

PAZIN, CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS

Conservation of Wall Paintings

Parish church of St. Nicholas in Pazin is located in the northern part of the old town centre. It was mentioned for the first time in 1266. In one of the earliest portrayals of the city by J. J. Valvasor from 1679, the church was depicted as a single-nave building with a belfry on the façade, side chapel and prominent sanctuary. A spacious polygonal sanctuary with a lierne vault, the first of its kind in Istria, was built in 1441. Construction of the side chapels began in 1659, and during the great Baroque reconstruction in the 1760s, the chapels were converted into side aisles and equipped with new altars, giving the church the present triple nave floor plan.

The monumental Gothic sanctuary was completed with a series of wall paintings from the third quarter of the 15th century. Iconological content, preservation and quality of the painted layer makes them an important part of the corpus of Gothic wall paintings of Istria and the subalpine area. Scenes from the *Genesis* and *Battle of Angels* are painted on the vault, and coats of arms are portrayed on the joints of stone ribs. Scenes from the Pauper's Bible (*Biblia pauperum*) are painted on lateral walls of the sanctuary with scenes from the Old and New Testament as well as the *Crucifixion in the crowd*. Previous research confirmed the influence of the Pazin cycle on the development of local painting production, especially the workshop of Vincent and Ivan from Kastav. Painting elements from south Tyrol were recognized, which is why the frescoes were attributed to painter Leonhardt of Brixen. New research and review of existing theses have also identified another possible origin in Central Europe while the author remains unknown. Nevertheless, the painter of Pazin paintings was an excellent artist

who adjusted his compositions to the demanding format of wall surfaces, especially fields in the vault. He was also skilled at light modelling when painting people, anatomy and draperies, as well as portraying objects of various types of materials (wood, metal or fabric).

The wall paintings from Pazin were discovered during the reconstruction of the church in 1927 and restored in 1933 under the guidance of conservators and restorers from Trieste.

Eighty years after the first conservation, the painted layer was in poor condition and covered with impurities, inadequate retouching and salts caused by direct moisture or the process of damping and drying of the wall surface. In order to properly conserve and restore the wall paintings, Croatian Conservation Institute first carried out protection work on the roof and windows in the sanctuary. Conservation was preceded by detailed conservation, restoration, archival, historical and art historical research, and laboratory testing of original materials and causes of decay. The aim was to determine the state of preservation, provide detailed documentation of the condition before conservation, determine work methodology and valorise historical interventions for the final presentation. Wall paintings were cleaned and consolidated. During the final phase, the integration of the painted layer was carried out so interventions on the stone elements and reintegrated plaster and painted layers were preserved and presented, while retouching covering the original painted layer was completely removed. A recent approach to the integration of the painted layer involved tonal adjustment, thus re-establishing the uniformity of the cycle.



PAZIN, CRKVA SV. NIKOLE

Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na zidnim slikama



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Župna crkva sv. Nikole u Pazinu smještena je u sjevernom dijelu gradske jezgre, a prvi se put spominje 1266. godine. Na veduti grada J. J. Valvasora iz 1679. godine, crkva je prikazana kao jednobrodna građevina sa zvonikom, bočnom kapelom i istaknutim svetištem. Prostrano poligonalno svetište nadsvođeno zvjezdasto-rebrastim svodom sagrađeno je 1441. godine kao prvo te vrste u Istri. Dogradnja bočnih kapela počela je 1659. godine, ali su kapele u velikoj baroknoj obnovi 1760-ih godina objedinjene u bočne brodove i opremljene novim oltarima, čime je crkva dobila trobrodni tlocrt.

