AT THE THRESHOLD OF THE HEAVENS:
THE NARTHEX AND ADJACENT SPACES IN
MIDDLE BYZANTINE CHURCHES OF MOUNT ATHOS (10th-11th CENTURIES) –
ARCHITECTURE, FUNCTION, AND MEANING

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Abstract

The narthex, the entrance room of the Byzantine church, seems to be particularly prominent in monastic churches of the Middle Byzantine period (9th to 12th centuries). The churches of the oldest coenobitic monasteries of Mount Athos, built between the late 10th and mid-11th centuries, are no exception: they all have elongated, three-bayed narthexes, which is typical for the period. On the other hand, the presence of an upper storey and, especially, its twin-domed design are not so common. Moreover, an additional, outer narthex, and two subsidiary chapels were appended to a few narthexes soon after their completion. Although the presence of these spaces has not passed unnoticed, our knowledge of their functions and the reasons for their inclusion, as well as the interpretation of their forms and the location in the narthex zone are fragmentary or entirely lacking.

This dissertation deals precisely with this problem. The first part, by providing the first comprehensive examination of all known Athonite narthexes and adjacent structures (Chapter 1), looking at the possible influences through a survey of coevals in Constantinople, Bithynia, and elsewhere (Chapter 2), and establishing the narthex’s liturgical and other uses from written sources and performative traditions (Chapter 3), lays a groundwork for the analytical assessment of the examples in question from multiple perspectives. This is offered in the second part. Chapter 4 focuses on the narthex itself and suggests interpretations of a few characteristic architectural elements, the painted decoration, pieces of furnishing, and other design solutions found in the essentially plain and simple interior. Chapter 5 explores the narthex’s upper storey (katēchoumena), its form, the functions accommodated, and its overall meaning. Chapter 6 examines exonarthexes, subsidiary chapels, porches, and phialai, and investigates their purpose
and relationship with the narthex. Engaging a wide range of material, the study also addresses such issues as the interaction between form and function, and the formation and transmission of liturgical spaces within the monastic context. The results not only lead to fuller understanding of Athonite narthexes, but they also shed light on the role and meaning of the Byzantine narthex in general.
Мојим родитељима,
с љубављу
For around the next bend the miracle happens:
The miracle is a citadel with a single gate,
Where the password must be unspoken without mistake
And you must enter at the proper hour, filled
With love for the visible:

for stone, brick, lead,
Towers, verandahs, galleries, cupolas,
The silver foil of afternoon sun
On the thin glass of windows, for a shadow
Climbing, like oil up a wick, straight up the cypress
In the close, paved with stone
And wild mallow...

For through the visible runs the border
Of joy from the other side – the measure of the given,
The only chance to change the ineffable
For ready coin, for divorced images
To meet: hence miracles are confirmed
In the unremitting space of the seen […]²

Ivan V. Lalić (1931-1996)

Byzantium VIII, or Chilandari

# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations (with Their Sources)</td>
<td>xxxiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Definition of the Problem; Its Architectural and Historic Aspects</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relevance and Aims of the Present Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Main Research Issues and Questions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Methodology, Study Materials (Evidence), and Pertinent Issues</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Spatial (Architectural, Archaeological, and Artistic) Evidence</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Written Evidence</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unwritten (Performative) Evidence</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Some Additional Methodological Remarks</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dissertation’s Structure</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART I: Evidence for the Study of Athonite Middle Byzantine Narthexes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Middle Byzantine Narthexes and Adjacent Structures on Mount Athos (10th-11th Centuries): Descriptions and Examinations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Narthexes of Basilican Churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prōtaton</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philotheou</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravadouchou and Kalamitsiōn</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Narthexes of Cross-in-Square Churches  

Great Lavra 49  
Ivērōn 61  
Vatopedi 67  
Xenophōntos 83  
Zygou (Frangokastro) 87  
Skētē of St. Demetrius 94  
Kellion of St. Procopius 98  

Chapter 2  Narthexes in the Cross-in-Square Churches of Constantinopolitan and Other Monasteries of the 10th and 11th Centuries 105  

a) Constantinopolitan Churches 109  
Theotokos tou Libos (North Church of the Monastery of Lips) 109  
Myrelaion 114  
Eski İmaret Camii (Church of the Monastery of Christ Pantepoptēs?) 118  
Vefa Kilise Camii 123  
b) Bithynian Churches 130  
c) Panagia tōn Chalkeōn (Thessaloniki) and Church at Olynthos, Chalkidikē 141  

Excursus  Narthexes in Middle Byzantine Monastic Churches (9th-12th Centuries) 150  

a) Narthexes of Basilicas and ‘Domed Basilicas’ 153  
b) Narthexes of Cross-in-Square Churches 158  
c) Narthexes of ‘Domed Octagon’ Churches 177  

Chapter 3  The Narthex in the Monastic Life and Ritual: The Evidence from Foundation Documents (typika) 183  

A. The Narthex as a Gathering Space 193  
B. Daily Liturgical Offices Performed in the Narthex 199  
   a) Ninth Hour and Vespers 200  
   b) Compline and Mutual Forgiveness 203  
   c) Midnight Office 207  
   d) Matins 209  
   e) First Hour 210  
   f) Third and Sixth Hours, and the Office of Typika 212  
   g) Catechetical Instruction in the Narthex 215  
C. Annual Celebrations and Rites Staged in the Narthex 220  
D. Sacraments, Ordination, Funerary, and Other Individual Rites
PART II: Cumulative Analyses and Interpretations of Athonite Narthex Areas: Characteristic Architectural Elements and Pieces of Furnishing, and Their Role in Staging Functions and Conveying Meanings

Chapter 4 Narthex Proper (Ground-Floor Room) 260

a) The Three-Bay Layout, Size, and Proportions 260
b) The Emphasized Central Bay 266
c) The Three-Door Arrangement and Other Elements of the Wall between the Narthex and the Naos 296
d) Furnishings, Lighting Devices, and Burials 315
e) External Openings 333
f) Transmission and Innovation in Planning 335

Chapter 5 Narthex’s Upper Storey (katēchoumena) 338

Architectural Form and Spatial Characteristics 342
a) The Overall Layout and Relationship to the Narthex and Naos 342
b) Access 346
c) The Katēchoumenēion Proper 349
d) North and South Compartments and the ‘Twin Dome Motif’ 351

Function(s) and Meaning 359
a) Repository of Relics, Liturgical Vessels, Documents, Books (Skeuophylakion and Library) 360
b) Liturgical Space (Chapel) 367
c) Dwelling (Monastic Cell) 374
d) Function and Meaning of the Entire Space – Solitary (Anachoretic) Habitation and Dwelling within the Holy 376

Chapter 6 Spaces and Structures Adjacent to the Narthex 386

a) Exonarthex, Porches, and Connecting Corridors 386
b) Subsidiary (Lateral) Chapels 407
c) Burials in Lateral Chapels and Exonarthex 425
d) Sēmantra and Their Location 433
e) Phialē 437
f) The ‘Aggregated Narthex Area’ 449

Conclusions 451

Form, Features, and Spatial Organization of the Narthex 453
Functions and Meaning (Perception) of the Narthex 457
Relationship between Form and Function: Some Particular Solutions Developed on Mount Athos 459
Katēchoumena: Their Form, Organization, Function(s), and Reasons for the Location above the Narthex 462
Exonarthex, Lateral Chapels, and Phialē: Purposes and Relationship with the Narthex 464
Transmission and Innovation in Planning and Design 470
Conclusion 475

Glossary of Terms 479
Bibliography 483

ILLUSTRATIONS

Chapter 1 (Figures 1-182) 521
Chapter 2 (Figures 183-264) 624
Chapter 2, Excursus (Figures 265-423) 667
Chapter 4 (Figures 424-494) 741
Chapter 5 (Figures 495-504) 781
Chapter 6 (Figures 505-549) 788
Preface

My interest in and affection for Mount Athos were born long time ago, probably during my high-school years, and most likely not within a single moment. They condensed from only bits and pieces of information on the monastic republic that were available to me back then, which were less telling and more concealing, turning the distant and inaccessible peninsula into a mythic place. Therefore, I felt extremely fortunate when I got a chance to make my first visit to the Holy Mountain in 1997, as an undergraduate architecture student with a group of my peers. During the sojourn of eight days, I was overwhelmed by the intense immersion into my myth, which was turning into reality, while offering images and impressions beyond everything I had previously constructed in my imagination about this place. In this wealth of sensations and new information, an important segment belonged to architecture. Encounters with architectural structures such as arsanas, archontariki, katholikon, phialē, trapeza, docheion, and pyrgos,¹ and especially finding them still being in active use, ignited even greater interest in Athos’s built environment, particularly as an expression of the monastic life there.

On my departure from the peninsula, I felt as if I were leaving a land located between heaven and earth.² I immediately missed the place. And the next nine years until my second visit – on a pre-dissertation trip in July 2006 – seemed very long, but did not lessen my interest in Athonite architecture. Quite the contrary. Meanwhile, I independently grew more intrigued by the issue of the relationship between architecture and liturgy, i.e. by their impact on shaping

¹ In Athonite parlance: harbor, guesthouse, main church, pavilion with a holy water font, refectory, storehouse, and tower/keep, respectively.
² As an echo of a Serbian folk fairytale „Čардак ни на небу ни на земљи“ (literally “The Castle Neither in Heaven Nor on Earth”), published in English as “The Castle in Cloudland” in Maximilian A. Mügge, Serbian Folk Songs, Fairy Tales and Proverbs (London: Drane’s, 1916), pp. 116-120.
each other. One of my research papers, a study of Byzantine monastic ossuaries and the chapels that accompany them, afforded me greater knowledge of specific issues in planning of monastic buildings and enhanced my interest in Athos. Also, I was interested in the narthex, the entrance section of Byzantine churches, and its role in the church ritual. Several Athonite churches have especially distinct, large narthexes, known in Greek language as litai. With its spaciousness and organization, the litē immediatly calls for one’s attention and scrutiny. Its form is radically different from that of the earlier Athonite narthexes, as well as from most of contemporaneous Byzantine narthexes outside Athos. However, the litē and, generally, the Athonite katholika’s narthexes appended with smaller and larger ancillary rooms and structures, provide an interesting and under-investigated material. To me, this seemed to be a good subject for a case study of the relationship between Byzantine architecture and Byzantine liturgical practices, which I wished to pursue as my doctoral dissertation.

