

# International Symposium on the Conservation of Monuments in the Mediterranean Basin

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## Welcome Speech

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# Welcome Speech

**Dimitrios Kouis** - Associate Professor, Department of Archival, Library and Information Studies, University of West Attica, Greece

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Dear Rector,

Dear members of our University Board,

Dear Members of the Scientific and Organizing Committees,

Dear Presenters and Authors,

Dear Participants,

The **seven years** that have passed since the organisation of the previous Symposium have changed the world and each of us personally.

From practical and ethical perspectives, the COVID pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the subsequent economic crisis made it impossible to organise the MONUBASIN Symposium under the terms and conditions that would bring the best possible outcome.

But today "**It's Gonna Be A Good Day**"!

With **great joy and emotion**, I welcome you to the 11th International Symposium on the Conservation of Monuments in the Mediterranean Basin held at the University of West Attica in Athens, Greece.

The combined efforts of five Academic Institutes made it possible for this conference to take place today. Namely

1. The Department of Archival, Library and Information Studies, and the Department of Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art from the University of West Attica
2. The Department of Materials Science and Engineering of the School of Chemical Engineering at the National Technical University of Athens
3. The School of Chemistry at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
4. The Department of Architecture of the IUAV of the University of Venice and
5. the University of L'Aquila in Italy

The theme of our **11<sup>th</sup> MONUBASIN** is "**Exploring Material, Techniques and Technological Advances for Conservation, Urban Restoration and Management of Cultural Heritage in the New Era**".

The new era is characterized by recurring anthropogenic crises, climate change, the increase of conflicts in recent decades especially in the Mediterranean basin region such as: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Syria, Algeria, Lebanon, Israel, but also in the broader region of the Black Sea such as: Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, with incalculable disasters in museums, archaeological and urban sites.

In the field of technology, significant progress has been made in devices/techniques for the diagnosis and characterization of materials, as well as for conservation/restoration interventions in cultural heritage objects and structures. This progress has been facilitated by the development of non-invasive techniques and, more recently, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The Symposium's theme refers to the materials, techniques, and state-of-the-art technological advances used for damage assessment, rehabilitation, and restoration in urban environments, with a focus on sustainable and long-lasting conservation. It also encompasses aspects of cultural heritage management related to conservation/restoration procedures and techniques, as well as innovative approaches to promoting and presenting cultural artifacts to the public and relevant stakeholders in the new digital era of cultural heritage management.

We hope the Symposium will provide a forum for scientists, technicians, and experts in the conservation and restoration of monuments to present their work and exchange ideas and experiences.

More than 200 authors, attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors participated in this Symposium.

All the papers were critically reviewed by the members of the Scientific Committee, to whom I would like to attribute my deepest gratitude for all their essential effort and cooperation in this crucial aspect of the Symposium.

The proceedings will be published in the [eProceedings](#) service with Open Access by the National Documentation Center (EKT). *eProceedings is an innovative service for the electronic publishing and management of conference proceedings, helping researchers and academic institutions reach a wider readership and effectively promoting new ways of scholarly communication in full compliance with the principles of open access. Each paper in the proceedings will get a unique DOI and will be indexed by Google Scholar and other citation indexes.*

Additionally, two special issues in esteemed International Journals will be published to enhance the visibility and dissemination of the conference papers: Infrared Physics & Technology, by Elsevier, and the Journal of Integrated Information Management, by the University of West Attica.

I would also like to thank **Professor Fulvio ZEZZA** from the University IUAV of Venice, ITALY. He is the President of the Symposium and Coordinator of the International Group on the Conservation of Monuments in the Mediterranean Basin. Unfortunately, he was unable to be with us due to unforeseen personal issues. However, we will be able to see and hear him in the Opening Lecture titled "Exploring materials, techniques and technological advances for conservation, urban restoration and management of cultural heritage in the new era" in a little while.

Additionally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Maria Koufopoulou for providing me with the opportunity many years ago to participate in the MONUBASIN conference events.

Additionally, I believe she deserves our gratitude, as she has been responsible for organizing most of the MONUBASIN conferences, including the one that starts today.

I would also like to thank

Stamatios BOYATZIS, Professor and President at the Department of Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art at the University of West Attica

Ioannis KARAPANAGIOTIS, Professor at the School of Chemistry in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and

Stefano SFARRA, Associate Professor at the Department of Industrial and Information Engineering and Economics at the University of L'Aquila,

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Rector, Professor Panagiotis Kaldis, and his efforts that allowed us to host the conference at our university.

Many thanks should be extended to the Scientific and Organizing Committee members, whose contributions are considered of utmost importance for the success of the Symposium.

Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues for their assistance with the conference organization. Many thanks to Valia Triperina, Ioannis Drivas, Vasiliki Dritsa, Nikolaos Lazaridis, Manto Psallidakou, Georgia Kiriakaki, and Foteini Euthimiou.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all sponsors for their generous financial support.

I hope you enjoy the conference and that it proves to be an event that will help you on both a scientific and professional level.