



Tigdid *il-ġrajja*

Dokumentazzjoni tar-restawr tar-rakkmu tal-ventartal
prinċipali tal-artal maġġur tal-Knisja Parrokkjali ta'
San Ġużepp tal-Kalkara fuq sfond storiku

Kitba u riċerka: Kav. Duncan Brincat



*“Dak li pajjiż
jaghżel li jsalva
huwa dak li pajjiż
jaghżel li jgħid
dwaru nnifsu.”*

Mollie Beattie



Survey Sheet, 1927.

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Ix-xatt tal-Kalkara fis-snin 30 tas-seklu 20.



Werrej

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© Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara, 2020
Il-jeddijiet kollha miżmuma mill-awtur.



Il-kampnar tal-Knisja mgarraffil-gwerra. (Hajr War Damage Commission)

Introduzzjoni

Sa mit-twaqqif tagħha l-Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara hadmet u stinkat sabiex il-patrimonju storiku u artistiku ta' dan ir-raħal jiġi mhux biss preservat għall-preżent u l-ġejjieni, iżda fuq kollox jiġi preżentat lill-poplu tal-inhawi għall-apprezzament, l-għarfien u t-tgawdija tiegħu. Fuq kollox, poplu li ma jgħożżx l-istorja li sawwritu m'għandux identità b'saħħitha li tiksiblu dimensjoni aktar wiesgħa.

Dan il-ktejjeb li qed jasal f'idejkom huwa parti minn proġett li l-Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara wettqet flimkien mal-Parroċċa San Ġuzepp, bl-għajjnuna finanzjarja tal-Programm LEADER tal-Unjoni Ewropeja. Il-proġett li applikajna għalih, u eventwalment ġejna mogħtija l-fondi, kellu t-titlu *Restoration of a Hand Embroidered Antependium* u jikkonsisti primarjament f'żewġ fażijiet.

L-ewwel fażi kienet dik tar-restawr ta' palla rrakmata li fl-imghoddi kienet isservi bħala ċ-ċentru ta' ventartal artistiku tal-artal maġġur tal-Knisja Parrokkjali preċedenti. L-iskop kien dak li jsir restawr professjonali li għalih saret sejha kompetittiva, sabiex aktar tard din l-istess opra artistika wirt il-Kalkara kollha tiġi eżebita fis-sala tal-Knisja Parrokkjali u b'hekk apprezzata matul is-sena kollha. It-tieni fażi kienet il-pubblikazzjoni ta' dan il-ktejjeb. L-għan prinċipali kien li mhux biss isir ix-xogħol ta' restawr, iżda bħala Assoċjazzjoni xtaqna li naqsmu l-istorja tal-ventartal imwahħda ma' din tal-Knisja Parrokkjali preċedenti, kif ukoll l-informazzjoni dettaljata tar-restawr li sar. Nemmu li apprezzament ta' biċċa xogħol tal-arti ma jkunx komplut jekk ma jkunx hemm tagħrif dwar l-istorja li sawritha, u għalhekk il-htieġa li jiġi ppubblikat dan il-ktejjeb.

Nittamaw li l-apprezzament ta' din l-opra tal-arti jwassal biex nġożżu dak kollu li finalment jgħaġinna bħala raħal.



Il-Kalkara fis-sinj 20 tas-seklu 20.



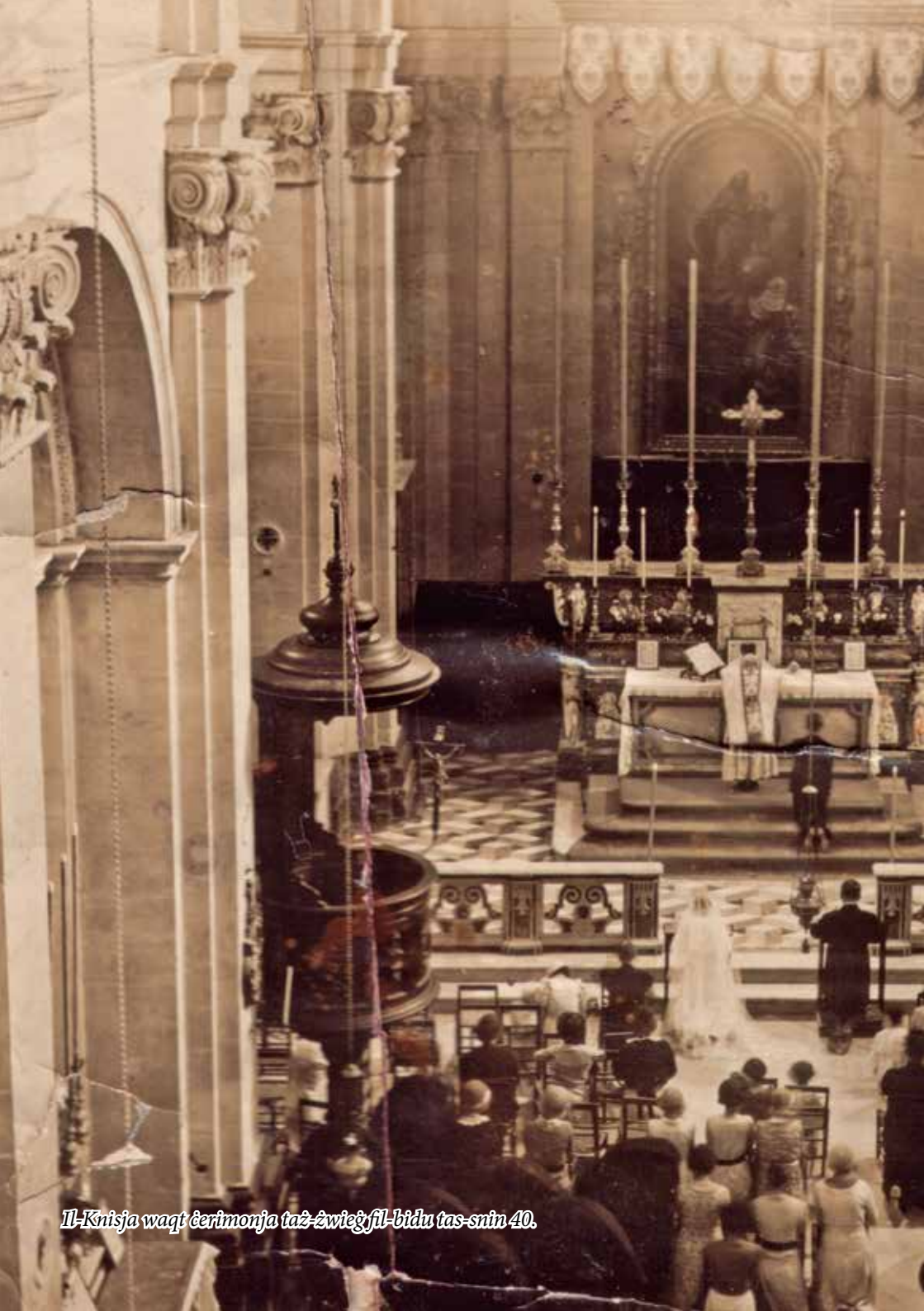
Il-Kalkara

Ir-rahal tal-Kalkara jinsab fir-regjun tax-xlokk ta' Malta u għandu popolazzjoni ta' madwar 3,014. L-isem ġej mill-kelma Latina għall-ġir minhabba l-preżenza ta' kalkara tal-ġir sa minn żmien ir-Rumani, b'hekk il-motto *A Calce Nomen* u l-arma tal-lokal bħala skud aħdar maqsum fi tnejn: nofsu ikhal jirrappreżenta l-baħar u n-nofs l-iehor deheb bi fjamma taqbad.

Il-Kalkara hija magħmulha minn żewġ peniżoli: dik tar-Rikażli, antika-ment magħrufha bħala *Punta Sottile* jew *Punta delle Forche* minhabba l-forka li kienet tingħata hemm, u dik ta' Bigħi, antikament magħrufha bħala *San Salvatore* minhabba l-Knisja qadima li ġgħib l-istess titlu. Huma tnejn id-dahliet li jiffurmaw il-Kalkara: dik tar-Rnella bl-isem ġej mit-Taljan *arenella* minhabba l-forma tagħha u li skont l-istoriku Ġan Franġisk Abela kienet tajba għall-ġhawm, u dik tal-Kalkara li antikament kellha diversi ismijiet fosthom *Porto del Infermeria*.

L-istorja tal-Kalkara hija mistura fil-passat glorjuż tagħha: il-preżenza ta' raddi tar-roti arkeoloġiċi fl-inħawi tat-Turretta, il-ħaġar Eġizzjan miġjub mill-Feniċi u misjub fl-inħawi ta' Bigħi, u t-tħaffir ta' ipogej Paleo-kristjani fl-inħawi tax-Xaġhra ta' Santa Duminku. Barra minn hekk, l-ewwel Knisja tas-Salvatur ġiet mibnija qabel l-1487 u tindika l-preżenza ta' komunità fil-qrib, tgħix permezz tas-sajd u l-biedja. L-iżvilupp tal-Kalkara kiber fi żmien il-ħakma tal-Kavallieri u tal-Ingliżi, speċjalment bil-bini tal-fortifikazzjonijiet u l-Isptar Navali ta' Bigħi. Saret parroċċa awtonoma fl-1897.

Il-Kalkara batiet il-qilla tat-Tieni Gwerra Dinjija, b'numru ta' mwiet u binjiet meqruda. Il-bini mill-ġdid tar-rahal wara l-gwerra weraw s-saħħa ta' komunità biex tibda kollox mill-ġdid: il-Kalkara ġiet trasformata f'gawhra tal-gzejjer Maltin.



Il-Knisja waqt ċerimonja taż-żwieġ fil-bidu tas-snin 40.



Il-binja tal-Knisja

Nhar it-23 ta' Awwissu 1884 in-neguzjant Fortunato Gulia ppreżenta rikors fil-Kurja Arciveskovili ta' Malta quddiem l-Arcisqof Carmelo Conte Scicluna biex jirregala parti mill-art propjeta' tiegħu fil-Kalkara biex fuqha tinbena Knisja għall-użu tal-poplu tal-Kalkara u li setgħet isservi flok dik tas-S.S. Salvatur. B'digriet maħruġ fl-istess jum, l-Arcisqof aċċetta din it-talba, u ddelega lill-Primiċerju Kanonku Dun Ġużepp Azzopardi, Rettur tal-Knisja tas-S.S. Salvatur, bħala l-bniedem responsabbli mill-bini ta' din il-Knisja ġdida. Din id-donazzjoni giet milqugħa skont l-att maħruġ minn Nutar Giuseppe Rossi fl-24 ta' Awwissu 1884.

Minnufih, il-Kanonku Azzopardi fforma kumitat għall-binja tal-Knisja li kien kompost min-neguzjanti Carmelo Bugeja, Fortunato Gulia, Gio Batta Farrugia flimkien ma' Orazio Agius u l-avukat Dr. Paolo DeBono bħala Segretarju. L-Arcisqof approva dan il-kumitat b'digriet tat-13 ta' Settembru 1884.

Ġie mqabbd il-perit Guglielmo Attard, Inġinier tal-Ammiraljat, biex iħejji d-disinj għal din il-Knisja, liema xogħol huwa għamlu mingħajr ħlas. Minħabba li l-art li kien offra Gulia ma kienet kbira biżżejjed, inxtrat biċċa art biswit li kienet propjeta' tal-Kapitlu ta' Bormla. Għal dan il-għan u sabiex jingabru l-fondi meħtieġa, il-Kanonku Azzopardi kera post fil-Kalkara stess mingħand is-Sur Spinocchio li fih beda jsir it-tejatrini u li ssemma' *Teatrino San Giuseppe*. Dak iż-żmien il-popolazzjoni tal-Kalkara kienet ta' madwar 900 ruħ jew 150 familja.

