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Agios Afkentios Church in Komi Kebir/Büyükkonuk

This is a project of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Start Date: **February 2014**

End Date: **May 2015**

Type of intervention: **Conservation works**

Total cost: **229,050 Euro**

The existing structure of the church was built on several periods, although the exact date of the church remains unknown. Parts of previous structures were incorporated in the existing building. The church is a single-aisle orthogonal plan building. It is roofed with a pointed vault which is supported by two transverse strengthening arches. The east end, which houses the Holy Bema (Sacristy), has a wide semi-circular apse which is covered by a semi-dome. Two arch recesses are built on both the north and south walls respectively. The church is entirely built with stone. Despite the relatively small size and the bad state of preservation the church constitutes an architectural building of significant historical, artistic, and environmental value.

Architectural surveys and emergency intervention/measures designs carried out in 2012 identified cracks of vaults and walls which were posing serious structural problem to the church; the wooden roof of the gallery had totally collapsed and water penetration had created extensive damage to the vault and walls.

The project – which was born as emergency measures and was later turned into a conservation project - aimed at consolidating and stabilising the structure to prevent possible collapses hence leading to an aesthetic upgrading of church.



Before



After



Interventions for this monument comprised:

- Rendering, pointing removal and grouting of all masonry surfaces in the interior and exterior of the church;
- Replacement of broken/cracked or heavily weathered stones with new stones of similar characteristics (texture, toughness, size etc.);
- Existing stones and mortar have been removed, wall cavity cleaned and rebuilt with the same material (stones);
- In order to strengthen the walls and vault's stability, metal tie rods were placed across the church. Also a metal tie beam was inserted at the top of the apse wall to tie apse with church;
- Repair of the church roof and apse semi dome;
- Reconstruction of the westside of the gallery roof;
- New wooden doors and windows;
- A proper protection of the mural painting has been carried out by a specialized conservator to prevent further damage.
- The Holy Altar has been partially reconstructed (one layer of stones) to indicate the original structure and avoid further destruction of the existing;
- Floor: Existing coloured-cement tiles inside the church, although not original, were maintained and missing parts were replaced by similar ones. A new floor with similar characteristics (colour, dimensions etc.) was built for the Sacristy. The floor surface under the portico repaired with using existing materials.
- Reconstruction of the South Arcade and Gallery Roof: strengthening and partial reconstruction of arcade base and foundation using the existing (placed in the church) material and new stone carving where needed;
- Reconstruction of the Agia Trapeza (Holy Altar) and of the stone icon screen.
- Repair of existing perimeter walls around the building.
- Provide new pathway at the main entrance.
- Reconstruction of a small shrine on the north perimeter wall. Courtyard levelled and traditional trees planted.

The project was fully funded by the **European Union**. Total cost (including additional safety items, design and works) **229,050 Euro**.

This is a collaborative work and an effort between United Nations Development Programme – Partnership for the Future Office, the Technical Committee for Cultural Heritage of Cyprus and local and international architects, engineers, conservators and researchers.

More information on on-going projects of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage can be found here: <http://www.cy.undp.org/content/cyprus/en/home/operations/projects/partnershipforthefuture/support-to-cultural-heritage-monuments-of-great-importance-for-c.html>

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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 two leaders as the executive 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.

United Nations Development Programme – Partnership for the Future (UNDP-PFF) - The Agreement on the establishment of the Advisory Board for the Preservation, Physical Protection and Restoration of the Immovable Cultural Heritage of Cyprus recognizes a special role to **UNDP in Cyprus** as a **politically accepted implementation body** by both communities. For this reason, UNDP-PFF was requested by the European Commission to

become the lead coordinator under which the project would be implemented fostering dialogue, cooperation and confidence building between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

European Union - Since 2012 approximately **€6.7 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.