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liquefy unbleached beeswax. At this heat, when a hand briefly gripping the tip of the spatula would feel uncomfortable but not be burned, the spatula could soften the brown Pasto varnish on the outside rim of the bowl, in an area adjacent to where the solvent test flakes were removed. This heat was found to be sufficient to set down a blister without causing the surface texture to be flattened or become shiny. No adhesive was added. Three photographs show how this test was repeated in a red area of the bowl to cause a blister to flatten somewhat without significant loss of surface texture. CONCLUSION: controled-heat spatulas can be safely used – with caution! – to reduce blisters in Pasto varnish; however this treatment may not be sufficient to cause secure readhesion as well as visual improvement.

In summary, caretakers and historians of art objects should always be alert for the presence of materials and processes unknown to them, especially when examining objects from foreign cultures. Choosing the safest and most appropriate methods of preservation depends upon understanding the materials we are trying to preserve, and we do a grave disservice when we neglect the sometimes tedious but always essential first step of a careful assessment.

I wish to thank the many people who responded to my queries, even from afar, and thus assisted in making this contribution possible. Although this has been in some ways a collaborative effort, I alone am responsible for any errors in this report. Finally,

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