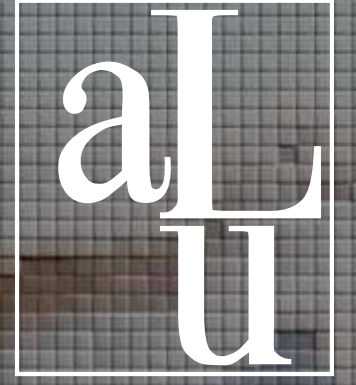




Conservation and restoration work on the ripidas from the Church of Holy Father Nicholas, Mikluševci



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GENERAL INFORMATION

This project concerns the mobile inventory of the Church of Holy Father Nicholas in Mikluševci, near Vukovar, in Eastern Croatia, and encompasses the following objects:

- four ripidas, H 194 x W 47 x D 7 cm; tempera on wood, with gilding, and an upper layer of bronze
- twenty venerating icons of similar size – H 23-29 cm, W 20-22 cm, D 2 cm; tempera on panel
- crucifix, H 223 x W 32 x D 7 cm, tempera on wood, with gilding, and upper layer of bronze

The authors are unknown; all objects are dated in the 19th century. The inventory was stored in the parochial house located next to the church

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Supervision: Conservation Department in Vukovar, Croatia
Cultural heritage registry number: R-98 (1978.)

Head of project: Tamara Ukrainčik/ Associates: Maja Sučević Miklin, Ana Božičević, Ida Blažičko, Barbara Horvat Kavazović, Tea Zubin Ferri, Vladan Desnica, Domagoj Šatović, Jelena Trajković, Anđelija Kozakijević i studio ViaKomet/ Team members: Nika Knežević and Hana Borenić, 5th year students (diploma works)
Estimated end of project: 2023



Church of Holy Father Nicholas in Mikluševci, Croatia, photo by Barbara Horvat Kavazović, 2019



Four ripidas and a crucifix in the church; the archive of the Conservation Department of Vukovar, 1990



Consolidation treatment, photo by B. Horvat Kavazović, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Four wooden, painted and gilded ripidas are part of the mobile inventory from the church of Holy Father Nicholas in Mikluševci. Under the supervision of the Conservation Department in Vukovar/ Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia from 2020 are carried out conservation and restoration work at our department. Due to political and social events, the church has been out of service for years, which is the cause of the accelerated deterioration of the building and inventory. Previous repairs, which were done on the ripidas, damaged their appearance. The prolonged exposure to unfavorable conditions in the church caused additional damage to all layers of the objects. Hana Borenić and Nika Knežević carried out treatments on the ripidas in the academic year 2021/2022, as part of their final diploma thesis. At the same time, they learned about the legal procedures when working on national protected cultural property.



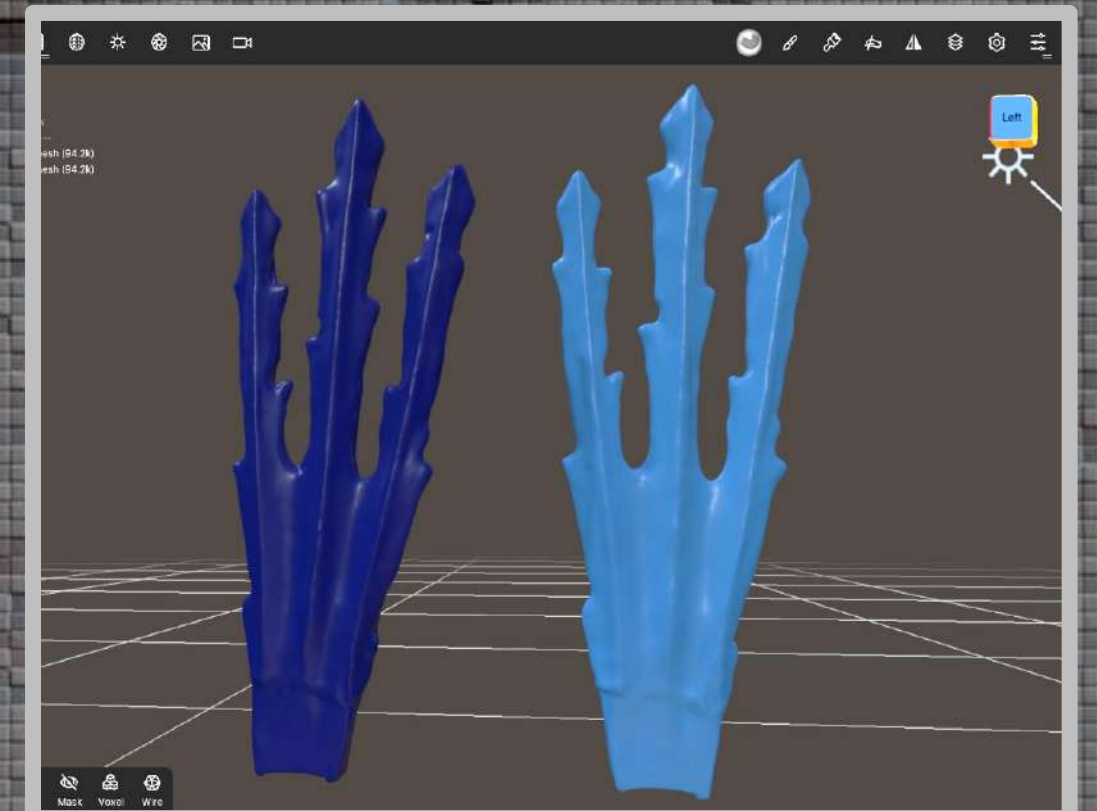
Ripida with depictions of the Transfiguration/ St. Demetrius, before the treatments, diploma work of Hana Borenić, photo by H. Borenić, 2021



