



TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM
MONASTERY OF THE FLAGELLATION
Archaeological Museum. Gospel sites in Palestine.
Multimedia Museum. Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre: from Herod to our days
ST. SAVIOUR'S MONASTERY
History Museum. The Franciscan Custody in the Holy Land

Press Release, 20 September 2013

The **Franciscans** of the Custody of the Holy Land, who for more than 800 years have safeguarded the places of the Redemption, **will inaugurate in 2015 in Jerusalem the TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM**, the only museum in the world on the roots of Christianity and the preservation of the Holy Places.

The Museum will have an exhibition area occupying 2,573 m² and will consist of three sections: Archaeological, Multimedia and History, divided between two existing sites (the Monastery of the Flagellation and St. Saviour's Monastery) close to one another and near the principal pilgrimage and tourist destinations in Jerusalem (the Temple Mount, the Wailing Wall, the starting point for the Way of the Cross, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre).

The architectural design and the supervision of the fitting-out works are being carried out by **Giovanni Tortelli, from the Studio GTRF Tortelli Frassoni Architetti Associati**, who has chosen the methodology of the expositions and selected a rigorous language style. **The stage of analysis and study of the collections and design was concluded at the end of 2012. In the coming months the architectural restructuring works will begin.**

The Museum will be divided between two sites in the Old City of Jerusalem: the **Monastery of the Flagellation** and **St. Saviour's Monastery**, both nineteenth century constructions containing some very old parts – Roman, Byzantine and medieval from the Crusader period.

The first, which will host the **Archaeological Museum** and the **Multimedia Museum**, is located at the beginning of the Via Dolorosa which leads to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (the route of the "Way of the Cross"). **It is currently the site of the Archaeological Museum of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, in operation since 1902 (making it the oldest museum in Israel), which will be restructured and significantly enlarged.** The Museum will be located in the area of the Antonia Fortress, according to tradition the place of Jesus' condemnation, of which remains of walls, pavements and cisterns can still be seen, all of which will be included in the tour of the museum. The display will present a selection of the most important finds from the archaeological excavations carried out by the Franciscans in the Holy Places over the past 150 years, ranging chronologically from the Canaanite period (2nd millennium BC) to the medieval Crusaders (11th - 12th centuries AD).

Mainly known to researchers and for **its important discoveries, the current museum area is the depository for unpublished materials not presently available to the public**, which will be exhibited and enhanced in the new Museum. In order to increase the space available for exhibitions, several fascinating subterranean areas from the Crusader period having thick, exposed stone walls will be recovered and fitted out, and mezzanine areas will be created to hold the most important thematic archaeological collections from the *Studium Biblicum*.

St. Saviour's Monastery, the second site and the headquarters of the Custody of the Holy Land, is located near the New Gate, the entrance to the Christian Quarter, a place of passage for many pilgrims heading to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Here, beneath the groin vaults of the former library will be located the **History Museum**, rich in works of arts and rare documents. Adjoining this, the evocative **wine cellar** (at 800 m², the largest in all the Eastern world) will be recovered in order to create an area for rest and refreshment.

The selection criterion chosen by the Archaeological Museum is of the geographic-evangelical type, determined in part by the extraordinary discoveries from the archaeological excavations carried out in

the places of Jesus' life, and also by the interests of the public, principally the pilgrims, for whom the Museum is intended. For the History Museum, the criterion employed has been a thematic one, highlighting the importance of the Franciscan mission in the Holy Land, the history of the Custody, and its relations with both the Middle Eastern world and the European States.

The director of the museological project is **Gabriele Allevi**, who is in charge of overall organization taking into account the various conditions: the cultural objectives set forth by the client, the heritage available for display and the different publics to whom the museum will be addressed.

An important focal point is represented by the extraordinary and rare **collections** of sculptures, paintings, goldsmith's work, illuminated manuscripts, liturgical vestments and precious archival documents **donated over the centuries by the European royal houses** (Spain, England, Portugal, the France of Louis XIII and XIV, the Habsburg Empire), the Italian republics (Kingdom of Naples, Duchy of Milan, Republics of Venice, Genoa and Tuscany) and the Papal States in order to show their devotion to the Holy Places and their support of the Custody. **The artistic heritage of the Custody consists of sculptures, paintings, goldsmith's work (chalices and candelabra), illuminated manuscripts from the 15th and 16th centuries, rare pharmacy jars, armor, furnishings, liturgical vestments and valuable archival documents.**

A room will be dedicated to the Treasures of Louis XIII and XIV, offering a unique example of the celebrated French Baroque and Rococo goldsmith's work that was destroyed during the French Revolution, in the form of a one-of-its-kind complete set of sacred vessels. All of these works (only a portion of which were on display in the recent exhibition "The Treasure of the Holy Sepulchre" at Versailles) are used only infrequently in liturgical functions, and hence can only be seen on rare occasions by the public.

