NARRATE

Needs for Digital Recording and Documentation of Ecclesiastical Cultural Treasures in Monasteries and Temples

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The purpose of NARRATE project is to codify the actual recording and documentation needs for the ecclesiastical cultural treasures, through a systematic study of the users' needs.

Consortium partners

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NARRATE

Needs for Digital Recording and Documentation of Ecclesiastical Cultural Treasures in Monasteries and Temples

ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΚΡΑΤΙΚΩΝ ΥΠΟΤΡΟΦΙΩΝ IKY

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- COGNITIVE UX

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Abbreviations

Assoc. Prof.	Associate Professor
CH	Church heritage
ChT	Church Treasures
EU	European Union
Eccl.	Ecclesiastical
Hist.	Historical

Executive Summary

The EU Erasmus+ “NARRATE: Needs for Digital Recording and Documentation of Ecclesiastical Cultural Treasures in Monasteries and Temples” (2022-1-EL01-KA220-HED-000089867) aims at identifying and promoting the needs and priorities concerning ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage (CH) documentation.

This study seeks to organize and address the specific requirements for recording and documenting ecclesiastical cultural treasures by thoroughly analyzing user needs. NARRATE focuses on capturing ecclesiastical cultural heritage in a way that allows stakeholders to convey their interconnected histories, roles, and spiritual significance over time.

The present report: *R3.4. Meeting Report for Sofia Conference* is activity that’s part of *WP3 - Implementation and User Evaluation of the NARRATE Framework*. The organization and hosting of such a conference aim to bring together specialists in the field of digitization of church artifacts, publish a specialized volume on the conference's theme, and promote the cause of digitizing such artifacts to support their preservation and presentation to the public. The digital dissemination of the results is also of particular importance for promoting the project's outcomes. The presence and participation of clergy and theology students are equally significant for evaluating the project's activities.

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1. Methodology

The goal of the NARRATE project is to organize and streamline the process of recording and documenting ecclesiastical cultural heritage by conducting a thorough analysis of users' requirements.

For the purpose of conducting the user evaluation of the NARRATE project product, a conference was organized in Sofia, Bulgaria. Its organization was the result of the collaborative efforts of the entire international project team, with all participants actively involved. However, the primary fieldwork in Sofia was carried out by the Bulgarian team of the project. During the regular team meetings, the following stages of preparation for the international conference were identified:

- Stage 1: Identifying work stages and assigning tasks.
- Stage 2: Selecting the venue for the conference at the Sofia University. Ensuring options for online participation and video recording of the conference.
- Stage 3: Identifying potential hotels for guest accommodation and venues for daily lunches and dinners located near the conference venue.
- Stage 4: Preparing a conference budget based on the proposed international guests suggested by the project team.
- Stage 5: Designing a poster, a section on the NARRATE website, folders, and other promotional materials for the conference, including content for social media platforms.
- Stage 6: Developing an online platform for participant registration for the conference. Establishment of the conference organizing committee.
- Stage 7: The conference topics were determined, and the program was developed based on the registered participants and the presentations they proposed.
- Stage 8: Sending invitations to participants, as well as to official representatives of local authorities and other international institutions in Sofia involved in the project's mission.
- Stage 9: Conducting the conference sessions.

- Stage 10: Preparing certificates for participants to confirm their active involvement in the conference proceedings. Sending the certificates to participants in electronic format.
- Stage 11: Collecting the texts presented at the conference for publication in a special volume. Publishing the volume.

The coordination and oversight of all stages of implementation were assigned to Associate Professor Dr. Svetoslav Ribolov.

