

Miracle of St. Demetrius in 1821, heralded as beginning of liberation struggle in greater Athens, commemorated today



The miracle of St. Demetrius, occurring at dawn on April 1, 1821, is commemorated today at the central Athens cathedral dedicated to the saint.

St. Demetrius appeared in a dream to a leading Christian clan leader, Hatz-Meletis, hours after the latter had persuaded the local “Voivoda”, or warlord, to supply his men with more rifles, gunpowder and swords, ostensibly to defend from Muslim bandits and irregulars active in the mountains outside of Athens.

When the Ottoman leader latter regretted his decision, given that the flames of revolution against Turkish yoke were already lit in various areas of mainland Greece and the islands, he ordered troops of the garrison to intercept Hatz-Meletis and his band of men from the settlement of Hasia and take back the weapons and munitions.

The clan leader saw the saint come to him in his sleep, while encamped with his men at the older St. Demetrius chapel, and exclaim “To Arms”.

The event is considered as a harbinger of the liberation of the greater Athens area – ancient Attica – from our Ottoman rule, according to the Archimandrite Fr. Filoumenos Roubis, the parish priest of the cathedral, which today is known as St. Demetrius ton Oplon, the latter meaning “of the Arms”.

Today’s cathedral has been built around the older chapel.

