

MARC-RENÉ DE MONTALEMBERT and his wife **MANUELA SCAMMACCA DELLA BRUCA** are the founders of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation in memory of their son Marc (1972-1993). As he was of both French and Italian descent, the foundation that bears his name focuses on raising awareness of the richness of Mediterranean cultures among young people of this region and on promoting intercultural dialogue. Marc-René de Montalembert is a retired senior official with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). His professional life was dedicated to international cooperation and development assistance.

“Conversation in the Library is a very welcome initiative of Hafız Ahmed Agha and Ahmed Fethi Pasha Foundation as it reunites in one collection a number of important contributions about history, art and culture in the Medieval City of Rhodes. So, we are grateful and pleased to participate in this initiative with our account of a modern foundation whose objective is to enhance the conservation and the cultural life of the Medieval City with an example of nature protection and cultural activities for the benefit of all. It shows what can be done at a moment when so many medieval buildings which have been restored at great cost are left closed and unattended: on the contrary it is indeed indispensable to accompany the current mass tourism with cultural education and emblematic promotion of the past and present of this prestigious World Heritage city.”

Marc-René de Montalembert

A Modern Multicultural Foundation in the Medieval Town of Rhodes the Marc de Montalembert Foundation

The restoration of an emblematic site:
combining heritage conservation and the promotion of dialogue
among Mediterranean cultures

Introduction

2025 marks twenty-five years of presence in Rhodes of a new foundation, the Marc de Montalembert foundation – thus a very recent presence in the old historical complex of the Medieval Town and furthermore a French foundation established in Paris. The first step took place in December 1995 when the site on which the Foundation is active was donated by the founders to the City of Rhodes.

Marc-René and Manuela de Montalembert wanted to honour the memory of their son Marc de Montalembert (1972-1993) who used to stay nearby the small byzantine chapel of Agios Markos (Saint Marc) in Rhodes. They decided to restore the garden behind Agios Markos and to offer it to the church dedicated to their son’s patron, and to donate the site to the City of Rhodes.

The transfer of ownership took place in December 1995. The conditions set in the donation act provide for the irreversible preservation of the site. The donors and the Foundation in the name of Marc de Montalembert were to carry the restoration of the site. They have the right of use to ensure the preservation of the site and its use for cultural activities at the initiative of the Foundation.

The Marc de Montalembert Foundation has a multicultural scope focusing on Mediterranean cultures. More specifically it intends to further the knowledge of their diversity and to encourage the awareness that such diversity is their richness. It hopes thereby to contribute to the cause of peace and tolerance in the region. Its main target group is the young generations. Financial support through grants is provided to cultural projects undertaken by young people from the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Interactions among diverse cultural groups are promoted through dialogue and encounters.

This presentation focuses on the Foundation’s presence and actions in the Medieval Town of Rhodes. The first part describes an emblematic site with testimonies of successive occupations during the byzantine, the Knights and the Ottoman periods. Such testimonies required careful attention and a very significant effort in their restoration which took four years. The second part is a concise presentation of the activities of the Foundation on its siege in the Medieval town of Rhodes with particular focus on those activities meant to build awareness among the Rhodians of their cultural and nature heritage. The facilities which are available on the restored site are used to host multicultural encounters and seminars and for exhibitions related to cultural projects supported by the Foundation.

I - Concise History of the Site

The best illustrated testimony of the medieval time of the city is the Caoursin codex or codex Parisinus Latinus 6067¹, completed by 1490. It constitutes a unique description of the city which was the headquarters of the Order of Saint John until 1523 when the Knights were defeated by the army of the Ottoman Sultan Soliman². The codex’s miniatures provide a detailed representation of the city in the late XV° century. It enables the identification of elements of the urban fabric and remarkable fortress which had been developed by the Knights over two hundred years.

Several miniatures show on the western side of the city the bastion of Agios Giorgios and the walls, the monastery of Agios Giorgios, the church of Agios Markos and a garden lying just behind in between the monastery and the church³. This church had a particular significance as the Knights brought into it the precious icon of the Virgin of Fileremos from the countryside monastery at the times of attacks by the Ottomans.

The buildings shown on the miniatures still exist and they are under the Ministry of Culture. A significant programme of restoration has been carried out in the 1990s by the Byzantine archaeological service under the leadership of Elias Kollias with joint funding from the European Community and the Government of Greece. The restoration provided for a unique complex of Byzantine, medieval and Ottoman buildings.

