

GOVERNMENTAL DELEGATE OF THE DEMOCRACY OF CYPRUS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday afternoon, 24th March/6th April 2017, Mr. Nikolaos Christodoulidis, Governmental Delegate and Manager of the Cross-cultural Office of the President of Democracy Mr. Nikos Anastasiadis, visited the Patriarchate, escorted by his wife, the Ambassador of Cyprus in Israel Mrs. Thessalia Siambou, other members of the Cypriot Democracy among whom, Ms. Louiza Varakla.

Mr. Nikolaos Christodoulidis and his escort was warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos together with the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Fr. Marc and Fr. Nikitas.

On the agenda of the meeting there was a conversation on the completion of the restoration project of the Sacred Edicule, by the initiative of the Patriarchate and the study of the National Technical University of Athens, and the significance of this project for the establishment of peace in the Holy Land.

Reference was also made on the Churches Mr. Christodoulidis visited, among which the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Capernaum and that of the Holy Apostles in Tiberias and the Russian Monastery of St. Magdalene on Tiberias shore.

Mr. Christodoulidis thanked His Beatitude for His time and the interesting conversation and asked His blessing, as well as for the visit and veneration of the Holy Sepulchre after the fitting the occasion exchanging of gifts.

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE'S THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM NAME DAY (2017)

On Saturday, 12th/25th March 2017, the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated (transferred from Wednesday) by the Patriarchate. His Beatitude bears the name of one of the Holy Forty Martyrs of the lake of Sabastia in Pontus, who celebrate on 9th March.

1. In the evening

On Friday evening the feast began with the reading of the 9th Hour at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

Afterwards, bells tolling, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood descended at the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection. There, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the Hagiotaphite Fathers venerated the Holy Deposition Shrine and the Holy Sepulchre, and then having put on His cloak, He gave the blessing in the Catholicon and Great Vespers began, with the Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread. Meanwhile, the Archbishops of the Holy Synod venerated the Horrendous Golgotha and the Deacons performed the incense procedure around the Shrines. At the end of Vespers, the

Hagiotaphite Brotherhood headed for the Patriarchate quarters.

2. On the Day of the Feast

On Saturday morning, 12th/25th March 2017, after the descend at the Church of the Resurrection and the veneration of the Holy Deposition and the Holy Sepulchre, His Beatitude was dressed in His cloak and entered the Catholicon, blessed and went up on the Throne, and the procedure of the prayers to receive the blessing from both the Priests and His Beatitude followed, while the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection was chanting festal hymns.

Once His Beatitude and the Archbishops were dressed in their liturgical vestments, the Divine Liturgy began in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, led by His Beatitude, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, and the Most Reverend Archbishops: Alexios of Tiberias, Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedona, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, and Arab-speaking Presbyters of the Patriarchate, the Hierodeacons Eulogios, Anastasios and Archdeacon Mark. Singing were the choir leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the Consul Mr. Koenis, other members of the Greek Consulate and many pilgrims.

After the Holy Eucharist and the Dismissal, a Doxology for His Beatitude's feast took place at the centre of Catholicon, with the participation of the concelebrants Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks. At the end of the Doxology, the Patriarchal Entourage headed for the Patriarchate. There at the Reception Hall, Geronda Secretary-General addressed His

Beatitude as follows:

Address of Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina on His Beatitude's our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Name Day

H.B. Theophilos III

9th March 2017

Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The Memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs, who suffered cold and other similar tortures for their confession of Christ in the lake of Sebastia in Pontus, is celebrated by Church today, in the beginning of March, and in the middle of Great Lent. This feast is before us today, as a strong hortatory challenge and encouraging reinforcement for the continuation of our spiritual struggle towards a worthily participation in the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the Mother of Churches and the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in it, the memory of these Great and Holy Forty Martyrs is associated with the feast of Your Holy Beatitude's Name Day, as you God-lovingly bear the name of one of them, the Holy Martyr Theophilos.

For this double occasion of the memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs and Your Name Day, the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist was celebrated, and a thanksgiving Doxology was sang in the middle of the earth, where our God worked our salvation and where the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection stands, with the participation of all the members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, the Clergy and laity from near and afar places belonging to the jurisdiction of our Patriarchate.