Ix-xogħol fuq il-pedamenti tal-Knisja l-ġdida beda fl-1887, filwaqt li sar mudell fiċ-ċokon tal-binja biex jintwera lin-nies. Ix-xogħol tal-pedamenti tlesta fi żmien sentejn, sabiex fit-22 ta' Ġunju 1890 fil-5.30pm tpoġġiet u tberket l-ewwel ġebbla. Għal din l-okkażjoni attenda



*Il-Kanonku Dun Ġużepp
Azzopardi 1848-1913.
(Hajr: Fabian Mangion)*



*Dun Ġużepp Ciangura, l-ewwel
Kappillan tal-Parroċċa l-ġdida
tal-Kalkara, 1871-1931.*

l-Arcisqof Pietru Pace, li twassal f'karozza apposta u li ġie milqugħ b'ferħ kbir mill-Kalkariżi. Ġie armat tronett bis-sedja għall-Arcisqof u għall-okkażjoni ntxteghlu t-toroq bil-gass mis-Sur Cordina. Għal dakinhar il-kumitat stieden żewġ baned li esegwew programm tal-okkażjoni, filwaqt li

nħarqu ukoll xi murtali. Il-kazzola li ntużat kienet inħadmet apposta fit-Tarzna ta' Malta, l-istess kazzola li mbagħad reġgħet intużat meta tqieghdet l-ewwel ġebbla tal-Knisja preżenti.

Għalkemm il-poplu kien fqir, u l-bini tal-Knisja kien jiswa' ammont sostanzjali ta' flus, fl-1892 tfaċċa l-Kavallier Carmelo Bugeja, membru tal-kumitat, li tul is-snin kien benefattur importanti. Madankollu, saret hidma minn diversi persuni oħra biex jinġabru l-flus meħtieġa, fosthom Vincenzo Borda li kien jiehu hsieb il-ġbir minn fost il-Kalkariżi u Gio. Batta Borda li kien ta donazzjoni ta' £100 lill-Kanonku Azzopardi biex isir l-artal magġur ta' din il-Knisja. Il-Kanonku Azzopardi ħareġ ukoll hafna flus minn butu biex setgħet inbniet din il-Knisja, filwaqt li madwar £920 ġew mid-dhul taċ-Ċimiterju ta' Wied Għammieq.

Ix-xogħol tal-bini, li kien fdat f'idejn il-kumpanija F. Cilia & Co., tlesta lejn tmiem is-sena 1895 u għalhekk matul is-sena ta' wara bdiet tiġi arredata l-Knisja. Il-Knisja kienet twila 30.5metri (110pied), u kienet wiesgħa 20.5metri (67pied) b'10metri (32pied). F'Settembru 1896 beda jitqieghed l-irħam, kif ukoll beda x-xogħol ta' dekorazzjoni u skultura fil-prospettiva fejn kellu jitqieghed il-kwadru titolari. Din kienet qed issir minn ċertu Salvatore li wettaq diversi xogħlijiet oħra ta' skultura, fosthom iż-żewġ prospettivi tal-artali tar-Rużarju u tal-Kuncizzjoni, prospettivi

ta' artali laterali ohra u 36 kapitell tal-kolonni. Sadanittant, f'Jannar tal-1897 bdiet iż-żebgħa ta' xi hitan tal-Knisja, filwaqt li kienet qed titkompli xi skultura minn ċertu Michele. L-invjatura tal-faċċata tal-Knisja bdiet fil-15 ta' Mejju 1897, filwaqt li l-iskultura tagħha bdiet f'Lulju minn ċertu Michelino. Fl-istess waqt tqiegħed l-irham tal-paviment tal-presbiterju u tas-sagristija mid-ditta Moschetti.

B'digiet tal-Arcisqof Pietru Pace mahruġ fl-10 ta' Diċembru 1897, il-Kalkara giet iddikjarata bħala Parroċċa indipendenti, miftuma minn dik tal-Birgu. Ġiet iddedikata lil San Ġużepp, kif kienet l-intenzjoni sa mill-bidu ta' dan il-proġett. Il-Kanonku Dun Ġużepp Azzopardi nħatar bħala Vigarju Kurat sakemm nhar it-8 ta' Jannar 1898 ha l-pussess bħala l-ewwel Kappillan tal-Parroċċa l-Kanonku Dun Ġużepp Ciangura. F'dan iż-żmien ukoll Dun Glivau inħatar Viċi Kappillan. L-ewwel magħmudija kienet ta' Ġużeppa Attard li saret nhar il-15 ta' Diċembru 1897, filwaqt li l-ewwel funeral kien dak ta' Ġwanni Azzopardi fl-età ta' 78 sena nhar it-13 ta' Diċembru 1897.

Il-binja tal-Knisja issa kienet temporanjament mitmuma u għalhekk il-ħidma nfixxet aktar fuq l-akkwist ta' opri importanti tal-arti fosthom pitturi u aċċessorji liturġiċi. B'digriet tas-6 ta' April 1898 ġew imwaqqfa l-Fratellanzi tas-Sagrament, tar-Rużarju u ta' San Ġużepp, bħala Fratellanza waħda taħt il-patroċinju ta' San Ġużepp. Fl-istess sena waslet l-ewwel qanpiena f'din il-Knisja li kienet magħmula fl-1896 minn Ġulju Cauchi u li kienet tiżen 14-il qantar (ekwivalenti għal 1,111 kg) u 24 ratal (ekwivalenti għal 19 kg). Din swiet aktar minn £118, li £70 kienu



Rendering diġitali tal-Knisja Parrokkjali preċedenti. (Xogħol ta' Christian Mizzi)



It-tberik tal-ewwel ġebbla tal-kampar fl-1923. (Ħajr: Anthony Balzan)



Dun Eleazzaro Balzan, it-tieni Kappillan, 1886-1949.

ngabru mill-Kalkarizi waqt ġabra apposta. Ġew ukoll mixtrija l-artali mehtieġa, tant li fit-22 ta' Diċembru 1898 ġie mħallas il-marmista Mariano Russo għall-artal maġġur li sewa' iżjed minn £81 minħabba li kien magħmul minn irħam fin u kkulurit. Dan minbarra li l-istess marmista ħadem fl-irħam iż-żewġ artali tal-kappelluni, l-artal ta' San Filep, l-artal tal-Erwieħ tal-Purgatorju u l-kancell li jdawwar il-presbiterju. Fil-bidu tas-seklu għoxrin ġie mżanzan pulptu tal-injam disinn ta' Giuseppe Decelis u xogħol ta' Giuseppe Gonzi.

Sadanittant, fl-1914 il-Kaptan Nicola Azzopardi ħalla fit-testment tiegħu l-wirt ta' £1000 lill-Knisja Parrokkjali tal-Kalkara bl-intenzjoni li jiġu mibnija ż-żewġ navi laterali. Madankollu, minħabba li kien għad fadal xi hlasijiet x'jithallsu fir-rigward ta' spejjeż tal-bini u aċcessorji, ġie deciż li jithallsu dawn flok isir il-bini tan-navi peress li l-perit sostna li dik is-somma ma kienetx biżżejjed.

Il-Knisja ġiet ikkonsagrata fit-30 ta' Jannar 1921 u hemm ġie deciż li jinbena l-kampnar li kellu jakkumpanja din il-binja. Nhar il-Ħadd 1 ta' Lulju 1923 l-Arcisqof Dom Mauro Caruana bierek l-ewwel ġebbla tal-kampnar li ma damx ma tlesta għax taw sehmhom fih diversi Kalkarizi. Għat-twettiq ta' dan il-proġett kienu saru diversi attivitajiet fosthom fiera kbira li għaliha kienet ħadet sehem il-banda *San Giorgio* ta' Bormla.

It-tieni Kappillan tal-Parrocċa tal-Kalkara kien Dun Eleazzaro Balzan li ħa l-pussess fil-5 ta' Lulju 1925. Huwa ħa ħsieb li ssir il-gallerija tal-orgni, fuq disinn ta' Giuseppe Decelis, li twettqet

fl-1933 permezz ta' digriet mahruġ fil-11 ta' Frar tal-istess sena. L-orgni kien kbir u sab postu fil-Knisja fl-1925 permezz ta' donazzjoni.



Il-Knisja preċedenti kif kienet tidher mix-xatt tal-Kalkara.

Meta fl-1939 faqqgħet it-Tieni

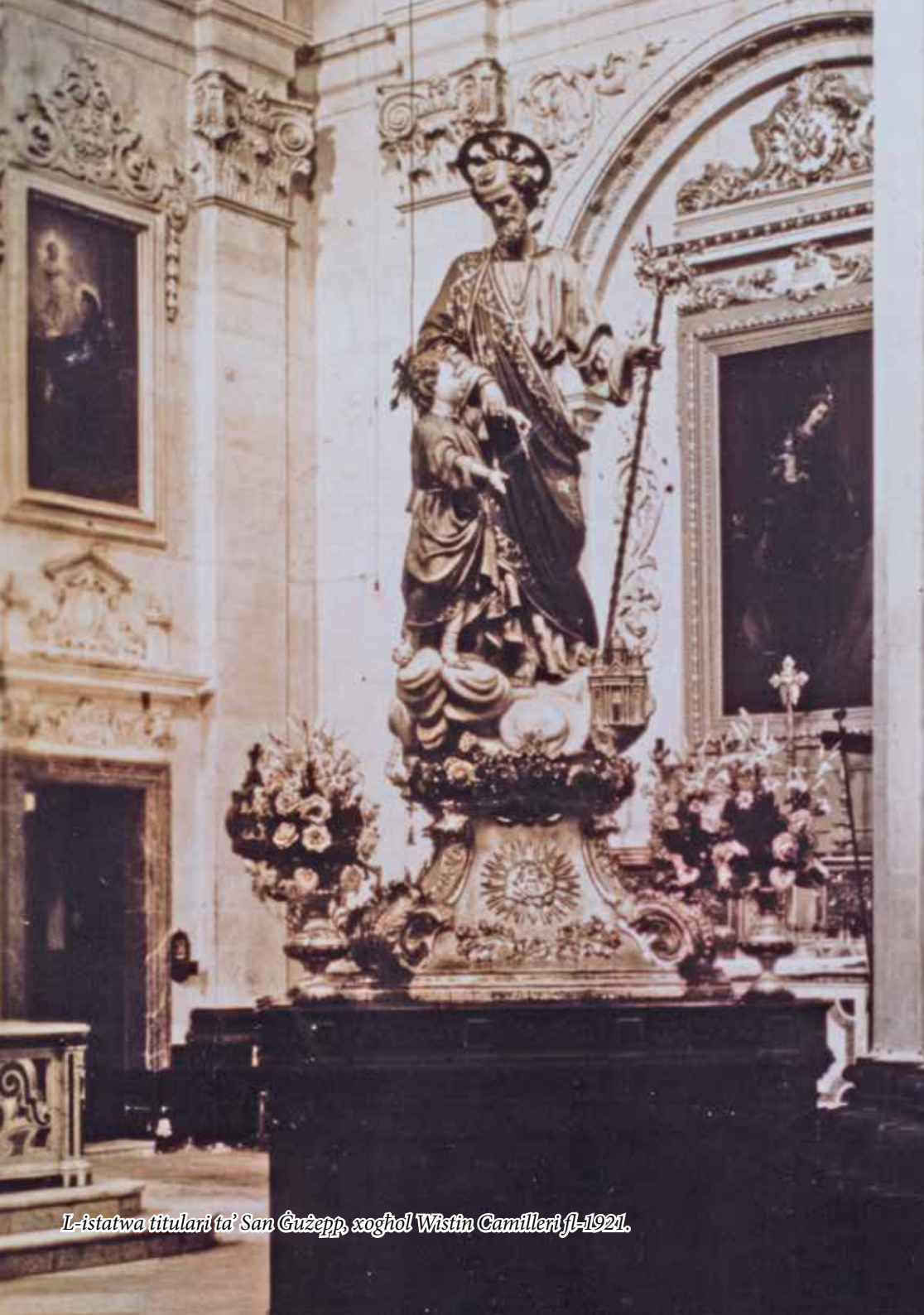
Gwerra Dinjija, il-Kalkara kienet destinata li ssufri bħall-bqija tal-pajjiż. Dak iż-żmien il-popolazzjoni kienet telgħet għal madwar 1700 ruħ. Sehħew diversi traġedji, hallew haġjiethom bosta Kalkariżi, iżda d-data tal-10 ta' April 1942 u l-hin tal-5pm



It-tiġrif tal-Knisja. (Ħajr: War Damage Commission)

jimmarkaw l-assedju bil-bombi tal-ġhadu u t-twaqqieġh kważi komplut tal-Knisja Parrokkjali tal-Kalkara. Dakinhar intilfu bosta opri fosthom l-istatwa titulari ta' San Ġużepp. Ġew salvati biss il-pitturi tal-Knisja li kienu ttiehdu Għawdex fuq struzjonijiet tal-Isqof Mikiel Gonzi li

kien Kalkariż, u xi opri oħra li kienu maħżuna go armarju ġos-sagristija li kien imħaffer fil-blat. Mill-bqija herba shiħa, u l-poplu Kalkariż kien safa' l'tim mingħajr Knisja.



