

## **Myrtis has been named “friend of the United Nations”**

### **Her message to the world leaders**

Myrtis died of typhoid fever during the plague which hit Athens in the middle of the 5th Century BC. Typhoid fever is even today -2.500 years after- the cause of death for 500.000 to 700.000 people every year. Moreover, each year nearly nine million children under five are losing their lives from typhoid fever and other diseases that can be prevented and treated.

For this reason, the [United Nations Regional Information Centre \(UNRIC\)](#) “asked” Myrtis to become a [friend](#) of the [UN Millennium Development Goals](#) and join, in her own unique way, the United Nations world campaign "We can End Poverty".

This is how Myrtis became a [friend](#) and supporter of the United Nations. She “assumed” her duties without delay by sending a message to world leaders who attended the [UN Millennium Development Goals Summit](#) of September 2010.

So, Myrtis is not any longer only “face to face with the past” but also “face to face with the future of humanity”.

MYRTIS, AN ATHENIAN GIRL WHO LIVED 2500 YEARS AGO,

IS SENDING A STRONG MESSAGE TO THE WORLD



My name is Myrtis. Actually this is not my true name. I was named “Myrtis” by the archeologists that discovered my bones in 1994-1995, in a mass grave with another 150 skeletons in the Athens area of Kerameikos.

I may look like a girl of the 21st century but I can assure you that I’m an eleven year old Athenian girl who lived and died in Athens during the 5th century BC.

So, how can a young ancient Athenian become a Millennium Friend of the United Nations?

The scientists are certain that I was one of the victims of the plague that struck Athens during the 5th century BC. They also know that the cause of my death was the typhoid fever that also killed the ancient Athenian statesman Pericles and roughly one third of all people living in the city at that time. They also say that it was this plague that contributed to Athens’ defeat by

Sparta during the Peloponnesian Wars.

My skull was in an unusually good condition and this inspired Athens University Orthodontics professor **Manolis J. Papagrigorakis** to begin – with the help of specialist scientists – to effect a facial reconstruction. And, here I am. You can see the result of their efforts in my photo. I look almost exactly the same as the day I died.

**Prof. Manolis J. Papagrigorakis** thought that my ‘resurrection’ should not only be an opportunity for the world to see the face of a girl who played at the Acropolis while the Athenians were building the Parthenon, but he also wanted my “return” to send a strong message to the world and its leaders.

My death was inevitable. In the 5th century BC we had neither the knowledge nor the means to fight deadly illnesses. However, you, the people of the 21st century, have no excuse. You possess all the necessary means and resources to save the lives of millions of people. To save the lives of millions of children like me who are dying of preventable and curable diseases.

2,500 years after my death, I hope that my message will engage and inspire more people to work and make the Millennium Development Goals a reality.

Listen to me. I know what I’m saying. Never forget that I’m much older and therefore much wiser than you.»

Myrtis is the central person of the exhibition «**Myrtis: Face to face with the past**» which has begun a planned tour of Greek and foreign cities.

WHO estimates that the global prevalence of typhoid fever is between 16 million and 33 million cases annually, with 500,000 to 700,000 deaths. Nearly 9 million children under five die every year of preventable and curable diseases.

Go to:

<http://www.wecanendpoverty.eu/millennium-friends/millennium-friends.html>

to see the original UNRIC page!