A special feature of this complex is that the garden which was shown as central to it on the miniatures still exists. It is the site of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation's project. The garden has an extension of 1700 square metres. At the centre of the garden are a terrace with a large well, a standing arch and the remains of two more surrounding a basin which can be dated to the Knights’ period. North of the basin were the remains of an Ottoman pavilion largely in ruins. While no indication could be found of the complex which they could be part of, the garden was an important element at the medieval time, and it was maintained since then.

In recent times the garden was privately owned and the connections with the surrounding buildings had been closed. It had been used until the 1980s to grow vegetables with the central well and basin providing water through a traditional irrigation system.

In the early 1990s the garden had been left unattended for many years and what remained of the central construction was in complete disarray. Seasonal workers found a shelter in a small room. Garbage of all kinds were being thrown and accumulated in this abandoned piece of land. Being privately owned it was not part of the restoration programme of the Ministry of Culture; discussions had started to turn the site into a tourist wine and dancing place.

1 Guillaume Caoursin: *Obsidionis Rhodiae* 1483-1489, Codex Latinus Parisinus 6067, Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.
2 1523 in Rhodes is the year which marks the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the Ottoman one. The Greek Ministry of Culture considers the period of the Knights in Rhodes as the medieval period, followed by the Ottoman period starting with the Turkish occupation of the city.
3 The Byzantine Archeological Service in Rhodes has copies of the miniatures of the Codex Latinus Parisinus but their poor quality does not allow their reproduction in this submission except the plan of the city. Dr. E. Kollias, Conservator Emeritus, referred to these miniatures in his address at the opening of the Foundation on 2nd May 2000. See annex.

Following the donation of the site restoration started in early 1996. It was conducted in close collaboration with the Byzantine archaeological service as it was intended to contribute a significant green landscape to the complex of medieval buildings and the Turkish mansion currently under a major restoration programme.

II – The Restoration Project

It was necessary to proceed in two distinct phases i.e. the restoration of the ruins of the central pavilion, of the arches and of the basin and then the establishment of the garden. Furthermore, the advanced degradation of both the building and the garden imposed a cautious and gradual approach in order to integrate in the restoration work new elements being uncovered. The project revealed itself to be much more complex and demanding than initially foreseen. Furthermore, a deliberate and systematic use of traditional know-how and solutions was to be applied. This influenced the evolution of the restoration as work was progressing.

Work was carried out following an integrative approach as the garden and the pavilion could not be treated as separate elements. Instead, the site was to have a built-in unity in which the space whether external or internal was closely interpenetrating. Such integrated approach was aimed at developing one and the same atmosphere of harmony and peace. From the windows of the pavilion the garden was to be evidenced from different but complementary perspectives. The objective was to avoid the perception of inside and outside and to offer a diversity of possibilities of contemplation. It was to provide an example of continuity in the occupation of the space despite major historical and cultural changes.

Restoration of existing buildings in the garden

The terrace with an **old well** was the main visible element dominated by a fifty-year-old oxidated windmill. The windmill was removed and the top of the rectangular well cleaned and restored to bring it back to its original shape. The terrace had been covered with rough cement. In places the underneath original cover of little stones was apparent. The terrace was fully restored with the typical small pebble cover, traditional in Rhodes (“rhaliki”).

West to the well an Ottoman fountain was inserted at the centre of a high wall covered with stucco acting as a separation between the well and a **basin** of rectangular shape. Water would fall from the Ottoman fountain into the basin and from there into an old irrigation canal to the two ends of the garden. The sides and the bottom of the basin were still covered with some remains of old curasani⁴. On the southern side of the basin there was a **very fine arch** of light pink stones from the medieval time through which the cupola of Agios Giorgios can be seen. This arch required no intervention.

During the initial cleaning research was made to ascertain the nature of the wall with the Ottoman fountain as it was covered with relatively recent stucco. A **second arch** perpendicular to the southern one was uncovered with great caution. Only part of the arch was intact, but the keystone was found among the remaining stones of the wall. This and the fact that the base of the arch had not been modified when the wall was built led to the decision to reconstitute the entire arch.