Consolidation treatments on the ripida of St. Georgia/ St. John and ripida of Virgin Mary and St. Michael, diploma work of Nika Knežević, photo by Ida Blažičko, 2022



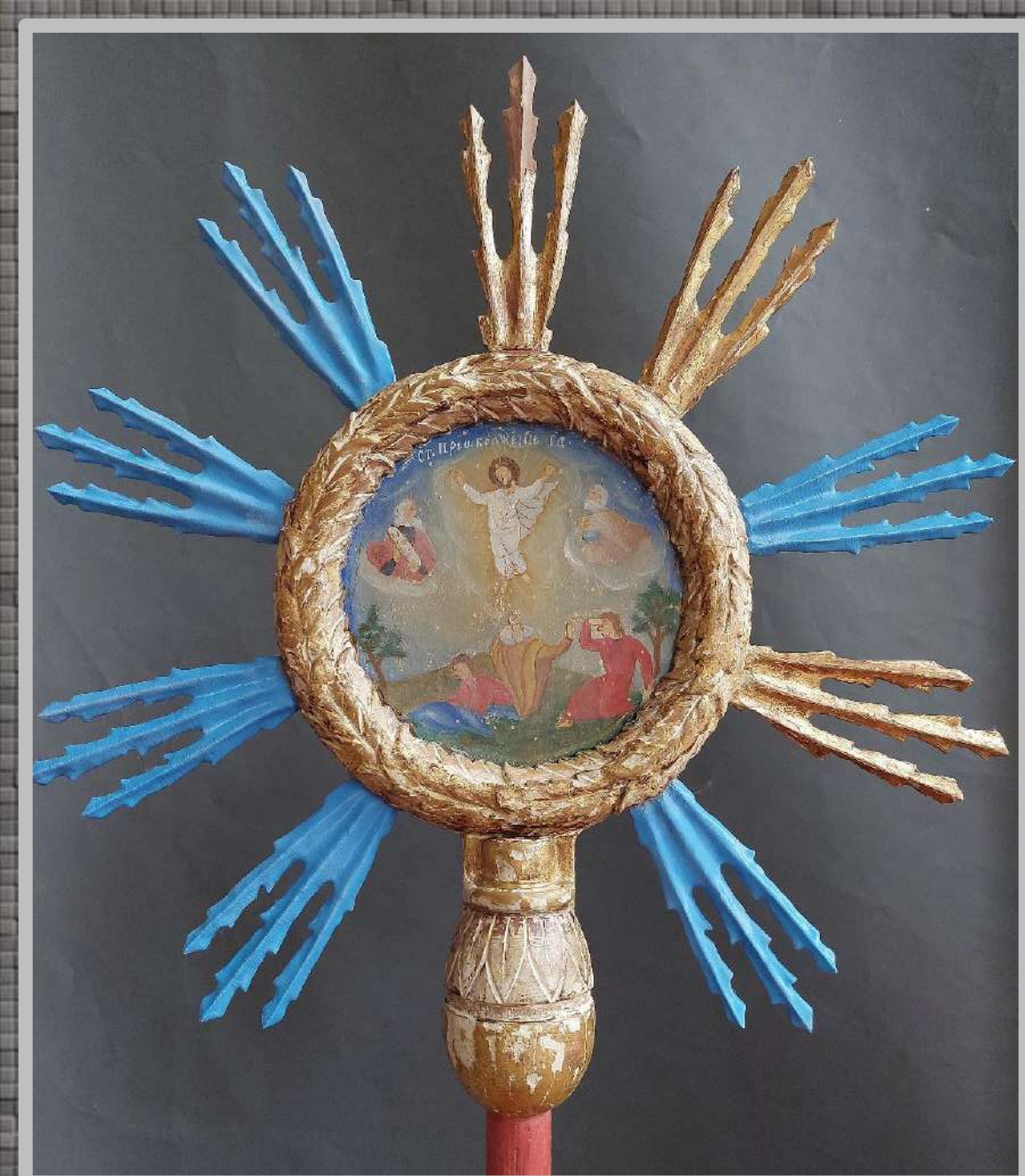
3D shot of the ripida with the figures of St. Elijah and St. Nicholas, made by studio ViaKomet, 2021



