



## Project

### Enhancement and conservation of historical heritage in the Old City of Jerusalem through training and professional development of local youth

#### **A Genesis of the project and area of Intervention**

In December 2014, a delegation from the Municipality led some representatives of the University of Turin (Department of Drug Science and Technology) and of the Order of Pharmacists from the province of Turin on an exploratory mission to the Palestinian Territories for the preparation of a project coordinated by the Holy Land Association (ATS). ATS acts in support of the Custody of the Holy Land (CTS), appointed to protect and promote the sacred places where Jesus and his apostles used to live.

One of the project objectives was the construction of a museum room in East Jerusalem at the new headquarters of the Terra Sancta Museum. The Custody has in fact created in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem a new and more functional museum, which is unique in the world for the roots of Christianity and the preservation of holy places. The aim was to create a permanent exhibition where to discover the history of an extraordinary land in which the lives of many people have been weaving together and sharing the holy places for three monotheistic religions.

In the new Terra Sancta Museum, more than 400 vases of remarkable historical and artistic value are now on display. They come from the Ancient Franciscan Pharmacy, one of the most prestigious in the Christian world at a time when a system of hospitals in the Holy Land had not been developed yet. The collection of vases, dating from the late seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, shows how both the maritime republics and monarchies in the ancient Italian reigns (where the vases come from) were close to the Holy Land and the Franciscans. It also shows how the social work that the Custody of the Holy Land has always been carrying out in Jerusalem was important.

#### **The role of the Turin system in the project**

The involvement of both the Order of Pharmacists and the University of Turin allowed a qualified technical-scientific contribution for the study of some ceramics from the Piedmont area, given to the Custody as a gift from the House of Savoy. The contribution of the University of Turin, in particular, made possible to identify which formulations used in a period of maximum activity for the Pharmacy (1650-1700) can still be used today without danger to the consumer, thanks to the detailed analysis of the ingredients contained in the various formulations by simply excluding the substances which are today considered potentially toxic. Therefore, if there were any interest in repurposing some products, it will be possible to do it by carrying out a formulation study, a quality control and subsequently a financial evaluation for their marketing.

At the end of the exploratory mission in December 2014, the University and the Order were willing to offer their technical-scientific support necessary to carry out both the study of the vases and the texts kept in the Historical Archive of the Custody of the Holy Land. A research fellow from the University of Turin pursued an internship in Jerusalem and that made it possible to complete the study of the pharmaceutical formulations and their curative powers, with a comparison between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and nowadays. The two bodies also offered collaboration for the preparation of a feasibility study useful for the establishment of a mini-educational laboratory within the Terra Sancta Museum, dedicated to the Ancient Franciscan Pharmacy.

The City of Turin, through its International Relations, European Projects, Cooperation and Peace Office, coordinated the Italian partners (the University of Turin, the Order of Pharmacists of the province of Turin and the Municipality of Montevarchi) from a technical and administrative point of view and entertained relations with the project leader (ATS) and with the co-financer (PMSP). In addition, during the 2015 Holy Shroud Exhibition, in collaboration with the Turin Museums Foundation and the Shroud Museum, it had been working to put on display in Turin four objects dating back to the 1st century. A.D., from Jerusalem and granted for the occasion by the Custody of the Holy Land. The Museum of Oriental Art (MAO) and the Shroud Museum displayed the four objects.

Through this project, the link between territories and religious communities has been strengthened, a link which has been so firmly rooting over the centuries and still *going as strong as ever* along the paths of knowledge and faith, by integrating "pieces" of Piedmont's history with a fundamental cultural and spiritual heritage for Christianity.

### **Context**

In the framework of the Italian-Palestinian PMSP - Palestinian Municipalities Support Program (financed by MAE program - Ali della Colomba), with the involvement of the Palestinian Municipalities, the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government (based in Ramallah) and the Italian consular authorities in Jerusalem ( ITAU - Italian Technical Assistance Unit).

### **Duration**

Start: April 2015.

End: November 2016.

### **Total costs**

€. 197,122.59

### **Donors and partners**

- Pro Terra Sancta Association (Applicant) = 2.82% (in kind)
- Custody of the Holy Land = 9.62% (in kind)
- City of Turin (Italian leading partner) = 8.26% (cash and in kind)
- University of Turin / Order of Pharmacists province of Turin = 23.16% (cash and in kind)
- Municipality of Montevarchi = 4.92% (cash and in kind)
- PMSP = 51.22% (cash)

### **Results**

- Setting up within the new Terra Sancta Museum, of both a room dedicated to vases and objects from the Ancient Franciscan Pharmacy and a multimedia room where to carry out educational workshops on ancient pharmaceutical preparations.
- Identification of both contents and powers of 18 pharmaceutical preparations prepared in the past centuries. Study of potential applications for five of them based on current scientific knowledge. Development of a dissertation research within the Department of Drug Science and Technology of the University of Turin.
- Four objects from Jerusalem and dating back to the first century AD (Apr-Jun 2015, during the Shroud Exhibition) displayed at the Museum of Oriental Art and the Shroud Museum in Turin.
- Seminar to show the project outcomes at the Monastery of Saint Saviour in Jerusalem (30 November 2016).