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Sent: 06 May 2025 09:38
To: Catholic Cultural Heritage Commission
Cc: Anton Teuma; Anthony Bezzina; ghajnsielemparish@gmail.com
Subject: Parroċċa Madonna ta' Loreto, Ghajnsielem Għawdex: Konservazzjoni u Restawr ta' Numru ta' Artifatti
Attachments: Silver items- Ghajnsielem-May 2025 - Condition Assessment.pdf; Additional_Info.jpg

Lil
Rev Dr André Zaffarese
Segretarju
Kummissjoni għall-Patrimonju Kulturali Kattoliku

Reverendu,

Għan-nom tal-Arċipriet tal-Parroċċa Madonna ta' Loreto, Ghajnsielem, Għawdex, il-Kan. Frankie Bajada, qed nippreżenta proposta ta' konservazzjoni u restawr ta' numru ta' artifatti li jintużaw waqt purċissjonijiet kif jidhru fid-dokument bir-ritratti tagħhom.

Il-Konservaturi-Restawratur inkarigat minn dan ix-xogħol hu tas-Sur James Licari bin-numru tal-warrant 011 u li din il-warrant tkopri oġġetti ta' metall. Rapport b'konnessjoni ma' din il-proposta ta' konservazzjoni u restawr huma meħmuża hawn fuq.

Jekk hemm hteġġa li tiġi pprovduta aktar informazzjoni, nitolbuk tinformana.

Għall-konsiderazzjoni tagħkom.

Grazzi u tislizet,

Inġ. Johnny Zerafa
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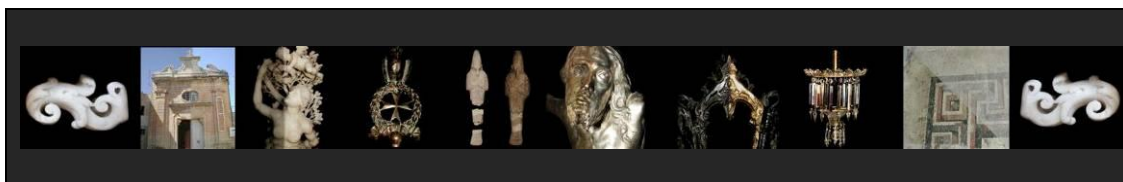


CONDITION ASSESSMENT REPORT



VARIOUS SILVER ITEMS PERTAINING TO GHAJNSIELEM CHURCH, PARISH COLLECTION

05th May 2025





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GENERAL DATA

Item	<p><i>List of items:</i></p> <p>Lanterns ('Lanterni') 12</p> <p>Cross finials ('Rjus tas-Slaleb') 6</p> <p>Rays of light ('Raggieri tas-slaleb') 2</p> <p>INRI scroll of a cross ('INRI ghas-slaleb') 2</p> <p>Medallion finials ('Surgentini') 2</p> <p>Cross Finials for flag standards ('Krucetti ghal-standardi (Slaleb') 2</p> <p>Small rays of light of a cross ('Raggieri zghar mas-slaleb') 2</p> <p>Pectorial Plaques ('Domni pettorali') 2</p>
Artist	Unknown
Dimensions	Various dimensions
Date/Period	Unknown but most likely 20 th Century
Date of examination	30 th April 2025 (based on photographs provided)
Location	Ghajnsielem Church, Gozo
Method of examination	Visual observation
Conservator/s	James Licari MSc (Melit.), B. Cons (Hons) (Melit.)
Additional Information	Works will be undertaken with other skilled personnel in order as to give a better and more holistic approach to the conservation-restoration of the cultural heritage object.
Historical information	

DESCRIPTION

General Description



Figure 1: Twelve lanterns

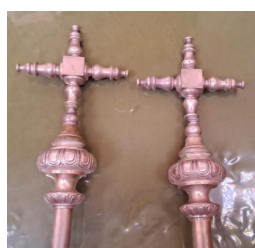


Figure 2: Two cross finials



Figure 3: Two of the three finials of one of the crucifixes.

List of items:

Lanterns ('Lanterni')	12
Cross finials ('Rjus tas-Slaieb')	6
Rays of light ('Raggieri tas-slaieb')	2
INRI scroll of a cross ('INRI ghas-slaieb')	2
Medallion finials ('Surgentini')	2
Cross Finials for flag standards ('Krucetti ghal-standardi (Slaieb)')	2
Small rays of light of a cross ('Raggieri zghar mas-slaieb')	2
Pectorial Plaques ('Domni pettorali')	2

All the items listed above are silver plated. The silver layer is applied to thick underlying copper sheets, which in some cases are further supported by a thick supportive wooden structure. These are held in place by metal screws and plates, whilst the sheets are attached by small inconspicuous nails. Many of the decorative parts are mechanically embossed.



Figure 7: Details of the backing rays of light from two different crucifixes.



Figure 4: Two of the three finials of another crucifix.



Figure 5: INRI scroll and cartouche of the two crucifixes.



Figure 6: Medallion Finials



Figure 8: Two pectoral plaques

CONDITION ASSESSMENT

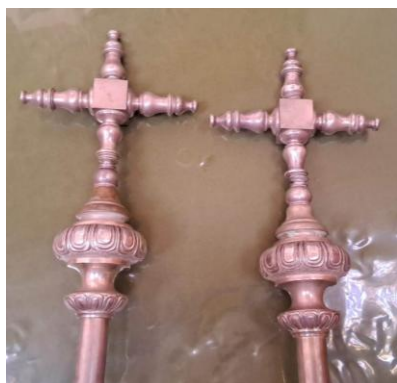


Figure 9: Two cross finials, which look a little red in colour, as the silver plating seems to have worn off the copper structure.



