



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Terra Sancta Museum
Art and History

Saint Saviour Monastery
Jerusalem





Pectoral Cross of Charles VI of Habsburg – 1735
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**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM
– ART AND HISTORY**

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“SUPPORT PLACES OF CONTACT AND UNDERSTANDING THE OTHER”

The project of the Terra Sancta Museum was started several years ago by the Custody of the Holy Land. For us, Franciscan friars, it is part of what the Catholic Church entrusted us with in 1342 with the *Gratias Agimus* bull. By becoming “Guardians of the Holy Places”, as Friars Minor, it has been our commitment to dwell in shrines, pray in them and ensure they are places of celebration of the faith, always keeping the characteristic of an international presence. A corollary of this mission is the care and upkeep of the Christian shrines, welcoming the local faithful and the pilgrims of the Universal Church. **Over these 800 years, our mission and the work connected with it have been able to evolve constantly and adapt to the times and places.**

The Terra Sancta Museum will be the first major museum of Christian art in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem, with thousands of historical and archaeological works which will show local Christians, pilgrims and tourists, Israelis and Palestinians, the history and the active presence of Christians in this Land for 2,000 years.

In the face of disillusion, the temptation of reductionist historiographical and simplifying approaches, the rise of extremisms and the worsening of violence and hatred, more than ever we need to imagine and support places where people can come into contact with, meet, listen to and understand the other. **This is why we want to build a space that is open to all those who want to believe that dialogue is not only possible, but indispensable.**



“Let us begin again, for until now we have done nothing.” Saint Francis of Assisi is believed to have said on the eve of his death. Dear team of collaborators, dear friends, dear patrons, dear ambassadors of the Terra Sancta Museum, this invitation echoes again today, so let us not despair. In these dark times, working for the creation of the Terra Sancta Museum may seem very complicated, not to mention slightly crazy, but this first Annual Report has the merit of showing the concrete progress and the myriad of initiatives and links created thanks to this project. The adventure of the Terra Sancta Museum is a human adventure, as well as a fascinating artistic, historical and cultural discovery.

You should know that through this project we are working together to take another small step towards greater humanity and fraternity, and I thank you for this. I would like to conclude by quoting the words of Pope Francis, taken from his encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (3 October 2020): *“There is an ‘architecture’ of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, each according to its own area of expertise, but there is also an ‘art’ of peace that involves us all.”* **We are experiencing and building this project as builders of peace.**

I thank each and every one of you for the professional or voluntary contribution you have made and are making, the Lord who has providentially guided us in these 800 years is also casting his gaze of blessing on to each one of you.

Fr. Francesco Patton ofm
Custos of the Holy Land

THE TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM IN A FEW WORDS

The Terra Sancta Museum aspires to becoming a place, offering those who live in the Holy Land, tourists and pilgrims from all over the world, the opportunity to discover, understand and experience the Christian dimension of Jerusalem.

“The unique character of Jerusalem, as the cradle of Christianity, must remain visible and accessible to all, to preserve its universality”, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, underlines. This initiative is of crucial importance in a context where Christians represent only 1-2% of the total population in Israel and in Palestine.

GENESIS OF THE PROJECT

The Terra Sancta Museum has its origins in the “Museum of the Franciscan Fathers”, founded in 1902. This first museum was conceived at the time as an annex to the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of the Pontifical “Antonianum” University in Rome). It was a place where the discoveries from its excavations in the Holy Places could be exhibited and preserved. It has been in the Monastery of the Flagellation since 1927.



Fr. Eugenio Alliata ofm, Director of the Terra Sancta Museum Archaeology, and Daniela Massara, Executive Director

With the creation of the Terra Sancta Museum and a renewed ambition, its display and layout have been entirely reconsidered. The museum has been renamed **Terra Sancta Museum – Archaeology** and is now part of a **museum network** with the Terra Sancta Museum – Art and History. Renovation started in 2015, allowing a progressive reopening of two wings in 2016 and 2018. The third wing, partially accessible in 2023, will be **completed by 2025**.

The **Terra Sancta Museum – Art and History** has its origin in the exhibition *“Treasure of the Holy Sepulchre”*, which obtained an immense success at the Château de Versailles in 2013. This event inspired the creation of a historical museum in Saint Saviour Monastery. It will exhibit the priceless Christian artistic heritage of the Custody of the Holy Land, the result of generous European and local donations and carefully preserved by the Franciscans over the eight centuries of their presence in the Holy Land. After preliminary studies and consolidation works, the phase of structural work began in the summer of 2023. The completion and installation of the exhibits will follow. The museum is scheduled to open to the public in 2027.

OUR MISSIONS

The project of the museum is anchored in the long Franciscan tradition of protecting the Holy Places and supporting the Christian communities of the Holy Land. It has the following missions:

- 1 - To **promote the historical importance of the Christian presence** in the Holy Land and the universality of Jerusalem.
- 2 - To propose a **new cultural offering** contributing to the development of the economic and social framework of the Old City.
- 3 - To build a **meeting place around Christian culture** alongside the existing museums consecrated to Judaism and Islamic art that is open to everyone.
- 4 - To take part in the **formation of local actors** and their appropriation of a rich historical and artistic heritage.

©Terra Sancta Museum

THREE SITES IN THE HEART OF JERUSALEM

TWO MUSEUMS AND A MEDIATION CENTRE

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

THE TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM – ART AND HISTORY Saint Saviour Monastery – New Gate – Christian Quarter

In the headquarters of the Franciscan community in the Holy Land since the 16th century, the collections will be presented in three sections:

