

Press Release



Press & Public Relations
Office, Promotion and
Development Sector

Telephone: 22894304
Email: prinfo@ucy.ac.cy
Website: www.ucy.ac.cy/pr



27 November 2019

A project of the University of Cyprus for the Maritime Cultural Heritage at Risk Comprehensive Documentation, Recording and Digital Preservation Of the Wooden Motor



The Maritime Archaeological Research Laboratory (MARELab), Department of History and Archeology of the University of Cyprus, in collaboration with the Cyprus Institute and specialists from Cyprus and Greece, will carry out a specialised field project from 12 November to 12 December 2019; it concerns the detailed recording of the wooden motor trawler AGIOS SPYRIDON, at Latsi, Polis Chrysochous, before it is destroyed forever.

The Recent Events

AGIOS SPYRIDON, one of the last traditional fishing boats of Cyprus, has been left on dry land for many years, along the modern marina of Latchi, Polis Chrysochous. Built on Crete in 1950, it belongs to the *karavoskaro* type of vessels (with an elliptical stern). It was brought to Cyprus in 1954, and it was used for fishing along the coasts of the island and the eastern Mediterranean until 2004, when it was withdrawn as a result of a European Programme for the protection of Fisheries Resources. Few such caiques survive in the Aegean today and even fewer are of AGIOS SPYRIDON's size. Nonetheless, this monument of nautical heritage has been left unprotected and unmaintained for 15 years, which has resulted in its gradual deterioration. The high maintenance cost and its poor current condition led the Council of Polis Chrysochous to decide it should be destroyed.

In February 2018, despite its serious objections to this decision, the MARELab, in collaboration with the Cyprus Institute, took the initiative to organize a documentation project, with the use of conventional and digital survey methods (3D recording, with Laser Scanning and drone-led Photogrammetry); the digital

model that was created has already been uploaded on the *Ephemera* webpage: <http://ephemera.cyi.ac.cy/?q=node/48> . That initiative was supported by the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research and the Municipality of Polis Chrysochous.

The AGIOS SPYRIDON PROJECT



The objective of the current project **AGIOS SPYRIDON: Comprehensive Documentation, Recording and Digital Preservation** is to preserve digitally, in detail, the morphology of the wooden boat by documenting it carefully while it is being dismantled, in a controlled manner. Recording, of course, will only preserve the image of the vessel, since AGIOS SPYRIDON will be destroyed in a few days, despite the fact that it is a palimpsest of a centuries-old shipbuilding tradition, and a case of tangible evidence of the labour and skills by generations of Cypriot seamen and fishermen that sailed on it for 50 years. It is the first time that such a project will be carried out in the eastern Mediterranean, aiming to collect enough data to rebuild AGIOS SPYRIDON and to reconstruct its *biography*, thus saving it in the communal memory.

Characteristic parts of the boat will be preserved in MARELab's storerooms for further study, whereas an effort is being made to distribute the remaining ones to be reused as raw material for arts and crafts.

The project is funded by the Honor Frost Foundation, UK, and the Polis Chrysochous Municipality. Dr Stella Demesticha has the role of general scientific supervision, with Constantinos Nicolaou (MA) as field director and the participation of graduate students of the University of Cyprus. Dr Costas Damianidis (architect, specialist in vernacular shipbuilding) and his associates will undertake the documentation of the ship's construction, whereas the Cyprus Institute will complete the 3D recoding of the vessel.

For more details see: <https://www.facebook.com/AgiosSpyridonProject>

End of announcement