

From the newspaper article by Prof. Dr. İlber Ortaylı

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Two documentary film maker, one or two well intentioned amateur diver who found a couple of professional divers in an attempt of having some credibility, giving lecture on TV. They are on pursuit of the 1700 year old secrets and legends. Oh my! . In the exploration of 283 m long tunnels of Hagia Sophia they found the remains and mosaics belonging to the child king Antiegenos and Patric Athanasius (!). I am in awe; we have even turned upside down the Christian hagiography. No need for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Leave that alone, the Ministry of Culture was oblivious to our warnings: “Before building public toilets, let us construct the maps and measurements of cisterns and tunnels between Hagia Sophia, Binbir Direk and Topkapı.” Despite all these, the measurements of the length of the galleries of Hagia Sophia by these people is a sheer surprise.

Pseudo Research Smelling Marketing

The research led by Dr. Çiğdem Özkan Aygün from İstanbul Technical University and her team used to be first permitted and then hampered by the Ministry. I am a witness at first hand. I do not know if these mentioned pseudo researchers are involved in this situation but according to their allegations research is conducted by themselves. They also own the findings of Feridun Dirimtekin the manager of the museum in 1940’s. (It seems the universities first will have to get their permission). We understood better the professionalism of Mrs. Aygün and her team in the Topkapı cisterns and galleries survey (her findings are also published internationally). Their sole purpose is to determine the physical location of the galleries and cisterns and produce their maps.

These above mentioned gentlemen are different though. According to Hürriyet’ Sunday paper they are posing in photos with scuba tanks which are too big to enter the tunnels. They also found English soldiers canteens. To me their discourse of “look what we have found among many other secrets to be discovered”, is not convincing at all. I do not intend to discuss the fiscal goals of these pseudo researchers but I believe that such claims over the monument must be to the every one’s concern.