



**LĪGA ŠĻAKOTA**, Mg. art  
LMA doctoral studies, 3rd year  
Kalpaka bulvāris 13, Rīga  
liiga.slakota@gmail.com

The icon, wood/tempera, size 39x116x2.5 cm, late 18th century, originally came to the church as a gift, it has changed original size and the same number of layers of overpainting similar to other icons, which is evidence and indicate an earlier adaptation for the needs of the iconostasis. A 5 cm wooden strip was deliberately added to the upper part of the icon to increase its size. The base is made of two boards with vertical fibers, while the later added lath has horizontal fibers. The original base was curved in the shape of a shield, but the strip remained straight, creating a gap and a pronounced step between the two parts. The quality of the painting was difficult to access the layer of varnish had blackened (Image 1). The background seemed inorganically fresh and did not correspond in colour to the figure, and the inscription above the shoulders and the letters in the halo were missing, which already initially indicated that the background had been overpainted. UV rays revealed absorption of the rays in the lower part of the icon, where various restoration primers had been applied during previous repairs. Micro-cross-section examination revealed that there were three layers of overpainting in the top of the icon, and two in the lower part – with intermediate layers of varnish. The oldest layer of paint was missing on the later added strip, but a layer of dark brown putty was found at the joint.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

After research, it was decided to sequentially remove the overpainting on the background and separate the later added strip. The overpaintings of the figure were removed only in places where the tension caused by their density threatened the preservation of the original painting. Conservation work began with consolidation of the paint layer with 3% Aquazol 200 in ethanol and distilled water in a ratio of 1:2, was used in an open manner to achieve faster moisture evaporation and plasticization of the top layer of paint. The levkas-type primer was consolidated by impregnating it with a 1–2% adhesive solution and gluing it back to the base using the 4% Aquazol 200 in water. The removal of later layers in the background began with the removal of soft resin varnish with ethanol and turpentine distillate in a ratio of 1:2 (Image 2). This was followed by the removal of poor-quality overpaintings down to the original paint layer on the background and halos, documenting each layer. The first overpainting was removed with ethanol and turpentine solution 1:1 (Image 3), but the second and last layers were removed mechanically with a scalpel (Image 4), the last layer being slightly softened with ethanol. Under the overpaintings, a thick, darkened layer of oil varnish was exposed (image 5), which was thinned with a complex mixture of solvents: dimethyl sulfoxide, methylcellulose, ethanol, lavender oil in a ratio of 1:1:1:1 and neutralized with turpentine distillate. After removing the overpainting, the later restoration primer was removed and a new restoration primer was applied. The losses were retouched with watercolours. Regalrez 1094 restoration varnish was used as a protective varnish (Image 6).