

PARROĊĊA MARIJA ANNUNZJATA, HAL TARXIEN

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15ta' Jannar 2025,

Lill-E.T. Rev.ma Mons. Charles J. Scicluna
Arċisqof Metropolita ta' Malta.

34/2025

Rikors ta' Dun Christopher Ellul
Arċipriet tal-Parroċċa Marija Annunzjata, Hal Tarxien

Bil-qima kollha r-rikorrent jesponi dan li ġej:

Ir-restawr tal-kwadri ta' Via Sagra c. seklu 18 li waslu għal-restawr intensiv. Mehmuż għandek issib rapport u stima mis-Sur Brian Caruana. Il-warrant tinsab mehmuża fuq wara tal-istess rapport. Il-fondi għal dawn il-proġetti se jingibu mill-applikazzjoni mill-Skema ta' Finanzjament għar-Restawr maħruġa mill-Ministeru għall-Wirt Nazzjonali, l-Arti u l-Gvern Lokali u l-Kunsill Malti għall-Arti

Għaldaqstant, ir-rikorrent jitlob li:

Jingħata l-permessi meħtieġa sabiex jibda r-restawr fuq il-Kwadri tal-Via Sagra.

Waqt li nitlob il-Barka pastorali tiegħek,

Għoddni tiegħek fi Kristu

Dun Chris Ellul
Arċipriet



Preżentat fil-Kurja Arċiveskovili

17 ta' Jannar 2025

Charles Bugge, Kancellur

Preliminary Conservation Report

Fourteen Via Crucis Decorative Frames



The Parish Church of the Annunciation of Our Lord, Tarxien

2025

Preliminary Conservation Report

Fourteen Via Crucis Decorative Frames



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General Information

Type of objects	Decorative Frames
Location	Annunciation Parish Church, Tarxien
Name of Paintings	Via Crucis
Artist	Unknown
Date/ Period	18th century
Medium	Gilded Wood
Support	Wood
Dimensions (cm)	160 x 80
Aims of conservation and restoration treatment	Consolidation, cleaning, reconstruction of missing sculpture and reintegration of gilding.
Date of examination	14th January 2025
Name of conservator	Brian Caruana

Introduction

On 14 January 2025, the Archpriest of the Annunciation Parish Church of Tarxien, Rev. Fr. Christopher Ellul, requested me to examine and assess the damages to the fourteen decorative frames of the paintings of the Via Crucis located in the Parish Church. Following a thorough examination of the gilded frames, it was recommended that action should be taken to conserve and restore these valuable frames to stop their deterioration and prevent further damage being done to the frames.



I



II



III



IV



V



VI



VII



VIII



IX



X



XI



XII



XIII



XIV

Manufacturing Technique of the Frames

The frames, measuring 160 x 80 cm (excluding the cross), are crafted from rectangular moulding with an arched top rail. Both the upper and lower sections are embellished with intricate Baroque sculptures, while a Latin cross crowns each frame. At the top of each frame, Roman numerals, painted in black, elegantly denote the station number, and the station title is inscribed in Italian at the bottom.

The wooden structure and sculpture of these fourteen frames were initially coated with a mixture of gesso and animal glue to form a smooth base. Layers of red bole were subsequently applied over the gesso, imparting a warm undertone. The frames were then meticulously gilded with gold leaf, resulting in their exquisite and radiant finish.



