THE ANNUNZJATA CHAPEL AT TA’ L-GHOLJA – A CONSERVATION STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

The Annunzjata, or Lunzjata Chapel is situated at the tip of the Ta’ l-Gholja plateau in the village of Siggiewi. The Chapel, which possibly dates back as far as 1634, ceased to fulfil its pastoral role in the mid 1960s, after which period the Chapel was neglected. Since then, the Chapel has experienced considerable structural damage, and now poses signs of possible collapse. The structural condition of the Chapel has in fact set off a wide interest amid the wide Maltese community, and has stimulated the author to search for a conservation strategy which could possibly prolong its life.

The first part of this study delves into the philosophy underpinning conservation ethics, which will in turn guide the way forward through this study. Against this background, the history of the Chapel is considered in detail, followed by a deep appreciation of the Chapel’s cultural significance as defined in the Burra Charter in order to gauge the value of the Chapel and thereby establish whether the Chapel is worth preserving for future generations.

This is followed by a thorough understanding of the Chapel’s built architecture and its immediate surroundings in order to single out the damage mechanisms affecting the Chapel, after which the study searches for possible solutions which could arrest the damage.

These solutions will however be approached with caution in order to ensure that any proposed intervention is practical, technically sound and “ethically” acceptable. Against this background, the study ties the merits underlining the discussed options and selects the optimal way forward within the overall framework of good conservation practice, which in turn would guarantee the saving of the Chapel.