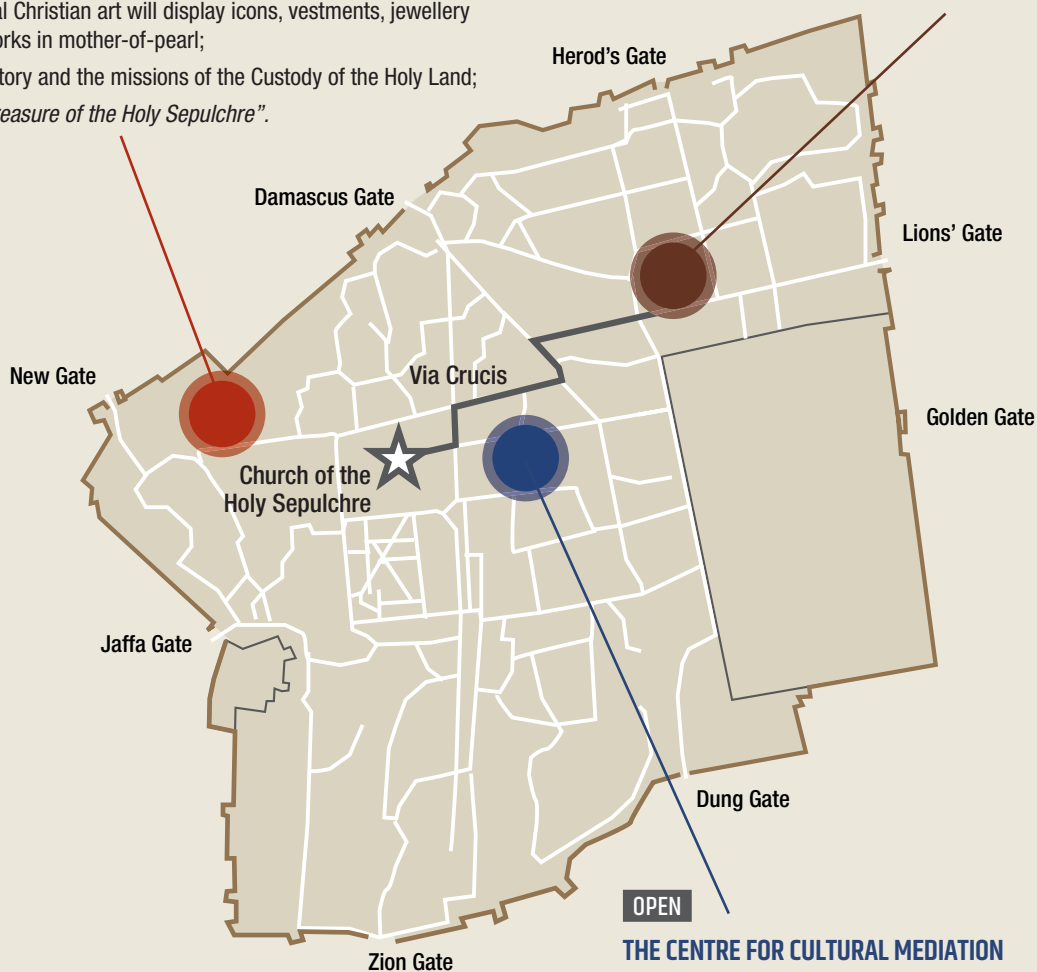
- Oriental Christian art will display icons, vestments, jewellery and works in mother-of-pearl;
- the history and the missions of the Custody of the Holy Land;
- the “Treasure of the Holy Sepulchre”.

OPEN

THE TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM – ARCHAEOLOGY Monastery of the Flagellation – Via Dolorosa – Muslim Quarter

Visitors uncover the birthplaces of the Christian faith through an exhibition featuring archaeological discoveries from excavations conducted by the Franciscans since 1863. It consists of three wings:

- one offers a captivating multimedia experience retracing over 2,000 years of Christian history in just 15 minutes;
- the other two are dedicated to the findings unearthed in the Holy Places, spanning from the Bronze Age to the Mameluk period.



OPEN

THE CENTRE FOR CULTURAL MEDIATION Dar al-Consul, Khan ez-Zeit – Muslim Quarter

The complex of Dar Al Consul, restored thanks to the support of the European Union, was inaugurated in 2021, and comprises 42 social housing units and a community centre with cultural stakeholders. One of its vocations is to host the Education Department of the Terra Sancta Museum. The success of a first three-year project (2020-2023) “A Community Living Museum for Palestinian Youth”, operated by Pro Terra Sancta in collaboration with the Terra Sancta Museum – Archaeology, showed us the need for a spacious place, suitable in particular for a young public.

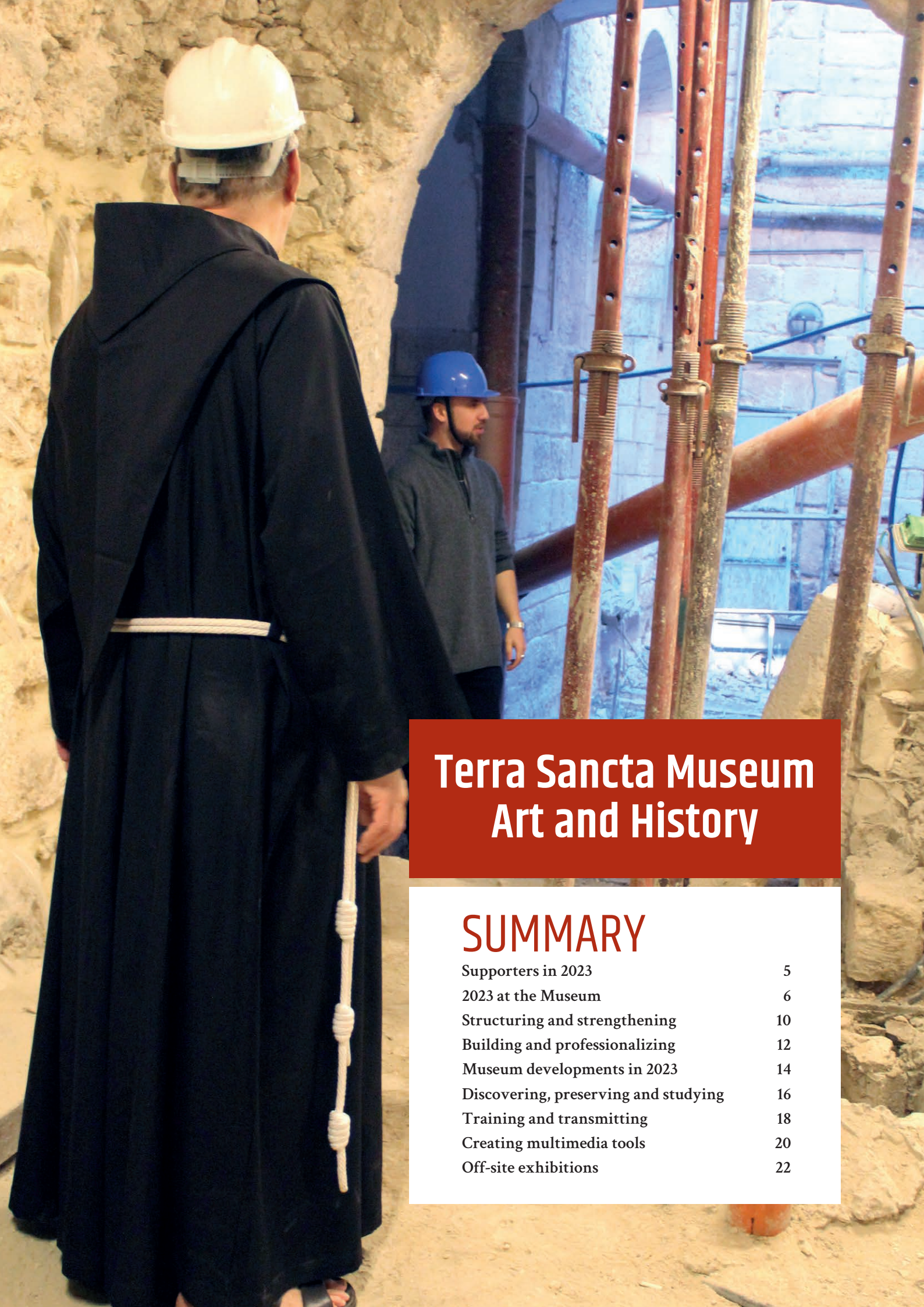


Wall fragment from the triumphal arch of the Church of the Agony at Gethsemane – Crusader period

©Terra Sancta Museum/Angelo Tosi

PRO TERRA SANCTA





Terra Sancta Museum Art and History

SUMMARY

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Discovering, preserving and studying	16
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SUPPORTERS IN 2023

PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

- François and Laurence BESSE
- Marcus and Cécile BILLAM
- Maria Amélia and João Duarte BLECK
- Joaquim CADETE
- Société CAREITAS
- José Filipe CORRÊA GUEDES
- Joaquim COSTA ALMEIDA
- Carl and Angélique DE LENCQUESAING
- Maria Antonia DURÃO ARANTES OLIVEIRA
- Dominique GOIRAND
- Maria Helena GONCALVES FOLHADELA
- Vasco Maria GUIMARÃES JOSÉ DE MELLO
- Marie-Hélène HABERT-DASSAULT / Dassault Histoire et Patrimoine
- Henner Holding
- Monica LOURDES LUZURY
- António Bourbon MAGALHÃES E MENEZES (Felgueiras)
- Franky MULLIEZ
- Adalberto NEIVA DE OLIVEIRA

- Maria QUINTON
- Alain REMY
- Lionel and Ariane SAUVAGE
- Maria João SCHALK
- Tiago TELES DE ABREU
- Maria Luisa VIEIRA

INSTITUTIONS

- Agence Française de Développement
- Fondation ALIPH
- Fondation Evergète
- Fondation Mansart / Parcs et demeures de France
- Fonds de dotation Amici Terræ Sanctæ
- Fundação Joana Simões Alpuy
- Lieutenancy of Portugal (Ordem de Cavalaria do Santo Sepulcro de Jerusalém / Lugar-Tenência de Portugal)
- NGO Development Center / NDC
- Pro Terra Sancta
- Province of the friars of Portugal (Provincia Dos Santos Martires de Marrocos)



© Terra Sancta Museum

Construction site open day for local architects, builders and heritage experts

2023 AT THE MUSEUM

“A YEAR OF CONTRASTS”

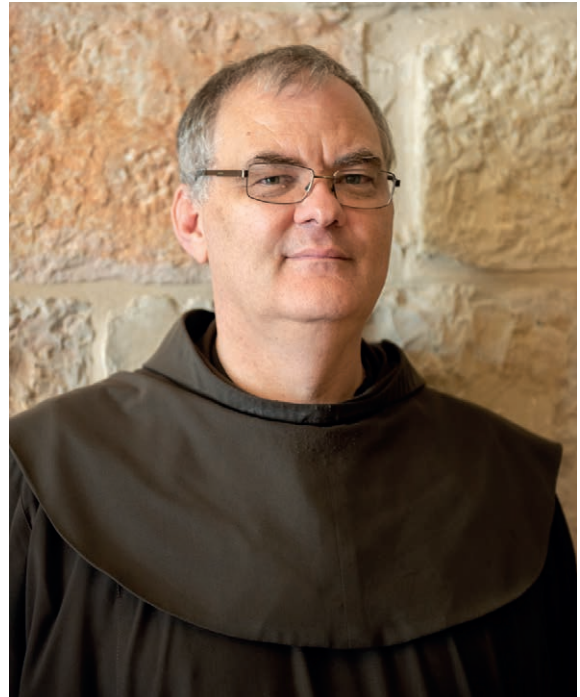
At 2023. This has been a very strange year with a first half which was exciting, full of energy and a proliferation of projects, contrasting with the last tragic months you all know. Taking the time to stop and reread this past year allows you to measure the breadth and the diversity of the subjects that were worked on in-depth by a multitude of actors in Jerusalem and in Europe.

At the Terra Sancta Museum – Art and History, we are pleased with the launch of the second phase of work at Saint Saviour Monastery, thanks to funding from Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and under the supervision of NGO Development Center (NDC) and Aliph Foundation. This extensive site is consecrated to the indispensable consolidation of the structures and the floors of the future exhibition areas and the restoration of the internal courtyards.

This year also marks a turning-point in the acknowledgement of our museum project abroad, as it opens a period in which our works travel to renowned international institutions. The exhibition “*Treasures from Kings, masterpieces from the Terra Sancta Museum*” inaugurated in the winter of 2023, at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, well illustrates in its title the long way we have come since 2013, the year when our heritage was first presented in Versailles at the exhibition “*Treasure of the Holy Sepulchre*”.

Fr. Stéphane Milovitch ofm

*Director of the Cultural Heritage Office
of the Custody of the Holy Land*



27 JANUARY

Second session of training on textile **restoration** for the sisters of the Milk Grotto (Bethlehem) by Anastasia Ozoline, restorer at Palais Galliera, City of Paris Fashion Museum.

6 MARCH

Presentation of the Project of the Terra Sancta Museum in Lisbon by Fr. Rodrigo Machado Soares ofm.

9 – 10 MARCH

12th meeting of the Scientific Committee

of the TSM: inclusion of the section of Oriental Christian art in the museum route.

21 MARCH

Presentation of the project to the heads of European cooperations for the purpose of a joint funding.

20 APRIL

Launch of heritage preservation awareness and training workshops led by Lorraine Abu Azizeh for archaeology students at the University of Bethlehem.

4 MAY

Meeting of the multimedia group in Milan with Studio Base 2.

15 MAY

74 works are packed and shipped to Lisbon.

25 MAY

Exhibition of 15 objects as part of the exhibition “1973-2023, 50 years of service and dialogue” at the Christian Information Center, Jerusalem.



© Terra Sancta Museum

Removal of the Bas-relief of the Resurrection before its shipment to Lisbon



©Terra Sancta Museum

Guided tour of Jerusalem's first Arabic-language museum exhibition

5 JUNE

Inauguration of the first exhibition of the presentation of the museum project in Arabic:

“ذكريات دير المُخلص: دير، رعيّة، متحف” / “Memories of Saint Saviour: convent, parish, museum” in the Curia of the Custody of the Holy Land (5 June-25 September).

16 JUNE

Meeting of the multimedia group in Milan with Studio Base 2.

5 JULY

Exhibition of 13 objects as part of the exhibition “Tastes of Heaven: Tales from the Arab Kitchen” at the Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem from 5 July 2023 to 31 May 2024.

13 JULY

Start of the structural works

financed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) under the supervision of NGO Development Center (NDC).

3 AUGUST

Signature of contract with the firm Perrot & Richard for an audit on the architectural issues of the museum.

18 AUGUST

Translation of the tools of patronage into Portuguese by volunteers of the association Voluntariado na Terra Santa in view of the exhibition at the Gulbenkian Foundation.

9 SEPTEMBER

Start of the collaboration with the Institut National du Patrimoine (INP) with the restoration of a first icon from the collections.



©Terra Sancta Museum

In Paris, reception of one of our icons for the first restoration project of our icon collection

11 SEPTEMBER

Continuation of the works financed by the Aliph Foundation.

26 SEPTEMBER

First multimedia production: “Pilgrimages of the past, a human and spiritual adventure.”

21 – 29 SEPTEMBER

First visit to Jerusalem by the firm Perrot & Richard and consultants as part of the general audit of the project.



©Thomas Coes/AFP

Our entire team was deeply affected by the loss of Fr. Sergey Loktionov ofm, a member of the Scientific Committee

30 SEPTEMBER

Preparatory Committee of the display and layout of the new section dedicated to Oriental Christian art.

7 OCTOBER

Temporary suspension of work at the museum due to the conflict.

21 OCTOBER

Death of Fr. Sergey Loktionov ofm, archivist of the Custody of the Holy Land and member of the Scientific Committee of the Terra Sancta Museum.

