

Conservation of Painted Church Interior Decorations of the Late Baroque Period in Latgale (2004–2018)

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——— Some of the most valuable eighteenth-century church buildings of the late Baroque period in Latvia belong to the cultural heritage of Latgale region (Eastern Latvia). Roman Catholic churches in Krāslava, Pasiene and Piedruja are among them. Although their interior finish has experienced both improvements and losses during the course of the centuries, a significant number of the initial fresco painted interior decorations have survived and conservation works were carried out there in 2004–2018 with the cooperation of Latvian and Polish restorers. An attempt to evaluate both the specific features of these interior paintings and the results of their investigation and conservation works is the main topic of the article.

Keywords: conservation, baroque, *fresco* painting, church interior decoration.

In recent decades, conservation works of monumental-decorative painting have taken place in the sacred interiors of Latgale's churches. A significant part of the region's late Baroque architectural heritage consists of masonry Catholic churches dating from the second half of the eighteenth century. Their interiors have retained traces of their original painted finish to varying degrees. The most outstanding objects from this aspect are St. Louis' Catholic Church in Krāslava, St Dominic's Catholic Church in Pasiene and the Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Piedruja. Built in the same period (1760s–70s), they reveal not only the flourishing of late Baroque sacred buildings in this region but also the adherence to a particular stylistic trend. The Pasiene and Piedruja churches mark the Vilnius Baroque School's northeast boundary, while the church in Krāslava, especially its furnishings, indicates a more direct appropriation of classical examples (the sacred architecture of Roman Baroque).¹ These churches also underwent nearly simultaneous research, repair and conservation works during which new information surfaced on their painted décor.

The Pasiene Church and Dominican Monastery ensemble are situated very close to the Russian border, where the areas of Eastern and Western Christianity intersect, and it has always been a clear landmark of Catholic, Western cultural values. The surroundings of Pasiene initially belonged to the Ludza congregation but Dominicans settled here after receiving an invitation from Bishop Mikołaj Korwin-Popławski's in the late seventeenth century. Construction of a wooden church and monastery complex began, forming a permanent congregation and establishing 12 chapels nearby, most of which later became congregation churches.² When the monastery was abolished in 1832, diocesan priests served the congregation.³ The first wooden church along with monastery buildings was constructed here in 1694. This complex burned down in 1753⁴ and construction of the present masonry church and monastery began. The spacious monastery

1 Boriss Vipers, *Baroque Art in Latvia*, Rīga, 1939, pp. 250–251.

2 Andrejs Johansons, *Latvijas kultūras vēsture. 1710–1800*, Stokholma: Daugava, 1975, p. 311; Stanislavs Škutāns, *Misionāru darbeiba Latgolā*, Minhene: V. Lōča izdevniecība, 1953, p. 34.

3 Jānis Cakuls, *Latvijas Romas katoļu draudzes. Kūrījas arhīva materiālu apkopojums*, Rīga: Rīgas Metropolijas kūrīja, 1997, p. 294.

4 *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, t. 8, 1887, Warszawa: nakł. Filipa Sulimierskiego i Władysława Walewskiego, p. 844.

building was completed in 1761⁵ but the new church was built in 1760 and consecrated in 1777.⁶ Repairs were already needed in 1798.⁷ The architect of the complex remains unknown. Antonio Paracca⁸ was hypothetically named but documentary evidence is still lacking.⁹ There is also no information on the artists who created the painted interior and *stucco* finish at the time of construction. Both the building's architectonic forms and its *stucco* décor remind of Piedruja Catholic Church (1759–1774), also situated in Latgale.

Over time, the building and its interior were affected by various events that could have significantly impacted its image. In 1815, the church was struck by lightning and caught fire; it was restored and repaired in 1828.¹⁰ Records from 1828 list not only *stucco* altars but also two illusively painted altars in the side chapels (the St Thomas Aquinas and St Joseph altars). The shared iconographic programme of these altars shows typical Dominican themes (images of St Dominic, St Catherine of Siena and saints of Sandomierz).¹¹ Nineteenth-century documents provide little information on the church's ceiling and murals. An 1818 record mentions the church being plastered on both the outside and the inside as well as decoratively painted;¹² this might indicate the lost polychrome décor, but its form is not specified. The building was damaged by fire in 1882, at which time its roof, towers and south-façade windows were also completely destroyed.¹³ The

5 *Akt Wizyty Klasztoru Posińskiego zaczętej dnia 1. Junij a Skonczoney dnia 30 tegoż Miesiąca Ru. 1818*, in: Нацыянальны Гістарычны Архіў Рэспублікі Беларусь, Мінск (NGARB), f. 1781, ap. 26, b. 1396, l. 49 v.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

7 *Na ukaz Jego Imperatorskiego Maiestatu Samowładcy Caley Rosyi Instyt: Collegium z Rzymsko Katolickiego Departamentu Mohilowskiemu Rzymskich Kościołów Jaśnie Wm. Arcybiskupowi Kawalerowi Sietrzeneczewiczowi pod Numerem 124 wydany; y nam Dominikanom Posińskim przez konsystorz Rzymsko Katolicki Mohilowski odpowiedziec zalecomy; Takowy następujący y sprawiedliwy daie się Raport.* [1798], in: Російский Государственный Исторический архив, Санкт-Петербург (RGIA), f. 822, ap. 12, b. 2589, l. 162.