The section entitled "Treasures of Europe" includes the *Throne in Gold and Precious Gems* donated by Charles III of Spain and the beautiful Illuminated Manuscripts, among which are three antiphonaries from the Tuscan and Lombard schools, donated by Henry IV of England at the end of the 14th century. To be mentioned as well is the extraordinary "**Treasure of Bethlehem**", discovered by accident in 1863, which includes a *Pastoral* in embossed and gilded copper from the 13th century from Limoges as well as candlesticks, organ pipes, bells, etc.

Also of great value is the **archaeological section** consisting of finds uncovered during the excavations carried out over the past 150 years in the Holy Places: the places of Jesus' earthly life from his birth in **Bethlehem**, to his hidden life in **Nazareth** and his public one in **Capernaum** (with the house of Peter) and Galilee (**Tabgha** and **Cana**, where the first miracles took place), concluding with his Passion in **Jerusalem** (**Holy Sepulchre** and **Gethsemane**). Featured are **painting materials (frescoes), ceramics and sculptures, Byzantine mosaics, coins, fragments of plates, architectural materials (Crusader capitals), jars from Bronze Age tombs, sarcophagi, alabasters, jewels (scarabs, seals and cameos), lamps, inscribed ossuaries, etc.**, ranging chronologically from the Canaanite period (2nd millennium BC) to the medieval Crusaders (11th - 12th centuries AD). There are also extraordinary special collections from Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Among the works that have been preserved, mention should be made of the beautiful capitals depicting the history of the apostles discovered in 1906-1909 in a cave at the Convent of the Annunciation in Nazareth, examples of Burgundian sculpture that are among the best preserved in the world inasmuch as they were never actually put in place. And of the numerous ossuaries from the archaeological site at Dominus Flevit, which show that in all likelihood a Jewish Christian necropolis existed already in the 1st century AD. A large room with beautiful manufactured crosses will be dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre. After 2,000 years of earthquakes, destructions, fires and architectural restorations this Holy Place is difficult to comprehend. The new Museum will thus help to give meaning to this monument that is of such great importance and the destination each year for pilgrims from all over the world. For further information: info@proterrasancta.org.

The total investment for the project, including the renovation of the buildings, equipment and fitting out, is estimated at €4.5 million. The Custody of the Holy Land, in addition to making available at no charge the areas for the museum, has allocated €1.1 million for the project. **Donations required to meet the overall financial requirements will be approximately €3.5 million.** After the initial period of investment and start-up, lasting approximately three years, the project will be able to support itself, generating cash flow that can be used to support future museum initiatives to be promoted by the Custody of the Holy Land.

ATS pro Terra Sancta, the NGO of the Custody of the Holy Land, is coordinating **fund-raising activities which are being organized** and which will be carried out beginning in Italy, where the

Franciscans have their headquarters, and will then expand to the rest of the world in order to collect the estimated required total.

Supporters will be able to share in this project and link their own name (family, business, institution) to the Holy City of Jerusalem. Donors will be able to choose to support the creation of one of the three sections of the Museum, one of the principal and central areas or a room of the Museum. Their **name will then be engraved on one of the typical local (Jerusalem) stones** used for pavements and located at the entrance to the rooms. A copy will be delivered to the supporter. Finally, for smaller donations the name will be added to a special wall located at the museum's entrance.

Among other initiatives, ATS pro Terra Sancta has decided to organize short trips of 3/4 days featuring exceptional visits and encounters not generally available in normal tours and pilgrimages.

A voyage to Jerusalem to learn about its secrets and appreciate its beauty. Above all, the opportunity for an exclusive visit to the places that will host the Terra Sancta Museum, and to see first hand the restructuring works. Among the special sites to be visited are the rooms where the sword and stirrups of Godfrey of Bouillon are still preserved, and the precious Treasure of Bethlehem. Four intense days in which the visitor will be guided through the principle stages of all of ancient Palestine. Including ancient archaeological sites usually not covered in pilgrimages, which testify to a millenary history that remains to be discovered in all its beauty and complexity. Beginning with the life of Jesus: his private life in Capernaum, and his public one that culminated in Jerusalem.

YOUR NAME IN HISTORY The commitment of supporters

For further information please contact ATS pro Terra Sancta, the nonprofit NGO recognized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has been given the responsibility for carrying out the project and coordinating fundraising activities: info@proterrasancta.org.

Bank Transfer: Banca Etica; Account Name: Terra Sancta Museum

IBAN: IT35X 05018 01600 000000144474 BIC: CCRTIT2T84A

TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM

The founding institution is the Custody of the Holy Land, a brotherhood of religious (the Friars Minor), who for more than 800 years have safeguarded the places of the Redemption, in conjunction with the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, an academic institution for research and teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the archaeology of the Bible Lands, based in Jerusalem.

The aim of the project promoters is to enhance the priceless historical, archaeological and artistic heritage and to make it accessible to everyone while at the same time avoiding its dispersion, encouraging restoration and preservation.

Progress of the works on the Terra Sancta Museum can be followed on the site

www.terrasanctamuseum.org. Other useful sites: www.custodia.org, www.proterrasancta.org, www.fmc-terrasanta.org

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Images and video services

- Franciscan Media Center (multimedia center of the Custody), www.fmc-terrasanta.org.

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