4 NOVEMBER

13th meeting of the Scientific Committee online on the first conclusions of the audit, the evolution of the project and of the statutes of the future museum.



©Rocio Cibes/Cidade da Cultura de Galicia

Signing in Compostela of the exhibition to be held at the Cidade da Cultura de Galicia from March 22 to August 4, 2024

10 NOVEMBER

Inauguration of the exhibition “O Tesouro dos Reis. Obras-primas do Terra Sancta Museum” at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon (from 10 November 2023 to 15 February 2024).

22 NOVEMBER

The Terra Sancta Museum is mentioned in the travel guide Le Routard: Israël et Palestine 2024-2025 edition.

12 DECEMBER

Press conference with the announcement of the upcoming exhibition “Tesouros Reais. Obras mestras do Terra Sancta Museum” at the City of Culture of Galicia in Santiago de Compostela.

20 DECEMBER

Presentation of the final audit report by the architectural firm Perrot & Richard.

STRUCTURING AND STRENGTHENING

The project governance set up in 2021, enabled us to structure the activities of this large-scale project carried out by a multicultural and multidisciplinary team. The year 2023, was marked by the involvement of new resources whose skills and expertise helped to professionalize our approach and lay the foundations of an internationally renowned cultural institution in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem.



© Terra Sancta Museum

Working session on the articulation of the museum with the founding institution, i.e. the Custody of the Holy Land, in the company of Fr. John Luke Gregory ofm, Discrete

DEFINITION OF THE MUSEUM'S FUTURE ORGANIZATION AND STATUS

In 2023, discussions were started with the team in charge of the Terra Sancta museum – Archeology to define the scope of action of each museum (curation, mediation, collection management),

the human resources that will be required, and those that can be shared and supported with existing structures within the Custody of the Holy Land (reservations, maintenance, IT, legal support, HR).

The challenge is to find the most fluid and efficient general organization, based on the reality of our museums run by a religious congregation, while planning appropriate training courses to ensure that we have the right staff on the spot when we open.

In the same year, a process of reflection was launched with the Custody's lawyers and legal experts from the world of culture, with the aim of giving the museum a status and international recognition capable of guaranteeing the legal management of the collections as well as its financial sustainability.

As the museum is located in the old city of Jerusalem and supported by a religious community, different, and sometimes competing, legal rights and standards apply. The definition of a tailor-made legal framework is necessary, with the awareness that the Terra Sancta Museum remains an entity in its own right of the Custody of the Holy Land and that it is the entire institution which is engaged in each procedure.

LAUNCH OF STUDIES ON MUSEUM AUDIENCES

Since late 2022, the Mediation and Visitors group has conducted a series of studies aimed at crafting a comprehensive marketing strategy for our two museums. Under the guidance of Carole de Legge, the group undertook the following initiatives:

- Conducted preliminary audience segmentation and provided associated mediation recommendations.
- Completed an economic mapping exercise of the surrounding neighbourhood, comprising a market study, demographic analysis, SWOT assessment, review of existing local policies, and real estate evaluation.
- Examined practices observed at neighbouring museums to establish benchmarks, including an analysis of pricing structures, opening hours, and accessibility standards.
- Formalized expression of need for the online and on-site ticketing system.

Simultaneously, an inventory and analysis of visitor reception requirements at the museum entrance enabled the Architecture group to define the prerequisites for anticipated visitor traffic. This encompassed considerations such as security measures, ticket purchasing facilities, and souvenir shop amenities.

64
PEOPLE INVOLVED

48%
WOMEN

12
NATIONALITIES

PROJECT GOVERNANCE

CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND

Fr. Francesco Patton ofm

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Fr. Eugenio Alliata ofm, Carla Benelli
and Fr. Stéphane Milovitch ofm

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Chaired by Béatrix Saule

New members

Charlotte Maury
*Responsible for the Ottoman
collections and the Art of
the Book in the Department
of Islamic Arts, the Louvre*

Anastasia Ozoline
*Restorer at Palais
Galliera, City of Paris
Fashion Museum*

Pierre Aziza
*Deputy Director of
cultural development at
the Château de Versailles*

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

Marino Ficco (new Operations Coordinator),
Léonardo di Marco, Fr. Stéphane Milovitch ofm,
Émilie Rey and Béatrix Saule

Architecture group

Collections group

Mediation and
visitors group

Multimedia group

Functioning of the
Museum group

Communication/
Fund raising group

See p.12

See p.16

See p.20



© Terra Sancta Museum

In 2023, the museum invested heavily in the Instagram social media platform, multiplying its videos and photos

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY ACTIONS

The year 2023 saw the arrival of Maya Abu Hani. Palestinian, with a diploma in journalism from the University of Birzeit, she continued her education at the Université Toulouse III thanks to a joint scholarship from the French Consulate in Jerusalem and the Custody of the Holy Land. She completed her studies with an internship in the Digital communications department of the Château de Versailles. Her presence will allow us to further reach Arabic-speaking audiences and undertake other awareness-raising and community mobilization actions. The team in charge of communication and sponsorship continues its patient work of networking, promotion of collections, opening to other audiences by investing ever more heavily in social networks. The 2023 results speak for themselves: +10.5% on Facebook and +186% on Instagram. The team also relies on international exhibitions to approach potential future visitors to the museum. The fundraising team was also strengthened by the arrival of a delegate from the Terra Sancta Museum in Portugal, Prof. Tiago Teles de Abreu, who was able to lead a number of sponsorship and visibility initiatives around the exhibition in Lisbon.






BUILDING AND PROFESSIONALIZING

The second phase, begun in January 2023, concerns studies, as well as architectural works, in the existing building (floors excavation, reinforcements of foundations and consolidation of masonries). Accessibility and inclusivity of the visitors are integrated as key issues of the implementation of the museum project, in order to welcome disabled persons.

One of the big changes of the year in terms of **architectural management** of the project is the arrival of the firm **Perrot & Richard** who are now working hand in hand with the team of the Technical Office of the Custody of the Holy Land.

From the 7th October, the impossibility for the Palestinian workers to reach Jerusalem has caused a temporary halt in the works.

STRUCTURAL WORK FUNDING & PROGRESS

CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND € 240,000 	AFD / NDC € 499,654 	ALIPH € 511,218 
Work on the roofs of the museum buildings: waterproofing and deviation of rainfall	Preparation of ventilated floors	Preparation of ventilated floors
 Done	Consolidation of structures (1/2)	Consolidation of structures (2/2)
 In progress	Restoration of masonry	Restoration of underground cisterns
 To do	Restoration of the inner courtyard	Restoration of a water tank
In 2023, structural works began.	Restoration of three cisterns	Skylights on two courtyards
	Management of underground networks	

In 2023, structural works began.