Continuing the prayer we started in the Temple, for Your Beatitude's health and longevity, we conclude now in this

historic Hall of the Throne, and express all that is worthy, demure and praising, as proven by Your works, that befit You.

And we commence by saying that Your Beatitude's distinguishing pastoral concern, care and diligence for our Greek-Orthodox Arab-speaking congregation has been once again unceasing, manifested at Your pastoral visits either at the feasts with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the preaching of the Divine word, or by providing financial aid on different occasions of need, according to the measure and the ability of the Patriarchate. On this field, with the financial aid of the Patriarchate, we celebrated recently the inauguration of the Holy Church of St. George of the border Community of Pkea in north Israel, and the suitable for it Priest was ordained. Caring for the Arab-speaking congregation, Your Beatitude has recently started the procedure for the operation of the Joint Council, an institution which specifies the participation limits of laity in matters concerning the Patriarchate.

The places of worship and estate rights of our Patriarchate were likewise protected and secured, as in the cases of the property of the Monastery of St. Theodosios, in the surrounding area of St. Savvas' Lavra, which is a no construction area, and in the Metochion of Gethsemane opposite the Church of the Resurrection, which was in danger by the treacherous and illegally occupying the neighbouring guesthouse Israeli settlers. In order to safeguard these property rights of the Patriarchate, large sums of money were paid to court and lawyers' fees.

The humanitarian activity of our Patriarchate was made manifest again in practice, by the third visit of Your Beatitude in the Syrian refugees' camp in Zaatar in Jordan, where humanitarian help prepared by the Patriarchate's office in Amman, was offered.

All the above, Your Beatitude, took place while for more than one year, lying on Your shoulders, was the responsibility and

the care in both theory and practice of the work of the restoration, conservation and rehabilitation project of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, according to the study of the Interdisciplinary Team of the N.T.U.A. under the coordination of the present with us today, Professor Antonia Moropoulou, with the financial contribution of noble donators, whose names are in the book of life. This work, is the capping stone of Your works, as a difficult task was made easy, and what was impossible was made possible, for which Your Beatitude first of all, and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood who cooperated with willingness and devotion with You, are able to boast modestly, for they have added a fixative and sustaining stone to the pre-existing work of Komnenos and our Fathers, as an eternal mark of the religious peace-making and cultural mission of our blessed nation in the history and glory of the Resurrected from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sincerely congratulating Your Beatitude for these, I raise my glass on behalf of the Brotherhood, wishing you undiminished health for as many years as possible, peace, solidarity and governmental power, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, towards the creation of more good works for the benefit of our Holy Congregation and the glory of our Trinitarian worshiped God. So be it."

His Beatitude was also addressed by His Excellency the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, as follows:

"Your Beatitude, Most Reverend Fathers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's feast is of special significance to all of us, as the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the noble Congregation, among which are those who serve at the Greek Consulate, honour the Name Day of the Head of the Zion Church, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude's the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

It is a special honour as well as joy for me to be present at this feast for the first time since the undertaking of my duties in Jerusalem. On this occasion, I would like, Your Beatitude, to convey on behalf of the Greek Government, its unwavering confidence and support towards the Patriarchate, the Hagiographite Brotherhood and You personally, together with the recognition and our admiration for the multi-task work that you, tirelessly and with self-denial perform. Allow me to express our most sincere and heartfelt wishes for health, longevity and strength, so that you continue to accomplish Your important mission.

Only a few days after the bright ceremony of the completion of the restoration project of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, which inspired admiration and deep respect to Christians worldwide, we are given the opportunity to recognize that this project would have never been materialized without Your historic initiative, Your vision and sense of great responsibility for the protection of the exaltation of the shrines, which as You Yourself emphasized, reconciles peoples, nations and cultures, and constitutes an eloquent witness of our common human nature, our common destiny.

Your Beatitude,

The sincere disposition for understanding and reconciliation that You demonstrate and systematically cultivate, not only for the relationship with the other Doctrines and Religions, but also in the broader reconciliation and peace-making effort in this unsettled region, adds moral authority and status to the Jerusalem Patriarchate, rendering it an institution of moderation and stability, amidst an era of uncertainty, instability and reorganizations which seem to favour fanaticism, intolerance and tensions.