8 Mariusz Karpowicz, *Antonio Paracca. Architetto del rococó estremo*, Comune di Valsolda, 2008, p. 17.

9 Brothers Antonio Ludovico Paracco (1722–ca. 1790) and Francesco Domenico Paracco (1729?–?) worked in Latgale. Biographical information from: Mariusz Karpowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

10 Copy of the 1828-visitation record is included in the research: Edgars Dubiņš, *Arhitektūras pieminekļis – Pasiēnes baznīca un klosteris. Pirmsprojekta izpēte*, 1. sēj., 2. d., Rīga, 1981, pp. 4–119. Manuscript is held at the MDC (Monument Documentation Centre of the National Heritage Board of Latvia).

11 Edgars Dubiņš, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6.

12 NGARB, f. 1781, ap. 26, b. 1396, l. 17.

13 Jānis Cakuls, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

church was further damaged during the First World War, and the small borderland congregation struggled to repair the church. Works were still in progress as late as the 1930s.¹⁴ After the Second World War, several repairs were made to the building and its interior, which altered the painted décor.

The destiny of this church and monastery ensemble has been little studied up to recent decades, even if Latvia's twentieth-century historians of architecture and art have always acknowledged its value. Since the 1960s, there have been guidelines on what should be done to put the building in order, recognising the necessity of conservation.¹⁵ In 1981, preliminary historical and architectural research was carried out, but conservation works in the church never began. In the late 1980s, the issue was once again raised by supportive émigré Catholics from the Diaspora, but this did not lead to any conservation. Architectonic and artistic research of the church building took place in 2006.¹⁶ In 2010–2011, research was also carried out on the monastery, now in a ruined state.¹⁷ Works were executed in the church interior in 2005–2008,¹⁸ these involved repairing the *stucco* finish, conserving the plafond painting and exposing the polychrome décor of the organ gallery railings.

Research shows the walls, the nave ceiling and the presbytery featuring four systems of finish.¹⁹ Late-eighteenth century murals and several layers of decorative polychrome finish were once found in the monastery premises too²⁰ but these values are now in fact lost with the collapse of the building. In the church hall and presbytery, walls were initially whitewashed in three layers, serving as a background for painted *stucco* altars (architec-

14 Jānis Svilāns, *Latvijas Romas-katoļu baznīcas*, Rīga: Rīgas Metropolijas kūrīja, 1995, p. 149.

15 MDC, file of Pasiene Catholic Church.

16 Zanda Bikše, Anda Robežniece, Rūdolfs Sauja, *Pasienes katoļu baznīca. Arhitektoniski mākslinieciskā inventarizācija*, Rīga, Arhitektoniskās izpētes grupa, 2006, in: MDC, file of Pasiene Catholic Church.

17 The monastery was damaged by fire in 1837: *Ведомость о Посиньском Римско-Католическом Приходском Костеле состоящем в Пред-Люцинском Деканате Люцинском уезде Витебской Губернии. Составлена 1855 года*, in: RGIA, f. 822, ap. 12, b. 2911, l. 930v. Afterwards two of its blocks collapsed, with only one, south block, remaining. In the Soviet period, the monastery was used as a residential house and cattle shed. After 1991, the congregation had regained the building but did not use it, leading to its collapse.

18 Information from the restorer Staņislavs Astiēšs, 2018.

19 Zanda Bikše, Anda Robežniece, Rūdolfs Sauja, *Pasienes katoļu baznīca...*, p. 13.

20 Ilmārs Dirveiks, Vija Strupule, Laura Lūse, Ieva Jekševica, Ieva Poriete, Ruta Taurena, *Pasienes klosteris. Arhitektoniski mākslinieciskā inventarizācija*, Rīga, Arhitektoniskās izpētes grupa, 2010/2011, p. 17, MDC, file of Pasiene Monastery.



1.
Pasiene St Dominic's Catholic Church. Exterior view.
Photo: Rūta Kaminska, 2017

Pasienės Šv. Dominyko katalikų bažnyčia, eksterjero
vaizdas



2.
Pasiene St Dominic's Catholic Church. View towards
the high altar. Photo: Marika Vanaga, 2017

Pasienės Šv. Dominyko katalikų bažnyčia, vaizdas į
didžiojo altoriaus pusę



3.
Pasiene St Dominic's Catholic Church. Painted ceiling
decoration. Photo: Marika Vanaga, 2017

Pasienės Šv. Dominyko katalikų bažnyčia, lubų
tapybinė puošyba



4.
Pasiene St Dominic's Catholic Church. Painted deco-
ration of the organ gallery. Photo: Rūta Kaminska, 2017

Pasienės Šv. Dominyko katalikų bažnyčia, vargonų
galerijos tapybinė puošyba

tonic parts on a light pink plane, artificial marble²¹ with turquoise patterns on white ground, red accents on the painted capitals and ornamental details, and white-painted sculptures).²² Fragmentary traces of polychrome, brown, yellow and reddish-toned finish on the walls and ceilings are dated to the late eighteenth century. Painting was done with distemper on dry plaster. Two side altar retables were illusively painted at that time; they are made of pilasters adorned with rocaille and profiled cornices. The finish of interior wall pilasters with illusively painted fluting and marble imitation is also part of the overall décor system. The organ gallery railings featured painted Classicist frames with hanging draperies and flower bouquets, as well as the bishop's coat of arms in the centre. Edges of window openings were accentuated with illusively painted surrounds; fragmentary traces of polychrome finish are also found on the ceiling. According to currently available information, it is incompatible with the present composition of the plafond.²³

In the second half of the nineteenth century, probably after the fire of 1882, the walls and ceiling were covered with lime mortar on which a new painted finish was applied in the 1880s–90s. It includes the painted ceiling, the décor of the organ gallery railings (diminishing the earlier décor), and wall finish (painted frames and a heraldic motif on pilaster planes). Two new illusively painted altar retables were also created, replacing the late-eighteenth century painted ones (architectonic motifs and rocaille ornament were found in the layer from the 1880s–90s). Window opening niches with decorative frames painted on their lintels are also part of the overall décor system. This painted interior was radically altered in 1961 and again after 1981. The walls were painted, covering the illusive side altars and changing the general composition of the painted décor. At the same time, only some areas were covered in the ceiling, leaving the late-nineteenth century decorative composition intact.²⁴

Now the church's painted interior includes the plafond and painted gallery railings. The painted ceiling consists of groin vaults in five bays; emblematic subjects are framed by rocaille cartouches on a pink background,

21 The use of artificial marble is confirmed by the data obtained during conservation works: Staņislavs Astičs. *Pasienes katoļu baznīca. Baznīcas altāri. Restaurācijas pase*, 2007, MDC, file of Pasiene Catholic Church.

