

Fragments of the Assumption's altarpiece. Claudi Lorenzale. Oil on canvas. 1854-1856. *Birth of the Virgin / Presentation at the Temple / Espousal of the Virgin / Visitation / Holy Family / Dormition.*

In October 1810, Napoleon's troops entered Solsona, where they would stay for a week. Before leaving they burned the cathedral, hence causing the loss of the altarpieces, the choir and the decoration of the *Claustre's* chapel. The chancel's gothic vault was toppled too. Only the *Mercè's* chapel was spared. As a result of all this, the major altarpiece, built in XVII c. by Miquel Vidal, was burned down.

The architect Josep Oriol Mestres was intrusted with the design of a neogothic altarpiece dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin, the cathedral's patron. A sculpted group with the Assumption presided the piece, framed in the main niche. By its sides there are four narrow sections, each with a sculpted figure and a tabernacle, alongside eight canvas painted by Claudi Lorenzale. It is known that the piece was being built in 1854 and the paintings were finished two years later.

This latter altarpiece was destroyed in August 1936 during the Spanish Civil War, with six out of the eight canvas being saved and then forgotten in the cathedral's sacristy for many years. In 2002 they were deposited in the *Museu de Solsona* and between 2010 and 2011 a cultural institution, the *Centre de Restauració de Béns Mobles de Catalunya*, was charged with its restoration. The paintings were kept in the reserve of the museum until 2021, when they were lent to the cathedral of Solsona, its original location.