

XVII International Congress on Dry Stone

“Dry stone perspectives: challenges after the UNESCO inscription”

Cavtat, Croatia, October 1-2 2021

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«Best Practices in Cyprus and Palestine after the UNESCO inscription - Challenges after the UNESCO Inscription »



17th international congress on dry stone
KONAVLE 2021



The inscription of the “Art of Drystone, Knowledge and Techniques” in the UNESCO Representative List for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, has given a new impetus in various countries and regions around the world regarding the interest in the topic. It has also highlighted the interest even in regions that have not been involved before in topics concerning drystone walling, or representatives of which have not participated in related conferences. The above inscription has encouraged organizations and individuals to rediscover and exploit the significant dry-stone reserve in their areas.

What has happened in Palestine?

The UNESCO Committee in Palestine contacted the Hellenic National UNESCO Committee and requested experts on drystone walling. Subsequently and in consultation with SPS, myself as expert from Cyprus and Richard Tufnell - master stone mason from the United Kingdom were appointed by the UNESCO Commission

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Antonis Theodosiou

in Palestine. In August 2019, we conducted lessons and practical workshops in Palestine in collaboration with local authorities.

The lessons and workshops were attended by craftsmen and builders, who showed keen interest in learning the technique of building in drystone. The workshops were held in the valley of Battir which consists a historical drystone landscape, an area that has been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

The educational material presented by the two experts have been translated into Arabic and are used by local Palestinian institutions as technical guidelines for building in dry stone and for the further development of the work of drystone rehabilitation.



foto 1 =restored drystone hut in Cyprus

The inscription of the “Art of Drystone, Knowledge and Techniques” in the UNESCO List has also revived the interest and Cyprus.

The ICOMOS International Day of Monuments and Sites, which is celebrated on the 18th of April each year, was dedicated in 2019 to Rural Landscapes. On this occasion, it was decided in Cyprus to hold events dedicated to the Dry-Stone Rural Landscape.

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Challenges after the UNESCO Inscription »** Cavtat, Croatia, October 1-2 2021
Antonis Theodosiou



foto 2 =newly constructed drystone walls in Palestine

Thus, the Department of Antiquities in collaboration with ICOMOS-Cyprus and local authorities, under the auspices of the Minister of Transport, Communications and Works, organized events, such as the setting up of a mobile exhibition on drystone constructions in Cyprus and in the world, the preparation of a related booklet, and the holding of presentations in a series of wine villages.

Also, a three-year project entitled 3PRO-TROODOS has been secured, with the Cyprus Institute as the scientific coordinator, concerning the Troodos Geopark Mountainous Areas in Cyprus. The theme of the project refers to the promotion of new crops based on traditional ones, to conduct workshops on the restoration and new construction of dry-stone walling in the respective areas, and to prepare a manual for building drystone retaining walls.

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Challenges after the UNESCO Inscription »** Cavtat, Croatia, October 1-2 2021
Antonis Theodosiou



foto 3 =Drystone landascpae in vineyards – Cyprus

The Troodos region is an area of approximately 2332 km², with 140 small communities and a total population of around 50,000 inhabitants. The 3PRO-TROODOS project supports the role of farmers in the supply chain by developing a quality certification label and by building a sustainable network of actors. The above are considered as the most important expectations, along with solving the challenges of providing incentives for youth to stay in the Troodos area. Main expectations through the project are to support the farmers by increasing the value added of local agricultural products and to convince consumers about the quality characteristics and eco-friendly production processes along with the maintenance of the existing drystone landscape and the building of new drystone walls.

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Challenges after the UNESCO Inscription » Cavtat, Croatia, October 1-2 2021
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foto 4 =3PROTROODOS drystone workshop in Cyprus

* «Battir is at the centre of a Mediterranean walled landscape that is comprised primarily of terracing of low to medium height. This represents centuries of activity by the farming community but recent decades of conflict and consequent rural depopulation have meant that much of this heritage, whilst mainly present, is in a poor state of repair. In addition, some of the works that have been carried out appear sub-standard or employing the use of inappropriate techniques such as capping with cement or concrete, or altering some of the ancient water control infrastructure, or traditional dry stone paving»

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**«Best Practices in Cyprus and Palestine after the UNESCO inscription -
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Antonis Theodosiou

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Sources of all photographs = the personal archive of Anastasia Pitta and Antonia Theodosiou «Petra stin Petra Foundation»

Short biography of author:

Antonia Theodosiou

Dipl. Ing. Architect and Environmental Engineer

Studies in restoration of historic buildings and ecology

Author of publications on vernacular architecture, traditional anthropogenic and natural landscape

Expertise in the field of environment, the management of nature reserves, energy and sustainable development

Awarded by Europa Nostra, ICOMOS and the Council of Europe for restoration projects and the rehabilitation of drystone landscapes in Cyprus

President of «Petra stin Petra» foundation concerning drystone

Vice president of ICOMOS – CYPRUS and the International Association for the Multidisciplinary Scientific Study of Drystone construction - SPS

Board member of CEA (CYPRUS ENERGY AGENCY) and MIO-ECSDE (Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development)

Member of the Monuments Committee of the Cyprus Technical Chamber

Scientific collaborator for the preparation of the multinational file for the successful nomination by UNESCO of the “Art of dry stone, knowledge and techniques” on the international representative list of the “Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”

