

# LA CONA D'ALTARE DELLA CHIESA DELLA DISCIPLINA DELLA CROCE A NAPOLI: UN PROCESSO DI CONOSCENZA PER LA CONSERVAZIONE

## The altar background decoration of the *Disciplina della Croce* church in Naples: a process of knowledge for conservation

DAMIANA TRECCOZZI\*, CHIARA COLOMBO\*\*, ANDREA PANE\*, ANTONIO SANSONETTI\*\*

\* Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II”

\*\* Istituto di Scienze del Patrimonio Culturale CNR Milano

### Abstract

Before Roberto Pane published his book dedicated to Naples historical center<sup>1</sup>, descriptions of the altar of the *Disciplina della Croce* church only referred to its great painting of the *Santa Croce*. Up to then, only a few mentions to the extraordinary *Gloria degli Angeli* stucco decoration had been made in some local guides<sup>2</sup>. Situated behind the altar, the artwork surely testifies the artistic synthesis reached in the Neapolitan late Baroque. The fifteen figures molded by Lorenzo Vaccaro – the illustrious forefather of the «new style» – and young Pietro Scarola, fully embody Arcangelo Guglielmelli’s architectural conception<sup>3</sup>.

However, the altar background decoration still seems to be quite unexplored from the point of view of construction techniques. Thus the research here presented has investigated this decorative apparatus in order to reveal its compositional and constructive aspects. In order to do so, an innovative – if related to the context – multidisciplinary approach has been adopted where archival information is compared to multi-analytical data gained through an experimented methodological protocol<sup>4</sup>. The aim of the paper is to make sector operators aware of the testimonial value of decorative mortars and of the importance of anticipating the knowledge process to the intervention phase as to achieve greater control of conservation methods applied to Neapolitan heritage.

**Keywords:** *conservation, stucco decorations, Naples.*

<sup>1</sup> R. Pane et al., *Il centro antico di Napoli*, ESI, vol. III, Napoli 1971, p. 420.

<sup>2</sup> G. A. Galante, *Guida sacra della città di Napoli*, Napoli 1873, 254-255; R. D’Ambra, *Napoli antica*, Napoli 1889, tav. XXII.

<sup>3</sup> V. Rizzo, *Lorenzo e Domenico Antonio Vaccaro. Apoteosi di un binomio*, Napoli 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Ci si riferisce a quanto già sperimentato dall’ISPC di Milano – in collaborazione con l’Università degli Studi dell’Insubria di Como e l’Università di Lugano SUPSI – per lo studio degli stucchi degli “Artisti dei Laghi” (es. L. Rampazzi, C. Colombo, C. Conti, M. Realini, *The Stucco Technique of the Magistri Comacini: The Case Study of Santa Maria dei Ghirli in Campione D’Italia (Como, Italy)*, in «Archeometry», 54, 5 (2012)).