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1 Description of the Documents:

The content of this report is made by **Aithenticate.art** based on the documents described below.

1. RGB Photos of resolution 2029×2964 showing the painting which is subject of this assignment: "The Virgin Reading", which was part of the Forti collection. Refer to Figure 1 for the image of the painting **Q1**.
2. Books and Papers from renowned art historians and experts, obtained from trusted sources. These sources are referenced at the end of the present report [2, 1, 5, 3, 4, 6].
3. Documentation and photos of similar artworks, made during the same time frame.



Figure 1: Painting .

2 Introduction

"The Virgin Reading" is a piece of art attributed to Antonello da Messina, a significant Sicilian artist of the 15th century. Antonello, renowned for his proficiency in oil glazing—a technique reportedly learned from Jan van Eyck—played a crucial role in introducing this style to Italian art. His influence extended to the art of Giovanni Bellini and late 15th-century Venetian painting.

The painting's early attribution to Antonello and its time in the Mino Forti collection in Venice underscore its historical and artistic value, though its definitive authorship remains a subject of academic debate.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

This study intends to delve deeper into the intricacies of "The Virgin Reading" (Madone Forti). Our objectives are:

1. To trace the provenance of the painting, utilizing reliable bibliographic sources. This analysis will cover its ownership journey from Dr. Mino Forti to his daughter Luciana Forti, and its subsequent donation to the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan <https://museopoldipezzoli.it/Opere/verginelleggente/>.
2. To explore the painting's attribution to Antonello da Messina, comparing it with other verified works of the artist. This comparison includes works such as "The Virgin Reading" at the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore and "The Virgin with the Christ Child" at the National Gallery, London.
3. To conduct a thorough examination of the painting's stylistic and thematic aspects. We aim to understand the depicted Virgin, the inherent symbolism in the painting, and the unique characteristics of the attributed artist's technique. This analysis also includes positioning "The Virgin Reading" within the broader oeuvre of the period.

Our goal is to foster a deeper understanding of "The Virgin Reading" (Madone Forti), thereby contributing to the discourse on the works attributed to Antonello da Messina and Quattrocento art.

2.2 Artist's Background. Early Life and Training

Attributed artist Antonello da Messina, born to a stone mason in Messina, emerged as the most notable Sicilian artist of the 15th century. Based on Giorgio Vasari's accounts and other historical records, Antonello was believed to be born around 1430 and died in 1479.

Antonello is documented as running his own workshop in Messina by 1457, yet evidence suggests he received his initial training in Naples, under the tutelage of Niccolò Colantonio. He might have also spent time in the Netherlands, absorbing the complex Eyckian glazing technique which later became a cornerstone of his art. The influence of Netherlandish and French painting is evident in early works attributed to Antonello, such as the Crucifixion (Bucharest, N. Mus. A.).

Between 1457 and 1465, records indicate the attributed artist's commissions and travels, yet no dated works from this period survive. Artworks attributed to him during this time, such as the Penitent St Jerome, the fragment of the Hospitality of Abraham, and St Jerome in his Study, show a distinctive Eyckian influence, combining detailed surface depiction with measured space.

3 Description of the painting

The painting, attributed to Antonello da Messina, portrays the Virgin Mary in an intimate and reflective moment, encapsulating her in a moment of quiet reading. The piece measures approximately 38.7 x 26 cm, indicative of the smaller, more personal devotional pieces common during the time period. A picture of the back side of the artwork is in Figure 2, showing the aged wood.



Figure 2: Back side of the painting.

The Virgin is presented in a three-quarter profile view, her gaze lowered in concentration, fixed on a book she delicately holds with both hands. The dark background enhances the atmospheric depth of the scene, allowing the viewer to focus exclusively on the Virgin.

The artist employed the technique of *sfumato*, blurring the lines and contours, creating soft transitions between colors and tones. This effect grants the figure a sense of depth and volume, generating an almost tangible impression of the Virgin's presence.

The refined rendering of the light, particularly on the Virgin's face, highlights the artist's skilled manipulation of luminosity, rendering a subtle glow that seems to emanate from within the figure herself. This delicate illumination adds to the serene atmosphere of the scene, further emphasizing the Virgin's contemplative state.

The attention to detail in this painting is notable: the pages of the book, the intricate folds of the Virgin's robe, and the fine lines of her facial features all contribute to a palpable sense of reality. Such detail is indicative of the Netherlandish influence on the artist's style.

