



## Three Churches in Afendrika Archaeological Site

This is a project of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage



### PROJECT OVERVIEW

*Start Date:* **October 2020**

*End Date:* **December 2020**

*Type of intervention:* **Emergency Conservation Works**

*Total cost:* **215,595 Euros**

At the site of Aphendrika on the north coast of the Karpas peninsula, the remains of an ancient settlement which was identified as the city of Ourania, mentioned by ancient writers, exists.

The ruins at Aphendrika were first identified as the ancient city of Ourania by the British archaeologist David George Hogarth (1889) and the Cypriot scholar Ieronymos Peristianis (1910). The site preserves the remains of an ancient settlement with a harbour, which possibly thrived during the Classical Period. Three ruined churches and other architectural remains imply that the site prospered again from the Early to the Middle Byzantine Period (6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> century). These churches are the basilica of Panagia Aphendrika, the basilica of Asomatos and the church of Agios Georgios.



Before



After

The standing church of Panagia Aphendrika is a 16<sup>th</sup> century single-aisled vaulted chapel with a pointed vault. This church was built within the west part of the nave of an earlier barrel-vaulted basilica (8<sup>th</sup> century), which was in turn built over a timber-roofed basilica of the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Little is known about the internal decoration and the liturgical furnishings of Panagia Aphendrika. The original floor has never been unearthed. The marble base of the templon (iconostasis: barrier with icons in front of the Holy Bema) of the 16<sup>th</sup> century church, may belong to the original 6<sup>th</sup> century liturgical installations.



Before



After

Asomatos church is located approximately 30 meters south of Panagia Aphentrika. The two churches have a similar ground plan and construction characteristics but the first one is smaller. The original 6<sup>th</sup> century Asomatos church was a timber roofed, three-aisled basilica with three apses to the east end. The nave was divided from the aisles by two colonnades of five limestone columns, crowned with stone capitals of local production.

Like Panagia Aphentrika, Asomatos church was converted into a vaulted basilica at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, utilizing the original ground plan. The three apses and the synthronon were reused from the previous phase. However, unlike Panagia, the north, south and west walls were completely rebuilt upon earlier foundations. The 6<sup>th</sup> century arcades were replaced by two pier arcades consisting of three cross-shaped piers. The synthronon is the only liturgical furnishing which is still in situ and probably belongs to the original phase of the basilica.



Before



After

The small single-aisled church of Agios Georgios lies about 50 meters west of Panagia Aphentrika. It has a symmetrical twin apse built in ashlar blocks. It is one of the two churches in Cyprus with a double apse (the other one is Agios Georgios at Choulou, Paphos). It was previously covered with a dome on transverse round arches. Originally, the church was may have been decorated with wall paintings. It has been suggested that Agios Georgios is the earliest surviving domed building in Cyprus, dated between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Main interventions for this site include:

- Treatment and removal of vegetation from masonry walls, roof and the perimeter of monuments;
- Cleaning of biological colonization;
- Soft cleaning of floors;

- Repair of cracks in roof;
- Repair of cracks in all elevations;
- Consolidation of detachments;
- Replacement of crumbling and heavily decayed stones;
- Dry cleaning of loose surface deposits on the stone and removal of loose deposits;
- Removal of modern graffiti;
- Capping of horizontal surfaces to avoid water penetration;
- Installation of metal doors and screens to all openings;
- Installation of meshes in all openings;
- Construction of new wooden door at the north elevation door;
- Construction of drywalls and levelling works for rainwater management;
- Protection of floors and rainwater management by reburials;
- Manufacturing iron posts for visitor management;
- Preparation and installation of information panels.

The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage.

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#### **European Union**

Since 2012 approximately **€19.9 million of European Union funds** have been provided by the European Commission to implement the priorities of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage for the preservation of the island-wide cultural heritage in Cyprus. The European Union is the biggest supporter of the work of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus.

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