Jerusalem Patriarchate is certainly a stable point of reference for the Greeks worldwide and symbolizes our long presence in the Holy Land, while it is an indestructible bond

of friendship and cooperation with other nations, as it also is representative of the Orthodox Christians in the region, preserving precious traditions and conveying the Ecumenical message of Orthodoxy to all destinations. For all of us, the Holy Institution is the trustee of the most important Holy Shrines of Christianity, which are being defended with devotion and self-denial by the Hagiotaphite Fathers.

Your Beatitude,

Both the Greek Government and the faithful Greeks surround You with love and devotion. Officers and others gather at the Patriarchate as pilgrims, as we witnessed a few days ago, proving the significance they attach to Your work, and the work of the Hagiotaphite Fathers.

Among them, we also pray that You may have health, strength and longevity for the benefit of the Patriarchate, the Brotherhood, Your Greek Orthodox Congregation, Orthodoxy and peace in the Holy Land. Many Happy Returns."

His Beatitude was also likewise addressed by representatives of other Orthodox Churches and congregations, which are shown at the rendering of thanks of His Beatitude at His address below:

"O wondrous prizewinners, with minds staunch with courage, as ye endured the pains of martyrdom nobly, ye passed through fire and water, O ye valiant men, coming out into the breadth of eternal salvation; ye gained the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven..." the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul-General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

"Let us rejoice in the Lord, let us shout with jubilation unto

God our Saviour" (Psalm 94:1); for He has granted us the Communion of His Heavenly and Immortal Mysteries at the celebration of the bloodless sacrifice at the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection, on the memory of the Holy and Great Forty Martyrs of Sebastia, as well as the Great Martyr Theophilos, our guardian and advocate.

These Saints were distinguished for their unanimous and wholehearted confession of their faith to crucified and resurrected from the dead Christ in front of their persecutors, the idolaters, who did not succeed in dissuading the Martyrs. For this reason, being naked in mid-winter, they were condemned to spend the night in the middle of the lake by the city of Sebastia, where they suffered a martyrs' death as their hymn writer says: "The Martyrs, O Christ God, esteemed the lake as Paradise and the cold as warmth. The threats of the tyrants did not affright their mind, nor did the noble Saints fear the assaults of torments, since they possessed the Cross as a divine weapon; for with it, as mighty men, they put the enemy to flight. Wherefore, they have also received the crown of grace".

The Sacred Memory of these Holy and Great Martyrs is especially honoured by our Holy Orthodox Church, and this is done during the period of the Great Lent. And this is so because the Holy Martyrs went through fire and water and entered the Kingdom of Heaven, fulfilling by their works the prophetic word of Prophet David: "We went through fire and water and Thou didst bring us out into refreshment" (Psalm 65:12).

Partakers of this experience were the friends and preachers of the Gospel of love and righteousness and of the light of the salvific truth of Christ, the Holy Apostles and all who faithfully followed them, the Holy Martyrs, teachers and God-bearers Prelates of our Church.

Our Mediocrity, bearing the name of Martyr Theophilos, who

participated in the chorea of the Holy Forty Martyrs of Christ's love, we render glory and thanks to the Holy Consubstantial and Life-Giving and Undivided Trinity on this Sacred Feast of our spiritual rebirth in Christ, but also for our calling to the Apostolic and Institutional position, of the Head of the Most Holy Church of Jerusalem on the one hand, and on the other hand, of the Hegoumen of the Order of Monks of the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Today's festal day, amidst the reverend and distinguished members of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Deacons and Monks, as well as Clergy of our brotherly Holy Orthodox Churches, and the participation of the faithful Christians of our Congregation, grants us with a great honour and an even greater responsibility "as those who must give account to the Lord" according to St. Paul's command: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

"For an honour to the Martyr is the imitation of a Martyr" St. Chrysostom preaches. This means that the way by which Christ's Martyr is praised, is the steadfast imitation of his faith and virtue during his life in Christ, by us who festively celebrate his Sacred Memory.

The blood of the martyrdom in Christ of the Holy Forty Martyrs and of the Holy Martyr Theophilos with them, calls all of us today to vigilance, so that the light of the witness of the sons of Christ's light may not be put out. "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:17-19).

We therefore say this, because the darkness of the persecutors

of Christ has made its appearance in our contemporary era with the form of the most demonic terrorism which plagues humanity as a whole.

