

THE PAINTING DECORATION IN ST. ANDREW'S PARISH CHURCH AT ZGORNJI LESKOVEC AND ZAGREB PAINTER ANTON ARCHER

SLIKOVNE DEKORACIJE U ŽUPNOJ CRKVI SV ANDREJA U ZGORNJEM LESKOVCU I ZAGREBAČKI SLIKAR ANTON ARCHER

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses and analyses wall paintings in St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec. The church was built in 1779 (according to the date on the portal) and probably painted shortly thereafter. This is confirmed by the style of painting and by a mention in a written source. The fresco paintings have not yet been presented, analysed or assessed. This paper explains their iconography. Based on a critical stylistic analysis, the frescoes are attributed to Anton Archer, a painter from Zagreb who worked with the Styrian painter Anton Lerchinger. The studied wall paintings are the first work of art in Slovenia to be attributed to Anton Archer. Furthermore, they show that the painter worked completely independently as early as 1780, i.e. before Anton Lerchinger's death. This paper could be a good starting point for further attributions of Late Baroque paintings in the Zagorje region.

Key words: Anton Archer, Anton Lerchinger, Late Baroque painting, Zagorje, Styria, Zgornji Leskovec, 18th century, fresco painting

Ključne riječi: Anton Archer, Anton Lerchinger, kasnobarokno slikarstvo, Zagorje, Štajerska, Zgornji Leskovec, 18. stoljeće, fresko tehnika

INTRODUCTION

The parish church at Zgornji Leskovec, located in St. Andrew's Parish on the very edge of Haloze near the Slovenian-Croatian border, has only recently become a subject of art-historical literature. It is studied in the monograph entitled *Korpus poznobaročne sakralne arhitekture na slovenskem Štajerskem* (Corpus of Late Baroque Sacral Architecture in Slovenian Styria); its architecture is attributed to Janez N. Fuchs, a master builder from Maribor, since the church is dated 1779 and since its type and style correspond to Fuchs' other works. However, given its rather simple design, it could be the work of Gottlieb Petzold, a master builder from Ptuj who rebuilt the neighbouring church at Cirkulane two years earlier.¹

In the Late Baroque Classicist interior there are wall paintings from the same period which have not yet been presented, analysed or assessed in art-historical literature. The frescoes are mentioned only in

¹ KEMPERL, Metoda. *Korpus poznobaročne sakralne arhitekture na slovenskem Štajerskem*, Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta 2007, 28, 54, 76, 77, 140.

Anica Cevc's catalogue of works by Anton Lerchinger, a Late Baroque painter from Styria. Cevc wrote that the above mentioned wall paintings show the strongest Lerchinger's influence in Slovenian Styria and that their author copied Lerchinger's work in terms of both concept and details but lacked quality.² The frescoes cover almost the entire surface of the church interior and are of sufficient quality to deserve a more detailed analysis.

First, I will explain the significance of the wall paintings through an iconographic analysis, and then try to determine when the frescoes were painted and who their author is on the basis of a critical stylistic analysis. Since there are currently no known archival documents about the paintings, we can only rely on 19th-century sources.

Fresco painting in Styria is quite difficult to research: firstly, because of the lack of archival sources, secondly, due to the fact that paintings were painted over in the 19th and 20th centuries, and thirdly, because of the way painters worked in the 18th century. A painting decoration as a whole could be painted by several painters, more specifically by the main master and his assistants. For example, the issue of the authorship of wall paintings in the interior of the Church of St. Roch near Šmarje pri Jelšah, which constitute one of the most beautiful high-quality Rococo painting decorations and were painted by several painters, including Anton Lerchinger, who is considered the most important Styrian fresco painter of the second half of the 18th century, remains unsolved.³ Furthermore, there is a lack of clear distinction between Lerchinger's oeuvre and that of his co-workers or successors.⁴ Thus, the catalogue of the exhibition held in 2007 at the National Gallery in Ljubljana includes quite diverse paintings all of which are attributed to Lerchinger.⁵ The issue of successors of Ivan Ranger, a lay member of the Paulines, who is considered the best painter of the same period on the Croatian side of the Sotla River, has also not yet been resolved.⁶ A characteristic of both mentioned painters is that they worked on both sides of the Sotla River, which did not pose an obstacle to exchanges and cooperation at that time.

Recently, Croatian art historians dealing with Baroque fresco painting have devoted a lot of attention to Lerchinger's co-worker Anton Archer. Mirjana Repanić Braun found already in 1990 that the frescoes in the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows in Nova ves (1763) and those in the Holy Cross Chapel of St. Ivan's Church in Nova ves (1787) differ considerably in terms of quality. Therefore, she assumed that Anton Archer played an important role in the creation of wall paintings in the Holy Cross Chapel.⁷ The same hypothesis was put forward by Marija Mirković, who assumed that Archer was Lerchinger's assistant.⁸ Janko Barle was the first author to mention the name of this painter in connection with the furnishing of the parish church in Nova ves; however, he failed to cite the relevant source. In 2002, Mirjana Repanić-Braun further studied the frescoes in the Holy Cross Chapel in St. John's Church in

² CEVC, Anica. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger*, Ljubljana: Narodna galerija 2007, 228.

³ CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger ... and older literature referred to therein*; MIRKOVIĆ Marija. Zidne slike u »kabinetu« dvorca Miljana, in: *Dvorac Miljana. Istraživanja i konservatorski radovi* (ed. Silvije Novak), Zagreb 1992, 75-85; REPANIĆ-BRAUN, Mirjana. Autor zidnih slika u crkvi sv. Ivana na Novoj Vesi – Lerchinger ili Archer?, *Acta historiae artis slovenica*, 7, 2002, 107-122.

⁴ REPANIĆ-BRAUN, Mirjana. Zidne slike u župnoj crkvi sv. Kuzme i Damjana u Kuzmincu. Prilog određivanju njihova avtostva, in: *Vis imaginis. Baročno slikarstvo in grafika. Jubilejni zbornik za Anico Cevc* (ed. Barbara Murovec), Ljubljana 2006, 291-341; REPANIĆ-BRAUN, Mirjana. Prilog istraživanju baroknog slikarstva u Hrvatskoj – zidne slike u Višnjici i Koprivničkom Ivancu, *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, 36, 2012, 141-152.

⁵ CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger ...*

⁶ MIRKOVIĆ, Marija. Ivan Krstitelj Ranger i pavlinsko slikarstvo, in: *Kultura pavlina u Hrvatskoj 1244-1789* (ed. Đurđica Cvitanović et al.), Zagreb: Globus, Muzej za umjetnost i obrt 1989, 127-162.

⁷ REPANIĆ BRAUN, Mirjana. Anton Lerchinger – freske u kapeli Majke Božje u Novoj Vesi u Zagrebu, *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, 14, 1990, 175, 176.

⁸ MIRKOVIĆ, Marija. Zidne i tabelarne slike u župnoj crkvi sv. Ivana, in: *Sveti Ivan Krstitelj zaštitnik Hrvata. Župna crkva Sv. Ivana u zagrebu (1770-1990)* (ed. Stjepan Sirovec), Zagreb: RKT. Župni ured sv. Ivana Krstitelja, 1990, 107-119; MIRKOVIĆ, Marija. Zidne i tabelarne slike u župnoj crkvi sv. Ivana Krstitelja u Novoj vesi, in: *Sveti Ivan Krstitelj zaštitnik Hrvata* (ed. Stjepan Sirovec), Zagreb: RKT. Župni ured sv. Ivana Krstitelja, 1997, 159-160.



Figure 1. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, interior view of the nave

Nova ves in Zagreb (1787, 1792) and stated more clearly that they are probably the work of Anton Archer. At the same time, she attributed to Archer wall paintings in the Three Kings Pilgrimage Church at Komin (between 1776 and 1780) and individual paintings in St. Nicolas' Parish Church at Hrašćina (1754–1761, ok. 1779), as well as a part of frescoes above the choir loft in the pilgrimage church at Trški vrh. Furthermore, she made the hypothesis that Archer was probably one of Lerchinger's co-workers or assistants.⁹ In another article, the same author attributed frescoes in the Church of the Holy Trinity at Visoko (between 1761 and 1795) to Archer.¹⁰ In 2014, Jasmina Nestić attributed very poorly preserved frescoes in the Parish Church of St. Anthony the Abbot at Slavetić to Archer on the basis of a stylistic analysis. She assumed that Archer became an independent painter after Lerchinger's death around 1787 or even earlier. She also wrote in her paper that he gave an altar in the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity at Legrad a polychrome finish in 1798.¹¹

As regards the life of Anton Archer, who was referred to in one of the sources as »Purgara Szlavnoga Kaptoluna«,¹² we now know that he got married on 25th May 1778 in the Church of St. John the Baptist in Nova ves in Zagreb (it is

documented that Archer cooperated in painting the frescoes in the same church), that he bought a house in Opatovina street in Zagreb in 1804 and that he must have died no later than 1807, since his widowed wife sold the house that year. He was a fresco painter and also painted canvas paintings. The inventory of his estate shows that he had a large collection of graphic prints used as templates.¹³

It is characteristic of his paintings that they are of lower quality than Lerchinger's. Figures and figural compositions in Archer's paintings are modelled after the same templates as the ones painted by Lerchinger; however, Archer's figures are not life-like and fully rounded, but quite dull and characterized by expressionless physiognomy. His typical figures have wide foreheads, small eyes with drooping eyelids, narrow jaws and a somewhat sad look on their faces. They have long hair falling in strands over

⁹ REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Autor zidnih slika u crkvi sv. Ivana na Novoj Vesi ...107–122; REPANIĆ-BRAUN, Mirjana. Zidne slike, Hrašćina, župna crkva sv. Nikole, in: *Umjetnička topografija Hrvatske. Krapinsko – zagorska županija. Sakralna arhitektura s inventarom, feudalna arhitektura, spomen-obilježja*, (ed. Ivanka Reberski), Zagreb 2008, 200–201; REPANIĆ-BRAUN, Mirjana. Sedam darova Duha svetoga. Zidne slike u Kominu prema predlošcima Johanna Georga Bergmüllera, *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, 27, 2003, 197–206; REPANIĆ-BRAUN, Mirjana. Tematika i autorstvo kasnobaroknih zidnih slika u Kominu i Visokom, in: *Sveti Ivan Zelina i zelinski kraj u prošlosti*, ed. Ante Gulin, Zagreb 2003, 307–312. See also CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger* ...118–122, 206–211.

