

# RESTORATION OF TWO PAINTINGS AND DECORATIVE FRAMES AT KURMENES ST. PETER'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## INTRODUCTION

The author of the paintings is Wincenty Leopold Slendzinski, who is a well-known Polish-Lithuanian artist, comes from a family of painters for several generations. 1856-1863 he studied at the Moscow Art School and in the early 60s was considered one of the most prominent authors of Polish religious painting.

The current Kurmenes stone church was built in 1870 by Count Antons Komarovskis in honor of St. Peter, on the site of the old wooden chapel, which was demolished. When Andrejs Mediņš started to serve as dean in the parish, in 2019, wide cleaning and restoration works of the church building and its surroundings were started, to celebrate the 150th birthday of the church in 2020.



"St Anthony" back before the restoration



"St Anthony" before the restoration



"An angel frees St. Peter from prison" back before restoration



"An angel frees St. Peter from prison" before restoration

DATED: 1874  
TECHNIQUE: OIL/CANVAS, WOOD  
SIZE: 223 × 150 CM

## CONDITION BEFORE RESTORATION

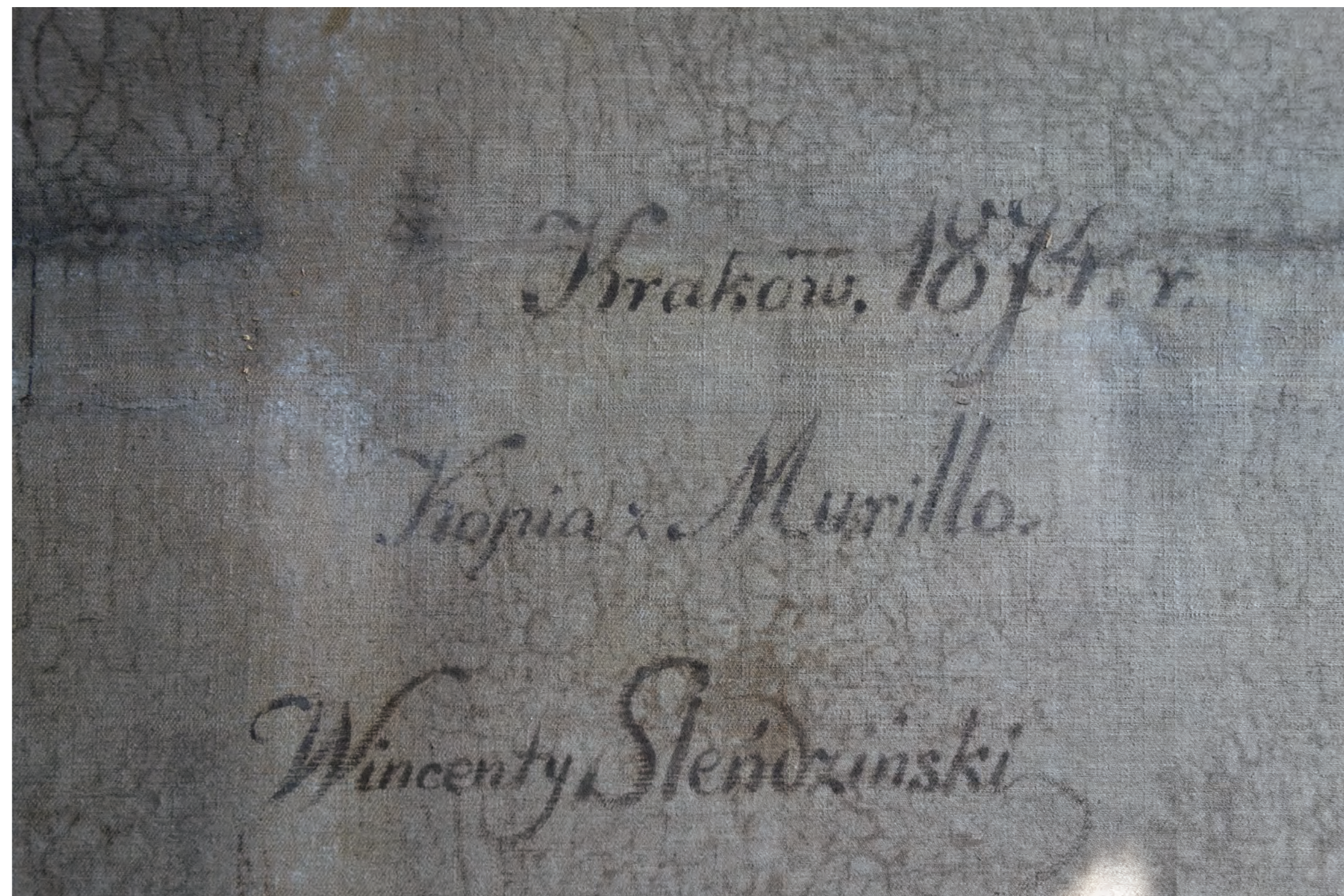
Paintings "St. Anton with the child Jesus and angels" and "St. Peter is released from prison by an angel" was in a bad technical condition in the restoration workshop - the base of the canvas had loosened; the surface was covered with a layer of mold and dust. Reticulated craquelure had formed in the primer and paint layers, the primer with the canvas base had poor adhesion. One of the paintings has a vertical 20 cm long tear in the upper right part, which appeared recently, judging by the condition of the edges of the tear. Both paintings are covered with a thick layer of varnish, which has yellowed over time.