Front and Back Images of One of Fourteen Via Crucis Frames

State of Conservation

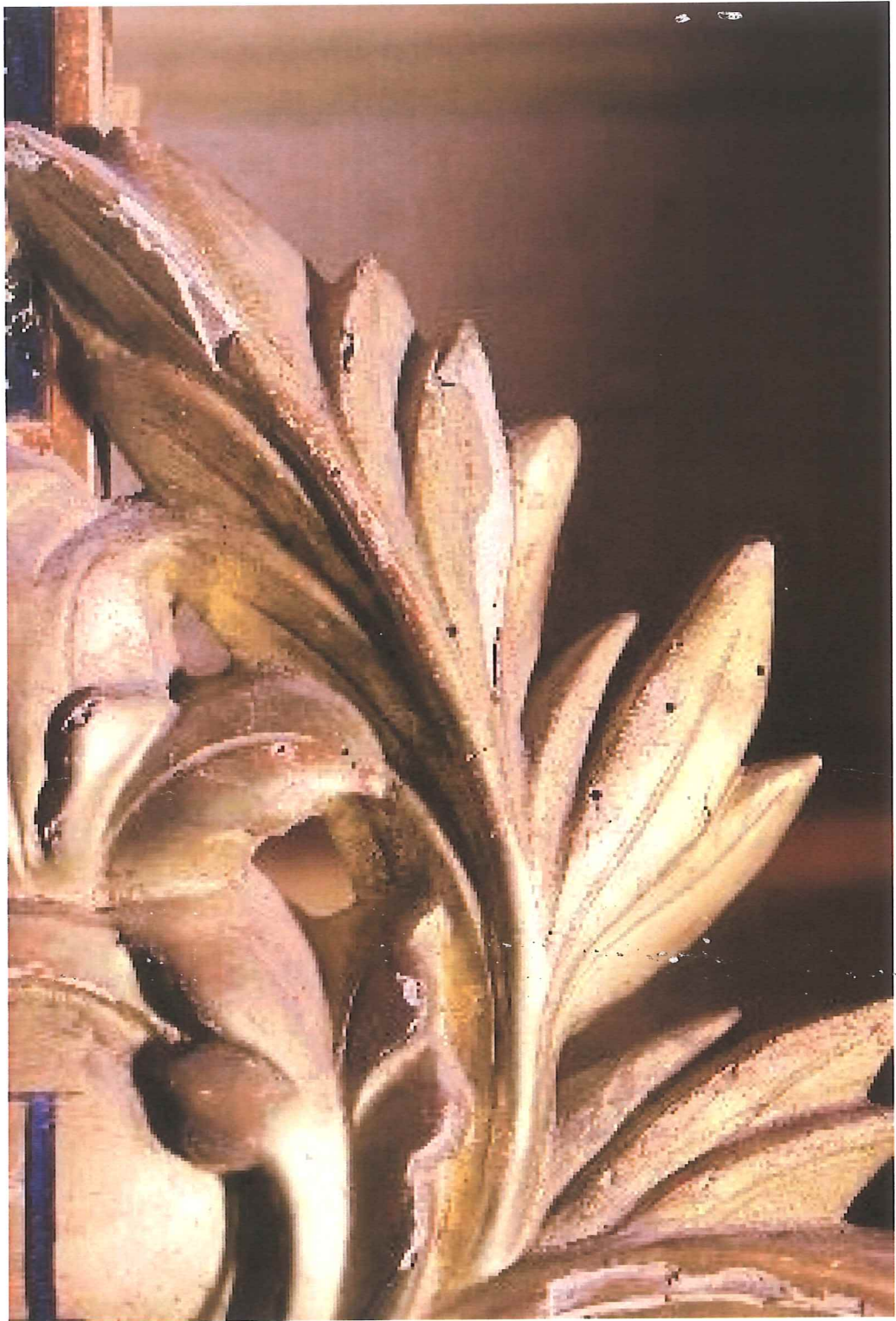
The frames are in a critical state of conservation and urgently require restoration. Their current condition poses a significant risk of further deterioration, endangering the intricate Baroque sculptures and gilded surfaces that define their historical and artistic value.

The wood of the frames exhibits severe deterioration, including losses, woodworm holes, detached sections of the sculptures, and missing elements, particularly in the sculptural details. Extensive detachments in the gilding have occurred due to movements in the wood, further compromising the frames' stability. The gilding has also suffered extensive damage, with large areas of *gesso*, *bole*, and gold leaf lost, exposing the wood beneath and contributing to a shabby and neglected appearance. Additionally, a considerable amount of dust and grime has accumulated on the surface of the frames, further diminishing their visual appeal and overall condition.

