

## Šibenik, Church of St. Barbara / Conservation of the High Altar

Church of St. Barbara, located near the Cathedral of St. James, was built in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. First, it was dedicated to St. Benedict, and later to St. Nicholas. St. Barbara's Brotherhood was founded in 1588, and the church of the same *patrocinium* was used from 1606 to 1797. The church was desacralized in 1806 and converted into a military warehouse. Later, it served as an exhibition space of the Museum of Ecclesiastical Art.

The gilded high altar of St. Barbara, created by one of the Veneto workshops in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was commissioned by St. Barbara's Brotherhood. The altarpiece portraying St. Barbara, St. Nicholas and St. Paul was painted by Angelo Mancini in 1610. The altar of St. Barbara is one of the most beautiful altars in Dalmatia: it was masterfully crafted and has extremely balanced proportions. The antependium (altar frontal) has also been preserved.

After it was no longer used for liturgical purposes, the altar of St. Barbara, which belongs to the group of architectural altars with a retable in the form of an aedicula, suffered extensive damage.

Conservation and restoration of the altar retable and antependium of St. Barbara was performed between 2006 and 2018 at the Split workshop of the Croatian Conservation Institute.

The work was based on a detailed examination and analysis of the original layers of the altar, as well as the masterful technique used to make it. Gilding, made using three different methods which is rarely seen on altars on the Dalmatian coast, was particularly valorised for the level of preservation. After detailed documentation of the altar's condition before conservation and the analysis of the original layers, the reconstruction of the damaged parts

of the carrier and the painted layer could begin. Materials and techniques used on the original altar were consistently used during the reconstruction. Layers of extremely dark impurities created by burning candle wax were removed from the surface of the altar with a gel, and consolidation of the painted layer was started.

There are three methods of gilding on the altar: gilding using water-based gold leaves, oil-based gold leaves and gilding that combines quartz sand, gold powder and an oil binding agent. Quartz sand, with a protein adhesive (glue) as the binder, was used to create a texture that highlighted certain parts of the altar. Five layers of a glue and chalk mixture were applied as the carrier, observed in micro-sections taken from different parts of the altar.

Three types of wood were used to make the altar of St. Barbara: linden (most carved elements and profiles), larch (some profiled elements) and spruce (some profiles and constructions). During the reconstruction of the missing parts, types of wood used for the original were also used for the reconstruction. Carpenter chisels and electrical modelling tools were used for woodworking, and the reconstructed parts were later coated with glue. Animal glue served as a binder, but in some areas, due to a very small contact surface, an epoxy adhesive was also used. After the reconstruction of the damage in the preparation layer with the glue-chalk putty, the gilding base was applied, followed by gold leaves which were matched to the original gilding.

The high altar of St. Barbara can now be fully appreciated as a cultural good of exceptional value by presenting the entire process and the results of conservation.



## ŠIBENIK, CRKVA SV. BARBARE / Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na glavnom oltaru



## ŠIBENIK, CHURCH OF ST. BARBARA / Conservation of the High Altar

## Šibenik, crkva sv. Barbare / Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na glavnom oltaru

Crkva sv. Barbare, smještena nedaleko od katedrale sv. Jakova, sagrađena je u prvoj polovici 15. stoljeća. Prvotno je bila posvećena sv. Benediktu, a potom sv. Nikoli. Bratovština sv. Barbare osnovana je 1588. godine, a crkva istog patrocinija bila je u funkciji od 1606. do 1797. godine. Crkva je desakralizirana 1806. godine te je prenamijenjena u vojno skladište, a poslije u izložbeni prostor Muzeja crkvene umjetnosti.

Pozlaćeni i izrezbareni glavni oltar sv. Barbare, rad jedne od mletačkih radionica 17. stoljeća, izrađen je prema narudžbi Bratovštine sv. Barbare. Oltarnu sliku s prikazom sv. Barbare, sv. Nikole i sv. Pavla naslikao je Angelo Mancini 1610. godine. Navedeni oltar pripada skupini najljepših dalmatinskih oltara; izrazito je skladnih proporcija i majstorske izvedbe. Sačuvan je i pripadajući antependij (predoltarnik).

Nakon što se prestao koristiti u liturgijskoj namjeni, oltar sv. Barbare, koji pripada skupini arhitektonskih oltara s retablom u obliku edikule, pretrpio je brojna oštećenja.

Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na retablu oltara i predoltarniku sv. Barbare obavljani su između 2006. i 2018. godine u splitskoj radionici Hrvatskog restauratorskog zavoda.