The decorative upper frames of the paintings are rectangular in shape with decorative wood carvings on their bottoms and tops. The frames are made of pine wood. To obtain slats of such a thick size and profile, they are glued from two parts. The decorative frames are poorly preserved, starting with the finishing layer, which separated in large areas, and their structural strength. Profile strips did not connect with each other and in some places, there were gaps in the places of gluing, but not completely separated. Some of them have disappeared. The decorative wood carvings of the frames have been partially preserved. A lot of wood carving parts have come off and disappeared. On the edges of the frame, there are small wooden breaks. The frame is finished with chalk primer and bronze paint.

The sub-frames are stable, with two vertical and three horizontal crossbeams, but without the possibility of wedging them and without grinding. During the restoration, it was decided to preserve the subframes by creating wedges and grinding them.



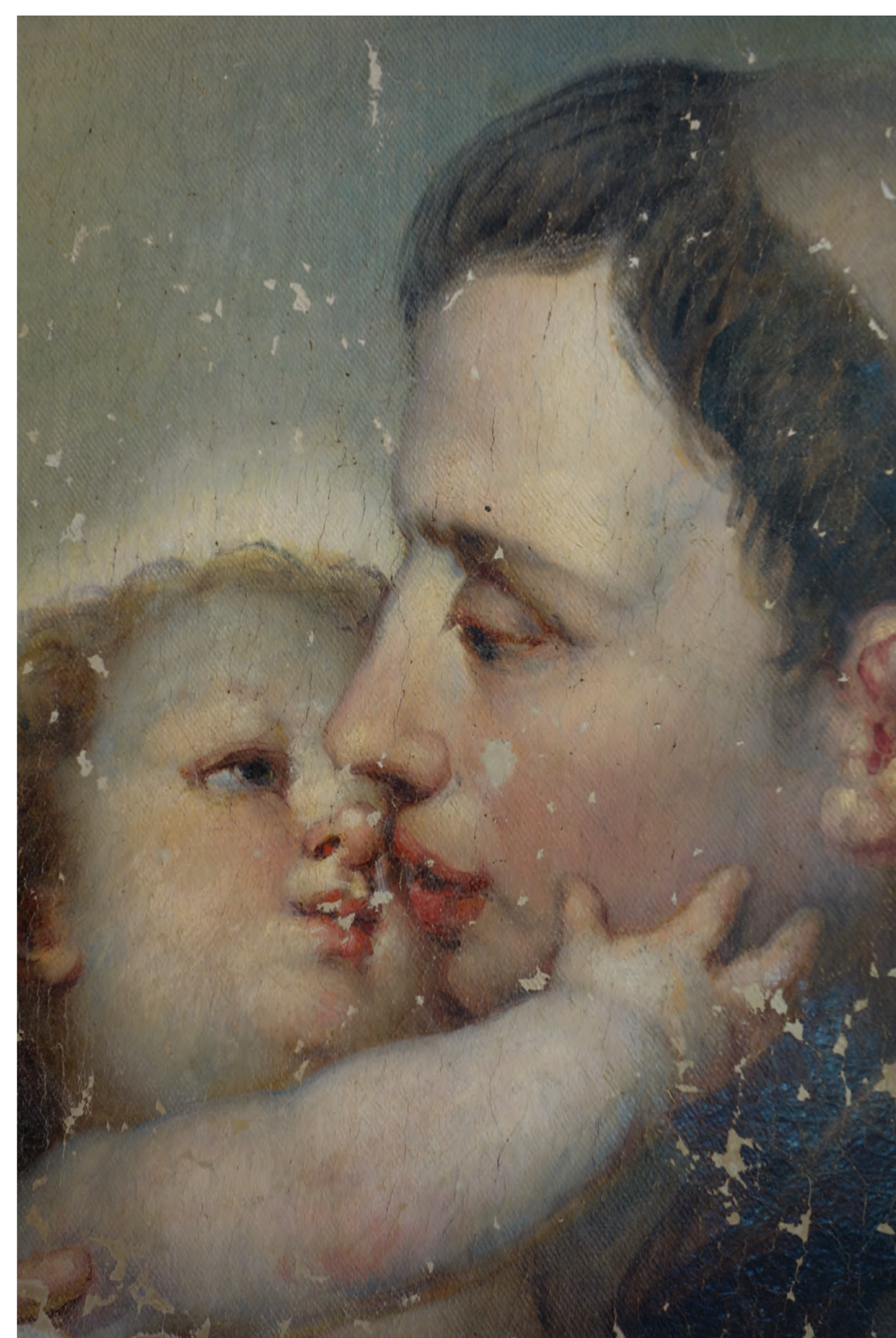
Decorative frame details



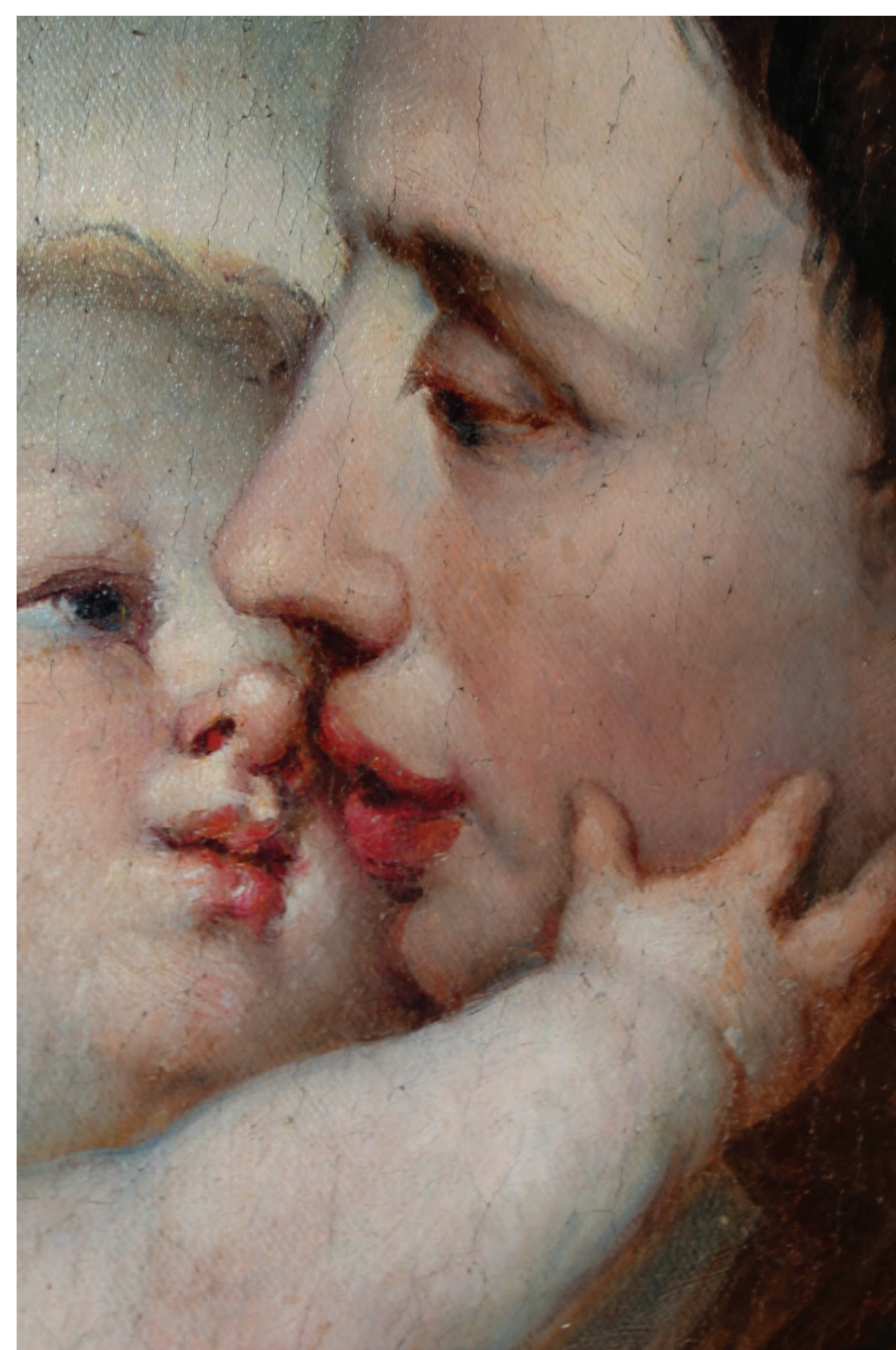
"St Anthony" fragment of the back before the restoration



"St Anthony" fragment before restoration



"St Anthony" fragment in restoration process



"St Anthony" fragment after restoration

## RESTORATION

The course of the restoration - the backs of the paintings were treated with an antibacterial lamp and additionally treated with the antiseptic "Aerodesin 2000" both before and during the restoration. The primer and paint layers were consolidated, the base tear was closed, all edges were lined, a restoration primer was laid in the areas where the author's primer and paint layers were lost, a layer of varnish was thinned. During the restoration, it was revealed that there are two layers of varnish and small overpainting between them. The paintings are mounted on the restored sub-frames, inpainting, retouched. Restored decorative frames, reconstructed lost details. Restoration processes were carried out in January - June 2020.