I originally envisaged my research as a study of the architectural and liturgical development of narthexes within the specific monastic context of Mount Athos. The primary focus was set on the major event in this development, the transformation of the ‘regular’ Middle Byzantine narthex into its large Late Byzantine counterpart, the litē, which occurred at the beginning of the 14th-century. The aim was to search for explanations – liturgical, spiritual, ideological, artistic, and other – of this phenomenon. The narthex, as an integral part of the church, had been considered primarily in terms of its liturgical function. Therefore, I was intrigued by what shift in liturgical practice could have brought this dramatic transformation of space and form within the monastic context of Athos, a place that had been regarded as

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4 The title of the dissertation proposal presented in May 2007 was “Framing the Monastic Ritual: Byzantine Church Narthexes on Mount Athos (10th-15th Centuries) – Architecture and Liturgy”.
5 For references, see the following note.
conservative and not prone to abrupt and radical changes, especially in liturgical matters. I spent two seasons – in 2008 and 2010 – conducting onsite research on Mount Athos, where I had the opportunity to examine narthexes, but also experience their use during various services. And my research grew increasingly focused on the pursuit of the explanation lying behind the formation of the Athonite litē and its subsequent dissemination throughout Athos and beyond. I believe that I have been able to pinpoint the liturgical component, i.e. the shift in monastic system of church services, with many of them being assigned to the narthex;\footnote{Some results and ideas were presented in two conference papers, “A Shift in Athonite Architecture: The Narthex of Hilandar’s Katholikon,” BSC 36 (2010): 40-41, and “Formation of the litē on Mount Athos: Liturgical and Historical Aspects,” in Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Sofia, 22-27 August 2011, Volume II: Abstracts of Round Table Communications (Sofia, 2011): 91-92.} but I was equally interested in tracing the architectural background or the possible sources for the form of this new type of narthex. That is why I went back to the Middle Byzantine Athonite examples, which certainly provided the geographically closest predecessors, but also – by the mere fact that they were associated in the minds of their medieval users with local liturgical traditions – the litē’s most relevant source of spatial and architectural solutions.

Due to the lack of scholarly studies covering Athos’s earlier narthexes,\footnote{For a list of work representing the present scholarship on Athonite and, on a more general level, Byzantine narthexes, see Introduction, note 12.} my research of that material has gradually grown both in volume and in depth, becoming an independent study. That is why I decided in 2014, in consultation with my adviser, Professor Slobodan Ćurčić, to present it as my doctoral thesis. My plan is to return later to the study of the Late Byzantine transformations and innovations in the Athonite narthex design, which is already in progress, in order to be able to provide a rounded picture of the formation, development, and dissemination of the litē, which is often defined as the ‘Athonite narthex’ or, in association with a triconch cross-in-square naos, as part of the ‘Athonite church plan’.
I present here a study of Middle Byzantine narthexes on Mount Athos that chronologically and formally preceded the *litai*. In addition to examining the form, organization, and uses of Athos’s earlier narthexes, I have tried to pursue the reasons behind their formation, which took place some time towards and after the end of the Iconoclasm. Their emergence coincided with a rise of monasticism and, in particular, the Stoudite monastic reform movement of the 9th century. Therefore, I wished to examine how, if at all, the latter influenced the shaping of this part of the liturgical space of the monastic church on Mount Athos and in general. Moreover, I have brought attention to the role of the patron in the planning process, with a special interest in the transmission of spatial experience (i.e. architectural memory) and the architectural articulation of emerging needs and concerns. However, the main focus has remained on the architecture of Athonite narthexes, with the intention to provide systematization and explanation of their forms, architectural elements, and organization, as well as to search for their functions and meaning within the Athonite monastic life and ritual.

* The dissertation writing was in its final stages in January 2016, when I learned the unfortunate news that Prof. Ćurčić had suffered a stroke. For the next several months, I was polishing the text and illustrations, while waiting and hoping that he would recover and assess the last three chapters that he had asked to read once the draft would be complete. However, since his recovery was still in progress in August 2016, the guidance in the last phases of the dissertation completion was assumed by Prof. Charles Barber, who has been acting as the thesis co-adviser since 2014.
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I have been greatly blessed with and obliged by instruction, assistance, support, kindness, friendship, and love offered by so many people and institutions during the long period of my dissertation research and writing, and along my academic formation as a graduate student in general. These people and their contributions to the shaping and completion of this dissertation need to be duly acknowledged here. However, it is also an extreme pleasure to remember all of them at this point and to recall all those good moments and adventures shared with them. I and this study benefitted in ways which include many details and facets that cannot be fully recounted here. If this dissertation is in any part good and the sheer fact that it has been completed, it is in a great part thanks to these people. Therefore, I gladly write this piece, which is just a little more than a mere listing, a public acknowledgement of ‘signposts along the road’ and a modest and stammering expression of my immense gratitude.

Before acknowledging any individual contribution, I should say that this project would have been difficult to accomplish in any other academic environment but Princeton University and Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection. More than their libraries, archives, and other research facilities, it is their scholars, students, fellows, and administrators who make these institutions great. I feel that I was extremely privileged for being part of these academic families and, on the other hand, I feel guilty for not producing more and performing better while at this places. I am greatly indebted to people who brought me there. The gates of Princeton were opened to me by my future adviser, Prof. Slobodan Ćurčić, who recognized potentials in me, and by Prof. Jelena Bogdanović, a friend of many years and a graduate student back then, who introduced me to Prof. Ćurčić by presenting to him my early academic works in medieval
architecture and who encouraged me to apply to Princeton, the prestigious school that I thought was beyond my reach. I would have never seriously consider coming to Princeton if these two were not there. The mythical heavens for all Byzantinists, Dumbarton Oaks, admitted me in its beautiful gardens and rich library aisles through the intercession of its then senior fellows in Byzantine Studies: Albrecht Berger, John Duffy, John F. Haldon, Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Ioli Kalavrezou, Robert S. Nelson (chair), and Margaret Mullett (Director of Byzantine Studies). I sincerely thank to them all.

* 

I met Prof. Ćurčić, whose work and fame had been very well known to me, only after I had filed my application for graduate studies. Immediately, he left an impression of a very kind, generous, and thoughtful person. This greatly facilitated my graduate studies, which were occasionally very stressful, as I was making a transition from architecture and architectural preservation to art history. He cared for how I was doing both as a student and as a human being. Prof. Ćurčić have had trust in me and my abilities even when I did not, providing a great deal of support and encouragement. In the same time, I have expanded my knowledge of Byzantine architecture and culture enormously through his excellent and always inspiring classes and seminars. He generously and happily let me use his rich library – I could just make a phone call to check if he was at home and immediately go there to take any book; even extremely well stocked Princeton University Library lacked many of those. Moreover, he would suggest literature that I was not aware of to add to the piles I had come for. Often on these occasions, we would start conversations that eventually greatly contributed to my knowledge, opened new perspectives, and initiated previously unnoticed venues of interpretation in the projects I worked at the time. He has also shown great delight in hearing my thoughts, views, and ideas, which I
often developed further and enhanced the arguments in their support through our discussions. These and the conversations we had on our walks together back home after his late classes on Thursdays (we lived in the same neighborhood during my first three years in Princeton) I probably enjoyed most. I only regret that due to his illness he has not been able to read the last three chapters of this dissertation and provide his comments, as well as to be present at the final public oral examination.

Prof. Charles Barber took over the advising in the most critical moment: the thesis had been essentially completed, but it still lacked its final and more coherent shape. Prof. Barber carefully read the text, provided useful suggestions regarding some improvements, particularly of certain more theoretical considerations, and helped me in writing the introduction and conclusions. Moreover, he painstakingly undertook an additional editing of the final text. I believe it was as difficult for him as it was for me to work while a great geographical distance separated us, but he performed excellently, especially in the final phase, when he masterfully coordinated several parallel tasks leading to my final public oral examination.

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ensures the most competent examination of the dissertation when it comes to one of its key aspects, the relationship between Byzantine architecture and liturgy. I thank them all for their useful comments and questions.

A few other people whom I have got to know at Princeton also directly contributed to the shaping of this dissertation. Dr Katherine Marsengill has carefully copyedited the text, which not only corrected the grammar, but pointed to me where the improvement of the content and arguments had to be made. She also provided advice on how to approach revising certain parts, especially the introduction. And she did all these during a very difficult period in her live. I cannot thank her enough. Prof. Jelena Bogdanović took of her precious time to read the entire draft at one point and helped me to reorganize it and tighten it up. Also, she gladly and with no restrictions placed her vast collection of photographs of Byzantine monuments at my disposal. Prof. Michelle Lim read the initial version of the introduction and, although not a Byzantinist, made useful suggestions how to improve it. Prof. Kevin J. Kalish has examined Chapter 3 and offered comments and corrections on several issues concerning liturgical celebrations in the narthex. However, none of these scholars and friends is responsible for the potential shortcomings in the dissertation. They solely reflect my own incompetencies.

I should also thank Professors Nino Zchomelidse and John Pinto, who together with Prof. Ćurčić served on my general examination committee. They made me establish a solid medievalist foundation before embarking on my dissertation project. I am further indebted to Prof. Pinto for taking me as one of preceptors in his class, where he gave me a vivid example of excellent teaching and gracious collegiality, despite my expertise being way below his. Additionally, he supported my application for a Dumbarton Oaks fellowship with sincere enthusiasm and great belief in my abilities.
Our graduate secretary, Diane Schulte, has been always there for me, taking each of my questions and requests with equal seriousness and seeking the solution with utmost diligence during all these many years of my connection with Princeton. All the preparations for my final public oral examination – which had to be carried in a very short time – she made go smoothly and with minimal or no stress. She even went ahead to contact the bindery and announce my request for the thesis’s binding. I am immensely grateful for all these assistances. I also thank Susan Lehre, Department Manager, and Marilyn Hansen, Media Specialist, for their help.