¹⁰ REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Autor zidnih slika u crkvi sv. Ivana na Novoj Vesi ...107–122.

¹¹ NESTIĆ, Jasmina. Zidni oslik svetišta župne crkve sv. Antuna pustinjaka u Slavetiću: prilog poznavanju opusa slikara Antuna Archera, *Portal. Godišnjak hrvatskog restauratorskog zavoda*, 5, 2014, 123–136. Accessed 20.4. 2016. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.17018/portal.2018.8>

¹² REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Autor zidnih slika u crkvi sv. Ivana na Novoj Vesi ...114.

¹³ MIRKOVIĆ, M. Zidne i tabelarne slike ...160; REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Autor zidnih slika u crkvi sv. Ivana na Novoj Vesi ...107–122; NESTIĆ, J. Zidni oslik ...128.

Figure 2. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, nave vault



their shoulders on both sides. Furthermore, Archer's paintings are characterised by very elongated figures with small heads and large hands, often with palms facing outwards. Archer did not use rich Rococo decorative elements, and his style is calm Classicism. He designed space in his paintings on vaults or domes the same way as A. Lerchinger, i.e. he depicted either »canopy« architecture or true domes.¹⁴

THE HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH

The first mention of the church is found in archival sources from 1545, where it is mentioned as the succursal church of the Videm pri Ptuju Parish (St. Vitus near Ptuj). Archbishop of Gorizia Karl Mihael Count Attems visited that region shortly after the Archdiocese of Gorizia was established. On the initiative of locals and based on a commitment made by Count Sauer, the owner of the Borl estate, to provide all necessary resources, the Archbishop elevated St. Andrew's church into a Vicariate.¹⁵ The establishment of the Vicariate was apparently also the reason for the construction of a new church, since the previous church building was probably too small to satisfy its needs. Povoden wrote that the new church was finished and painted in 1780, and consecrated in 1804.¹⁶ The parish priest Janko Petan (who served as a priest between 1945 and 1972) wrote that the church was probably painted by Paulines from Lepoglava.¹⁷

The north-east facing church consists of a presbytery with a sacristy on the south side, a nave with narrow rectangular chapels, and a bell tower. The presbytery has rounded eastern corners and an elliptical termination. The chapels, which extend the whole length of the nave, are rectangular with rounded corners. The large four-storey bell tower has an onion dome. The church has two entrances, one on the

¹⁴ REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Anton Lerchinger ...175, 176; REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Autor zidnih slika u crkvi sv. Ivana na Novoj Vesi ...112-115; NESTIĆ, J. Zidni oslik ...128, 129.

¹⁵ Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv Graz, Handschriften, 828, Simon Povoden, Beytrag zu einer steyrischen Kirchengeschichte von allen Stiftern und Klöstern, welche in unserer Steyermark annoch bestehen und schon aufgelassen sind, 1820, 68. OŽINGER, Anton. *Vizitacije Savinjskega arhidiaconata goriške nadškofije 1751-1773. Atti delle visite pastorali nell' Archidiaconato di valle Saunia 1751-1773. Die Berichte der Pastoralvisitationen im Archidiaconat von Sauen 1751-1773*, Ljubljana 1991, 192, 193, 371; <http://zupnija-sv-andraz.rkc.si/index.php/content/display/19> (Accessed 15.5.2016)

¹⁶ Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv Graz, Handschriften, 828, Simon Povoden, Beytrag zu einer steyrischen Kirchengeschichte von allen Stiftern und Klöstern, welche in unserer Steyermark annoch bestehen und schon aufgelassen sind, 1820, 68.

¹⁷ <http://zupnija-sv-andraz.rkc.si/index.php/content/display/19> (Accessed 15.5.2016)



Figure 3. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, presbytery vault

west side below the tower and one on the north side (the latter portal is dated 1779). In the interior, the presbytery has a sail vault resting on interior piers of trapezoidal cross-section. The centrally planned nave is defined by four wide concave piers each having attached to it one pilaster on each side of the passages into the chapels or the presbytery. The piers carry a sail vault which covers the entire nave. The very shallow chapels are rectangular. Between the bell tower and the nave there is a rectangular space with a sail vault under the choir loft. The choir loft has a convex-concave fence.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FRESCOES AND ICONOGRAPHY

The paintings cover the vault and the south wall of the presbytery, the nave vault, the choir loft fence and the vault below the choir loft, and there are individual paintings in frames on the west piers of the nave and in the two chapels.¹⁸

In the vault of the presbytery there is a depiction of an ochre canopy-like architecture with a large circular opening at the top and semi-circular openings (lunettes) on all four sides. This canopy-like architecture rises from some kind of corner consoles on which sit four Fathers of the Church: St. Gregory, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Hieronymus. Their space is defined by architectural elements of pink colour, which are connected with the canopy-like architecture. Depicted inside the circular opening is the Apotheosis of St. Andrew. The saint – with a cross in his hand and an angel at his feet – is being welcomed into heaven by the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Christ with the Cross, and a dove – the Holy Spirit. Depicted inside the semi-circular openings are landscape views with scenes from the life of St. Andrew the Apostle. On the entrance side, St. Andrew is depicted as a fisherman – this scene probably shows the appearance of Jesus by the Sea of Tiberias. On the south side, St. Andrew is depicted as a preacher. The west lunette opens onto a landscape in which St. Andrew is blessing a beggar and a mother with a child, and in the north lunette there is a depiction of a landscape with a scene showing preparations for the crucifixion of St. Andrew. The purpose of the composition on the presbytery vault is not to create an illusion of extension in space, but to merely »open up« the vault with the canopy-like non-tectonic architecture and the painted sky. On the south wall, frescoes cover the area around the sacristy door, where the painted architectural elements create an illusionist extension above the door. On this painted cornice sits a personification of Faith holding a cross in her right hand, with a chalice on the cornice next to her left hand, and an angel holding up a book for her. To the left of the sacristy door there is a depiction of a standing personification of Caritas. She is holding one child in her

