws our attention is the tough, muscular body held up against the sky. One is acutely aware of its hard, round quality. This is due to strong light which shines on the figure from the left in contrast to the gently diffused light in the rest of the painting. However, it is not simply a question of solidity, for one also feels the inner structure of muscle and bone that give it vitality. The arms, the shoulders, the legs are all eminently capable of action. The same impression is given by the hard, almost metallic form of the angel, which is revealed by the folds of the drapery. There is solidity everywhere in the picture, in the tree trunk, in the rocks, and in the hills in the background.

The body of the young Christ in the Resurrection in Sant'Apollonia has this same plastic quality, particularly in his upraised arm, his neck and head. The angels on either side of the Crucifixion are also like our angel. In the Sant'Apollonia frescoes Castagno has also used two different types of lighting: gently diffused on the scenes from the Passion and sharply contrasting on the Last Supper. In the frescoes from the Villa Legnaiia each section of the armor of the Pippo Spano or the Farinata degli Uberti is a distinct, solid, almost geometrical volume, but they all co-ordinate logically to make up one highly organic figure. How different these figures would have been painted by Masaccio, Uccello, or Piero della Francesca, how static and immobile. In Castagno, while their power and monumentality are preserved, there is always a subtle sense of the possibility of movement.

Among the artists of the fifteenth century there is none who so strikingly announces the coming of Michelangelo. Masaccio's figures, with all their monumental qualities, are uniformly statuesque, essentially immobile. Uccello, even in the Deluge, never breaks free from the rigorous patterns of medieval decoration. Domenico Veneziano is interested in something entirely different, fascinated by surface detail, like the northern painters from whom he had learnt the oil technique for which he was famous. If Castagno resembles an artist of this time it is Donatello, a sculptor rather than a painter.

Indeed the hard plastic quality of the Saint Sebastian and his pose standing on the impro-

The angel bringing the palm and crown of martyrdom, from Castagno's Saint Sebastian.
vised tree-trunk pedestal are so sculptural that they suggest the idea that Castagno may have taken one of Donatello's statues as a model for his painting—perhaps even the lost Saint Sebastian in wood mentioned by Vasari. Another possible source for the figure might be the Isaac in the Sacrifice of Abraham which Ghiberti submitted in the competition for the bronze doors of the Baptistry in 1401. There the position of the head is different, but the rest of the body to the knees is very similar. The relief was famous at the time and would surely have been studied by a young artist in Florence.

The pose is fundamentally classical and if the figure was derived neither from Donatello nor from Ghiberti, it may have been inspired by a Greek or Roman torso which the young Castagno had seen in the Medici collections. The fact that the arms are too short for the body might almost confirm such a theory; the model may not have had any.

The wiry and muscular anatomy is that of a shepherd of the Mugello rather than a Greek ephebus. In combination with the handsome but not pretty face this realism again recalls the work of Donatello. The type is similar to the bronze David in the Bargello or the young John the Baptist from the Casa Martelli; whereas the schematized anatomy—noticeable particularly in the left leg—is very close to that of the Crucified Christ in Santa Croce and the marble John the Baptist in the Bargello. In the London Crucifixion the schematized anatomy again occurs, particularly in the legs of the crucified thief to the right.

Vasari writes of the beauty of the angels which Castagno painted "in the air, which had not hitherto been done." What was new in Castagno's angels was the combination of movement with solidity of form. Angels bringing crowns from heaven occur frequently in medieval painting, but they are almost always disembodied creatures whose wings and drapery serve in most cases as linear decorative patterns.

Here the subject is treated with extraordinary naturalism, not only in the body, which is articulated and visible through the drapery, but in the movement, which is that of flight, with, at the same time, an effort to slow down a headlong impetus with the outstretched wings. The large scale of the angel in relation to the saint somehow enhances the sense of actuality.

Castagno used angels in several of his compositions, although none have quite the originality of this one. In the Berlin Assumption four of them hold up the canopy of clouds on which the Virgin is rising to heaven. The folds of their draperies, and the way in which they reveal the body beneath, are the same. But they have not the same bold volume nor the sense of purpose. Indeed, they still seem quite linear and decorative by comparison. This is consistent with the rest of the picture, which, with its gold background, is the most conservative work we have of Castagno's hand.

In the Sant' Apollonia Passion the angels are placed flying high up in space in the composition much in the same manner as in the Saint Sebastian. In other respects they are also alike, especially in the violent and positive character of their actions. One has only to compare...
them with those in the Crucifixion by Paolo Schiavo, also in Sant' Apollonia, to realize the extent of the change which Castagno has brought about.

Although he may well have worked out this new interpretation for himself, nevertheless it is tempting to think that it is another lesson learned in the Brancacci Chapel. There, in the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, the Archangel, though different in many details, has a similar upright position and movement, the same sense of volume, the same drapery pushed forward by the knee, the same expression, and about the same relation in scale to the figures.

