

Sotin, Main Altar of Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Help of Christians

Parish church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Help of Christians in Sotin is a baroquised late medieval structure. Over five centuries, the church was damaged and repaired three times, but it has retained the original floor plan and partially the size of the oldest construction phase. It was restored in the Baroque style in the 18th century when the front convex-concave façade was built. In the middle of the 19th century, a classical belfry was constructed over the central axis of the façade resulting in the present appearance of the church.

The parish priest Ferdo Gerstner wrote about the history of the construction of the church and altar in his book *Povijesne bilješke Sotina* (*Historical Notes about Sotin*), published at the beginning of the 20th century. Ferdo Gerstner states that the old, smaller parish church was demolished due to the growing number of pilgrimages, and a new one was built between 1760 and 1768. The reconstruction costs amounted to 6902 forints.

The altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary Help of Christians, located in the shrine of the parish church of the same *patrocinium*, is a valuable late Baroque retable and one of the few altars in Croatia made using the stucco marble technique. It was constructed in 1768 and paid for with the donation of 1100 forints by Mihajlo Cseh, and additional 300 forints from other donors. According to F. Gerstner, it was built in one year by three stucco masters. Unfortunately, he did not mention their names or the workshop, but comparative analysis point to South German stucco workshops. According to the inscription on the wreath of the attic, the altar was gilded by Feliks Šerciger in 1800.

The main altar in Sotin is a single-tiered retable with an attic. Rising above the side pedestals and the altar stone with a typical concave-convex shape is a predella with consoles that carry columns and serve as pedestals for sculptures of St. Joachim

and St. Anne. The central focus of the retable is the oil-on-canvas painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one of numerous similar copies based on the template by the German painter Lucas Cranach. During the construction of the altar, special attention was paid to the design of the tabernacle in the form of a small *tempietto*. The altar was constructed using a special technique that combines plaster, various pigments and animal glue to imitate different types of marble.

In 1991, during the Homeland War in Croatia, the parish church in Sotin was heavily damaged. The altar was mechanically damaged in several places, the wooden structure was desiccated or burnt, the layer of rough supporting plaster was separated from the wooden structure, and the layer of stucco marble was cracked, mechanically damaged, or completely gone. Statues of St. Joachim and St. Anne were missing, and only a few fragments of the angel sculptures remained.

During the European Year of Cultural Heritage comprehensive conservation of the main altar from the church in Sotin has been completed. The work, carried out from 2007 to 2018, included the construction of the missing wooden structure, rendering of the rough supporting plaster, replacing a layer of stucco marble with different patterns on all elements of the altar architecture, and creating a facsimile of the sculptures. The abovementioned work, as well as all the technical and technological solutions that came from extensive research, were carried out by the staff of the Department for Stucco at the Croatian Conservation Institute. The complexity of the work is evident in the fact that only a handful of Central European workshops specialize in the conservation of art pieces made using this technique.

The entire project was financed by the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Croatia.



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Župna crkva Blažene Djevice Marije Pomoćnice kršćana u Sotinu barokizirana je kasnosrednjovjekovna građevina koja je tijekom pet stoljeća postojanja razarana i popravljana tri puta, zadržavši pritom izvorni tlocrt, a djelomično i gabarite najstarije građevinske faze. Obnovljena je u baroknom stilu u 18. stoljeću, kad je pročelje dobilo konveksno-konkavni oblik. Sadašnji izgled dobila je sredinom 19. stoljeća kad je nad središnjom osi pročelja podignut klasicistički zvonik.

Povijesne podatke o gradnji crkve i oltara donosi sotinski župnik Ferdo Gerstner u knjizi *Povijesne bilješke Sotina* s početka 20. stoljeća. Ferdo Gerstner navodi da je zbog sve brojnih hodočašća srušena stara, manja župna crkva te da je između 1760. i 1768. godine podignuta nova. Troškovi obnove iznosili su 6902 forinte.

Oltar Blažene Djevice Marije Pomoćnice kršćana, smješten u svetištu župne crkve istog patrocinija, vrijedan je kasnobarokni retabl i jedan od malobrojnih oltara izrađenih u tehnici štukomramora na području Hrvatske. Podignut je 1768. godine darom Mihajla Cseha od 1100 forinti te s još dodatnih 300 forinti drugih donatora, a prema F. Gerstneru gradila su ga godinu dana tri majstora štukatera. Nažalost, njihova imena i podrijetlo radionice nije spomenuo, no komparativne analize upućuju na južnonjemačke štukaterske radionice. Prema natpisu na vijencu atike, oltar je pozlatio Feliks Šerciger 1800. godine.

Sotinski glavni oltar jednokatni je retabl s atikom na vrhu. Iznad bočnih postamenata i oltarne menze, tipičnog konkavno-konveksnog oblika, izdiže se predela s konzolama koje nose stupove i predstavljaju postamente za skulpture sv. Joakima i sv. Ane s atributima.

Na središnjem mjestu retabla nalazi se slika Blažene Djevice Marije, izvedena u tehnici ulja na platnu, jedna od brojnih sličnih kopija izrađenih prema predlošku njemačkoga slikara Lucasa Cranacha. Osobita je pozornost pri izradi oltara posvećena izvedbi tabernakula u obliku malenog tempijeta.

Oltar je izrađen specifičnom tehnikom kojom se smjesama gipsa, različitih pigmenata i tukulne vode oponašaju različite vrste mramora.

U agresiji na Hrvatsku 1991. godine sotinska je župna crkva teško stradala. Oltar je na više mjesta bio mehanički oštećen, drvena konstrukcija je bila rasušena ili nagorena, sloj podložne žbuke odvajao se od drvene konstrukcije, a sloj štukomramora bio je raspucan, mehanički oštećen ili je u cijelosti nedostajao. Kipovi sv. Joakima i sv. Ane su nestali, a od figura anđela sačuvano je samo nekoliko fragmenata.

