

Preface and Abstracts

The thematic of the 4th Postgraduate Conference of Transylvanian Hungarian Restorers included reports on the conservation/restoration of paintings beside the topics of the former occasions, which mainly dealt with the restoration of ethnographic and archaeological objects and those of applied art. A professor of the Institute for Training of Conservators of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts discussed the degree of the completion of paintings, the reconstruction and the technology of re-touching and László Vinczeffy painting restorer of the Székely National Museum of Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfântu-Gheorghe) gave an account of his works between 2000 and 2003. An exhibition organised from more than twenty paintings restored by him and the panels illustrating the restoration was opened also to the public in the Haáz Rezső Museum.

The participants visited the ecclesiastic and folk monuments of Medgyes (Medias), Szászbogács (Băgaciu), Nagyszeben (Sibiu), Szászsebes (Sebeș), Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia), Torockó (Rimetea), Torda (Turda), Bánfyhunyad (Huedin), Körösfő (Izvoru Crișului) Magyarerőmonostor (Mănăstireni), Magyarvalkó (Văleni) and Magyarvita (Viștea) within the frames of a study trip connected with the program of the postgraduate conference.

Hungarian students of furniture restoration have regularly taken part in on-the-job training in Transylvanian museums since 1995. They conserved some of the wooden statues in the Székely Museum (Csíkszereda, Miercuriera Ciuc) and most of the guild chests of the Haáz Rezső Museum (Székelyudvarhely, Odorheiu

Secuieș) and the painted furniture in its permanent exhibition.

A report was given at the conference on the three-week program titled "Conservation of painted Transylvanian Saxon furniture", which the Hungarian University of Fine Arts organised for future furniture restorers within the frames of the Erasmus higher education program of the European Union in 2003. Beside Hungarian participants, students of three universities EVTEK, Vantaa (Finland), Universität für Angewandte Wissenschaft und Kunst, Hildesheim (Germany) and Universitatea Lucian Blaga, Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Romania) attended the event. The theoretical lectures held in Budapest (Hungary) were followed by practical training in the Astra Museum in Nagyszeben (Sibiu).

They were also the professors of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts who proposed a few years ago the conservation of the wooden chests preserved in the church of the Saxon community in Hégen (Brădeni). The work, which was planned to last a couple of years, started in the summer of 2003 in the co-operation of the furniture restoration departments of the Hildesheim and the Budapest art universities by the financial support of the two countries. The chests that were conserved during the two weeks of the on-the-job training in Segesvár (Sighișoara) were deposited in the St. Nicolas church on the top of the hill.

A study trip was added to both international programs, which aimed at the recognition of the material cultural heritage just as well as of the history of Transylvania.

Katalin GÖRBE

The methods of completion in the restoration of paintings

The paper traces back the individual specifics of the completion of panel paintings to theoretical bases. An object of art is a specifically complex feature: it represents an artistic value and, at the same time, it is an irreplaceable relic of our historical past. The multidirectional approach of the problem actually roots in this double feature.

Only an authentic reconstruction can be accepted, but as it is always a compromise, the execution is often debatable. The necessity of a critical interpretation is evident since the possibility of an error is always present yet it should be a mistake to refuse completion because of it.

The original condition of an object of art cannot be reconstructed but its effect can be approached. The purpose of the completion is to give emphasis to the original parts, to lend the greatest possible stress to the artistic value of the object of art.

The responsibility of the restorer charged with the execution is immense since the completion gets integrated into the object. Consequently, only a specialist of an appropriate training and artistic sensitivity can do this job.

The author lists the other factors that influence the completion of an art object: e.g. the style of the given period, the circumstances of the object, its relationship with the spectator or its cultic value. The antiquity value and the illusionistic feature of the object can have a specific determinant role.

From the respect of the preservation of the historical value, reversibility and the theory of recognisability are basic aspects: the application of the analytical scientific methods helps to the latter one.

The variability of completion is illustrated by the examples, most of which are borrowed from the archive documentation collection of the Restorer Training Institute of the University of Fine Arts of Hungary. The paper discusses the difference between the concept of re-touching and reconstruction, which can theoretically be distinguished, although the boundary between them is often vague in practice.

Many methods of completion have been developed (integrated, distinguishing, neutral, etc.). The paper tries to help orientation among them with the help of illustrations.

