

ATHENS PRESENTATION OF INNOVATIVE PROGRAMME OF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE AEDICULA OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

On Tuesday, the 24th of February/8th of March 2016, the innovative programme of conservation and restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre was presented at the Zappeion Megaron in Athens by the interdisciplinary team of the NTUA, consisting of: the head of the programme, Professor Antonia Moropoulou of the School of Chemical Engineers; the former professor of the School of Architects, Professor M. Korres; Professor A. Georgopoulos of the School of Rural and Surveying Engineering; and Professor K. Spyrakos of the School of Civil Engineering. The presentation was held upon the invitation of Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, the Rector of the NTUA, Mr I. Golias, the President, Mr G. Christou, and the Board of the Olympia and Bequests Committee.

At the presentation of the study, which has been conducted for the first time after 1810 when the Rum Orthodox erected the Aedicula, the Patriarchate was represented by Patriarch Theophilos, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, the Holy Sepulchre's Exarch in Athens, Archimandrite Damianos, other Hagiotaphite Fathers, and Archimandrite Mathaios and Hieromonk Savvas, serving at the Exarchate in Athens. Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and all Greece, Metropolitan Seraphim of Piraeus, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Messenia – Dean of the University of Athens' Faculty of Theology – and Metropolitan Pavlos of Glyfada also attended the event.

The state was represented by the Minister of Culture and Sports and emeritus professor of the NTUA, Mr Aristides Baltas, and the Deputy Minister for Culture, Research and Religious Affairs, Mr Constantinos Fotakis. Also in attendance were the President of the Greek House of Representatives, Mr Nikolaos Voutsis; the Minister of State, Mr Alexandros Flambourakis, representing the Greek Prime Minister; the former Rector, Mr Theodoros Fortsakis, representing the Opposition; the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administrative Reform, Mr Panagiotis Kouroumbli; the Deputy Finance Minister, Mr Tryfon Alexiades; the Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, Transports and Networks, Ms Marina Chrysoveloni; the President of the Union of Centrists, Mr Vasileios Leventis; the President of the Academy of Athens, Mr Thanasis Valtinos; Ms Aikaterini Paliou, representing the Prefect of Attica; the Jordan Ambassador to Greece, Mr Fawwaz Qasim Al-Eitan, the Ambassador of Israel to Greece, Ms Irit Ben-Abba, the Palestinian Ambassador to Greece, Mr Marwan Emile Toubassi, the Greek Ambassador to Lithuania, Mr Asteriades, Members of the Greek Parliament, the President of the Bank of Attica, Mr Ioannis Gamvrilis, the President of the Technical Chamber of Greece, Mr Stasinou, Rectors, Deputy Rectors, Deans and professors of the National Technical University of Athens, and many others.

The event included four different units, namely: a) Opening Speeches, b) Presentation of the Innovative Programme of Conservation and Restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre in the Church of the Resurrection, c) Remarks and d) Closing.

Patriarch Theophilos addressed attendants in Greek, pointing out that the event consists a landmark in the history of the Church of the Resurrection, and that whilst conducting the restoration study, the interdisciplinary team did its utmost not to prevent freedom of access to thousands of pilgrims visiting the Holy Sepulchre from across the world. The

presentation of the Interdisciplinary Study, said His Beatitude, paves the way for the materialization of the assigned project.

In his address, Minister Baltas pointed out that the presence of the leaders of the Christian Communities of the Holy Sepulchre, namely the Custos of the Holy Land of the Franciscans and the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, sets the signal for and a perspective of consultation within the Christian world.

The Rector of the NTUA, Professor Ioannis Golias, underlined that the National Technical University of Athens confirms that social and national contribution consist a significant axis of its mission, hence why it has undertaken the aforementioned innovative research. Mr Golias added that this is an emblematic project pertaining to a leading monument of global influence.

After the Patriarch's address, Ms Moropoulou and Messrs. Georgopoulos, Korres and Spyrakos presented the "comprehensive study on the documentation and diagnosis of the pathology of the Holy Aedicula and on the proposal for compatible and sustainable materials and interventions for conservation, enhancement and restoration".

The presentation was followed by comments from the International Scientific Community, i.e. the Representative of the Institute of Geological Research of the Armenian Academy of Science, Mr H. Babayan, Professor G. Tucci of the University of Florence, and representatives of the Christian Communities, His Paternity the Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land, Rev. f. Pierrebattista Pizzaballa, and His Beatitude the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem, Nourhan Manougian.

On the conclusion of the event, the Exarchate of the Holy Sepulchre hosted lunch at "Aegli Zappiou", on behalf of the NTUA's Rector, Professor Golias.

From the Secretariat-General