2. Implementation of the Activity

2.1. Identifying work stages and assigning tasks

During the regular online project team meetings, the working stages for the preparation of an international conference dedicated to the digitization of ecclesiastical treasures were identified. Various options for carrying out the activities were also discussed, and specific tasks were assigned to the Sofia team to be executed between September 2023 and March 2024, when it was ultimately decided that the conference would take place. The tasks for the team members responsible for maintaining the online platform were defined, as well as the remaining tasks related to the online promotion of the conference. The allocation of funds for the conference, as provided in the project, was also discussed. In this regard, the advice from colleagues at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the practical assistance of Ms. Aikaterini Stamou proved particularly valuable. The title of the conference was also finalized following discussions within the team. Upon the suggestion of Prof. Efstratios Stylianidis, the final title was determined to be: *International Conference on the Documentation of Ecclesiastical Heritage.*

2.2. Selecting the venue for the conference at the Sofia University

Associate Professor Ivaylo Naydenov from the Sofia team negotiated the use of the New Conference Hall at Sofia University (Tsar Osvoboditel 15 Blvd., Sofia), provided by the Faculty of Theology of the same university. Additionally, Sofia University supplied video recording equipment and a staff member to perform a professional video recording at the university's expense. Technical assistance was also ensured by assigning a dedicated engineer from the university to oversee the functionality of the hall's equipment

and ensure its safe operation during the three-day event. In the month leading up to the conference, the technical systems in the hall were tested by the university's dedicated engineer responsible for the event. Meanwhile, the Sofia team maintained constant communication with colleagues from Greece and Turkey regarding the requirements for the hall and equipment, ensuring that all invited keynote speakers could deliver their presentations at the conference without any obstacles. The hall is equipped with a high-tech setup for simultaneous interpretation, a video wall, an audio system, and other advanced facilities.

Figure 1: *New Conference Hall during the 1st day of the Conference*

2.3. Identifying hotels for guest accommodation and meal venues

This activity was entrusted to Associate Professor Dr. Ivaylo Naydenov. He conducted a survey of the selected hotels located near the main building of Sofia University, where the conference was to take place. Preferential rates for conference participants were negotiated, and the method for booking accommodations was determined. For international guests invited to participate at the expense of the NARRATE project budget, advance payments were made through Sofia University in compliance with the regulatory provisions of Bulgarian legislation. The recommended hotels were Hotel Crystal Palace Boutique, Shipka Street 14, 1504 Sofia, www.crystalpalace-sofia.com; InterContinental Sofia, an IHG Hotel, Parliament Square 4, www.ihg.com and Hotel Rila "Tsar Kaloyan" 6 Str., 1000 Sofia, www.hotelrila.bg.

Associate Professor Dr. Ivaylo Naydenov also arranged the dining venues. For the dinners, including the main social dinner, the well-known restaurant "Krivoto,"[1] popular for academic gatherings in central Sofia, was selected. For lunches, preferential rates were negotiated at the university restaurant "The Egg,"[2] commonly used by university staff. As a meeting place for Sofia University faculty, this venue provided opportunities for interactions and discussions with colleagues from various faculties. As a university restaurant, the establishment offers exceptionally affordable prices for daily meals.

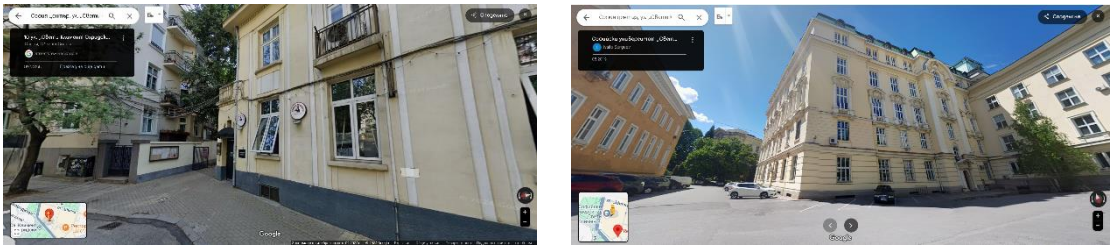

***Figure 2**: The Restaurants of "Krivoto" and "The Egg"*

2.4. Preparing a conference budget

During the regular online team meetings, the budget was discussed, and an approximate allocation of the €10,000 planned for the project was made. In this regard, the advice of Ms. Aikaterini Stamou proved particularly helpful, as she provided valuable recommendations regarding the organization of individual activities within the preparation and execution of the conference. Despite some challenges caused by the sharp increase in hotel prices in Sofia during the autumn of 2023, no changes to the budget were necessary. The team concluded that it would be entirely feasible to organize the conference within the allocated budget. The conference budget covered three coffee breaks, three lunches, one social dinner, and one welcome dinner, as well as conference

