

## Results

The project on the conservation of the fourteen medieval icons from the town of Nessebar was successfully completed in spite of the delay. The icons were presented to the public in Sofia at a temporary exhibition in the Crypt of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in the autumn of 2010.<sup>11</sup> This was before the major exhibition in Thessaloniki. Although it ran for a relatively short time, the intermediate exhibition in Sofia was a big success. It presented the newly conserved icons and the discoveries made in the course of conservation work to the general public. Last but not least, the exhibition of the fourteen icons was important to publicize our practically invisible and anonymous profession. An analysis of the problems raised by the project will allow better practice in the future. A bilingual publication of the results of the conservation project is due to come out with the support of the A.G. Leventis Foundation.

## Conclusion

Projects like this sometimes raise controversy and conflicts; professionals often face unexpected problems which have to be solved as we go along. We, as conservators-restorers of paintings, are deeply committed to serving the art created by great masters, regardless of whether the paintings are religious or secular. Although we still work mostly ‘behind-the-scenes’ our profession is less anonymous than it was, say, a decade ago. Yet, even so, it still remains quite unknown and ‘mysterious’ to the general public. Better publicity and understanding is one of the prerequisites for raising awareness among the general public (and among relevant specialists) of the challenges and importance of heritage conservation.

As conservators of cultural heritage, we, too, have to learn constantly in this young and fast developing discipline: learn to develop the theory and rules of professional conduct, to raise the standards of practice, and to communicate more successfully with other stakeholders. Sharing views and experiences is an important instrument for achieving this target.

## Notes

1. <http://www.nationalartgallerybg.org/>, last accessed 28 Aug 2012.
2. <http://www.ancient-nessebar.com/>, last accessed 28 Aug 2012.
3. <http://www.mbp.gr/html/en/>, last accessed 28 Aug 2012.
4. <http://www.ekbmm.gr/>, last accessed 28 Aug 2012.
5. <http://www.leventisfoundation.org/>, last accessed 28 Aug 2012.
6. <http://arbbg.org/>, last accessed 28 Aug 2012.
7. Also known as “Panagia Blachernae (Blachernitissa)” (Gr. *Παναγία η Βλαχερνίτισσα*), or “Vlahernitissa”, or “Virgin Vlahernae (Blachernae)”.
8. Information on the transfer technique and materials will be provided in a forthcoming bilingual publication about the conservation project.