



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

DEPUTY MINISTRY OF CULTURE



DEPARTMENT  
OF ANTIQUITIES  
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7 August, 2023

Mr Omar Alshikh  
Email: [amrlood@gmail.com](mailto:amrlood@gmail.com)

Dear Mr Alshikh,

SUBJECT: INFORMATION ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN CYPRUS

I refer to your email dated 28 July 2023, concerning the above subject and I would like to inform you of the following, regarding the Department of Antiquities' law and policies in place for the protection of all archaeological heritage, including that dated to the Ottoman period. In your letter, mention is made to a tour of four Islamic archaeological sites in need of restoration, without specifying to which sites you are referring to; a more precise response could be provided, had you been more specific.

The Department of Antiquities, the competent authority of the Republic of Cyprus on matters relating to the country's archeological heritage, firmly believes and applies the principal that cultural heritage is universal and is treated as such on all levels. This can be documented by a mere overview of the Department of Antiquities' legislation, projects and annual budgetary allocations, publications, public announcements, conferences, museum exhibitions and archaeological sites open to the public and conservation practices on all listed Ancient Monuments regardless of chronological era or functional category. The Antiquities Law equally protects all phases and uses from the first presence of human occupation to the island up until the British period (i.e., older than 100 years old). It is considered unprofessional and against the code of ethics and standards established internationally to protect or preserve cultural heritage based on a constructed ethnic affiliation. The universality of heritage is not considered to be a challenge, but common practice amongst heritage professionals.

In this framework, the government of the Republic of Cyprus has consistently undertaken systematic efforts for the protection of all monuments and cultural sites on the island, including the Muslim monuments which constitute an inseparable part of the island's cultural heritage. The Department of Antiquities is responsible for over 1500 listed Ancient Monuments, which span chronologically from the Neolithic period to modern times and are varied in nature. Among these, there are 19 listed Ottoman monuments (mosques and mausoleums) and many more preserving Ottoman period phases, or dating to the Ottoman period and testify to the architecture and its characteristics.

There is a specific budgetary funding on an annual basis concerning these 19 listed monuments, while in general conservation work on monuments and sites absorbs the majority

of the annual expenditure of the Department of Antiquities. Recent examples of extensive conservation work undertaken on listed Mosques are the restoration of the minaret of the Peristerona mosque in Lefkosia District funded exclusively by the Republic of Cyprus, the Zouhouri Mosque in Larnaca implemented by the Department of Antiquities through funding from the European Union and the ongoing restoration project of Kebir Mosque in Lemesos funded by the Sultanate of Oman with the contribution of the Republic of Cyprus. Efforts and continuous monitoring of these 19 Monuments are implemented to ensure their good state of preservation and their safeguarding for future generations.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Giorgos Georgiou  
Act. Director  
Department of Antiquities