[1] The restaurant is located directly behind the main building of the Rectorate of Sofia University on "Sveti Kliment Ohridski" 10, Str., 1504 Sofia.
[2] The restaurant is situated on the ground floor of the Rectorate building of Sofia University on Tsar Osvoboditel 15, Blvd., 1504 Sofia.

bags, pens, badges, notebooks, two roll-up banners, ten large-format posters, lanyards, fifty small promotional posters, one airplane ticket, and hotel accommodation for Prof. Gavrilakis from Istanbul. Additionally, two buses were arranged for trips to two monasteries in the vicinity of Sofia on the final day of the conference. In the end, since many participants left early, we canceled the second bus, which allowed us to reduce expenses. Detailed information can be found in the expense plan attached to the report. The successful reduction of planned expenses allowed €3,000 from the initial conference budget to be allocated for the publication of a volume containing the texts presented at the conference.

2.5. Designing a poster, flayer, a conference website, folders, and other promotional materials for the conference, including content for social media

The design of the posters and the images intended for dissemination of information about the event were discussed during team meetings. Ultimately, one of the designs proposed by Assoc. Prof. Svetoslav Ribolov was approved. Naturally, several improvements were made following recommendations and advice from Prof. Stylianidis, Dr. Stamou, and Dr. Sylaiou. Additionally, the advice and remarks of Father Prof. Chrysostomos Nassis proved to be particularly valuable. The poster was prepared in two sizes: a larger format for the conference itself, the hall in front of it, the foyer of the Faculty of Theology, the Sofia Metropolis, and the Rectorate foyer, and a smaller format for broader distribution across the Sofia University campus, Sofia churches, and key bookstores. The digital design of the poster was created by the Sofia team, while its distribution was carried out by student volunteers from the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. The folders, bags, posters, and notebooks were ordered for printing at the university publishing house of Sofia University.

The conference website3 was developed by CognitiveUX, who also took care of promoting the event on social media4, where the NARRATE project has its own pages.

[3] https://narrateproject.eu/conference
[4] https://www.facebook.com/projectnarrate

***Figure 3**: Poster and Flayer*

2.6. Developing an online platform for participant registration for the conference

At the suggestion of Prof. Stella Sylaiou, the electronic conference page was registered on the Microsoft CMT platform.[5] Its purpose is to facilitate the online registration of all those wishing to participate in the conference. The platform allows specialists to provide all the necessary information without engaging in lengthy correspondence with the conference coordinators. After receiving the necessary instructions, the Sofia team trained to work with the platform and officially announced the start of registration in December 2023. Within two months, all interested participants registered and submitted their topics, enabling the preparation of the event program. The advantage of organizing registration through an electronic platform is that, in the event of changes in the number of attendees, the titles of their presentations, or other details, quick adjustments can be made. This ensures that an up-to-date program can be prepared using the available electronic information stored in one centralized online location.

[5] https://cmt3.research.microsoft.com/User/Login?ReturnUrl=%2FNARRATE2024%2FSubmission%2FIndex

2.7. The conference topics and the program development

In November 2023, during the joint online meetings of the entire team, the following topics were identified to serve as the foundation for drafting the conference program and to provide directions for all potential participants in the conference. Out of more than 20 topics proposed by the Greek, Turkish, and Bulgarian groups in the project, only 6 final topics were selected.