L-istatwa titolari ta' San Ġużepp, xoghol Wistin Camilleri j1-1921.

Il-ventartal

Hekk kif intemm il-bini tal-Knisja preċedenti, fl-1896 din bdiet tiġi dekorata b'opri tal-arti ta' natura varja. Il-bennejja tal-Knisja, id-ditta F. Cilia & Co., ma' tmiem ix-xoghol iddeċidew li jirregalaw pittura ta' San Filep lil din il-Knisja peress li huma kienu minn Haż-Żebbuġ. Din il-pittura saret mill-pittur Żebbuġi Lazzaro Pisani u hija mfahħra ferm għall-kuluri eżotiċi u d-dettalji tagħha. Fl-istess sena saru l-artal u l-pittura tal-kappellun tar-Rużarju mill-benefattur Antonio Bezzina bil-pittura li turi lil Madonna ta' Pompei xoghol Giuseppe Cali, l-artal u l-pittura ta' San Vinċenz Ferrer mill-benefattur Vincenzo Borda, u l-artal u l-pittura ta' San Frangisk mill-benefattur Tousants DeMaria. L-aħħar żewġ pitturi m'għandniex hjiel tal-artisti li għamluhom.

Matul dan iż-żmien il-Kanonku Dun Ġużepp Azzopardi kien qed jagħmel hidma u pressjoni kbira biex il-Kalkara tinqata' bħala Parroċċa awtonoma ddedikata lil San Ġużepp, u warajh kellu lill-poplu tal-Kalkara. Għalhekk fl-1897 huwa ordna l-ewwel statwa ddedikata lil dan il-qaddis, li aktar tard kellha ssir l-ewwel statwa titulari, mingħand l-istatwarju Etienne Puccini f'Toulouse fi Franza. Din l-istatwa kienet tat-terrakotta, kienet tirraffigura lil San Ġużepp qed iżomm il-Bambin f'idejh, dekorata bl-aktar mod rikk u swiet 400 Frank Franciż. F'April tal-istess sena pedestall temporanju għal din l-istatwa ttiehed għand l-iskultur Abram Gatt biex issirli xi skultura fuqu.

Sadattant, fl-20 ta' Ottubru nxtrat il-bieba tat-tabernaklu, filwaqt li fl-istess żmien ġew akkwistati xi karti tal-glorja, hames pjaneti u thallset pittura mpittra minn ċertu Abela. F'Novembru l-Kanonku Azzopardi kompli jieħu hsieb jarma din il-Knisja, għoddha lesta b'dak kollu meħtieġ għar-riti sagri u ċelebrazzjonijiet oħra. Fl-10 tax-xahar inxtraw żewġ pjaneti, kif ukoll brukkat u gallun tad-deheb. Wara t-twaqqif tal-Fratellanza f'April 1898, sar l-istandard tal-Vjatku u bandalora żgħira



*L-ewwel statwa titolari ta' San Ġużepp
mahduma Franza mill-istatwarju
Etienne Puccini fl-1897.*

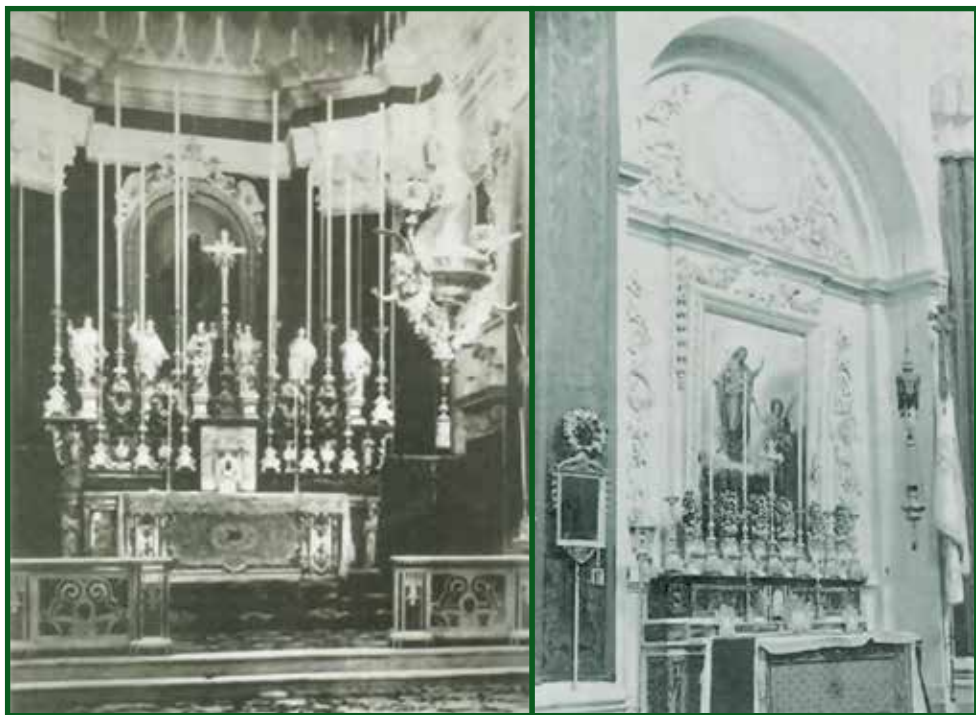
ohra fosthom ostensorju tal-fidda, vetrina għas-sagristija, tnax-il salib għall-konsagrazzjoni eventwali tal-Knisja, seba' gandlieri żgħar, arloġġ u anki xi kappi. Inxtara ukoll il-fonti tal-Magħmudija skulturat fl-irġam flimkien ma' kuċċarun tal-fidda li jintuza għall-amministrazzjoni tal-istess sacrament. F'din is-sena tlestew ukoll diversi kwadri ta' pittura, l-iktar importanti dak titolari li juri l-patroċinju ta' San Ġużepp impitter minn Giuseppe Cali li huwa ffirmat bil-kontra bħala sinjal ta' protesta li diversi knejjes kienu qed jippreferu jaħdmu għand artisti barranin li jithallsu inqas. Dan il-kwadru kien sewa' £27. Madankollu, waslu ukoll diversi xoghlijiet tal-pittur Taljan Filippo Fortunato Venuti, fosthom dak tal-Immakolata Kuncizzjoni fil-kappellun, ta' San

tad-Duttrina Nisranija. Sar ukoll standard prim abjad li nħit għand ċertu Vassallo. Minn din is-sena l-Kalkara kellha l-ewwel Kappillan tagħha, Dun Ġużepp Ciangura. Inxtraw sett ta' tlettax-il gandlier mill-Belt Valletta, u aktar tard fl-istess sena dawn ġew ibbanjati fil-fidda, filwaqt li ġie indurat ukoll il-pedestall temporanju tal-istatwa ta' San Ġużepp li issa kien tlesta minn Abram Gatt. Saru tużell u baldakkin li ġew mehjuta minn ċertu Fortunato, filwaqt li saru ukoll sett forċini u ġiet irrangata kamra fis-sagristija bħala maħżen għal dawn l-aċċessorji.

Fl-istess sena nħadmu ukoll il-bankun u l-bradell tal-kewba intersjata għal taħt l-istatwa ta' San Ġużepp. Din kienet se tkun l-ewwel festa titolari, iċċelebrata fit-tieni Hadd ta' Lulju, u għalhekk inxtraw ukoll diversi aċċessorji



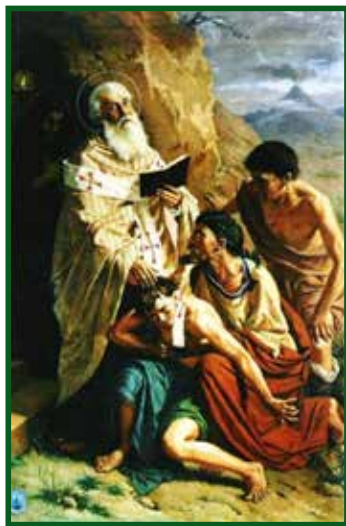
*Il-purċissjoni fi Triq ir-Rnella matul waħda mill-ewwel
festi titolari ta' San Ġużepp.*



L-artal magġur u l-artal tal-Erwieħ tal-Purgatorju armati għall-festa ta' San Ġuzepp. Il-palla rrakkmata tal-ventartal prinċipali tidher fiċ-ċentru tal-ventartal tal-artal magġur.

Pietru u San Pawl fil-kor, ta' Marija Annunzjata, Sant' Antnin, Sant' Anjeze, San Fortunato u tal-Erwieħ tal-Purgatorju. Dan tal-aħħar għandu mpittrin fuqu ż-żewġ tfajliet ta' ċertu Fabri mill-Kalkara li kienu mietu ta' età żgħira.

Mill-Italja, mingħand id-ditta Gio. & G. Fratelli Bertarelli li kellha s-sede prinċipali tagħha f'Milan, ingiebu diversi aċċessorji tal-fidda, fosthom il-ġilju tal-fidda tal-vara titolari li kien regalati minn Nicola Cachia fl-1899, il-lampier, biebha għat-tabernaklu tal-artal magġur, salib, umbrella għall-vjatku u tużell żgħir argjentat. Għal dawn l-ispejjeż saru xi kontribuzzjonijiet liberi minn xi benefatturi. Sadanittant, qabel il-festa, saret l-induratura tal-



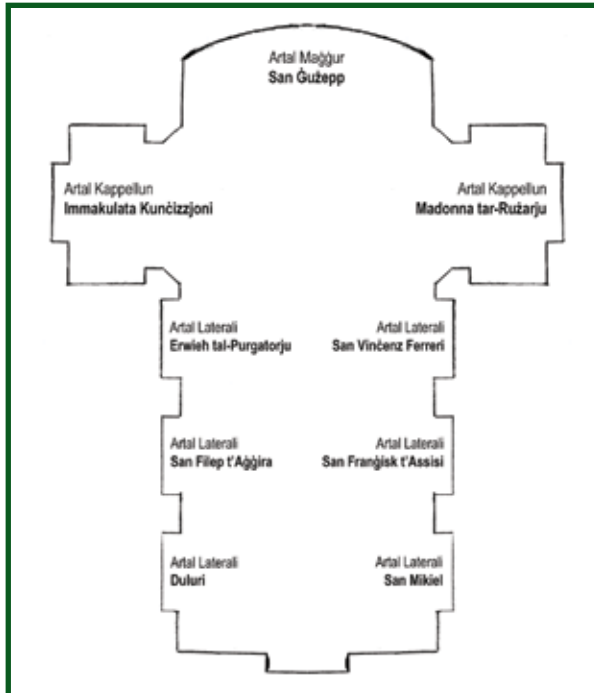
San Filep, impittr mill-artist Żebbuġi Lazzaro Pisani.