22 Zanda Bikše, Anda Robežniece, Rūdolfs Sauja, *Pasienes katoļu baznīca...*, p. 16.

23 Zanda Bikše, Anda Robežniece, Rūdolfs Sauja, *Pasienes katoļu baznīca...*, p. 14.

24 *Ibidem*, pp. 14–15.

arranged in four groups according to the spheroid planes of the vaults. This composition is surrounded by rocaille bands, interpreted differently in the nave and the presbytery²⁵ which possibly points to a different date. Art historian Ojārs Spārītis presumably dates the painted plafond compositions to the 1770s–80s and relates them to engraving sample books of emblematics,²⁶ specifying a concrete source – engravings of Gottfried Eichler's painted compositions published by Johann Georg Hertel in Augsburg in 1758–1760.²⁷ However, research and the restorer's conclusions do not support this attribution,²⁸ leaving the preserved plafond to the Historicist epoch.

When the restorer Staņislavs Astičs²⁹ began working in Pasiene, he had to renovate the interior finish of the existing structure – tidy up the *stucco* décor of the altars and the pulpit as well as clean, reinforce and tone the plafond. As a result, the painted ceiling was preserved in its 1890s' form without an in-depth research and a possible discovery of an older painting layer if there were one. Therefore, repairs and conservation of the object were carried out, but the question of whether the original late-eighteenth century plafond exists beneath the layers of overpaintings still remains open. At the same time, the organ gallery railings have regained their initial polychrome Classicist-period décor.

Research and conservation works were carried out almost simultaneously in Piedruja Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. A Catholic congregation had already emerged in Piedruja in the early seventeenth century.³⁰ In 1772, it was included in the list of churches of the Braslaw Deanery.³¹ There is no precise information of when Piedruja became part of the Drysa-Sebezh Deanery but an 1820 record indicates the congregation was already part of it.³² The first wooden church was con-

25 *Ibidem*, p. 15.

26 Assumption of the painting as a part of the authentic eighteenth century finish was based on an incorrect dating: Ojārs Spārītis, "Dominikāņu pedagoģijas aspekti Pasienes katolu baznīcas emblemātisko gleznojumu ciklā", in: *Polu kultūras zīmes Latvijā! Šlādami kultūry polskiej na Łotwie*, Rīga: Latvijas Polu Savienība, 2007, p. 45.

27 Ojārs Spārītis, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

28 Zanda Bikše, Anda Robežniece, Rūdolfs Sauja, *Pasienes katolu baznīca...*, p. 15.

29 The work was commissioned by the Bishop of Rēzekne-Aglona Diocese; non-professional auxiliary workers were involved in the process.

30 *Słownik geograficzny...*, t. 9, 1888, p. 208.

31 Stanisław Litak, *Struktura terytorialna kościoła łacińskiego w Polsce w 1772 Roku*, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL 1980, p. 269.

32 *Directorium officii divini et missarum Mohileviae*, 1820.

structed in Piedruja in 1632.³³ It was one of two churches founded by the Vilnius Voivode Lew Sapieha in Druja (then Sapieżyn) and Piedruja; both churches were maintained by the folwark (half-manor) on the right bank of the River Daugava.³⁴ These wooden churches were burned down and their furnishings plundered during the Russo-Polish War in 1654.³⁵ A new wooden church was built in Piedruja to replace the one destroyed and it in turn was replaced by the present masonry church. Its initiator was the Vilnius Canon Karol Karp who was the Dean of Druja (Piedruja) from 1739 to 1743.³⁶ Construction works began in 1759; Antonio Paracca allegedly authored the construction design.³⁷ The church was consecrated by the local dean in 1760³⁸ but works also continued after that and were completed before 2 October 1774.³⁹ The building was severely damaged during the First World War⁴⁰ when it stood on the frontline; after the war, it was restored and operated as a church throughout the Soviet period serving the Catholics of the town of Druja as well.

The church was repaired from time to time, but research and conservation works on it have only taken place in recent decades. Polish and Latvian specialists have researched the building in 2006, 2014 and 2016.⁴¹ The wall constructions were examined to detect humidity and salt saturation, and a number of painted walls and interior furnishings were uncovered to capture their stratigraphy. A general architectural and artistic inventory was drawn up with information on the building's construction history and periods of finish. Conservation of the main altar's painted retable took place in 2015–2017. The mensa (altar top) and the tabernacle wall were restored

33 Sławomir Karp, "Karol Karp ok. 1700-19.III 1779 r. Kanonik, senior katedralny i oficjal generalny wileński. Szkic do portretu", in: *Przegląd Wschodni*, t. XI, z. 2, 2010, p. 392.

34 "Stan Parafii Drujskiej na rozkaz Jaśnie Oświęconego Książęcia Ignacego Jakuba Masalskiego biskupa Wileńskiego czasu generalnej dziekańskiej wizyty opisany w roku tysiąc siedmset osmdziesiąt trzecim", in: *Breslaujos dekanato vizitacija 1782–1783 m.*, Lietuvos istorijos šaltiniai, t. 7, red. Romualdas Firkovičius, Vilnius, 2008, p. 275.