© Terra Sancta Museum

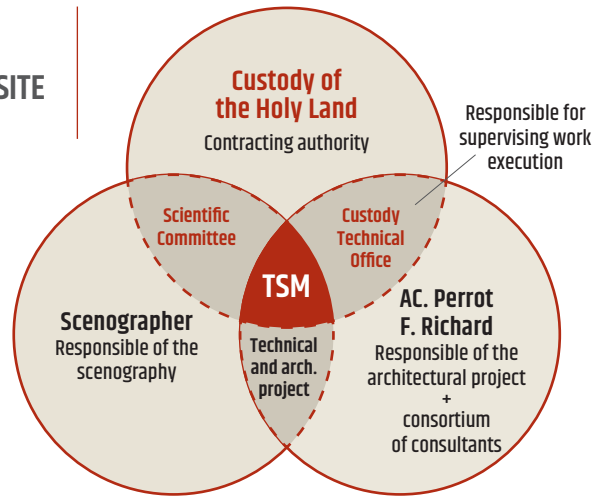
In 2023 **30**
PALESTINIAN WORKERS
ON THE SITE

1,200
SQ. M. WORKSITE
AREA



©Terra Sancta Museum

Work session at Perrot & Richard with the Custody team, including *Léonardo di Marco* for the Technical Office, *Béatrix Saule* and *Raphaëlle Ziadé*, for the Scientific Committee and *Fr. Stéphane Milovitch* ofm



**ARCHITECTURE GROUP
ORGANIZATION AND SYNERGY**

**THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRM PERROT & RICHARD:
A GUARANTEE OF PROFESSIONALISM**

In August 2023, the Custody of the Holy Land, the contracting authority of the works, signed an agreement with the architectural firm Perrot & Richard, specialized in architecture and heritage restoration, which takes on the contracting authority of the project (conception and accompaniment of worksite supervision). The Technical Department of the Custody of the Holy Land remains responsible for the execution and carrying out of the works.

The firm Perrot & Richard carried out an **exhaustive audit in the last quarter of 2023**. Its aim was to draw up an inventory of the architectural project before orienting its actions. It is

based on the existing documentation, interviews with the key actors of the project and a study mission on the site carried out in September.

Its conclusions tackle the following topics:

1. Managing the flows of visitors
2. Access to the museum
3. Harmonization of the floor levels
4. Enlarging the technical spaces

A budget revision and estimated calendar have also been proposed. In-depth studies will complete the preliminary studies already carried out. These recommendations were presented to the Scientific Committee at the end of 2023, before validation by the Preparatory Committee in early January 2024.



Visit by the project management team in Jerusalem, September 2023.
From left to right: *Lorraine Abu Azizeh* (P&R, architect); *Fr. Stéphane Milovitch ofm*; *Olivier Francisco* (Feerick, lighting design); *Florent Richard* (P&R, associate architect); *Mathieu Gillet* (P&R, architect); *Federico Cruz-Barney* (Studio DAP, acoustics design).

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MUSEUM DEVELOPMENTS IN 2023

THE BIRTH OF A SECTION DEDICATED TO ORIENTAL CHRISTIAN ART

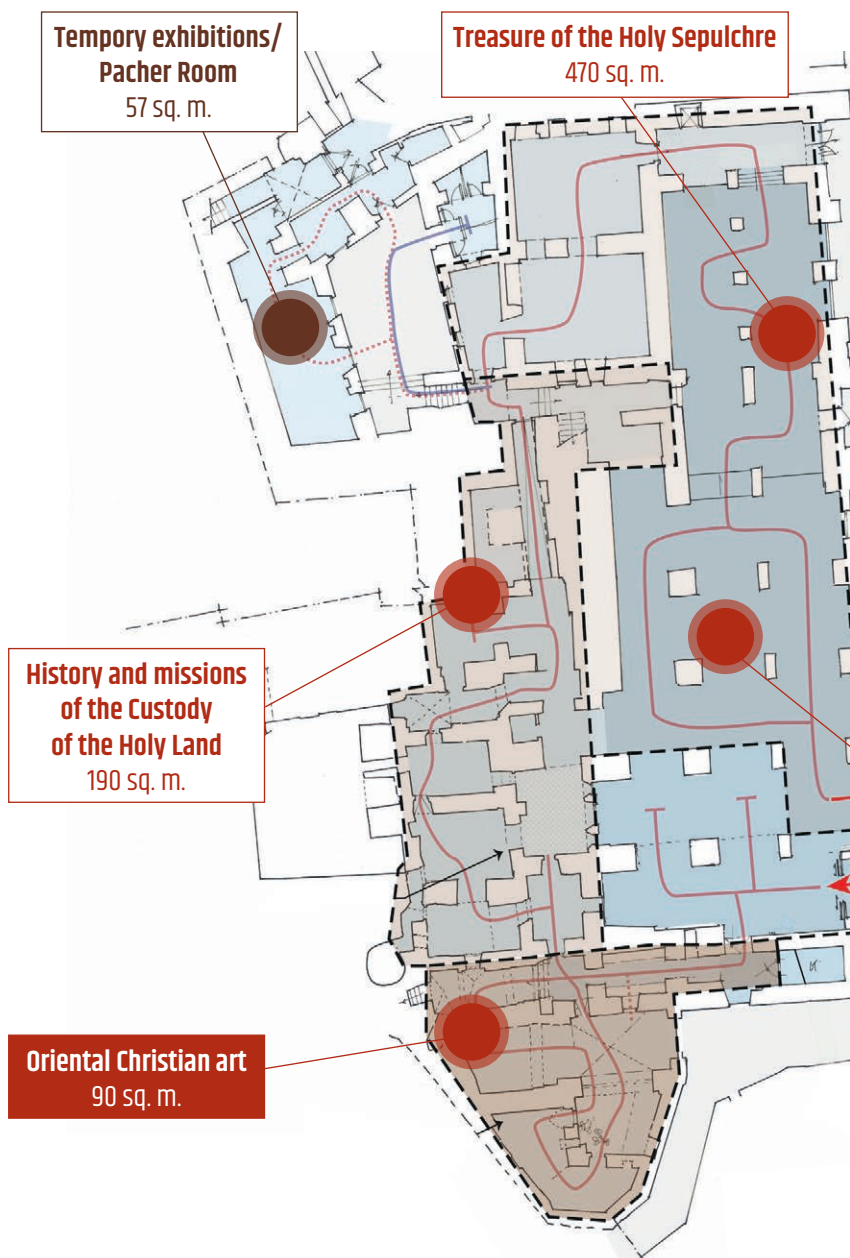
Béatrix Saule is the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee of the Terra Sancta Museum. She has worked for a long time, hand in hand with the Franciscans, on the guidelines of the project and the museum route. She shares the latest progress made.

“The museum was initially envisioned as a display for the gifts bestowed by European courts upon the Custody of the Holy Land, the custodian of Christian Holy Sites. These items were donated by Catholic nations in the West with the intent of providing the finest offerings for divine worship. Consequently, Jerusalem houses exemplary pieces from each period of Western art, often including the last surviving copies of these artworks.

Since 2017, the beginning of the project, everything had been conceived to show off this treasure to the best: three linear and logic sections, which revisited “Jerusalem, the cradle of Christianity”, “the history and the mission of the Custody of the Holy Land”, and the presentation of the Treasure. All this worked very well, but recently, it has become absolutely necessary to include a new section dedicated to Oriental Christian art.

