

Parroċċa Sant' Andrija

24/2025

2 Dar Parrokkjali

Misraħ il-Knisja

Ħal Luqa

13 ta' Jannar 2025

Lill-Eċċellenza Tiegħu Mons. Charles J. Scicluna Arċisqof ta' Malta

Rikors Restawr Pitturi Qalb ta' Ġesu' u San Mikiel Parroċċa Ħal Luqa

Eċċellenza,

Ir-rikkorent jagħmel it-talba sabiex jiġu restawrati żewġ pitturi: ta' San Mikiel u Qalb ta' Ġesu' li jinsabu fil-Knisja Parrokkjali ta' Ħal Luqa. Mehmuz hemm l-istima tax-xogħol u r-rapport ta' restawraturi.

Qegħdin napplikaw ukoll mal-Malta Arts Council sabiex niehdu dawn il-fondi.

Nitlob il-barka tiegħek

Kan. M. Zammit

Kan. Michael Zammit

Kappillan



Preżentat fil-Kurja Arċiveskovii

Illum 15 ta' Jannar 2025

Charles Buggeja, Kancellier



ESTIMATE

Invoice No. 1871
Invoice / Tax Date. 09/01/2025
Estimate Expiry Date.

Account No. FRATSLQA
Order No.

Client

ReCoop Architecture & Fine Arts
Triq L-Esportaturi
Mriehel Industrial Estate
Birkirkara
VAT Reg No: MT16869616

Fratellanza SSmu Sagrament Luqa
Domus Curialis
Pjazza tal-Knisja,
Hal-Luqa

VAT Reg No:

Quantity Details	Unit Price	Disc Amt	Net	VAT Rate	VAT
1.00 Project no. 25002L Name of Painting: St. Michael the Archangel Documentation Facing with Japanese Paper Removal from Auxiliary Support Removal of Lining Cleaning of Lining Adhesive Consolidation of Paint & Ground Layers Flattening of Deformations Lining Stretching Back onto Auxiliary Support Cleaning of Dirt, Varnish & Overpaintings Application of Varnish (with UV Absorber) Infill with Gesso Application of Varnish (with UV Absorber) Pictorial Integration Application of Varnish (with UV Absorber)	8,293.50	0.00	8,293.50	18.00	1,492.83
1.00 Project no. 25001L Name of Painting: Sacred Heart of Jesus Documentation Clening of the Back of Canvas Consolidation of Paint & Ground Layers Flattening of Deformations Application of Varnish (with UV Absorber) Infill with Gesso Application of Varnish (with UV Absorber) Pictorial Integration Application of Varnish (with UV Absorber)	4,416.75	0.00	4,416.75	18.00	795.02

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

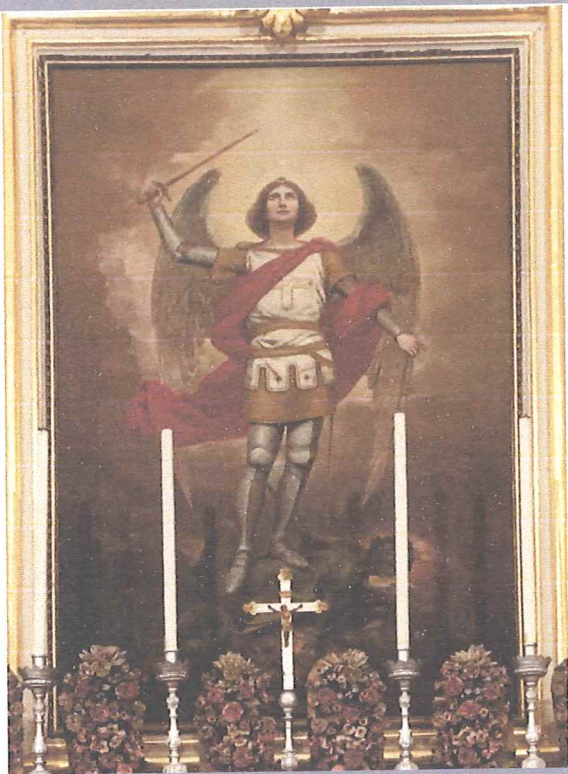
Payment: 40% deposit required to start work.
Balance 60% on completion.

Total Net Amount 12,710.25
Carriage Net 0.00
Total VAT Amount 2,287.85
Invoice Total 14,998.10
Euro Total 14,998.10

Kindly Sign and input your ID number as acceptances

THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS
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METHOD STATEMENT AND CONSERVATION PROPOSAL



St Michael the Archangel | Sacred Heart of Jesus

St Andrew's Parish Church

Luqa


RECOOP
CONSERVATION & RESTORATION

ReCoop – The Restoration and Conservation Coop Ltd

Exporters Street, Mriehel Industrial Estate
Mriehel, Malta BKR 3000
+356 21491297 – info@recoop.com.mt

Bankers: Bank of Valletta Plc

GENERAL INFORMATION

Title: St Michael the Archangel

Dimensions: 274cm x 186cm

Project No: 25002L

Title: Sacred Heart of Jesus

Dimensions: 275cm x 182cm

Project No: 25001L

Provenience: St Andrew's Parish Church
Luqa

Compiled by:

Roderick Abela (Warrant number 44)

Pages: 34 Pages

Date: January 2025

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PREAMBLE

This document is submitted by ReCoop – The Conservation and Restoration Cooperative Ltd. to the Fratellanza Ss.mu Sagrament A.D. 1634 on behalf of the St Andrew’s Parish Church Luqa, as a method statement and conservation proposal for the conservation and restoration of two oil on canvas paintings depicting the ‘St Michael the Archangel’, by Giuseppe Calí (1846 – 1930), and the ‘Sacred Heart of Jesus’ by Silvio Galimberti (1878 - 1956). This proposal includes an art historical context and relevance, an outline of the state of conservation and treatment design for the conservation of the mentioned project as well as safety requirements and proposed long term maintenance.

ART HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE

ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Giuseppe Cali (1846-1930) was a leading Maltese artist known for introducing a fresh artistic identity, particularly through his religious art. Educated in Naples, Cali was heavily influenced by the Neapolitan School, which blended the dramatic intensity of Baroque art with naturalistic realism, verismo and the eclectic. His works often depicted deeply emotional and spiritual scenes, intended to resonate with Malta's Catholic devotion during the British colonial period. His innovative approach revitalized ecclesiastical art, making him a sought-after figure for commissions across the Maltese Islands from both the ecclesiastical and aristocratic factions.

The portraying *St. Michael the Archangel*, exemplifies Cali's talent for combining realism and spiritual idealism. The Archangel, dressed in resplendent armour with a raised sword, symbolizes divine justice, standing over the defeated devil. Cali's use of dramatic chiaroscuro, vivid colours, and a radiant halo around the Archangel evokes both the celestial nature of St. Michael and the triumph of good over evil. Interestingly, this piece also features inscriptions on the devil's tail naming few figures in the artist's life with whom he had personal resentments.

A similar depiction by Calí exists at the Fontana Parish Church in Gozo. This second painting of St. Michael follows the same theme but with few differences.

This work holds immense significance in the Maltese context, as it aligns with Malta's Catholic and artistic heritage.

SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Silvio Galimberti (1887-1956) was an Italian artist recognized for his contributions to ecclesiastical and decorative art, particularly in the first half of the 20th century. His work is situated within the broader artistic and historical context of European modernism and Catholic revivalism, where religious art experienced renewed significance as a counterpoint to the rise of secularism. Galimberti's oeuvre reflects a blend of traditional Christian iconography with the stylistic influences of late 19th-century Romanticism and early 20th-century Symbolism. His compositions often emphasize emotional resonance, luminous coloration, and detailed depictions of divine figures, aligning with the Catholic Church's promotion of spiritual devotion through visual art.

Three paintings are known to be present locally, *The Portrait of Antonio Sciortino* present at MUZA, Valletta, *The Agony of Saint Joseph* within the Fontana's Parish Church in Gozo and the present one depicting the *Sacred Heart of Jesus* at the Luqa Parish Church.

The *Sacred Heart of Jesus* is emblematic of Galimberti's reverence for traditional Christian themes. It showcases Christ's divine compassion, symbolized by the glowing Sacred Heart, a motif deeply rooted in Catholic spirituality. The soft palette and radiant aura evoke a transcendent atmosphere, inviting viewers to contemplate divine love and mercy.

Galimberti produced other similar works for Italian Churches. A canvas painting depicting the same theme and composition is present at the Saint Gaudentius parish Church in the Marche having Christ with the slight modification of the hands and another Fresco painting at the Francavilla D'ete, San Pietro Apostolo also in the Marche region with an identical Jesus Christ's depiction but instead of angels at the bottom, there are represented the figures of St Peter and St Roque.

This work holds an important significance in the Maltese artistic and cultural context as very few examples of Galimberti's works exist locally.

CONDITION REPORT

ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

STATE OF CONSERVATION

The painting is in a dire state of conservation and various tears are present.

A varnish layer is present throughout the painting's surface, which turned yellow and dark, diminishing the overall aesthetic value of the work of art. This layer most probably also incorporates dust and dirt, which accumulated through the years.

Several overpaintings are visible, especially in the background area. This might be due to the fact that the painting has been enlarged from both sides and top and bottom and the person carrying out such a task found it easier to repaint the entire background rather than following Cali's original colour scheme. Fly specks, wax and paint deposits are sporadically present throughout the painting.

Large areas exhibit severe cracking of the original paint layer. These are mainly situated in the corners. Several tears are visible, most probably reflecting the joints in between the original additional extensions. An old puncture of about three centimetre is also present on the left side which had been closed and retouched, but

it has now cracked, and the retouching has darkened. Flaking of paint layer is present, especially visible where torn areas are present.

The painting has also been lined, having another canvas attached at the back of the original one. Sagging marks are visible at the lower part of the painting, hence, where most of the cracks and paint losses are concentrated. As a result of the aforementioned, the paint layer is in constant strain by the weight of the canvas that it cracks, detaches and flakes off.

After the Second World War, the painting was restored by Oscar Testa, who came to Malta from the Musei Vaticani to execute a number of restoration works in various churches. No other restorations or interventions have been documented to date.

SACRED HEART OF JESUS

STATE OF CONSERVATION

The painting needs conservation treatment mainly due to the excessive amount of varnish and surface grime present, impeding the original vibrant colours to show.

A varnish layer is present throughout the painting's surface, which turned yellow and dark, diminishing the overall aesthetic value of the work of art. This layer most probably also incorporates dust and dirt, which accumulated through the years.

Several varnish drippings are present, mainly concentrated in the central part of the painting, just beneath the figure of Christ. Some wax deposits and fly specks are sporadically present throughout the painting.

Sagging marks are also slightly visible at the lower part of the painting, hence strain by the weight of the canvas may inflict damages to the paint layer.

After the Second World War, the painting was restored by Oscar Testa, who came to Malta from the Musei Vaticani to execute a number of restoration works in various churches. No other restorations or interventions have been documented to date.

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION OF PRESENT CONDITION

ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

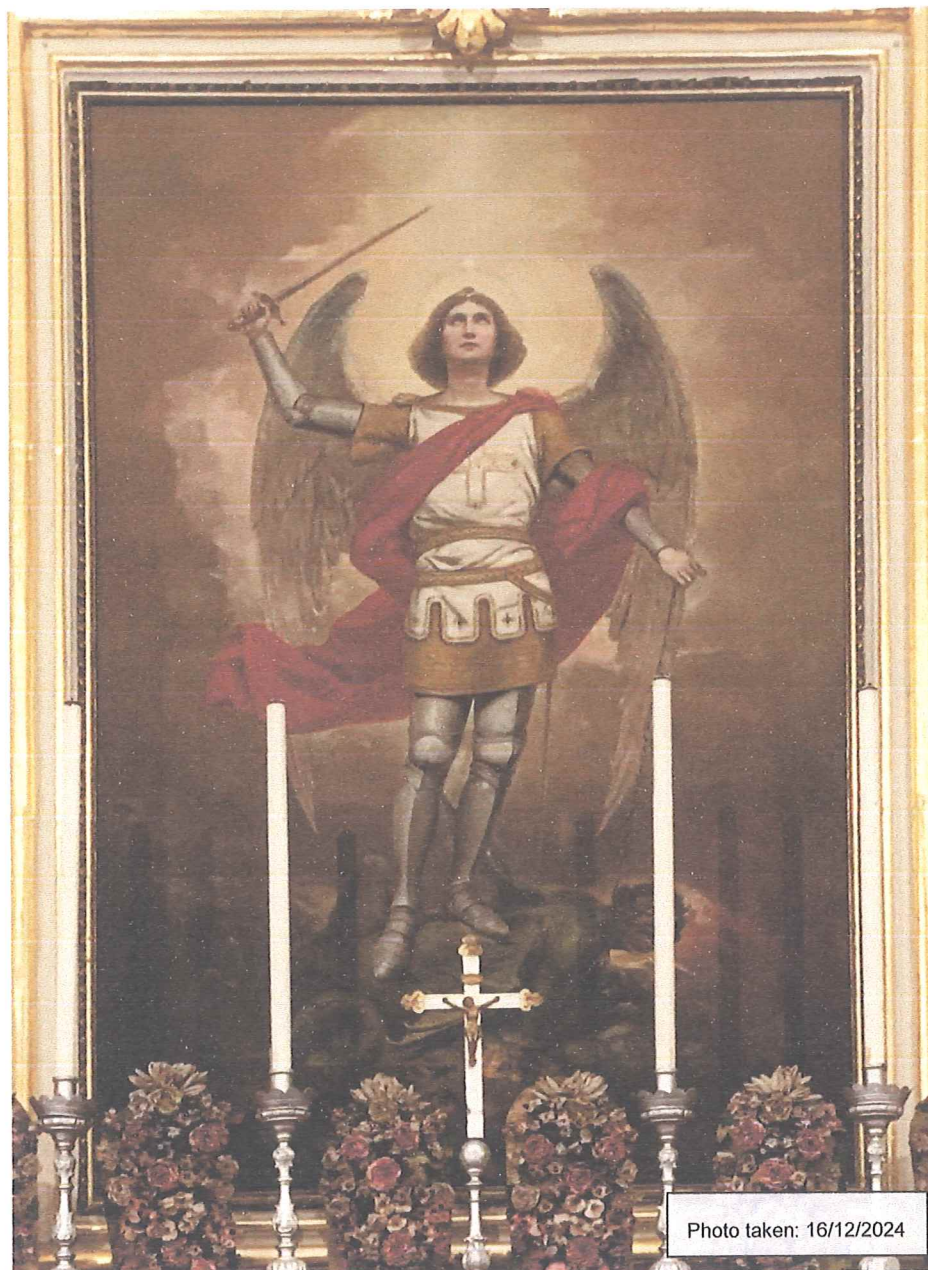


Figure 1: The painting of 'St Michael the Archangel' in-situ before conservation treatments.

