

THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF ST GEORGE OBSERVED IN LYDDA

On Sunday, the 3rd/16th of November 2014, the translation of the relics of St George the Great Martyr and Trophy Bearer was commemorated at St George Church in Lydda, Israel, which is a center of worship for the Patriarchate's Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking Community.

Commemorated on this particular feast-day is not only the Saint's martyrdom, but also the translation of his holy relics, circa 305 AD, from Rome to his maternal place of origin, to be buried in Lydda where, according to the Acts of the Apostles, an early Christian community existed from the dawn of Christianity (Acts 9, 32-35).

On top of the saint's grave in Lydda, Saint Helena built a magnificent church between 326 and 336 AD. The church survives to this day, even though one half of the building was conquered in unknown times and is being used as a mosque to this day.

The divine Liturgy was held on the morning of the feast-day, led by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Co-officiating were His Eminence Damascene, Archbishop of Joppa; the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Archbishop Demetrius of Lydda, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking presbyters, Archdeacon Evlogios and Hierodeacon Dionysius. In attendance was the representative of the Greek Embassy to Israel, Mr Alexandros Gennimatas, the Cypriot Ambassador to Israel, Mr Panagis, and the Romanian Ambassador to Israel, Mrs Andrea. The choir of the Community of Lydda sang in Arabic, while a crowd of faithful (though not as many as last year, due to heavy rain) from the town and other areas

of Israel and of the occupied areas proceeded to venerate at the Saint's tomb.

During Communion, His Beatitude preached the Word of God in Greek. In Arabic, the homily may be reached here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2014/11/16/8216>

After the *apolyxis*, the Abbot of the Shrine, Archimandrite Nicodemus, hosted guests to a reception at the Hegoumen's Quarters, thanking His Beatitude for His interest in the flock. In His reply speech, the Patriarch said that St George is an ecumenical saint for all Churches, having suffered a martyr's death for the love of Christ.

At noon, Abbot Nicodemus and the Community Council hosted lunch for His Beatitude and retinue, as well as for the Ambassadors of Orthodox states to Israel having attended mass, the Mayor of Lydda, members of the Community and other guests.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/YcvYUayj040>

<httpv://youtu.be/1zrzUlq5Ke4>