The *topics* are as follows:

- ***Best Practices in Digital Documentation.***
- ***User-Centered Design for Digital Documentation Initiatives. Collaborative strategies for defending and preserving cultural heritage at risk.***
- ***Challenges of Documentation of Ecclesiastical Artifacts.***
- ***Digitization Ethics and Cultural Sensitivity. Challenges of the local Ecclesiastical environment.***
- ***Church-historical geography of Thrace. Archaeological discoveries and the conservation of church monuments in Thrace.***
- ***The Future of the Documentation of Ecclesiastical Treasures: Technology, funding and sustainability.***

The conference organizing committee was determined to include Prof. Stylianidis, Dr. Aikaterini Stamou, Assoc. Prof. Stella Sylaiou, Prof. Eva Sarlak, and Assoc. Prof. Svetoslav Ribolov. All participation proposals registered on the Microsoft CMT electronic platform were reviewed and evaluated. After a critical assessment of the applicants, 5 keynote speakers were selected, and 27 participants with presentations were approved. Among these, 5 presentations are group efforts, involving between two and six authors. Additionally, 10 social guests from Bulgaria were invited and accepted the invitation. Attached below is the final version of the program, prepared at the end of February, after all preliminary organizational activities and the scientific evaluation of participation applications were completed.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE DOCUMENTATION
OF ECCLESIASTICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE
Sofia, March 11-13, 2024
New Conference Hall, St Kliment Ohridski Univeristy of Sofia, Rectorate Building
1504 Sofia, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.

March 10, 2024

19:30-21:30

Welcome Dinner

March 11, 2024

9:00-9:30 – *Registration*

9:30-10:00 – *Opening & Welcome*

Address to the Conference of His Excellency the Mayor of Sofia **Vasil Terziev**

Address to the Conference of His Excellency the Ambassador of Republic of Hellas in Bulgaria ***Alexios Marios Liberopoulos***

Address to the Conference of the Rector of the Sofia University Prof. **Georgi Valchev**

Address to the Conference of the Deputy Rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Prof. **Efstratios Stylianidis**

Address to the Conference of Prof. **Eva Şarlak** (KMKD Board Member)

Address to the Conference of Assoc. Prof. **Stella Sylaiou** (International Hellenic University)

Address to the Conference of Assoc. Prof. **Svetoslav Ribolov** (Sofia University)

1st Session

Best Practices in Digital Documentation

Moderator: Aikaterini Stamou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

10:00-10:40

Efstratios Stylianidis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki):

Recording and sharing. Challenges of accessibility and ethics for cultural heritage documentation.

10:40-11:20

Isabella Baldini (University of Bologna):

Documenting Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage: The Byzart Online Database.

11:20-11:40

Damianos Kasotakis (Early Manuscripts Electronic Library), **Roger Easton** (Rochester Institute of Technology), **Fr. Chrysostomos Nassis** (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), **Michael Phelps** (Early Manuscripts Electronic Library):

Best Practices for Recovering Texts in Palimpsest Manuscripts Using Multi-Spectral Imaging,

11:40-12:00

Vera Atanasova (National Museum of History, Sofia):

Between Visual and Digital: French Example of Digitization and Digitalization of Ecclesiastical Artefacts.

12:00-12:30 – *Coffee Break*

2nd Session

Digitization Ethics and Cultural Sensitivity

Moderator: Fr. Chysostomos Nassis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

12:30-13:00

Venizelos G. Gavrilakis (VENIS STUDIOS, Istanbul):

Preserving Cultural Legacy with Integrity: Unveiling the Ethics of Art Conservation and Restoration through Icon Conservation and Restoration.

13:00-13:20

Petros Panagiotopoulos (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki):

Ethical Issues from Church Monuments' Digitization.

13:20-13:40

Kostadin Nushev (University of Sofia):

Ethical problems related to the digitalization of Orthodox Christian heritage.
13:40-14:00
Fr. Emil Paralingov (Holy Metropolis of Plovdiv/Philippopolis):
Ethics of Digital Representation of Church Treasures.