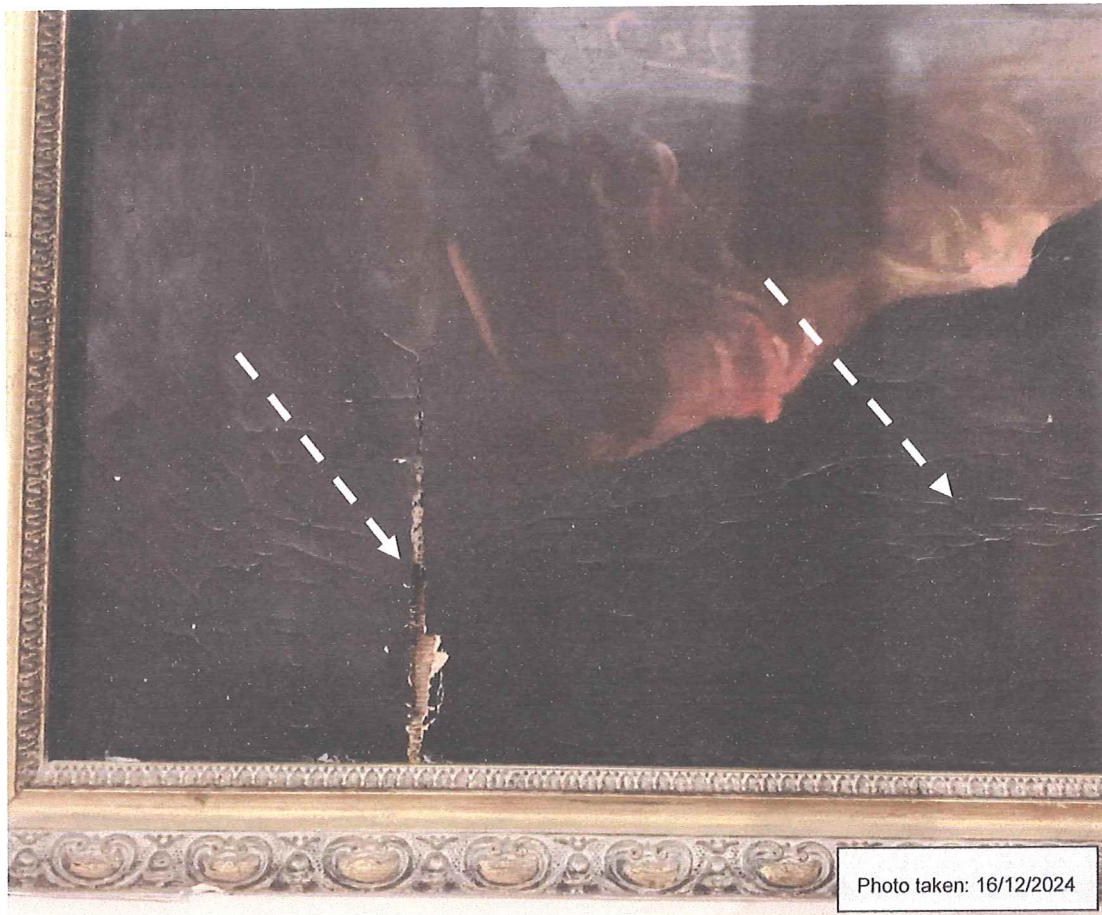


Figure 2: Detail of the several torn areas, cracks and paint losses present adjacent to the signature area.

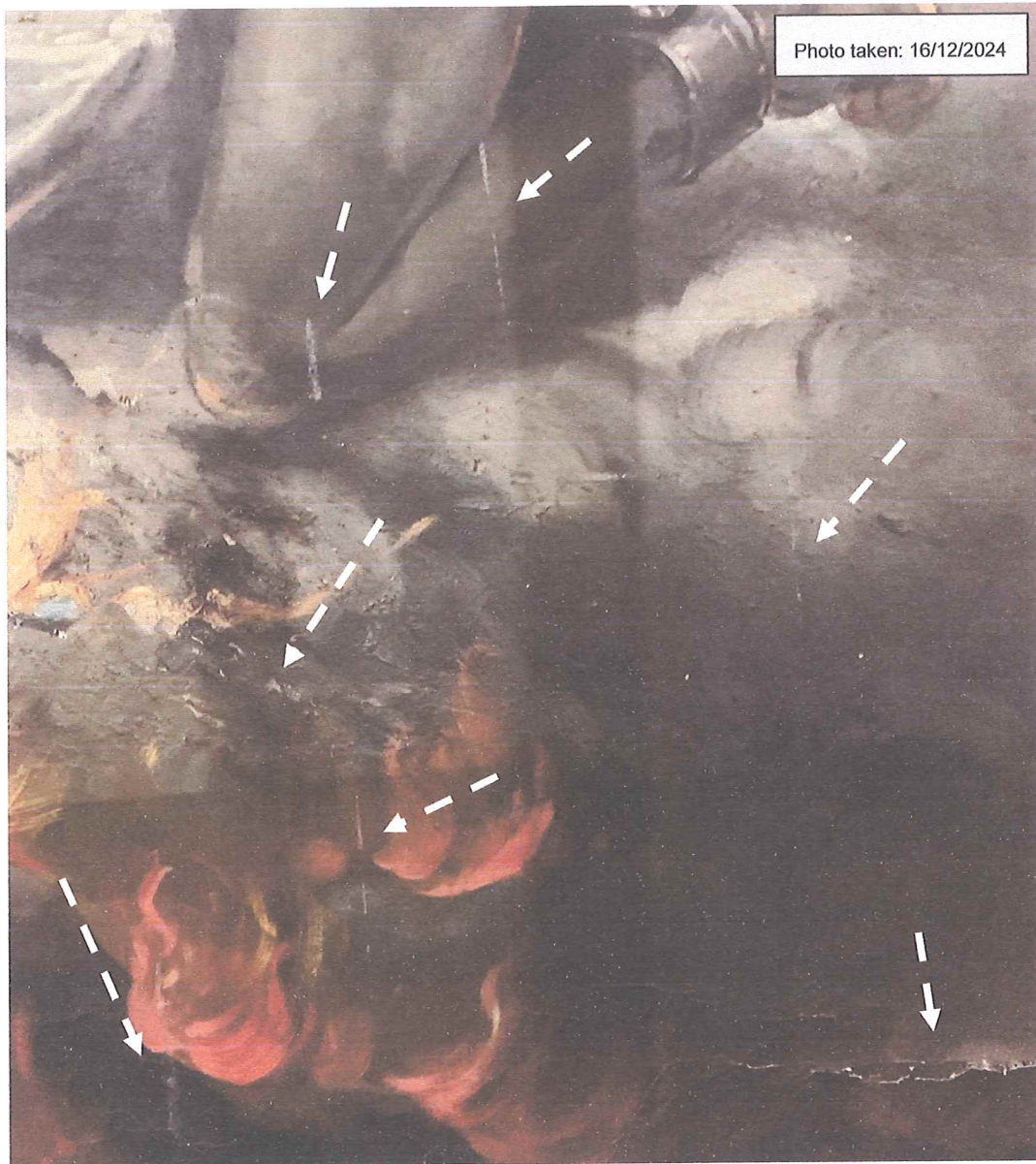


Figure 3: Detail of some of the several paint drippings and cracks present.

