

SUMMARY

THE CONSERVATION AND MIST LINING OF THE CANVAS PAINTING „HOLY TRINITY“ FROM PAADREMA CHURCH

The aim of this thesis was to conserve a religious canvas painting „Holy Trinity“ from an orthodox church situated in Paadrema village, Pärnumaa, Estonia. As it was found out from several historical photos of the iconostasis of Paadrema church the painting had been hanging in the same place for about a hundred years. The painting could be dated to the end of 1880s by signatures on the back (mostly unreadable) which included a year. The authors name was also on the front of the painting but it could not be identified since there was only half of the name left due to a probable heat damage and on the back side it had mostly faded.

The painting and its frame was found to be in a quite poor condition. Prior to conservation, the painting had significant damages: loss of canvas, tears, severe craqueleur, ground and painting layer was brittle and flaking and the painting was covered with dust and soot. In the lower part of the painting there were also signs of heat damages, which were probably caused by the oil and candle lamp hanging in front of the painting. It was found that the original canvas was cotton canvas, which does not suit well to an environment with fluctuating temperature and relative humidity. Country churches in Estonia tend to have these type of issues.

Because of severe damage to the thin cotton canvas it was quite clear from the start that the painting will have to be lined to give it the much needed support. There are several different methods known from the history of lining paintings, but it was decided to follow the main principles of nowadays conservation ethics and treatments, such as reversibility and minimal intervention. When choosing the proper lining method, it was also kept in mind that the painting will go back to its original location. So, considering all these aspects it was decided to go with a fairly new and relatively unknown lining method in Estonia – mist lining, which is also the main focus of the theoretical part of this thesis.

The greatest advantage of the mist lining is that the quantity of adhesive has been reduced to a minimum. Also the quantity of moisture affecting the painting is very small and reactivating the

adhesive does not need the application of heat. Different tests have shown that the bond between original and lining canvas is strong and gives a painting sufficient support. Thanks to this lining method the painting can preserve its characteristics. Because of the reversibility of materials, mist lining is suitable for conservation with the purpose of minimal intervention. Even though mist lining is not yet widely known, it has received great feedback from conservators all over the world.

Since nowadays lining paintings is considered to be a rather radical method and conservators look for alternatives, the practice of lining rarely comes up. For the author of this thesis it was a great opportunity to learn about different lining methods and to practice the innovative method of mist lining. Also, by practicing all the main procedures involved in conservation of paintings.

As a result, the painting has been conserved and its structural parts stabilized, ensuring the future preservation of the painting. Conservation was done with reversible materials and the aesthetic integrity has been restored. Once the conservation of the frame will be completed, the painting will return to Paadrema church to its original place where it once again can be exhibited and used for religious purposes.