Remaining at Princeton, I would like to give credit to people who have not directly contributed to this dissertation, but from whose scholarship and and friendship I benefitted a great deal. Prof. Anne-Marie Bouché made my first steps in the graduate studies much easier and tremendously exciting. She opened again my eyes for the western medieval art, but also taught me to see deeper. And, on several occasions, she offered a friendly and helping hand in difficult situations that a graduate student can face. The late Dr Lois Drewer of the Index of Christian Art was always there for me (and others), appearing as having nothing else to do but help in locating or search herself for some hard to find bibliographic unit or rare image, while most generously sharing her encyclopedic knowledge of various media of Byzantine art and architecture. The classes I took with Professors Slobodan Ćurčić, Anne-Marie Bouché, Thomas Leisten, Esther da Costa Meyer, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, John Beldon Scott, Robert Ousterhout, John F. Haldon, Peter Brown, Peter Jeffery, and Sara Poor, and off-classes contacts with them contributed to my and the formation of my dissertation project.

The Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies has been my second home at Princeton. It financially supported my graduate studies, awarding me with a Stanley J. Seeger Graduate Fellowship, and funded my study trips abroad on several occasions through Stanley J. Seeger
Summer Fellowships. But, more importantly, it provided a place where I could go whenever I wished to and people whom I could turned to with any academic or personal problem. The key figure who made this institution feels like that to me is Dimitri H. Gondicas, its executive director and its spiritus movens in true sense. His positive attitude, energy, and care for people are admirable and often contagious. Any person who is or has ever been affiliated with the center would remain the subject of his interest, concern, and could count on his assistance. Thus, in a critical moment of my dissertation development, he encouraged me by inviting me to present a paper with newest results of my research. On another occasion, he generously provided me with an opportunity to read my conference paper to the affiliates of the Hellenic Studies program and get their feedback. In addition to this, he was my first teacher of Modern Greek, who instilled in me a great affection for the language, its nuanced meanings and funny twists, as well as Greek culture and tradition. I am greatly obliged by all these. And other members of the center, primarily its manager Carol Oberto and administrative coordinator Christine Twiname, as well as its many former post-doctoral and visiting fellows – Pagona Papadopoulou, Nikos Kontogiannis, Petre Guran, Irma Karaulashvili, Elisavet Yota, Maria Evangelatou, Ilias Kolovos, among others – have made this place special to me.

I took part in several summer seminars of the Mount Menoikeion Project, organized under the auspices of the Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, and this also kept me in the close association with the center. This project directly exposed me to the monastic life and physical environment of a still living monastery that has maintained close connections with Mount Athos for centuries. This experience revived my great love for fieldwork research and onsite documentation of architectural heritage. My involvement would not be possible without the center’s support and the trust shown by the project’s director, Dr Nikolas Bakirtzis. I thank to
both. And I am also grateful for the immense and heartfelt hospitality by the monastic community, headed by its abess Phevronia, as well as for the great time I had with other participants and their camaraderie.

*  

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection has been to me something of a second academic institution. I was affiliated with it first as a Junior Fellow during the academic year of 2011-2012 and then as a Short-Term Pre-Doctoral Resident in June 2015. On both occasions, I was exposed to the best possible research facility and most friendly environment, surrounded by all books I needed, photographic and field documentation, and – the most important of all – great scholars and even greater people, who became my very good friends.

The first period will probably remain the most memorable year I have had while in the United States. The merit for this goes to Deborah Brown (who was not only the most helpful in the library, but also introduced me to the beautiful nature around Washington DC), Divna Manolova (who was there for anything and in every moment), Nikos Tsivikis (a great friend who brought meaning and fun even in grim situations), Daniel Galadza (from whom I benefitted a great deal in the field of liturgical studies, as well as in spiritual matters; who later introduced me to some non-tourist parts of Rome, which I enjoyed a lot), Jeff and Julia Wickes, Kostis Smyrlis and Denise Klein, Katya Kovalchuk, Michele Trizio, Asa Eger, Jack and Jeannette Tannous, Scott F. Johnson, Örgü Dalgıç, Vasilis Marinis, Linda Safran, Marka Tomić-Durić, Simone Beta, Johannes Pahlitzsch, Michael Herchenbach, Alla Vronskaya and Igor Demchenko, and Duncan Campbell. We shared together academic interests, work space, apartment building, meals, fun times, and sad times too; we lived like a big family. Günder Varinlioğlu provided help with the Photographic archives, while Alice-Mary Talbot and Natalia Teteriatnikov offered some useful
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In 2015, I had luck to return to this place and spend another three weeks there. Margaret Mullett, when she saw that I was stuck with the writing, took the initiative and helped me tremendously to see the dissertation’s structure with a fresh eye and to present better the material envisaged to form Part II. And, in general, she was as always there to help, to give advice, to encourage, to embrace. Deb Brown again provided great help in the library, with usual enthusiasm and cheer, despite her health problems. Fani Gargova and Shalimar Fojas White of the Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives provided invaluable assistance with the photographic material I pursued. Vitaly Permiakov was patient to listen to my ideas and interpretations of the narthex in regard to liturgical practices, and he offered to read the final draft. However, I have not got a chance to send it to him; if he read it, the dissertation would have been much improved. Dr Anne-Catherine Baudoin, Dr Branislav Cvetković, and Dr Werner Seibt made a good company during my short stay.

* 

This project would not be possible without long sojourns on Mount Athos and onsite investigation of its monuments. The monasteries of Hilandar, Vatopedi, and Ivērōn granted me the permission to stay and use their hospitality beyond the period of four days that pilgrims to the
monastic republic normally get. At Hilandar and Vatopedi, I was allowed to take photos, for which I owe gratitude to their respective abbots, Metodije and Ephraim. In addition to this, the abbot of Vatopedi let me visit, closely examine, and take photos of the Skētē of St. Demetrius and the Kellion of St. Procopius. I was taken to these two complexes by monk Sabbas, the librarian, who was very generous with his time and did his best to provide the information I needed. During my stays and while conducting research, I was kindly assisted by several monks: Simeon, Danilo, Lazar, Makarije, and Teodosije at Hilandar; Iakovos and hieromonk Ieremias at Ivrēn; Makarios, Maximos (Nicholas Constanas), Averkios, and Elisaios (the younger) at Simonos Petra; and hieromonk Loukas and hierodeacon Silouan at Grēgoriou. I warmly thank to them all.

In addition to Mount Athos, I have traveled to several other places in conjunction with my research and have received precious, occasionally even crucial assistance by local or locally engaged scholars. Nikolas Bakirtzis generously let me stay in his apartment when I stayed in Thessaloniki, where his family – Charalambos, Dēmētra, Olga, and Elpinikē – were great hosts. Olga Bakirtzi introduced me to her friends Dr Vangelis Maladakis and Dr Lila Sabanopoulou, who instantly became my friends too. These two were most generous with their time, knowledge, and professional connections. Moreover, they made me feel like a local in Thessaloniki. I cannot thank them enough for this. On another visit to Thessaloniki, Xenophŏn Moniaros and Nikoleta Tzanē hosted me in their apartment and Dawn LaValle shared the apartment she rented when I stayed again in the city. John A. Graham introduced me to Georgian traditional church chant, folk singing, and the supra, but also provided me with the opportunity to visit Georgia and its many monasteries and churches. I stayed in his house in Signaghi, while my host in Tbilisi and in Racha was Luarsab Togonidze. In Istanbul, Professors Robert Ousterhout and Zeynep Ahumbay let me visit the Zeyrek Camii and climb on its roof.
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The funding for all these travels was generously provided by the Stanley J. Seeger Summer Fellowship (on several occasions), Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies Summer Dissertation Research Grant (on two occasions), and Spears Travel Grant (Department of Art and Archaeology).

*  

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During my first three years at Princeton, I shared an apartment with Ljubomir Milanović, than a Rutgers University graduate student. His humor and wit were the medicine for any problem and being with him under the same roof made the student life easier and funnier. I will always remember with a smile in the corner of my lips our shopping tours to grocery stores and outlet malls, going to cinema theaters, and eating in a Chinese buffet. He obliged me by scanning articles on a few occasions and by a last-minute tracking down several bibliographical references. This saved me quite some time and spared me from the additional stress.

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I also remember other people whom I got to meet while in the United States and who in one way or another left a positive mark in my work and my life: Prof. Ljiljana Ševo, the late Prof. Svetlana Popović (who invited me to join her panel at the International Byzantine Congress in 2011, which both revived my enthusiasm and helped me to shape some of my dissertation ideas), Prof. Ljubica Popovitch (who kept inquiring about my academic progress and sending Christmas presents), Dušan Korać and his family, Dr Amy Papalexandrou, Prof. Alessandra Ricci, and Prof. Stavros Mamaloukos. Prof. Mamaloukos has many times selflessly shared his insights, as well as his published and yet unpublished materials, helped with literature, and turned my attention to some relevant, but little known monuments in Greece. I am grateful for these, but also for his immediate and lasting friendship, in which he has always treated me in scholarly matters as his equal, although I am not.

*  

Probably crucial in my decision to continue and deepen my studies of Byzantine architecture by going to graduate school was the participation in the Byzantine art program of the Ohrid Summer University. During its first session, in 2002, I met its instructors, Professors Elizabeta Dimitrova, Ida Sinkević, and Alexei Lidov, and its participants Tatjana Starodubcev, Branislav Cvetković, Svetlana Smolčić-Makuljević, Sofija Grandakovska, Nona Petkova, Vladimir Dimitrov, and many others. The multidisciplinary classes, which were often conducted inside Byzantine monuments dispersed in the gorgeous setting of the Ohrid Lake, as well as our off-classes visits and conversations showed me new and ever-interesting ways of looking at and interpreting Byzantine art. Professors Sinkević and Dimitrova later wrote recommendation letters when I applied for graduate studies. I am grateful for that and for their continuing support
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Note

I have presented research leading to or materials from this dissertation at the following conferences:


- University of Niš, Niš (Serbia), February 2013: lecture upon invitation “Athonite Nartheces of the Late-Byzantine Period: The Formation, Development, and Dissemination of an Architectural Type” (in Serbian); not published


- At the same conference: paper “Dwelling within the Holy: Accommodation of a Monastic Cell in the Katēchoumena at Great Lavra (Mount Athos) and Other Middle Byzantine Monasteries”; the abstract published in ibid., pp. 760-761