The author cites her own work as a final, instructive example: she describes the problems and the solutions that emerged in relation to the completion of the panel painting of the "The adoration of the Kings" on the high altar of the one-time Liptószentmária.

In summary we can establish that historical recognition cannot replace the loss of the artistic value in the restoration of paintings.

The specific characteristics of the objects of art determine the method and degree of completion, but the works must be examined and treated in their whole complexity.

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Judit B. PERJÉS – Petronella KOVÁCS **Restoration of ornamented, leather-covered** **Transylvanian chests**

The authors recently restored two chests preserved in the Tarisznyás Márton Museum in Gyergyószentmiklós. The chests are covered with leather and one of them ornamented with copper the other with iron mounts. Beside restoration, the authors studied the technology, the function, the origin and the owners of the chests. They collected and systemised the data of similar chests preserved in Hungarian museums, and publish two more items from Transylvania, which are in the property of a private person and the Armenian church. All the studied chests came from Transylvania, many of them from territories where a larger mass of Armenian population settled in the 17th – 18th centuries. It is not yet decided if the owners were people who travelled a lot or Armenian tradesmen, whose travelling kit included the travelling or coach chests, often decorated with iron or copper mounts. Another problem to be decided is if the leather-covered, finely decorated chests were primarily bridal or hope chests or travelling chests, perhaps similar items were prepared for both purposes.

The study describes the technology of leather-covered trunks, which became common in Germany in the 18th century probably after Dutch antecedents, after J. G. Krünitz's „Oekonomisch-technologischen Encyclopädie" published in the 1790's. The production of these trunks needed the collaboration of a group of craftsmen. It is known from the literature that the tanners and the locksmiths of Gyergyószentmiklós were active in more than one craft. Consequently, the authors think it is possible that not specialised craftsmen prepared the Transylvanian chests they restored. The blacksmith or the locksmith could buy the tanned leather from the tanner and, switching over to the joiner's job, prepared the simple wooden case as it was ordered, then nailed on it the ornaments that had been cut out in advance together with the leather.

The authors mechanically cleaned the metal applications during the restoration of the chests from Gyergyószentmiklós, than treated the strongly corroded iron mounts with a rust solvent and passivating agent of phosphorous acid content. The dry cleaning of the leather cover was executed with vinyl eraser and vacuum cleaning, and various types of liquors (cleaning emulsions) were used for wet cleaning. In the case of the chest with iron mounts, the leather cover, which had hardened and become brittle because of the iron mounts, had to be softened. To prevent further injuries, the fragmented and torn handles, which protected against dust, were completed with goatskin but the handle that was missing from the front of the lid of the iron-mounted case was not reconstructed. Finally the leather cover was treated with Maroquin skin vaseline (an acid-free, colourless mineral fat, which protects from the environmental effects) and a protective coating of a 5 % solution of Paraloid B72 dissolved in 1:1 mixture of acetone and toluol was applied on the metal mounts. The smaller cracks and fractures of the wooden material were glued with poly(vinyl-acetate)-based aqueous dispersion. The textile lining of the chests was cleaned with an aqueous emulsion and an emulsion of an organic solvent after mild vacuum cleaning. The missing parts of the lining were completed with a simple cloth dyed to a colour similar to the background colour of the mottled fabric. The completions were cut larger than necessary so that they could reinforce the weakened lining around the holes. They used starch to fix the textile lining back to the wood.

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Practical and preventive conservation methods in the Open-air Ethnographic Museum of Szentendre

In the introduction, the author gives a general review of the conditions of the establishment of open-air museums in Hungary, the purposes of the Open-air Ethnographic Museum of Szentendre and the results it has attained.

The condition of the objects of art exposed to unfavourable environments and destined to a fast decomposition urges the specialists to find special solutions. The need to preserve the holdings of the open-air museum necessitated specific restoration measures and often the application of materials that are alien in the practice of the protection of art objects.