35 *Ibidem*, p. 275.

36 Sławomir Karp, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

37 Sławomir Karp, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

38 Sławomir Karp, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

39 Sławomir Karp, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

40 Jānis Cakuls, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

41 Engineer Ryszard Jurkiewicz, study of humidity and salt saturation in the building's walls, 2006; Tomasz Dziurawiec, research of polychromy, 2014; Ilmārs Dirveiks, Daiga Lēvalde, Ieva Liepa, *Piedrujas baznīca. Arhitektoniski mākslinieciskā inventarizācija*, Rīga, Arhitektoniskās izpētes grupa, 2016. Materials are held at the MDC, file of Piedruja Catholic Church.

in 2017. Restorer Tomasz Dziurawiec supervised⁴² the work of Agnieszka Chojkowska-Sawicka, Dmitry Lashchetko and Zane Kēlere.⁴³ These works received financial support from Poland.

About ten layers of finish were detected on the walls of the nave during the research on the interior; the oldest consisted of thin lime paint with yellowed whitewash on top, both without any traces of polychromy. This suggests that the original finish of the nave walls was monochrome, with a painted socle appearing only in the next layers.⁴⁴ On the east wall of the sacristy, there is a freely painted motif of Gloria and fragments of red lines in the oldest paint layer on top of the lime mortar, covered by the subsequent layers of whitewash.⁴⁵ One can conclude that the initial church finish and furnishings dated to the 1760s–70s were centred around the main altar with a wooden mensa and an illusively painted retable, two polychrome, painted *stucco* side altars and an architectonic wall finish with Composite Order pilasters whose décor included the rocaille motif. These furnishings have survived. However, unlike Pasiene Church, there is no structured or developed iconographic programme in the original ensemble. The oldest painted altarpieces have been lost; the altars were devoted to Mary and Christ and the *stucco* décor of the retables includes the sculptures of apostles, angels and two Dominican (?) fathers.

The painted retable of the main altar in Piedruja Church stands out against the whitewashed wall of the altar section. The retable composition includes a wall niche covered with the painting *The Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven* (Pēteris Mironovičs,⁴⁶ 1935; oil on canvas). The illusive retable painting depicts an architectonic two-level construction flanked by Composite Order columns and pilasters. They support an expressively curved entablature and cornice with angel figures on its ends. In the centre, fringed draperies are painted around columns but over the niche there is a pink fabric canopy. The attic storey part is narrower, framed

42 Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie z II etapu prac konserwatorskich przy iluzjonistycznej polichromii głównego ołtarza w prezbiterium kościoła parafialnego p.w. Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Marii Panny w Piedruji na Łotwie*, Rzeszów, 2016, s. 6, MDC, file of Piedruja Catholic Church.

43 Auxiliary works were carried out by Sergei Bushmakın and students of Riga Building College.

44 Ilmārs Dirveiks, Daiga Lēvalde, Ieva Liepa. *Piedrujas baznīca...*, p. 25.

45 Ilmārs Dirveiks, Daiga Lēvalde, Ieva Liepa. *Piedrujas baznīca...*, p. 28.

46 “Draudžu vizitācija 1937. gadā”, in: *Katoļu Dzīve*, 1937, no. 12, s. 454.



5.
Piedruja Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Exterior view. Photo: Marika Vanaga, 2013

Piedrujas Švč. Mergelės Marijos Ēmimo į dangū katalikų bažnyčia, eksterjero vaizdas



6.
Piedruja Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Exterior view. Photo: 1927, MDC

Piedrujas Švč. Mergelės Marijos Ēmimo į dangū katalikų bažnyčia, eksterjero vaizdas



7.
Piedruja Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. View towards the high altar before the conservation. Photo: Marika Vanaga, 2013

Piedrujos Švč. Mergelės Marijos Ēmimo į dangū katalikų bažnyčia, vaizdas į didžiojo altoriaus pusę prieš restauravimą



8.
Piedruja Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. View towards the high altar after the conservation. Photo: Edīte Lukša, 2018

Piedrujos Švč. Mergelės Marijos Ēmimo į dangū katalikų bažnyčia, vaizdas į didžiojo altoriaus pusę po restauravimo

with pilasters entwined in volutes on the sides and topped with a cornice over which a beaming monogram of Mary appears. The Holy Trinity on the cloud background is painted in the centre of the attic storey. There is a wide, arched mensa with a tabernacle and a high tabernacle wall rounded off with painted, silhouette-carved figures. Italian painter Filippo Castaldi (1734–1814)⁴⁷ was hypothetically mentioned as the author of the painted retable but no documentary evidence has been found. The master was employed by the Count Plater family in nearby Krāslava in the second half of the eighteenth century. According to construction history data, the interior finish of Piedruja Church was possibly accomplished between 1760 and 1774 when the painter still worked nearby. It is known that he left Latgale and went to Rome in 1774⁴⁸ but later his life was closely connected to Poland.

Conservation of the Piedruja altar retable allowed concluding that the illusive painting in *buon fresco* technique on the brick wall with sand-lime plaster had been painted over many times with tempera and distemper paints, and partly whitewashed during later wall repairs.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the artist himself has changed the technique during the work, making corrections with tempera-distemper paints and covering up the damage done by spilled liquid paint. Also, the initial composition was somewhat altered in the upper part, switching the places of the Holy Trinity motif and the monogram of Mary. The conservation programme envisioned the cleaning of the authentic layer of painting from later strata, desalting and strengthening of the plastered ground as well as filling up the lost parts, toning of painting and the conservation of gilded details. Conservation of the mensa was carried out simultaneously. Removing subsequent layers, the second layer of painted décor was uncovered and exhibited. The altar composition was restored with a late Baroque polychrome solution. The church interior has regained the main colour accent – the polychrome painted altar but the side *stucco* altars still retain traces of primitive *stucco* repairs and remain under later overpaintings. As researches up to now have shown, the side altars were originally painted polychrome like in Pasiene Church; *stucco*

⁴⁷ Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie...*, 2016, p. 2.