¹⁸ The wall paintings in the chapels are not from the period in question.

Figure 4. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, presbytery vault, Apotheosis of St. Andrew



lap, supporting him with her right hand, while another child stands beside her, holding her left hand. Depicted to the right of the door is a standing personification of Hope with an anchor in her right hand. The light is depicted as coming from the altar, thus there are large dark shadows painted behind the personifications. The window which opens into the oratory above the sacristy is also surrounded with rich illusionist architectural elements creating an extension above the window. Both windows in the south and the north walls of the presbytery are also decorated with illusionist architectural elements. There are three little angels with an anchor, a chalice and a burning heart (attributes of the three theological virtues) painted on the east wall above the main altar.

The painting on the nave vault creates the illusion of a dome with a large circular opening which opens up into the sky. The opening rests on monumental double free pillars which are connected at the top by a dentil cornice. The pillars stand on rectangular bases standing on a strongly profiled cornice which runs along the entire perimeter. There are four large angels flying in the sky and holding a yellow ring. They are depicted in animated poses so that two of them have their backs turned to the viewer while the other two are facing the viewer. One of the angels is accompanied by a putto, and another is holding a mirror. Looking through the ring, we can see a medallion emitting rays of light which fall on a group of saints sitting on clouds below the medallion. Between the pillars of the illusionist dome, there are the following four scenes depicted in rectangular frames: above the triumphal arch there is a depiction of the Coming of the Holy Spirit – Pentecost; above the south chapel there is an allegory of the Catholic Church (in the foreground there is a kneeling female personification with a tiara, keys, a chalice with a book and a shepherd's rod next to her; above the personification is a circular building (probably a Loreto symbol) and a triangle – the symbol of the Holy Trinity; to her right are St. Peter and St. Paul, and to her left a depiction of hell); painted above the choir loft is a scene showing Jesus at the home of Simon the Pharisee (Mary is anointing Jesus' feet and wiping them with her hair), and above the north chapel there is a depiction of the Resurrection of the Dead (four angels blowing trumpets and three dead men below them climbing out of their graves). On the pendentives of the illusionist dome, i.e. above the piers, there are further four framed scenes. Depicted to the right of the presbytery is the Resurrection of Christ, to the left of the presbytery is a scene showing Christ being laid in his grave, to the left of the choir loft is a depiction of the Nativity of Jesus, and to the right of the choir loft a depiction of Christ in Limbo or the Last Judgement. The painting on the pier to the right of the choir shows the God's creation (God the Father in clouds, below him are Adam and Eve and many animals), and the painting on the pier to the left of the choir shows the blessing Christ with the terrestrial globe.

There are three depictions in frames on the fence of the choir loft. In the middle frame is a depiction of the Last Supper, in the left frame a depiction of St. Cecilia, and in the right frame King David with



Figure 5. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, south wall of the presbytery, three theological virtues

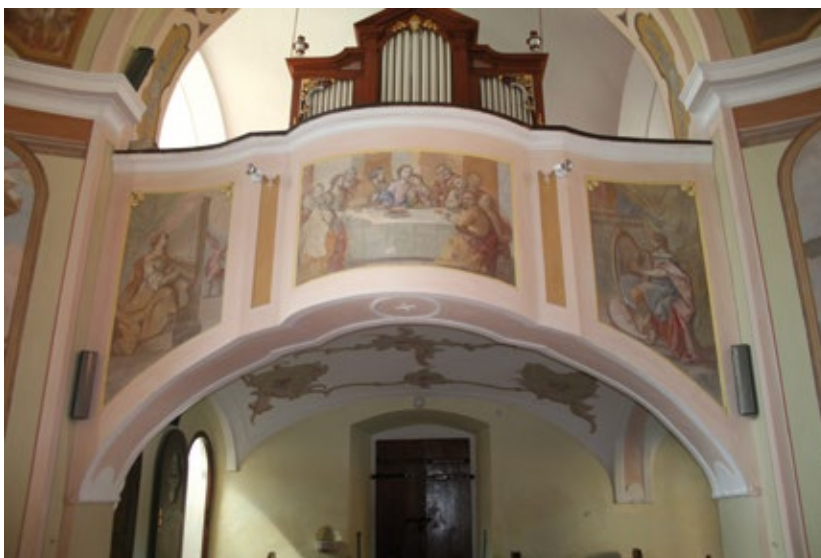


Figure 6. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, choir loft

a harp. The vault below the choir loft is decorated with rocaille frames connected with tendrils and enclosing floral still lifes.