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**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC</td>
<td><em>Byzantine Studies Conference, Abstracts of Papers</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td><em>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CahArch</td>
<td><em>Cahiers archéologiques</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOP</td>
<td><em>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries</td>
<td>Margaret Mullett (ed.), <em>Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries</em> (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, Institute of Byzantine Studies, Queen’s University of Belfast, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOThR</td>
<td><em>The Greek Orthodox Theological Review</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JöB</td>
<td><em>Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSAH</td>
<td><em>Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mylonas, Atlas of Athos


OrChrP Orientalia christiana periodica


RÉB Revue des études byzantines

SVTQ St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly

Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism
Margaret Mullett, and Anthony Kirby (eds.), The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism ([Belfast]: [Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, School of Greek, Roman and Semitic Studies, The Queen’s University of Belfast], 1994)

Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis
Margaret Mullet and Anthony Kirby (eds.), Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis, 1050-1200 (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, School of Greek, Roman and Semetic Studies, The Queen’s University of Belfast, 1997)

ZRVI Зборник радова Византолошког института

ABME Αρχείον των Βυζαντινών Μνημείων της Ελλάδος

Buβαντινή αρχιτεκτονική και λατρευτική πράξη
Ευαγγελία Χατζητρύφωνος, Φλόρα Καραγιάννη (eds.), Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική και λατρευτική πράξη (Εισαγωγικές ομιλίες, θεματικές και ελεύθερες παρεμβάσεις), Πρακτικά (Θεσσαλονίκη: University Studio Press, 2006)

ΔΧΑΕ Δελτίον Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας

Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή
Στάνος Β. Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου: Ιστορία και αρχιτεκτονική - Διδακτορική διατριβή (Αθήνα: Εθνικό μετσόβιο πολυτεχνείο, Τμήμα αρχιτεκτόνων, Σπουδαστήριο ιστορίας της αρχιτεκτονικής, 2001)

Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους
Τουτός, Νικόλαος, και Γεώργιος Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, 10ος - 17ος αιώνας (Αθήνα: Ακαδημία Αθηνών – Κέντρο έρευνας της Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής τέχνης, 2010)
Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы
Василий Григорович-Барский, Странствования Василия Григоровича-Барского по святым местам Востока с 1723 по 1747 г. (С.-Петербургъ, 1885-87), Vol. III: Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы (1744) (С.-Петербургъ: Издание Афонского Русского Пантелеимонова монастыря, 1887)

Саоштѣна Републичког завода за заштиту споменика културе
List of Illustrations (with Their Sources)

N. B.: All internet resources were last accessed in September 2016.

Chapter 1

Fig. 1 Prōtaton Church from southwest (photo: I. Pantazēs, 2012) – source: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/97976263

Fig. 2 Prōtaton Church from northeast (photo: M. Stanković, 2012) – source: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/81318869

Fig. 3 Prōtaton Church, ground plan (P. Mylonas, 1975) – source: П. М. Милонас, „Заметки об архитектуре Афона“, in: А. И. Комеч, О. Е. Этингофф (eds.), Древнерусское искусство: Балканы, Русь (Санкт-Петербург: Издательство „Дмитрий Буланин“, 1995): 7-81, p. 9

Fig. 4 Prōtaton Church, longitudinal section facing north (P. Mylonas, 1975) – source: ibid., p. 10

Fig. 5 Prōtaton Church, south elevation (P. Mylonas, 1975) – source: ibid., p. 12

Fig. 6 Prōtaton Church, south façade (A. H. S. Megaw) – source: ibid., p. 11

Fig. 7 Philotheou Monastery, drawing by Vasilii Grigorovich-Barskii (1744) – source: Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы (see List of Abbreviations), pl. between pp. 118-119

Fig. 8 Philotheou, katholikon, drawing by V. Grigorovich-Barskii (detail of Fig. 7)

Fig. 9 Philotheou, a) reconstructed ground plan of the ancient katholikon (P. Mylonas, based on the drawing by V. Grigorovich-Barskii) and b) this reconstruction minimally corrected in the narthex area (author) – source: Paul M. Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” in: Actes du XVe Congrès international d’études byzantines – Athènes, 1976: II, Art et archéologie: Communications (Athènes, 1981): 545-574, fig. 12

Fig. 10 Kelli of Ravdouchou, plan of the present complex (P. Mylonas) – source: ibid., fig. 3

xxxiii
Fig. 11  Ravdouchou, present upper and lower floor plans (b, c) and longitudinal section of the original building facing north (a) by P. Mylonas – source: ibid., fig. 4

Fig. 12  Ravdouchou, reconstructed north façade and ground plan (S. Mamaloukos) – source: Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή (see List of Abbreviations), drawing 87

Fig. 13  Kalamitsiōn, katholikon (S. Mamaloukos): a – ground plan of the remains, b – hypothetical reconstruction, ground plan, c – hypothetical reconstruction, longitudinal section, d – hypothetical reconstruction, north elevation – source: Στάυρος Μαμαλούκος, «Η προσέγγιση της διαδικασίας του σχεδιασμού στη Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική μέσα από τη μελέτη των μνημείων. Μια αφορμή για προβληματισμό σχετικά με τη χρήση προπλασμάτων», in Ιωάννης Δ. Βαράλης (ed.), Προπλασμάτα στη Μεαιωνική αρχιτεκτονική (Βυζάντιο, ΝΑ Ευρώπη, Ανατολία). Θεματικές εξηγήσεις, ελεύθερες παρεμβάσεις και συζήτηση – Πρακτικά (Θεσσαλονίκη: University Studio Press, 2009): 37-48, fig. 10

Fig. 14  Mount Latros, Stylos Monastery, ground plan of the complex (Th. Wiegand) – source: Svetlana Popović, “The Trapeza in Coenobitic Monasteries: Architectural and Spiritual Contexts,” DOP 52 (1998): 281-303, fig 10

Fig. 15  Mar Saba, ground plan of the structures surrounding the courtyard (1 – main church) – source: Joseph Patrich, Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995), fig. 12

Fig. 16  Great Lavra Monastery, ground plan of the monastic complex (P. Mylonas): A – katholikon, B – phialē, Γ – trapeza, Δ – main gate, Ε – pyrgos (tower) – source: Mylonas, Atlas of Athos (see List of Abbreviations), Fasc. 3, pl. 101.1

Fig. 17  Great Lavra, ground plan of the monastic complex in the Middle Byzantine period (P. Theocharidēs): bold line – enclosure as in the 960s, 1 – katholikon, 2 – site of belfry (1060?), 3 – old hēgoumeneion, 4 – remnants of the kellion of St. Athanasius (predating the foundation of the monastery), 5 – the “Tzimiskēs” Tower, 6 – tower of a putative extension of the early 11th century – source: Ploutarchos L. Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” in Georges Galavaris (ed.), Athos, la Sainte Montagne: Tradition et renouveau dans l’art, Αθωνικά Σύμμεικτα 10 (Αθήνα: Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών – Ινστιτούτο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 2007): 97-128, fig. 1

Fig. 18  Great Lavra, reconstructed ground plan of the monastic complex as in ca. 1810 (P. Theocharidēs) – source: ibid., fig. 2

Fig. 19  Great Lavra, καθολικόν from northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 20  Great Lavra, καθολικόν with phialē viewed from west (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 21  Great Lavra, *katholikon* with *phialē* viewed from southwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 22  Great Lavra, phases in the formation of the *katholikon* (P. Mylonas): a – the initial form *ca*. 963, b – the removal of the diaphragms, c – the addition of *choroi* (side conches), d – the form *ca*. 1002 – source: Μιλόνας, „Заметки об архитектуре Афон", p. 34

Fig. 23  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, interior of the south conch from northwest – source: http://cutsinger.net/images/athos_2007/catholikon_interior_great_lavra.jpg

Fig. 24  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, drawing of the ground plan with an ongoing liturgical service (V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744) – source: Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pl. between pp. 76-77

Fig. 25  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, longitudinal section facing south and ground plan (S. Voyadjis) – source: Σωτήρης Βογιατζής, «Κιονοστήρικτοι νάρθηκες – λιτές στη μοναστηριακή αρχιτεκτονική», ΔΧΑΕ 33 (2012): 37-54, fig. 5

Fig. 26  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, transversal section through the *litiē* and chapels’ narthexes facing east (S. Voyadjis) – source: ibid., fig. 6

Fig. 27  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, plan of the floor pavement (P. Mylonas) – source: Paul M. Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite,” CahArch 32 (1984): 89-112, fig. 5

Fig. 27A  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, floor pavement of the original narthex (P. Mylonas) – source: Mylonas, *Atlas of Athos*, Fasc. 3, pl. 101.4

Fig. 28  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, central part of the narthex’s floor (photo: D. Liakos) – source: Δημήτριος Λιάκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στα Βυζαντινά δάπεδα σε τεχνική *opus sectile* των ναών του Αγίου Όρους», Βυζαντινά 31 (2011): 107-146, fig. 11

Fig. 29  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, ideal reconstructions of four characteristic phases in the evolution of the complex (P. Mylonas): a – initial plan *ca*. 963, b – addition of *choroi* *ca*. 1002, c – form acquired by the end of the 11th century and recorded in the 1520s, d – situation as of 1744 (when Barskii visited it) – source: Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite,” fig. 6

Fig. 30  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, hypothetical and schematic reconstruction of the original narthex, ground plan (author, based on Fig. 27)

Fig. 31  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, *parekkλēsion* of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia, tomb of St. Athanasius of Athos from southeast (photo: F. Dölger, 1941) – source: Courtesy of
Great Lavra, depictions of the *katholikon*: a – on a wall painting in the *katholikon* (1535), b – on a wall painting in the refectory (after 1527), c – on an etching (1810) – source: Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite,” fig. 9

Great Lavra, ideal reconstruction of the *katholikon*’s west elevation as of the 1520s (P. Mylonas), with a detail of *Fig. 32b* – source: *ibid.*, figs. 10a, 9b (respectively)

Great Lavra, *katholikon* from north (photo: author, 2008)

Great Lavra, *katholikon*, hypothetical and schematic reconstruction of the *katēchoumena*, ground plan (author)


Ivērōn, the roofs and domes of the *katholikon* viewed from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Ivērōn, *katholikon* from north (photo: author, 2008)

Ivērōn, *katholikon*, longitudinal section facing north (P. Mylonas) and ground floor plan, with the initial structure dark-shaded (P. Mylonas) – sources: Mylonas, *Atlas of Athos*, Fasc. 3, pl. 103.1, and Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite,” fig. 17a (respectively)