Koncept radova zasnovan je na detaljnom ispitivanju i analizi originalnih slojeva oltara, kao i majstorske tehnologije kojom je rađen. Posebno se valorizirala očuvanost trostruke vrste pozlate koja se rijetko pojavljuje na oltarima na dalmatinskoj obali. Nakon detaljno provedenog dokumentiranja zatečenog stanja i provedene analize originalnih slojeva, počelo se s rekonstrukcijom oštećenih dijelova nosi-

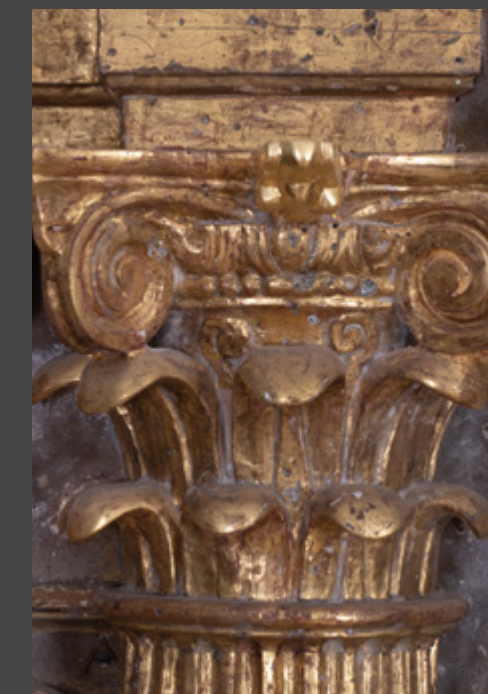
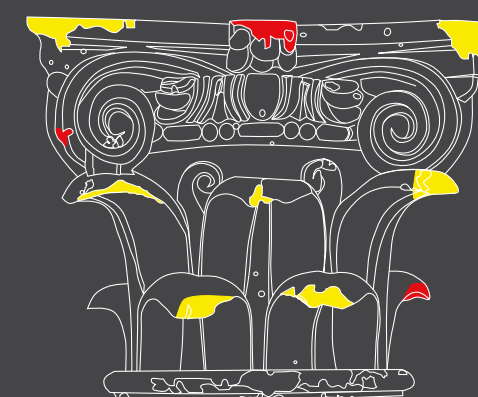
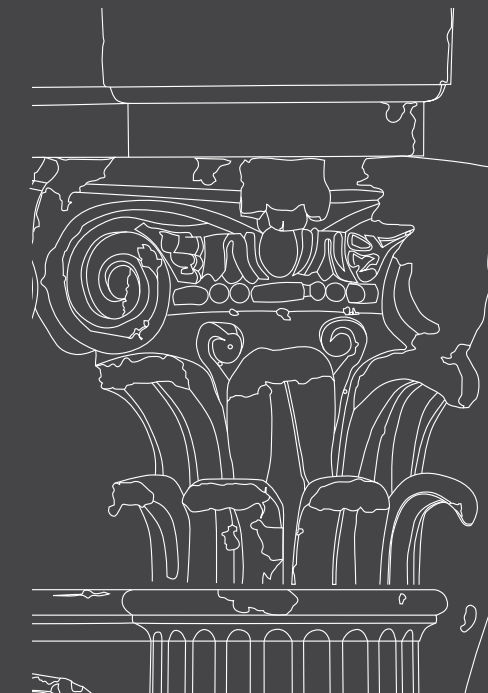
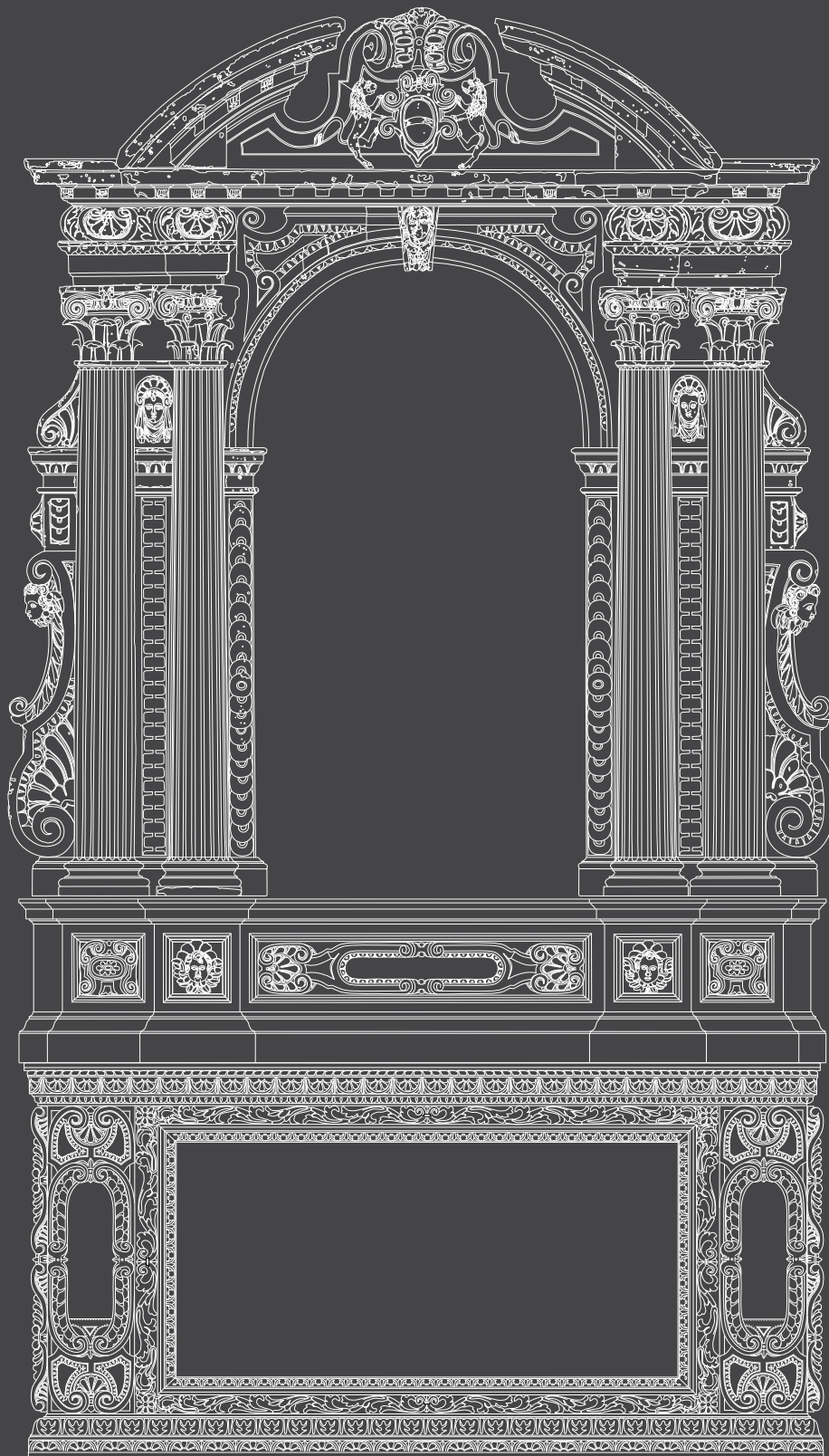
oca i bojenog sloja. Pritom su se dosljedno primjenjivali izvorni materijali te tehnologija izrade i apliciranja tih materijala. Površina oltara bila je prekrivena slojem izrazito tamne nečistoće, nastale izgaranjem svijeća voštanica. Ti su degradirajući slojevi uklonjeni primjenom gelova, a potom se pristupilo konsolidaciji slikanog sloja.