The painting, with its monochromatic tonality and close attention to detail, reveals a style that combines elements of the Italian and Northern European traditions of painting. While the artwork bears some hallmark qualities attributed to Antonello da Messina, the discovery of an underlying sketch has added a layer of intrigue to its authorship.

3.1 Provenance of the artwork

The provenance of "The Reading Virgin" traces back to its previous owner, Dr. Mino Forti. After being a part of his collection, the painting was passed down to his daughter, Luciana Forti. In 2018, Luciana generously donated this esteemed artwork to the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan.

Antonello da Messina was significantly influenced by the atmosphere of the Flemish style. However, his approach stood out for its spirit of exploration and integration, rather than simple imitation. Modern restoration techniques have indeed unveiled a variety of revisions in the artwork's composition. Refer to the next section 3.2. For instance, an image of Saint Michael the Archangel, armed and poised to strike down the devil, was found beneath the Virgin's visage. This figure, meticulously crafted with an exceptionally sophisticated perspective, demonstrates a level of skill that mirrors the careful rendering of the Virgin's face. Additionally, the alteration in the position of the right hand that holds the prayer book is evident to the naked eye.

Regrettably, precisely dating the artwork is challenging as Antonello da Messina did not consistently date his canvases. When Roberto Longhi stirred the critical debate concerning the painting's attribution to Messinese in the 1940s, he presented other artworks more widely accepted than the *Forti Madonna* (also referred to as Mino Forti). The first is the Salting Madonna, currently housed in the National Gallery in London. It shares many elements with the artwork of our concern, including the foreground figure of the Virgin, the angels supporting the crown, and the decorative style. The volumetric portrayal in the London Madonna is markedly more comprehensive, indicating that Antonello had evolved in his visual experience since the creation of the painting under study.

The second point of comparison, according to Longhi's reconstruction, is the Virgin Reading housed in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, dated around 1460. The familiarity of its rendering with the stark variant of Poldi Pezzoli is evident. Lastly, the comparison triptych concludes with the Madonna Advocata from the Civic Museums of Como. Its somber gaze is akin to the reader's, and the three-quarter turned face captures the soul in a moment of contemplation.

- Antonello da Messina, Salting Madonna, 1460-69. National Gallery, London
- Antonello da Messina, Virgin Reading, 1461. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore
- Antonello da Messina, Madonna Advocata, 1452. Civic Museums, Como

Each of these three attributions inevitably comes with its reservations. Yet, the echoes of similarities persistently reverberate despite the cloud of mystery that often enshrouds them.

3.2 Findings based on scientific methods for Authentication

In the analysis of "The Virgin Reading" from the Forti collection, a painting previously attributed to Antonello da Messina, an intriguing discovery was made. Advanced infrared imaging revealed the existence of a completely different drawing beneath the surface^[4]. The underlying depiction, diverging sharply from the final one, outlines the figure of Saint Michael the Archangel. His sword is positioned in such a way that it aligns with the current position of the Virgin's nose in the final painting. This angelic figure is observed by another character to his right, and both are set against a background of distinctive Gothic arches with three pointed openings, the smaller ones adorned with trefoil reliefs in a triangular form.

Evidence suggests that this initial version was only partially brought to life through paint, a conclusion derived from the correlation between the infrared images and the radiograph. While infrared radiation can't penetrate the black pigments of the background, it does reveal an underlying depiction that aligns with the color fields of the final painting. Conversely, the radiograph exposes only the detailed painted parts of the initial version, specifically those crafted with radiopaque pigments like lead white, but doesn't capture the drawing itself.

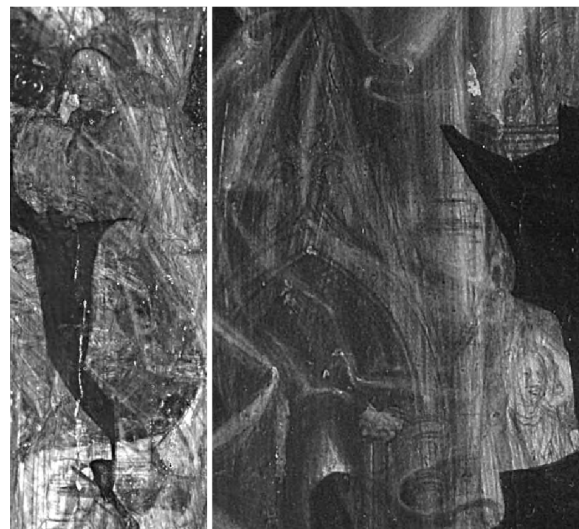
It seems that this hidden layer remained in a sketch-like state until the panel was repurposed for the final depiction of "The Virgin Reading". The similarity in intensity and style between this preliminary sketch and the final painting suggests that they are both works of the same artist. The artist is conjectured to be a Valencian painter active around 1470, given the particular interests in perspective demonstrated in the underlying depiction of Saint Michael, notably his perspective-adjusted halo.