Ivērōn, *katholikon* with *phialē* viewed from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Ivērōn, *katholikon* with *phialē* from southwest (photo: author, 2008)


Ivērōn, *katholikon*, domes of the *katēchoumeneion* from southeast (photo: author, 2008)

Ivērōn, *katholikon* from northwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 45  Vatopedi Monastery, ground plan of the monastic complex (P. Mylonas): A – *katholikon*, B – *phialē*, Γ – *trapeza*, Δ – main gate, E – *pyrgos* (tower) – source: Mylonas, *Atlas of Athos*, Fasc. 3, pl. 102.1

Fig. 46  Vatopedi, aerial view of the *katholikon* and refectory with other surrounding structures from west – source: *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition, History, Art* (Mount Athos: Monastery of Vatopaidi, 1998), Vol. 1, fig. 131

Fig. 47  Vatopedi, *katholikon* and the rest of the monastery from northeast – source: *ibid.*, Vol. 1, fig. 108

Fig. 48  Vatopedi, *katholikon* from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 49  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, plans of the lower and upper levels, with construction phases (S. Mamaloukos) – source: Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπαίδου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawings 64, 66

Fig. 50  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, isometric section looking northeast (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition, History, Art*, Vol. 1, ill. 13

Fig. 51  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, isometric section looking southwest (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, Vol. 1, ill. 12

Fig. 52  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, longitudinal section facing south (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, Vol. 1, ill. 15

Fig. 53  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, transversal section through the first narthex (*mesonyktikon*) and *parekklēsia* facing east (S. Mamaloukos) – source: Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπαίδου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawing 19

Fig. 54  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, transversal section through the second narthex (*lītē*) and narthexes of the *parekklēsia* facing east (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawing 20

Fig. 55  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, transversal section through the porch facing east (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawing 21

Fig. 56  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the initial form (end of the 10th cent.), plans of the lower and upper levels (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawings 69.1, 69.3

Fig. 57  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the initial form (end of the 10th cent.), longitudinal section facing north and south elevation (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawing 27
Fig. 58  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the initial form (end of the 10\textsuperscript{th} cent.), west elevation (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawing 69.7

Fig. 59  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the initial form (end of the 10\textsuperscript{th} cent.), isometric view from southeast (M. Kambanēs) – source: *ibid.*, front cover

Fig. 60  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form *ca.* beginning of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, plans of the lower and upper levels (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawings 71.1, 71.3

Fig. 61  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form *ca.* beginning of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, west elevations (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawing 71.7

Fig. 62  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form *ca.* beginning of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, north elevation (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawing 71.9

Fig. 63  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form as of *ca.* mid-11\textsuperscript{th} century, ground plan and south elevation (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawings 72.1, 72.8

Fig. 64  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form as of *ca.* mid-11\textsuperscript{th} century, west elevation (S. Mamaloukos) – source: *ibid.*, drawing 72.7

Fig. 65  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form as of *ca.* mid-11\textsuperscript{th} century, isometric view from southwest (M. Kambanēs) – source: *ibid.*, drawing 73

Fig. 66  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *phialē* from northwest (photo: author, 2006)

Fig. 67  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, porch with the clock tower and *phialē* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 68  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, first narthex (*mesonyktikon*), plans of the ground and upper floors (details of drawings by S. Mamaloukos) – sources: *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition, History, Art*, Vol. 1, ill. 14, and Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawing 3 (respectively)

Fig. 69  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the *mesonyktikon* looking north (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 70  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the *mesonyktikon* looking south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 71  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the south bay of the *mesonyktikon* looking south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 72  Vatopedi, *katholikon, mesonyktikon*, vault of the central bay (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 73  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, entrance portal of the *mesonyktikon* from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 74  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, north window of the *mesonyktikon* from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 75  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, lintel of the portal of the *mesonyktikon* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 76  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *arcosolium* in the *mesonyktikon*’s south wall (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 77  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, floor of the *mesonyktikon* from north (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 78  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *mesonyktikon*, fresco of Christ (second decade of the 14th cent.) on the southeast pilaster (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 79  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *tribēlon* viewed from the *naos* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 80  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *tribēlon* viewed from the *katēchoumena* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 81  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *katēchoumeneion*, door viewed from east (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 82  Vatopedi, *katēchoumena*, interior of the north chapel from SE (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 83  Vatopedi, *katēchoumena*, interior of the south chapel from SE (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 84  Vatopedi, *katēchoumena*, interior of the south chapel from SW (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 85  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, the east wall of the *litē*’s upper floor, once the west façade of the initial church, the central and south blind arches (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 86  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, first and second narthexes, plans of the ground and upper floors (details of drawings by S. Mamaloukos) – sources: *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition, History, Art*, Vol. 1, ill. 14, and Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, drawing 3 (respectively)

Fig. 87  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the *litē* from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 88  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the *litē* from southwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 89  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, the *pentabēlon* of the *litē* from northwest (photo: author, 2006)

Fig. 90  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, entrance portal of the *litē* with bronze-plated doors (dated to 1426) from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 91  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, lintel of the *litē*’s portal from west (photo: author, 2006)
Fig. 92  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, bronze plaques of the Annunciation (dated to 1426) of the entrance portal of the *litē* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 93  Vatopedi, *litē*, “alcove” and north door (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 94  Vatopedi, *litē*, east door in the “alcove” (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 95  Vatopedi, *litē*, west wall of the “alcove” (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 96  Vatopedi, *litē*, the centerpiece of the floor (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 97  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, inside the porch looking northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 98  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, abbot’s throne and part of bench in the porch (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 99  Vatopedi, *litē*, the mosaic of *Deēsis* above the east door (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 100  Vatopedi, *litē*, east door with the Annunciation mosaics (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 101  Vatopedi, *litē*, north section of the east wall’s decoration (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 102  Vatopedi, *litē*, south section of the east wall’s decoration (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 103  Vatopedi, *litē*, upper registers of the east wall’s decoration (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 104  Vatopedi, *litē*, west wall arcade, southernmost spandrels with Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zachariah, painted 1311/12 (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 105  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, the upper floor arcade of the once west façade of the exonarthex, *ca.* beginning of the 11th century (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 106  Vatopedi, *katholikon* from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 107  Vatopedi, old and new bell towers from E (photo: author, 2006)

Fig. 108  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, inside the porch from S (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 109  Vatopedi, plan of the monastery (P. Theocharidēs): 1 – *katholikon*, 2 – *trapeza*, 3 – belfry of 1427, 4 – Panagia Tower, 5 – Metamorphosis Tower, 6 – church of the Holy Anargyroï, 7 – present entrance complex, 8 – older entrance – source: Ploutarchos L. Theocharides, “Recent Research into Athonite Monastic Architecture, Tenth-Sixteenth Centuries,” in *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism* (see List of Abbreviations): 205-221, fig. 16.2
Fig. 110  Xenophōntos, plan of the monastery’s oldest core (P. Theocharidēs) – source: Πλούταρχος Λ. Θεοχάρης, «Προκαταρακτική θεώρηση των βυζαντινών φάσεων του περιβόλου της μονής Ξενοφόντος Αγίου Όρους», JöB 32/4 (1982): 443-455, fig. 2

Fig. 111  Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon, longitudinal section facing north and ground plan (P. Mylonas) – source: Mylonas, Atlas of Athos, Fasc. 3, pl. 116.1

Fig. 112  Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon from south (2011) – source: internet

Fig. 113  Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon from north (2006) – source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/christakos/154939036/

Fig. 114  Xenophōntos, monastery from south, drawing by V. Grigorovich-Barskii (1744) – source: Βαρσκий, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pl. between pp. 288-289

Fig. 114A  Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon from south (detail of Fig. 114)

Fig. 115  Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon, interior of the lité looking northeast (photo: P. Mylonas, 1962) – source: Mylonas, Atlas of Athos, Fasc. 2, pl. 138

Fig. 116  Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon, ground plan of the floor pavement (P. Mylonas) – source: Paul M. Mylonas, “Remarques architecturales sur le catholicon de Chilandar: La formation graduelle du catholicon à absides laterales ou choeurs et à liti, au Mont Athos,” Χιλανδαρσκι зборник 6 (1986): 7-45, fig. 6

Fig. 117  Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon, ground plan (P. Theocharidēs) with a hypothetical reconstruction of the original narthex delineated in red (author) – source: Θεοχάρης Ν. Παζαράς, «Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος του παλαιού καθολικού της μονής Ξενοφόντος στο Άγιον Όρος», ΔΧΑΕ 14 (1987-1988): 33-48, fig. 3

Fig. 118  Xenophōntos, plan of the monastery as enlarged in 1078(?) (P. Theocharidēs): 1 – katholikon, 2 – possible location of the trapeza, 3 – water mill – source: Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” fig. 6

Fig. 119  Xenophōntos, plan of the monastery in the 14th century (P. Theocharidēs): 1 – katholikon, 2 – trapeza, 3 – water mill, 4 – chapel of St. Demetrius and portico, 5 – boat house – source: ibid., fig. 7

Fig. 120  Frangokastro (Zygou Monastery), plan of the excavated parts (as of Oct 2003): 1 – katholikon, 2 – refectory, 3 – main gate, 4 – main tower – source: information board at the excavation site (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 121  Frangokastro (Zygou), the site from south – source: www.athos.web-log.nl

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Fig. 122 Zygou, katholikon, ground plan of excavated parts (as of February 2003) – source: information board at the excavation site (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 123 Zygou, katholikon, ground plan with building phases (A. Kapandriti): ca. 1000, first half of the 11th century, mid-11th century, last phase – source: Ioakeim Ath. Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos (Thessaloniki: [M. Triantafyllou], 2005), fig. 10

Fig. 124 Zygou, katholikon, ground plan of the inner narthex (detail of Fig. 122; amended by author, in red)

Fig. 125 Zygou, katholikon, inside the inner narthex looking southeast (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 126 Zygou, katholikon, inside the inner narthex looking south (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 127 Zygou, katholikon, restored marble west portal of the inner narthex (with the restored naos portal and templon screen in depth), from west (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 128 Zygou, inner narthex’s north window from W (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 129 Zygou, inner narthex’s south window from W (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 130 Zygou, inner narthex, south niche from NW (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 131 Zygou, inner narthex, north niche from W (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 132 Zygou, katholikon, inner narthex, floor pavement of the south half, from north (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 133 Zygou, katholikon, interior of the north chapel from south (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 134 Zygou, katholikon, interior of the north chapel looking northeast (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 135 Zygou, katholikon, ground plan of the narthexes and chapels (detail of Fig. II-122; amended by author, in red)