14:00-15:00 – *Refreshment & Lunch Break*

3rd Session

Monuments in Thrace and Their Digitalization

Moderator: Guldehen Kaya (KMKD)

15:00-15:40
Chrysostomos Nassis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki); **Georgios Tsigaras** (Duth); **Ioannis Bakas; Eleni Chrysafi; Aikaterini Stamou; Ioannis Tavantzis; Efstratios Stylianidis** (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki):
Recording and Documentation Needs for the Ecclesiastical Cultural Treasures in Thrace Region in Greece.
15:40-16:00
Vanya N. Sapundzhieva; Zornitsa Ivanova (University of Veliko Tyrnovo):
Icons from the Thracian Region at St. Demetrius' Church Collection in Stara Zagora – A Preliminary Announcement.
16:00-16:20
Şehrigül Yeşil (Isik University/KMKD):
Documentation of the Mosaic Pavements of the Byzantine Church at Perinthos-Herakleia in Thrace.
16:20-16:40
Ventzyslav Karavalchev (University of Sofia):
Churches and monasteries in the Bulgarian part of the Strandzha mountain – opportunities for digitization.
16:40-17:00
Vanessa R. de Obaldia (ERC Starting Grant MAMEMS):
Athos' Endangered Archives: Digitising, Cataloguing, Translating, and Preserving Ottoman Archival Collections.

19:00-22:00 – *Social Dinner*

March 12, 2024

8:30-9:00 – *Registration & Networking*

4th Session

Challenges of Documentation and Preservation of Ecclesiastical Artefacts

Moderator: Stella Sylaiou (International Hellenic University)

9:00-9:40
Tsvetan Vasilev; Dimitar Iliev (University of Sofia):
Digitizing Post-Byzantine Religious Inscriptions in Bulgaria.
9:40-10:00
Emre Kishalı (Kocaeli University, Department of Architecture):
Damage Assessment for conserving architectural heritage at risk.
10:00-10:20

Damla Acar (Cultural Heritage Conservation Learning Community):
Conservation methodology of polychrome wooden altarpieces in Yeniköy Panagia Orthodox Church in Istanbul.
10:20-10:40
Hareth Y. Ibrahim (St Joseph of Damascus Manuscript Conservation Centre):
Balamand Digital Heritage.
10:40-11:00
Zoi Eirini Tsifodimou, Ifigeneia Skalidi, Aikaterini Bakousi, Alex Skondras, Eleni Karachaliou, Ioannis Tavantzis, Thomas Mone, Aikaterini Stamou, Efstratios Stylianidis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki):
3D Documentation of UNESCO Monument, Church of the Saviour, Thessaloniki, Greece.

11:00-11:30 – *Coffee Break in Poster Area*

5th Session

The Future of Digital Documentation of Ecclesiastical Treasures

Moderator: Svetoslav Ribolov (University of Sofia)

11:30-12:00
Stella Sylaiou; **Konstantinos Papatheodorou, Konstantinos Evangelidis** (International Hellenic University); **Argyris Constantinides**; **Marios Belk** (Cognitive UX GmbH):
Design of data models and reference ontologies on ecclesiastical domain: the case study of the NARRATE platform.
12:00-12:20
Costis Drygianakis (Volos Academy for Theological Studies):
An icon, a site, a book: We and the digital representations of church cultural heritage.
12:20-12:40
Todor Enchev (University of Veliko Tyrnovo):
Late Antique and Medieval Christian Monuments of Thrace – a need of digitalization.
12:40-13:00
Pencho Mihnev; Atanas Georgiev (University of Sofia):
Overview of suitable platforms for digitisation and description by the end user of cultural artefacts and their presentation to the public.

13:00-14:00 – *Refreshment & Lunch Break*

19.00-21.00 – *Dinner*

March 13, 2024

9:00 – 15:00

Trip to monasteries in the area around Sofia.

