



Figure 1. The Virgin Eleusa, fourteenth-century paint layer coexistent with eighteenth-century fragments (the faces of the Virgin and Jesus Christ). © Nadejda Tsvetkova.

Another question that arose during the conservation process was how to treat the elements that were to be removed. These were later paint layers, constructive elements of the wooden support, or elements of metal decoration added later. The most challenging turned out to be the later paint layers (overpaintings). The first consideration was to check whether it was possible to separate and transfer the different paint layers. In some cases this proved to be possible, as with the double-sided icon of Christ Pantocrator of the twelfth-thirteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries (Figure 2) and the fourteenth century Crucifixion (Figure 3). The conservator in charge was faced with the technical challenge of finding an appropriate technique and procedures for the separation of the layers (Figure 4). She also had to plan the transfer of the separated paint layer onto a new support along with all the subsequent operations, including the integration of losses. Although, as with every transfer, there was a risk that part of the authenticity of the transferred elements would be lost, they would thus be preserved for posterity. As a result, after the conservation of the icon, we now have three objects