The landscape is one of the most extraordinary aspects of the Saint Sebastian, and it seems unique in the first half of the fifteenth century. The treatment of space is essential to the general effect and one of the chief causes of the picture’s freshness and breadth of conception. Just as one is aware of the three-dimensional quality of the figure, or in other words of the existence of the parts of it which one does not see, so one feels very vividly the presence of a great, almost limitless body of space or air behind it.

Castagno has succeeded in giving this impression partly by using two sources for the light, which is broad and diffused in the landscape and concentrated from the left on the figures. This sets the figures forward in sharp relief, seemingly almost at the plane of the frame. The effect is increased by the gradation of the sky.
from a fairly intense blue above to almost white at the horizon and by the composition of the landscape itself, which leads the eye step by step into the distance: first the flat, slightly rising foreground, then the drop into the green river valley (before the color was worn away this must have been dramatically emphasized by the small white house with a red roof on the brow of the hill just to the left of the figure), and finally the semicircular bowl surrounded by hills, which creates, so to speak, a half-cylinder shape, a niche of space behind the figure.

All of Castagno's known works, with the exception of the Berlin Assumption, show interest in the representation of space. This may again be the influence of the Brancacci Chapel, where Masaccio surrounded his powerful figures with atmosphere. Unfortunately, few of Castagno's works which have come down to us contain landscapes, but in each one of these the methods and the results resemble the Saint Sebastian. In the three scenes from the Passion in Sant' Apollonia there is the same arrangement of large-scale figures placed in the foreground against a low horizon, with a broad expanse of sky graded down almost white at the skyline, and in the distance rolling hills, treated not as conventional silhouettes but as rounded surfaces which seem to lead the eye over and beyond the horizon. The fresco of the Trinity with Saint Jerome and Two Holy Women in the Annunziata is composed in the same way.

The predella panel of the Crucifixion with the Virgin and Saint John in the National Gallery, London, seems to be the closest to the Saint Sebastian. The composition is similar and even the details are strikingly alike: the flat promontory as foreground with the same stones and isolated tufts of grass and other plants, the same river valley, with an almost identical river bend, occasional buildings, and on the horizon, rounded, barren hills. The clouds are also executed in the same manner.

In the foreground of our picture there are carefully defined rocks and flowers, which bring to mind the passage in which Cennino Cennini (Chapter 88) advises, when painting a landscape, first to study rocks in the studio and then to carry out the mountains as one has the rocks.

The distant landscape on the other hand is remarkably modern in its rendering, in the suggestion of atmosphere and in the way in which the transition of values is smoothly and accurately carried out. Of course, one must not forget that with time the painting has undergone certain changes due to surface wear and to alteration of the greens, which were brighter originally. This has brought about a general blurring of the outline and made the gradations less distinct. It is also important to remember that today we have become trained to appreciate the landscapes of Corot and the Impressionists, the success of which is due in large part to such effects. This is what makes the landscape especially attractive and beautiful to modern eyes. However, even if one imagines how it must have looked originally, it is still in advance of its time.

At first sight the landscapes of Piero della Francesca, the Baptism in London or the Resurrection in Borgo San Sepolcro, seem to be of the same type. But on closer examination it becomes evident that in them the basic system is different: distance is given by diminution in scale of the trees and other objects, which are always equally clearly defined regardless of where they are placed. Even in the beautiful landscapes of the Montefeltro portraits the treatment is topographical and conservative.

It is in the paintings of Fra Angelico and his workshop that Castagno may have found his inspiration for our landscape. In the predella of the Life of the Virgin in Cortona, in the Stoning of Saint Stephen in the Vatican, and in several of the San Marco frescoes there is the same atmosphere, although the hills, rocks, and trees are still conventionalized and medieval. Castagno has brought them closer to nature.

The color composition of our panel is a characteristic element as far as Castagno is concerned. Vasari twice draws attention to the fact that he was an unsuccessful colorist. There is certainly a lack of harmony in the Saint Sebastian. This is particularly noticeable in the top half of the picture, where the bright blues, reds, and purple of varying intensities are antagonistic to each other. The lower half, in contrast, is remarkably sober, painted in brown, olive
green, and gray, the only real color being the pale purple loincloth. As we have already seen the harmony in the landscape may be due to a certain amount of neutralization of the colors with time, but even if this is taken into account the difference between the lower and the upper parts of the panel is striking.

In the left wing of the angel the shadows are given an iridescent quality by the addition of streaks of deep red. This occurs frequently in Castagno's work as, for instance, in the Sant' Apollonia Passion, where we also see the same kind of purple. Among the panels, the Berlin Assumption has a similar lack of general harmony, and the headdress of the Virgin and the flesh tones are close to our picture. The London Crucifixion has what appears to be exactly the same color combination, although it is difficult to make a comparison when there is such a difference in scale.

