

Church of St. Mary of the Rocks near Beram / Conservation and Restoration of the Painted Wooden Ceiling

The Church of St. Mary of the Rocks is located on an elevation near the cemetery, northeast from Beram. It was built in the first half of the 15th century as a single nave building with a rectangular shrine. Beram church is well-known for the best-preserved series of wall paintings in Istria. Depictions of lively colours, motifs, and compositions (scenes from the Mariological and Christological cycle, saints, *Dance of the Dead*, *The Original Sin*, *Wheel of Fortune* and *Adoration of the Magi*) were painted in 1474 by painters from the workshop of Master Vincent from Kastav. The *Dance of the Dead* is the only such depiction in Croatia.

The painted wooden ceiling above the nave was constructed at the time of the great Baroque renovation in 1709. At that time the cross-ribbed vault in the shrine was demolished and replaced by a straight ceiling, the floor was raised, windows were opened on the façade and lateral walls, a spindle-like belfry was built, and an exterior porch was added. The shrine was equipped with a new marble altar, a work by Mihovil Ladavac and Franjo Golop.

The painted ceiling (total surface area of 56 m²) covers the entire nave of the church and is constructed out of 63 painted square cassettes, where the central one is four times larger than the others. The cassettes have an outer and inner square field framed by an octagonal moulded frame. The depiction of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary is painted in the octagonal field of the central cassette. Remaining smaller cassettes have, one each, a sculpted and gilded passion flower applique (the flower of Christ, *Passiflora*). Rectangular outer fields have painted depictions of calyces from which rise stems with leaves, flowers, and fruits embodied in Christian symbolism (roses, tulips, chrysanthemums, carnations, daffodils, pears, figs, oranges, apples, cucumbers, squashes, peaches, plums, grapes, dates, quinces, mulberries, and pomegranates). On the outer fields of eight smaller cassettes en-

circling the central one with the depiction of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary, cherubs are painted. The painting technique, conception and position of figures support the hypothesis that the ceiling paintings in Beram were made by the same author who painted the wooden ceiling of the cemetery Church of St. Peter and Paul in Trviž, based on a signature dated to 1703.

The analysis of the wooden support confirmed that the supporting beams of the roof construction are made of oak-wood, while the planks of the painted ceiling are of fir-wood. Inspection of the ceiling's condition established that the wooden support is mostly damaged due to humidity and wood-eating insects, while the painted surface is pulverized and falls of the wood in small particles due to deterioration of the binder. The porosity and poor attachment of the painted layer to the surface did not allow the removal of surface impurities and tannin stains by applying liquid medium on cotton swabs. Instead, a water-based solid gel was used. After cleaning the surface, the painted layer was consolidated and fixed to the support by using synthetic resin dissolved in a mineral solvent. Ceiling planks were reinforced by saturating the wooden support with a consolidator dissolved in a mineral solvent, nails were replaced with wooden pegs, and the construction was strengthened by inserting new wooden elements. The retouching of the painted layer was limited to connecting smaller damages and breaks in the form where there was a need for restoring visual integrity, intentionally avoiding any major reconstructions.

The first half of the ceiling (from the main entrance to the centre of the nave) was disassembled in 2016 and the works were completed in 2018 when the restored cassettes were once again mounted in their original positions. That same year the second part of the ceiling was dismantled while the opening to the roof was closed with boards with the photograph of the painted ceiling. Complete conservation and restoration of the ceiling will be finished in 2020.



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Crkva sv. Marije na Škrilinah kraj Berma / Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na oslikanom drvenom stropu



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Crkva sv. Marije na Škrilinah smještena je na uzvisini pored groblja, sjeveroistočno od Berma. Sagrađena je u prvoj polovici 15. stoljeća kao jednobrodna građevina s pravokutnim svetištem. Beramska je crkva poznata po najočuvanijem ciklusu zidnih slika u Istri. Prizore živih boja, motiva i kompozicije (scene iz mariološkoga i kristološkoga ciklusa, sveci, *Ples mrtvaca*, *Prvi grijeh*, *Kolo sreće* i *Poklonstvo kraljeva*) naslikala je 1474. godine radionica majstora Vincenta iz Kastva. *Ples mrtvaca* jedini je prozor s takvim ikonografskim motivom u Hrvatskoj.