Il-fdalijiet tal-istandard irrakmat tal-Fratellanza.

bħal pjaneti u tunicelli, brukkat fjurit għat-tużell, satin fjurit, frenża, damask għall-ventartali u kappi, u brukkat għall-baldakkin.

Mingħand l-istess ditta Taljana ġie ordnat ukoll ventartal rikk, jew aħjar il-parti ċentrali rrakmata tal-ventartal tal-artal maġġur, magħrufa bħala palla rrakmata



It-tqasim tal-artali fil-Knisja Parrokkjali preċedenti.

istatwa titulari ta' San Ġuzepp għand l-induratur Giorgio Schembri.

Il-Kappillan Ciangura ha ħsieb li jiġu ordnati diversi opri u aċċessorji oħra fejn jidhol rakkmu u xogħol ta' drapp mingħand id-ditta Taljana Alessandro de Signi. Fost dawn l-aċċessorji nsibu apparat sagru

tal-ventartal. F'dan il-ventartal il-figura ċentrali hija l-ħaruf, simbolu tal-Ewkaristija mqaddsa, ċertament bl-għan li jintuża mhux biss għall-festa titulari, iżda ukoll fil-festi tal-Ewkaristija. Sfortunatament xejn ma nstab dwar min kien id-disinjatur tiegħu.

Għall-festa tal-1899 ġie mżanzan ir-relikwarju prim tal-fidda indurat bid-deheb li ġie mħallas nofsu minn benefattur, filwaqt li għall-bidu tas-seklu għoxrin giet imżanzna l-ġilandra ndurata bid-deheb xogħol Giuseppe Gonzi (1902), u żewġ statwi tal-

Madonna ta' Lourdes u ta' Marija Addolorata rispettivament.

Fl-1921 saret statwa titulari ġdida ta' San Ġużepp li turi l-patroċinju tiegħu fuq il-Knisja Kattolika. Din ħadimha fil-kartapesta l-iskultur Għawdxi Agostino Camilleri u giet mġhotija lill-Parroċċa mill-każin

Circolo San Giuseppe fl-istess sena. Sadattant, fl-1922 gie mbierak l-artal ta' Marija Addolorata u l-pittura tiegħu saret minn Ramiro Cali. Fl-1932 saru xi modifiki fil-pedestall tal-istatwa ta' San Ġużepp permezz ta' digriet maħruġ nhar it-12 ta' Diċembru 1931, li swew £30 u li nġabru bejn il-Kalkariżi. Dan wara li fl-istess perjodu din l-istatwa giet mġhotija s-salib pettorali ta' Mons. Ġużepp Ciangura li ħallieh b'wirt wara mewtu.

Kważi l-opri tal-arti kollha li kienu miżmuma fil-Knisja ġew meqruda totalment fl-attakk tal-ġhadu matul it-Tieni Gwerra Dinjija nhar l-10 ta' April 1942. Madankollu, fortunatament, iċ-ċentru tan-nofs jew palla rrakkmata tal-ventartal tal-artal maġġur giet salvata għax kienet maħzuna ġewwa alkova fil-blat li kienet tinsab fis-sagristija tal-Knisja. L-istess xorti tajba messet lill-ġilandra u wiehed mill-gandlieri tal-artal maġġur.



L-artal maġġur armat fil-festa ta' Corpus fil-bidu tas-seklu 20.



Mons. Mikiel Gonzi 1885-1984.



Waqt it-trattament tal-ħsarat fid-drapp tal-harir.



Ir-restawr

Il-konservazzjoni u r-restawr tal-ventartal tal-artal maġġur li juri ‘Agnus Dei’ u li jinsab miżmum fil-Knisja Parrokkjali tal-Kalkara ddedikata lil San Ġużepp, ġie mitmum matul ix-xahar ta’ Frar 2020 mill-kumpanija privata Atelier del Restauro, magħżula wara sejha pubblika li saret mill-Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara matul ix-xhur ta’ Ġunju u Lulju 2019.

Il-hidma kienet tikkonsisti billi tinghata kura lill-valur artistiku ta’ din l-opra tal-arti kif ukoll lill-materjali li jsawruha. Dan wassal għall-ħtieġa ta’ approċċ xjentifiku u metodoloġiku għall-konservazzjoni u r-restawr ta’ dan l-artefatt. Il-proġett kien immexxi minn Dr. Maria Grazia Zenzani u s-Sa. Valentina Lupo.

It-teknika tal-manifattura

Din l-opra tal-arti hija ventartal maħdum fl-Italja minn Alessandro de Signi fl-1898. Il-ventartal huwa magħmul minn drapp minsuġ tal-ħarir, li jerga’ minsuġ ma’ ħjut tal-fojl tal-fidda b’rakkmu fiċ-ċentru magħmul minn ħjut tal-metall b’qalba tal-karti tirrapreżenta ‘Agnus Dei’ fi gwarniċ fjurit. L-artefatt ġie mmuntat f’qafas tal-injam permezz ta’ perimetru tal-imsiemer u kellu kisja bajda li kienet imwaħħla mal-gwarniċ stess. Id-dekorazzjonijiet tal-ħajt tal-metall ġew magħmula permezz ta’ tekniki differenti u b’tipi varji ta’ ħajt, sabiex tinholq varjazzjoni fil-luminożità minhabba rifrazzjoni differenti.

L-istat ta’ Konservazzjoni fil-qosor

Il-ventartal ma kienx f’kundizzjoni tajba ħafna billi kellu ħsara li kellha x’taqsam kemm mal-użu kif ukoll ma’ fatturi ambjentali. Dawn tal-aħħar kienu jinkludu l-esponiment għad-dawl, trab, tibdil fit-temperaturi u l-umdità. L-effetti ħżiena tad-dawl wasslu biex id-drapp tal-lama jidgħajjef, filwaqt li l-immaniġġjar tiegħu kkawża

d-deterjorament u t-tqaxxir tal-
ħarir tal-lama tul il-perimetru.

Permezz ta' osservazzjoni kemm
viżwali u anki permezz tal-id,
instab li d-drapp irqiq tal-ħarir
huwa fragli ħafna. Il-fibra tal-
ħarir hija meqjusa li għandha
l-inqas reżistenza tal-fibri kollha
għad-dawl ultravjola magħrufa
bħala *photo degradation*. Waħda
mir-raġunijiet li l-ħarir hija

l-iktar fibra fragli taħt id-dawl hija l-fatt li hija l-ifen fibra naturali. Instabu serje ta' qtugħ u tiżrit, u saff fin ta' trab li ħammeġ il-kuluri originali tad-drapp u r-rakkmu.



Osservazzjoni tal-istat tal-ventartal.

Fazijiet ta' restawr u proċeduri tekniċi

Żarmar

L-ewwel operazzjoni li saret
kienet it-tneħħija ta' kull
musmar li kien jinsab madwar
il-perimetru tal-ventartal, u dan
sabiex ma jkunx kompromess
izjed l-istat ta' konservazzjoni
tad-drapp.

Dry Cleaning

Ix-xogħol kollu sarlu *dry cleaning*
minn quddiem u minn wara
permezz ta' *vacuum cleaner* ta' qawwa baxxa li tuża xbieki tal-filtru biex tipproteġi
d-drappijiet.



*Dettall mill-ventartal li juri l-ħsarat preżenti
fid-drapp tal-ħarir li jsawru.*

Vaporizzazzjoni

Saret vaporizzazzjoni abbondanti fuq il-wiċċ kollu sabiex terġa' tiġi stabbilita
l-idratazzjoni u l-elasticità naturali tal-fibri.

Tnehhija tat-tbajja

Sar tentattiv fuq it-tbajja permezz ta' tindif mekkaniku u solventi (alkohol, *ligroin* u aċetun). Ir-riżultat finali kien li t-tbajja tal-ilma l-kbar iċċaraw xi ftit bl-applikazzjoni ta' ilma u surfattant (*saponin*).



Detall waqt il-proċess tad-dry cleaning.

Tindif

L-uċuħ kollha tal-metall tad-deheb kienu trattati b'mod mekkaniku bis-suf tal-qoton imxarrab fil-*ligroin*. It-trattament, minbarra li neħħa ħafna mill-ossidazzjonijiet, sarraf f'uċuħ aktar ileqqu, speċjalment dawk li huma rrumblati-ċatti.

Konsolidazzjoni

Il-qatgħat kollha ġew konsolidati billi tpoġġew biċċiet ta' velu ta' Lyon miksi bir-reżina fuq quddiem u wara ta' din l-opra. Il-perimetru ġie kkonsolidat fuq appoġġi ttrattati bir-reżina Beva 371 O.F 65 li ġie mqieghed fuq wara tax-xoġhol. Hawnhekk, il-medd kollu ġie ordnat u mqieghed lura f'postu bl-applikazzjoni tas-sħana kkontrollata.



Waqt il-proċess tat-tindif u ċ-ċarar tat-tbajja li saru mill-ilma.

Immuntar

Bi ftehim mal-Parroċċa u l-Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara, u għal raġunijiet ta' integrità fil-konservazzjoni, ġie deċiż li jinbidel l-qafas tal-injam b'pannelli tal-polikarbonat. Il-wiċċ ta' quddiem tal-pannelli ġie miksi b'tessut tal-ħarir bl-istess tonalità ta' kulur bħall-isfond tal-original. Ix-xoġhol ġie mqieghed permezz ta' hjut imqieghda



Dettall tal-konsolidazzjoni tal-perimetru.

f'korrispondenza maż-żewġ ġonot li jgħaqqdu d-drapp originali u, fiż-żona ċentrali, b'hjut li jsegwu l-linji vertikali tar-rakkmu.

Il-perimetru ngħalaq 'il ġewwa b'madwar nofs ċentimetru ta' spazju fit-tarf tal-pannelli biex jitnaqqas ir-riskju u ma jergax iġġarrab xi brix permezz ta' għorik mal-ucuħ. Fl-aħħarnett,

biċċa drapp żejda ġiet meħjuta fuq il-parti ta' wara halli tgħatti l-pannelli.

Suġġerimenti għall-konservazzjoni korretta tal-ventartal

Sabiex il-hidma li saret tinżamm f'kundizzjoni tajba fil-ġejjieni, huwa rakkomandat li l-ventartal jinżamm f'temperatura kostanti (bejn 18°C u 22°C) u f'kundizzjonijiet ta' umdità kkontrollata (50-60%).

Huwa rakkomandat ukoll li dan ix-xogħol ma jitqiegħedx vicin sorsi ta' sħana, li jiġi evitat esponiment dirett għax-xemx u biex wiehed jieħu hsieb li l-kamra/maħżen fejn ikun se jitpoġġa ma tkunx suġġetta għal infiltrazzjoni tal-ilma.



Dettall waqt il-hjata tar-rakkmu.

Hija prassi tajba wkoll li dan ix-xogħol jinżamm taht kontroll sabiex wiehed jinduna mal-ewwel bi problemi jew hsara li tkun qed issir.

Għal konservazzjoni fit-tul tal-ventartal huwa rakkomandat li ssir manutenzjoni regolari tax-xogħol, għalhekk huwa rakkomandat li jsir tfarfir fuqu kull sena u vaporizzazzjoni kull 3-4 snin. Meta ma jintużax, il-ventartal irid jiġi mġhotti bi

drapp tal-qoton jew bjankerija. M'għandux jiġi mghotti bi plastik jew materjal simili halli tiġi evitata l-kondensazzjoni u konsegwentement moffa u bijofilm.



Il-ventartal wara l-konservazzjoni.