(a) . Visible and Infrared.



(b) X-Ray and details on the face of the Virgin area.



(c) More details X-Ray

Figure 3: Study of *The Virgin Reading* (Forti) in visible, infrared and radiography spectrum[4].

Further examination confirms that the architectural elements in the upper region of the painting were most likely already in place before the final version, as evidenced by the carefully rendered protruding shadows.

While these findings provide intriguing insight into the painting's creation process, they do not necessarily further the attribution of the painting to Antonello da Messina. The discovery of an underlying sketch in the same stylistic and thematic vein as the final painting points to a common authorship, however, this artist is thought to be a Valencian painter active around 1470 based on the particular stylistic elements and perspective interests evident in the underlying depiction.

This timeframe and location do not necessarily align with what is known about Antonello's active years and geographical influence. Furthermore, the specifics of the discovered style, while certainly compatible with Antonello's, are not unique to him and could be seen in the works of other artists of the period. As such, although the painting was previously attributed to Antonello, these new findings neither confirm nor refute this attribution definitively. The exploration of the painting's layers adds a rich dimension to its history and complexity, but the true authorship remains an open question, awaiting further research and consideration.

4 Antonello da Messina: Interplay and Influence

In the vast and diverse artistic landscape of the Italian Renaissance, Antonello da Messina carved out a unique niche, synthesizing Northern European painting techniques with the aesthetic sensibilities of his native Italy. The art of this era was not created in a vacuum; rather, it was an intricate web of influences, styles, and techniques that crossed borders and time periods. Understanding this interplay is crucial to fully appreciate the complexity and nuance of Antonello's work.

This section delves into the relationships between Antonello's paintings and the broader contemporary art scene, particularly those that share thematic, stylistic, and compositional similarities. We will take an in-depth look at several notable works of Antonello, including "The Virgin and Child" in the National Gallery, London, "The Virgin Mary Reading" at the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, and others. We will also explore the unique qualities of his Annunciation portraits housed in the Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, Palermo; the Pinacoteca Civica, Côme; and the Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

We will discuss the technical challenges Antonello faced in creating these Annunciation portraits, highlighting his mastery of the oil painting technique, his exploration of light and shadow, and his ability to depict psychological depth. We will follow the progression of Antonello's work, tracing his evolution from his early experiments to his mature style, and compare his Madonna paintings with other similar works of his time. Through this exploration, we aim to underscore Antonello's significance and influence within the context of his contemporaries.

In the following section, we will further delve into Antonello's singular contribution to art, addressing the pioneering techniques he introduced, the stylistic transformations he underwent, and the enduring influence his works continue to have on subsequent generations of artists.

4.1 Exploring "The Virgin and Child", in the National Gallery, London

The painting depicts the Virgin Mary gazing affectionately at her infant son, Christ, who grasps a symbolic pomegranate. The fruit, with its crimson pulp, alludes to his impending suffering and Crucifixion. Mary, often referred to as the Queen of Heaven, is seen here being crowned by two tiny hovering angels - a theme recurrent in Renaissance art. The golden crown, adorned with pearls and gemstones, matches the grandeur of her brocade dress, jewelled mantle, and translucent veil. Refer to Figure 4.



Figure 4: Probably from Antonello da Messina, *The Virgin and Child*, in the National Gallery, London

The profusion of ornate details resonates with the work of 15th-century Netherlandish painters, renowned for their prowess in capturing an array of textures and finishes accurately, courtesy of their proficiency with oil paints. Their influence was felt across southern Europe, including Sicily and Naples, where Antonello da Messina was born and educated. The King of Naples, Alfonso of Aragon, owned a triptych by Rogier van der Weyden, amplifying the popularity of these styles in the region. Southern European artists, including Antonello's master in Naples, Niccolo Colantonio, attempted to emulate both the intricate detailing and the oil painting technique prevalent in Netherlandish art.