4 curasani: traditional material and technique used in the Mediterranean area to protect and waterproof basins, roofs, walls, cupols. Used from Venice, where it can be meant as “cocciopesto”, to the coast of North Africa and the eastern Mediteranean.



FIGURE 1: The site in early 1996 after a first cleaning

The five missing stones were carved by workers with experience in this kind of delicate restoration. The eastern arch of the basin now stands with the fountain in its centre and the view to the church of Agios Markos and complements the southern arch towards Agios Giorgios.

Opposite to the eastern arch it was decided to remove a more recent line of stones and to bring the western wall of the basin to its original level. This operation uncovered the two stones which formed the base of a **third arch**: the original form of the basin was thus a square 4x4 metres. During the Ottoman time the basin was extended towards north and given its present rectangular shape. Had there been a fourth arch its elements were removed.

The base of the third arch was kept visible to evidence the complex of three arches on the sides of the Ottoman basin as an example of integration over time of the medieval and Ottoman cultures. Research and restoration works did not provide any indication of the original status and purpose of this complex before the modification into the Ottoman basin was arranged.

The sidewall and the basement of the basin were cleaned of the remains of old curasani and covered anew with curasani carefully prepared and applied according to the complicated and lengthy traditional technique. Despite the difficulty to find workers skilled in this technique the restoration of the basin's complex is exemplary of the deliberate recourse to the traditional know-how.

North of the well-basin complex stood what remained of a **building** which seemed a modest peasant house in very bad conditions. The state of these remains was such that the elements of the original building could not be identified at the time when preparing the restoration proposal.



FIGURE 2: The site in April 2000 after the completion of the restoration

The first operation thus consisted in a major cleaning to remove the trees and the ivy growing in and on the remaining walls and the huge quantity of garbage accumulated over time in the destroyed parts of it. Medieval elements were later uncovered. Important decisions were taken while restoration was in progress to integrate these elements after checking their stability.

The building complex thus uncovered consisted of three main elements:

- An Ottoman pavilion north to the basin and later connected to a small building with a chimney on the side of the terrace; they could date from the end of the XVIIIth-beginning of the XIXth century;
- Two more recent rooms probably built late XIXth century further north in order to extend the original pavilion.
- A large space in between medieval walls and divided by an arch was uncovered right under the two rooms and its level is that of Agios Markos.

The study of the ruins of the **Ottoman pavilion** identified the position of the original windows. Their restoration enhanced the shape of a refined ottoman salon – *hayat* in Turkish - looking on to the basin and to the garden on three sides. Two lines of windows, eleven of large size for the view and above them eleven smaller for the ventilation, were restored with the traditional Turkish wooden frame design. A wooden roof and floor and the furniture consistent with the traditional design completed the restoration. The adjacent small building was restored with special care for some large stone wall elements, which were left apparent. The space between the hayat and this

other old building was covered at the beginning of the XXth century and the two connected through an additional room. The latter was integrated to the hayat in the restoration work resulting in a larger space which exalted the atmosphere of the hayat. It is meant to provide the meeting space for the Foundation.

Of the **two more recent rooms** only one still had a roof and could be inhabited while the larger one had only the sidewalls with a tree growing on a mixture of soil and garbage which were removed. When this underground space was cleared medieval walls were uncovered which were acting as the foundations for the upper ottoman level. The restoration of the two upper rooms was postponed until the work in the underground level was completed. The shape of the original openings and of the walls where they still existed was maintained. The remains of a traditional Turkish wooden balcony on the eastern side justified a new insertion. The same Turkish stile wooden roof and floor as in the hayat was then used. One room was equipped as library and the other as office space.

The removal of the soil and garbage in the **medieval underground basement** uncovered the higher part of a large medieval arch which divided a large room with medieval walls, and a smaller entrance arch together with a well. These corresponded to a medieval dwelling.

No other elements were found which could enable the understanding of its nature and possible connection to surrounding buildings.

A careful restoration work was undertaken to ensure the stability of the medieval arches and walls. It was meant to re-establish the open space thus providing a clear example and evidence of the development of the building and the way successive occupants had used its elements in a continuous manner. Curasani was used to protect the floor against humidity at 1,5 metre below existing soil level. The restored space provided space appropriate for seminars and workshops.

The only addition to the existing buildings was a new space that was created under the terrace on the north-western side of the building. This new room with independent access was to provide for hosting a guest on the site.