Two versions of the ornament in the Nomad Sculpt program, made by Hana Borenić, 2022

SHORT REVIEW

The Orthodox church in Mikluševci, dedicated to St. Nicholas of Myra was built in 1758-1762. The entire inventory of the church represents a skilfully done Orthodox sacral art, typical for the end of the 18th and the 19th centuries. The results of the scientific analyses carried out on the paintings of the ripidas and icons indicate that they were most likely made in the middle, or in the second half of the 19th century. In their simplified artistic style the ripidas and icons fully followed the standard iconography of that period. In 1990 the inventory of the artwork in the church consisted of an elaborate iconostasis, venerating icons, a cross, candle holders and ripidas. The iconostasis was painted by the baroque painter Lazar Serdanović in the 1770s, and since the last war it is in Novi Sad. Ripida (Greek: "ἡ ριπίς" ripis, gen. ripidos - fan) is a ceremonial worship prop in the Orthodox Church which has been used since the first century until present time. In a liturgical ceremony, two deacons hold ripidas on each side of the Holy Throne. The ripidas are accompanied by crosses both on a long handles. These objects are traditionally made in carved wood or light metal with painted depictions of saints and scenes from Jesus life.



Ripida of Transfiguration/St. Demetrius after cleaning, consolidation, and insertion of 3D printed ornaments photo by H. Borenić, 2021



The same ripida after ground layer application, photo by Hana Borenić, 2022



The same ripida after applying the layer of bolus, photo by Hana Borenić, 2022



The same ripida after retouching and gilding, photo by Hana Borenić, 2022

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION WORK ON RIPIDAS

The each ripida consists of a circular wooden disc with the painted on both sides, a carved gilded wreath from which gilded rays radiate, and a gilded nodus that connects the wreath with a long, red-colored handle. In contrast to the icons that suffered mayor losses the original paint the ripidas, was well preserved. That allowed for a comprehensive conservation and restoration work on the ripidas which include: dissection, surface cleaning, consolidation, removal of overpaints, reconstruction of missing parts of the wooden carrier (partially using 3D technology), compensations in the base layer, retouching, gilding and application of a final protective layer. The bronze overpaint removal revealed a fine and precise original wood carving. All the stages of the conservation and restoration work were supported by stratigraphic layer analysis, historical artistic analysis as well as photo, graphic and written documentation.

CONCLUSION

The work on the ripidas was challenging due to the fact that they are objects of practical, ceremonial use as well as the objects of artistic and aesthetic intention. The success of the project was based on integration of these two aspects. The ripidas could once again have a liturgical function, but it is more likely that they will be stored together with the rest of the inventory in the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Vukovar, before the end of 2023.



Application of the protective layers, photo by Tamara Ukrainčik, 2022



The final touch, diploma work and photo by H. Borenić, 2022



After the conservation and restoration treatments, photo by H. Borenić, 2022