This painting reflects the intent of the artist to mirror the styles of their Northern European contemporaries. Evident cracks on the surface, indicative of painting over layers of wet paint, suggest an artist in the early stages of mastering the art of oil painting, perhaps Antonello himself. Over the years, Antonello achieved a level of proficiency in oil painting uncommon among his Italian peers, as is visible in the range of textures depicted in his *Saint Jerome*. However, in *The Virgin and Child*, the accuracy of the jewel rendering and the randomness of the folds in the Virgin's cloak and veil suggest an earlier stage in his artistic journey. The dark background, intense lighting, and simplistic forms also align with Antonello's initial works, similar to a painting housed in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, believed to originate from his early painting years in the 1460s.

While Antonello is celebrated for his portrayal of psychological depth, the lack of emotive or cognitive engagement in the holy figures in this painting has raised doubts about its attribution. Some propose that the work could be attributed to Antonello's brother, Giordano, or his apprentice, Paolo de Chaco, whom he mentored from 1457. Yet, the identity of the artist remains speculative due to the myriad of painters operating in this style in southern Europe during this period, many of whom are now lost in the annals of history, making accurate attribution a challenging task.

4.2 Exploring "The Virgin Mary Reading" (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore)

Housed in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, the evocative piece titled "The Reading Virgin" plays a notable role in the oeuvre commonly attributed to Antonello da Messina, as illustrated in Figure 5. Though the artwork's authorship has been the subject of scholarly discourse, its intrinsic artistic value and palpable impact remain indisputable [3].

In this intimate devotional tableau, the Virgin Mary is seen engrossed in reading, an act that not only illustrates her piety but also underscores her revered position as the Queen of Heaven. This divine status is further emphasized by the meticulously detailed golden crown, encrusted with an array of pearls and gleaming gemstones, and adorned with vibrant red and white roses. The crown, held aloft by angels, presents a harmonious blend of earthly beauty and heavenly symbolism.

Further enhancing the painting's spiritual resonance is a small pendant cross, gracefully suspended from the Virgin's mantle, adorned with delicate pearls. These elements bear testament to Antonello's affinity for geometric forms, an artistic inclination reminiscent of the early Italian Renaissance's stylistic proclivities.

Delving into the technical aspects, Antonello had adopted the use of oil glazes, a skill gleaned from his exploration of contemporary Flemish painting. This technique facilitated the creation of incredibly detailed textures, capable of reflecting light in multifaceted ways. The intricate, luminous crown in this artwork serves as a sterling demonstration of this mastery, offering an exceptional play of light and shadow that brings an unparalleled depth and vitality to the scene.



Figure 5: Probably from Antonello da Messina, *The Virgin Reading*, Walters Ar Gallery, Baltimore

4.3 Vierge de l'Annonciation (Pinacoteca Civica, Côme)

The artwork "Vierge de l'Annonciation", referenced in Figure 7, is a captivating oil painting on wood (57x39 cm), created around 1452. It is attributed to Antonello da Messina and is preserved in the Musei Civici di Como (inv. 322). This art piece, too, has a disputed attribution, with potential creators ranging from Antonello da Messina to Father Joan Reixach and Jaçomart Baço. Refer to Figure 6.



Figure 6: Vierge de l'Annonciation (Pinacoteca Civica, Côme)

The painting was donated to the Museum of Como in 1906 by Giovanni Antonio Galli di Rondineto (1820-1906). In his handwritten list of works to donate to Como, dated June 7, 1905, it is referred to as "Portrait of a nun, 15th century school, unknown author," with an additional note stating, "Purchased in Spain" (and not in Naples, as erroneously reported by Mandel). The Spanish provenance is also confirmed by the back, covered with an original preparation, evidently placed there to prevent the board from warping or cracking, and partly covered by another painting, executed in the stylistic ways of Goya. The date of purchase is unknown, but it must have occurred before 1871, as after that year, Galli did not leave Italy.

Stefano Bottari drew attention to the painting at the post-war exhibition in Como in 1945, and further increased interest in it after the publication of the Reading Virgin (then called Santa Eulalia) in 1950. Several art historians and critics, including Roberto Longhi, Jan Lauts, and others, have variously attributed the painting to Antonello da Messina, Jaçomart Baço, Colantonio, and other artists from the Iberian-Naples region. More recently, Mauro Lucco has suggested that the painting

could be one of the most successful works produced by the workshop of Jacomart and the hand of Reixach, closely related in style to the Sant'Elena of Jativa and the Virgin from the Charterhouse of Valdecris, now in Segorbe.

