The conservation project in the church St. Mary of Pond was initiated primarily because of endangered medieval wall painting, severely damaged by rain movements of the building before any constructive work was started. It was necessary to secure damaged plaster and paint layers, an operation that began during this year’s practical training with the hope it would be continued.

St. Mary of Pond is a one-nave building with one conserved semicircle apse and belongs to the Romanesque style. The wall painting on the north wall from the year 1100 represents the scene Adoration of the Magi and is considered to be a work of an author influenced by Friulian painting of the 12th century. From all, the task of this month-long practical training was to investigate the state of preservation of this building and interior wall painting as well as the wall painting’s production technology, to make its graphic documentation and consolidate the most endangered areas.

While investigating the technology, with the purpose to detect original materials, under a few terracotta tiles on the floor inside the church, 37 fragments of plaster package with original paint layer were found. These fragments represent remains of the original wall decoration in the apse that was destroyed in Europe to make room for a wooden altar. Some fragments were submitted to pigment and binder analyses conducted in the Research Centre for Metal Industry in the Istrian County – METRIS (µFT-IR, FT-IR, SEM-EDS).

Wall painting technique was identified as lime casonara and a thin limewash coat. Organic binder (proteins) found in the paint layer and limewash was detected by infrared chemical analysis performed in 2000 (restorer B. Hacker). Based on these results, B. Hacker concluded that organic binder was added to the limewash (lime slurry) and confirmed that the painting was executed with lime casonara.

By means of scalps with exchangeable blades and Webmaster sponge trials were executed to remove overpaintings and subsequent limewashes in order to determine the appropriate cleaning method. Removing dust and other superficial dirt from the surface of the painting was done only in the areas that represent the main scene. The paint layer in that area was unstable and cleaning trials were executed with soft brushes, painted wooden sticks and WebMaster sponges with good results.

To consolidate original plaster layers it was necessary to pre-consolidate delaminated areas with Japanese tissue and Tylose MH 300 (1%). After drying, Japanese tissue was partially and temporarily removed only in the areas that were treated internally, inducing the surface tension with a mixture of ethanol and distilled water, inducing re-cohesion of the decayed plaster structure with sodium CalxNova with addition of quartz sand and glass microspheres. That way the most endangered damaged areas were consolidated.

The invitation of restorer B. Hacker who conducted the investigations and some conservation treatments in the church of St. Mary of Pond and the scene Adoration of the Magi to join the project, was considered crucial in continuing conservation works to high quality level. As a student at Fachhochschule Potsdam, Fachbereich Architektur und Städtebau Studiengang Restaurierung for the purpose of practical training in 2008 and diploma thesis in 2009, he conducted thorough investigations of the building and the wall painting, with an emphasis on investigating the original and compatible conservation materials. This research resulted in a conservation concept we wanted to adhere to.

Conservation Department in Pula for the area of the Istra County (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia) Owner / beneficiary: Roman Catholic parish Gologorica, St. Peter and St. Paul

Time: June 7th, 2013 – August 3rd, 2013

Authors: Apolonio Katarina, Cvija Kristina, Gordan Ana

Mentor: Assist. Prof. Neva Pološki

Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Department for Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art

Specialization: painting

E-mail: kipich.slikich@gmail.com

Project Funding: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, Municipality of Conida / University of Zagreb

Project coordinator: Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Department for Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art

Mentor: Assist. Prof. Neva Pološki

Guest lecturer: restorer Bastian Hacker, Germany

Students: Cvija K., Erdena A., Martineau Y. V., Modor M., Pavlič Sav. P., Pavlič T.

Period: June 7th, 2013 – August 3rd, 2013

Building: Church St. Mary of Pond

Conservation object: wall painting

Scene: Adoration of the Magi

Date: 11th / 15th century

Attribution: unknown author

County / District / Town: Conida / Croatia / Istria / Gologorica

In the jurisdiction of: Conservation Department in Pula for the area of the Istra County (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia)

Owner / beneficiary: Roman Catholic parish Gologorica, St. Peter and St. Paul

The state of preservation, main causes of deterioration were established; structural instability within the building, rising damp (capillary moisture) and historical renovations that contributed to decaying of the wall painting structure (hammer damages, inadequate overplasterings, subsequent limewashes, etc.). Drawing graphic documentation in situ included the compilation of a catalogue of damages and the scene Adoration of the Magi to join the project, was considered crucial in continuing conservation works at a high quality level. As a student at Fachhochschule Potsdam, Fachbereich Architektur und Städtebau Studiengang Restaurierung for the purpose of practical training in 2008 and diploma thesis in 2009, he conducted thorough investigations of the building and the wall painting, with an emphasis on investigating the original and compatible conservation materials. This research resulted in a conservation concept we wanted to adhere to, primarily with the benefit of the wall painting in mind, but also with a view of the most adequate education for future conservators. With the lectures about the conducted investigations and their results, B. Hacker has secured the fundaments and guidelines for student investigations and conservation works.

The state of preservation, main causes of deterioration were established; structural instability within the building, rising damp (capillary moisture) and historical renovations that contributed to decaying of the wall painting structure (hammer damages, inadequate overplasterings, subsequent limewashes, etc.). Drawing graphic documentation in situ included the compilation of a catalogue of damages, photographing main types of damages, determining graphic representation for each damage type, drawing data map and map of damages in 1:2.5 scale by means of a square net.