

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 1-2-2018

The AUB Archeological Museum celebrates its 150th anniversary
and launches a series of activities

Ghattas Khoury: "Lebanon is a message, as is AUB"

The Archeological Museum at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Society of Friends of the AUB Museum celebrated its 150th anniversary at a ceremony in front of the illuminated facade of the museum's building. The ceremony was attended by Minister of Culture Ghattas Khoury, former Minister of Culture Rony Arajji and a number of ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps. From the university, its President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri attended, along with Provost Dr. Mohamed Harajli, Director of the AUB Archeological Museum Dr. Leila Badre, Vice-Presidents and members of the administrative and faculty bodies and some members of the Board of Trustees, in addition to members of the Society of Friends of the AUB Museum and members of the press and others.

The ceremony began with the Lebanese national anthem and was followed by a speech of the director of the museum Dr. Leila Badre, who said: "AUB has provided us with a symbol of continuity, always aiming for the highest professional goals and standards. Its Archaeological Museum, the third oldest in the Near East, after Cairo and Constantinople, is the strongest symbol of this cultural continuity. It has highlighted and proudly maintained the values of our Heritage for AUB, Lebanon and the Region. The AUB Museum has gone through two World Wars and a civil one too; and yet it is still here stable and steadfast in its role and mission." Badre spoke about her 40 years in the institution, which were highlighted by the complete renovation of the museum. She focused in particular on the key role played by the Society of Friends of the AUB Museum in order to accomplish this renovation.

The logo of the museum was lit up on the facade of the building. Then, AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri made his remarks, in which he recalled some of the history of the museum, which began with a collection of ancient treasures from Cyprus donated by General Luigi Palma di Cesnola, who later became the first director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Khuri talked about how the AUB Museum was the only museum that remained open throughout the years of the civil war. He also described the museum as a “hidden gem of Ras Beirut”, to continue saying, “I think it is fair to say that this is far more than a hidden gem. It is a shining diamond—for AUB and for Lebanon—not just of Ras Beirut, but of our common culture from every inch of the Arab world.”

And finally the Minister of Culture Dr. Ghattas Khoury delivered his speech, and said: "Every people of the world carry a civilization message derived from concepts of human values. These concepts are formed and accumulated over time via the interaction of individuals and peoples with the natural and human environments. And the more that people understand their cultural peculiarity, the more they contribute to the development of humanity and progress towards a better life. Because self-awareness lies in the knowledge of heritage, and its concrete and intangible aspects. "Lebanon is a message," according to the late Pope John Paul II. Yes, Lebanon is a universal message that has transcended the boundaries of its small homeland, and has spread throughout the world for six thousand years."

He added, “As Lebanon is a message, the American University of Beirut is a message, from the first days of its founding to the present day. It is an educational and social message, and it promotes positive human attitudes among its students. The university did not limit its scope to teaching and educating, but it worked to preserve the Lebanese historical heritage in a museum that has a scientific, academic and human impact.”

He continued, “More than 150 years ago, AUB founded an archaeological museum, convinced that the preservation of the historical heritage is first a preservation of the collective human memory, and secondly, a solid testimony to the Lebanese of the importance of Lebanon and its geographical and civilization position on the map of world civilizations. It was hard work by a devoted team and a concerted effort that after 150 years, gave us a museum housing landmarks and milestones that make every Lebanese proud.”

He concluded, "Blessed is your effort. It is appreciated by all the Lebanese, and is an affirmation that the educational, social and humanitarian vision is a characteristic of the American University of Beirut.”

Minister Khoury presented a Certificate of Recognition to the Director of the AUB Museum, Dr. Leila Badre, after which everyone gathered at the location in front the museum where Minister Khoury, AUB President, the Museum Director and the President of the Society of Friends of the Museum Nabil Nahas, planted a tree to mark the anniversary. This was followed by a tour of historical banners of the eight curators who have directed the museum over the past 150 years, and a tour and reception inside the museum. The event also included the launching and

displaying of the 360-degree virtual tour of the AUB Archeological Museum, which can be accessed on this link http://website.aub.edu.lb/museum_archeo/Tour/index.html

The celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the museum will continue in 2018 with a number of activities, including two major events. The first is an exhibition and a film in May, which will highlight the history of the AUB Museum. And the second is a colloquium around the subject “From Collection to Museum”, which will take place in June and will bring together the directors of the world's ten greatest museums, including the Metropolitan, British, Louvre, Berlin, Brussels, Athens, Cairo and Istanbul. Another major landmark in the museum's celebrations is the production of a special stamp by the Ministry of Communications.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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