



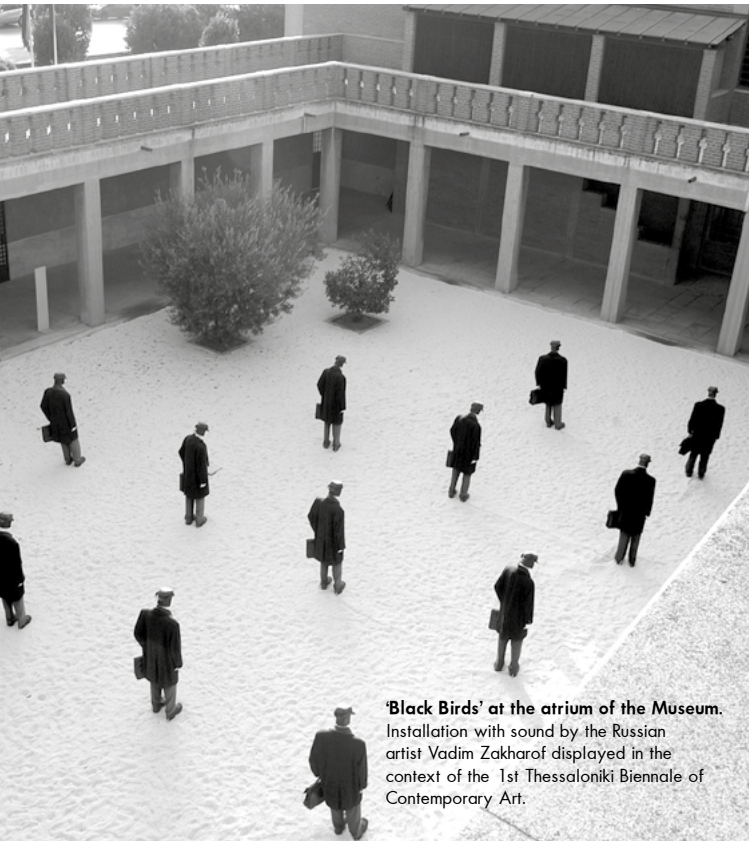
**MUSEUM OF
BYZANTINE
CULTURE**

The Museum of Byzantine Culture, which first opened its gates to the public in 1994, is housed in a listed building, designated as a historical monument and a work of art that was erected between 1989 and 1993 based on the awarded design of the architect and painter Kyriakos Krokos. The permanent exhibition of the museum, comprised of 11 galleries, is chronologically arranged, divided into thematic entities. Through the display of authentic artefacts that come from Thessaloniki and Macedonia mainly, and the use of graphics and multimedia, it presents diverse aspects of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine culture.

The museum features fully equipped conservation laboratories as well as state-of-the-art storerooms designed for archaeological material, space intended for educational programmes, a temporary exhibitions wing, a multipurpose room, two auditoria, a museum shop and a café-restaurant. With all of its undertakings, its educational and cultural activities and its publications the museum constitutes an exemplary centre of preservation, research and promotion of our cultural heritage. Thus, it comes as no surprise that in 2005 it was awarded with the Council of Europe Museum Prize, an honour bestowed upon a Greek public museum for the first time ever.



Museum Prize 2005
Council of Europe



'Black Birds' at the atrium of the Museum.
Installation with sound by the Russian artist Vadim Zakharof displayed in the context of the 1st Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art.

Early Christian or Proto-Byzantine Period (4th-7th c.)

Room 1: The Early Christian Church

The display is concerned with the architecture and decoration of the early Christian church based on the prevailing building type of the timber-roofed basilica. The fan-shaped ambo from Philippi, the rare frieze that comes from the church of Hagios Menas, the mosaic panels from the churches of Hagios Demetrios and the Acheiropoietos, the decorative elements with mother-of-pearl incrustation from mural decorations, the silver reliquary from Nea Herakleia and the purple parchment leaf from the so-called codex of St. Petersburg (Codex Purpureus Petropolitanus) constitute some notable exhibits.



Room 2: The Early Christian City and Private Dwelling

Centered around the triclinium, the reception room coming from an opulent house of Thessaloniki, the exhibition articulates subjects that highlight the role the city played as a fortified urban complex, encompassing public and private life, economic activity, trade, workshops and private dwellings with their domestic utensils (pottery and glassware), craftwork production and artefacts associated with clothing and personal adornment.



Room 3: From the Elysian Fields to the Christian Paradise*

The display introduces the transition from the perception of Late Antiquity, that considered afterlife as a blissful place of material prosperity, to the ultimate triumph of the Cross with the prevalence of the new religion and its doctrine concerning the final and eternal judgment and the resurrection of the dead. The exhibition includes tombs coming from cemeteries located outside the walls of Thessaloniki, whose interior unravels an exceptional ensemble of funerary painting, and also funerary inscriptions, vessels, coins, jewellery etc.

