The research and the design focused at combining and enhancing the surrounding area of the school which is referred to as the “Lighthouse of Orthodoxy”. The project has been envisaged in such manner as to provide a spiritual link between the contemporary garden design and Byzantine heritage. This required exhaustive research, as the available information on garden design in the Byzantine era is fairly limited. Plantation which has survived the 40 years of disuse of the School’s closure will be enhanced by landscaping. New plants to be used in the project have been chosen accordingly to each of the species symbolic meaning in the scriptures (e.g. fig trees symbolise gentleness, vines symbolize calmness). Finally it is discussed the symbolic aspect of the garden design and its dual meaning and representation. The project was unveiled in a ceremony in the Holy Theological School of Halki, Istanbul, on September 1, 2013, in the presence of His-Holiness Enumerical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople.
FIGURE 1. The plants and the symbolic meaning that uses at the Garden of virtues

FIGURE 2. The design composition and the dual architectural morphology.

**METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this paper is to give a brief description of the existing gardens of the Theological Scholl of Halki and present the landscape proposal envisioned to enhance the surrounding area of the School. The proposed landscape plan is based on bibliographical research concerning the Byzantine gardens, with a focus on site inventory recorded through pictures and drawings as well as reformulation of the current needs of the School based on interviews.

**RESULTS**

The proposed landscape plan attempts to attribute to the garden of the Theological School of Halki a dual meaning, both material and immaterial, as expressed by the meaning of Byzantine gardens. Plantation which has survived the 40 years of disuse of the School's closure will be enhanced by the new landscaping. Mediterranean species of flora were especially introduced to the “Garden of Merits”, a major route connecting different parts of the Byzantine garden, where each plant symbolizes a merit (e.g. lilies symbolize indigence, olive trees symbolize mercy, fig trees symbolize gentleness, vines symbolize calmness). These species have been selected accordingly to each of the species' symbolic meaning described in the old handwritten anonymous manuscript of the 12th century found in Oxford Library (Thompson, 1989) in order to enhance the spiritual virtues like patience, stamina, and courage. Also, the landscape scheme focuses on separating the circulation (main, secondary, thematic), introducing pausing and viewing spaces. (Fig. 1).

The natural and the spiritual elements of the landscape proposalhold a strong symbolic dimension. The design composition consequently consists of a dual architectural morphology while the overall composition seems to successfully integrate both as one emanates from the other (Fig. 2):

- Symmetrical – formal, dictated by the expressive presence of the School building, which dominates the site, and
- Asymmetrical – organic, which is mainly established as a network of serpentine paths well situated into the existing landscape which lead the visitors to the building.

There are two main entrances into the Halki Gardens which depict the double meaning of the proposed landscape scheme:

- A linear, monumental path that becomes the main entrance of the School, aligned to the historic axis of the School, and
- A second entrance (currently the main entrance of the School) that is characterized by its asymmetrical design.

The linear path is situated to the west of the site and is conceived to create a gradual transition from mundane to a spiritual atmosphere. The presence of a major water feature situated close to the entrance of the School, symbolising baptism and purification, and immediately next to it on both sides, the presence of two specimen styrax trees (Liquidambar styraciflua) with star-shaped leaves symbolizing prayer, call for an uplift of look and soul towards the Universe, meaning divinity (Fig.3). On both sides of the linear path, there are two terraced gardens overlooking the sea similar to the ones depicted in miniatures in prayer books and gospels of the 11th and 12th centuries (Dolezal, et al 2002) (Fig 4).

To the north of the site, a woodland reinforces the existing pine trees (Pinus brutia) with a number of supplementary plantings mainly locust tress (Ceratonia siliqua). The under canopy of the woodland is heavily planted with myrtles (Myrtus communis), sages (Salvia sp), and other herbaceous and indigenous plants. This forested area leads through a serpentine path to an open recreational space where a specimen hawthorn (Crategus monogyna), symbol of hope, stands alone at its centre. At the highest level of this side, an orchard is planted in circles in a
similar way orchards were planted in Byzantine times (Dolezal, Mavroudi, 2002).

To the east of the site, an elevated garden composed of plants mentioned in the Holy Bible is created (i.e cedar (Cedrus libani), cypress (Cupressus sempervirens), Date Palm (Phoenix dactylifera), Laurel (Laurus nobilis), e.t.c.). The highest level of this garden contains two terraced gardens overlooking the sea and Istanbul.

The landscape project was unveiled in a ceremony in the Holy Theological School of Halki, Istanbul, on September 1, 2013, in the presence of His-Holiness Enumerical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople. The major part of the landscape project is currently implemented.

CONCLUSION

The recreation of the gardens enhances the historical character of the buildings and meets the current needs and functions of the School through an original concept design which is translated into a morphologically unique and sustainable ecosystem. Such a landscape design approach is directly connected to the broader meaning of “Heaven”, that is an autonomous and self-managed ecosystem (Dentle et al 2008).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the team involved in this project: E. Antonara and V. Giannakis (architects), N. Thymakis (agronomist), C. Vlachou, L. Protopapas, C. Tsiarkezos, C. Palates, E. Theophanous, A. Yianni (students), as well as V. Kyriakou, F. Eliopoulou and Professor D. Merou for their contribution. The project presented in this paper was generously supported by Metropolitan Elpidoforos.

REFERENCES


Unknown, Geoponika, 10th century

Other Byzantine palace gardens <http://www.gardenvisit.com/history_theory/library_online_ebooks/ml_gothein_history_garden_art_design/other_byzantine_palace_gardens>, accessed 30 May 2014

The Holy Mitropolis of Pringiponisson < http://www.impringiponnison.org/>, accessed 30 May 2014 (in Greek)