The conservation of iron objects is usually carried out with the single-component synthetic emulsion Noverox (SFS Stadler, CH-9435 Heerbrugg). Phosphine (phosphorous-hydrogen) is used for the fumigation of wooden substances. The large building elements, which had been pulled down to be rebuilt later, are treated with Bio-komplex concentrate, the aqueous solution of a combined fungicide and pesticide (agents: 20% 2-(thiocyano-methylthio)benzthiazol and 0,25% deltamethrin (synthetic pyrethroid). The outdoor building elements exposed to the beating of the rain are disinfected with Wolmanol BX of an organic agent dissolved in benzene. Specialists are invited from outside to help in the protection of wooden materials against Herculean ants, which appeared recently. A substance called Pesquard-B is used for this purpose.

Once a year, outside specialists treat the materials in the textile store-room with a synthetic pyrethroid marked Coopex 2, 5EC independent of the presence of infection. In the case of insect infection of textile objects, Globol (paradichlorobenzene) is placed into a hermetically closed case for one or two months.

As a preventive measure, the endangered objects are removed from the exhibition after it had been closed in the autumn and they are deposited in a specially prepared area of the store-room. The larger pieces of furniture, which are left in the houses, are pulled away from the walls and wooden cubes are placed under the ones that stand on the rammed floor to ensure their free airing. Linen covers protect the furniture from dust.

To protect historical curtains, UV-foil is put on the windows. Acid-free cardboard back covers are used at photos and paper pictures, and also acid-free paper and acid-free polyethylene foil is placed on the shelves and between the textiles kept in cupboards.

A 1 mm thick polyethylene foam plate, which isolates moisture and arrests humidity, is inserted between the moist building elements and the objects of art when the objects are hanged on the wall or they stand on the rammed floor.

In the case of objects that are strongly endangered from the respect of the protection of art objects, like curtains, paper pictures, photos or outdoor sacral monuments, certain stone statues or pictures on a metal base, exact copies are made.

Regrettably, ageing processes caused by exterior factors cannot be stopped. They can, however, be slowed down to a certain degree, thus preventive conservation plays a crucial role in open-air museums. The purpose is the establishment of an optimal environment for the objects of art. For the sake of prevention, special attention needs to be paid in the open-air museums to the signs indicating active deterioration on wooden building elements and objects. Deterioration must immediately be treated according to the expert's opinion so that the infection does not spread. In summary we can say that permanent control (even in the winter season) and systematic preventive conservation can bring a satisfying solution against the above sketched problems. To comply with the processes that evolved in international museology in the last decade, the first visual store-room in Hungary was opened to the public in the Open-air Ethnographic Museum, which was established within an optimal environment. The exhibition store-room is a transition between a traditional storeroom and an exhibition, where in different groups masses of objects can be shown. A double aim was attained: the store-room of the institution was opened both to the specialists and the public and it ensures a better storage possibility for the collection.

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Storage, conservation and exhibition of ethnographic textiles

Ethnographic textiles are among the most sensitive components of a museum collection. They are extremely exposed to damage, so their treatment, movement, storage and exhibition need prudence and a great circumspection.

Solving problems of the protection of art objects is often not a question of money but of consideration and the sharing of tasks. The aspect of preventive protection of art objects opens the door to more rational and cheaper solutions, which can be realised, however, only with the co-operation of the staff of the museum.

Preventive conservation means the complexity of measurements and activities that do not endanger the coherence of the objects, and which are necessary to prevent the development of any kind of deterioration that can be evaded.

It is very important to set up so-called transitional store-rooms in every museum so that we do not take biologically active parasites into the collection with the new objects and the wrappings.

In a new environment the optimal relative humidity (55–60 %) and temperature (16° C) must be secured for the textiles, which can be set by moistening or desiccation and by regular measurements. The natural light should be filtered, and the artificial light should not exceed the light intensity of 50 lux.

The furniture of the store-room should be prepared from materials of neutral pH. The textiles kept on open shelves should be protected from dust with curtains. Also pH neutral materials should be used for wrapping like e.g. acid-free paper. Only well preserved costumes should be stored on hangers.

The cleaning of textiles, be it dry or wet, is an irreversible process. The purpose is not cleaning but the removal of the decomposition products in order to stop acidification.

Deionised water and surface-active agents should be used for the wet cleaning of museum textiles. Bleaching is not applied because it damages the textile fibres.

Bactericide and fungicide matters can be used for the disinfecting washing, like Preventol CMK (0,05–0,1 % alcoholic solution of parachloro-metacresol) and Dodigen 226 (alkyl-dimethyl-benzil-ammoniumchloride).