Thus, the iconography in the presbytery is that of the titular saint, St. Andrew, while the theme of the paintings in the nave is apparently apostolic faith. The Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb is decorated with paintings on the same theme which are attributed to Anton Archer.¹⁹ The depiction of God's creation on the pier to the right of the choir loft relates to the first part of the Apostles' Creed: »I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth«. The depiction of the blessing Christ on the pier on the other side of the choir relates to the following words: »and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord«. The words »Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary« are incorporated into the depiction of the Nativity of Jesus on the pendentive above the blessing Christ. The scenes in the other pendentives showing Christ being laid into his grave, the Resurrection of Christ and the Last Judgement correspond to the following part of the Apostles' Creed: »suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day

¹⁹ MIRKOVIĆ, M. *Zidne i tabelarne slike ...* 155–157.

Figure 7. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, nave vault, Pentecost



Figure 8. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, nave vault, Jesus at the home of Simon the Pharisee



He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead«. The last part of the Creed: »I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.« is shown in depictions between the pairs of pillars of the illusionist dome: Pentecost, the allegory of the Church, the Resurrection of the Dead and Jesus at the home of Simon the Pharisee.

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

The author of the wall paintings in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec used a limited colour palette and always the same shade of an individual colour. He predominantly used ochre, orange, green, red, pink and off-white colours, while he seldom used blue. Individual compositions in the wall paintings are very animated. Figures are depicted in animated poses, many of them with emotional gestures, and their fluttering clothing often has many folds. Nevertheless, their bodies are poorly modelled, and the folds in the fabric are awkward and flat, they do not fall naturally and are not draped on bodies in soft folds. To model the drapery on figures, the painter used lighter shades of the same colour which in



Figure 9. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, nave vault, Resurrection of Christ

some places become almost white. The painted space in which figures move around is poorly constructed. When the scene takes place indoors, the space is depicted using only the most basic elements, which is also the case for scenes taking place in natural settings. The landscape depicted in the sail vault in the presbytery is very simply painted. The figures typically have disproportional elongated bodies. They have expressionless faces, wide foreheads, small dark eyes, large hands and swollen feet. Their faces are flat and lack modelling with shading. Further typical characteristics of the figures include thick messy beards and long curly hair that falls over the shoulders on both sides.

STYLISTIC COMPARISONS

Painted on the sail vault of the presbytery is an illusionist canopy-like dome with a large opening in the centre and four semi-circular openings on the sides. This is a concept often used by Anton Lerchinger in his paintings in vaults and domes, for example in the parish church at Kamnica, in St. Mary's Chapel of the parish church in Slovenske Konjice, in the chapel at Svetli dol, in St. Ann's Chapel at Završje Začretsko and in the pilgrimage church at Trška gora.²⁰ Different parts of wall paintings in the sail vault of the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec are connected via pink volutes and flower garlands, which were also used by A. Lerchinger. The jagged fluted consoles in the presbytery on which the evangelists sit are almost identical to those in the pilgrimage church at Trški vrh or those on the attic of the main altar in the Holy Cross Chapel of St. Ivan's Parish Church in Nova ves in Zagreb. The latter painting decoration is mentioned in archival sources as the work of painter Anton Archer from Zagreb.²¹ Such consoles can also be seen in the parish church at Slavetić²² and on the ceiling of the presbytery of the parish church at Hraščina.²³ The motif of the spiral console used as an element connecting the architectural structure surrounding the Church Fathers with the structure that frames the opening of the illusionist dome is similar to the consoles on the ceiling of the castle chapel at Gornja Stubica and on the ceiling of the chapel in the Novo Celje Mansion –these two painting decorations are presently attributed to A. Lerchinger.²⁴ The ochre decorative border around the opening in the dome is identical to that in the Chapel of St. Francis Xavier in the Olimje parish church.²⁵

²⁰ For attributions, see CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger ...*79–211.

²¹ REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. *Autor zidnih slika u crkvi sv. Ivana na Novoj Vesi ...*110–112.

²² NESTIĆ, J. *Zidni oslik ...* 127, 129

²³ The work is attributed to Jožef Lerchinger (CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger ...*118–119.

²⁴ CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger ...*123-128.

²⁵ This painting decoration is also attributed to A. Lerchinger (CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger ...*148–156).

The dome in the nave is designed in a very similar way as the dome in the castle chapel at Gornja Stubica. An illusionist true dome with pillars is otherwise quite unusual for Anton Lerchinger's oeuvre, but is typical of the oeuvre of Ivan Ranger, a Pauline painter who, like A. Lerchinger, worked on both sides of the border between Slovenia and Croatia. A similar illusionist dome can also be found in Anton Archer's oeuvre, for example in the presbytery of the parish church at Hrašćina. Thus, it cannot be excluded that I. Ranger influenced both A. Lerchinger and A. Archer.

