

advisers have no authority, and where the protection of heritage is based on dialogue between the local church councils, or vicars, and the church authorities – the bishop.

### Case studies<sup>2</sup>

Between 1980 and 1982, important Gothic paintings dating from 1425–50 were uncovered in Rørby Church, situated on the western part of the island of Zealand. The paintings were of high artistic value and attributed to the workshop of Undløse<sup>3</sup> (Figure 2). From the very beginning, the church council was enthusiastic and, supported by authorities and consultants, the work was financed. The uncovering and restoration was carried out by the National Museum Conservation Department.

Unfortunately, shortly after the restoration was finished, the paintings began to deteriorate as a result of salt efflorescence. As early as 1983, the National Museum drew attention to the hot-air heating system, which needed to be changed to create a suitable climate. As the church did not have the finances for this solution, the situation grew worse, and the museum frequently made the church council aware of the situation. Not until 1998 was a new heating system introduced, but no funding was provided for the preservation of the paintings. In 1999, the church council agreed to the installation of a climate chamber under the vault, which has reduced the speed of the deterioration. Since 1983, there had been several negotiations between the church council, the church authorities and the National Museum but all efforts broke down, not only due to the lack of money, but also due to the lack of understanding of the heritage value. In this case,

**Figure 2.** Rørby Church. Wall painting in the nave. Condition before restoration. © National Museum, 2006.

