

Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Τουρισμού

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Press Release

Myrtis: Face to face with the past

A Temporary Exhibition at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens

September 13 – November 30, 2010

The Temporary Exhibition Myrtis: Face to face with the past will be opening at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens, on Monday, September 13, at 19:30. It presents the results of an important interdisciplinary enterprise. The focal exhibit is the reconstructed face of an anonymous 11 years old Athenian girl who was –along with Perikles- one of the tens of thousands victims of typhoid fever in the year 430 BC, the second year of the Peloponnesian war between Athens and Sparta and their allies. This exhibition was made possible thanks to the generous offer of the dental specialist, Dr Manolis Papagrigorakis, Senior Professor at the Dental School of Athens University, following a fruitful collaboration with the National Archaeological Museum, Athens. This exhibition was recently on display at the Goulandris Museum of Natural History.

We feel that the National Archaeological Museum, Athens is the ideal setting par excellence to display Myrtis. Her reception within the walls of our institution, where so many burial sculptures and funerary reliefs are held, recalls the ancient ritual practice of Dexiosis, whereby the right hand is extended in a gesture of farewell to the dead. The encounter of Myrtis with the youths and maidens on burial stelai at the Museum -Dikaioi, Nikocharis, Aristille or Mnesagora- is metaphysical. Through the face of little Myrtis, sepulchral monuments and memorials of the 5th century BC, both eponymous and anonymous, come back to life and talk with us. They remind us of the common human fate, death, but also of its defeat by means of memory. It is no coincidence that Myrtis was declared "Friend of the Goals of the Millennium" by the United Nations Organization.

A series of educational activities, to be announced in the near future, is scheduled for the period of the exhibition.

Photos

- Model of Myrtis

- Inscribed marble burial stele showing Mnesagora and Nikocharis, sister and brother "whose death caused immense pain to their parents".

