



SOCIETY OF THE
FRIENDS OF EPHEOS

CASE FOR SUPPORT

CONSERVATION OF THE CELSUS LIBRARY IN EPHEOS



EPHESOS – WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE OF SUPERLATIVES

- 9,000 years of history of mankind
- Home of the Temple of Artemis – one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World
- Most important antique harbour in the eastern Mediterranean
- One of the largest settlements of antiquity never built over
- One of the largest cities of the Roman Empire along with Rome, Athens and Alexandria
- Capital of the Roman province of Asia
- Important Jewish and early Christian community
- Last residence and burial place of the apostle John
- Presumed last residence of the Virgin Mary
- Immortalised in the New Testament and in the letters to the Ephesians by the Apostle Paul
- Venue of important early Christian councils councils



Sarcophagus of Celsus

THE CELSUS LIBRARY

A MONUMENT OF INTELLECTUAL CULTURE AND WORSHIP OF KNOWLEDGE

Founded by Gaius Iulius Celsus Polemaeanus in 114 AD

The Roman proconsul Gaius Iulius Celsus Polemaeanus may not have been immortalised by his library, but he is still vividly remembered more than 2,000 years after his death - not least by the 3 million visitors to the World Heritage Site of Ephesos every year. With the foundation of the library, he earned the unique privilege of being buried within the city walls of Ephesos, namely in a central location directly below the library. Unique because for centuries the deceased had to be buried outside the city by law.

The library and burial place of Celsus is therefore an eternal statement of his great respect for learned knowledge. Today, the Celsus Library is a bigger attraction than the Temple of the Goddess Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Even if Celsus - all too humanly - cannot have been entirely unpretentious, he certainly could not have dreamt of his current importance.



50 years after the re-erection

The Celsus Library was discovered as early as 1905 as one of the first finds of the Austrian excavation, which was still commissioned by the emperor at the time. In a lengthy process, individual parts were identified as belonging to the library at various locations in the city and brought back. It was only between 1970 and 1978 that the façade of the Celsus Library was rebuilt in its current form.

Since then, it has become known worldwide and has developed into a top destination for scholars and laymen alike. Archaeologists, historians, art historians, religious scholars and building researchers have made a unique history of cultural development, social life, intellectual history and artistic expression accessible to us.

A general conservation is necessary

The antique library is now in need of urgent and sustainable general conservation. In addition to environmental influences such as rain or air pollution, which cause damage to the building fabric, some of the materials and techniques used during the reconstruction 50 years ago are now considered problematic. It is also necessary to maintain the structural integrity of the building to ensure its long-term use.

Before major damage occurs, it is up to us to protect this breathtaking monument in the long term through comprehensive conservation.



An international team of experts is carrying out the conservation project

By the end of 2024, a thorough survey of conservation needs had been conducted and analysed in terms of urgency and procedural techniques. Thanks to our detailed knowledge acquired over more than a century and our extensive network, we are able to call on the world's best conservation experts and develop an optimal conservation plan for this important monument.

The icon of the Ephesos excavation in new splendour

The methods used to restore ancient monuments are constantly evolving. This will make it possible to apply the latest research and technologies to the restoration of the Celsus Library. The conservation work will be particularly visible on the façade, which will shine brightly again after cleaning.

Upon completion of the project, the Celsus Library will be restored in such a way that its preservation will be ensured for decades to come and visitors will be able to enjoy this unique cultural heritage.





UNMATCHED EXPERTISE

For 130 years, the Austrian Archaeological Institute (OeAI) at the Austrian Academy of Sciences has been leading the excavations in Ephesus. Our excavation team knows literally every square centimetre of the antique city and has unique knowledge of where to dig, what to restore and what to leave alone, and what will yield the most relevant results for researching and understanding human history. The fact that there is a museum in Vienna dedicated entirely to the finds from Ephesus is a testament to the unique prestige associated with this excavation.

Our work in Ephesus has also survived the upheavals of the 20th and 21st centuries, and we maintain excellent relations with our Turkish partners. Over more than a century, we have earned their respect and operate on an equal footing. That is why our assessment of archaeological projects and measures in the UNESCO World Heritage Site is heard at the highest level.

Our Society of Friends of Ephesus was founded in 1972 by Professor Tita von Trentini and is now run by his grandson Christoph Trentini, the third generation of the family. For over 50 years, the Society has supported the work of the Austrian Archaeological Institute in Ephesus and acts as our link to the community. The Society of Friends finances its support through membership fees and corporate donations, but a greater effort is now needed to preserve the Celsus Library – the library needs committed people like you!





FASCINATION OF ORIGINS

The deeply human need to understand our origins is unbroken and almost as old as humanity itself. The question of our past is inextricably linked to that of our own mortality and explains the enduring interest in monuments, for they point beyond our physical existence.

We have been committed to this site for 130 years, so that future generations can also learn that they are part of a human history that spans many millennia. We want to enable them to experience the joy of the outstanding achievements and works of art of early humanity and, to this end, preserve the Ephesos ensemble in all its significance. We invite you today to become part of this important undertaking!



114

Julius Aquila donates
the Celsus Library
to his father.

1903-1904

The monument
is completely
excavated.

1970-1978

With the support of the
Society of Ephesos,
a modern reconstruction is
being carried out.

2024

Start of a comprehensive
restoration project.

YOUR GATEWAY TO ETERNITY

Your support will make it possible to preserve the incomparable experience of the Celsus Library for generations to come.

As a patron of this unique cultural treasure, you can join Celsus himself on a commemorative plaque carved in stone, where you will be remembered by future generations for the next 2,000 years.

Leave your personal greeting to posterity by sending the eternal message of this iron monument to human intelligence into the future in the age of artificial intelligence.

Leave your personal statement on becoming human, being human and remaining human!



DONATION ACCOUNT

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