2.8. Invitations to participants, as well as to social guests

After the presentations were approved and the program finalized, the final responses and the program were sent to the approved participants. Among the most notable are the Mayor of Sofia, His Excellency Vasil Terziev, the Ambasador of the Republic of Hellas, His Excellency Alexios Marios Liberopoulos, the Rector of the Sofia Univeristy Prof. Georgi Valchev, the Metropolitan of Stara Zagora, His Eminence Cyprian, and the Auxiliary Bishop of Sofia, His Grace Polycarp. Social guests at the conference included numerous priests and monks from the Metropolises of Sofia and Philippopolis (Plovdiv). Father Emil Paralingov, the custodian of the skeuophylakion of the Philippopolis Metropolis, was sent as the official representative of the Metropolitan of Philippopolis, His Eminence Nikolay.

***Figure 4**: Ambassador Alexios M. Liberopoulos*

***Figure 5**: Prof. Eva Sarlak*

***Figure 6**: Mayor Vassil Terziev*

***Figure 7**: Rector Pof. Georgi Valchev*

***Figure 8**: Dr. Aikaterini Stamou*

***Figure 9**: Prof. Eva Sarlak, Prof. Eftr. Stylianidis*

***Figure 10**: Prof. Efstratios Stylianidis*

***Figure 11**: Assoc. Pof. Svet. Ribolov*

2.9. Conducting the conference sessions

The conference program was executed without deviations in the timing of the presentations. The participants and session moderators – Prof. Stylianidis, Aikaterini Stamou, Prof. Eva Sarlak, Fr. Christostomos Nasis, Assoc. Prof. Ribolov, Assoc. Prof. Güldehan Kayar, and Assoc. Prof. Ventsislav Karavalchev – ensured that the time limits for presentations were strictly adhered to. This allowed ample time for open discussions and questions from the audience. The opportunity to stream the sessions online and allow other scholars, who could not attend in person, to participate significantly contributed to the depth of the discussions.

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***Figure 12**: Kostis Drygianakis* ***Figure 13**: Fr. Chrysostomos Nassis and Fr. Emil Paralingov*

***Figure 14:** Prof. Theodor Enchev* ***Figure 15:** Dr. Damianos Kasotakis&Prof. Roger Easton*

At the end of the second day of the conference, between 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM on March 12, the second international working meeting of the project team was held. During the meeting, the results of the conference up to that point were discussed, and tasks were assigned for the preparation of a proceedings volume from the conference. The volume is planned to be published in Thessaloniki by the end of autumn 2024.

A number of church officials, monks, and priests from the Metropolis of Philippopolis attended the conference, along with students and faculty members from the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University. Representatives from all the different groups attending the event actively participated in the discussions. Many of the Bulgarian attendees expressed a desire for the results of the NARRATE project to be presented in a dedicated seminar conducted in Bulgarian.

The entire conference was recorded on video, which has been made available to colleagues for the dissemination of the event's results.

***Figure 16**: 2nd Transnational Meeting*

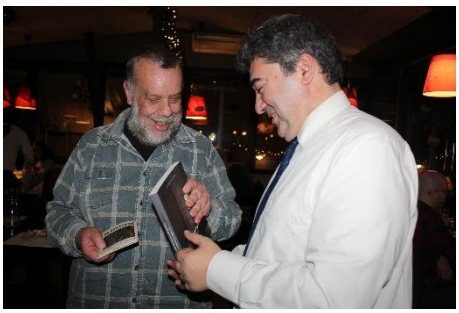

***Figure 17:** Social Dinner*

***Figure 18:** A group photography at the end of the working sessions*

On the third day of the conference, visits were organized to the Church of St. Sophia in Sofia and its museum, the Museum of Christian Art in Sofia, as well as two monasteries – the Kremikovtsi Monastery and the German Monastery. At the German Monastery, we were welcomed for lunch by the abbot, Hieromonk Pimen. The activities of the NARRATE project were presented to the brotherhood of the monastery.

***Figure 19**: In the Monastery of German* ***Figure 20:** In the Monastery of Cremikovtsy*

The entire conference can be followed through the exceptionally high-quality video recordings made during the conference sessions. Additionally, the event's website features a detailed collection of photographs, showcasing moments from the sessions as well as the visits to monasteries and churches on the third day of the conference.[6] These resources allow participants and those unable to attend to relive the experience and engage with the outcomes.