Oslíkani drveni strop iznad broda crkve postavljen je u vrijeme velike barokne obnove u 1709. godine. Tom je prilikom srušen križno-rebrasti svod u svetištu te je zamijenjen ravnim stropom, povišen je pod, na pročelju i bočnim zidovima probijeni su prozori, podignut je zvonik na preslicu i dograđena lopica. Svetište je dobilo novi mramorni oltar, djelo Mihovila Ladavca i Franje Golopa.

Oslíkani strop (ukupne površine 56 m²) natkriljuje cijeli brod crkve, a sastavljen je od 63 oslikane kvadratne kasete, od kojih je središnja četverostruko veća od ostalih. Kasete su sastavljene od vanjskog četvrtastog polja i onog unutarnjeg, orubljenog oktogonalmim reljefno profiliranim okvirom. U oktogonalmom polju središnje kasete naslikan je prikaz Uznesenja Blažene Djevice Marije. U središte oktogonalmih polja manjih kasete aplicirana je po jedna plastično oblikovana, pozlaćena pasiflora (*Kristov cvijet*, *Passiflora*). Pravokutna vanjska polja oslikana su motivima otvorenih čaški iz kojih izlaze razlistale stabljike s cvijećem i plodovima prisutnim u kršćanskoj simbolici (ruže, tulipani, krizanteme, karanfili, narcisi, kruške, smokve, naranče, jabuke, krastavci, tikvice, breskve, šljive, grožđe, datulje, dunje, dudovi i narovi). Na vanjskim poljima, osam manjih kasete koje okružuju središnju s motivom Uznesenja Blažene

Djevice Marije, naslikani su kerubini. Slikarska izvedba te koncepcija i impostacija figura govore u prilog pretpostavci da je beramski stropni oslik naslikao isti autor koji je oslikao drveni strop grobljanske crkve sv. Petra i Pavla u Trvižu, datiran prema pronađenoj signaturi u 1703. godinu. Analizom drvenog nosioca utvrđeno je da su nosive grede krovne konstrukcije od hrastova drveta, dok su daske oslikanog stropa koje su za njih pričvršćene od jelovine. Pregledom stanja stropa utvrđeno je da je drveni nosilac većinom oštećen djelovanjem vlage i insekata koji se hrane drvom, a oslikana površina uslijed popuštanja veziva pulverizira i u sitnim česticama otpada s drva. Poroznost i slaba vezanost slikanog sloja za podlogu nije dopuštala da se površinska nečistoća i taninske mrlje uklone pomoću tekućeg medija nanošenog tamponima vate, već je u tu svrhu korišten kruti gel na vodenoj bazi. Nakon čišćenja površine, slikani sloj je konsolidiran i fiksiran za nosilac pomoću sintetske smole rastopljene u mineralnom otapalu. Daske stropa su učvršćene natapanjem drvenog nosioca konsolidantom rastopljenim u mineralnom otapalu, čavli su zamijenjeni drvenim klinovima, a konstrukcija učvršćena umetanjem novih drvenih elemenata. Retuš slikanog sloja ograničen je na povezivanje manjih oštećenja i prekida forme, gdje je to nalagala potreba za uspostavom vizualne cjelovitosti, pri čemu je namjerno izostala izrada većih rekonstrukcija. Prva polovica stropa (od glavnog ulaza do središnje lađe) demontirana je 2016. godine, a radovi su dovršeni 2018. godine, kada su restaurirane kasete ponovno montirane na svoje izvorne pozicije. Iste je godine obavljena demontaža drugog dijela stropa, a otvor prema krovu zatvoren je daskama prekrivenima fotografijom oslikanog stropa. Cjeloviti konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na stropu bit će dovršeni 2020. godine.