Fig. 136 Zygou, katholikon, remains of the exonarthex’s west façade (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 137 Zygou, katholikon, north half of the exonarthex’s west façade (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 138 Zygou, katholikon, south half of the exonarthex’s west façade (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 139 Zygou, exonarthex’s west façade, parapet slab of the north opening in situ (photo: author, 2010) and a reconstruction of the opening’s closure (T. Xanthopoulou) – source: Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, fig. 17
Fig. 140  Zygou, *katholikon*, remains of the *exonarthex*’s north façade (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 141  Zygou, *katholikon*, *exonarthex* through its north door (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 142  Zygou, *katholikon*, northeast corner of the *exonarthex* and remains of the floor from southwest (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 143  Zygou, *katholikon*, southeast corner of the *exonarthex* from northwest (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 144  Zygou, *exonarthex*, quincunx design of the floor’s central section, from north – source: Papangelos, *Das Athos-Kloster Zygos*, fig. 24b

Fig. 145  Zygou, *exonarthex*, remains of frescoes of the Annunciation on the east pilasters – source: information board at the excavation site (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 146  Zygou, *exonarthex*, reconstruction of the fresco of Archangel Gabriel from the Annunciation composition (T. Xanthopoulou) – source: information board at the excavation site (photo: author, 2010); also in Papangelos, *Das Athos-Kloster Zygos*, fig. 18

Fig. 147  Zygou, *katholikon*, view into the south chapel from southwest (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 148  Zygou, *katholikon*, remains of the south chapel’s west façade (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 149  *Skêthê* of St. Demetrius, ground plan of the complex: 1 – *kyriakon* (main church), 2 – refectory (with kitchen and belfry), 3 – dormitory – source: *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition, History, Art*, Vol. 1, drawing 29

Fig. 150  *Skêthê* of St. Demetrius, aerial view of the complex from southwest – source: *ibid.*, Vol. 1, fig. 174

Fig. 151  *Skêthê* of St. Demetrius, *kyriakon*, ground plan (detail of Fig. 149)

Fig. 152  *Skêthê* of St. Demetrius, *kyriakon*, longitudinal section facing north (P. Androudēs) – source: Pascal Androudis, “Le catholicon du monastère byzantin de Saint Démétrios (Chalkéôs) au Mont Athos (actuel *kyriakon* de la skite de Saint Démétrios de Vatopédio),” *ΔΧΑΕ* 29 (2008): 195-206, fig. 5

Fig. 153  *Skêthê* of St. Demetrius, *kyriakon*, south elevation (P. Androudēs) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 7

Fig. 154  *Skêthê* of St. Demetrius, *kyriakon*, ideal reconstruction of the original mid-11th-century form, ground plan and longitudinal section facing north (S. Mamaloukos) –
source: Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawings 91A, 91B

Fig. 155  
**Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon**, lintel of the door to the *naos* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 156  
**Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon**, detail of the niche in the narthex’s east wall (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 157  
**Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon**, narthex from southwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 158  
**Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon**, narthex part from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 159  
**Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon, naos** part from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 160  
**Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon**, window in the *naos*’s west wall (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 161  
**Skētē of St. Demetrius**, engraving (second half of the 18th c.) – source: Paul M. Mylonas, *Athos and Its Monastic Institutions through Old Engravings and Other Works of Art* (Athens: Printed by I. Makris Papadiamantopoulou, 1963), pl. 82

Fig. 162  
**Skētē of St. Demetrius**, remains immediately south of the *kyriakon*, from southwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 163  
**Kellion of St. Procopius**, plans of the complex’s upper (A) and lower (B) levels (S. Mamaloukos) – source: Στάυρος Μαμαλούκος, «Το βατοπεδινό Κελλί του Αγίου Προκοπίου: Η οικοδομική φάση του 16ου αιώνα στα πλαίσια της αθωνικής αρχιτεκτονικής της εποχής», in Νικόλαος Τουτός (ed.), *Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα: ΣΤ’ Διεθνές Επιστημονικό Συνέδριο – Πρακτικά Συνεδρίων (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αγιορειτική Εστία, Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, 2012): 467-484, fig. 2

Fig. 164  
**Kellion of St. Procopius**, church: plans – upper floor (a), ground floor (b), roofs (c); longitudinal sections – along the main axis, facing south (d), through the south aisle, facing south (e), along the main axis, facing north (f); transversal sections – through the narthex, facing east (g), in front of the west façade, facing east (h), through the *naos*’s west bays, facing west (i) (S. Mamaloukos) – source: ibid., fig. 4

Fig. 165  
**Kellion of St. Procopius**, church from southeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 166  
**Kellion of St. Procopius**, church from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 167  
**Kellion of St. Procopius**, church from northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 168  
**Kellion of St. Procopius**, church, northeast corner of the narthex from northeast (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 169 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, chapel’s apse protruding into the *naos*, from northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 170 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, interior of the narthex from north (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 171 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, interior of the narthex from southeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 172 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, vaults of the narthex’s central and north bays from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 173 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, window and niche in the narthex’s north bay, from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 174 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, entrance to the chapel, from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 175 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church’s entrance, from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 176 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, west and south façades (S. Mamaloukos) – source: Μαμαλούκος, «Το βατοπεδινό Κέλλι του Αγίου Προκοπίου», fig. 4

Fig. 177 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, ideal reconstruction of the original, mid-11th-century form (S. Mamaloukos) – source: ibid., fig. 5

Fig. 178 Voroskopou, church of St. Symeon, longitudinal section facing north and ground plan of the remains (S. Mamaloukos) – source: Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου* - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawing 98

Fig. 179 Voroskopou, church of St. Symeon, ideal reconstruction, longitudinal section facing north and ground plan (S. Mamaloukos) – source: ibid., drawing 99


Fig. 181 Melissourgeiou, church of St. Nicholas, ground plan of the remains (S. Mamaloukos after I. Papangelos) – source: Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου* - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawing 108

Fig. 182 Melissourgeiou, church of St. Nicholas, ground plan of the remains (S. Mamaloukos after I. Papangelos) – source: ibid., drawing 108
Chapter 2

Fig. 183 Istanbul, Fenari Isa Camii (Monastery of Lips), from east (photo: author, 2005)

Fig. 184 Fenari Isa Camii (Monastery of Lips), from southwest (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 185 Fenari Isa Camii (Monastery of Lips), after partial restoration, from northwest (early 1960s) – source: Arthur H. S. Megaw, “Notes on Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul,” DOP 17 (1963): 333-371, fig. 27

Fig. 186 Monastery of Lips, katholikon, ground plan (E. Mamboury) – source: Theodore Macridy, “The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi,” DOP 18 (1964): 253-277, fig. 5

Fig. 187 Monastery of Lips, katholikon, North (Theotokos) Church, ground plan (A. H. S. Megaw) – source: Arthur H. S. Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” DOP 18 (1964): 279-298, fig. A

Fig. 188 Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, ground plan of the narthex (A. H. S. Megaw, detail of Fig. 187)

Fig. 189 Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, ground plan of the narthex (E. Mamboury, detail of Fig. 186)

Fig. 190 Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, interior of the narthex looking north (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1935) – Nicholas V. Artamonoff Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., Neg. No. RA32 (ICFA.NA.0016) – source: http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/138

Fig. 191 Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, lower cornice – source: Cyril Mango and Ernest J. W. Hawkins, “Additional Notes [on the Monastery of Lips],” DOP 18 (1964): 299-315, fig. 15

Fig. 192 Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, interior of the stairwell tower looking south (photo: Th. Macridy, ca. 1929) – source: Macridy, “The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi,” fig. 48

Fig. 193 Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, cross section through the stairwell tower looking north (detail of a drawing by A. H. S. Megaw) – source: Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” fig. F (detail)

Fig. 194 Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, longitudinal section through the north aisle looking north (E. Mamboury) – source: Macridy, “The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi,” fig. 7
Fig. 195  Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, ideal reconstruction of the narthex’s upper floor, ground plan (detail of a drawing by E. Mamboury) – source: ibid., fig. 9 (detail)

Fig. 196  Fenari İsa Camii (Monastery of Lips), before restoration, from northwest (photo: Byzantine Institute, ca. 1960) – source: Megaw, “Notes on Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul,” fig. 26

Fig. 197  Fenari İsa Camii (Monastery of Lips), before restoration, from northwest (photo: Th. Macridy, ca. 1929) – source: Macridy, “The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi,” fig. 2

Fig. 198  Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, drawing of what remains of the original north façade (A. H. S. Megaw) – source: Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” fig. E

Fig. 199  Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, ideal reconstruction of the original form (A. H. S. Megaw) – source: ibid., fig. G

Fig. 200  Istanbul, Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church) before restoration, from northwest (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1935) – Nicholas V. Artamonoff Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., Neg. No. RA10a (ICFA.NA.0006) – source: http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/68

Fig. 201  Istanbul, Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church) after restoration, from northwest (photo: J. Bogdanović, 2005) – source: Courtesy of the author

Fig. 202  Myrelaion Church, reconstructed ground plan (C. L. Striker) – source: Cecil L. Striker, The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul, With an Appendix on the Excavated Pottery by John W. Hayes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), fig. 19

Fig. 203  Myrelaion Church, narthex, inverted plan of the vaulting (C. L. Striker) – source: ibid., fig. 6 (detail)

Fig. 204  Myrelaion Church, narthex, transversal section facing north (C. L. Striker) – source: ibid., fig. 17 (detail)

Fig. 205  Myrelaion Church, narthex, longitudinal section facing east (C. L. Striker) – source: ibid., fig. 13 (detail)

Fig. 206  Myrelaion Church, ideal reconstruction, perspective cut-off (C. L. Striker) – source: ibid., fig. 29
Fig. 207  Myrelaion Church, ideal reconstruction, perspective from southwest (C. Bozkurt) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 28

Fig. 208  Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church), the narthex segment of the north façade, from northwest (photo: author, 2013)

Fig. 209  Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church), narthex, vaults of the middle and north bays, from south (photo: author, 2013)

Fig. 210  Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church), narthex, vault of the north bay (photo: author, 2013)