Moreover, the frames bear numerous scratches and areas where the gold leaf has been rubbed off, further diminishing their aesthetic and structural integrity. Immediate restoration is imperative to halt the damage, stabilize the structures, and preserve these irreplaceable works of art for future generations.



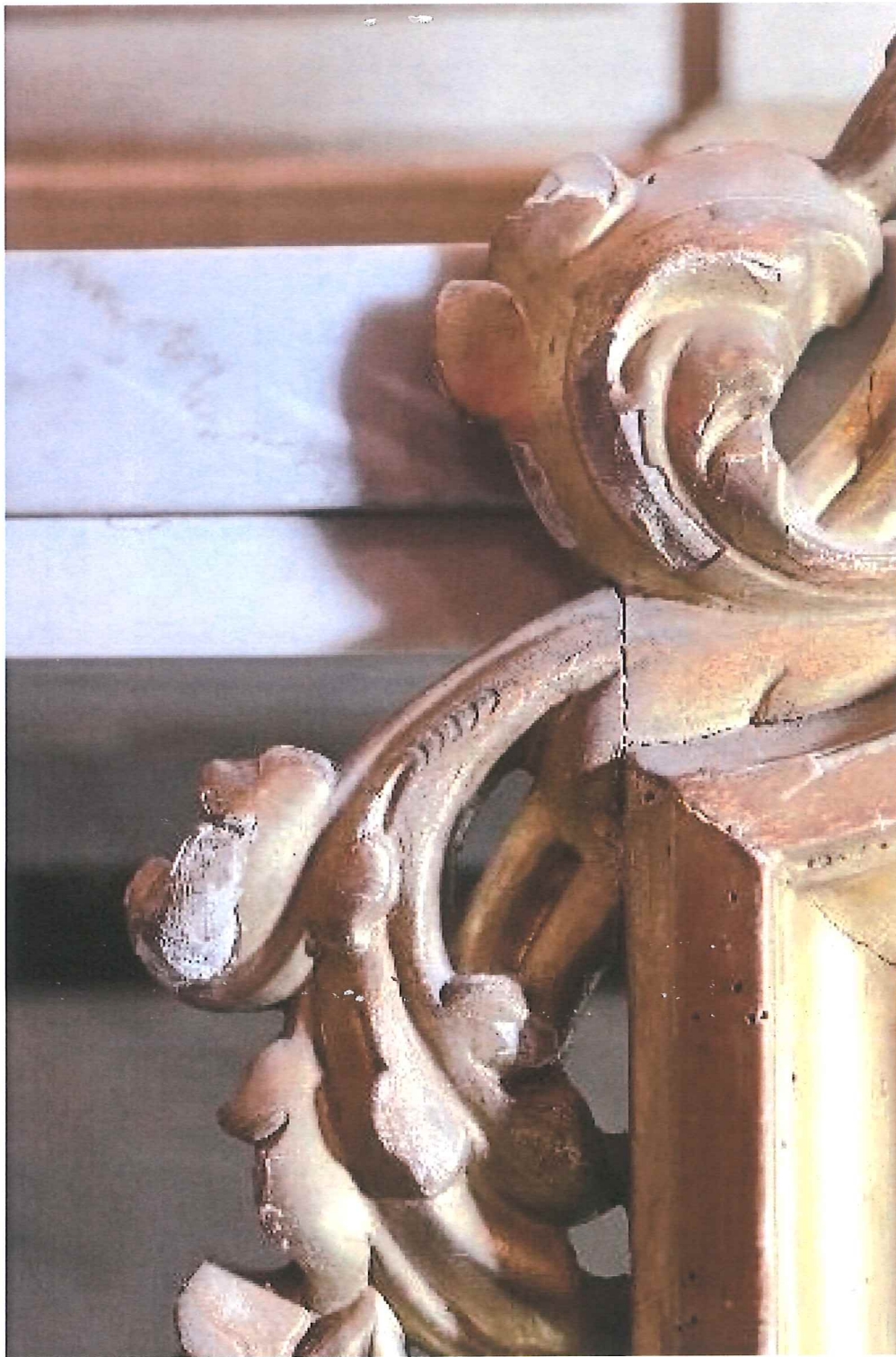
Detail showing extensive Losses of Gesso and Gilding, revealing the Underlying Wood