• *The exhibition was realized within the context of the research programme "The Transformation of the Roman World, AD 400-900" of the European Science Foundation, with the support of the EU.



Middle Byzantine Period (8th-12th c.)

Room 4: From Iconoclasm to the Splendour of the Macedonian and Komnenian Dynasties

The exhibition presents the architecture, painting (icons, wall paintings) and sculpture (closure panels, column capitals, icons) of the time period, and also liturgical objects and aspects of public and private life, in general, through the display of seals, coins, funerary monuments, artefacts of everyday life, clothing and personal adornment, whereas special attention is drawn to the Christianization of the Slavs and the myrrh-flowing saints of Thessaloniki.



Room 5: The Dynasties of the Byzantine Emperors

The dynasties of the emperors of Byzantium from the reign of Heraclius (610-641) through to Constantine XI Palaeologue (1449-1453) are outlined with the aid of genealogical trees, coins, hoards of coins and seals.



Room 6: The Byzantine Fortress

The exhibition sheds light on the defensive system of the Byzantine Empire, the way the fortress town is laid out and also on the daily life and production within as well outside its walls. The archaeological material comes from Central Macedonia and primarily from Rentina and Gynaikokastro. This thematic entity is supplemented with a video installation which informs visitors about the fortresses of Macedonia and Thrace.



Gynaikokastro, Kilkis Prefecture.
Built by Emperor Andronikos III
Palaeologue (1328-1341).

Late Byzantine Period (1204-1453)

Room 7: The Twilight of Byzantium*

This period signals for Thessaloniki an era of spiritual awakening and fervent theological pursuits that resulted in the revival of the arts, particularly of painting, with a profound impact on Mount Athos and the neighbouring Slavic peoples. Amongst the exquisite examples of the artistic production of the city are the icon of Christ depicted as the "Holy Wisdom of God", the gold-embroidered silk epitaphios, relief icons made of marble and works intended for burials. Simultaneously, the role of Thessaloniki during this period, as a commercial and craft manufacture centre with a mint, highly developed production and trading of products and artefacts, such as glass vessels and glazed ceramics, is accentuated.

● *Sponsored by CARREFOUR-MARINOPOULOS S.A.



Rooms 8, 9: The Collections of Dori Papastratou and Dimitrios Oikonomopoulos

These rooms, which have been dedicated to the great donors of the museum, bear their name. A small number of objects donated to the museum for the enrichment of its collections are on display. The Oikonomopoulos Collection is comprised of 1460 artefacts that date from prehistoric times through to the 19th c., with Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons being preponderant in terms of quantity and quality. The rich and distinctive Dori Papastratou Collection consists of 232 engravings spanning the period from the 18th c. up until the beginning of the 20th c. and eight wooden and copper matrices that come from all the major centres of producing and printing Greek religious engravings.



Post-Byzantine Period (1453- 19th c.)

Room 10: Byzantium after Byzantium: the Byzantine Legacy in the Years after the Fall of Constantinople

The room gives insights into the Byzantine inheritance in the years following the Fall of Constantinople. Concurrently, an approach to elements of the Byzantine culture that have lived on in private life is attempted with reference to private worship and daily life. The exhibited icons, rendered in some cases by renowned eponymous icon painters such as Fragkos Katelanos, Theodore Poulakis, and Emmanuel Tzannes, represent the various schools of painting and local workshops in the Greek territories under Turkish and Venetian rule over the centuries. Exquisite samples of ecclesiastical goldwork embroidery and silversmithing, engravings and liturgical books are also displayed, whereas issues such as the flourishing culture of monasticism and the cult of neomartyrs are considered.

● **Co-financed by the European Union (3rd Community Support Framework, Sectoral Operational Programme "Culture", 2000-2006).*



Room 11: Discovering the Past*

The stages an ancient artefact undergoes from the excavation site through to its display at the museum, the planning of a permanent exhibition and the history of museums globally are elucidated with the aid of digital applications. The sole authentic artefact on show, a floor mosaic dated at the 5th c. AD, is enhanced by a contemporary artistic creation which alludes to the urban environment of Thessaloniki and brings to mind the background of its discovery, but also the unbroken continuity of the new city over the old one.

● **Co-financed by the European Union (3rd Community Support Framework, Sectoral Operational Programme "Culture", 2000-2006).*





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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Culture and Sports



Ταμείο Αρχαιολογικών Πόρων
Archaeological Resources Fund



ΜΝΗΜΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ
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