

Kaštel Štafilić, Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary / Conservation of the altar of the Holy Cross

Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Kaštel Štafilić is the third parish church built on the former property of the Staffileo noble family from Trogir. Its present form was designed in 1765 by Ignacije Macanović Raguseo from Trogir.

There are four monumental altars in the nave of the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary - three stone altars and a polychrome, gilded, wooden altar of the Holy Cross, the oldest and most valuable altar in the church. The complex concept and architectural design of the altar with five statues, originally with a rich gold and silver decoration on the poliment, speak of its importance. Fluted Corinthian columns of the retable frame the arched altarpiece portraying *Feast of the Cross with the three Marys*, oil on canvas, belonging to High Venetian Baroque of the 18th century.

The altar of the Holy Cross, like most wooden, polychrome, gilded altars, proved to be a complex challenge for the conservation profession. The large altar combines a number of techniques and technologies, and the wooden support suffered extensive damage because it was not handled properly and it was housed in unfavourable conditions. Therefore, the conservation process took a long time and presented a number of challenges for conservator-restorers.

Conservation and restoration of the altar of the Holy Cross began in 2000, and the Museum of the Town of Kaštela was in charge of the program until 2007. From 2007 till the end of 2017, conservation and restoration, funded entirely by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, was completed by the Split Department for Conservation of the Croatian Conservation Institute.

The aim of the conservation and restoration process was to consolidate and reconstruct the damage, and restore the original appearance of the altar as much as possible. After detailed documentation, including X-ray and infrared imaging, disinfection and fumigation were performed, several layers of overpaint were removed, newly carved elements that were missing were added, structural consolidation was carried out, and a partial reconstruction of the original painted layer was performed.

Removing several layers of overpaint from the altar and antependium proved a particularly challenging process. Considering the fact that the same number of layers of overpaint was not present on all parts of the altar, visual unity of the altar was brought into question. Based on the careful analysis of the painted layers, a decision was made about the presentation of the original painted layer. Minimal retouching was performed, exclusively for the purpose of visually connecting the motifs. A previously unknown painting on wood, *Betrothal of Mary and Joseph in the Temple*, dated in the late 17th century and attributed to master Mateo Ottoni by Radoslav Tomić, was discovered by removing layers of overpaint from the antependium.

Respecting all aspects of the conservation profession, from the meticulous detection of damage and its causes, detailed documentation of the condition before conservation and valorisation of the altar, to the execution of the entire conservation and restoration process in order to preserve the original material and techniques, work on the altar, antependium and altarpiece of the Holy Cross was successfully completed, and the artwork reclaimed its Baroque splendour.

Kaštel Štafilić, crkva Bezgrešnog začeca Blažene Djevice Marije / Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na oltaru Sv. Križa



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Crkva Bezgrešnog začeca Blažene Djevice Marije u Kaštel Štafiliću treća je župna crkva sagrađena na nekadašnjem posjedu trogirskih plemića Staffileo. Njezin današnji oblik odredio je 1765. godine protomajstor Ignacije Macanović Raguseo iz Trogira.

U longitudinalnom brodu crkve Bezgrešnog začeca Blažene Djevice Marije smještena su četiri monumentalna zidna oltara: tri kamena i polikromirani, pozlaćeni, drveni oltar Sv. Križa, najstariji i najvrjedniji oltar u crkvi. Složeni koncept i izrada arhitektonskog oltara s pet pripadajućih skulptura, izvorno bogate dekoracije zlatom i srebrom na polimentu, govore o njegovoj važnosti. Kanelirani korintski stupovi retable uokviruju lučnu oltarnu palu s prikazom *Uzvišenje Svetog Križa s tri Marije*, ulje na platnu, zrelog venecijanskog baroka 18. stoljeća.

Oltar Sv. Križa, kao i većina drvenih, polikromiranih, pozlaćenih oltara, jedan je od najkompleksnijih izazova konzervatorsko-restauratorske struke. Oltar velikih dimenzija sjedinjuje niz tehnika i tehnologija izrade, dok je drveni nosilac pretrpio mnoge degradacije i oštećenja uzrokovana neprimjerenim smještajem i rukovanjem; zato su radovi na građi dugo trajali i pred konzervatore-restauratore stavili niz izazova.

Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na oltaru Sv. Križa počeli su 2000. godine, a Muzej grada Kaštela bio je nositelj tog programa do 2007. godine. Od 2007. do kraja 2017. godine konzervatorsko-restauratorske radove, financirane u cijelosti sredstvima Ministarstva kulture RH,

dovršili su djelatnici splitskog Restauratorskog odjela Hrvatskog restauratorskog zavoda.

Cilj konzervatorsko-restauratorskih radova bilo je konsolidiranje i rekonstrukcija oštećenja te vraćanje izvornog izgleda oltara u što većoj mjeri. Nakon detaljnog dokumentiranja zatečenog stanja, uključujući RTG i IR snimanje, provedena je dezinfekcija i fumigacija, uklonjeni su višestruki preslici, aplicirani su novoizrađeni drvorezbareni dijelovi te je provedena strukturna konsolidacija i parcijalna rekonstrukcija izvornog oslika.

Naročito zahtjevan posao bilo je uklanjanje višestrukih preslika na oltaru i antependiju. S obzirom na činjenicu da na svim dijelovima oltara nije bilo ustanovljen isti broj preslika, dovedeno je u pitanje vizualno jedinstvo oltarne cjeline. Na temelju pomne analize slikanih slojeva donesena je odluka o prezentaciji izvornog oslika. Retuš je izveden minimalistički, isključivo u cilju vizualnog povezivanja motiva. Uklanjanjem preslika na antependiju otkrivena je dotad nepoznata slika na dasci, *Zaručnici Marija i Josip u hramu*, koju je Radoslav Tomić datirao u kasno 17. stoljeće te pripisao majstoru Mateu Ottoniju.

Poštujući sve uzance struke, od minucioznog detektiranja oštećenja i njegovih uzroka, detaljnog dokumentiranja zatečenog stanja i valorizacije oltarne cjeline do izvođenja svih konzervatorsko-restauratorskih radova s ciljem očuvanja originalne materije i izvorne tehnologije, radovi na oltaru, antependiju i oltarnoj menzi Sv. Križa uspješno su privedeni kraju, a umjetnina je ponovo zaživjela raskošnim baroknim sjajem.



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