

## The forgotten baroque master - authentication investigations of the painting attributed to J. J. Knechtel

Anna Rogulska<sup>1\*</sup>, Katarzyna Wantuch-Jarkiewicz<sup>2</sup>, Monika Czarnecka<sup>3</sup>, Barbara Łydzba-Kopczyńska<sup>4,5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Chemistry, Jagiellonian University, Ingardena 3, 30-060 Krakow, Poland*

<sup>2</sup>*The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design, Plac Polski 3/4, 51-156 Wrocław, Poland*

<sup>3</sup>*Faculty of Chemistry, University of Wrocław, F. Joliot Curie 14, 50-383 Wrocław, Poland*

<sup>4</sup>*Faculty of Chemistry, University of Wrocław, F. Joliot Curie 14, 50-383 Wrocław, Poland 2)*

<sup>5</sup>*National Museum in Kraków, Laboratory of Analysis and Non-Destructive Investigation of Heritage Objects, Piłsudskiego 14, 31-109 Kraków, Poland*

\*[rogulska@chemia.uj.edu.pl](mailto:rogulska@chemia.uj.edu.pl)

The recovery of the artistic heritage of Joseph Jeremias Knechtel is believed to be an important juncture in the art historical study of Baroque Silesian art. J. J. Knechtel was almost completely forgotten and his works were hardly known by art historians.

Several paintings attributed to Knechtel were subjected to comprehensive investigations within the research project completed by the Cultural Heritage Research Laboratory. The results delivered information about the painting technique and materials employed by the artist. Moreover, the attribution of the painting "Bolko Świdnicki" to Knechtel was confirmed<sup>1</sup>. Thus, further development of the database created by experts from different fields including art history, chemistry<sup>1</sup> and conservation<sup>2</sup> became essential in broadening the knowledge of Knechtel's workshop.

Recently, conservation treatments of "Madonna and Child" from the main altar in the church of SS. Simon and Jude Thaddeus in Rudno (formerly Rauden, Lubuskie province, Poland) began, aimed at recovery of the original appearance of the painting. The main image of the altarpiece was signed by Knechtel, but not "Madonna and Child". Stylistic analogy between these two paintings is significant, but due to the lack of signature and former conservation interventions, the attribution to Knechtel was questioned. It is worth mentioning that the artists treated the paintings from the top part of the altar as their commission. Thus, leaving them unsigned was a common practice.

To confirm the authorship of "Madonna and Child", the painting was subjected to comprehensive investigations based mostly on non-invasive and non-destructive physicochemical analyses. UV and IR photography was performed to determine the state of the preservation of the painting and to specify the area for collection of micro-samples. The paint cross-sections were submitted to optical microscopy in order to characterize their stratigraphy. The application of Raman spectroscopy, SEM-EDS point analysis and mapping delivered information about pigments used and their distribution in different layers. Additionally, GC-MS analysis provided complementary information about organic media employed.

The results of the investigations were subjected to the comprehensive analysis together with the data from the developed database and allowed the verification of the attribution of the analyzed painting. Moreover, stylistic analysis of "Madonna and Child" was carried out by an art historian, which further supported Knechtel's authorship of this painting. It belongs to a wide range of representations of the Madonna, originating from the Byzantine depiction of Our Lady Eleusa (Greek: showing mercy).

Łydzba-Kopczyńska Barbara, Ciba Marcin, Rusek Grzegorz, Implementation of scientific methods of fine art authentication into forensics procedures : the case study of "Bolko II Świdnicki" by J. J. Knechtel. in: 7th International Congress on the Application of Raman Spectroscopy in Art and Archaeology, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2th-6th September 2013 2013, 198-199.

Wantuch-Jarkiewicz Katarzyna, Warsztat malarski Jeremiasa Josepha Knechtla w świetle prac konserwatorsko-restauratorskich obrazów z ołtarza pw. św. Piotra Fouriera w kościele pw. Wniebowzięcia NMP w Żaganiu, Katalog Wystawy Jeremias Joseph Knechtel. Legnicki malarz doby Baroku, 26.10.2012 - 30.03.2013, Akademia Rycerska w Legnicy, ul. Chojnowska 2, Legnica 2013, s. 85-95.