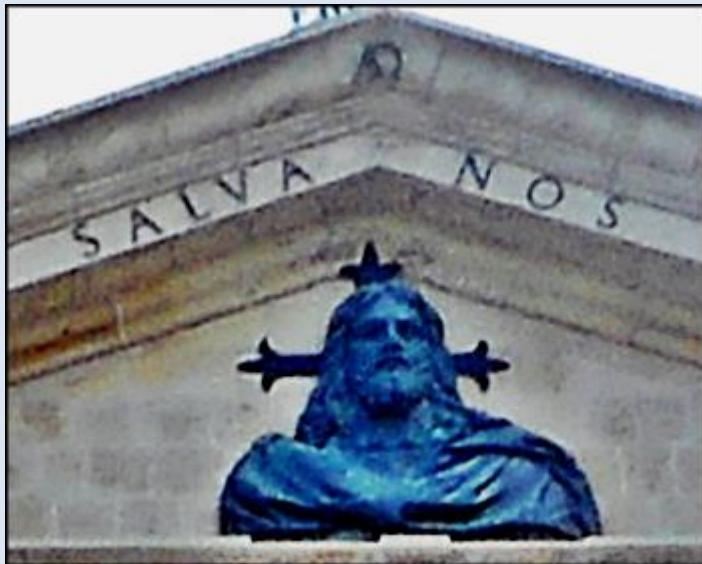


MALTA

Valetta

**Konkatedra pw.
św. Jana Chrzciciela**





Restoration of the Altar-Painting of St James

St James
Mattia Preti
Altar-painting for the Chapel of Castile, Leon and Portugal, St John's Co-Cathedral,
Oil on Canvas, 300 x 200 cm

This altarpiece represents St. James and was painted by the Calabrian artist Mattia Preti in the 1660s for the chapel of the Langue of Castile, Leon and Portugal in St John's Co-Cathedral. This period Mattia Preti was already engaged in the monumental decoration of the vault of St James.

The painting portrays St James as a pilgrim surrounded by iconographic symbols which include a bottom left representing the Langue of Leon and a castle, held by an angel, representing the Langue of Castile. The coat-of-arms on the castle represents the Langue of Portugal. An angel on the right of the painting holds a martyr's crown and palm, while an axe on the bottom right indicates his martyrdom by beheading. According to legend, St James travelled as a missionary to Compostela where he was martyred. A host of angels then carried his body to Compostela where a shrine was built. This later became one of the most venerated destinations for Christians.

The St James is a powerful image of the type of monumental Baroque art produced in the 17th century. The use of earth colours and exquisite draughtsmanship are typical of Mattia Preti. Restoration took place because of deterioration to the paint layer as well as the canvas frame caused by the passage of time.

The restoration was carried out by Giuseppe Mantella, 'Restauro e Conservazione Opere d'Arte'.

1. Consolidating the pictorial layer
Consolidating the pictorial layer of the lower part of the painting, where the pictorial layer was failing, was carried out before the painting from its place.

2. Repairing the canvas
The St James was painted on two pieces of canvas which were then sewn together. This seam gave way creating a vertical slit which ran through the lower, central area of the canvas. This was repaired during the restoration intervention and the tear was further supported by relining.

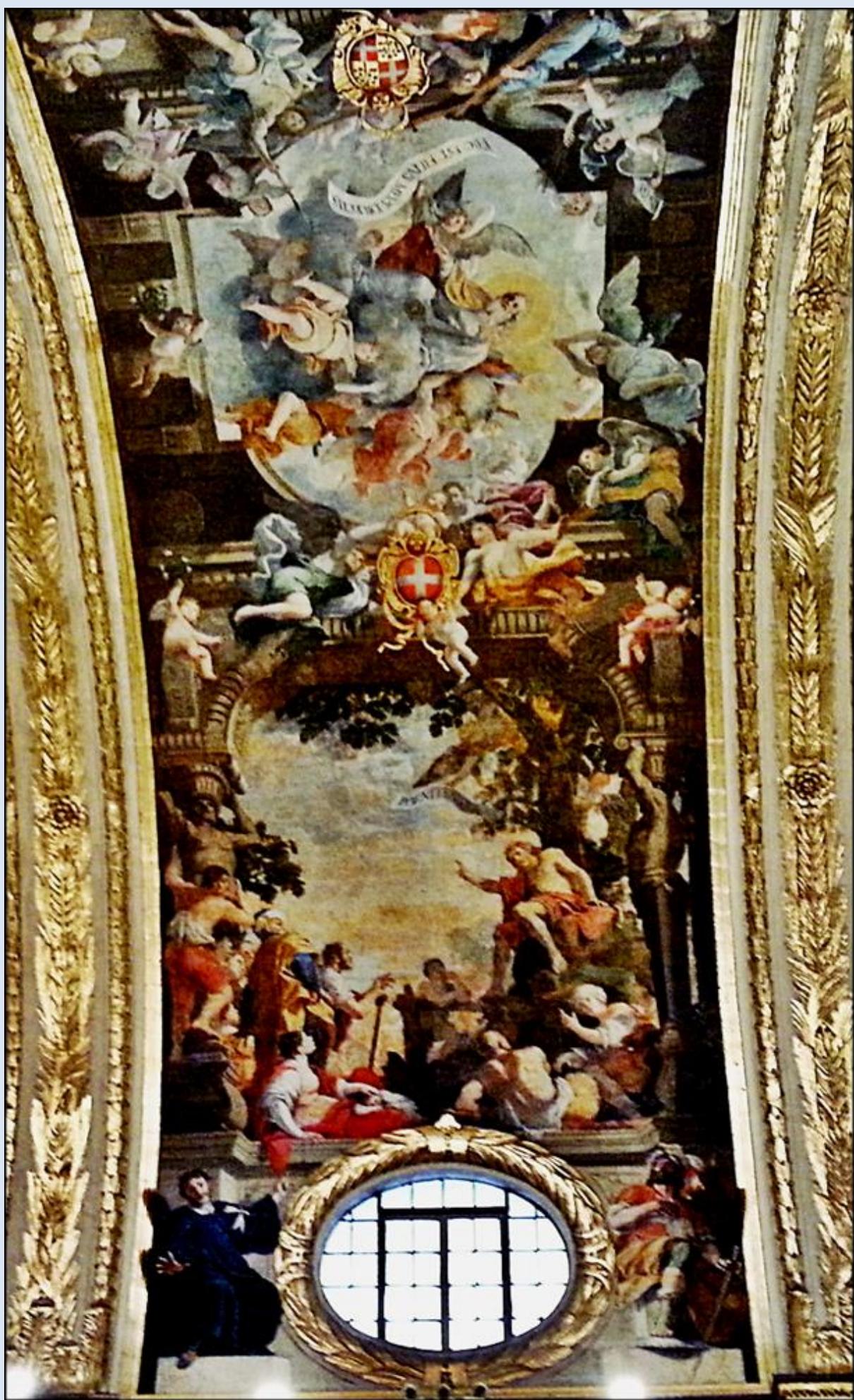
3. Relining and stretching
The painting was relined and then stretched onto an aluminium stretcher with springs which will allow the canvas to adjust to environmental changes.

4. Retouching
Following the relining procedure the paint layer was structurally restored and the canvas were filled and retouched to obtain aesthetic results.















zdjęcia: tsw

zdjęcia w czerwonej obwódkę zapożyczono z:
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