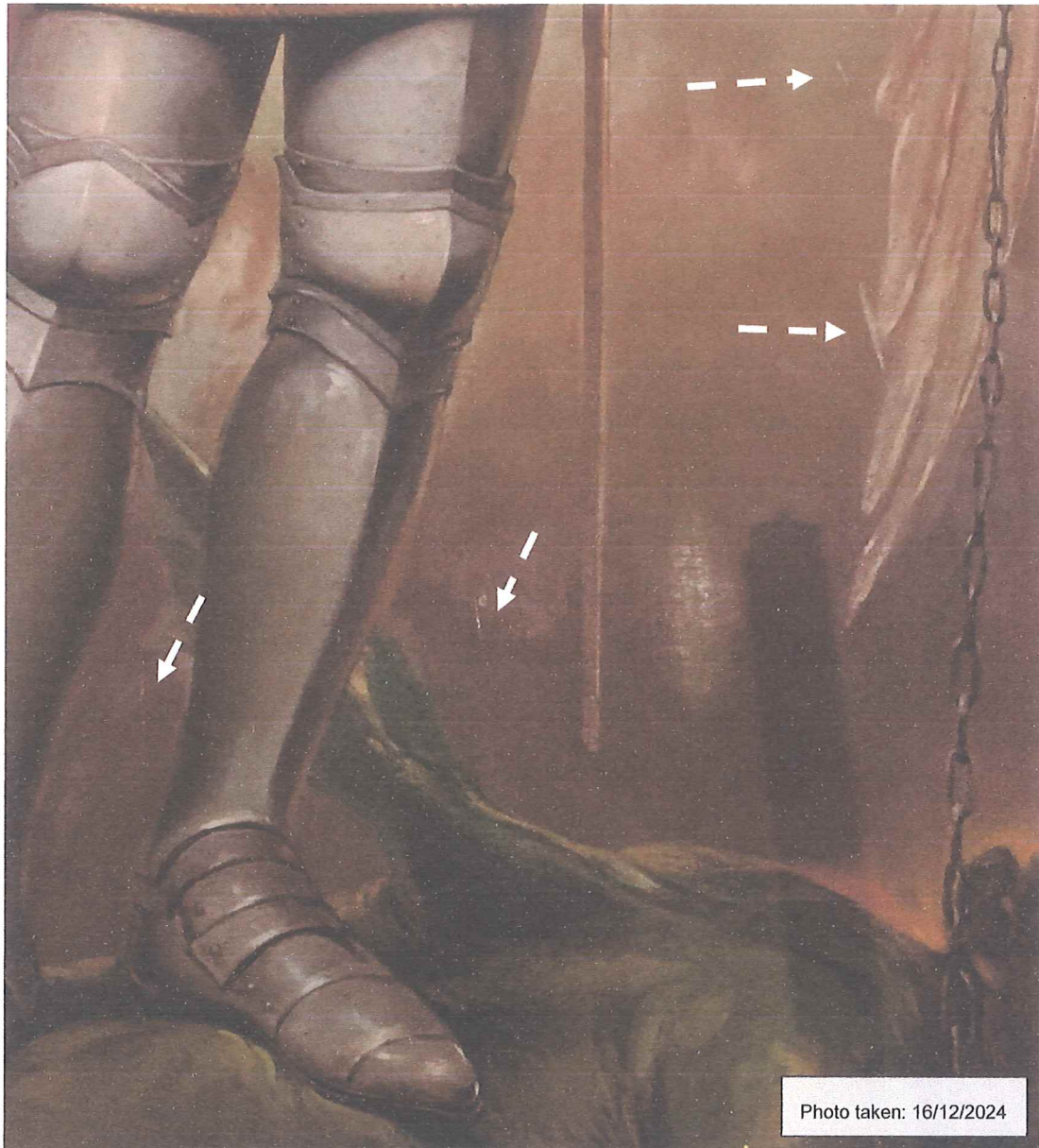


Figure 4: Detail of some of the several paint drippings present.