The value of the Palestinian artefacts of art offered to the Franciscan friars (icons, costumes and jewellery, objects in mother-of-pearl...) deserves to be highlighted. These objects, as well as displaying true expertise, show the good relations between the Custody and the local communities. Moreover, this goes in the direction of the more global evolution of the museum world. When I began my career, it was important for museums to display objects. Today, museums are asked to be close to people’s concerns. The question of identity, the fact that young local people from here can find themselves in the narrative, an opening to the other Christian communities, an invitation to dialogue... the Terra Sancta Museum becomes a meeting place: that of two arts, Western Christian art and Oriental Christian art.”

Credit: Terre Sainte Magazine no. 688
November-December 2023



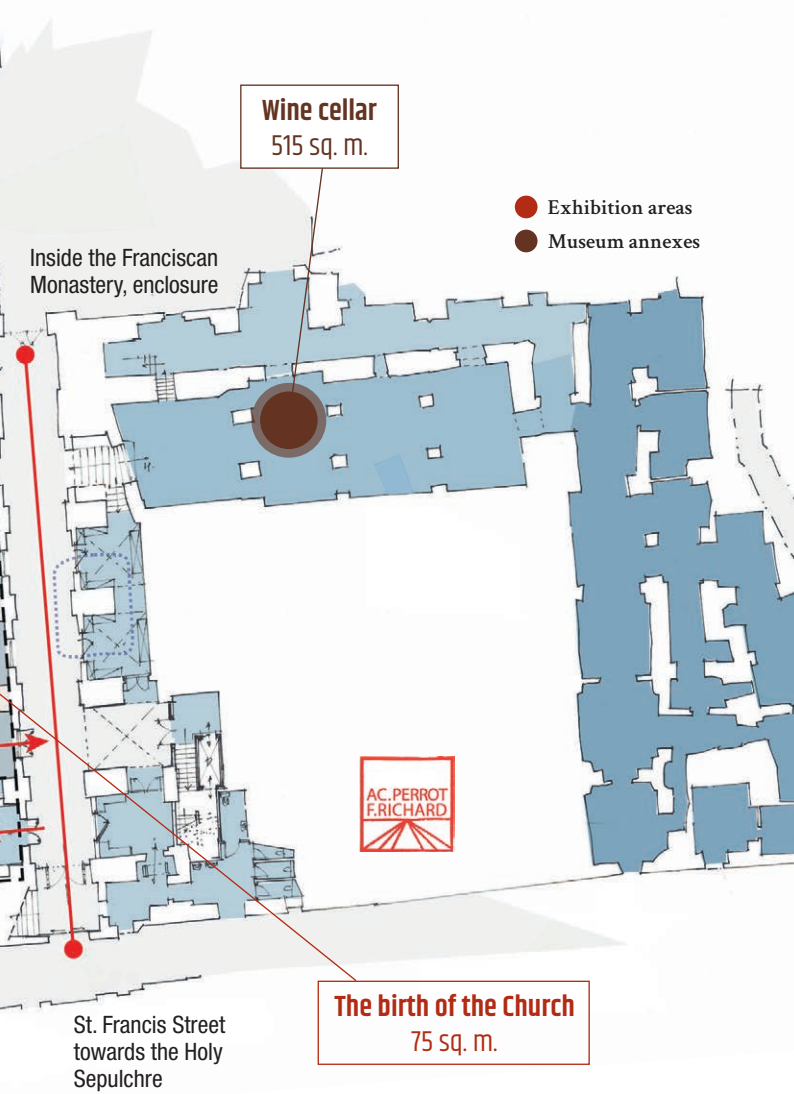
“Palestinian Icon” – George Al’Ama collection – Bethlehem, Palestine

© Terra Sancta Museum

825 SQ. M.
FOR ART EXHIBITIONS

27
ROOMS

ABOUT **1,200**
PIECES ON DISPLAY



Model of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, Bethlehem, c. 1700

©Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Pedro Pina



Work session in Jerusalem on the new section with Raphaëlle Ziadé and George Al'Ama

©Terra Sancta Museum



©Terra Sancta Museum



©Terra Sancta Museum

George Al'Ama, member of the Scientific Committee, presents some icons from his collection, which will be on display at the museum.

DISCOVERING, PRESERVING AND STUDYING

The Terra Sancta Museum benefits from the work of the Cultural Heritage teams of the Custody of the Holy Land, which is carrying out a major study and recording of the objects kept in the museum, its reserves and sanctuaries of the Holy Land. This initiative contributes to enriching a database, created in 2013, according to the rules of the Italian Central Institute for Cataloguing and Documentation. **All this in-depth work supports the museum's discourse.**

Within the project, the Collections group **supports the organization of exhibitions abroad and restoration work.** Its work in 2023, was to a great extent consecrated to preparing the exhibitions in Lisbon and Santiago de Compostela, as well as continuing work on the publication of catalogs of our goldsmiths and silversmiths collections.

RESTORING OUR WORKS

In 2023, the restoration efforts focused on restoring the paintings on wood, the restoration of metal objects and the preservation of textiles.

- With a rich heritage of 240 icons, the Terra Sancta Museum, at the request of the Institut National du Patrimoine (France), started a pilot project of restoration with a very common type of icon: the Hodegetria, *i.e.*, the Virgin Mary carrying the Child Jesus in her arms.
- In view of their exhibition in Lisbon, the Restoration Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation undertook

priceless work of renovation of 39 pieces with the help of 12 experts of the **José de Figueiredo laboratory** (the Portuguese national restoration institute).

- A new session of training on textile restoration was given in January in Bethlehem to the contemplative sisters of the Milk Grotto by **Anastasia Ozoline** (textile restorer at Palais Galliera in Paris). These textile items are amongst the most fragile in our collections and it is crucial for us to have local expertise on the subject.
- Two portraits of Kings Phillip II and Phillip V of Spain, presented in the Room of the Condotte, were restored with their frames.

Restoration of the Bas-relief of the Resurrection and its 80kg in silver!



© André Afonso

In 2023

4

INVENTORY
CAMPAIGNS

1,946

OBJECTS ADDED TO
THE DATA BASE

60

WORKS RESTORED
OR BEING RESTORED

3

CATALOGUES
IN PREPARATION

DEEPEN KNOWLEDGE OF OUR PALESTINIAN HERITAGE

The year was marked by several important discoveries, which confirm the close relations between the Franciscans and the local populations:

- the preparation of the exhibition “*تذكريات دير المخلص: دير، رعية، متحف*” / “*Memories of Saint Saviour: convent, parish, museum*” allowed rediscovering a very rare set of Palestinian jewellery which, until then, had formerly been exhibited as an ex-voto in Saint Saviour Church. Studied by a member of the Scientific Committee, **George Al'Ama**, and the expert in amber, **Jack Hawileh**, it then benefitted from cleaning before joining our collection of Oriental Christian art.
- the Palestinian collections were also enriched by the discovery in the archives of the Custody of the Holy Land of an exceptional collection of preparatory drawings for works in mother-of-pearl. They come from the Bethlehem workshop of **Suleiman Roc**, a major figure in carving mother-of-pearl at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.



Discover preparatory drawings for works in mother-of-pearl

WELCOMING RESEARCHERS AND SPECIALISTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

A place of scientific research as much as of exhibition, the Terra Sancta Museum regularly receives researchers. They benefit from a privileged access to the works and archives of the Custody of the Holy Land to carry out their work. Several studies have been started or were in progress in 2023. They feed our knowledge of the works and the museum project:

- **Camille Rouxpetel** and **Alice Croq**, both with Ph.D.s in History, are currently studying the collection of firmans, which are juridical documents issued by former Muslim powers and preserved by the Custody of the Holy Land. This research is part



Study of objects from the “Treasure of Bethlehem” by members of the Scientific Committee

of the project financed by the Agence nationale de la recherche française, focusing on the historical relations between local churches and Muslim powers over the centuries.