⁴⁸ This is evidenced by the correspondence with the Vice-Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Kasimir Konstantin Plater: Rūta Kaminska, “Filipo Kastaldi un viņa mantojums”, in: *Mākslas vēsture un teorija*, 2004, no. 2, p. 21.

⁴⁹ Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie...*, 2016, p. 2.

sculptures for their part had been monochrome, painted white in lime paint to resemble stone sculptures.⁵⁰

The most ambitious eighteenth-century ensemble of monumental-decorative painting described in literature⁵¹ is found in Krāslava's St Louis Catholic Church. Other architectural objects with polychrome décor were situated nearby in the second half of the eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. One of Latgale's major sacred places had developed since the sixteenth century. A wooden chapel was the first building there, replaced by a wooden church constructed by Jesuits in 1656.⁵² In the mid-eighteenth-century changes occurred: the Jesuits in Krāslava were succeeded by Lazarites or Congregation of the Mission. Construction of the present masonry church began in 1756.⁵³ The Count Plater family which funded the works had established the seminary headed by the Lazarites in the main town of their residence; Platers also started building a monastery and a large church, envisaged as a future cathedral. However, the political situation changed; after 1772 and the annexation of Latgale to the Russian Empire it proved impossible to obtain this status. Italian masters were involved in the construction of the church and the interior finish. The building was designed by one of the Paracca brothers⁵⁴ while Filippo Castaldi was entrusted with painting the interior décor.⁵⁵ It is known that the church was built "up to windows"⁵⁶ in 1761. Construction works were allegedly finished in 1767.⁵⁷ Archbishop Stanisław Bohusz Sietrzenciewicz consecrated the church in 1777.⁵⁸ An open-air altar (St Anne's Chapel) with painted finish was built next to the church in the second half of the eighteenth century; the altar was destroyed

50 Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie...*, 2016, p. 2.

51 "O kościele Kraslawskim w gubernii Witebskiej w powiecie Dynaburskim", in: *Pamiętnik Religijno-moralny*, Serya nowa, 1858, no. 11, p. 484.

52 *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski u Litwy*, oprac. Ludwik Grzebień, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 1996, p. 326.

53 Stanisław Litak, *Akta wizytacji generalnej diecezji Inflanckiej i Kurlandskiej czyli Piltyńskiej z 1761 roku*, Toruń: TNT, 1998, p. 19.

54 Although Antonio Paracca was repeatedly mentioned in the nineteenth and twentieth century literature, now it is impossible to differentiate his output from that of his brother Francesco Domenico Paracca due to the lack of documentary evidence.

55 "O kościele Kraslawskim" ..., p. 484.

56 Stanisław Litak, *Akta wizytacji generalnej...*, 1998, p. 15.

57 Gustaw Manteuffel, *Kraslaw*, Warszawa, 1901, p. 11.

58 *Wizyta Kraslawskiego Parafialnego Kościoła w Gubernii Witebskiej powiecie Duneburskim Dekanacie Wyższego Duneburga leżącego Zgromadzenia XX. Swieckich S. Wincentego a Paulo prez Dziekana tegoż Dekanatu 1832 roku odbyta*, in: RGIA, f 822, ap.12, b. 2794, l. 766.

after the Second World War. Works on the church finish and improvement of the surroundings continued in the nineteenth century. In 1855, a masonry side gate was built,⁵⁹ and decorated with painting on top of plaster, showing a typical Classicist composition with two angels over a semi-circular arch. The painting was restored in 2011 (restorer Dmitry Lashchetko).

Information on the murals of Krāslava Church is found in the 1855 records listing “optically” painted side altars of the Holy Trinity, Assumption of the Virgin, St Joseph, Christ on the Cross, St Vincent de Paul and St Anthony.⁶⁰ A mural is also part of the main altar and it was noted in 1857 that the church contained eight altars painted on walls and “unsuccessfully restored”.⁶¹ The church interior was considerably modernised in the mid- to late nineteenth century. New side altars were created and the main altar composition was enhanced with the altarpiece created from Jan Matejko’s sketch with his disciples as executors in 1884.⁶² Until a few years ago, there was no information on the destinies of the painted side altars. At the same time, the main altar had retained a reduced and overpainted part of the illu- sively painted attic storey. The fact that behind the altarpiece *St. Louis De- parts for the Crusade* there was at least a partly preserved authentic *fresco* on the same subject, was confirmed by a photograph of the 1930s when the altar niche was uncovered during the conservation of the painting.⁶³ Re- search of the church’s ensemble of monumental-decorative painting *in situ* began in 2003 at the same time as the work on the conservation of the main altar *fresco*. Probing of 2012, aimed at establishing the volume of the poly- chrome interior décor,⁶⁴ examined a part of the interior and furnishings – three side altars and the main altar retable construction, presbytery walls and sacristy. However, all-encompassing architectonic and artistic research of the interior is still lacking.

59 “O kościele Kraslawskim” ..., p. 507.