Detail showing Woodworm Holes



Detail showing detached Sections of the Sculpture and Losses of Gilding revealing the Underlying Bole



Detail showing Dust deposits, Losses of Gesso and Gilding, Detachments and Woodworm Holes



Detail showing Chipped Gesso



Crosses with Missing Sculpture

Conservation/Restoration Method Statement

1. Surface Cleaning

Dirt and grime accumulated on the frame's surface will be removed using an appropriate cleaning solution.

2. Consolidation Treatment

Since the frames are suffering from detachments of the gilding it is of utmost importance that a consolidation treatment will be applied on the frames. This intervention is to reattach the detached layers of gesso to the wood and avoid and stop the gilding from flaking off.

3. Consolidation of Woodworm Holes

Since the wooden frames were infested by woodworms, and the infestation now appears to be inactive, a consolidation treatment should be applied to strengthen the deteriorated wood.

4. Reconstruction of Missing Sculptural Details

The frames have several sculptural details missing which will be reconstructed using wood and conservation-friendly materials.

5. Infilling of Lacunas in the *Gesso*

All areas where the frames have lost the *gesso* must be infilled with a stable and compatible filler.

6. Re-integration of Gilding

The re-integration of gilding will be carried out using gold leaf and conservation-grade acrylic metallic paint.

7. Final Protective Layer

A final protective layer will be applied to the entire surface of the frames to protect the gilding from the effects of pollutants, dirt, and light exposure.

8. Documentation

An illustrated report detailing the conservation and restoration work will be presented upon completion.

Time Frame and Quotation

The conservation and restoration of these fourteen decorative frames will follow modern conservation ethics, employing appropriate materials and interventions that emphasize maximum reversibility. The project will be carried out in three stages: conserving the original materials, restoring physical damage, and applying aesthetic treatments.

The total quotation for the project, including all expenses, is **€1,450 per frame** (VAT exempt). The estimated time frame for completion is approximately twelve months.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Caruana', with a horizontal line underneath.

Brian Caruana



Warrant

GHALL-EŻERĊIZZJU TAL- PROFESSJONI TA' KONSERVATUR-RESTAWRATUR

Billi Brian Caruana

issodisfa lill-Bord tal-Warrants tar-Restawraturi li għandu l-kwalifiki u r-rekwiżiti msemmija fl-Att Dwar il-Patrimonju Kulturali (Kap. 445 tal-Liġijiet ta' Malta).

Jien, għalhekk, qiegħed b'dan nawtorizza u nagħti s-setgħa lill-imsemmi

Brian Caruana

biex jeżerċita l-professjoni ta' Konservatur-Restawratur f'Malta fil-qasam / oqsma msemmija fiċ-ċertifikat Prattikanti anness ma' dan il-Warrant u li jista' juża d-denominazzjoni ta' Konservatur-Restawratur flimkien m'ismu.

Nru. tal-Warrant: 036

Data tal-Hrug: 17/06/2021

Chairperson
Bord tal-Warrants tar-Restawraturi



CERTIFIKAT PRATTIKANTI BORD TAL-WARRANTS TAR-RESTAWRATORI


Għall-finijiet tal-Artikolu 31(3) ta' l-Att Dwar il-Patrimonju Kulturali (Kap. 445
tal-Liġijiet ta' Malta) jiġi dikjarat illi:

Brian Caruana

li għandu l-karta tal-identità bin-numru 0285867 m huwa detentur tal-Warrant ta'
Konservatur-Restawratur numru 036, u jista' jipprattika l-professjoni ta'
Konservatur-Restawratur fl-oqsma segwenti:

1. *Painting (canvas)*
2. *Painting (panel)*
3. *Painting (wall)*
4. *Polychrome Sculpture*

Data tal-firgħ: 17/06/2021



Chairperson
Bord tal-Warrants tar-Restawraturi



Segretarja
Bord tal-Warrants tar-Restawraturi

