



EUROPEAN CENTRE

FOR BYZANTINE AND POST-BYZANTINE MONUMENTS

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## PRESS RELEASE

### START OF THE CONSERVATION WORK ON THE FRESCOES OF THE BYZANTINE CHURCH OF AGIOS NIKOLAOS IN MESOPOTAMOS, ALBANIA

In the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in September 2021 between the European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments and the Ministry of Culture of Albania, for the conservation of the frescoes, the marble parts and the floor of the Byzantine church of Agios Nikolaos in Mesopotamos, the first phase of the conservation work took place between 27 August and 20 September 2024. Trial trenches were made in the entire surface of the church's walls up to the level of 8 meters, extensive interventions for the removal of subsequent roughcasts and lime roughcasts, as well as delimitation, stabilization and superficial desalination work.

In addition, non-destructive imaging and spectroscopic diagnostic and documentation methods were applied to determine the nature of the pigments of the different phases of the frescoes, with particularly interesting results. An interesting element was the fact that the work revealed frescoes over a large area, especially in the western and southern parts of the church, which had not been visible until recently. The above work was carried out according to the study for the conservation of the decorative elements of the church that was conducted on behalf of the EKBMM by the Directorate of Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments of the Greek Ministry of Culture and was approved by the Albanian Ministry of Culture.

The conservation work of the frescoes is scheduled to be carried out in 2025. In all stages of the organization and planning of the project, our cooperation with the National Institute of Cultural Heritage (IKTK) of Albania has been excellent.

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