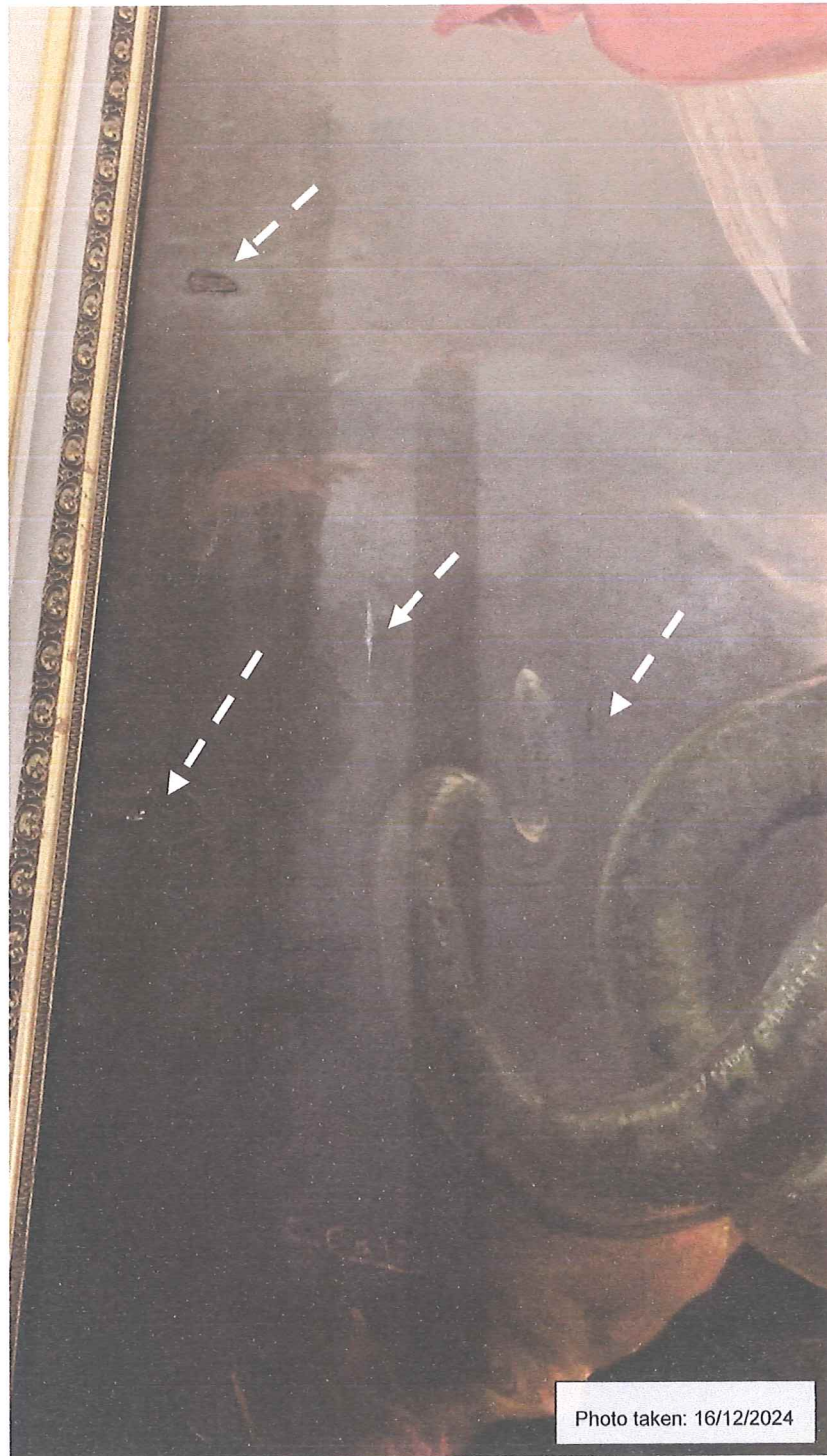


Figure 5: Detail of some of the several wax, and paint drippings and old puncture present.

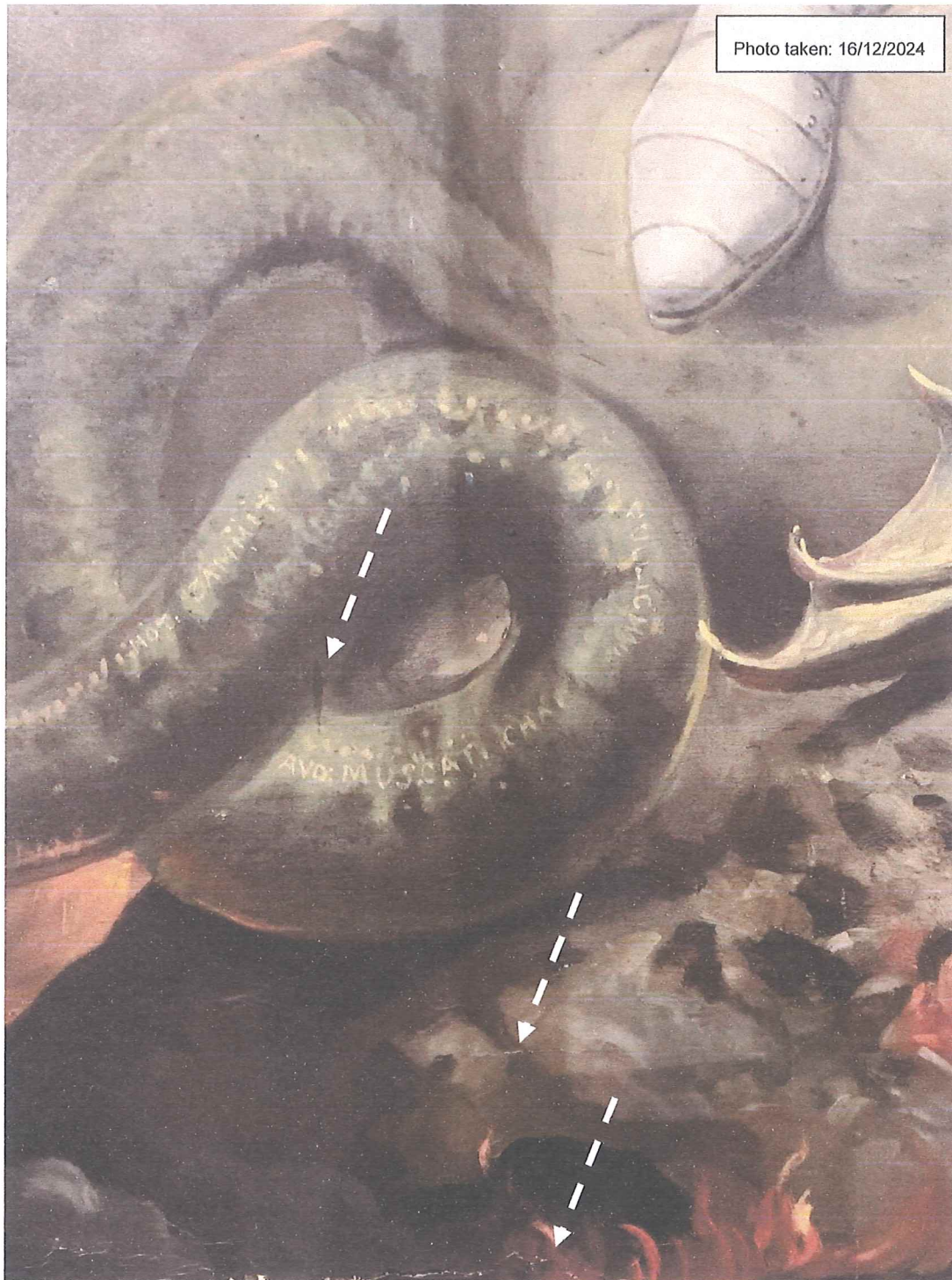


Figure 6: Detail of the inscriptions present on the devil's tail, with wax deposits and several cracks present.