- **Felicita Tramontana**, Associate Professor at the Università Roma Tre, is continuing a study on the origins and the circulation of devotional objects for the Custody of the Holy Land in the 17th century. Her research is based in particular on the study of the “condotte”, which are registers for the exhaustive inventory of goods received by the Custody of the Holy Land and some of which will be on display in the Room of *Condotte* in the museum.
- **Marie de Geloës**, a PhD., candidate in the Histara laboratory of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (France), is completing a thesis on “*Les usages, expositions et conservations des objets catholiques dans la basilique du Saint-Sépulcre depuis 1847*”.

PUBLISHING OUR COLLECTIONS

In 2023, **Michèle Bimbenet-Privat** (Honorary Curator-General of the Louvre) was the **Editorial Director** of the scientific catalogue of the gold and silver work of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, with the contributions of **nine international researchers**. She also supervised the translations of the introductions and the entries by **three translators**. Currently being reread, the result of this voluntary work will be published in December 2024.

Two other catalogues on gold and silver are being prepared: silverware of the 19th and 20th centuries by **Anne Dion** (Curator-General in the Department of Objets d’art of the Louvre) and **medieval objects** by **Florian Meunier** (Head Curator of the Late Middle Age and Roman art collections of the Louvre).

TRAINING AND TRANSMITTING

The Terra Sancta Museum aspires to serve as a hub for raising awareness and providing training for both local and international cultural practitioners on matters concerning conservation, restoration, and heritage redevelopment. *“This sector cruelly lacks professionals. The situation is made worse by the incapacity of the institutions to experiment a multidisciplinary approach and to work in teams. As a consequence, a policy aiming to train specialists, aware of their responsibilities and with strong operational skills, is a priority”* said Ossama Hamdan (1960-2024), was saying the much regretted director of the Mosaic Centre of Jericho and collaborator of the Custody of the Holy Land.

FIRST STEPS IN TRAINING THE MUSEUM'S FUTURE AGENTS OF MEDIATION

Thanks to collaboration with the NGO *Pro Terra Sancta*, five young Palestinians received training as cultural mediators, using our collections. Over three years, they participated in the 33 educational workshops and 50 guided tours which took place throughout the project, bringing together a total of more than 2,000 people. Moreover, a partnership with the Vatican Museums allowed them to spend six months there as interns.

“I was able to take this opportunity thanks to the Terra Sancta Museum and its links with the Vatican Museums. In the Education Department, I was able to understand more about the field of museums. I am currently working with Pro Terra Sancta and designing an audio-guide to the archaeological museum for visitors with special needs. I have written the complete the visit and used some of the techniques I learned in Rome.”

Eyad Handal
Bethlehem

PRO TERRA
SANCTA



©Terra Sancta Museum



©Terra Sancta Museum

Numerous volunteers from prestigious art schools come to the museum to complete their university training

WELCOMING AND TRAINING INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

Since its beginnings, the Terra Sancta Museum has benefitted from the dynamism of many young people seeking a first professional experience in the world of art, conservation or cultural communication. They are mainly from France (often students from the *École du Louvre* and the *École des Chartes*) and Italy (Aldo Moro University of Bari and the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan).

“My experience at the Terra Sancta Museum was particularly rich in the fields of preventive conservation and setting up exhibitions. I was able to work alongside experts of the museum world. The generosity of the Scientific Committee, always ready to offer their help and advice, touched me immensely. After this period, I want to write my second Master's thesis on the collection of preparatory drawings of Palestinian mother-of-pearl objects and take the competitive examination for curators of the heritage.”

Lucie Mottet

Former student of the *École du Louvre*, Paris

In 2023

12
INTERNATIONAL
VOLUNTEERS IN 2023

5
PALESTINIAN
INTERNS

10
PALESTINIAN
TRAINED

A GREAT ACTION OF LOCAL MOBILIZATION: AN EXHIBITION IN ARABIC

In 2023, the museum organized its first exhibition in Arabic “*تذكريات دير المخلص: دير، رعية، متحف*” / “*Memories of Saint Saviour: convent, parish, museum*”. Conceived as preliminary to the museum, this exhibition, addressing the inhabitants of the Christian Quarter of the Old City, retraced the history of the bonds between the Custody of the Holy Land and the local Christian community. Thirty-five works, including textiles, gold and silver pieces, musical instruments, photos and archive documents, an icon and works in mother-of-pearl were on display. A student from the University of Grenoble, Augustine Berger, did her Master’s internship in History of Art as part of this project. We asked her to create visits and actions of mediation in particular for targeted visitors: elderly residents of the Saint-Louis Hospital, parishioners and local tour guides.



MAKING THE SITE AN OPPORTUNITY OF AWARENESS-RAISING FOR PALESTINIAN STUDENTS

In response to a need identified by the Department of Human Sciences at the University of Bethlehem, the structural work on the museum facilitated several initiatives involving its students. From January to June 2023, Lorraine Abu Azizeh, the architect overseeing the project, supervised a group of students enrolled in the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage degree programme led by Professor Omar Abed Rabo. This initiative, backed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), raised awareness among ten participants through three workshops focused on architectural drawing, interpreting plans, and conducting archaeological surveys. As part of this project, two days of professional training were also provided on site, with the participation of fourteen Palestinian builders, engineers and architects.

“Our students were able to benefit from training by a professional on the job and not only of theory taught in the lecture theatre.”

Hanadi Soudah Younan

Dean of the Faculty of Arts – University of Bethlehem

Lorraine Abu Azizeh with students from Bethlehem University



CREATING MULTIMEDIA TOOLS

In 2023, two of the three multimedia installations for the Terra Sancta Museum – Art and History were produced under the supervision of Gabriele Allevi and in collaboration with the Italian company Studio Base 2.



StudioBASE2
EMOZIONI DIGITALI

This agency, specialized in creating cultural digital content, has conceived in particular immersive experiences at Saint John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta, Malta, and the Memorial of Deportation in Florence.

MULTIMEDIA NO. 1

Shown at the beginning of the route and conceived as a link between the two museums (Terra Sancta Museum – Archaeology and Terra Sancta Museum – Art and History), in eight minutes it retraces the history of the Christian presence in Jerusalem, from the birth of the local Church to the arrival of the Franciscans in the Holy Land in the 13th century.



MULTIMEDIA NO. 2

A genuine immersive sight and sound experience, in four minutes it describes the route of the pilgrimage from Venice to Jerusalem in the 15th century. This multimedia is in the section on the history and the missions of the Custody of the Holy Land, in particular hospitality for pilgrims.