60 *Полная Вызита Крaслaвскoгo Римскo Кaтoлическoгo кoстелa Мoгилевскoй Епархии Витебскoй губернии Вышине-Динaбургскoгo Декaнaтa – Во испoлнении Укaзa Мoгилевскoй Римскo Кaтoлическoй Духoвнoй Консистории от 19 Августa 1855 гoдa зa № 6737 Декaнoм Ксeндзoм Ялoвецким 17 Октября сeгo же гoдa сoстaвляеннaя*, in: RGIA, f. 822, ap. 12, b. 2911, l. 718.

61 “O kościele Kraslawskim” ..., p. 484.

62 Painter Tomasz Lisiewicz’s signature has been detected on the painting along with the year 1884. MDC, file of Krāslava Catholic Church.

63 MDC, file of Krāslava Catholic Church.

64 Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie z I etapu badawczych prac konserwatorskich przeprowadzonych w kościele parafialnym p.w. Św. Ludwika w Kraslawiu na Lotwie*, 2012, p. 3, MDC, file of Krāslava Catholic Church.

When conservation of the main altarpiece began (2003), it was removed from the altar, thus uncovering the authentic *fresco* painting in the centre of the retable. As the research progressed, painted retable compositions of the side altars came to light,⁶⁵ previously partly covered with the late-nineteenth century retables and partly painted over. Probing has also revealed the painted décor of the sacristy that was previously unknown.⁶⁶ Now the main altar has been restored by the efforts of restorers Kristīne Širvinskā, Pāvels Rosovskis, Dmitry Lashchetko, Tomasz Dziurawiec and Agnieszka Chojkowska-Sawicka.⁶⁷ Altar conservation proceeded in several phases (2004–2006, central *fresco*; 2008–2011, attic storey; 2012–2015, decorative painting of the architectonic part). Latvian and Polish specialists collaborated on this project with financial support from both Latvia and Poland.

The main altar retable of Krāslava Church is architectonically constructed with a niche flanked by columns and pilasters in the centre, containing a *buon fresco* painting⁶⁸ on lime-sand plaster; it is a figural composition titled *St Louis Departs for the Crusade Blessed by the Archbishop*. The work is enclosed with a plastic frame with rocaillé décor. The altar's narrower attic storey is illusively painted, framed by side volutes and topped by a broken cornice with two angels holding a crown over it; Apostles Peter and Paul are seen in the centre of the attic storey within a painted frame. The *fresco* of the main niche has survived in a comparatively good state with little physical damage. Plaster had peeled off in the upper painting and there were some cracks, but the surface was covered with a layer of dirt and mould. The conservation programme envisaged cleaning the *fresco* surface, removing the dirt and upper layers, filling in the missing parts of the lime-sand plaster, camouflaging the cracks, reinforcing and toning the paint layer.⁶⁹ In the masonry construction of the retable, brick walls and columns are covered with *stucco* plastering and the surface is painted with tempera. Column shafts are painted to imitate marble, but the plastic parts are gilded.⁷⁰

65 Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie z I etapu...*, 2012, p. 3.

66 Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie z I etapu...*, 2012, p. 4.

67 Sergei Bushmakina and Leons Podgaiskis were involved in auxiliary works.

68 Before in-depth research and information obtained during the conservation, overpaintings erroneously suggested that this was a *fresco-secco* work: MDC, file of Krāslava Catholic Church.

69 Józef Steciński, *Dokumentacja prac konserwatorskich wykonanych w latach 2003–2006 przy obrazie olejnym "Św. Ludwik wyruszający na wyprawę krzyżową" w ołtarzu głównym kościoła rz. kat. p.w. Św. Ludwika i Donata w Krastawiu – Lotwa*, 2005, p. 8–9, MDC, file of Krāslava Catholic Church.

70 Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie z I etapu...*, 2012, p. 4.



9.
Kraslava St Louis' Catholic Church. Exterior view.
Photo: Marika Vanaga, 2014

Kraslavos Šv. Liudviko katalikų bažnyčia,
eksterjero vaizdas



10.
Kraslava St Louis' Catholic Church.
The high altar. Photo: 1927, MDC

Kraslavos Šv. Liudviko katalikų
bažnyčia, didysis altorius



11.
Kraslava St Louis' Catholic Church. The high altar.
Photo: Marika Vanaga, 2014

Kraslavos Šv. Liudviko katalikų bažnyčia, didysis altorius



12.
Kraslava St Louis' Catholic Church. Filippo Castaldi.
Fresco painting of the high altar. Photo: Marika
Vanaga, 2014

Kraslavos Šv. Liudviko katalikų bažnyčia, Filippo
Castaldi, didžiojo altoriaus freska



13.
Kraslava St Louis' Catholic Church. Filippo Castaldi.
Fresco painting of the high altar's attic storey. Photo:
Marika Vanaga, 2014

Kraslavos Šv. Liudviko katalikų bažnyčia, Filippo
Castaldi, didžiojo altoriaus viršutinio tarpinio freska



14.
Kraslava St Louis' Catholic Church. Painted decoration
of the sacristy ceiling. Photo: Rūta Kaminska,
2017

Kraslavos Šv. Liudviko katalikų bažnyčia, zakristijos
lubų tapybinė puošyba

The attic storey part of the altar was painted, combining *buon fresco* and *fresco-secco*. It has been altered to a greater degree; the conclusion was painted out, the architectonic part – painted over with seven to eight layers of tempera and oil paints.⁷¹ A canvas with an oil painting *The Holy Family* (1940s; painted over by M. Vagulevs, 1953) was glued to the central part.⁷² During the conservation, the central *fresco* was cleaned and toned, removing later overpaintings; the original composition of the attic part was fully uncovered, removing upper paint layers and the painted canvas glued to the central part. The architectonic part of the retable was cleaned, the paint layer was reinforced, and the lost parts were filled and toned. The altar has regained its original composition, but the nineteenth century altarpiece is now exhibited on the presbytery wall. The church interior has taken on a new accent that distances it from the heavy nineteenth century stylistics.