In fact, the entire decorative repertoire in the studied paintings is similar to that used by A. Lerchinger, but is less Rococo in style and includes fewer decorative elements (the absence of rich Rococo ornaments can be observed already in the pilgrimage church at Trški vrh).²⁶

The typical facial features, hairstyles and modelling of the figures in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec differ quite strongly from those typical of A. Lerchinger's oeuvre. As mentioned above, facial expressions of figures at Zgornji Leskovec are subdued, and the modelling is very unconvincing. Facial features as well as the modelling of figures are most similar to those in the paintings in the Holy Cross Chapel in Nova ves in Zagreb. If we compare Christ's face in the depiction of the blessing Christ or in the scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec with the face of the blessing Christ on the west wall of the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb or with Christ's face in the Resurrection scene in the Holy Cross Chapel at Hrašćina, we see that the faces are of the same type and that they were painted by the same painter. The same conclusion can be drawn from a comparison between angels' faces, for example those of the angel in the Resurrection scene or the angel next to the blessing Christ in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec and the angel on the ceiling of the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb. All these figures have the same hairstyle with long curly hair which is parted in the middle and falls over the shoulders on both sides. They also have small dark eyes which are set very close together. Apostles' faces in the depiction of the Last Supper on the choir fence in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec are very similar to the faces of apostles in the Resurrection scene in the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church at Hrašćina. Furthermore, the faces of female figures in the paintings in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec are closely comparable to the faces of women depicted in the parish church at Hrašćina and the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb. The face of the female personification of Hope on the south wall of the presbytery very closely resembles the face of St. Lucy on the altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the parish church at Hrašćina or the face of the woman (St. Mary Magdalene and St. Veronica) on the west wall of the Holy Cross Chapel of the same church. Mary's face in the depiction of Pentecost and the face of the female personification in the allegory of the Church at Zgornji Leskovec closely resemble Mary's face in the scene showing Christ



Figure 10. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, pier in the nave, God's creation

²⁶ CEVC A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger ...*172.



Figure 11. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, pier in the nave, the Blessing Christ

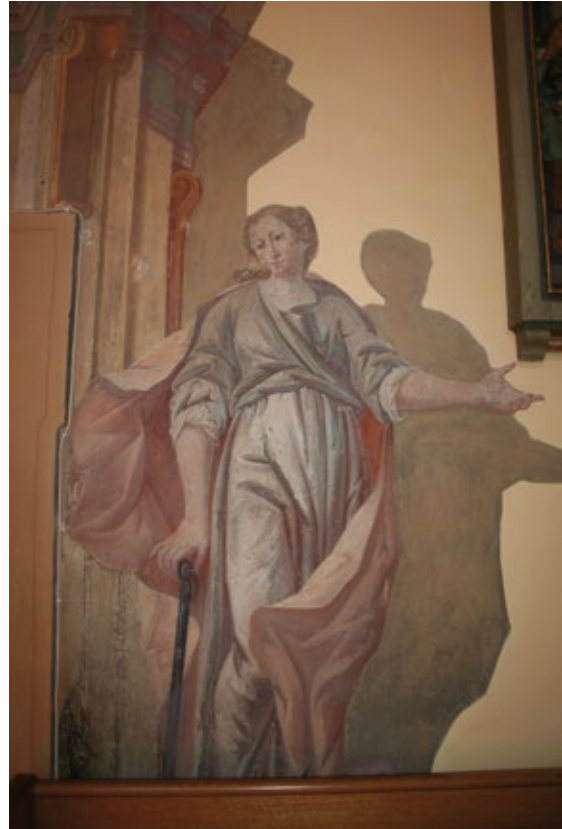


Figure 12. St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec, south wall of the presbytery, Personification of Faith

and Mary returning to Nicholas his episcopal insignia in the parish church at Hrašćina. In addition, the folds in these figures' hoods are also very similar.

Figures in the wall paintings in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec typically have swollen feet (for example, the figures on the sail vault of the presbytery, Christ in the scenes depicting the Resurrection of Christ and Christ at the home of Simon the Pharisee, and the personification of Faith in the presbytery). Such swollen feet can be seen on most of the figures depicted in the parish church at Hrašćina (for example, the apostles on the dome of the presbytery, two female figures on the west wall of the Holy Cross Chapel, figures in the scene depicting Christ and Mary returning to Nicholas his episcopal insignia) as well as on figures in the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb (for example, the figure of Christ in the scene depicting the Resurrection of Christ) and on most of the figures in the presbytery of the same church.

As mentioned above, the drapery in the wall paintings in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec is fluttering in lively folds but shows a certain lack of skill, and the folds are stiff and flat. The scene depicting Pentecost in the church at Zgornji Leskovec is closely comparable to the scene showing Christ and Mary returning to Nicholas his episcopal insignia on the west wall of the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb. The folds in the garment of the personification of Hope on the south wall of the presbytery fall in a similar way as those in the garment of the Immaculate Virgin on the ceiling of the chapel at Novo Celje Manson²⁷ or those in St. Lucy's garment on the altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the parish church at Hrašćina.

²⁷ Archival attested work of A. Lerchinger (CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger ...*123–128).