Let us thus entreat the Holy Martyrs who have parressia before God the Father, so that by their prayers and the intercession of the Most Blessed our Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, we may bear witness in this world of the martyria of love, peace and righteousness of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we may be found worthy to celebrate the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For all these, we pray for all who have been praying with us and have honoured this feast, that you may have the strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God. We express our heartfelt thanks to those who addressed Us, Geronda Secretary-General, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy Synod and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Joppa, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Acre – Ptolemaida, Reverend Fr. Charalambos Bansour, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, Professor Mrs. Moropoulou, the Zion Patriarchal School Director and teacher, Mr. Nikolaos Souliotis, and all participants in this feast.

To the health of every one of us!"

The reception at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate was followed by a festal meal. The above mentioned Church Services were broadcast live by the Jerusalem Patriarchate radio station.

From Secretariat-General

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THE CEREMONY MARKING THE COMPLETION OF THE RESTORATION PROJECT OF THE SACRED EDICULE OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

On Wednesday morning, 9th/22nd March 2017, the ceremony marking the completion of the restoration and rehabilitation of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre took place in front of the Sacred Edicule. This project began one year ago, by the initiative of Jerusalem Patriarchate and the agreement among the Christian Communities, the Franciscans and the Armenians; the research study and the work were undertaken by the Interdisciplinary Team of the National Technical University of Athens (N.T.U.A.) under the coordination of Professor Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou.

Present at this ceremony was His Excellency the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Alexis Tsipras, who had visited His Beatitude at

the Patriarchate earlier that morning, Ministers of Greece, Mrs. Mika Ertegün, Commissioner of the World Monuments Fund, major and minor donators for the completion of this project, His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who had also visited His Beatitude at the Patriarchate earlier, Representatives from Mount Athos, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki, Representatives from the State of Israel, such as Mr. Yacoub Salame and Cesar Marjeh, the Israeli Jerusalem Police Chief Mr. Yoram Levi, Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. Tsahi Hanekby; present were also, as invited, the majority of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, led by their Hegoumen, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The ceremony began with the chanting of Paschal hymns by the choir leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos and his team and "The angel cried to her that is full of grace..." immediately after the address of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem (see [link:https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/03/22/30993](https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/03/22/30993)) . His Beatitude's address was followed by the addresses of the Custos of the Holy Land Fr. Francesco Patton, the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem His Beatitude Nourhan, the former Custos of the Holy Land and at present the Latin Apostolic Administrator Fr. Pierre Battista Pizzaballa.

An address was given by His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (to be posted shortly).

Messages were also read by the Pope's delegate Cardinal Leonardo Sandri and the Catholicos Patriarch of Armenia H.H. Garegin.

At the end of the ceremony the invitees proceeded to the Patriarchate. There His Beatitude gave the following address (see [link:https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/03/22/31041](https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/03/22/31041)) and

introduced the Professor of the N.T.U. and coordinator of the project Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou, for the presentation of the technical aspects of the project on screen. The presentation in English is as follows:

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Consequently, His Beatitude honoured Mr. Ivan Savvidis with the Supreme Distinction of the Great Cross bearer of the Holy Sepulchre, and the owners of the Aegean Airlines Mr. Theodoros and Mr. Eutychos Vassilakis with that of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

The ceremony ended with the address of the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Alexis Tsipras.

Concluding all the above, the ceremony ended and all guests were invited to a fasting reception buffet, giving thanks to God, Who deemed us worthy to achieve the completion of such a project.

From Secretariat-General

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THE MINISTER OF HUMAN CAPACITIES OF HUNGARY VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday morning, 5th/18th March 2017, the Minister of Human Capacities of Hungary, His Excellency Mr. Zoltán Balog visited the Patriarchate, escorted by his wife, the Ambassadors of Hungary in Israel and the Palestinian State respectively, and by a small team of his associates.

The Minister and his escort were warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, together with Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Dragouman Fr. Mattheos and others.

Mr. Balog expressed his joy on his visit and mentioned that in his country there are Churches that belong to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Patriarchate of Moscow and Romania and other Churches.

