

*Ἐπὶ πέτρας λευκῆς*

A Conference in Memory of Κυριακὸς Σ. Πιττάκης

October 23rd 2013 marked the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary from the death of Kyriakos S. Pittakis (1798-1863), the ἥρωος οἰκιστῆς of Greek Archaeology. His passion and adoration of his ancestral archaeological remains, as well as his devotion and constant care for them were instrumental factors for the preservation and publication of a great number of Ancient Greek inscriptions and other monuments in many areas in which he was active, such as Athens and Attica, Boeotia, the Aegean islands and the Peloponnese.

In the case of Athens, which was his birth place, Pittakis' contribution is not limited to the preservation and publication of antiquities. A great contribution to scholarship was his insistence on noting the exact find spot of the monuments and his belief, which was based on his experience, that, Athens before the Revolution of Independence preserved the same roads that were used in Ancient Athens and that the Christian churches were built mostly on the same locations as the ancient temples.

His work and interest did not only concern Antiquity but also the evidence on the Medieval History of Athens during the Ottoman Occupation, even the customs and traditions of the Athenians. In his notes appear a great variety of toponyms of Athens dating to the period before the War of Independence which is an invaluable source of information and knowledge for contemporary scholars and researchers. As the city grew and developed after its liberation, many of these toponyms changed or fell in disuse and were finally forgotten. Moreover, many areas of the city were transformed by building activity.

All the above mentioned constitute good reasons for honouring the memory of Kyriakos Pittakis, and with him the history of Greek Archaeology. Without Pittakis, Eustratiadis, Koumanoudis and other eminent Greek archaeologists of the 19th century, our scholarly knowledge and the memory of the past –so necessary in the difficult times of the present– would have been much impoverished.

The 150th Anniversary from Pittakis' death was an appropriate occasion for the organization of a conference by the Epigraphical Museum and the Greek Epigraphic Society (held on November 9th, 2013). The theme of the conference was the presentation and evaluation of Pittakis' work in the regions where he was active either under his capacity as Ephor of Antiquities or «κινούμενος μόνον ὑπὸ τοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἔρωτα τῶν προγονικῶν λειψάνων πόθου».

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