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Saving the post-Byzantine legacy of Imbros and Tenedos



The European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments (ECBCMM) completed one of its most important projects over the summer: the conservation of the ecclesiastical equipment of two churches of Imbros (Gökçeada in Turkish), the birthplace of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and 42 portable icons from the Church of the Virgin Mary of Tenedos (Bozcaada in Turkish).

“It was the summer of 2020 and we were on the island (Imbros) under the difficult conditions of the lockdown to share the concerns of His Eminence Metropolitan Kyrillos of Imbros and Tenedos about the state of the church relics and to evaluate the immediate priority projects,” said Natalia Poulou, president of the centre and professor of Byzantine archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

“We found significant damage to the wood-carved icon stands, pulpits and bishops’ thrones both in the Metropolitan Church of the Virgin Mary in Panagia, the island’s capital, and in the Holy Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Glyky. The rot had begun to eat away at their insides and the grime covered the luster of the

wood carvings and paintings," she told Kathimerini.

The two north-east Aegean islands with majority Greek populations were ceded to Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

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