It has already been proven that, when forming compositions, A. Archer used the same graphic templates as A. Lerchinger.²⁸ This can also be observed in the wall paintings in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec. The typical pose of God the Father in the scene representing the God's creation is almost identical to that of God the Father on the nave vault in the pilgrimage church at Trški vrh or that of God the Father on the vault in the pharmacy of the Olimje Monastery.²⁹ The same pose is used in the depiction of God the Father on the ceiling of the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb and in the scene representing God's creation in the same chapel. Furthermore, the pose of the angel in the scene depicting God's creation at Zgornji Leskovec is very similar to those of the angel supporting St. Francis Xavier on the vault in the Chapel of St. Francis Xavier in the parish church at Olimje, of the angel supporting God the Father on the presbytery vault in the parish church at Petrovče, and of the angel on the ceiling of the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb.³⁰ In fact, the entire composition of God the Father in the parish church at Petrovče is identical to that in the scene representing God's creation in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec. The pose of the angel supporting Christ in the scene depicting the blessing Christ is very similar to that of the angel supporting the terrestrial sphere on the ceiling of the chapel at Svetli dol³¹ or that of the angel supporting the terrestrial sphere in the same scene in the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb. The angel supporting the ring in the nave vault and turning his back to the viewer in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec is identical to the angel on the ceiling of the presbytery of St. Roch's Pilgrimage Church near Šmarje pri Jelšah, the angel on the ceiling of the chapel in the Novo Celje Mansion, the angel on the ceiling of the Chapel of St. Francis Xavier at Olimje, the angel on the nave vault at Trški vrh and the angel on the vault of the presbytery in Nova ves in Zagreb. The detail of male figures with bent legs and very broad laps is also interesting: the blessing Christ, St. Peter in the scene depicting Pentecost and Christ in the scene showing Christ at the home of Simon the Pharisee in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec are similar to God the Father in the presbytery of the succursal church at Brinjeva gora,³² St. Luke on the vault of the presbytery of the parish church at Hraščina, Christ in the scene showing Christ at the home of Simon the Pharisee and the blessing Christ in the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb. Christ the Judge in the Last Judgement in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec is identical to Christ the Judge in the same scene in the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb. Furthermore, the figures of Christ in the depictions of Resurrection in both churches are almost identical. The figure of Christ in the depiction of the Holy Trinity on the vault of the presbytery of the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec is very similar to the Christ on the vault in St. Roch's Pilgrimage Church near Šmarje pri Jelšah; however, Christ's right hand at Zgornji Leskovec is stretched outwards, which is a detail typical of the painter in question. The personification of Faith and St. Peter and St. Paul on the nave vault in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec are identical to the figures in the Allegory of Faith in St. Roch's Pilgrimage Church near Šmarje pri Jelšah. The figure of Mary in the scene depicting the Nativity of Jesus in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec is very similar to that in the same scene in St. Mary's Chapel of the parish church in Slovenska Bistrica. The putti seated on the cornices in the painting on the presbytery vault in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec are a recurrent motif in Lerchinger's oeuvre that was probably first used on the ceiling of the chapel in the Novo Celje Mansion, and later in the chapel of the Prešnik Mansion. Typical poses of angels include those of angels in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec depicted in three-quarters profile, turning their backs to the viewer and supporting, for example, a sphere or clouds on which kneels or stands Mary or a saint (Trški vrh, Olimje, Novo Celje). Such an angel is depicted on the sail vault in the nave at Zgornji Leskovec. The links between the depiction at Zgornji Leskovec and the composition on the

²⁸ REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Sedam darova Duha svetoga ..., 197–206.

²⁹ Attributed to A. Lerchinger (CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger* ... 201–206.

³⁰ All these comparative paintings are attributed to A. Lerchinger (CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger* ... 123–211).

³¹ The painting decoration is attributed to A. Lerchinger (CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger* ... 104–11.)

³² Attributed to A. Lerchinger in CEVC, A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger* ... 159.

nave vault in the parish church at Hraščina are the pose of the angel holding a cloud, the physiognomy of God the Father, and the large ring held by an angel. In the church at Zgornji Leskovec, such a ring and such an angel are depicted on the nave vault, while God the Father is depicted on the sail vault of the presbytery.

Thus, it is clear from compositions that the painter used the same templates as Anton Lerchinger; however, the use of these templates is also evident in Anton Archer's oeuvre. The author of the paintings at Zgornji Leskovec might also have used some other graphic templates whose use has thus far not been observed in paintings attributed to Lerchinger but has been proven in case of Archer's paintings by Mirjana Repanić Braun.³³ One such example is the putto holding an open book in front of the personification of Faith in the presbytery. The painted shadows are another interesting detail in the wall paintings in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec. The painted ornaments and figures of personifications of Faith, Hope and Caritas on the south wall of the presbytery cast distinct dark shadows that fall to their left. Such shadows can be seen in the wall paintings (depicting Church Fathers) in the pilgrimage church at Trški vrh, in the castle chapel at Gornja Stubica (personifications on the vault) and in the Chapel of St. Francis Xavier in the parish church at Olimje (the two angels on the triumphal arch).³⁴ They can also be found in the parish church at Hraščina, where they are cast by St. Luke depicted on the presbytery vault, as well as on the illusionist main altar in the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb and the illusionist altar in the Holy Cross Chapel of that same church.