The painting exhibits an original decorative framing on three sides, and shows only that it has been slightly shortened at the bottom, without prejudice to the inscription "Ave Maria gra[tia] plena." The painting has been identified as a Virgin Annunciate due to the inscription at the bottom, which records the words pronounced by the Archangel Gabriel in front of Mary. However, more recently, Schmidt and De Vries (2002) have indicated that the late age of the Madonna, the pitilessly represented wrinkles around her eyes, and the same head covering typical of married women, exclude her as a virgin annunciate. Instead, referencing ancient Roman icons, particularly that of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, we are faced with a Virgo advocata, a Madonna who intercedes for the concession of special graces.

Stylistically, the painting demonstrates a tight initial relationship with Flemish models, tempered and reformed by the revelation of Piero della Francesca's art.

4.4 La Vierge de l'Annonciation (Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, Palermo)

The "La Vierge de l'Annonciation" in Palermo is a confirmed work of Antonello da Messina, created around 1475-1476. Refer to Figure 7 (a). It's a beautiful piece made with tempera and oil on wood, measuring 45 x 34.5 cm. This artwork is currently displayed in the Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, located in the Palazzo Abatellis.

Three themes emerge in this painting: Antonello's solution to the problem of depicting the Virgin Annunciate, his intense close-ups of the face of the suffering Christ, and the utter modernity of Antonello's Italianization of the style of van Eyck, which he applies for psychological portraits. The dual style marks a breakthrough in portraiture and provides a sense of pre-Modernity. This concept of 'psychological portrait' is, of course, contestable, especially when all we have is the image of someone who is minimally, if at all, documented. However, it is the term we shall use boldly throughout this analysis, as it is relevant to our chief themes: the Virgin Annunciate and the faces of Christ at the pillar.

4.5 Exploring "La Vierge de l'Annonciation" (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)

A notable rendition of "La Vierge de l'Annonciation" graces the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, a testament to Antonello da Messina's broad influence in the realm of religious art during the 15th century. This piece, crafted with oil on lime wood between 1473-1474, measures 42.5 x 32.8 cm, and invites the viewer into a rich narrative. Please refer to Figure 7 (b) for further inspection.



(a) Antonello da Messina, *La Vierge de l'Annonciation* vers 1475-1476 Tempera et huile sur bois Galleria Regionale della Sicilia du Palais Abatellis Palerme Drapage de Italie



(b) Antonello da Messina, *La Vierge de l'Annonciation* 1473 – 1474 Alte Pinakothek Munich

Figure 7: Two versions of *La Vierge de l'Annonciation* also known as "Antonello's Annunziata"'s.

Antonello exhibits a deft handling of artistic challenge in this composition: while the angel holds a decorative, winged presence, it is the Virgin who remains the less ostentatious figure, drawing our attention to her central 'psychology'. Antonello's execution of this dynamic—limiting the depiction of the Virgin to her face and hands—is noteworthy, contributing to the singularity of the Palermo painting. The exhibition catalogue, however, obscures this crucial aspect through its selective cropping on the cover, posters, and flyers, removing the image of the Annunciation itself.

Yet, what is perhaps more striking is the exclusion of the Virgin's hands, a crucial element of Antonello's composition. This work commands attention as an integrated whole—it is through the cohesive viewing of the lectern, hands, and dignified gaze that the true essence of the painting can be discerned. While the book on the lectern remains illegible, it can be inferred to contain prophecies about Christ, underlining the theme of the Annunciation: the divine message to a virgin that she will bear the Savior. Antonello's *Annunziata* drives this narrative home with its elements contributing in harmony, offering an unadulterated, focused representation of this significant biblical event.

4.6 Comparison with other Madonna paintings

Contrastingly, the other two Madonnas of this type have been tied to young Antonello: the reading Virgin in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, and the Virgin with the Christ Child in the National Gallery, London. Both exhibit matching pairs of crown-holding angels, which reflect the manner of the mourners painted in the Bucharest panel, characterized by small heads and slender, nimble hands.

In the Venice and Baltimore versions, the ornate crowns are open and filled with lilies and roses, respectively. However, the crown of the London Madonna, although more intricate with limited space for flowers, shares the Marian symbolism through its embellishments of pearls and rubies. This follows the template set by Jan van Eyck in his *Gent Altar*, where the Virgin dons an open crown adorned with pearls, red stones, and fresh roses and lilies.

Though the angels depicted are "full-grown" and "adult", their proportions are strongly reduced. This imparts a stylistically early quality to these upper sections.