U Europskoj godini kulturne baštine dovršeni su konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na glavnom oltaru sotinske crkve. Radovima, koji su s prekidima trajali od 2007. do 2018. godine, obuhvaćena je izrada nedostajuće drvene konstrukcije, polaganje podložne žbuke, nadomještanje sloja štukomramora različitih uzoraka na svim elementima oltarne arhitekture te izrada faksimila kipova. Navedene radove, kao i sva primijenjena tehnička i tehnološka rješenja koja su proizašla iz opsežnih istraživanja, proveli su djelatnici Odjela za štuko Hrvatskog restauratorskog zavoda. Na složenost radova upućuje i činjenica da se samo nekoliko srednjoeuropskih radionica bavi konzervatorsko-restauratorskim postupcima na umjetninama izvedenim navedenom tehnikom.

Svi radovi bili su financirani sredstvima Ministarstva kulture Republike Hrvatske.



ŠTUKOMRAMOR

Štukomramor je specifična tehnika kojom se smjesama gipsa, različitih, uglavnom zemljanih, pigmentata i tutkalne vode, imitiraju različite vrste mramora. Pigmentirane gipsane paste miješaju se, savijaju, režu i kombiniraju kako bi se postigle strukture slične mramoru: nježno prožiljeni svijetli mramori, intenzivnije pigmentirane breče, kao i višebojne kamene strukture. Štukomasa se polaže na drvenu potkonstrukciju odgovarajućeg oblika na koju je nanesen sloj podložne žbuke. Rezanjem specijalnim alatima, glačanjem i višekratnim brušenjem sloja štukomramora s pomoću kamena plovučca, brusnog papira finije granulacije te završnim poliranjem voštanom pastom postiže se željeni efekt – imitacija raznobojnog poliranog mramora. Izvedba štukomramora zahtjevan je i dug tehnološki proces za koji je potrebna visoka

zanatska vještina. Ta je tehnika bila osobito primjenjivana i cijenjena tijekom 17. i 18. stoljeća, ponajviše na području srednjoeuropskog kulturnog kruga.

Konzervatorsko-restauratorski zahvat na štukomramoru uključuje radove na drvenoj potkonstrukciji, učvršćivanje postojeće i polaganje nove podložne žbuke te njezino modeliranje i brušenje, polaganje završnog sloja štukomramora te njegovo brušenje i poliranje. Da bi rekonstruirani dio štukomramora oblicima i bojom bio prilagođen izvornom materijalu, potrebne su brojne probe svih faza postupka za svaki uzorak.

Izdavač: Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, www.h-r-z.hr / Za izdavača: dr. sc. Tajana Pleše / Stručni tim: Krešimir Valentak, Josip Demo, Josip Cvrtila, Dejana Brdarić, Zvonimir Orčić, Danuta Misiuda, Tomislav Markić, Karmen Lentić, Diana Požar, Vanina Topić, Ivana Prodan, Ela Kreutz, Ana Pavešković Burazer, Nevena Živić, Iva Abičić, Konrad Verner, Tihana Popinjač, Ivan Liška / Fotografije: Đuro Šimičić, Jurica Škudar (fototeka Hrvatskog restauratorskog zavoda) / Autori teksta: Danuta Misiuda, Krešimir Valentak / Lektura: Rosanda Tometić / Prijevod: Nataša Đurđević / Grafičko oblikovanje i priprema za tisak: Ljubo Gamulin / Tisak: Novi Val d.o.o. / Naklada: 500 / Zagreb, ožujak 2018.



STUCCO MARBLE

Stucco marble is a special technique that combines plaster, various, mostly earthy, pigments and animal glue to imitate different types of marble. Pigmented plaster pastes are kneaded, bent, cut, and combined to achieve marble-like structures: gently streaked light marble, more intensely pigmented breccia, and multicolored stone structures. The stucco is placed on a wooden substructure on which a layer of rough supporting plaster had been applied. The desired effect – imitating multicolored polished marble – is achieved by cutting the stucco marble using special tools, polishing and sanding it multiple times using a pumice stone and super fine sandpaper, and finally polishing it with wax. Making stucco marble is a demanding and long technological process requiring high levels of craftsmanship. This tech-

nique was particularly popular and appreciated during the 17th and 18th centuries, especially in the Central European cultural circle.

The conservation of stucco marble includes work on the wooden substructure, fixing the existing rough supporting plaster and applying a new layer, as well as shaping and sanding it, adding the final layer of stucco marble that is then sanded and polished. In order for the shape and colors of the reconstructed part of the stucco marble to match the original material, numerous testing during all stages of the process is required for each sample.

Publisher: Croatian Conservation Institute, www.h-r-z.hr / For the publisher: Tajana Pleše, PhD / Expert team: Krešimir Valentak, Josip Demo, Josip Cvrtila, Dejan Brdarić, Zvonimir Orčić, Danuta Misiuda, Tomislav Markić, Karmen Lentić, Diana Požar, Vanina Topić, Ivana Prodan, Ela Kreutz, Ana Pavešković Burazer, Nevena Živić, Iva Abičić, Konrad Verner, Tihana Popinjač, Ivan Liška / Photos: Đuro Šimičić, Jurica Škudar (Photo Archive of the Croatian Conservation Institute) / Authors: Danuta Misiuda, Krešimir Valentak / Proofreading: Danijel Lončar / Translation: Nataša Đurđević / Graphic design and prepress: Ljubo Gamulin / Printed by: Novi Val / Edition: 500 / Zagreb, March 2018