His Beatitude also expressed his joy on this visit and for the fact of the good cooperation between our Patriarchate and the country of Hungary, which has demonstrated a special interest for the work of the Patriarchate in the Holy Land in many ways and by the donation Hungary has offered for the restoration of the Basilica of Bethlehem and the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

In recognition of this support on behalf of the country of Hungary to the Patriarchate, His Beatitude awarded Mr. Zoltán Balog with the honorary distinction of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. Touched, the awarded Minister thanked warmly His Beatitude and committed himself in the continuation of his country's interest for the

persecuted Christians of the Middle East. Having accepted His Beatitude's presents, the Minister departed to venerate the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

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H. B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM PRESENTS THE RESTORATION PROJECT OF THE H. EDICULE TO THE GREEK EXPATRIATES IN BRUSSELS

On Tuesday evening 1st/14th March 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, invited by former European Commissioner Mr. Spyridon Pappas, spoke to the Greek expatriates in Brussels on "The meeting of civilizations in Jerusalem and the role of Orthodoxy with a focus on the restoration of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre" at the Argo/Le Châtelain Hall.

Underlined in this speech were the technically multipart and complicated aspects of this project, which were solved by the scientific study of the National Technical University of Athens (N.T.U.A.) due to the coordination of Professor Mrs.

Moropoulou and the agreement among the Three Major Christian Communities. This project conveys the message of conformity, reconciliation and cooperation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was buried in it and Resurrected from the dead.

Welcoming His Beatitude and Mrs. Moropoulou, Mr. Pappas expressed his joy particularly for receiving them in Argo, which is the ark of principles, the centre of the European values. European Union has two gateways, the Greco-Roman Civilization and the Greco-Christian Civilization. European Union citizens experience a cultural cohabitation in a globalized society.

Thanking Mr. Pappas for his welcoming, His Beatitude underlined that the Holy Sepulchre is the heart of Orthodoxy and the Greek nation. Jerusalem Patriarchate is the source of the Christian message. The first Hierarch of the Jerusalem Patriarchate was St. James the brother of God. The Patriarchate preserves the Shrines as places of worship in the Holy Land, which is the place of co-existence as well as conflict between Judaism and Islam. A special indicative of Jerusalem is its having being washed by the blood of the prophets, and thus of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jerusalem is considered to be Holy for the Three Monotheistic Religions. Jerusalem Patriarchate has not only a religious role, but also a cultural and a political one, as an adjuster in the Status Quo of Jerusalem. The Status Quo in Jerusalem, as we know, is corpus separatum. After 638 A.D. Jerusalem Patriarchate has undertaken a governmental office, with the treaty between the Patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronios and Caliph Umar al-Khattab. The Roman nation was the succor of the Holy Shrines. The fruit of this aid is the venerable and material property of the Patriarchate. The Holy Sepulchre is the crown of the Shrines and the Patriarchate boasts for them the way St. Paul boasted in Christ. The Holy God allowed us to renovate the Holy Edicule. The Hagiotaphite Fathers protected the Shrines through many sacrifices, toils and labours, but also with

money, and sacrifices of blood, such as the recent events with St. Philoumenos, who martyred at Jacob's Well, and the Hegoumen of Chozeba Monastery Archimandrite Germanos, who was murdered near the Monastery. The Holy Sepulchre is an Ecumenical place. The Resurrected Christ took upon Himself the whole of the human nature. All people are saved by His power. Our mission is the message of reconciliation and peaceful co-existence. St. Justine the Philosopher and Martyr, from Neapolis of Samaria, mentions the "seminal word" existing in every man. We thank the President and the Argo members for this rather important for the Hellenism and Orthodoxy Symposium. Christianity preserves the spiritual and biological entity of man. This identity is also outlined today by the restoration project of the Holy Sepulchre.

Thereinafter, the Professor of the National Technical University of Athens presented the technical aspects of the restoration project of the Holy Edicule, saying that they connected the former structural components the way Komnenos had done (he did not destroy the existing components). He conjoined the Byzantine with the Crusaders' components and erected the existing Edicule on top of them. The Edicule had undergone through structural deformations. "For this", Mrs. Moropoulou said, "the Commanding English Government in 1947 had placed fixative iron pillars around the Edicule, which have been removed after the restoration work of this project. Venturing on the restoration project was a toiling work, as we had to knock down the stones, number, and keep them in the Franciscan area of the Church until we repositioned them. This project is being completed thanks to the donations of the noble benefactors and the donation of the World Monument Funder, the King of Jordan His Majesty Abdullah II among others.

