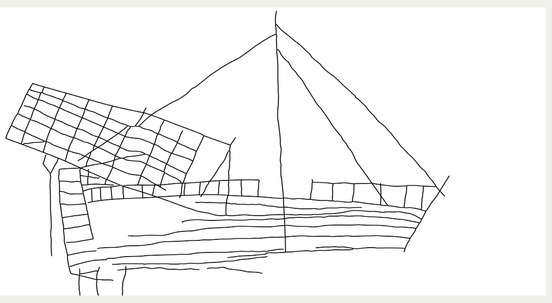
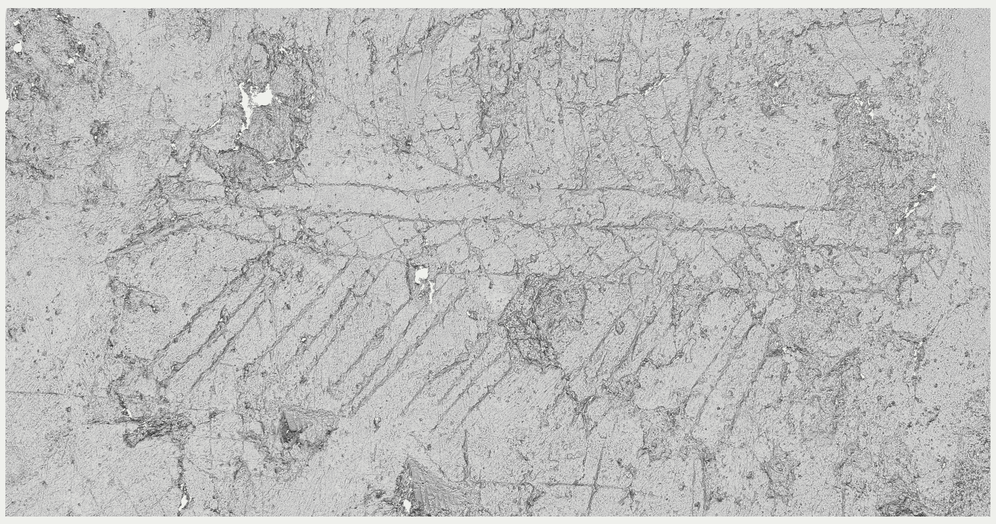
SAILING INLAND

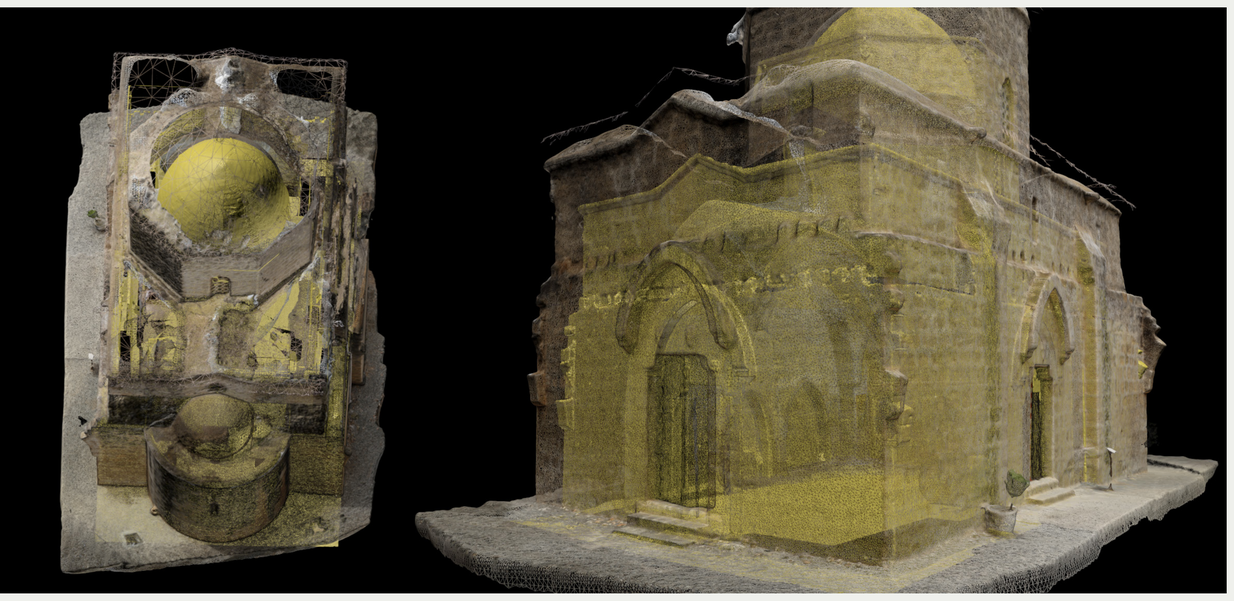
CYPRUS SHIP GRAFFITI

The project KARAVOI: The Ship Graffiti on the Medieval and post-Medieval Monuments of Cyprus: Mapping, Documentation and Digitisation, focused on the recording, analysis and study of ship graffiti in the Medieval monuments of Cyprus, was conducted between 2012 and 2015. It was directed by Dr Stella Demesticha, Archaeological Research Unit, Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Cyprus, and funded by the A.G. Leventis Foundation, through the Leventis FoundationResearch Committee of the University of Cyprus. The Cyprus Department of Antiquities and STARC of the Cyprus Institute were collaborating partners in this research effort.

KARAVOI project offered the first extensive graffiti survey in Cyprus through a selective application of innovative digital methods and techniques. It aimed at optimizing the information offered by this iconographic source through a comprehensive study. The applied methodology combined the analysis of every single ship graffito within the spatial context of the monument but also taking into consideration the location of the monument on the island.







KARAVOI established that ship graffiti were used as a form of communication-identification and/or devotion by locals and outsiders. The geographical distribution of ship graffiti showed that ships were inscribed not only in monuments along the Cypriot coastline, or close to the island's harbours but also inland all the way to the mountainous area of the Troodos. Moreover, graffiti distribution has shown unknown connections between primary shrines, cult sites and monasteries. The original contribution of the project has been the holistic and multi-scale documentation and visualization of graffiti through the application of innovative imaging technologies. Overall, the KARAVOI project confirmed the potential of graffiti to recover socio-cultural and geographical information that traditional sources cannot record.