Conservation of the polychrome finish of the sacristy is now in progress (2016–2018, conservator Dmitry Lashchetko). Beneath layers of whitewash, the vaulted ceiling and walls of the sacristy have retained fragments of several polychrome strata on dry plaster, covered with seven to ten layers of oil paint.⁷³ The local specificity of the lime-sand plaster on the brick wall is the fallow tone of the plaster, given by the chemical composition of the local sand,⁷⁴ influencing the overall tonality. The oldest finish layer in the sacristy has partly retained the rocaille décor and the painted coats of arms in the centre of the ceiling vault (coats of arms of the Plater and Ogiński families). Around 1790, the subsequent polychrome layer was applied with a painted frame composition, organising the division of planes; several layers of paint followed later. Now the plaster has been reinforced, the polychrome décor from the 1790s and fragments of an older layer – exposed, and conservation works are continuing.

71 Dmitrijs Laščetko, *Krāslavas Romas katoļu baznīcas centrālā altāra augšdaļas F. Kastaldi gleznotās freskas "Apustuļi Pēteris un Pavils" konservācija*, 2010, MDC, file of Krāslava Catholic Church.

72 Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie z prac konserwatorskich przy malowanym zwieńczeniu ołtarza głównego w kościele parafialnym p.w. Świętego Ludwika w Krastawiu na Łotwie*, 2011, p. 11, MDC, file of Krāslava Catholic Church.

73 Information from the restorer Dmitry Lashchetko, 2018.

74 Tomasz Dziurawiec, *Sprawozdanie z I etapu...*, 2012, pp. 4, 6; MDC, file of Krāslava Catholic Church.

Conservation of the monumental-decorative painting objects in three large churches of Latgale provided diverse experience. Surely, an important contribution has been made to the understanding of the late-eighteenth century painting traditions in the context of Latvia's artistic heritage. First, significantly more information was collected on the tradition of illusive painting in the late-eighteenth century sacred interiors as well as on the *buon fresco* technique (Krāslava and Piedruja) rarely found in Latvia. Furthermore, research has confirmed information on now lost examples of illusive painting (Pasiene Church) or those remaining inaccessible (Krāslava Church). Secondly, more material was gathered to characterise the polychrome finish of sacred ensemble interiors (paintings and the system of painted décor), specifying data on the use of compositional principles of the nineteenth century plafonds less common in Latgale (cartouche-ornamental frame system in Pasiene Church). It is clear that without comprehensive research, combining studies of documentary and published materials with careful examinations *in situ* by restorers, attributions could be ill-considered. At the same time, to ensure the quality of conservation, well-considered decisions by specialists are needed for both conceptual solutions and technical execution, while not just complying with the wishes of the commissioner (the bishop of the time). This aspect shows in the results of works. In the cases of Piedruja and Krāslava, the full cycle of conservation was carried out (even if different interpretations of various processes and technologies were discussed, as Latvian and Polish specialists did not have the same background experiences). Pasiene Church paintings were only superficially tidied up and conserved, without the study of the nuanced interaction between architecture and its finish, and the establishing of wider interconnections. All these works, however, have ensured the preservation of paintings and opened up the possibilities of further research that would gradually clarify the place of late Baroque and Classicist polychrome interior finishes in the context of Latgale's sacred artistic heritage.

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Abbreviations

MDC – Monument Documentation Centre of the National Heritage Board of Latvia

Santrauka

Latgalos vėlyvojo baroko laikotarpio bažnyčių interjerų tapybinės puošybos restauravimas (2004–2018)

Rūta Kaminska

Reikšminiai žodžiai: restauravimas, barokas, sienų tapyba, bažnyčios interjerų puošyba.

Reikšminga Latgalos (Rytų Latvija) vėlyvojo baroko architektūros paveldo dalis – XVIII a. antros pusės mūrinės katalikų bažnyčios. Jų interjerai skirtingu mastu išsaugojo autentiškos tapybinės puošybos pėdsakus. Šiuo požiūriu labiausiai išsiskiria Kraslavos Šv. Liudviko, Pasienės Šv. Dominyko ir Piedrujos Švč. Mergelės Marijos Ėmimo į dangų katalikų bažnyčios. Jos panašiu metu buvo tyrinėjamos, tvarkomos ir restauruojamos, vykstant darbams, paaiškėjo nauja informacija apie jose esančią sienų tapybą.

Pasienės dominikonų bažnyčios ir vienuolyno ansamblis buvo įkurtas XVII a. pabaigoje, baigus statyti medinės bažnyčios ir vienuolyno kompleksą. Šiam kompleksui sudegus 1753 m., pradėta statyti dabartinė mūrinė bažnyčia ir vienuolynas. Naujoji bažnyčia iškilo 1760 m. ir buvo pašventinta 1777 metais. Jos autoriumi hipotetiškai įvardijamas architektas Antonio Paracea, tačiau tam pagrįsti trūksta dokumentinių įrodymų. Bažnyčios pastato architektūriniai ir meniniai tyrimai įgyvendinti 2006-aisiais.

2005–2008 m. bažnyčios interjere atlikti šie darbai: koreguota stiuco apdaila, konservuota plafoninė tapyba ir atidengtas vargonų galerijos turėklų polichrominis dekoras. Tyrimai atskleidė keturių apdailos sistemų pėdsakus sienose, navos lubose ir presbiterijoje. XVIII a. pabaigos sienų tapyba sunyko arba buvo užtapyta. XIX a. antroje pusėje sienos ir lubos buvo padengtos kalkių skiediniu, kuriam išdžiūvus paviršius buvo naujai perdažytas 9 ir 10 dešimtmečiais. Lubų tapyba, vargonų galerijos puošyba ir sienų apdaila buvo radikaliai pakeista 1961 ir po 1981 metų. Po Staņisla-

vo Astičo atliktos restauracijos lubų tapyba atgavo savo 1890-ųjų pavidalą. Tuomet buvo atkurta ir vargonų galerijos turėklų pirminė XVIII a. pabaigos polichrominė apdaila.