During these operations the Lord's Tomb remained open for sixty hours in order to strengthen it. With this work, we restored the vertical position of the pessaries which had been

strongly tilted. Upon removing the metal frame we found layers of soil which Komnenos had kept, and we kept them too. Komnenos did not knock down the pre-existing structural components, instead, he built the Edicule of 1809 on top of them. The bottom slab in the Lord's Tomb is of the Constantine period, the top one of the Crusaders'. We opened an internal window, glass protected, in order to make the internal rock visible. We discovered murals which had been covered and were unknown.

We discovered the cross of the top of the Edicule, which was made by Kalfa Komnenos at his 1809 project, and we repositioned it. We ensured the sustainability of the monument. Action was taken so that the monument be protected from rainwater and the incoming pigeons. At the point of the Angel's stone, the Edicule is unfortunately fixated on alluvial mixture, because there have been arbitrary excavations, with the danger of sedimentation of the Edicule on that point. The monument needs a venting and dehumidifying system and securing of the floor coverings. For all these, there is need for monitoring work from the N.T.U.A. for at least 5 years.

With this project, the Holy Sepulchre remains an Ecumenical Centre for the pilgrims and conveys the message of reconciliation and peace for the Christian pilgrims, the followers of other religions who visit it, the people of the Middle East, and all humanity".

From Secretariat-General

H. B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM & MRS MOROPOULOU PRESENT THE RESTORATION PROJECT OF THE H. EDICULE AT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

On Tuesday 1st/14th March 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos arrived in Brussels by the Israeli airlines El-Al from Tel-Aviv, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Aristarchos of Constantina and Archdeacon Mark.

At Brussels airport, His Beatitude was welcomed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate Most Reverend Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium and Priests from his Metropolis. At the Hilton Brussels Grand Palace Hotel where His Beatitude was hosted, He was welcomed by the Professor of the N.T.U.A. Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou, who had arrived a little earlier.

Around noon of the same day, His Beatitude addressed the European Commission members with reference to the completion of the restoration project of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, as follows:

“Dear Deputy Director General Mrs. Claire Bury,

Deputy Director Mr. Javie,

Mrs Moropoulou,

Respected Presenters and Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We thank you for your invitation to say a few words to this

special gathering, and we bring you greetings from Jerusalem. As we gather here, we remember the words of the Psalmist:

I was glad when they said to me

"Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

Jerusalem...built as a city

that is bound firmly together

to it the tribes go up,

the tribes of the Lord.

Jerusalem has been down to ages, and continues to be in our own day at the heart of the European civilization. Jerusalem is the spiritual capital of the human family, where not only the adherents of the three great Abrahamic traditions, but all people of good will, without distinction, find a spiritual home.

There is a great deal of current rhetoric about the clash of civilizations, especially in the Middle East. But in Jerusalem we have a synthesis of civilizations. In Jerusalem all the great currents of human thought, endeavour, and religious yearning have formed a unique and inter-related pattern. As we know, civilizations are all derived from the same human mind, soul and spirit. Civilizations are human constructs and have the same human longings at their base. In Jerusalem the best of several civilizations have met, and we see the fruits of this reciprocity.

As you know, we have been engaged in the last few months in the renovation and restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre. This is one of the holiest places in Jerusalem and its significance for the European civilization is impossible to be over-estimated. And since it is the case that human civilization is about the highest aspirations of the human mind and soul, it is also the case that all human

existential concerns find their resolution in the Sacred Edicule, which gives hope and consolation beyond our everyday concerns and worries. Here we see a great synthesis, a unique coming together of the human heart, and in this synthesis we see a way forward to gather all the streams of civilization that the human mind has brought into being.

The human soul is eager to return to the source of its being. The human soul longs for integration, for wholeness, for the restoration of its original vocation and destiny. We have said in a number of different settings that engineers, architects, and those scientists who give themselves to the building and restoration of monuments of universal value are also, in a sense, spiritual engineers. For at the basis of all building is the search of integration, the marriage of form of purpose that enables the human community to attain to its divine potential.

Jerusalem represents just this same synthesis, just this same unity of purpose. In our world today, so many are distracted and confused, and there is much despair. Our European cultural heritage is a synthesis of great traditions that lift the human spirit to a higher plane, that refresh the soul as well as the mind, and that provoke in us a commitment to a deeper understanding of our common humanity.