Na oltaru i predoltarniku postoje tri vrste pozlate: u listićima na vodenoj osnovi, u listićima na uljenoj osnovi te u listićima na uljenoj podlozi i kvarcnom pijesku. Kvarcni pijesak upotrebljavao se da bi se stvorila tekstura kojom su istaknuti pojedini dijelovi oltara, a kao vezivo je upotrebljavano proteinsko ljepilo (tutkalo). Tutkalo-kredna podloga nanosila se u pet slojeva, što su pokazali mikropresjeci uzeti na različitim dijelovima oltara.

Oltar sv. Barbare izrađen je od tri vrste drva: lipe (većina rezbarenih elemenata i profila), ariša (manji dio profiliranih elemenata) i smreke (manji dio profila i konstrukcija). Prilikom rekonstrukcije dijelova koji nedostaju korištene su vrste drva od kojih su izvorno bili načinjeni. Za obradu su bila potrebna rezbarska dlijeta i električni modelarski alat, a nakon toga su rekonstruirani dijelovi premazani tutkalom. Za lijepljenje je poslužilo koštano tutkalo, ali ponegdje je, zbog vrlo male kontaktne površine, bilo nužno i epoksidno ljepilo. Nakon rekonstrukcije oštećenja u sloju preparacije tutkalo-krednim kitom, postavljena je podloga za zlato, a poslije i zlatni listići, koji su se ujednačavali s izvornom pozlatom.

Prezentacijom tijeka i rezultata izvedenih konzervatorsko-restauratorskih radova možemo potpuno valorizirati i estetski zaokružiti to kulturno dobro iznimnih vrijednosti.





- Rekonstrukcije nedostajućih dijelova izvedene rezbarenjem u drvu  
Reconstruction of the missing parts using woodworking
- Rekonstrukcije nedostajućih dijelova izvedene dvokomponentnim kitom  
Reconstruction of the missing parts using glue-chalk putty

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