

# Saint Neophytos and his Enclave come to life through an innovative digital process



Dora Christodoulou

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## A groundbreaking digital revival of Saint Neophytos and his Enclave, in the famous monastery dedicated to the saint, in Tala, Paphos, will be officially presented in May.

The UNESCO Chair for Digital Cultural Heritage at the Digital Heritage Laboratory and its Research Center "Mnemosyne" at the Technical University of Athens, announced today this important innovation within the framework of a European project on digital cultural heritage.

The 12th-century Enkleistra of Saint Neophytos, along with Saint Neophytos the Enkleist himself, come to life through **high-quality 3D digitization**, advanced Artificial Intelligence, and groundbreaking Virtual and Augmented Reality 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 value, as a monument that truly "speaks", conveying its history, meaning and cultural value through advanced technologies.



This exceptional innovation was made possible thanks to the collaboration of the two project partners, MIRALab in Geneva and the Digital Heritage Laboratory at the Technical University of Athens. According to the organizers, this groundbreaking project, which will be presented for the first time in Cyprus, transforms various cultural assets into two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms, videos, texts, maps and narratives, creating unique experiences. The Enclave of Saint Neophytos is one of the three emblematic monuments chosen for this project, along with 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 Enkleistra of Saint Neophytos, it is noted in a relevant announcement, 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,

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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.

In collaboration with MIRALab Geneva and the European Union Digital Library, the UNESCO Chair for Digital Cultural Heritage will present for the first time in Europe the results of a long-standing and pioneering collaboration. This achievement, it is emphasized, constitutes 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 major milestone in documenting the past through the Memory Twin Methodology – which will be presented at the Enclave of Agios Neophytos, on 24 May. This innovation introduces a new paradigm in the digital transition of the 21st century, where cultural heritage is no longer static, but is transformed into a living, intelligent repository of memory, knowledge and human experience for the benefit of future generations.

According to the project's organizers, 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.

The introduction of the MemoryTwin concept constitutes 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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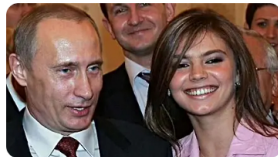
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