Ogġett: Ventartal

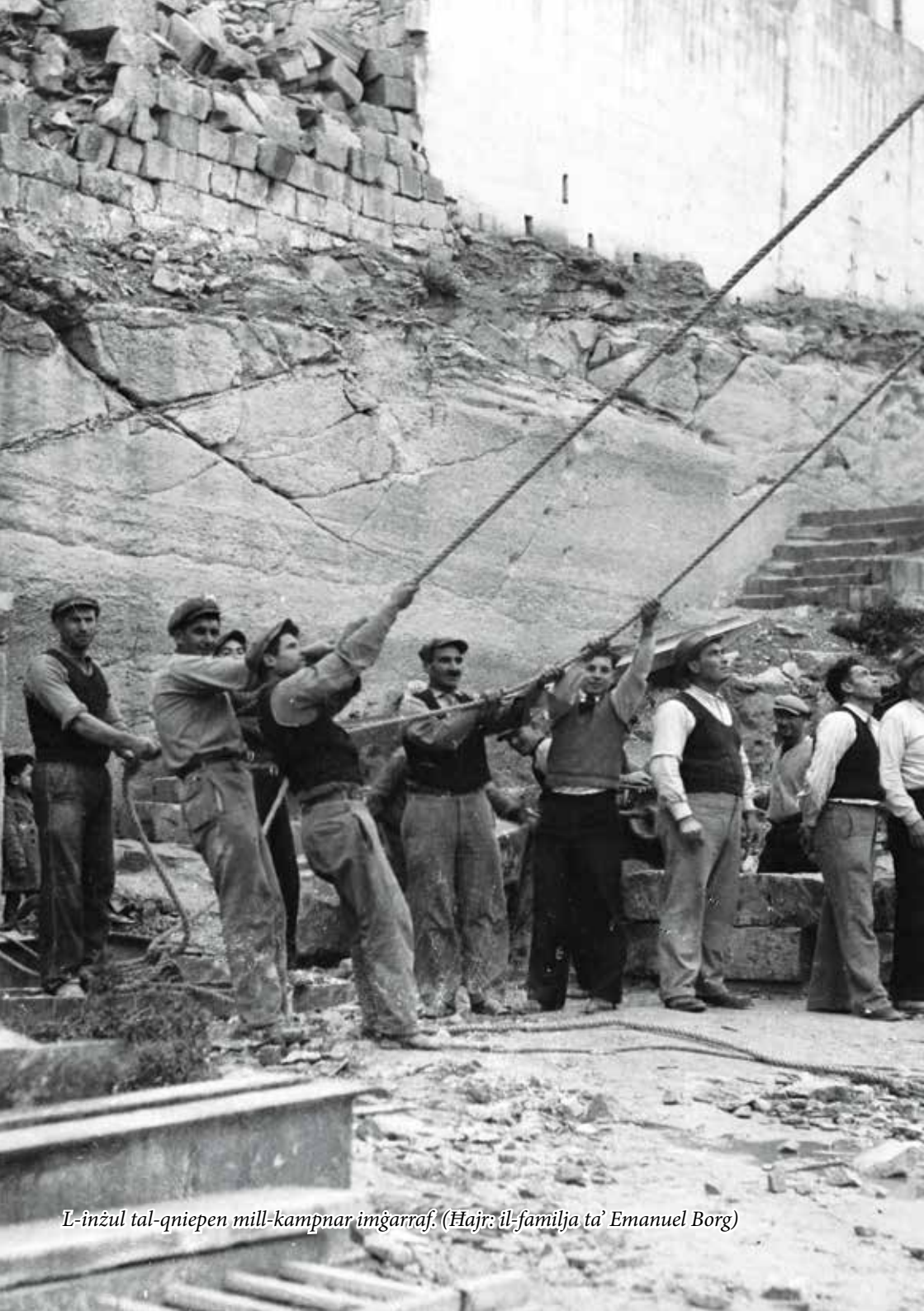
Manifattura: Taljan – Alessandro de Signi

Perjodu: Seklu XIX - 1898

Materjal: Ħarir u ħajt tal-metall tad-deheb u tal-fidda

Daqs: 80.5cm x 161cm

Din l-informazzjoni giet miġbura minn Atelier del Restauro, u hija silta mir-rapport finali li ġie mahruġ.



L-inżul tal-qniepen mill-kampnar imġarraf. (Hajr: il-familja ta' Emanuel Borg)



Għeluq

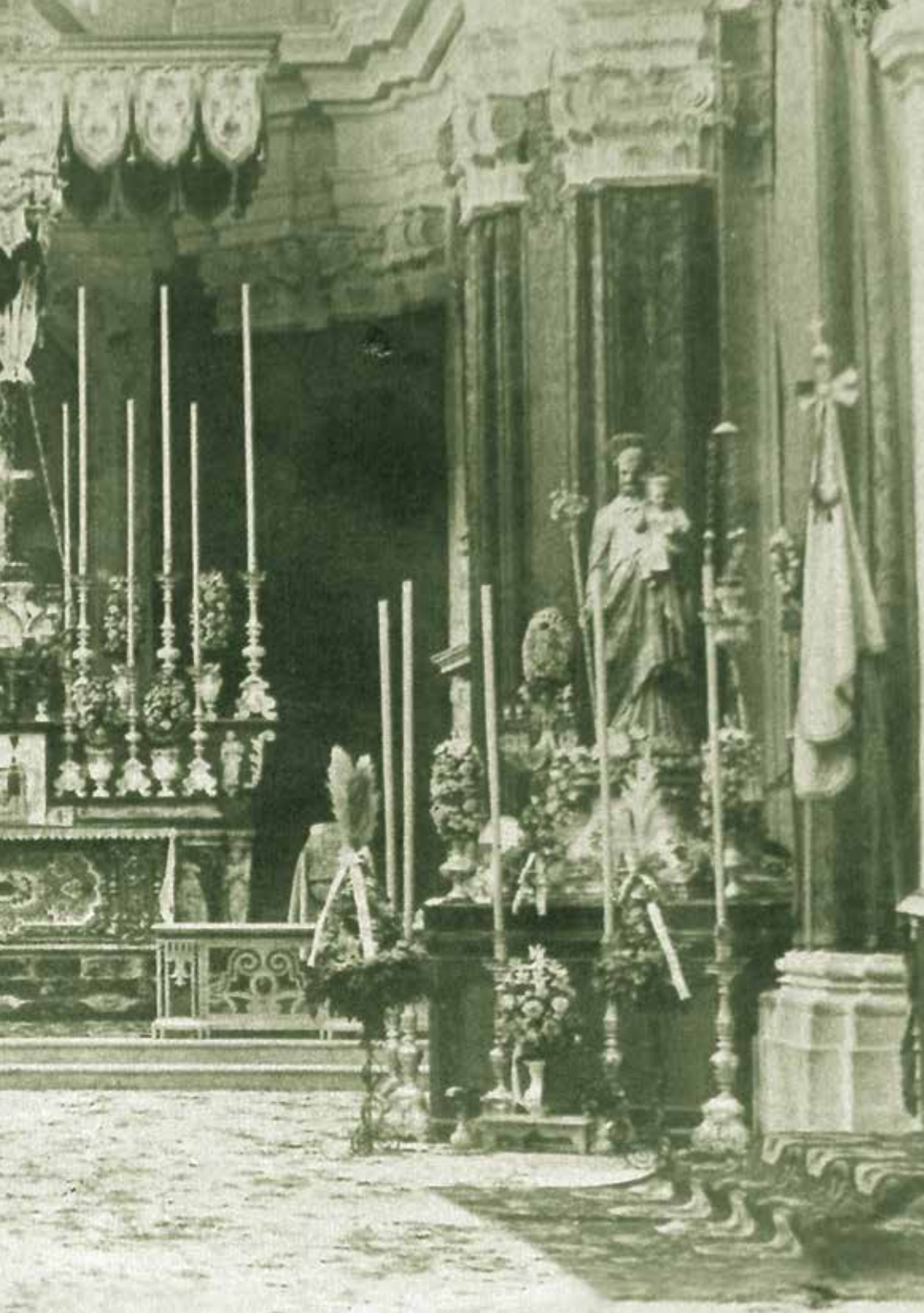
L-Assoċjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara temmen bis-shiħ li l-iżvilupp ta' raħal u territorju ma jistax ikun komplut jekk ma jinkludix fih iż-żamma u l-konservazzjoni ta' dak li sawwar lill-istess raħal matul ir-radda taż-żminijiet.

Ir-raħal tal-Kalkara mhux eċċezzjoni. Fl-aħħar sekl u sehħew żviluppi kbar li biddlu l-għamla tiegħu: bini ġdid, toroq mal-medda kollha, u saħansitra negozji u industrij li sabu ruħhom f'din l-art. Dan biex ma nsemmgħux iż-żieda fil-popolazzjoni, id-diversifikazzjoni tagħha u anki l-mod ta' kif il-poplu jħares lejn din iż-żona. Anzi, wieħed jazzarda jgħid li fil-Kalkara sehħew żviluppi esponenzjalment kbar ħafna meta nqisu dak li garrbet minħabba t-Tieni Gwerra Dinjija.

Ma nistgħux inħarsu biss lejn l-imgħoddi b'mod nostalgiku, u forsi anki melankoniku. Kull żmien fih l-istorja u l-bixra waħdiena tiegħu, iżda kull żmien irid jiftakar li huwa msejjes fuq dak li ġie mibni qabel. Għaldaqstant, għandu jkun hemm rispett minn kull generazzjoni għal dak li għamlu l-generazzjonijiet ta' qabel. Fejn tidhol il-Kalkara, dan jgħodd kemmxejn iżjed, anki għaliex il-binja ta' komunità b'saħħitha kellha sseħħ aktar minn darba minħabba dak li garrbet matul iż-żmien.

B'dan f'moħħna sar dan il-proġett ta' restawr u konservazzjoni: biex ngħożzu dak li ħallewlna missirijietna, nieħdu ħsiebu għal generazzjonijiet futuri, u nesponuh qalb daww prezenti f'dan ir-raħal u t-territorju kollu.





Conclusion

Assoc'azzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara strongly believes that the development of a village and territory cannot be thorough if it does not include the restoration and conservation of what moulded the same village during the passing of times.

The village of Kalkara is no exception. Major developments have taken place in the last century that have changed its shape: new buildings, roads along its entire stretch, and even businesses and industries that have found themselves on this land. Not to mention the increase in population, its diversification and even the way people consider this area. Contradictory, one dares to state that exponentially extensive development has taken place in Kalkara considering what it has endured due to the Second World War.

The past shouldn't be considered only nostalgically, and maybe even melancholically. Every period is sustained by its own unique history and trends, but every period should consider that it is based on what has built before. Hence, respect from each generation should be present for what previous generations have accomplished. As far as Kalkara is concerned, this is particularly more relevant, especially since the building of a stronger community had to take place more than once due to what the village had suffered over time.

With this in mind, this restoration and conservation project was carried out: to cherish what was inherited from our fathers, to give due care to it for future generations, and to expose it to all the villagers and the whole territory.



The laying down of the bells from the collapsed bell tower. (Credit: Emanuel Borg's family).



in a cotton or linen fabric. Plastic packing materials should not be used in order to prevent the formation of condensation and in consequence mold and bio-films.



The antependium after conservation.

This information was compiled by Atelier del Restauro, and is an excerpt from the final report issued.

Object: Antependium
Manufacturer: Italian – Alessandro de Signi
Period: XIX century - 1898
Materials: Silk and golden and silver metal threads
Dimensions: 80.5cm x 161cm

fixed by means of seams placed in correspondence of the two joining joints of the original fabrics and, in the central area, with threads that follow the vertical lines of the embroidery.

The perimeter has been folded inwards leaving about half a centimeter of ease with respect to the edge of the panel so as not to incur again the risk of

abrasions by rubbing against the surfaces. Finally, an additional fabric covering the panel was sewn on the back.

Suggestions for the correct conservation of the Antependium

In order to keep the work in good condition over time, it is recommended to keep it at a constant temperature (between 18°C and 22°C) and under controlled humidity conditions (50-60%).

It is also recommended not to place the work near sources of heat, to avoid direct exposure to sunlight and to take care that the room/storage in which it will be placed is not subject to water infiltration.

It is also a good practice to keep the work under control in order

to promptly notice the occurrence of problems or damage.

Detail during the sewing of the embroidery.