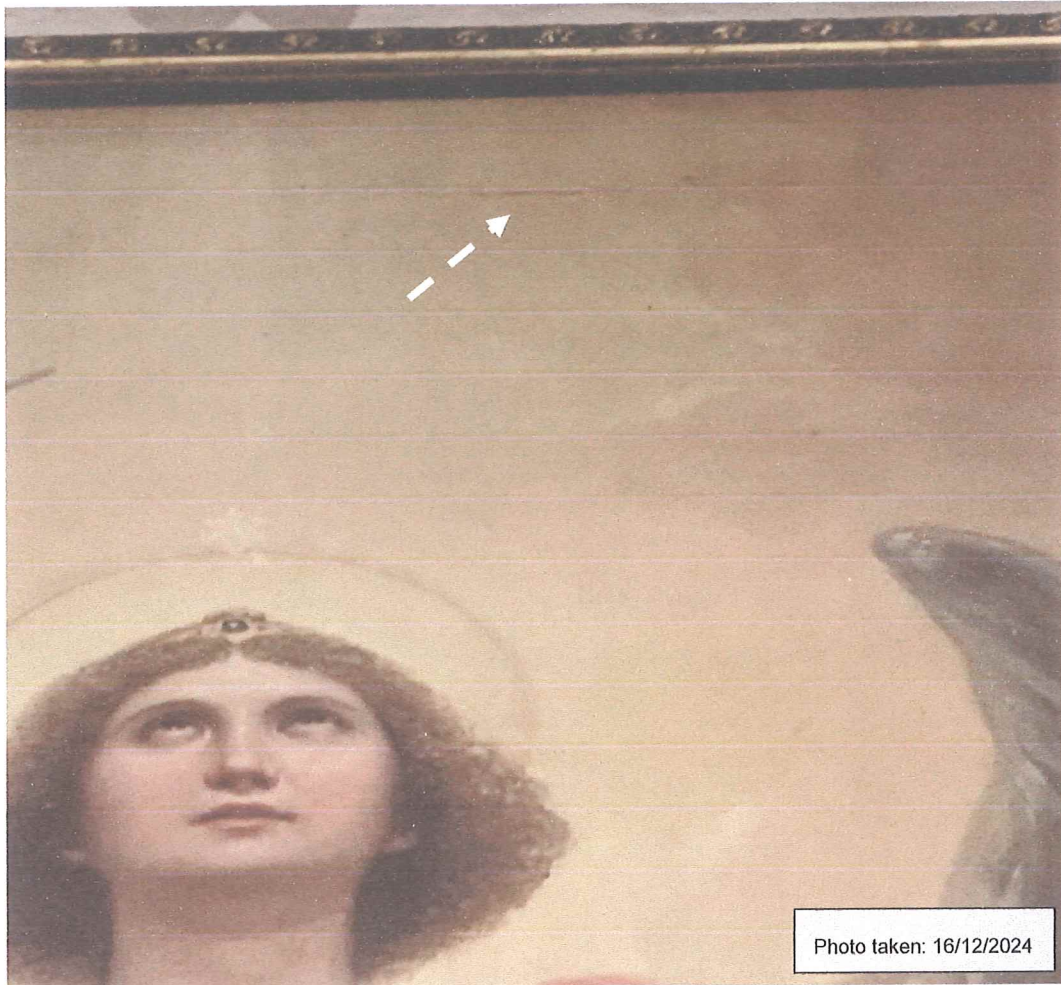


Figure 7: Detail of a crack present above St Michael's figure.

SACRED HEART OF JESUS

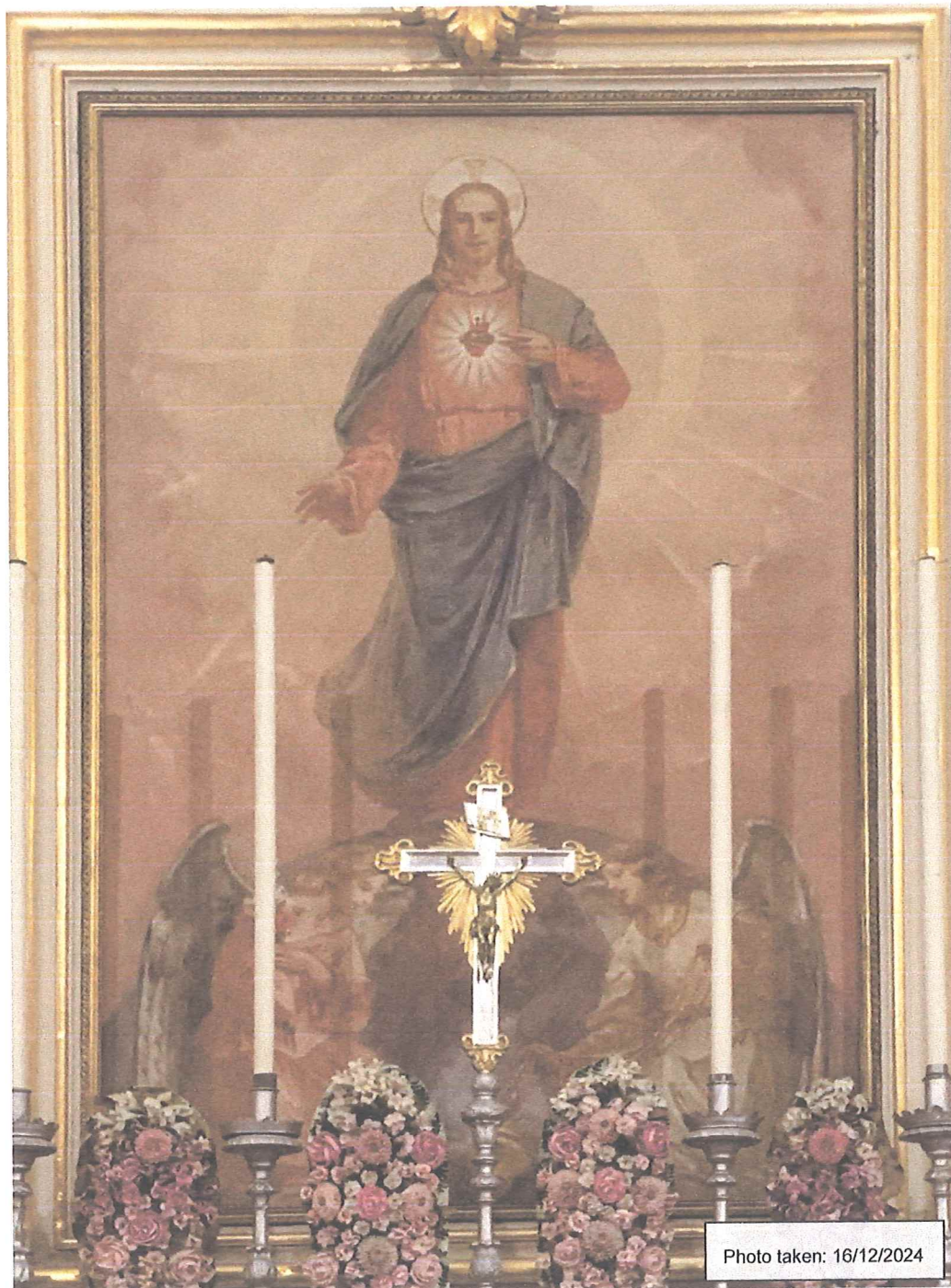


Figure 8: The painting of the 'Sacred heart of Jesus' in-situ before conservation treatments.



