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Construction of wooden altars in XVII and XVIII century and their conservation problematic on the example monumental altar in Toruń

The historical problematic of carpentry techniques and construction solutions used in the construction of wooden altars in XVII and XVIII century have not been a subject of systematic research yet. Unrecognized issue is the relationship between evolution forms of composition, their arrangement of parts and construction of wooden structures.

Literature about altars focus on many aspects for example: the history of the altar, the stylistic and formal aspects. The most common research issues are information connect with: the symbolism and theology of the altar, the genesis of the forms and the evolution of its individual components, both in terms territorial and chronological aspects. Also in publications associate with conservation and restoration problems, the construction of wooden altar is marginalized.

The consequence of this unilateral approach is the lack of understanding of altars as integrity composition including different structure elements and parts of the construction. Often this situation is causing incorrect identification of its parts and use of imprecise terminology for their defining.

These groups of problems decided about research related to construction of wooden altar. In PhD thesis contain the following types of research problems:

- arrangement of elements and function of wooden altar construction;
- identification of the main types of construction;
- connections and connectors of woodwork;
- materials and techniques of woodwork;
- relations between composition components (decoration) and structure of construction;
- extent and kind of woodworks work;
- determine the significance of the analyzed construction of wood for the history of building techniques;
- systematize and broaden the terminology of construction;

- identify the most common types and causes of damage to the construction of wooden altars.

The main aim of PhD thesis is to recognize common construction of wooden altars in XVII and XVIII century and to develop typology of altars constructions, which will be including the basic types of construction and applying the connections and connectors woodwork.

Recognizing the problems of construction and conservation will be realized basing on the following methodological methods:

- analysis of historical altars structures;
- analysis of the condition of the structures;
- chronological and material stratification.

In accumulating material for comparative studies will be helpful: photographic documentation, documentation of measurement and drawing in scale 1:20; 1:10 and 1: 2, containing the front and back views and cross-sections of altars. Specific kind of construction solution will be visualized in axonometry. The results of the construction research confronted with the results of analysis of written sources and historical iconographic. All elements will be systematized in the form of a catalog.

The basic of research material will be altars, which are located in churches from Toruń: Cathedral of St. St. John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, St. James, St. Spirit, the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Peter and St. Paul on Podgórz-Toruń.

To direct research selected over a dozen objects, which meet the following criteria: representativeness of forms, a variety of composition, diversity in terms of location and function and accessibility from the back.