Restoration of the garden

Research was conducted to uncover early information and to gather knowledge on the evolution of the site since the medieval time. The first evidence is to be found in the green space represented between the church of Agios Markos and the monastery of Agios Giorgios along the walls in the miniatures of Caoursin in 1480 (see reference above).

In the XIVth century Bosio indicated that the church of Agios Markos was a Franciscan convent⁵. After 1523 it was converted into a mosque by the ottomans. The Ministry of Culture completed the restoration of the original building in 1999.

Little was found instead on the garden at the early time. Bosio indicated that saffron – *Colchicum* - was cultivated. No representation was found so far of a Byzantine or medieval garden in Rhodes except on icons which have essentially a symbolic meaning. However, there are several descriptions

5 Bosio Giacomo, Istoria della sacra religione ed illustre milizia di S. Gio. Gerosolimitano, 1594-1602 Roma, Tipografia Vaticana

particularly in reports from travellers of that period such as Nicolas de Martoni⁶. He wrote in 1394-95 about Rhodes : « *Autour de la ville de Rhodes, il y a des jardins d’orangers, de citronniers et de toutes autres sortes de fruits. Dans chaque jardin, se trouve une grande fontaine et un moulin à vent pour tirer l’eau de la fontaine par une roue qui tourne au vent. De petits vases sont liés à cette roue et l’eau tombe dans un conduit jusqu’à une fontaine aussi grande qu’un pressoir. Ainsi elle est remplie et, le soir, tout le jardin est arrosé de cette eau* ».



FIGURES 3-5: The garden

6 Relation du pèlerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de Martoni (1394-1395), Edition Le Strange, Revue de l’Orient Latin, tome III, 1895



This description corresponds to the site where water is an essential element of the garden – well, fountain, basin, canal. The well’s wall bears the mark of the wooden wheel of the mill to extract water which will then run into the rectangular basin. The remains of a small canal connected to the basin and running parallel to the medieval rampart completed the frame of an irrigation system traditional in the Middle East.

As the garden is located just under the medieval rampart its design was elaborated with special care in order that it can be seen from above the walls as well as by the visitors of the churches of Agios Markos and Agios Giorgios and by those visiting the Foundation.

The view from above the walls catches the structure of the garden. The main direction runs west to east between the two impressive old cypress trees through the basin towards the church of Agios Markos. The other direction runs north to south along the canal with the two cypress trees at the centre and the Church of Agios Giorgios in the back. These two perspectives cross each other between the two cypress trees at the point of connection between the canal bringing water from the basin and that running parallel to the walls.

From the neighbouring churches the garden is seen as a structured element of nature which provides the consistent environmental scenery to the medieval complex and the impression of a closed garden, “hortus conclusus” which existed frequently besides a medieval monastery.

The visitor who enters the garden from the nearby crowded and noisy streets finds a peaceful and silent space. He discovers a variety of squares and paths, which enhance the views to the surrounding medieval buildings with the two cypress trees and the basin with its arches as central reference elements. Walking between squares planted with different tones of green and passing through spaces of light and shade the visitor is invited to a contemplation of harmony.

The **design of the restored garden** is a modern interpretation of both the medieval and ottoman garden. The figure of the square is used across the garden with measures, which are a multiple of the dimension of the arches of the basin. It is repeated through the garden as a set of mirrors. The square of the basin becomes a stone square. Then its dimension is doubled in a frame of white flowering bushes. The same figure of the square this time of an ash green colour blossoms in summer of white colour underlined by the bright green of myrtles.

Below the wall and along the white canal from north to south a mixed border of local species was planted under the existing trees. A path limited by two edges of myrtles draws from the main terrace to Agios Giorgios. Special importance was given to that area of the garden extending towards the church of Agios Markos to exalt the link between the Foundation and the church. Two old myrtles stand on the sides of the stairs which draw from the level of the garden down to that of the church. The remaining space was shaped by squares planted of different Mediterranean species. In September saffron bulbs will flower like in ancient times.

Research on **plants** focused on those which existed in the Mediterranean region at the time of the Knights ; were to be excluded those which were introduced from other continents, since the discovery of America even if considered now to be part of the Mediterranean flora. Research was conducted in old herbaria for this purpose. Varieties of ancient roses were selected and introduced along the walls. Preference was given to species still present in the wild in Rhodes.

