

THE INAUGURATION OF THE PATRIARCHAL LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

The inauguration of the renovated Patriarchal Library of Alexandria was performed on the evening of the 9th May 2008, by His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, in the presence of Mr. Takis Arapoglou, President of the National Bank of Greece , who was born in Alexandria . It was the National Bank of Greece which undertook and bore the costs for its renovation. Also present were His Excellency the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, in charge of issues regarding Greeks abroad, Mr. Theodoros Kasimis, and His Excellency the Governor of Alexandria, Mr. Adel Abib.

In his address at the inauguration, His Beatitude said:

“Honourable Mr President of the National Bank of Greece ,

Your Excellency the Representative of the Egyptian Government,

Your Excellencies the Ambassadors of Greece and Cyprus ,

Hierarchs, Archon Office Bearers of our Apostolic Throne of St Mark,

Dear Friends.

This day is a landmark for the Apostolic and Second Throne See of the Alexandrian Church, as the Patriarchal Library of the Alexandrian Throne is inaugurated and put back into operation, through the kind benefaction of the National Bank of Greece and its Egypt-born president Mr Takis Arapoglou. Ancient Codices, manuscripts containing the history, dogmatic and general theology of Orthodoxy and very old books which record the timeless journey and cultural contribution of the Hellenes of Egypt, as well as of our entire Nation, maintained and renewed by the experienced hands of special scholars, through the work and supervision of the Educational Institute of the National Bank, are given again to research, so that they may survive the decay of time and be passed on intact to the next generation. This important and great work could not have been planned and realized without the valuable assistance and support of the Egyptian Government which always shows its love for the work of our Patriarchate. Naturally, it would not be possible to complete it without the enormous costs undertaken by the National Bank of Greece , through the personal concern and initiative of its President, Mr Takis Arapoglou and its entire Executive Committee.

Not only the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, the Holy Synod of the Alexandrian Throne are grateful for this contribution, but so is the entire Nation because the contents of the Patriarchal Library of Alexandria are a spiritual inheritance and estate for all Greeks and Orthodox Christianity.

Today's inauguration is a bright point in the development of the renewal work which has been undertaken by the Apostolic Throne of St Mark. It is a job which is based on Divine Providence and the donations of citizens, public and private agents, through which we continue our historic presence in the hospitable land of Egypt and generally in Africa . Within this framework we try not only to renovate and equip the existing old buildings, but also to create new ones, to fight hunger, thirst, disease, and the lack of education, to face current sufferings in humanity, such as uncontrolled ethnic and social violence, but also to continue to offer an illumined witness of the Gospel word on the Dark Continent and to the whole world.

On our laborious missionary journey, donations such as that of the National

Bank of Greece , relieve our pain and anxiety and give us a crutch and a support to continue the work which the Lord has given us as service. With this help, we were able to essentially renovate the ancient patriarchal Library which, apart from its renowned scholastic, theological and historic publication "Analekta" has already inaugurated its new publication "Sources and Signs of Patriarchal History" and will continue with the publication of many other historic texts which are as yet unpublished and which are kept in the Patriarchal Library of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa.

Honourable Mr President and my dear friend Mr Takis Arapoglou, we thank you from our hearts for this assistance, and we look forward to a continuation on your part of support of our plans so that our Patriarchate's work will be on a level with its great past which were known to and in many ways created by generations of Hellenes from Egypt.

From today our Patriarchal Library opens its doors again, and offers its treasures to research and to science, as another contemporary Alexandrian Lighthouse together with the jewel of the Great City of Alexandria, the renovated and world renowned Alexandrian Library.

Full of joy, we pray that the Lord and Benefactor richly grant His blessing on both the donors and all who worked towards the completion of this work, enlighten all who will study and work here, that they may illumine the world with the light of respect, piety, faith and Christian studies".

This significant event of inauguration was attended by His Eminence Damianos of Sinai, Their Eminences Elder Paul of Memphis, Elder Petros of Aksum, Kallinikos of Piousion, George of Zimbabwe, Nicholas of Ermopolis, Dimitrios of Irinopolis; Their Graces Bishop Gabriel of Mareotis, Spyridon of Kanopos, Nikodimos of Nitria, Gennadios of Nilopolis; Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of Greece and Cyprus, the Consuls General of Greece in Cairo and Alexandria, the Consul General of Russia, the President of SAE, the General Secretary of the Cretan area, the Office Bearers and Members of the Order of the Parabalani of the Patriarchal Throne, the Chairman and members of the Hellenic Communities, as well as those of the Arabic speaking Communities, other dignitaries and many visitors from Greece and Cyprus.

There followed in the Great hall of the Patriarchal Throne the awarding of the Great Cross of the Saint and Apostle Mark to the President of the Bank of Greece Mr Takis Arapoglou, the highest award of the Alexandrian Church. Addressing the President of the National Bank of Greece , His Beatitude said:

"In this Hall of the Throne of the Patriarchate which today has been in continuous existence for 2000 years, it is worthy and right that I should honour you, Mr. Arapoglou, for in you I see your dignity and your spontaneous contribution , which will be remembered by the following generations as the contribution of an Alexandrian, who never forgot the place of his birth".

In his reply, Mr. Arapoglou said: "I am deeply moved for the honour given to me, which is both a personal honour and is also given to the National Bank, which I represent and which contributed to the renovations of the Patriarchal Library of Alexandria. The National Bank will always be at your side, in the continuation of the work of the Library, and with the maintenance of the books which begins soon. We will always be with you". He gave His Beatitude a Chalice and Cup which His Beatitude said was a most valuable gift for the Church as Christ's Body and Blood are offered in them.

His Beatitude also honoured with the award Senior Commander of St Mark, the overseeing Architect of the renovation works both of the Patriarchal Library as

well as the entire building works of the Patriarchal Mansion, Professor Mohamed Aouwat, saying: "In your person and in your valuable assistance, we see and honour the fruitful results of the harmonious co-existence between the Orthodox Greeks with the generous Egyptian people"; the Civil Engineer of the Cypriot Brotherhood of Alexandria Mr Haralambos Haralambides received the award of the Lion of St Mark, for his technical advice in the completion of the works; the award of the Lion of St Mark also went to the Great Archon of the Throne Mr. Efthymios Soulogiannis for his contribution to the recording of the historic journey of the ancient Patriarchate, because "as a genuine Hellene from Egypt, who, though he lives outside of the land of the Nile, is always concerned for and supports the Mother Church of the Egyptians, the Church of St Mark".

Following the events, a reception was held in the gardens of the Patriarchate and an official dinner was held on behalf of the National Bank of Greece at a luxury hotel in the Great City .