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PRESS RELEASE – Limassol, March 31, 2026

Press Office of the UNESCO Chair for Digital Cultural Heritage
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol*When a Monument Speaks: A Pioneering Digital Revival of Saint Neophytos*

The UNESCO Chair on Digital Cultural Heritage at the Digital Heritage Research Lab and its Research Centre "Mnemosyne" at the Cyprus University of Technology proudly announce a significant innovation resulting from the EU Digital Europe project Eureka 3 D - XR. The 12th - century Enkleistra of Saint Neophytos, together with Saint Neophytos himself,

Enclosed, they come to life through high-quality 3D digitization, advanced Artificial Intelligence and groundbreaking Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/XR) technologies.

For the first time in Europe, this innovative project goes beyond the concept of the "Digital Twin" and introduces the "Memory Twin" – a transformative approach, where cultural heritage is not simply reproduced digitally, but is enriched with knowledge, narratives and experiential experiences. In this context, the project marks a defining moment: **the moment when a monument truly "speaks", conveying its history, meaning and cultural value through advanced technologies. This exceptional innovation was made possible thanks to the collaboration between MIRALab in Geneva and the Digital Heritage Laboratory of the Cyprus University of Technology, both partners in the project.**

This important presentation will be held for the public on **24 May 2026, at 10:00 a.m. (after the Divine Liturgy)**, at the Enkleistra of the Monastery in Tala, Paphos. The event is part of the Digital Heritage Summit 2026, **taking place in Limassol, Cyprus**, which will take place in **May 2026** and is under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Eureka3D-XR project, funded by the Digital Europe programme, builds on the achievements of Eureka3D, developing innovative tools and scenarios for augmented reality (XR) applications. The project transforms a variety of cultural assets - in 2D and 3D, videos, texts, maps and narratives - into unique experiences. The Enkleistra of Saint Neophytos represents one of three flagship case studies selected for this project. The other two are the archaeological site of Bibracte in France and the walls of Girona in Spain, which will be presented on the first day of the conference.

The Cloister of Saint Neophytos: A Monument of World Importance

The Enkleistra of Saint Neophytos is a unique Byzantine monument, not only for Cyprus, but also for the entire Byzantine world. The cave was personally chosen by Saint Neophytos, who carved it in 1156. It served as his place of residence, study and spiritual exercise. Later, when he founded a monastery, the Enkleistra formed its core and, after his death, after he was buried there, the site became a funerary monument, continuing to be an important pilgrimage destination to this day.

Artistically, the monument is equally unique. Its iconographic program, designed by the Saint himself, was executed by artists with a deep knowledge of Byzantine painting in the capital and not of provincial models, as one would expect to see in a remote cave in Cyprus, on the periphery of the empire. As such, the Enkleistra is an outstanding example of Komnenian art and a monument of world cultural significance.

A Pioneering European Achievement

In collaboration with MIRALab (Geneva) and the European Union Digital Library Europeana, the UNESCO Chair for

Digital Cultural Heritage will present for the first time in Europe the results of a long-term and pioneering collaboration. This achievement is the first complete demonstration of the entire digital cultural heritage chain - from the creation of certified high-quality 3D content to its enrichment through Artificial Intelligence and its presentation with XR technologies, directly in its physical space.

Building on the European Union Innovation Prize, which the Digital Heritage Lab received in 2018, the UNESCO Chair has now achieved a significant milestone in documenting the past through the Memory Twin Methodology - which will be presented at the Enclave of Agios Neophytos, on the 24th

May 2026. This innovation introduces a new paradigm in the digital transition of

21st century, where cultural heritage is no longer static or merely descriptive, but is transformed into a living

21st century, where cultural heritage is no longer static or merely descriptive, but is transformed into a living, intelligent repository of memory, knowledge and human experience for the benefit of future generations.

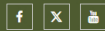
Engaging Society through Innovation

The project is designed to promote broad public participation, with a particular emphasis on students at all levels of education, while meeting the needs of academics, multidisciplinary professionals, political actors and cultural actors. It actively supports education, research, scientific and cultural diplomacy, highlighting the transformative potential of digital technologies in the field of cultural heritage.

Setting a New Standard

Bridging cultural heritage with advanced scientific and technological innovations, EUreka3D-XR sets a new benchmark in the field - reshaping the way history is preserved, experienced and transmitted to future generations. The introduction of the #MemoryTwin concept is a groundbreaking innovation for the electronic documentation of the past in the digital 21st century, opening new paths for humanity, even where it can preserve not only the form, but also the meaning, memory and collective intelligence of cultural heritage in an increasingly digital world.

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