Beveik tuo pačiu laiku Piedrujos katalikų bažnyčioje taip pat atlikti tyrimo ir restauravimo darbai. Pirmoji medinė bažnyčia ten iškilo 1632 metais. Dabartinės mūrinės bažnyčios statyba prasidėjo 1759 m., o Antonio Paracca yra minimas kaip statybos projekto autorius. Statybos iniciatorius buvo Vilniaus kanauninkas Karolis Karpis, kuris 1739–1743 m. buvo ir Drujos (Piedrujos) klebonas. Bažnyčia buvo pašventinta 1760 m., bet statybos darbai tęsėsi iki pat 1774-ųjų. 2006, 2014 ir 2016 metais lenkų ir latvių specialistai atliko pastato tyrimus. Centrinio altoriaus retabulas su iliuzine tapyba ir medinė mensa, padengta polichromine tapyba, buvo restauruoti 2015–2017 metais. Restauravimo darbus atliko lenkų ir latvių restauratoriai, vadovaujami Tomaszo Dziurawieco. Pirminės bažnyčios tapybos ir įrengimo, datuojamo XVIII a. 7 ir 8 deš., svarbiausieji akcentai – centrinis altorius su medine mensa ir retabulas su iliuzine tapyba, du įvairiomis spalvomis ištapyti stiukiniai šoniniai altoriai ir architektoninė sienų apdaila. Italų tapytojas Filippo Castaldis (1734–1814) yra hipotetiškai minimas kaip retabulo tapybos autorius, tačiau dokumentinių liudijimų nerasta. Piedrujos altoriaus retabulo restauravimas leido padaryti išvadą, kad freskos technika atlikta iliuzinė tapyba ne tik daug kartų buvo užtapyta tempera ir klijiniais dažais, tačiau ir pats menininkas darė pakeitimus bei taisė pažeidimus, atsiradusius nuvarvėjus dažams. Be to, viršutinės retabulo dalies pradinė kompozicija buvo kiek pakeista. Po restauravimo altoriaus retabulas atgavo savo pradinį pavidalą ir buvo atidengtas antras mensos tapybos sluoksnis.

Ambicingiausias XVIII a. monumentalios dekoratyvinės tapybos ansamblis – Kraslavos Šv. Liudviko katalikų bažnyčia. Vienos pagrindinių Latgalės šventųjų vietų vystymasis prasidėjo XVI amžiuje. Italų meistrai dalyvavo statant dabartinį mūrinį Kraslavos bažnyčios pastatą ir atliekant jo interjero apdailą. Pastatą suprojektavo iš Paraccos šeimos kilęs architektas, o Filippui Castaldi buvo patikėta ištapyti interjerą. Statybos darbai pradėti 1756 m. ir baigti 1767 m., bažnyčia pašventinta 1777 metais. Jau 1857-aisiais buvo pastebėta, kad bažnyčia turi aštuonis altorius, ištapytus ant sienų ir

„nesėkmingai restauruotus“. XIX a. viduryje ir pabaigoje bažnyčios interjere įvyko didžiuliai modernizavimo pokyčiai. 2003 m. prasidėjo *in situ* bažnyčios ansamblio monumentalios dekoratyvinės tapybos tyrinėjimai, tais metais centrinio altoriaus retabulo centre buvo atidengta autentiška freska. 2012 m. atliktas zondažas, siekiant nustatyti polichrominio interjero dekoru apimtį. Buvo ištirta dalis interjero ir apdailos detalių – trys šoniniai altoriai ir didžiojo altoriaus retabulo konstrukcija, presbiterijos sienos ir zakristija. Paaiškėjo, kad šoninių altorių iliuzinė tapyba buvo iš dalies uždengta XIX a. pabaigos retabulais ir iš dalies užtapyta. Taip pat buvo atidengta zakristijos tapybinė apdaila.

Restauruojant didįjį altorių dirbo latvių ir lenkų restauratoriai Kristīne Širvinskas, Pāvelas Rostovskis, Dmitry Lashchetko, Tomaszas Dziurawiecas ir Agnieszka Chojkowka-Sawicka. Darbai vyko 2004–2015 m. keliais etapais. Altoriaus retabulo kompozicijos centre yra *buon fresco* tapyba (figūrinė kompozicija *Arkivyskupo palaimintas šv. Liudvikas išvyksta į kryžiaus žygį*) ir viršutinis aukštas su iliuzine tapyba, kurios centre – įrėminta kompozicija, vaizduojanti apaštalus Petrą ir Paulių. Šiuo metu vyksta skliautuotų zakristijos lubų ir sienų polichrominės apdailos restauravimas (2016–2018, restauratorius Dmitry Lashchetko).

Trijų didelių Latgalos bažnyčių tapybinės apdailos tyrimai ir restauravimas suteikė svarbios informacijos tęsiant šių architektūros ir meno paminklų tyrinėjimus bei konservavimą ir reikšmingai prisidėjo gilinant supratimą apie XVIII a. pabaigos tapybos tradicijas Latvijos meno paveldo kontekste. Taip pat daugiau sužinota apie XVIII a. pabaigos bažnytinių interjerų iliuzinės tapybos tradiciją ir retai Latvijoje sutinkamą *buon fresco* techniką.