Fig. 211  Istanbul, Eski İmaret Camii, from southeast (photo: J. Bogdanović, 2005) – source: Courtesy of the author

Fig. 212  Istanbul, Eski İmaret Camii, ground plan with a reconstruction of the original form of the *exonarthex* (R. Ousterhout, after J. Ebersolt and A. Thiers) – source: Robert Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), fig. 18

Fig. 213  Eski İmaret Camii, narthex, interior looking north (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 214  Eski İmaret Camii, narthex, interior wall cornice (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 215  Eski İmaret Camii, narthex, interior of the south end, upper parts (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 216  Eski İmaret Camii, narthex, interior of the north end, from southwest (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 217  Eski İmaret Camii, south door between the narthex and *exonarthex*, viewed from the latter (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 218  Eski İmaret Camii, lintel of the central portal between the narthex and *exonarthex*, viewed from the latter (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 219  Eski İmaret Camii, longitudinal section facing south (A. Van Millingen) – source: Alexander Van Millingen, assisted by Ramsay Traquair, W. S. George, and A. E. Henderson, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople: Their History and Architecture* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912), fig. 73

Fig. 220  Eski İmaret Camii, *katēchoumena*, entrance to the south chamber from west (photo: L. Theis, 1989) – source: Lioba Theis, *Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau: Zur Befundsicherung, Rekonstruktion und Bedeutung einer verschwundenen architektonischen Form in Konstantinopel* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005), fig. 110
Fig. 221  Eski İmaret Camii, interior of the over-narthex, from northwest (photo: A. K. Porter; Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Cambridge MA) – source: http://archnet.org/media_contents/7951

Fig. 222  Eski İmaret Camii, view of the naos through the tribēlon of the gallery (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1937) – Nicholas V. Artamonoff Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., Neg. No. RA318d (ICFA.NA.0131) – source: http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/130

Fig. 223  Eski İmaret Camii, interior of the naos, from east (photographed in 2009) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Muscol) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:InsideEskiImaretMosque.jpg

Fig. 224  Eski İmaret Camii, katēchoumena viewed from the naos (photo: author, 2009)


Fig. 226  Eski İmaret Camii, from northwest (photographed in 2007) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Muscol) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EskiImaretMosque2007.jpg

Fig. 227  Eski İmaret Camii, narthex’s south façade, from southeast (photo: J. Bogdanović, 2005) – source: Courtesy of the author

Fig. 228  Istanbul, Vefa Kilise Camii (Molla Gürani Camii), from northwest (author, 2009)

Fig. 229  Istanbul, Vefa Kilise Camii, from northeast (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 230  Istanbul, Vefa Kilise Camii, exonarthex from southwest (photo: author, 2005)

Fig. 231  Vefa Kilise Camii, ground plan and longitudinal section facing north (A. Van Millingen) – source: Van Millingen, Byzantine Churches in Constantinople, figs. 84, 85

Fig. 232  Vefa Kilise Camii, narthex, interior looking north (photo: L. Theis, 1993) – source: Theis, Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau, fig. 147

Fig. 233  Vefa Kilise Camii, narthex, interior looking south (photo: T. F. Mathews) – source: Thomas F. Mathews, The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), fig. 40-23

Fig. 234  Vefa Kilise Camii, narthex’s west façade, from northwest (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 235  Vefa Kilise Camii, transversal section through the exonarthex facing east (Ch. Taxier; Royal Institute of British Architects) – source: Cyril Mango, “Constantinopolitana,” Jahrbuch des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts 80 (1965): 305-336, fig. 18

Fig. 236  Vefa Kilise Camii, north annex, from northwest (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 237  Vefa Kilise Camii, door connecting north annex with exonarthex, from southwest (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 238  Tirilye (previously Zeytinbaği), Fatih Camii from northwest – source: www.pembecefe.com/Haber/Balik_ve_zeytin_diyarı_Tirilye/


Fig. 241  Tirilye, Fatih Camii, isometric cut-off (R. Ousterhout, after M. S. Pekak) – source: Ousterhout, “The Architecture of Iconoclasm,” fig. 6

Fig. 242  Fatih Camii (Tirilye), interior of the narthex looking northeast (photo: E. Seymenler, 2012) – source: www.seyyahcelesi.com.tr/fatih-cami-trilye

Fig. 243  Fatih Camii (Tirilye), interior of the narthex looking east (photo: M. Cambaz, 2012) – source: http://www.mustafacambaz.com/details.php?image_id=31565

Fig. 244  Tirilye, Fatih Camii from west, within the modern entrance porch (photo: M. Cambaz, 2012) – source: http://www.mustafacambaz.com/details.php?image_id=31561

Fig. 245  Tirilye, Fatih Camii, row of columns in the courtyard from southeast (photo: C. Mango and I. Ševčenko) – source: Cyril Mango and Ihor Ševčenko, “Some Churches and Monasteries on the South Shore of the Sea of Marmara,” DOP 27 (1973): 235-277, fig. 7

Fig. 246  Tirilye, Fatih Camii, ground plan published by F. W. Hasluck in 1906/7 – source: F. W. [Frederick William] Hasluck, “Bithynica,” Annual of the British School at Athens 13 (1906-1907): 285–308, fig. 2
Fig. 247  Tirilye, Fatih Camii, reconstructed ground plan (S. Mamaloukos) – source: Marinis, 
Architecture and Ritual (see List of Abbreviations), fig. 10

Fig. 248  Pelekētē Monastery (near Tirilye), reconstructed ground plan (author, based on C. 
Mango and I. Ševčenko) – source: Mango and Ševčenko, “Some Churches and 
Monasteries on the South Shore of the Sea of Marmara,” fig. 40

Fig. 249  Kurşunlu, Megas Agros Monastery (?), katholikon, reconstructed ground plan 
(author, based on C. Mango and I. Ševčenko) – source: ibid., fig. 108

Fig. 250  İznik (Nicaea), church north of the city, ground plan (S. Eyice, drawn by H. Togay) 
– source: Semavi Eyice, “İzni̇k’tė bir Bizans kilisesi,” Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten 
XIII, No. 49 (1949): 37-51, pl. 14

Fig. 251  Yılanca Bayır (Diliskelesi, Gebze), katholikon of the Monastery of Niketiatai (?) (S. 
of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” JSAH 36/2 (1977): 94-110, 
fig. 7

Fig. 252  Çeltikdere (near Seben), remains of church from north – source: 
http://bolupostasi.com/seben-celtikdere-bizans-kilisesizin-abantiniz-var.html

Fig. 253  Çeltikdere (near Seben), remains of church from west – source: 
http://www.sirtcantam.com.tr/kibriscik-yolu-sapagi-yuva-koyu-celtikdere-seben- 
dogal-bisiklet-parkuru-40-km/

Fig. 254  Çeltikdere, church, ground plan of the remains (Y. Ötüken and R. Ousterhout, after 
S. Eyice) and reconstructed ground plan (Y. Ötüken and R. Ousterhout) – source: 
Μιχαήλ Γ. Κάππας, «Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και 
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Kunstgeschichte: Festschrift für Horst Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag 
(Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, 1995): 85-92, figs. 1, 2

Fig. 255  Çeltikdere, church, inside the narthex looking south (photo: Y. Ötüken and R. 
Ousterhout) – source: Ötüken, Ousterhout, “The Byzantine Church at Çeltikdere,” 
fig. 11

Fig. 256  Pendik, church, reconstructed ground plan (M. Kappas, after C. Soyhan) – source: 
Κάππας, «Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και την ύστερη 
βυζαντινή περίοδο: Το παράδειγμα του απλού τετρακιόνιου / tetrástulou», Cat. No 
018, p. 48
Fig. 257  Thessaloniki, Panagia tōn Chalekeōn from south (photo: author, 2006)

Fig. 258  Thessaloniki, Panagia tōn Chalekeōn, ground and upper level plans (S. Ćurčić) – source: Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans (see List of Abbreviations), fig. 395

Fig. 259  Panagia tōn Chalekeōn, longitudinal section facing south (D. Evangelidēs) and transversal section through the narthex facing east (S. Ćurčić, redrawn after D. Evangelidēs) – sources: Δημήτριος Ε. Ευαγγελίδης, Η Παναγία των Χαλκέων (Θεσσαλονίκη: Εταιρεία των Φιλών της Βυζαντινής Μακεδονίας, 1954), pl. 1ª, and Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” fig. 24 (respectively)

Fig. 260  Panagia tōn Chalekeōn, narthex, drawing of frescoes of the east half of the barrel-vault (D. Evangelidēs) – source: Ευαγγελίδης, Η Παναγία των Χαλκέων, fig. 12

Fig. 261  Panagia tōn Chalekeōn, from southwest (photo: S. Ćurčić) – source: Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” fig. 23

Fig. 262  Panagia tōn Chalekeōn, upper part of the narthex’s west façade (photo: author, 2006)

Fig. 263  Olynthos, remains of a Byzantine church (St. Nisholas?) from west (1938) – source: David M. Robinson, Excavations at Olynthus, Part XII: Domestic and Public Architecture (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), plate 263, fig. 1

Fig. 264  Olynthos, Byzantine church (St. Nicholas?), ground plan of the remains and reconstructed ground plan (P. Vocotopoulos) – source: Παναγιώτης Λ. Βοκοτόπουλος, «Ο Βυζαντινός ναός της Ολύνθου», in Βυζαντινή Μακεδονία, 324 – 1430 μ.Χ.: Διεθνές συμπόσιο, Θεσσαλονίκη 29-31 Οκτωβρίου 1992 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Εταιρεία Μακεδονικών Σπουδών, 1995): 45-56, figs. 1, 2

Chapter 2, Excursus

Fig. 265  Servia, remains of the “Basilica of the Catechumens”, ground plan – source: http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/gh2560.jsp?obj_id=5059

Fig. 266  Servia, remains of the “Basilica of the Catechumens” from south – source: http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/gh2562.jsp?obj_id=5059&mm_id=2730

Fig. 267  Mikrē Prespa, Hagios Achilleios, ground plan – source: http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/gh2562.jsp?obj_id=1768&mm_id=2646
Fig. 268  Nesebăr (Mesēmbria), Old Metropolis, ground plan (S. Ćurčić) – source: Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, fig. 242

