



## Agios Philon Archeological Area

This is a project of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage



### PROJECT OVERVIEW

*Works Start Date: May 2018*

*Works End Date: January 2019*

*Type of intervention: Conservation works*

The ancient city of Karpasia/Karpaz, which gave its name to the whole peninsula, is lying c. 3.5 km north east of the village of Rizokarpaso/Dipkarpaz.

Only a minimum part of the city has been unearthed by the archaeological excavation which started in 1935 and continued until 1938. The area around the byzantine church of Agios Philon (12th cent. A.D.) has been excavated revealing part of the early Christian episcopal complex (5th cent. A.D.) and earlier structures which are dated back to the Hellenistic and Roman period (4th BC – 4th AD). Today the visible remains of the archaeological site are the early Christian episcopal complex with the basilica, the narthex, the atria, the baptistery and many ancillary spaces.

The colonnaded basilica with galleries and a wooden roof was preceded to the west by a narthex and an atrium, now lost in the sea. In the southern wall of the basilica, a door used to give access to the baptismal complex. The baptismal complex is a freestanding rectangular structure consisting of different chambers: a rectangular room with an apse to its eastern side and four smaller rooms along the southern side (the second from the east was provided with the cruciform-shaped baptismal font).

The floor of the basilica and of the baptismal complex has a magnificent decoration in opus sectile, while other rooms are paved with slabs of schist ('marmara' or Cypriot marble) and limestone. The now ruinous domed pier cross-insquare church of Agios was built in good ashlar masonry over the nave and the south aisle of the early Christian basilica on the 12th century A.D.

A bi-communal multidisciplinary team of archaeologists, architects, civil engineers and conservators, designed the conservation project, aiming to provide the maximum conservation, consolidation and protection of the site through minimum interventions.

Main interventions for this site include:

Church:

- Consolidation of the vaults and vertical layers
- Repair and consolidation of the south arch
- Minimal changes of ashlar stones

- Lime mortar applied to lost joints of stones
- Structural support to the south wall
- Rainwater management
- Cleaning the pit inside the church in front of the central apse
- Cleaning and removal of vegetation
- Cleaning of the cistern & well mouth
- Conservation of collected architectural stones
- Repairs and consolidation of the stone walls
- Repairs and consolidation of dry stone retaining walls
- Manufacture of a stand for the icon of Agios (Saint) Philon

Archaeological site:

- Conservation of the mosaics (opus sectile)
- New fencing installation and information panels
- Construction of walking paths and view point
- Visitors arrangement and directional setup
- Manufacture of a stand for the icon of Agios (Saint) Philon

The first phase of the works started in May 2018 and completed in July 2018. The second phase of the works started in November 2018 and completed on in January 2019.

**The project was fully funded by the European Union within the overall 14.7 million Euro Cultural Heritage Programme that the European Commission is implementing through UNDP in Cyprus.**

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#### **European Union**

The Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, based on Council Regulation 389/2006, aims at facilitating the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community, with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island, on improving contacts between the two communities and with the EU, and on preparation for the EU body of laws (also referred to as *acquis communautaire*).

**For more information please visit:**

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/overview-funding-programmes/aid-programme-turkish-cypriot-community\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/overview-funding-programmes/aid-programme-turkish-cypriot-community_en)

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#### **The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage**

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage works in line with the mutually agreed mechanism for the preservation of the island's common heritage. In 2009, the Advisory Board was set up by a decision of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and approved by the two leaders as the consultative body of the Committee. The aim of the Board is to protect, preserve and facilitate the preservation, physical protection and restoration (including research, study and survey) of the immovable cultural heritage of Cyprus. This mechanism allows for the practical aspects of preservation to be considered in a non-political manner so that practical measures can be taken to improve the situation on the ground.

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#### **United Nations Development Programme**

UNDP aims to contribute and support the peace-building process in Cyprus and to enhance cooperation between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriot by implementing a range of confidence building measures.

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