Stain Removal

An attempt has been made on and solvents (alcohol, ligroin and acetone). The final result was that of a discreet lowering of the waterstains of larger dimensions through the application of water and a surfactant (*sapoin*).

Cleaning

All the golden metal surfaces were mechanically treated with

cotton wool soaked in ligroin. The treatment, in addition to having removed most of the oxidations, has made the surfaces more shiny, especially the flat-rolled ones.

Consolidation

All the lacerations have been consolidated by placing on the front and back of the work local portions of resin-coated Lyon veil. The perimeter has been consolidated on local supports treated with Beva 371 O.F film 65 resin. At this juncture all the warps were ordered and put back in position, finally stopped by the application of controlled heat.

Mounting

In agreement with the Parish and Associazione Wirt il-Kalkara, for reasons of conservative integrity, it was decided to replace the wooden frame

with a polycarbonate panel. The front surface of the panel was covered with a silk fabric of the same colour tone as the background of the original. The work was

During the cleaning and lightening of the watermark stains.



Detail during the dry cleaning process.



Abundant vaporization was carried out on the entire surface in order to restore the fibers their natural hydration and elasticity.

Vaporization

The work has been carefully dry cleaned from the front and on the back by means of controlled low suction power vacuum cleaner, using filter nets to protect the fabrics.

Details of the antependium showing damages to silk fabric.



Dry Cleaning

The first operation performed was the single removal of each nail that fixed the perimeter of the Antependium so as not to further compromise the state of conservation of the fabric.

Disassembly

Restoration phases and technical procedures

From both tactile and visual observation it was found that the thin silk fabric is very fragile. Silk fibre is considered to have the lowest resistance of all fibres to degradation from ultraviolet light known as photo degradation. It follows that one of the reasons that silk is the most fragile fibre under light exposure is the fact that it is the finest natural fibre. A series of cuts and lacerations. A fine layer of dust obscures the original colours of the textile and embroidery.

Observation of the current state of the antependium.



The restoration

The conservation and restoration of the main altar's antependium depicting the 'Agnus Dei' conserved inside the Parish Church of Kalkara dedicated to Saint Joseph was completed in February 2020 by the company Atelier del Restauraio, chosen after a public call made by Assocjazzjoni Wirt il-Kalkara during the months of June and July 2019.

The endeavour consisted in the care of the artistic value of the work of art and of its constituent materials. This brought about the necessity of a scientific and methodological approach for the proper conservation and restoration of the artefact. The project was led by Dr. Maria Grazia Zenani and Ms. Valentina Lupo.

Manufacturing technique

The important work consists of an antependium of Italian manufacture by Alessandro de Signi in 1898. The antependium is made of a woven silk fabric interwoven with silver foil yarns with an embroidery in the centre made of metal yarn with a paper core representing the 'Agnus Dei' framed by floral borders. The artefact was mounted on a wooden frame by means of perimeter nailing and had a white lining that was fixed to the frame. The metallic yarn decorations were made using different techniques and with various types of yarn, in order to create a variation in brightness due to the different refraction.

Brief state of Conservation

The Antependium was not found in a good condition with damage pertaining to both wear and tear and environmental factors. The latter includes exposure to light, dust, temperature changes and humidity. The harmful effects of light had caused the weakening of the lama fabric while the handling caused the deterioration and embrittlement of the lama silk along the perimeter.



During the treatment of lacerations in silk fabric.



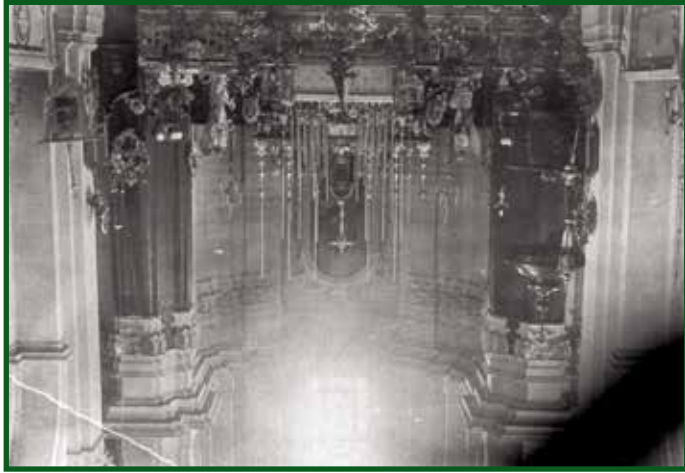
plated silver reliquary was inaugurated, half of its expenses donated by a benefactor, while during the beginning of the twentieth century more items were procured, such as the gold-plated *girandola* sculptured by Giuseppe Gonzi (1902), and two new statues one of Our Lady of Lourdes and

another one of Our Lady of Sorrows respectively.

In 1921 a new titular statue of Saint Joseph patron of the Catholic Church was made. It was sculptured in papier-mâché by the Gozitan artist Agostino Camilleri and was donated to the Parish by the *Circolo San Giuseppe* in the same year. Meanwhile, in 1922 the altar of Our Lady of Sorrows was blessed, with the painting done by Ramiro Call. In 1932 some modifications were made to the pedestal of the statue of Saint Joseph through a decree issued on 12th December 1931, costing £30 and collected from the parishioners. Mons. Joseph Ciangura left in his will his pectoral

cross to adorn this statue.

The high altar decorated for the feast of Corpus, early 20th century.



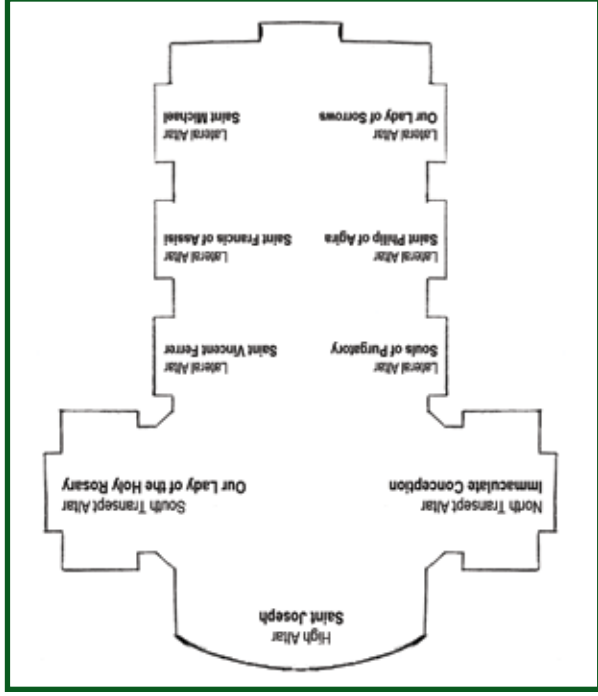
Mons. Michael Gonzi 1885-1984.



Almost all the works of art that were kept in the church were destroyed during World War II in the enemy attack on 10th April 1942. Fortunately, the embroidered central part of the antependium of the high altar was saved since it was stored inside a rock-cut cupboard located in the sacristy. The same fortune befell on the *girandola* and one of the candlesticks of the high altar.

The distribution of the altars in the former Parish Church. For the feast of 1899 a gold-

A rich antependium, or rather the embroidered central part of the antependium of the high altar, technically known as the embroidered *palla*, was also ordered from the same Italian firm. In this antependium the central figure is the lamb, a symbol of the holy Eucharist, certainly depicted here with the aim of this sacred item being used not only for the titular feast, but also in the feasts of the Eucharist. Unfortunately nothing was found about who was the designer.

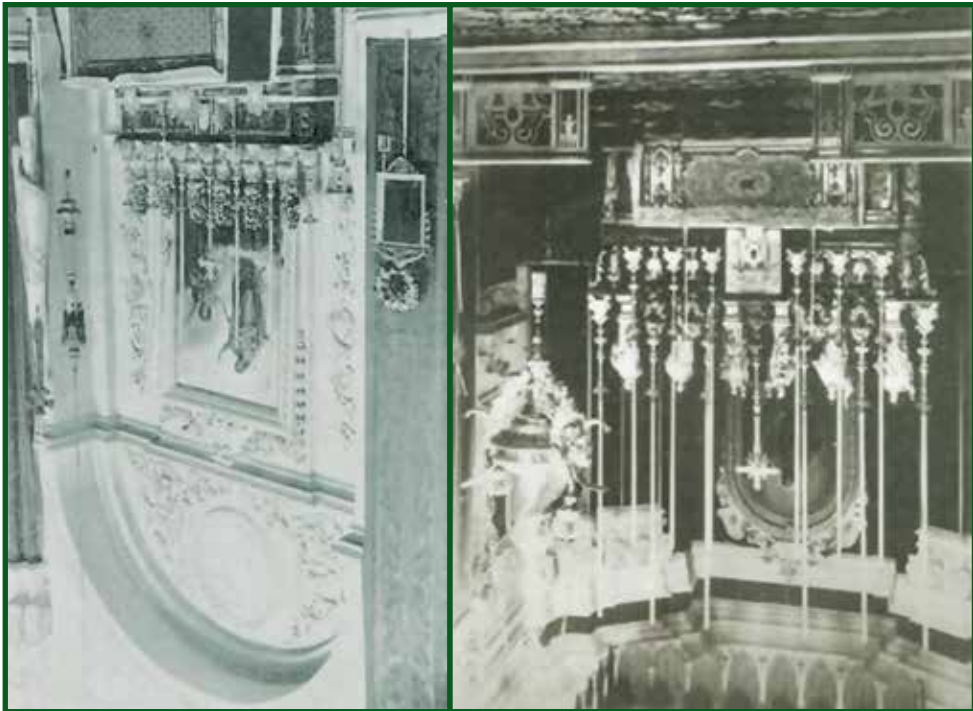


Remnants of the Confraternity's embroidered banner. Parish Priest Ciangura ordered various liturgical accessories including embroidered items and other fabric works from the Italian firm Alessandro de Signi. These sacred accessories included chasubles, dalmatics, flowered brocade for the altar-canopy, flowered satin, fringe, damask for antependiums and copes, and further brocade for the baldacchino.

high altar tabernacle, a cross, an umbrella for the Holy Viatum and a small silver canopy. Some contributions were made by some benefactors for these costs. Meanwhile, before the feast, the gilding of the titular statue of Saint Joseph was completed by the gilder Giorgio Schembrì.



The high altar and the one dedicated to the Souls of Purgatory decorated for the feast of Saint Joseph. The embroidered centre-piece of the high altar's antependium is clearly seen.



Saint Philip, painted by Lazzaro Pisani, an artist from Zebbug.



artists. This painting cost £27. However, several works by the Italian painter Filippo Fortunato Venti were also executed, including that of the Immaculate Conception in the north transept, of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in the chancel, of the Annunciation, Saint Anthony, Saint Agnes, Saint Fortunato and of the Souls of Purgatory. The latter is painted as remembrance of the two daughters of a certain Fabri from Kalkara, who had died at a young age.

From the Italian firm Gio. & G. Fratelli Bertarelli, which had its principal seat in Milan, various silver accessories were bought, including the silver lily of the titular statue which was donated by Nicola Cachia in 1899, the sanctuary lamp, a door for the

two chasubles were purchased, as well as brocade and gold gallon. After the founding of the Confraternity in April 1898, a banner of the Holy Viaticum and a small banner of the Christian Doctrine were made. The main white banner was sewn by a certain Vassallo. As from this year Kalkara had his first Parish Priest, Fr. Joseph Ciangura. A set of thirteen candlesticks was purchased from Valletta, and later in the same year they were silver plated, while the temporary pedestal of the statue of Saint Joseph was gilded and completed by Abram Gatt. An altar-canopy and a baldacchino were sewn by a certain Fortunato, while a set of statue-bearer supports (*forcini*) was ordered, and a room in the sacristy was organised as a repository for the storage of these accessories.

The first titular statue of Saint Joseph carved in France by the statuary Etienne Puccini in 1897.



