

The digitization of the largest collection of Antiquities outside Cyprus has begun

NEWS & EVENTS



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NEWS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

Another pioneering initiative of international radiation from TEPAK

A Cooperation Agreement was signed between TEPAK and the Medelhavsmuseet of Sweden

An extremely important mission for the Cypriot Culture and the cultural goods of Cyprus, which are located in museums abroad, developed in the previous days in Stockholm, Sweden and concluded with the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between the Rector Prof. Panagiotis Zafeiris, Cyprus University of Technology TEPAK and director general of the Swedish State Museums Ann Follin / the **Medelhavsmuseet** (Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities), which houses archaeological finds spanning a period of more than 7,000 years - from the Stone Age to Imperial Rome and which testify to frequent and long-term contacts between Cyprus and other cultures in the eastern Mediterranean region.

The important agreement is a historic milestone in the global developments of the 21st century, because it is the first time that a country that hosts foreign antiquities, officially invites an organization from the state from which the antiquities come, to cooperate in the digitization of the entire inventory with the ultimate goal of results to be in open access (Open Access) for the whole world and especially for researchers and trainers.

Brief history

It all started after the honorary invitation received by the Director of the UNESCO/TEPAK Chair, **Dr. Marinos Ioannidis**, who was invited as an official guest speaker at the **Europeana International Conference, held on April 18, 2023, under the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU and hosted by the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm**, while it had the support of the Swedish Ministry of Culture and was organized in collaboration with the Swedish National Heritage Council.

After continuous, methodical and intensive talks, the **Medelhavsmuseet in Stockholm**, which has the largest collection of Cypriot antiquities outside of Cyprus, recognizing the seriousness, high expertise and respect at the world level, of the UNESCO Chair of TEPAK, sent an invitation to the specialized scientists from TEPAK, who deal with the digitization of cultural heritage, in order to examine the possibility of digitizing the huge collection with thousands of objects, which the Museum has and which come from the excavations in Cyprus.

These excavations were carried out in the period 1927-1931 by the **Swedish Archaeological Mission to Cyprus, led by the later King of Sweden Gustav VI Adolf**, and most of the archaeological material from those excavations is now kept in the **Cyprus Museum in Nicosia** and the **Medelhavsmuseet** in Stockholm.

Thus, the scientific team of TEPAK, with the active participation of the students Zelia Dessouki, Chrysostomos Kolombos, Stelios M. Fotiou and Giorgos Neophytou, responded immediately and moved at the expense of the UNESCO Chair, in order to examine these important archaeological findings on site (>25000) and to establish a strategic plan for their digitization, the duration of which will depend on the degree of difficulty and the complexity of the project.

Visit of the Ambassador of Cyprus to the team's workplace

A pleasant surprise for the specialized Cypriot scientific team at the **Medelhavsmuseet** was the visit, at the workplace, of the **Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Sweden, Mr. Solon Savva**, who expressed his satisfaction with the positive developments and the involvement of an iconic Cypriot university in the rescue and highlighting Cypriot cultural heritage, which, unfortunately, is hosted outside of Cyprus, in the Stockholm museum and is an integral part of the history and tradition of the Cypriot people.

Mr. Ambassador stated that upon assuming his duties in Sweden in 2022, he expressed to the **King of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf** his readiness and commitment to further strengthening and deepening bilateral relations, but also to closer cooperation in addressing common challenges.

For his part, the King of Sweden referred to the excellent relations between the two countries, which date back centuries and made special mention of the importance of the Swedish Archaeological Mission in Cyprus in the period 1927-1931 and the imperative need to respect and protect the cultural heritage of all countries.

Such a deepening of relations takes place through this great collaboration between TEPAK and the Medelhavsmuseet of Sweden, which indeed sends out multiple messages of respect and protection of cultural heritage and is an example to be emulated.

Global connects Cultural Diplomacy

Global pioneer in Cultural Diplomacy

It is worth noting that this collaboration and the particularly important invitation from the Museum of Sweden, to a Cypriot body, to digitize Cypriot archaeological material, which has been located outside Cyprus for almost a century, is a global pioneer and creates new data in the so-called **Cultural Diplomacy** and contributes the most to education, research, innovation, rescue, documentation and of course the highlighting of the unique Cypriot cultural wealth, wherever it is, through open source digital access and the posting of this material in the [digital library of Europe Europeana](#).

This cooperation can be an example and good practice for all countries facing similar issues.

The head of the specialized scientific team that already works at the **Medelhavsmuseet**, but also the creator of this great effort and international cooperation, between Cyprus and Sweden, which establishes new customs and data in international cultural exchanges, **Dr. Marinos Ioannidis** - Director of the Center UNESCO/TEPAK, expressed his satisfaction with the developments and the international and global recognition of TEPAK for its contribution to New Technologies and the digitization of Human culture, creating new knowledge and policies in the global setting and stated the following:

*"With this project, it is the first time that the **digital repatriation** of works, which are missing from the cultural heritage of Cyprus and are hosted in museums around the world, is taking place, while at the same time, with the use of new technologies, **they are being reunited with the collections of Cyprus**.*

And this is happening, almost a hundred years after the Swedish Archaeological Mission to Cyprus (1927-1931), twenty years after the accession of Cyprus to the EU, twenty years of diplomatic relations with Sweden, twenty years after the establishment of TEPAK and Sixty years since the Swedish military mission to UNFICYP.

With TEPAK's global leadership in the field of Digitization of Human Cultural Heritage, which led, in fact, to the honorary assignment of the corresponding UNESCO Chair and through major events (EuroMed World Conferences , International Forums , seminars, European projects of tens of millions which create new jobs in Cyprus and produce excellent national work for Cyprus etc.), which gather the interest of the scientific community from all over the world, TEPAK and Cyprus have become a global point of reference in New Technologies and production knowledge and creation of cultural heritage management and rescue policies".

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Photographic material from the 1st expedition to Sweden together with the first results of their 3D reconstruction.



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