Transfer of a Fragment of Painted Frieze from The Moise Palace at Cres

Introduction
In the year 2016, a fragment (Fig. 1.) of a valuable 16th century wall painting was discovered under more recent layers of plaster and paint during the conservation research which was a part of the complex project of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Moise Palace on the island of Cres. The palace was in poor state of conservation so it was decided that it would be removed and repurposed as a University research centre and regional centre for lifelong learning. The project is the result of the collaboration of Ministry of Culture of Republic of Croatia and European Union. The Moise palace is a renaissance-patrician residence, so called palazetto, which has undergone many changes in terms of architectural renovation throughout the history: its interior walls were decorated with various chronological layers of wall paintings, rearrangement of those adaptations. The discovered fragment is a part of the 16th century painted fresco decoration situated in the central salon on the first floor of the palace Moise (Fig. 2.). The painted fresco depicts mythological creatures, angels, doves, animals and plants as well as residences with portraits of various men and women (Fig. 6). It is "framed" with upper and lower illusionistically painted architectural motives, suggesting 3D decorations usually done in stucco relief. Originally, the frieze adorned the upper surface of the “L” shaped salon. Today its fragments are found on approx. 55% of the original surface.

Detachment of the fragment
The fragment of the frieze (380 x 70 cm) was uncovered under recent layers of plaster and paint, on the southern half of the western wall of central salon. The wall carrying the fragment was statically unstable and deemed necessary to be demolished and replaced by a new one. Because of that, the wall painting needed to be detached as soon as possible in order to be preserved. After thorough investigation and preparation (Fig. 3.), the fragment was protected with facing (Fig. 4.) and divided into three smaller sections. Temporary support was made on the face of the fragment (Fig. 5.) and the painting was detached from its original support (unstable brick wall) using the staccato method of detachment.

A - support (brick wall); B - intrabrace (tan plaster); C - painted layer; D - first layer of facing (tamp paper + Paraloid 572); E - second layer of facing (cotton gauze); F - wooden slats; G - polyurethane foam; H - panel plates; I - scaffolding; J - screws

Treatment of the detached fragment
After detachment the fragment was transported to the workshop at the Department for Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art (Academy of Fine Arts, University of Zagreb). There it was assigned to two graduate students - Ivana Dougast and Lara Kunc who were to carry out further conservation treatments. The conservation work on the detached fragment consisted of: treatments of the background - cleaning (Fig. 7.), and reintegration of the intrabrace plaster, application of backing – calcium carbonate (Fig. 8.) with starch lime stone (Fig. 8.) and gesso (Fig. 10.), removal of the temporary support (Fig. 11.), reconnection of the sections (Fig. 12., 13., 14.) and gluing the fragment with an intervention layer (PUR loam) on the new support - the reinforced aluminum board (Fig. 15., 16.).

Remounting of the detached fragment and in-situ treatments
Before permanent mounting of the fragment in situ, its position was accurately determined (Fig. 17.). Then the fragment was fixed on a newly build wall (Fig. 18.), the facing was removed allowing access to the surface. Next step was the removal and replacement of inadequate plaster fillings from lacuna and edges (Fig. 20.). The final step in the conservation treatment was cleaning of the paint layer after which a few tests of the reintegration of the paint layer were made (Fig. 21.).

Conclusion
After the completion of the transfer process, the detached fragment was successfully connected with the rest of the painted frieze and the surrounding plaster which was applied to the entire newly build wall. Although the stratigraphy of the fragment was significantly altered, all the treatments were made according to the ethical principles of the conservation profession. This principle of reversibility was respected to enable possible future interventions. The remounted wall painting fragment is yet to be connected to the rest of the painted frieze via geometrical reconstruction of the missing parts of the paint layer.

References
2. CRAGGASSETA, JUMLA, Panamanian-people.

Fig. 1. The fragment of the painted frieze.
Fig. 2. North facade and the plan of the first floor where the frieze is situated.

Fig. 3. Stratigraphy during the detachment.

Fig. 4. Two layers of facings and wooden slats on the surface of the fragment.
Fig. 5. The fragment of the frieze protected with the layers of facing and temporary support fixed to the scaffolding.
Fig. 6. Detail of the fragment depiciting an angel leading the frieze from the wall.

Fig. 7. Stepping and leveling of the backside of intrabrace.

Fig. 8. Application of calcium carbonate backing on the backside of the intrabrace.

Fig. 9. Application of the cladded tyrolean on the backside of calcium carbonate.

Fig. 10. Application of the intervention layer (PUR loam) on the new support of the reinforced aluminium board on which the fragment was placed.

Fig. 11. Removal of the temporary support from the front side of the fragment.

Fig. 12. Partial removal of the second layer of facing (tamp paper) to ensure exact positioning of the fragment pieces.

Fig. 13. Partial application of the facing after exact positioning of the fragment pieces to prevent movements.

Fig. 14. Reinforcement of the temporarily connected fragments with stainless steel rods and permanently connected with final layer of calcium carbonate backing.

Fig. 15. Application of the intervention layer (PUR loam) on the new support of the reinforced aluminium board on which the fragment was placed.

Fig. 16. Additional application of polyurethane foam on the rear side of the fragment to prevent over-exposure.

Fig. 17. Positioning of the fragment before it was fixed to the newly built wall.

Fig. 18. Final mounting of the fragment on the newly build wall. Anchors bored behind the fragment were fixed to the metal brace and Zinc wall with a series of screws.

Fig. 19. Grout removal of the facing layers by water soaked cotton wads.

Fig. 20. Inadequate plaster fillings were replaced with new compositions of selective lime and cementitestoner. New plaster fillings were leveling to match the remaining surface.

Fig. 21. Test area where the proposition of the reintegration of the paint layer was made using natural pigments and Tyrolean Milk 006.