During the same year the statue-stand, with wood inlaying, for the statue of Saint Joseph was made. This was to be the first titular feast, celebrated on the second Sunday of July, so various other accessories were also purchased including a silver monstrance, a display case for the sacristy, twelve crosses for the eventual consecration of the church, seven small candlesticks, a clock and even some copes. The marble



The procession in Kinella Street during one of the first titular feasts of Saint Joseph.

baptismal font was also bought, along with a silver spoon used for the administration of the same sacrament. This year also saw the completion of several paintings, the most important being the one depicting the patronage of Saint Joseph by Giuseppe Calli, which is signed in reverse as a sign of protest that several churches were preferring work from lower paid foreign

The antependium

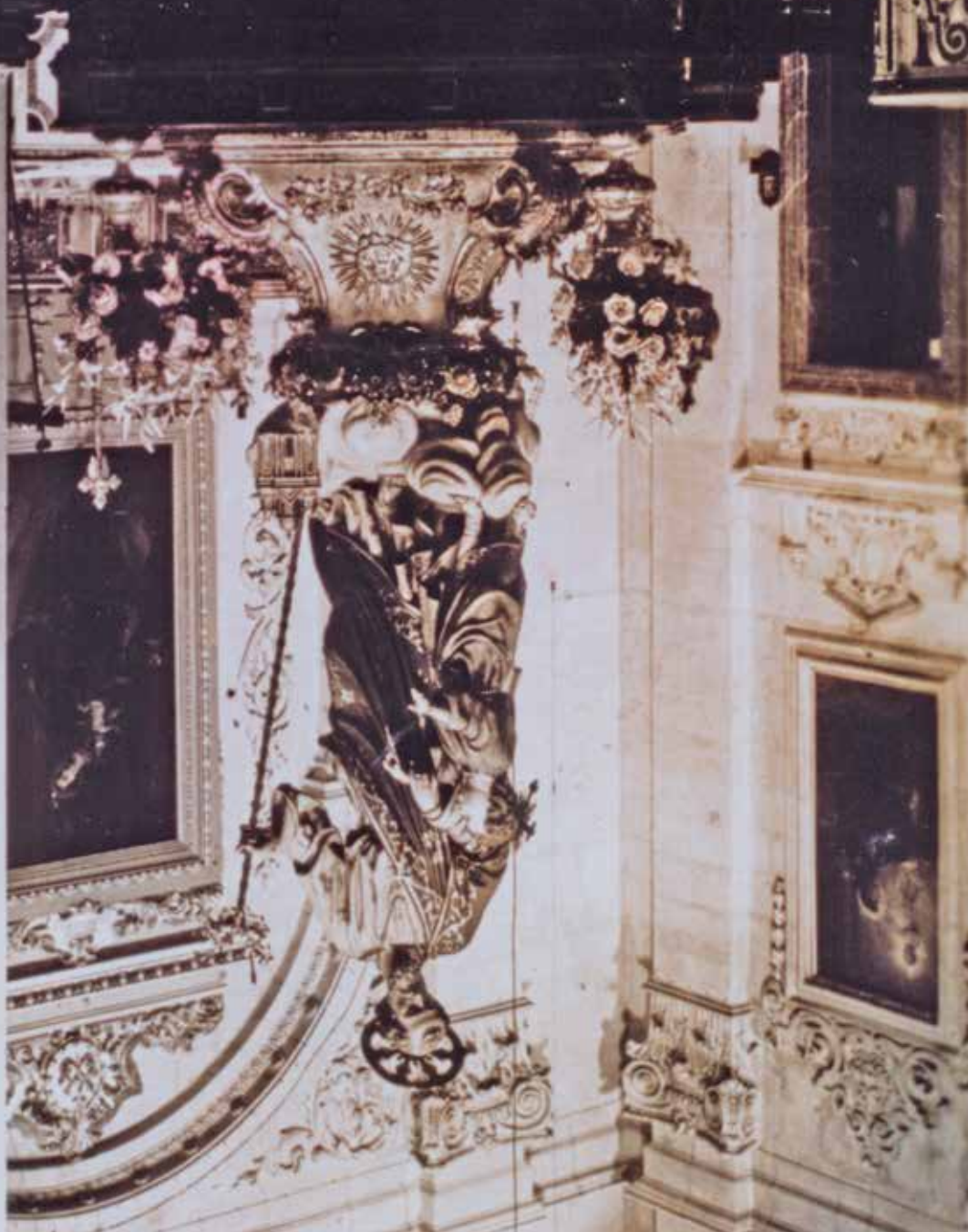
Promptly once the construction of the previous church was completed in 1896, it began to be decorated with works of art of various kinds. The builders of the church, the firm F. Cilia & Co., at the end of their commission decided to donate a painting of Saint Philip to this church since they hailed from Zebbug, and is highly acclaimed for its exotic colors and details. In the same year the altar and the painting of the Holy Rosary in the south transept were donated by benefactor Antonio Bezina, the painting depicting Our Lady of Pompeii made by painter Giuseppe Calli, the altar and the painting of Saint Vincent Ferrer donated by benefactor Vincenzo Borda, and the altar and painting of Saint Francis donated by benefactor Toussaint DeMaria. The artists of the latter two paintings are unknown.

During this time Canon Fr. Joseph Azzopardi was exerting pressure to have Kalkara declared as a separate Parish dedicated to Saint Joseph, and all the villagers were behind him in this move. So in 1897 he ordered the first statue dedicated to this saint, which would later become the first titular statue, from the statuary Etienne Puccini situated in Toulouse, France. This statue was made of terracotta, depicted Saint Joseph holding Jesus in his hand, was decorated in the richest way and costed 400 French Francs. In April of the same year a temporary pedestal for this statue was taken to sculptor Abram Gatt so as to carve sculpture on it.

Meanwhile, on 20th October the door of the tabernacle was purchased, while at the same time some altar cards and five chasubles were acquired, and a painting by a certain Abela was paid for. In November, Canon Azzopardi continued to purchase the final necessary accessories for the sacred rites and other celebrations. On the 10th of the month

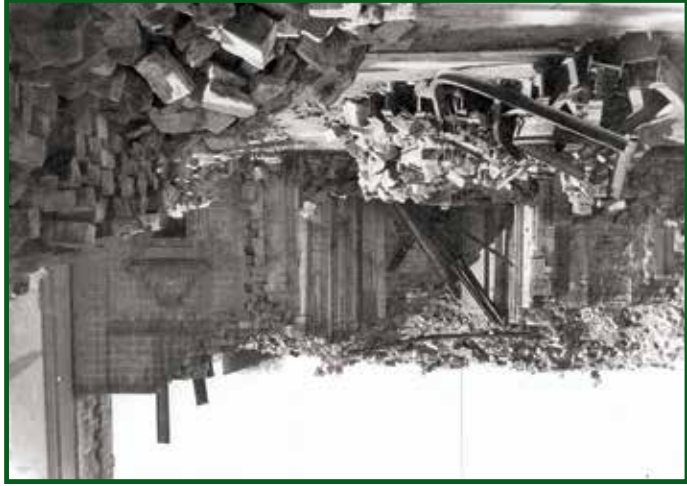


The titular statue of Saint Joseph, sculptured by Agostino Camilleri in 1921.



World War II broke out in 1939 and Kalkara was bound to suffer like the rest of the country. The population had risen to about 1700 people. Several tragedies happened, some of them including the demise of various villagers, but the date of 10th April 1942 and the time of 5pm mark the siege of the Parish Church with enemy bombs and its complete destruction. Many artistic works were lost that day, including the titular statue of Saint Joseph. Only the paintings, that had been transferred to Gozo on the instructions of Bishop Michael Gonzi who hailed from Kalkara, and some other accessories, that were stored in a rock-cut cupboard in the sacristy, were saved. All the rest was a complete ruin, and the people of Kalkara were left orphans without a church.

The Church ruins. (Credit: War Damage Commission)



The second Parish Priest of Kalkara was Fr. Eleazzaro Balzan who was installed on 5th July 1925. He planned the construction of an organ balcony, designed by artist Giuseppe Decelis, to be built in 1933 through a decree issued on 11th February of the same year. The large pipe-organ was acquired by the church in 1925 after a generous donation.

The previous Church as seen from Kalkara's strand.



The second Parish Priest of Kalkara was Fr. Eleazzaro Balzan who was installed on 5th July 1925. He planned the construction of an organ balcony, designed by artist Giuseppe Decelis, to be

to 1,111 kgs) and 24 *ratol* (equivalent to 19 kgs). It costed more than £118, of which £70 were raised by the parishioners during a special collection. The mandatory altars were also purchased, and on 22nd December 1898 the marmist Mariano Russo was paid £81 for the high altar, quite expensive since it was made of fine and coloured marble. The same marmist sculptured the two altars of the transepts, as well as the altar of Saint Philip, the altar of the Souls of Purgatory and the marble chancel that surrounds the presbytery. At the start of the twentieth century, a wooden pulpit designed by Giuseppe Decelis and sculptured by Giuseppe Gonzi was installed.

Meanwhile, in 1914 Captain Nicola Azzopardi left in his will the sum of £1000 as inheritance to the Parish Church of Kalkara with the purpose of building the two side naves. However, as there were still some fees to be paid in respect of building costs and accessories expenses, it was decided to pay them instead especially since the architect claimed that that sum was not enough.

The church was consecrated on 30th January 1921, and it was decided to build the bell tower that was to accompany this building in accordance to the original plans of the Parish Church. On Sunday 1st July 1923, Archbishop Dom Mauro Caruana blessed the first stone of the bell tower, which was soon completed since several parishioners contributed extensively towards its construction. For the realisation of this project various activities were held, among them an outdoor fair in which the band *San Giorgio* of Cospicua took part.

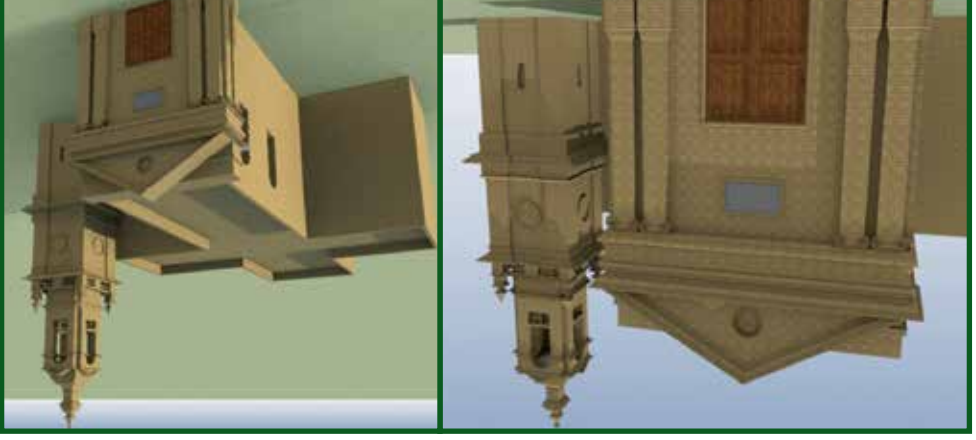
Fr. Eleazzaro Balzam, second Parish Priest, 1886-1949.



The blessing of the belfry's first stone during 1923. (Credit: Anthony Balzam)



Digital rendering showing the previous Parish Church. (Designed by Christian Mizzi)



other works of sculpture, among them the two perspectives of the altars of the Holy Rosary and of the Immaculate Conception, perspectives of other lateral altars and 36 column capitals. Meanwhile, in January 1897, painting works of the walls of the church began, while sculpture works were being done concurrently by a certain Michele. The stone-levelling of the façade of the church started on 15th May 1897, while its sculpture commenced during July by a certain Michellino. At the same time the marble of the presbytery and sacristy floor was laid by the Moschetti firm.