Figure 10: This finial seems to have most of its points damaged and the silver coating seems to have been thinned down

The supporting wood of most of the items seems to be in a fair state of preservation, with no apparent signs of biological attack or any other forms of visual deterioration.

The silver-plated items seem to have surface deposits of grime and dirt, especially on their peripheries caused by handling with bare hands. There are various erosion marks appearing as white/ light green spots on the silver, particularly concentrated towards the nails and screws. Dark orange/brown patches, found on some of the decorations, are considered to possibly be the tarnishing of the upper silver surface on the copper sheets. In some crevices, there seems to be residues of a white powdery material, which could be possible residues of past cleaning products.

There are some scratches observed all over the surface particularly on the periphery and upper most surfaces, caused through handling.

It was pointed out that the silver coating may be abraded in certain areas possibly revealing the underlying copper plate, this will not be so evident, before clearly cleaning due to the dark tarnish formed on the upper surfaces.



Figure 11: This finial seems to have most of its silver intact and may only require polishing.



Figure 12: Two of the three finials of one of the crucifixes. Cleaning tests should be undertaken to determine if they need re-plating.



Figure 13: Two of the three finials of another crucifix. Cleaning tests should be undertaken to determine if they need re-plating.



Figure 14: INRI scroll and cartouche of the two crucifixes. Cleaning tests should be undertaken to determine if they need re-plating.



Figure 15: Details of the backing rays of light from two different crucifixes. These look like they may require re-silvering.



Figure 16: The two pectoral plaques, which are in a good state of preservation and only require light polishing.

INTERVENTION PROPOSAL

- Written and photographic documentation prior, during and after the intervention.
- Further historical research will be undertaken by Mr Joe (Silversmith). The latter hope to find the hallmarks on these items, to confirm certain details related to its manufacture.
- Mr Joe Galea Cavallazzi reports and recommends:
'Apart from the fact that the silver plating on these items has worn off due to normal use, their condition is quite satisfactory, except for some minor repairs, which amount to about 5 to 10 % of the whole project. The remaining 90 to 95 % is for fresh silver plating.'
- Mr James Licari (as the warranted Conservator-Restorers), it must be stated that the ethics of minimal intervention is important to be emphasized. Being brought in this project at the final hours, he does not want to be rash or judgemental with regards to the firm's proposal. He does hope that cleaning tests were or are undertake prior to going for full re-silvering. Unfortunately, he has not managed to physically assess these items himself and more importantly, he did not do any cleaning tests himself. With regards to the latter mentioned re-silvering, it is important that the silver is of the same quality and thickness.
- Cleaning tests will be undertaken on the surface of the silver in order as to remove surface deposits of dust and dirt/ 'handling' grime as well as tarnish. Such tests will consist of chemical cleaning and only where necessary mechanical cleaning will be used. The conservator-restorers will try to choose the most efficient but least invasive methodology.
- As discussed with the clients, the conservation-restoration team, advised to follow a conservation methodology of minimum intervention, by simply cleaning the surface tarnish.
- Only, if necessary, the silversmith, may separate the various elements (with simple levering with micro-tools, screwdrivers and patience), to provide a more holistic study of the work, as well as to possible assess any underlying non-visual

problems, within the internal surfaces.

- Throughout the intervention, regular solvent rinsing will also be undertaken, to reduce any possibility of surface residues, as well as to possibly dissolve past cleaning residues.
- Any loose silver panels will be supported and re-attached appropriately.
- The silversmith may consider a light protective coating, but the conservator-restorer advises that while in storage, it is wrapped in a passivating cloth¹, and possible sealed in a plastic sleeve (which will hopefully provide a barrier from volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which are emitted from its surroundings.
- It is also advisable that the silver is not touched by the naked hands but rather using clean cotton gloves.

As this is a proposal, the suggestions above can be further discussed in detail and other suggestions may be considered, keeping in mind the historic, ecclesiastical, structural and aesthetic individuality of these items in question.

¹ Can be purchased from <https://www.preservationequipment.com/Catalogue/Cleaning-Products/Cleaning-Agents/Pacific-Silvercloth>



**SILVERSMITH
CREATIONS**

Company Progression

In 1980 Victor Galea, a qualified metallurgist from Strathclyde University, together with Victor Lanzon, an engineer, established a company specialising in the refining of gold and silver, as well as the recovery and refining of the noble metals from auriferous and argentiferous sweeps. This together with the production of silver nitrate and chloride for miral and glass works. This company was officially registered under the trading name "LAGA" Hallmark LAG.

In time the company sought to expand its operations into gold and silver craftsmanship. To spearhead this venture, John (Vanni) Bartolo was engaged as the company's silversmith, (hallmark BJJ) with Adrian Gauci (hallmark ADG) serving as his assistant. Joe Galea Cavallazzi (Victor Galea's brother) was appointed to manage this new division. He brought with him extensive experience, having relinquished a high ranking position within the civil service to take on this new challenge.

For the following 40 years, LAGA established itself and was renowned for producing refined silver works for parishes and private residences both in Malta and in Gozo.

In 2009 Laga underwent a change in ownership, marking a new chapter in the company's journey.


Following the retirement of John Bartolo in 2013, Adrian Gauci succeeded him as master silversmith. However in 2022, due to internal challenges between the new owners, Adrian Gauci chose to join Joe Galea Cavallazzi in a new venture under Marindex Ltd, who launched a dedicated silversmith division named "Silversmith Creations"

This newly formed entity assumed responsibility for all pending works previously undertaken by Laga, including the refining and recovery of noble metals, as well as the manufacture of silver and gold articles for local churches and homes. These operations were incorporated into Marindex Ltd's existing operations, which included gold and silver plating.


Joe Galea Cavallazzi

For and on behalf of
Silversmith Creations

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