

TRACING HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENT ON MOUNT TROODOS

WOODEN CULTURAL HERITAGE OF BYZANTINE AND MEDIEVAL CYPRUS

Wood was a valuable resource in the pre-industrial Mediterranean, and sources from antiquity highlight Cyprus' plentiful forest resources, especially in the Troodos mountains. In collaboration with the Department of Antiquities and the Department of Forests, we dedicate special attention to the UNESCO World Heritage monuments of Mount Troodos and related movable wooden objects like icons. The systematic application of dendrochronology provides a secure timeline that can enrich our knowledge of the wooden cultural heritage of the Troodos, providing new insights and a better understanding of the Byzantine and Medieval heritage of Cyprus. Moreover, dendrochronology is especially powerful in identifying and sourcing the timber used, thus offering evidence towards a scientific biography of monuments and objects. Being able to access and record this data provides a substantive and entirely new body of knowledge capable of profoundly informing the cultural history of Byzantine and Medieval Cyprus, while also providing important and hitherto inaccessible environmental and climate information for Cyprus reaching beyond the tree-ring series available from analysis of living trees. The results of studies on movable wooden heritage objects like icons stand as the pioneering high-precision timeline for medieval icon production and forest management information for Cyprus.