Monumentalno gotičko svetište upotpunjeno je ciklusom zidnih slika iz treće četvrtine 15. stoljeća. Svojim ikonološkim sadržajem, očuvanošću i slikarskom kvalitetom oslik zauzima važno mjesto unutar korpusa gotičkog zidnog slikarstva Istre i podalpskih prostora. Na svodnim poljima prikazane su scene iz *Geneze* te *Boj anđela*, dok su na spoju kamenih rebara grbovi. Na bočnim zidovima svetišta nalaze se prikazi iz *Biblije siromaha* (*Biblia pauperum*), s usporednim prikazima iz Starog i Novog zavjeta te scena *Raspeća u gomili*. Prethodna su istraživanja utvrdila utjecaj pazinskog ciklusa na razvoj lokalne slikarske produkcije, poglavito na radionicu Vincenta i Ivana iz Kastva. Prepoznati su elementi južnotirolskog slikarstva, zbog čega je autorstvo fresaka pripisivano slikaru Leonardu iz Brixena. Novim istraživanjima i preispitivanjem postojećih teza utvrđena su i druga, srednjoeuropska ishodišta oslika, dok je pitanje samog autora ostalo otvorenim. Unatoč tome, slikar pazinskog oslika vrstan je umjetnik koji se kompozicijski suvereno prilagođava zahtjevnom

formatu zidnih ploha, naročito svodnih polja. Vješt je i u tonskoj modelaciji likova, izvođenju anatomija i draperija, kao i prikazivanju predmeta od različitih vrsta materijala (drva, metala ili tkanina).

Zidne slike u Pazinu otkrivene su tijekom radova na obnovi crkve 1927. godine i potom restaurirane 1933. pod vodstvom konzervatora i restauratora iz Trsta.

Osamdeset godina od prvog restauriranja, oslik je bio u lošem stanju očuvanosti, prekriven nečistoćama, neprimjerenim retušem i solima, čijoj je pojavi uzrok izravni dotok vlage te procesi vlaženja i sušenja površine zida. Kako bi se zidne slike primjereno konzervirale i restaurirale, Hrvatski restauratorski zavod prethodno je proveo zaštitne radove obnove krovišta i prozora u svetištu. U skladu sa stručnom praksom, restauraciji su prethodila detaljna konzervatorsko-restauratorska, arhivska, povijesna i povijesno-umjetnička istraživanja te laboratorijska ispitivanja izvornih materijala i uzroka propadanja. Nastojalo se utvrditi stanje očuvanosti, detaljno dokumentirati zatečeno stanje, odrediti metodologija radova te valorizirati povijesne intervencije na osliku u svrhu njegove završne prezentacije. Zidni oslik je očišćen i konsolidiran, a u završnoj je fazi provedena integracija slikanog sloja tako da su očuvane i prezentirane prijašnje restauratorske intervencije na kamenim elementima te na područjima reintegriranog žbuknog i slikanog sloja, dok je potpuno uklonjen retuš kojim je izvorni oslik preslikan. Recentni pristup integraciji slikanog sloja odnosio se na prilagođavanje tonova lazurama, čime je ponovno uspostavljena cjelovitost ciklusa.





Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na zidnim slikama u crkvi sv. Nikole izvodili su se od 2011. do 2018. godine i jedan su od složenijih zahvata u svim provedenim fazama: od postupka dokumentiranja, utvrđivanja stanja očuvanosti i određivanja metodologije radova do završne prezentacije cijelog svetišta. U Europskoj godini kulturne baštine Hrvatski restauratorski zavod predstavlja

dosadašnje radove u crkvi sv. Nikole u Pazinu koja, kao vrstan primjer, svojom arhitekturom, zidnim slikama i umjetničkim inventarom oslikava utjecaje kulturnih i umjetničkih razmjena te preplitanja iskustava mediteranske i srednje Europe.

Conservation and restoration of wall paintings from the church of St. Nicholas was carried out from 2011 to 2018. It was one of the most complex interventions during all phases: from the process of documentation, determining the state of preservation and defining work methodology, to the final presentation of the whole sanctuary. During the European Year of Cultural Heritage,

Croatian Conservation Institute will present the work carried out in the church of St. Nicholas in Pazin since the architecture, wall paintings and art inventory of the church are an excellent example that portrays influences of cultural and artistic exchanges as well as overlapping experiences in Central Europe and the Mediterranean.