Even the most carefully stored, conserved and restored object can suffer irreparable damages in a short time if the necessary circumstances are not secured in an exhibition.

It is not always necessary to exhibit the original object, a reconstruction can be prepared of the more valuable textiles. It is suggested to exchange, from time to time, the costumes in a permanent exhibition since they age a lot during the years of the exhibition.

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Tibor SABJÁN **Restoration problems of stoves and stove tiles**

The author analyses and evaluates the main aspects and steps of the restoration of stove tiles through the eyes of a museologist. In the first half of the study he sketches the possible ways of production (throwing on a wheel, slicing and construction, pressing in moulds, individual elaboration) to help the work of the restorer. He describes the practice, the principles of medieval stove tile production emphasising the general connections, which can make the interpretation of the fragmentary material easier.

The author describes the process of restoration first on tiles as independent elements, then reviews the prob-

lems of the reconstruction of a stove. He stresses the importance of saving the original clay or paint remains that got mixed with the tiles or adhered to their sides, and calls attention that the backside of the tiles also need to be completed. After describing the production of stove copies, he illustrates the final product with good and bad examples.

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Katalin T. BRUDER **Restoration problems of outdoor building ceramics**

As the circumstances and the demands changed, building and town rehabilitation has been started in many parts of our region, including the reconstruction of monuments and historical buildings. Contrary to earlier practice, an increasingly substantial role should be given to object restorers in the planning and the execution of the reconstruction.

In this paper, the problems of only a single branch are discussed, those of building ceramics.

The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was the time of prosperity in architecture as well all over the historical territory of Hungary. Ceramic art also reached one of its flourishing periods at the time of eclecticism and secession. Architecture integrated the elements of folk art giving birth to a characteristic Hungarian architecture. Building ceramics were abundantly used both for ornamentation and as the raw material of functional elements. The examples we have chosen for illustration came from this period since ceramic material was frequently applied, it had a great artistic significance and raises topical problems from the respect of restoration. Thus the study deals with the products of the Zsolnay factory of Pécs, and their actual condition. This factory was the main producer of outdoor building ceramics, which were widely used all over the country.

Regrettably, the material of the products manufactured in this period has degraded to various degrees because of the physical and chemical deterioration. Their conservation and restoration is an urgent task.

However astonishing it seems, very few papers have been published in this field and even these papers describe only certain special problems. We cannot find results of analytical examinations and general conclusions drawn from such analyses. The author wrote this paper to raise the problem and start a discussion.

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**Glass painting in the Carpathian Basin II
Characteristic deteriorations of glass paintings
and glass fittings**

Architectural glass has changed countless times during the more than one thousand years that have passed since the production of the first colourless glass pane. The actual social demands, the economic possibilities and the geographical setting led to the birth of coloured glass windows, which functioned as organic parts of buildings. The gothic the flourishing period of glass painting served as an example to the use of materials and the applied technique in the age of historicism. The wars that devastated Europe demolished not only the churches, the palaces and the notable buildings of the Romanesque, the Gothic and the Renaissance periods that were significant on a European level as well. They also destroyed the glass paintings and the coloured glass windows of which we know from literary sources and archaeological finds.

1850–1930 was the period of the renaissance, the flourishing of glass painting in the Carpathian Basin. The preserved rich and varied material was the product of a number of glass painter workshops. Beside the individual features, they show interaction with each other and the European workshops. The character and degree

of deteriorations depend on the applied raw materials (glass pane, paints, lead rails, etc.) and the technology of production. The drastic changes of the environmental factors, air pollution and the change of the climate, wilful injuries and treasure hunters, repeatedly missed conservation and preservation, interventions carried out with inappropriate care and knowledge, the modified function of the buildings etc. all are interlinked and together they can cause irreversible damages.

The diverse deteriorations of the glass windows created in the last one and a half centuries set new tasks to restorers. New methods and new agents must be used for the sake of a successful conservation, restoration and reconstruction, the effectiveness of which can be increased by international co-operation. Owing to the different materials, the applied technologies and other circumstances the restoration of these windows is drastically different from that of medieval glass windows. The general protection of the coloured glass panes of the turn of the century goes back to only 15 years in the international practice as well. More and more specialists are aware that a similar protection must be secured to the glass windows of this period as to the medieval glass paintings.

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