May your work prosper the best of this human endeavour, so that the human family may be strengthened and make reality a more complete co-existence and mutual respect.

Thank you."

The scientific presentation of the full project was given by its scientific superintendent, Professor of the N.T.U.A. Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou

with the following lecture:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/e0v5p7dlfxhst1n/08_2_Brussels_March_

From Secretariat-General

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THE PRESIDENT OF DEMOCRACY & MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday morning, 28th February/13th March 2017, the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina Mr. Mladen Ivanić visited the Patriarchate, being in Israel for a visit. The President was escorted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Igor Crnadak, the Ambassador Mrs. Jelena Rajaković and a 20-member team of his associates.

The President and his team were warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with Hagiotaphite Fathers.

Within this visit, Mr. President expressed his joy for visiting Israel, the Holy Land, the Patriarchate and the Church of the Resurrection, from which he expects the blessing for his country.

Replying, His Beatitude expressed His joy for the visit of such a Presidential team, coming from a country with a

complexity of political problems both in the past and at present, as He himself noted in His visit to Montenegro a few months ago, when He was invited by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Amphilochios of Montenegro for the inauguration of the Holy Church of the Martyr St. Vladimir.

His Beatitude moreover referred to the peacemaker role of the Orthodox Church which unites in its Body various Orthodox nationalities occasionally competing with each other.

His Beatitude also discussed with the President the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate in the Holy Land, extending as far as Qatar, where the Patriarchate founded an Archdiocese under the lead of the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, who has studied Theology at the University of Belgrade in Serbia.

The visit concluded with exchanging of gifts and the President's wish to visit the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

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FIRE DUE TO ELECTRICITY FAILURE AT PATRIARCHATE CHURCH IN JIFNA

On Friday morning, 25th February/10th March 2017, a fire broke out at the H. Church of St. George in Jifna, due to an electrical failure. Jifna belongs to the Greek Orthodox Arab-

speaking Community of the Patriarchate. The fire caused serious damage in the Holy Altar and the interior of the central part of the Church; as a consequence the adjacent to the Church reception hall will be used for the Church services until the damage is restored.

The following day, Saturday 26th February/11th March, 2017, His Beatitude visited the burnt Church for financial and moral support; His Beatitude was escorted by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Secretary-General, and the Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos. The Supervisor of the Community Fr. George Awad and the vestry of the H. Church thanked His Beatitude for their visit and support.

From Secretariat-General

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H. B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM LEADS THE DOXOLOGY ON THE 70TH INCORPORATION ANNIVERSARY OF THE DODECANESE

On Tuesday morning, 22nd February/7th March 2017, a Doxology was celebrated at the Cathedral of the Annunciation at the Holy Metropolis of Rhodes, officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, courtesy of the

Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes; this was on the occasion of the 70th incorporation anniversary of Rhodes and the Dodecanese within Greece.

At the Doxology the Mayor of Rhodes gave the festive speech, emphasizing the ancient Greek roots of Rhodes and all of the Dodecanese, and the suffering they endured by the conquerors: Persians, Turkish, Venetians, Italians, as well as the significance of this incorporation for the Greek identity of its inhabitants.

The Doxology was followed by a Memorial Service for the repose of the souls of those who fought and died for their faith and country, the people of Dodecanese. After the Memorial Service, His Beatitude and His Entourage, the delegates of the other Communities, Franciscans, Armenians and the Latin Patriarchate, and the people of Rhodes attended a touching parade with the school students of Rhodes, Associations from various parts of Greece such as Cretans, Cypriots, Peloponnesians and others, Military Squads, Police forces, Fire Brigade and many other teams, and the demonstration of a supersonic aircraft.

All these created deep feelings of national pride and a disposition for praying to God for the protection of our country from enemy attacks.

At the end of the parade, at the Town Hall, the Mayor offered a copy of the key of the city to His Beatitude, the delegates of the other two Major Communities, the Mayor of Beit Sahour Mr. Hanna Al Haik, who also signed with the Mayor of Rhodes a fraternization document between the cities of Rhodes and Beit Sahour, Mr. Athanasios Abu-Aeta, the Ambassador of the State of Palestine in Greece Mr. Marouin Toubasi and other honoured guests.

In the evening of the same day, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes hosted a dinner in honour of His Beatitude,

His Entourage and other guests.