2.10. Preparing certificates for participants

After the conclusion of the conference, certificates of participation were prepared for all participants. These were sent to them electronically. Attached below is a sample of the certificate, which was completed and stamped by the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University and sent to each participant. The distribution of certificates was carried out using the email addresses collected from participants during their registration on the electronic platform for submitting conference participation requests. Certificates of participation were also issued to the social guests who actively contributed to the work and discussions during the conference.

[6] See https://narrateproject.eu/conference

Certificate of Participation

The Organizing Committee
hereby certifies that

Name Here

participated in

International Conference on the Documentation of Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage

March 11-13, 2024 New Conference Hall, St Kliment of Ohrid University of Sofia,
Rectorate Building 1504 Sofia, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Riholov

Conference Coordinator

Figure 21: *A sample of the individual certificates prepared for the participants.*

2.11. Collecting the texts presented at the conference for publication in a special volume and publishing the volume

After the conference, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ventsislav Karavalchev was tasked with collecting the texts presented at the event. Until September 2024, he managed correspondence, provided reminders and assisted the authors. Subsequently, the materials were forwarded to DISIGMA Publications in Thessaloniki, where the volume was printed in November 2024. The publishing house handled both the electronic formatting and technical editing. The cost of publication, amounting to €3,000, was covered by savings from the conference budget. The scientific editing of the book was carried out by Prof. Efstratios Stylianidis and Aikaterini Stamou. The efficiency and organization of the team contributed to the volume being published within the shortest possible timeframe.

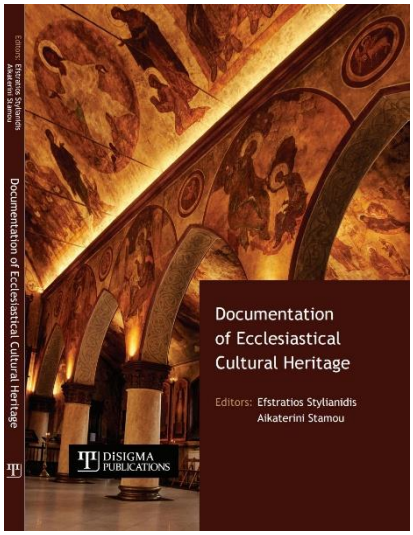

***Figure 22**: The exterior appearance of the printed conference volume*

The entire volume is available for free access on-line on the web-site of the conference: Efstratios Stylianidis, Aikaterini Stamou (edrs.), Documentation of Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage, Thessaloniki: Disigma Publ., 2024.

3. Conclusions

From the beginning of the preparations for the conference, held on March 11–13, 2024, at Sofia University, to the publication of the volume containing the participants' presentations, the entire project team worked in harmony and agreement. The proportional distribution of tasks and the discipline in their execution ensured that all activities related to the organization of the event were completed within the set deadlines. The team from Sofia University successfully organized volunteers from among the students and clergy of the Sofia Metropolis, who eagerly participated in the event's organization.

The event itself had a distinctly innovative character and was one of the few of its kind held in Sofia. This was the reason it attracted the attention of both the academic community and the media, as well as the city's mayor, a renowned manager in the field of e-education. The event provided an opportunity for specialists to meet and exchange ideas, bringing together academics and business professionals interested in preserving the Church's cultural heritage through electronic technologies. Equally important in this

regard was the personal engagement of three metropolises of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Stara Zagora, Philippopolis, and Sofia – which sent representatives to the conference. Additionally, the Sofia Metropolis hosted participants and guests at two of its monasteries on March 13, 2024.

The publication of the conference proceedings will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the educational and research environment in the field and will inspire new developments in the digitization of the Church's cultural heritage. As part of the NARRATE project, this initiative has proven to be exceptionally important for consolidating scientific potential around the project team.

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