The analysis of the Saint Sebastian and the comparison with other works of Castagno have brought out certain qualities which appear constantly in his work: the simplicity and restraint with which he expresses emotion, the powerful sense of plasticity combined with inner vitality, the use of drawing for outline, and the treatment of space.

In our panel we find each one of these qualities in a less developed stage than in those paintings which are known to have been done at the end of his life. There is a certain awkwardness, a lack of sureness, which disappears later and which corresponds to what can be expected from a young painter who is beginning to form his style. Another sign of youth may be seen in the fact that the influence of the great figures of the preceding generation, Ghiberti, Masaccio, Donatello, is still evident—well understood but not yet completely assimilated.

Unfortunately very little is known about Castagno's early works. There is no indication of what the Hanging Rebels looked like. The frescoes in San Tarasio, painted in 1442, are the first about which we can form an opinion, although even this cannot be accurate because they are so difficult to see. They appear to have some of the elements later characteristic of his work, but they are much more medieval. The same is true of the stained-glass Deposition in the cathedral. If we examine the next dated painting, the Berlin Assumption of 1449, we find a considerable advance in every sense, not only on these two earlier works, but also on the Saint Sebastian. This leads to the conclusion that our panel was probably done in about 1445, after Castagno's return from Venice and when he had been in the atmosphere of Florence long enough to be completely aware of all the innovations there and to shake off the remaining influences of his retardataire master.

This was the dawn of the Renaissance when the first great men, Masaccio, Donatello, Brunelleschi, had produced their masterpieces, and it is the mood of this generation, which still combined faith with a universal curiosity about nature, that is reflected in the Saint Sebastian. The treatment of the theme is no longer a medieval account of torture, nor an almost pagan image as it would be later in the High Renaissance; it is a union of devotional feeling with the new admiration for the beauty of the human body. In the simplicity of its symbolism, it is perhaps the earliest example of a type that remained popular through the High Renaissance into the seventeenth century, one of the finest examples of which, by Botticelli, was recently seen here with the Berlin collections.

The placing of the martyred Saint Sebastian, the symbol of human suffering, before a broad panorama is a parallel in painting to Petrarch's reflections on the vanity of man when he reached the summit of Mount Ventoux and saw the whole of Provence stretched out before him. The landscape with its sensitivity to nature, its rendering of atmosphere, is a particularly vivid reflection of the spirit of the period. Alberti, perhaps the most typical of Renaissance men, was moved to tears when he saw fine trees and was cured of an illness by the sight of a beautiful landscape.

It is the combination of the youth and freshness of the painter with elements so representative of this time in history which make the Saint Sebastian a living example of what Michellet so admirably characterized as the achievement of the Renaissance: "the discovery of nature and the discovery of man."
TECHNICAL NOTES

The technique of the Saint Sebastion is the tempera technique that was used throughout the fourteenth century. The iridescent colors in the angel's wing were traditional in this method and were created with a bluish purple glaze applied over a red underground.

The only sign of recognition of the new oil techniques is in the landscape, in the foreground. Here a glaze of oil mixed with green (copper resinate) was painted over an under painting in tempera. With time, in such a glaze, the oil darkens, becomes brown, and the green loses its intensity. Evidence of the oil darkening is plainly visible around some of the plants. All these passages that are now brownish were originally much lighter and brighter green.

The painting is on an Italian poplar panel 3½ centimeters thick. This is made of two approximately equal pieces, the joint running roughly through the center of the figure. The frame molding is old in part and seems to occupy its original position.

The gesso is a little thicker than usual in such paintings. The gesso grosso, or basic layer, is reinforced with long, coarse, hemp-like fibers mixed in and applied with it. These are thicker along the joint and are responsible for the heavier horizontal crackle lines.

The surface of the paint has suffered some wear and, in restricted areas, severe damage. Owing perhaps to a candle which stood in front of it the paint was almost entirely destroyed in portions of the figure. The lost passages have been restored and are a good example of reconstruction based on available evidence.

The wear is even throughout, the worst losses having occurred in the foreground, where some of the modeling of the ground and even some of the shadows cast by stones and the tree stumps have almost disappeared. The angel's face and the forehead and chin of the saint have also lost much of their original form and color.

The pentimenti around the angel, the saint's arms and torso, and his left foot are due to alterations in color applied over the surrounding surfaces. Judging by the unbroken crackle pattern, these must have been done at about the time when the whole picture was painted.

They are doubtless due to changes in drawing made by the artist himself, although the clumsy drawing of the toe of the left foot might indicate the hand of a pupil.

X-rays show no evidence of a different form near the shoulders and arms, but they do reveal that originally the angel was larger and that his head was further forward.