< **FIGURE 6:** The Ottoman water basin with the medieval arch gracefully bearing the inscription stone to honour the memory of Marc de Montalembert.

The garden is visible in all seasons with the various tones of green of the perennials. White is the colour of flowers of all plants in the squares and the border along the walls. The only exception is the red flower of the already existing pomegranates dear to Proserpine.

Work had started in early 1996. By the end of 1999, four years later, the buildings had been restored in full respect of the history of the site and the various stages of its occupation. The preference being given in the garden to plants endemic of the Mediterranean region provided the harmonious landscape to the architectural complex surrounding the site.

The site of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation provides an emblematic example of what a modern foundation can achieve through the complexities of an ambitious restauration work in the Medieval Town of Rhodes. In a presentation letter dated of 29 May 2000 Elias Kollias wrote: *“I have been following the project of the restoration of the building and transformation of the surrounding area and the garden from the outset. On the basis of this experience, I believe that a site where memories of at least five centuries are alive has been not only restored according to the international rules on restoration but, what is more, with prudence, self-restraint, love and ardent yearning.”* Indeed, tribute must be paid to the continuous support and informed advice by Elias Kollias and his colleagues of the 4th Eforate of Byzantine Antiquities.

III - Activities of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation in Rhodes

On May 2nd, 2000, on the day of Agios Markos, after a celebration in the chapel, the site whose restoration had just been completed is inaugurated with the participation of the local authorities: Mr. Giorgos Giannopoulos, Mayor of Rhodes, Mr. Savvas Karaigiannis, Prefect of the Dodecanese region, Fr Païsios auxiliary bishop of Rhodes, Mr. Elias Kollias, Efore of Byzantine Antiquities of the Dodecanese. There was a large participation of friends and of people from Rhodes who were curious to discover this site which had been donated to their city. Most importantly was the presence of the three persons whose sympathy and support of the project had really made possible its implementation: Elias Kollias, Giorgos Giannopoulos and Giorgos Vrouhos, lawyer.

The facilities which resulted on the premises of the Foundation after the extensive and costly restoration were clearly appropriate for the development of activities in line with the mission of the Foundation. Elias Kollias attached great importance to the landscaping role of the garden as a background integrating the surrounding byzantine monuments. And it had been agreed with Elias Kollias that whenever cultural activities were to take place in one of the elements of the site such as the monastery of Agios Giorgios or on the site of the Foundation the participants would have full access to the totality of the site to bring a full perception of its unique architectural and historical nature. Unfortunately, since the completion of its restoration the Monastery of Agios Giorgios has remained closed and unattended.

The Foundation's activities have gradually developed over the years since 2000 with a particular focus on the garden and on the capacities to host cultural activities. Particular attention has always been given to ensure that the people from Rhodes would perceive the Foundation's presence and its activities as taking into account what it could offer them. A concise account is presented below.



FIGURE 7: The Ottoman water basin with the medieval arch and the fountain with the Monastery of Agios Georgios in the back (above). The garden and the Ottoman Pavillon (below).



The garden: promoting awareness of the importance of Mediterranean species and of nature conservation

From the outset it was clear that the garden provides an important example of the potential of Mediterranean plants in the design of a garden in the context of the Medieval city of Rhodes, and not only! Thus, there was a clear scope for developing a programme focusing on Mediterranean plants and more broadly on nature management and conservation. Two lines of action were implemented.

- **Building awareness among the public.** There are annually three days when the public has free access to the garden: on the day of Saint Marc, generally end of April, the spring “open day” in May and the autumn “open day” in October. The dates are widely communicated in advance. And the gardener is available to respond to queries regarding the identification of plants and their treatment. There is always a very large participation of visitors from Rhodes, in particular families with children. Furthermore, visits are also organized on request for special interest groups.

- **Special programme for the children.** Of special importance is the programme for the children. The Foundation’s garden is unique in Rhodes and thus it can play an important educational function. Since the inauguration in 2000 visits of school children and students have taken place. In recent years it has become a regular programme. At the start of the school year the Foundation announces to all schools in the island that their primary and secondary classes are invited to visit the garden. Appointments are to be made with the person responsible for the garden for groups of 20/25 children to visit the garden. He will guide the groups around and he will identify the important Mediterranean species present in the garden. In most cases these species are familiar but un-noticed to the children. He will explain their mythology and the importance of protecting them in the local environment. Some classes will receive some seedlings of species found in the garden that they will take back and grow in their school premises.