BEHIND THE SCENES OF MAKING A MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION: FROM VENICE TO JERUSALEM IN THE 15TH CENTURY

1 FIND A CONCEPT

“What we are going to tell visitors about is an adventure that is as human as it is spiritual. It is the journey from Venice to Jerusalem at a time when it was very difficult to be a pilgrim, when you weren't even sure of returning home! The hospitality of the Franciscans was, therefore, vital. What we wanted to share were the emotions: from the fear during the long crossing when pirates could be met on the route, to the joy of arriving in Jerusalem.” **Béatrix Saule**

And to speak to as many people as possible, the museum team opted for a short format without a voice-off, privileging music.

2 BUILD UP A STORY FROM HISTORICAL SOURCES

In order to conceive the narrative plot, Béatrix Saule plunged into reading dozens of accounts of pilgrimages from the 16th to the 17th centuries. *“Les voyages de Frère Félix Fabri en Orient (1480-1483)”*, a Swiss Dominican, caught her attention.

“We have an accurate and dated account, which is extremely concrete and very vivid! At that time, the pilgrimages only took place between May and July for reasons of navigation. We did not cheat! We took a very particular pilgrimage, taking the exact dates of this journey to show how long it really lasted”. **Béatrix Saule**



Working session in Milan



©BNF

Reuwich's Engraving Featured in Breydenbach's Travel Narrative

3 AN ICONOGRAPHIC INTUITION

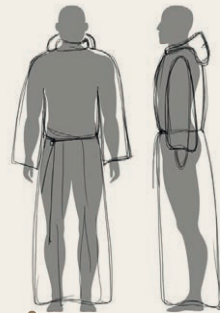
Béatrix Saule's other "find" were the engravings in "Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam" by the German ecclesiastical Bernard de Breydenbach, published in 1486. She describes it as follows: "it is the first illustrated travel account. It is a monument of its kind, it was a bestseller. Breydenbach asked the Dutch painter Erhard Reuwich to work with him. The quality of the engravings is magnificent." There was still the question of finding these engravings in high definition. The only colour copy is in the reserve of Rare Books in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

4 A SHADOW PLAY

Studio Base 2 had previously worked for the Terra Sancta Museum – Archaeology and Gabriele Allevi, who coordinates the multimedia productions of the Terra Sancta Museum, went to them.

"It was out of the question of spoiling the engravings by Breydenbach which are magnificent. In another museum in Italy, we had experimented with an idea of Chinese shadows to bring movement." Arianna Zovadelli, Project Manager, Studio Base 2

"I found the process extremely interesting because it avoided everything that was picturesque. You couldn't see the faces of the people, but the shadow 'puppets' highlighted the action and the gestures." Béatrix Saule



©Studio Base 2

5 FROM THE STORYBOARD TO THE SHOOTING



©Studio Base 2

To add these silhouettes, the decision was to film real people in action.

"We wrote, hand in hand with the museum team, a very detailed storyboard: even though they were shadows, nothing was left to chance, everything was studied so that it would be historically correct. The Franciscans even lent us a habit!" Arianna Zovadelli, Project Manager, Studio Base 2

"There was a lot of back and forth, we worked on the rhythm of the travelling shots, the junction between the rhythm of the silhouettes and the rhythm of the engravings as they passed, on adapting the gestures, etc." Béatrix Saule

6 ADDING AN IMMERSIVE EFFECT

To meet the initial commission, Studio Base 2 worked for a long time using a "parallax technique which gives the impression of movement but also on the music and sound effects to plunge the visitor into the emotional sphere. We worked with a composer, Michele Lombardi, who did a study of the music of the time and proposed a universe to talk of a land which is not ours. It is really a question of composing an original soundscape." Arianna Zovadelli, Project Manager, Studio Base 2



©Terra Sancta Museum

Some young friars from the Custody of the Holy Land recorded their voices for the multimedia soundtrack

OFF-SITE EXHIBITIONS

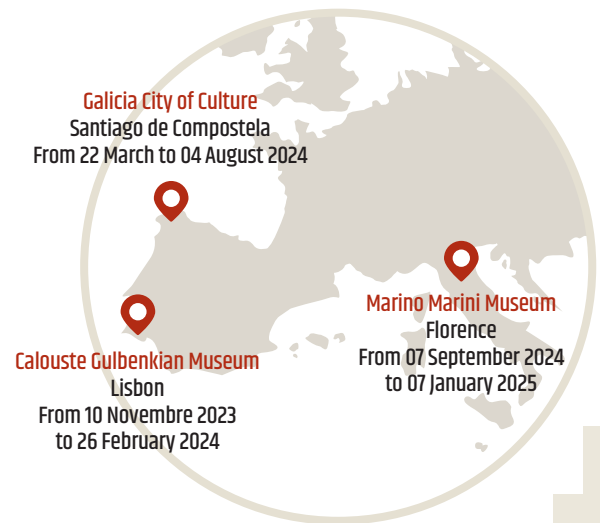
Prior to the planned opening of the museum in 2027, the collections of the Terra Sancta Museum are showcased in exhibitions hosted by various prestigious institutions worldwide. This initiative started in 2023, at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon.

It addresses several key objectives crucial for the museum's advancement: enhancing the museum's international renown, mobilising expertise to preserve our collections, and securing the funds required for the museum's development.

In 2023

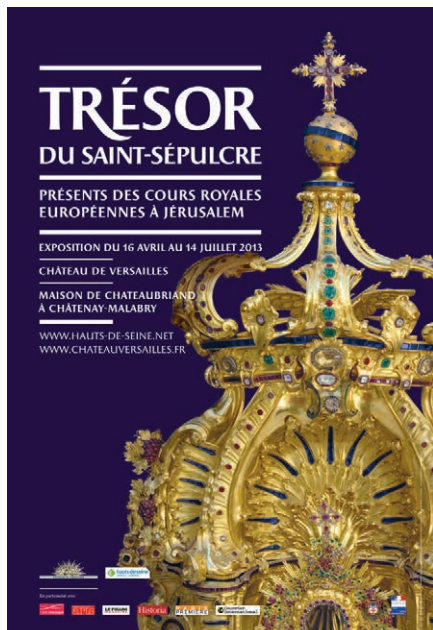
LOAN OF
74 WORKS

APPROX.
51,000
VISITORS IN LISBON



FROM VERSAILLES TO THE CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN, THE BIRTH OF A MUSEUM

2013



Versailles. The collections of the Treasure of the Holy Sepulchre were revealed to the whole world!

2023



Lisbon. The Terra Sancta Museum, as an institution, is taking the centre spotlight for the first time.



“The preparation of this exhibition allowed increasing scientific knowledge about the collections of the Terra Sancta Museum, and more particularly the Portuguese works. It also contributed to improving the state of conservation of the silver and gold pieces, which can be better appreciated by visitors at future exhibitions. Lastly, the national and international echo of the exhibition in Lisbon will make a decisive contribution to promoting the Terra Sancta Museum and its brand.”

André Afonso

Curator at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Executive Curator of the exhibition “Treasures from Kings. Masterpieces from the Terra Sancta Museum”



Jacques Charles-Gaffiot, Scientific Curator of the exhibition during the installation of the exhibition



©Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Pedro Pina

Altar frontal “Pentecost” Kingdom of Naples, 1731



©Guillaume Benoit

Detail of Altar frontal “Pentecost”



©Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Pedro Pina

White Dalmatic of Ferdinand VI of Spain, 1758



©Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Pedro Pina

Lamp of Maria Theresa of Habsburg – 1759



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