A decree of Archbishop Pietru Pace issued on 10th December 1897, declared Kalkara as an independent Parish, detached from that of Vittoriosa. It was dedicated to Saint Joseph, as was the intention from the initiation of this project. Canon Fr. Joseph Azzopardi was appointed Vicar Curate until 8th January 1898 when Canon Fr. Joseph Ciangura took over as the first Parish Priest of the new Parish. Concurrently Fr. Gliuau was appointed Vice Parish Priest. The first baptism was that of Joseph Attard on 15th December 1897, while the first funeral was that of John Azzopardi at the age of 78 on 13th December 1897.

The construction of the Church was now temporarily completed and so the endeavour focused around the acquisition of important works of art including paintings and liturgical accessories. Through a decree dated 6th April 1898, the Confraternities of the Sacrament, the Holy Rosary and Saint Joseph were canonically established as one Confraternity under the patronage of Saint Joseph. In the same year the first bell was acquired, made in 1896 by Julius Cauchi and weighing 14 *qantar* (equivalent

Pietru Pace attended the occasion, arriving in a special car and was greeted joyously by the people of Kalkara. A throne was setup with a chair for the Archbishop and for the occasion the streets were lit through gas by Mr. Cordina. The committee invited two marching bands to perform a musical programme for this occasion, and fireworks were let off. The trowel that was used for this occasion was specially manufactured at the Malta Drydocks, and it was the same trowel that was then reused for the blessing of first stone of the present church.



*Canon Fr. Joseph Azzopardi
1848-1913.
(Credit: Fabian Mangion)*



*Fr. Joseph Ciangura, first Parish Priest of the new Parish of Kalkara,
1871-1931.*

Albeit the villagers were poor and the construction of the church meant substantial finances, in 1892 an important benefactor emerged: Chev. Carmelo Bugeja, who was also a member of the committee. Nonetheless, substantial efforts were done by several other persons to raise the necessary funds, among them Vincenzo Borda who was in charge of collections from the villagers and Gio. Batta Borda who had donated £100 to Canon Azzopardi for the foundation of the main altar of this church. Moreover, Canon Azzopardi donated funds from his own pocket for this project, while approximately £920 came from donations of the Wied Għammiq Cemetery.

Construction works were entrusted to F. Cilia & Company, and were completed towards the end of the year 1895. Hence during the following year the church began to be furnished and finalised. The building was 30.5 meters (110 feet) long, and 20.5 meters (67 feet) wide by 10 meters (32 feet). In September 1896 the marble was laid, and the decoration and sculpture works on the titular painting perspective where completed. The latter were carried out by a certain Salvatore who did several

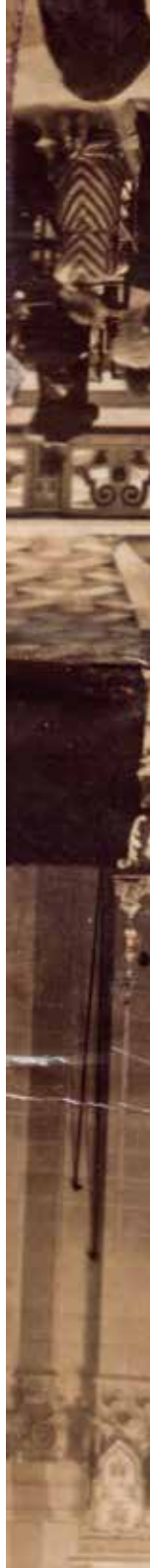
Church construction

On 23rd August 1884 merchant Fortunato Gùlia filed an application with the Archbishop's Curia of Malta, before Archbishop Carmelo Conte Scicluna, to donate part of his land in Kalkara for the building of a church for the use of the people of village, thus serving as an alternative to the church of Our Saviour. Through a decree issued on the same day, the Archbishop accepted this request, and delegated Canon Primicerius Fr. Joseph Azzopardi, Rector of the church of Our Saviour, as responsible for the building of this new church. This donation was accepted in accordance with the deed issued by Notary Giuseppe Rossi on August 24th 1884.

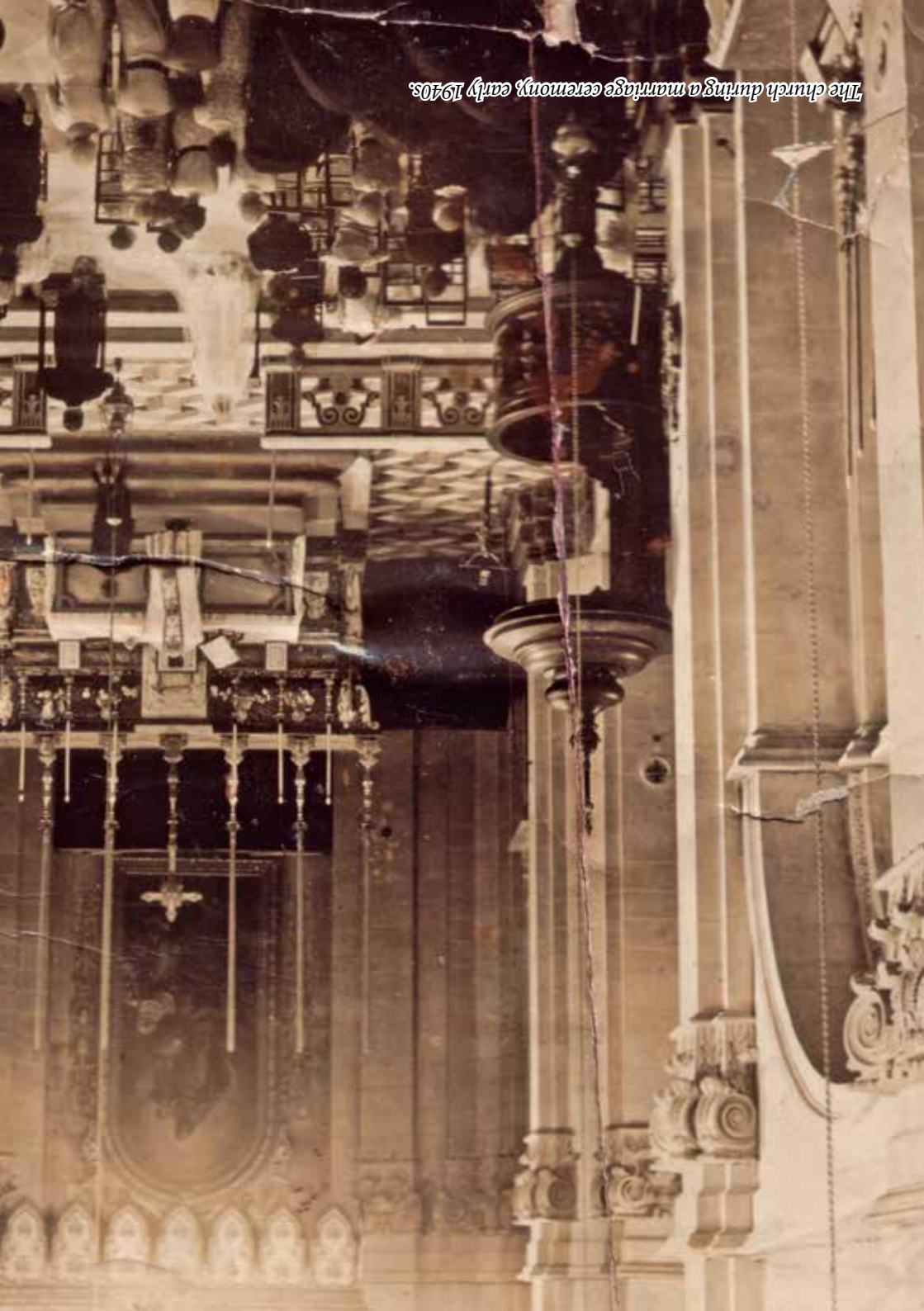
Forthwith, Canon Azzopardi constituted a committee for the building of the church, composed by the merchants Carmelo Bugeja, Fortunato Gùlia, Gio Batta Farrugia together with Orazio Agius and the lawyer Dr. Paolo DeBono as Secretary. The Archbishop approved this committee by a decree of 13th September 1884.

Architect Guglielmo Attard, an Admiralty Engineer, was commissioned to prepare the designs for this church, a task he did free of charge. Since the land that Gùlia offered was not large enough, another piece of land adjacent to it, owned by the Cospicua Chapter, was bought. For this purpose and in order to raise the necessary funds, Canon Azzopardi rented a property from Mr. Spinocchio in which *Teatrino San Giuseppe*, a small theater, was setup. At that time the population of Kalkara was about 900 people or 150 families.

Works on the foundations of the new church began in 1887, while a small model of the building was constructed and exhibited to the public. The foundation works were completed within two years, thus on 22nd June 1890 at 5.30pm the first stone was laid and blessed. Archbishop



The church during a marriage ceremony, early 1970s.



Kalkara

The village of Kalkara, situated in the South Eastern Region of Malta, has a population of around 3,014. The name is derived from the Latin word for lime due to the presence of a lime kiln since Roman times, hence its motto *A Calce Nomen* and the emblem represented by a green scutcheon divided in two parts: half being blue representing the sea, and the other being gold with a burning flame.

Kalkara consists of two peninsulas: that of Ricasoli, formerly known as *Punta Sottile* or *Punta delle Forche* due to the gallows found there; and that of Bighi, formerly known as *San Salvatore* due to the old church with the identical title. Two creeks form Kalkara: Rinella a name from Italian origin *arenella* due to its shape and that according to historian Gan Frangisk Abela was good for swimming; and that of Kalkara which in ancient times had several names including *Porto del Infermeria*.

Kalkara's history is buried in its glorious past: the presence of archaeological cart-ruts near it-Turretta, Egyptian stelae brought by the Phoenicians found in Bighi, and the construction of the Palaeochristian hypogea in the zone of Xaghra ta' Santa Duminka. Moreover, the first church of Our Saviour built before 1487 implies the presence of a community in the area, sustained through fishing and agriculture. Development of Kalkara surged during the periods of the Knights and British, especially with the construction of fortifications and Bighi Naval Hospital. It became an independent parish in 1897.

Kalkara bore the brunt of World War II, with a number of casualties and destroyed edifices. Reconstruction after the war proved the strength of a community to start afresh: transforming Kalkara into a gem of the Maltese islands.



Kalkara in the 1920s.



Introduction

Since its establishment, Assocjazzoni Wirt il-Kalkara has pursued and strived to preserve, not only the historical and artistic heritage of this village, but above all to present it to the people of the territory for their appreciation, knowledge and enjoyment. Moreover, a nation who does not cherish the history that carved it, does not possess a robust identity that earns it a wider dimension.

This booklet is an intrinsic part of a project that the Assocjazzoni Wirt il-Kalkara has carried out together with the Saint Joseph Parish, and with the financial aid of the European Union's LEADER Programme. The project which was applied for, and was eventually funded, was entitled *Restoration of a Hand Embroidered Antependium* and consists primarily of two distinct phases.

The first phase was the restoration of an embroidered center-piece which in the past served as the heart of the principal antependium of the main altar of the former Parish Church. The purpose was to carry out a professional restoration for which a competitive request for quotations was issued, with the intention that upon completion it would be exhibited in the hall of the Parish Church and thus appreciated throughout the year. The second phase was the publication of this booklet. The main aim was not only to carry out the restoration work, but to share the historical importance of the antependium and that of the previous Parish Church, as well as giving account of a restoration works that took place. We believe that the appreciation of a work of art would be incomplete without knowledge of the history that surrounds it, and hence the necessity of this publication.

We hope that the appreciation of this work of art will lead us to cherish all that eventually developed us as a village.



The bell tower of the church that collapsed in the war. (Credit: War Damage Commission)



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Kalkara strand in the 1930s.



Renewing the past

Documentation about the restoration of the embroidery of the antependium of the high altar of the Parish Church of Saint Joseph of Kalkara in a historical context



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*“What a country
chooses to save
is what a country
chooses to say
about itself.”*
Mollie Beattie



Text and research: Chev. Duncan Brinca

Documentation about the restoration of the embroidery of Saint Joseph of Kalkara in a historical context of the antependium of the main altar of the Parish Church of

Renewing the past