Figure 9: Detail of the several varnish drippings present

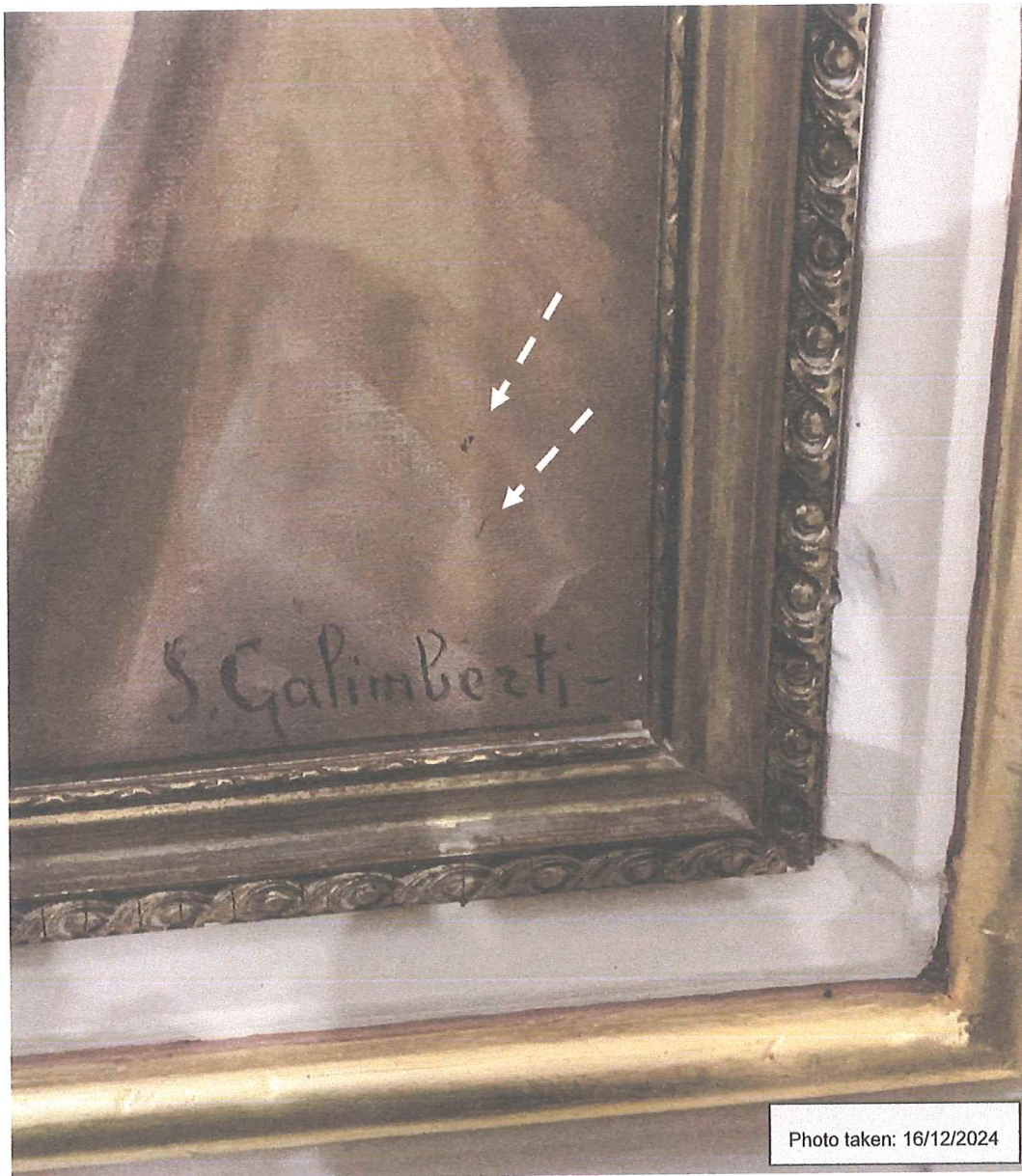


Figure 10: Detail of the lower right side showing the signature of the artists, with some adjacent paint drops.

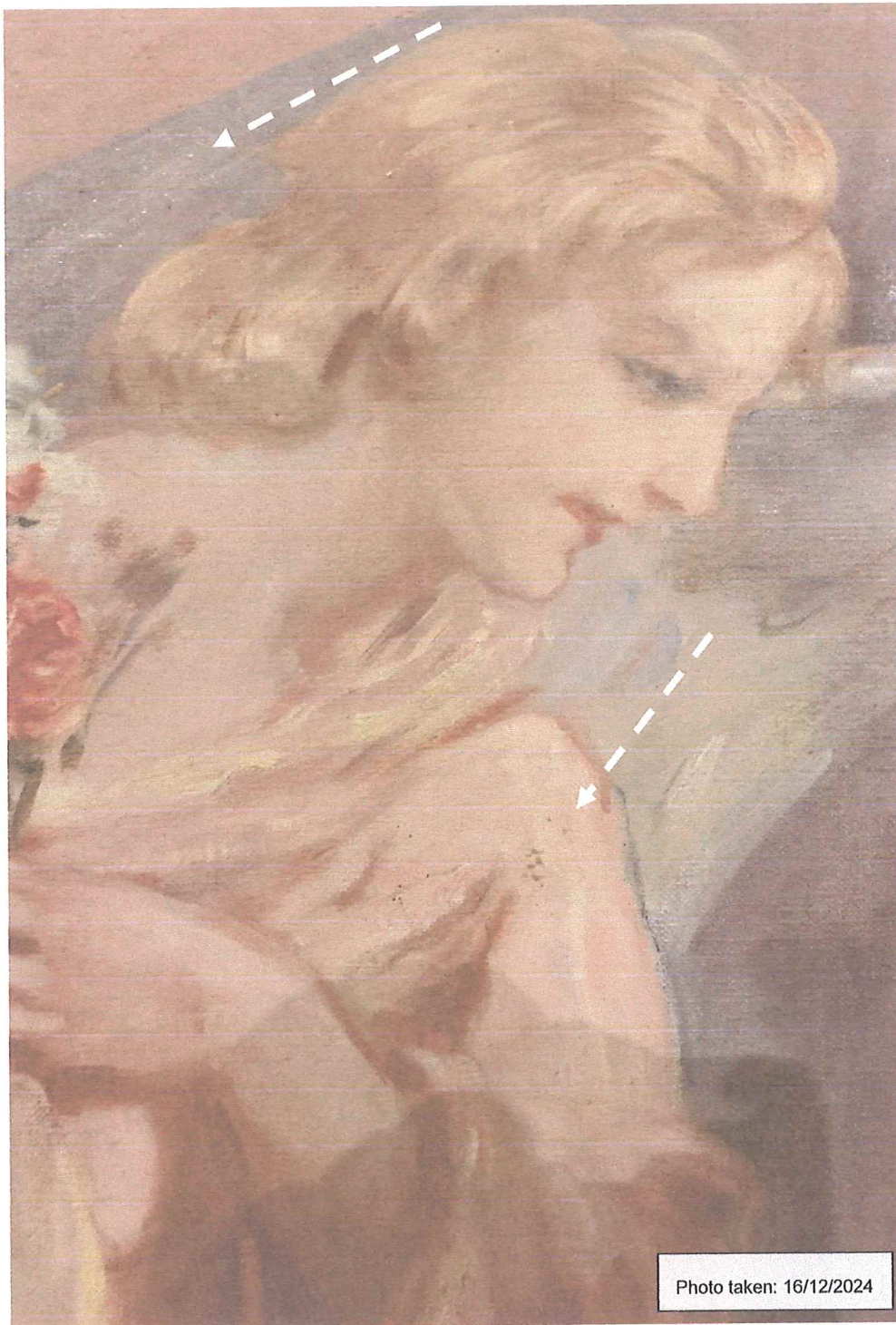


Figure 11: Detail showing several paint losses and abraded area.

PROPOSED CONSERVATION PROGRAMME – METHODOLOGY

The Interventions carried out will follow the international parameters and conservation principles established by the E.C.C.O. (European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations). The treatments proposed below aim to reinforce the paintings' structural stability with the least invading treatments possible and to ensure structural preservation. Furthermore, holistic methodologies used will aid in recovering as much as possible of the original and in improving the aesthetic value of the painting. The proposed treatment would include the following procedures:

METHODODOLOGY OF REMOVAL AND TRANSPORT

Prior to transportation to ReCoop laboratories at Mriehel, the paintings will be duly inspected and protected, in order not to create further damage to the paintings whilst in transit.

After unwrapping the paintings, the non-invasive scientific analysis will be diligently carried out. These will consist in inspecting both paintings in diffused light, raking light, with ultraviolet illumination and infra-red camera.