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE CEREMONY OF THE 70TH INCORPORATION ANNIVERSARY OF THE DODECANESE WITHIN GREECE

In order to participate at the festivities on the 70th anniversary of the incorporation of the Dodecanese within Greece, and the presentation of the restoration project of the Holy Edicule, invited by the Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, arrived at Rhodes airport from Jerusalem by Aegean air, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens Archimandrite Damianos and Archdeacon Mark, at 10:00 a.m. on Monday 21st February/6th March 2017.

Therein, His Beatitude was received by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Rhodes,

the Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos and other official members of Rhodes.

At noon of the same day, His Beatitude attended the ceremony of proclaiming the President of the Greek Democracy Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos an Honorary Citizen of Rhodes. This honorary distinction and a copy of the keys of Rhodes were offered to the President of the Greek Democracy by the Mayor of Rhodes, followed by the latter's address, that the President is deservedly awarded, as he is the protector of the rights of Rhodes and all Dodecanese, and because as a lecturer and minister of the Legal Science, he had said that "The Legal Science is the corrective function of social injustice" and that "Democracy is the constitution of measures and analogies".

Replying, Mr. President thanked Mr. Mayor for the honour appointed to him as an individual by the historic island of Rhodes. He also said that by the 1947 treaty between Greece and Italy, Greece was granted the full sovereignty of the island of Rhodes, all the Dodecanese and the neighbouring islets, and not only the rights of sovereignty, but also the obligation of the defence fortification of Rhodes, from both manifested and impending challenges; and this is for the sake of the protection of the island of Rhodes, the Dodecanese, Greece, and the whole of the European Continent where Greece belongs.

At noon of the same day, His Excellency Mr. Mayor offered a meal in honour of the President and all the guests, at the restaurant of the renovated building of AKTAION, a renovation that coincided with that of the three historic Mills of Rhodes for their proper function.

In the evening of the same day, there was the ceremony of the presentation of the ongoing restoration project of the Holy Sepulchre, at the presence of the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes, the Mayor and other guests, at the Venetian

Fortress of the Grand Master. At the ceremony the Mayor addressed the guests, and then His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos gave the following address:

“And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed” (Mat. 27:59-60)

Your Excellency President of Greece, Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos,

Your Eminence Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos,

Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the Holy City of Jerusalem, we bring you the blessing of the new tomb, meaning the Most Holy and Life-giving Sepulchre of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The historic multi-cultural and multi-national island of Rhodes, which has been evangelized by the Apostle Paul and which celebrates today its 49th incorporation anniversary within the Greek Dominion since 1948, has been associated with the Holy Land and thus the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Therefore, today's ceremony of the presentation, regarding the completion, maintenance, preservation and restoration project of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by the National Technical University of Athens, under the scientific superintendence of Professor Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou, together with the actual presence and participation of our associates and spiritual leaders, the Franciscan Custodian Father Francesco Paton, His Beatitude the Armenian Patriarch Nourhan

Manougian and the Commissioner of the Latin Patriarchate His Excellency Mr. Pierebattista Pizzaballa, is of particular importance.

And this is so, because firstly, the common Christian witness that “the one that ye (the myrrh bearing women) seek, Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here – in the new tomb- ; behold the place where they laid him” (Mark 16:6) is denounced.

And secondly, because it preaches to all nations the never setting and ever-lasting light of hope and the resurrection of the Son of Man, the Sun of Righteousness.

The significance to the contemporary man of this Pan-Christian, Universal and indeed holy tomb, which has been hewn out in the rock, is owed to the fact that it has accommodated within it not only Jesus the Nazarene but also the whole of the human nature which He received in the Incarnate God the Logos, Christ, the light of love, the light of the world, the light of reconciliation and peace.”

Addresses were also given by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes, the Custodian of the Holy Land Fr. Francesco Paton, the Delegate of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem Hegoumen at the Church of the Resurrection Fr. Samuel, Commissioner Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem Fr. Pierre Battista Pizzaballa.

After the addresses, the Professor of the National Technical University Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou presented the complete restoration project of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre with the following lecture:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/pys9xfthbck2v4s/07_2_Rhodes_March_2017_Integrated_V7_EN_F.pdf?dl=0

Mrs. Moropoulou’s presentation was followed by a musical event and then dinner at the Dinioras Restaurant, hosted by the

Mayor of Rhodes.

From Secretariat-General

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