Considering this dichotomy, it is suggested that Antonello had an early unfinished or requested revision of a Madonna in his studio. He painted a new version of the Virgin and Child while largely preserving the upper section. The Madonna of the unknown initial version may have been akin to the reading Virgin in Baltimore.

An interesting detail is the worldly, transparent veil covering her head. The depiction of the mother-child relationship is filled with humor and affection. Additionally, a crystal cross jewel pin is found on her mantle - a detail also visible in the previous Madonnas. In the London image, the cross assumes a Latin form and intriguingly, hangs upside down, suggesting a less formal use for later.

This handling of the cross is thought to convey Antonello's desire to downplay its ominous implication. It presents an image of maternal joy, a moment solely dedicated to the mother-child bond. The cross remains only as a subtle cue to the viewer. The Madonna and the Christ Child were adorned with delicate golden halos, traces of which still remain, along with a well-preserved ornamental border framing the background.

Amid these features, there are several witty details, like the curious fact that the angels' wings are attached by jewel-encrusted screws, as if the wings were add-on accessories. This amusing riddle added to the upper section painted years before may have been more than just a whimsical thought.

In the National Gallery, where this Madonna was placed years ago near Antonello's exceptional Saint Jerome in His Study, the piece stands its ground. The beautiful rendering of the Virgin and its wealth of thoughtful details demand attention. Any lingering doubts regarding the attribution (if any remain) can be comfortably dismissed. No other artist in the South Italian sphere at that time could have conjured a Virgin and Child imbued with such warmth and spirit.

Antonello da Messina's Madonna and Child paintings, specifically those housed in Venice, Baltimore, and London, each bear distinctive stylistic elements. These artworks contain depictions of angels holding crowns over the Virgin Mary's head. The Madonna in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, and the Virgin with the Christ Child in the National Gallery, London, align more closely with Antonello's early work, characterised by small heads and slender hands.

These paintings showcase Antonello's ability to work within the constraints of religious symbolism while bringing forward universal themes, such as the mother-child relationship. The London Madonna, despite areas of wear and overpainting, bears many of Antonello's unique features. The piece presents an interesting dichotomy between its primary section and upper area, both of which bear Antonello's stylistic imprint, despite the latter seeming stylistically earlier.

Key details in the painting include a transparent veil, a crystal cross jewel pin on the Madonna's mantle, and the whimsical fact that the angels' wings are attached by jewel-encrusted screws. This piece exemplifies Antonello's ability to push artistic boundaries even within a conventional format, subtly challenging the norms of his time.

Antonello da Messina's Madonna and Child paintings provide an opportunity to appreciate his creative vision and his unique contribution to art history, with their endearing portrayal of the Madonna and child and a wealth of thoughtful, amusing details that demand attention.

5 Conclusion

The study of the "Virgin Reading" painting from the Forti collection offers an intriguing exploration into the artwork's attribution and its place within the domain of art history. Despite the preliminary attribution to Antonello da Messina, the nuanced findings that modern scientific methods like infrared and x-ray imaging have unveiled invite new avenues of interpretation and comprehension.

The primary discoveries can be encapsulated as follows:

1. The infrared investigation revealed an underlying sketch of Saint Michael the Archangel beneath the Virgin's depiction. This finding points towards the canvas's reutilization, a common practice in the 15th century. The sketch demonstrates an advanced grasp of perspective and technique.
2. The study of the painting's authenticity, alongside the arguments supporting and opposing its attribution to Antonello da Messina, indicated a realm of debate and uncertainty around the painting's actual creator. Despite the clear elements echoing Antonello da Messina's style, the findings suggest the possibility of another artist's involvement, perhaps a Valencian painter active around 1470.
3. When compared with other works attributed to Antonello da Messina, notable resemblances were found with the Salting Madonna, the Virgin Reading in Baltimore, and the Madonna Advocata. Each of these artworks, however, carries its own degree of uncertainty regarding attribution.
4. The painting style, techniques, and themes present in the artwork reflect a complex interplay between Flemish influences and the artist's distinct spirit of experimentation, thus providing valuable insight into the artistic environment of the period.

These findings' implications contribute substantially to our comprehension of Antonello da Messina's work and the broader artistic practices of the 15th century. The painting serves as a testament to the era's stylistic experiments, innovative techniques, and potential fusion of varying cultural influences. It highlights the crucial role that scientific techniques hold in art history, unearthing hidden layers of history, and provoking reconsiderations of authorship and artistic practices.

Despite the persisting ambiguities around its authorship, the painting invites further exploration into this transformative period in art history, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of artistic expression and the fluidity of attribution.

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