METHODOLOGY OF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

1. **Documentation:** The whole project will be documented before, during and after. Documentation will include digital photography in diffused light, Ultraviolet light and Infra-Red light, together with a report outlining the whole of the conservation process.



Figure 12 Ultraviolet and Infra-red Images; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Titular Painting, Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Valletta

2. **Dusting:** The paintings' surface will be gently dusted, removing any dust and/or any other particulates deposited on top of the surface.

3. **Localised Consolidation:** Consolidation will be executed with the aim of imparting strength and adhesion in between the original stratigraphy. This is done in order not to lose any fragments during further treatments.
4. **Lining :** Refer to the lining process further on
5. **Cleaning:** Cleaning tests will be carried out, choosing the best and safest cleaning agent possible. Cleaning will include removal of the varnish and dirt layers and any unwanted overpaintings.



Figure 13: During Cleaning; Antonio de Saliba, The Madonna Enthroned Panel, Ta' Giezu Church Rabat.

6. **Integration of the ground layers:** Any losses will be in-filled to level out the paint film. Material used to infill will be as close to the original as possible always keeping

in mind that it should be of less physical strength than its surrounding original and that it remains completely reversible, even after ageing.



Figure 14: Application of Gesso di Bologna; Anon. 16th Century, Virgin & Child with Saints and a donor, Stella Maris Parish Sliema

7. **Varnish:** A layer of retouching varnish with an ultraviolet absorber will be applied at this stage. Its aim is to saturate the overall paint layer and it will also form a separation layer in between the original paint layer and the pictorial intervention / retouching layer.



Figure 15: Application of Varnish; Mattia Preti, St Nicholas of Bari, Siggiewi Parish Church

- 8. Pictorial integration:** Retouching and reintegration is executed in order to re-establish the potential unity of the work of art. It is thus the final stage of treatment, which determines the aesthetic presentation of the artefact. The in-filled losses, which display a disruption to the readability of the painted image, will be retouched. Re-integration is done using reversible materials and technique.

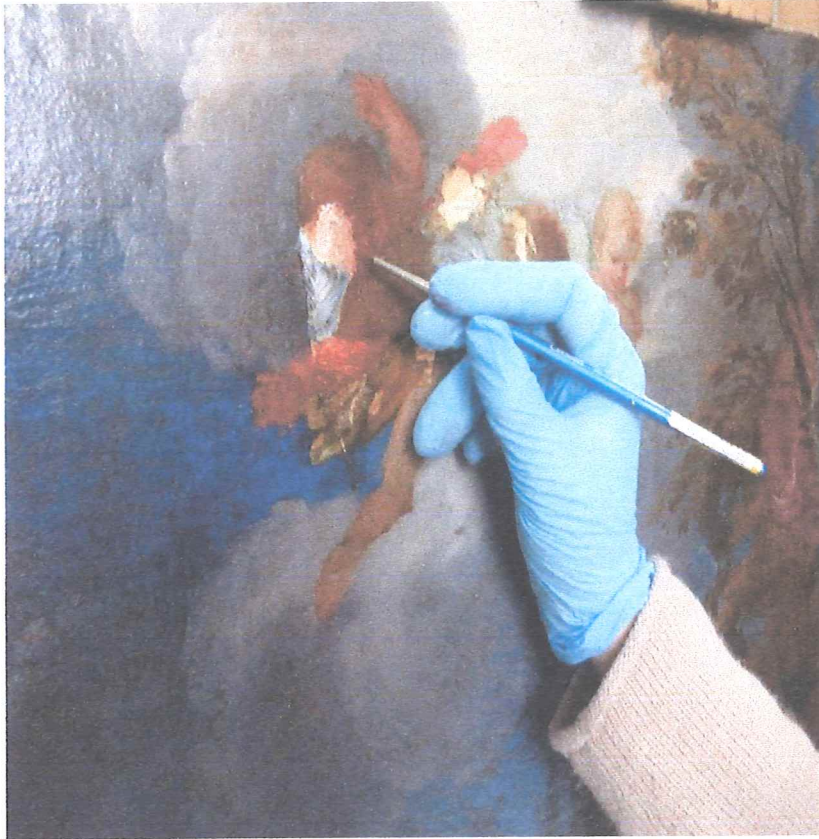


Figure 16: Retouching; 17th Century Italian Master, Virtues of Mary Magdalene, Private Collection

- 9. Application of final protective layers:** A final layer of varnish with ultraviolet absorber will be applied giving an overall homogeneous satin / semi gloss finish.



Figure 17: Varnish; Mattia Preti, The Miracle of St Nicholas of Bari, Siggiewi Parish Church

- 10. Conservation Report:** A final conservation report will be presented at the end of the project explaining in detail the conservation treatments carried out.

Lining Treatment for Painting

1. **Facing:** A layer of Japanese paper will be attached to the surface of the painting by means of reversible organic glue. This will give added strength and support during further conservation treatments.
2. **Removal of wooden support:** The painting will be removed carefully from the wooden auxiliary support. If the painting is found directly attached to the auxiliary support, it will be shaved from the back so that the structural integrity of the upper layers is preserved.



Figure 18: Removal of wooden support, Mattia Preti, Hercules freeing Prometheus, Private Collection.

3. **Cleaning of the verso:** Any lining or patches will be carefully removed. The verso of the painting will then be dusted and cleaned with a low strength aspirator. Any traces of glue will be mechanically cleaned at this stage.



Figure 19: Removal of old relining; Francesco Zahra, *Presentation of the Virgin*, Senglea Parish Church

4. **Flattening of lifted areas and repair of tears:** Deformation in the canvas will be flattened out using (if deemed safe) moisture and low pressure. This will help in reducing any lifted areas and resulting in a homogenous flat paint layer.

Tears or punctures in the canvas will be treated by, first flattening of the canvas and then by welding the tears together if possible, or in areas where the original canvas is missing a similar canvas will be inserted and welded with the original fibres with an appropriate synthetic glue.

5. **Consolidation of back:** A consolidant will be applied on the canvas support at the back. This will aim to the consolidation of the different layers building up the painting. General consolidation aids in imparting strength to the whole of the painting structure while at the same time preparing the back of the canvas for its adhesion to other new canvases during relining.



Figure 20: Consolidation; Anon. 16th Century, Virgin & Child with Saints and a donor, Stella Maris Parish Sliema

6. **Lining:** A new canvas with similar properties, having same thickness and same warp and weft count will be attached at the back of the original canvas by means of a reactivation cold lining technique, based on methacrylate glue, widely used in conservation lining treatments.

7. **Stretching onto auxiliary support:** The present auxiliary support will be used.



Figure 21: Stretching; Anon. 16th Century, Virgin & Child with Saints and a donor, Stella Maris Parish Sliema

8. **Removal of Facing layer:** Special care is taken to slowly remove facing layer applied previously for protective purpose.

Safety Requirements and Long-Term Maintenance

Special attention must be taken when manoeuvring the candles and any other embellishing accessories in front and around each painting. Handling of the paintings should be carried out by trained persons in order to avoid any mishandling accidents.

The paintings should be checked ideally twice yearly. In late winter and late summer. This will monitor any changes in the paintings' structure that may be caused by any fluctuating environmental conditions like temperature and humidity.