In support to the special programme for the children the Foundation published a small book with a poetic and pedagogical scope. The story “*Το μεγάλο ταξίδι του Κίτρο*” was written and illustrated by some local friends of the Foundation. In the form of a comic book, it is the story of a small child who discovers the garden and the main plants. Copies are given to the visiting classes, and they are also made available to those interested who visit on the “open door” days. In cooperation with the French Institute in Athens a French version was published and it is available in particular to Erasmus French-speaking groups of students.

Promoting intercultural dialogue through encounters

As a result of the restauration meeting facilities are available and provide a very positive environment. Furthermore, a hosting facility has been added close to the Foundation for up to 16 persons participating in the activities. The Foundation is thus able to promote intercultural dialogue by hosting encounters and meetings with regional participation on a wide variety of cultural subjects.

The first such encounter in September 2003 is worth mentioning: it was the Youth Forum of 7th Symposium of the Organization of World Heritage Cities. The Forum was organized with support from UNESCO, and it brought together 25 young people from a variety of countries who met for three days at the Foundation. They discussed their experiences from their own World Heritage City and their recommendations were presented to the Plenary of the Symposium. The Youth Forum was very successful, and all participants were enthusiastic about the venue. It confirmed the capacity of the Foundation to host such encounters on its premises in the Medieval City of Rhodes.

Since then, a variety of encounters, seminars and workshops have taken place at the Foundation. They are organized in cooperation with a diversity of institutions such as universities, research centres and programmes and non-governmental organisations – The Rhodes Centre for History and Social Research (the Rhodes Project) is one of these. The conditions are that the subject must be fully relevant to Mediterranean cultures and their diversities, and that they must be participatory in nature and bring together people from a variety of Mediterranean countries.

An important element of the Foundation’s programme is the award of annual grants which provide financial support to cultural projects undertaken by young people – under 28 years – from countries bordering the Mediterranean. These projects must be implemented in countries of the Mediterranean different from the country of origin of the applicant. The grants are presented every year in Rhodes on the day of the Foundation and the winners return to present the results according to their nature on the Foundation premises through exhibitions or conferences. By 2024 over 30 nationals from 8 Mediterranean countries have benefitted from such grants.

Last but not least the Foundation hosts in residence writers and researchers who are engaged in a subject related to Mediterranean cultures. Besides the quality of the residence on the premises of the Foundation it is also an opportunity for the residents who come from abroad to discover Rhodes and its unique cultural heritage.

Concluding remarks

In 1995 when the Marc de Montalembert foundation started its activities in Rhodes the authorities who provided support to the project expressed hope that the Medieval City will benefit from a cultural contribution of quality. But many Rhodians did not know what this initiative would consist of and what to expect from it.

Over the years awareness has grown as it was manifest that special care was given to the restoration of a site which was so much part of the long history of the City as testified by the remains present. The garden was also an example of how nature was a crucial element in the cultural heritage.

After 25 years since the inauguration Rhodians come time and again on the “open days” to this emblematic site which provides a unique example of integration of nature in the urban tissue of the Medieval City. Furthermore, thousands of children through the schools programme have come to the garden and their awareness has grown of how important is the contribution of nature to their cultural heritage. This effort of raising their awareness and knowledge is all the more significant and crucial that they are the adults of tomorrow.

The achievements of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation in the Medieval City of Rhodes show the potential of new initiatives which are conducted in close cooperation between the authorities and a private initiative. It was essential but not sufficient: the feasibility of the project and its success relied heavily on the informed and sensitive commitment of individuals: a special tribute must be paid to three persons without whose support the project would not have been successful, not even possible. They are Elias Kollias, former Ephorate of the Byzantine archaeological service, Giorgos Giannopoulos, former Mayor of Rhodes and Giorgos Vroukos, lawyer. The Foundation is now well-known in Rhodes and a group of local friends is now actively involved. This modern multicultural foundation is now well integrated in the Medieval City where it provides an original contribution to its conservation and cultural life. In many respects it is emblematic of the presence of a modern private initiative in the life of a historical site such as the Medieval City.