CONCLUSION

Iconographic and stylistic comparison between the paintings attributed to Anton Lerchinger and Anton Archer on the basis of archival sources and the paintings assumed to be their works shows that the wall paintings in St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec are the work of Anton Archer and that they were probably painted shortly after 1779, which is the year carved on the north portal of the church. The paintings are stylistically uniform, and the date of their creation suggests that Anton Archer worked as an independent painter already at that time, i.e. before the death of his alleged teacher Anton Lerchinger. The paintings at Zgornji Leskovec were created by one painter – unlike, for example, paintings in the parish church at Hraščina, which were found to be the work of several hands.³⁵ The author mostly modelled his compositions on those painted by A. Lerchinger; however, a comparison between them shows that Archer always changed them to a certain extent. This is most evident when comparing frescoes in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec with those in the Holy Cross Chapel of the parish church in Nova ves in Zagreb, which actually share the same iconographic program. However, instead of merely copying individual scenes, the painter tried to give them a stamp of his own character. In view of the early date of creation of the paintings and in the light of the findings of the mentioned Croatian art historians about A. Archer's involvement in the creation of paintings attributed to A. Lerchinger (for example, in the pilgrimage church at Trški vrh), the question arises as to whether A. Archer also cooperated in painting other works in Styria attributed to A. Lerchinger. Such an assumption about Archer's

³³ REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Sedam darova Duha svetoga ... 197–206; REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Tematika i autorstvo kasnobaroknih zidnih slika u Kominu i Visokom ...307-312.

³⁴ All these paintings are attributed to A. Lerchinger (CEVC A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger* ... 123–211). M. Mirković assumed that Lerchinger was not the sole author of this painting decoration and that he must have been assisted by a skilled quadraturist (MIRKOVIĆ, Marija. Iluzionističko zidno slikarstvo, in: *Sveti trag. Devetsto godina umjetnosti zagrebačke nadbiskupije 1094–1994* (ed. Tugomir Lukšić, Ivanka Reberski), Zagreb: Zagrebačka nadbiskupija, Institut za povijest umjetnosti, Muzejsko-galerijski centar, 1994, 289). Tanja Badovinac even assumed that the paintings were not painted by Lerchinger, but perhaps by Ferdinand Fromiller (BADOVINAC, Tatjana, Slikar Josef Ferdinand Fromiller in njegova dela v Rogatcu, *Acta historiae artis Slovenica*, 5, 2000, 133–150). Based on a stylistic comparison of details and a comparison with Ranger's frescoes, Anica Cevc nevertheless decided to attribute the frescoes to Lerchinger and stated that, with these frescoes, Lerchinger came closest to Ranger's works (CEVC A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger* ... 113-118).

³⁵ REPANIĆ-BRAUN, M. Autor zidnih slika u crkvi sv. Ivana na Novoj Vesi ...110–112; CEVC A. *Anton Jožef Lerhinger* ...122.

involvement was made by A. Cevc already in 2007 in relation to paintings in the chapel of the Prešnik Mansion, the parish church at Galicija and the pharmacy of the Olimje Monastery, but she did not provide a detailed analysis.³⁶ The present study confirms her assumption, since there are marked similarities between figures at Zgornji Leskovec and those in the pharmacy at Olimje. Archer might also be the author of the paintings under bay arches (the Miraculous Catch of Fish and the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor) in the parish church at Galicija. However, his involvement in the wall paintings in the chapel of the Prešnik Mansion cannot be confirmed by the present study. Further, for the purpose of determining whether Archer cooperated in the creation of other painting decorations presently attributed to A. Lerchinger, wall paintings in the parish church at Kebelej and in the Rosary Chapel of the parish church at Slovenske Konjice should also be analysed in more detail.

Archer's hand will undoubtedly be recognized in some other paintings in Croatia, more specifically in the Croatian Zagorje region. For example, there are many similarities between the frescoes in St. Andrew's Parish Church at Zgornji Leskovec and those in the Parish Church of St. Martin at Martijanec, which are dated after 1775.³⁷ The architecture of the altar is modelled on that in the parish church at Kuzminec, while the presbytery vault is almost identical to the vault in the presbytery of the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec both in terms of architecture and decoration as well as in terms of individual poses and types of figures. Furthermore, some face types in the parish church at Višnjica closely resemble those in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec (e.g. the angel on the triumphal arch).

Thus, the frescoes in the parish church at Zgornji Leskovec, which were painted shortly after 1779, present a challenge in terms of searching for other works painted by Archer, and they might help resolve the issue of Lerchinger's or Ranger's successors who, like these two painters, worked both in Styria and Croatia.

Anton Lerchinger probably had a large painting workshop where several painters worked, including Anton Archer. In his old age, Lerchinger gradually stopped painting and other painters in his workshop took over his work. Thus, after his death, his workshop continued operating without major changes.

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SAŽETAK

U radu se raspravlja i analizira zidno slikarstvo u župnoj crkvi sv. Andreja u Zgornjem Leskovcu. Crkva je sagrađena 1779. godine (prema datumu na ulazu) te je vjerojatno oslikana nedugo nakon toga. To potvrđuje i stil slikanja te podatak u pisanim izvorima. Ove freske još nisu predstavljene, analizirane ni procijenjene. U radu se objašnjava njihova ikonografija. Temeljem kritičke stilske analize, freske se pripisuju Antonu Archeru, slikaru iz Zagreba koji je radio sa štajerskim slikarom Antonom Lerchingerom. Proučavane zidne slike prvo su umjetničko djelo u Sloveniji koje se pripisuje Antonu Archeru. Nadalje, pokazuju da je slikar radio potpuno samostalno već 1780. godine, tj. prije smrti Antona Lerchingerera. Ovaj rad mogao bi predstavljati dobro polazište za daljnje određivanje autorstva kasnobaroknih slika u području Zagorja.