Fig. 269  Nesebăr (Mesēmbria), ruins of the Old Metropolis from southwest (lithograph by Deroy after C. Sayger and A. Desarnod, 1829) – source: C. Sayger & A. [Auguste-Joseph] Desarnod, *Album d’un voyage en Turquie fait par ordre de Sa Majesté l’empereur Nicolas 1er en 1829 et 1830* (Paris: Imprimérie de Firmin Didot Frères, 1834), Pl. 21

Fig. 270  Nesebăr (Mesēmbria), Old Metropolis, remains from west (photographed in 2014) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Cherubino) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Church_of_Saint_Sophia_in_Nesebar_09.JPG

Fig. 271  Basilicas of the Old Metropolis of Verroia (A) and the Metropolis of Kalambaka (B), ground plans rendered in the same scale (S. Ćurčić) – source: Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, fig. 430 A, B

Fig. 272  Kalambaka, Metropolis from southwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 273  Serres, Hagioi Theodōroi, ground plan (N. Moutsopoulos) – source: Војислав Корач, Марица Шупут, *Архитектура византийског света* (Београд: Народна књига – Алфа; Византолошки институт Српске академије наука и уметности; Филозофски факултет, 1998), fig. 110

Fig. 274  Serres, Hagioi Theodōroi from southwest – source: http://www.serrelib.gr/serres_nova.html

Fig. 275  Amorium, “Lower City Church”, ground plan (E. A. Ivison) – source: Eric A. Ivison, “Middle Byzantine Sculptors at Work: Evidence from the Lower City Church at Amorium,” *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique, Supplément 49* (2008): 487-513, fig. 1


Fig. 277  Vize, Hagia Sophia, plans of the ground and gallery floors (drawings: R. Rosenbauer) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 7

Fig. 278  Vize, Hagia Sophia, longitudinal section looking south and transversal section looking west (drawings: R. Rosenbauer) – source: *ibid.*, figs. 9, 8 (respectively)
Fig. 279  Vize, Hagia Sophia, west elevation (drawing: R. Rosenbauer and R. Casagrande) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 24

Fig. 280  Vize, Hagia Sophia, interior of the nave looking west (photo: from the internet)

Fig. 281  Ohrid, Cathedral of St. Sophia, ground plan (V. Korač, M. Šuput) – source: Кораћ, Шупут, *Архитектура византијског света*, fig. 118

Fig. 282  Ohrid, Cathedral of St. Sophia from northeast (photo: author, 2016)

Fig. 283  Ohrid, Cathedral of St. Sophia, narthex’ s south façade (photo: author, 2016)

Fig. 284  Orchomenos, Church of the Panagia in Skripou, ground plan (A. Papalexandrou) – source: Amy Papalexandrou, “The Church of the Virgin of Skripou: Architecture, Sculpture and Inscriptions in Ninth-Century Byzantium,” PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 1998), fig. 11

Fig. 285  Church of the Panagia in Skripou, longitudinal section looking north (A. Papalexandrou) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 16

Fig. 286  Church of the Panagia in Skripou, section through the narthex looking east (A. Papalexandrou) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 19

Fig. 287  Church of the Panagia in Skripou, reconstruction of the original appearance, south elevation (A. Papalexandrou) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 95

Fig. 288  Church of the Panagia in Skripou from northwest (photographed in 1991) – source: Wikimmedia Commons (User: Ziegler175) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OrchomenosMariaeHimmelfahrt.jpg?uselang=de

Fig. 289  Istanbul, Hirami Ahmet Paşa Camii (St. John *en tō Troullō*) from southwest (photo: T. F. Mathews) – source: Mathews, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey*, fig. 16-9

Fig. 290  Istanbul, Hirami Ahmet Paşa Camii (St. John *en tō Troullō*), interior of the narthex looking north (photo: T. F. Mathews) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 16-9

Fig. 291  Istanbul, St. John *en tō Troullō*, reconstructed ground plan (V. Marinis) – source: Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, fig. XII-1

Fig. 292  Istanbul, Zeyrek Camii (Pantokratōr Monastery) from east, distant view (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 293  Pantokratōr Monastery, ground plan of the three churches (R. Ousterhout) – source: Robert Ousterhout, “Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and A Few Examples,” DOP 54 (2000): 241-250, fig. 9

Fig. 294  Pantokratōr Monastery, longitudinal sections of the north, middle, and south churches facing north (M. Restle) – source: Theis, Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau, fig. 182

Fig. 295  Pantokratōr Monastery, south church, narthex looking north (photo: T. F. Mathews) – source: Mathews, The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey, fig. 10-14

Fig. 296  Pantokratōr Monastery, north church, gallery looking north (photo: Dumbarton Oaks, ICFA) – source: Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, fig. VIII-10

Fig. 297  Pantokratōr Monastery, south church, naos looking west (photo: R. Ousterhout) – source: ibid., fig. VIII-7

Fig. 298  Pantokratōr Monastery, north church, naos looking west (photo: Byzantine Institute) – source: ibid., fig. VIII-9

Fig. 299  Pantokratōr Monastery, south church, hypothetical reconstruction of the original west façade (J. Ebersolt, A. Thiers) – source: Jean Ebersolt, Adolphe Thiers, Les églises de Constantinople (Paris: E. Leroux, 1913), pl. XLVIII

Fig. 300  Panokratōr Monastery, three churches, domes from southwest (photo: R. Ousterhout) – source: Ousterhout, “Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople,” fig. 11

Fig. 301  Pantokratōr Monastery, interior of the exonarthex, openings to the narthex of the south church from southwest (photo: R. Ousterhout) – source: ibid., fig. 15

Fig. 302  Pantokratōr Monastery, interior of the exonarthex looking north (photo: N. Artamonoff, late 1930s) – Nicholas V. Artamonoff Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., BF.S.1979.1097 (ICFA.NA.0533) – source: http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/637

Fig. 303  Çanlı Kilise near Çeltek as in 1907 from southwest (photo: G. L. Bell) – source: Robert Ousterhout, A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005), fig. 9

Fig. 304  Çanlı Kilise as in 1907 from west (photo: G. L. Bell) – source: ibid., fig. 43

Fig. 305  Çanlı Kilise, ground plan published in 1907 (H. Rott) – source: Κάππας, «Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και την ύστερη βυζαντινή...”
Fig. 306 Çanlı Kilise, ground plan of the present remains (R. Ousterhout) – source: Ousterhout, A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia, fig. 13

Fig. 307 Çanlı Kilise, reconstructed longitudinal section facing south (R. Ousterhout) – source: ibid., fig. 21

Fig. 308 Çanlı Kilise, reconstruction of the south façade (R. Ousterhout) – source: ibid., fig. 22

Fig. 309 Çanlı Kilise, west elevation of the present remains (R. Ousterhout) – source: ibid., fig. 17

Fig. 310 Çanlı Kilise, section through the narthex and north annex facing east (R. Ousterhout) – source: ibid., fig. 20

Fig. 311 Çanlı Kilise, interior of the narthex looking north (photo: M. Ballance, 1956) – source: ibid., fig. 44

Fig. 312 Çanlı Kilise, interior of the narthex looking south (photo: R. Ousterhout) – source: ibid., fig. 46

Fig. 313 Çanlı Kilise, upper part of the naos’s west wall from east (photo: R. Ousterhout) – source: ibid., fig. 42

Fig. 314 Belisırma, Karagedik Kilise as in 1907 from northeast (photo: G. L. Bell) – source: ibid., fig. 66

Fig. 315 Karagedik Kilise, ground plan of the remains (P. Androudis) – source: Πασχάλης Ανδρουδής, «Ο μεσοβυζαντινός ναός του Αγίου Γεωργίου (Karagedik Kilise) στην κοιλάδα του Περιστρεμμάτος (Belisirma) της Καππαδοκίας», Βυζαντινά 28 (2008): 161-180, fig. 2

Fig. 316 Karagedik Kilise, ground plan as recorded by W. M. Ramsay and G. L. Bell (1907) – source: W. M. [William Mitchell] Ramsay, Gertrude L. Bell, The Thousand and One Churches (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), fig. 341

Fig. 317 Karagedik Kilise, reconstructed plans of the upper and lower levels (P. Androudis) – source: Ανδρουδής, «Ο μεσοβυζαντινός ναός του Αγίου Γεωργίου (Karagedik Kilise) στην κοιλάδα του Περιστρεμμάτος (Belisirma) της Καππαδοκίας», fig. 16

Fig. 318 Karagedik Kilise, remnants of a chamber above the northwest bay of the naos (photo: P. Androudis, 2004) – source: ibid., fig. 11
Fig. 319  Karagedik Kilise as in 1907 from southeast (photo: G. L. Bell) – source: Ramsay, Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, fig. 343

Fig. 320  Güzelyurt, Kilise Camii (St. Gregory) from southeast (photo: Ph. Norton, 2015) – source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/nortonp/19464405696/

Fig. 321  Güzelyurt, Kilise Camii, interior of the narthex looking south (photo: T. Neesam, 2007) – source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/neesam/837006366/

Fig. 322  Güzelyurt, Kilise Camii, interior of the *naos* looking southwest (photo: R. Gómez, 2008) – source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/rafaelgomez/2653464883/

Fig. 323  Athens, St. Catherine (originally dedicated to Sts. Theodores), reconstructed ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (S. Mamaloukos) – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 324  Athens, Hagioi Theodōroi from northwest – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 325  Athens, Hagioi Theodōroi, ground plan (A. Alexandratou) – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 326  Athens, Panagia Kapnikarea from southwest (an old photograph) – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 327  Athens, Panagia Kapnikarea, roofs from southwest – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 328  Athens, Panagia Kapnikarea, ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (V. Dēmos) – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 329  Athens, Panagia Kapnikarea, *exonarthex*, section facing east and western elevation (V. Dēmos) – source: Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας, Λασκάρινα Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα (Αθήνα: Εμπορική τράπεζα της Ελλάδος, 2002), fig. 398

Fig. 330  Athens, St. John the Theologian in Plaka, longitudinal section facing south, ground plan, and north elevation (A. Paraskevopoulos) – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 331  Athens, Panagia hē Gorgoepekoos from southwest – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 332  Athens, Panagia hē Gorgoepekoos, ground plan (V. Korać, M. Šuput) – source: Кораћ, Шупут, Архитектура византијског света, fig. 202
Fig. 333 Gaurolimnē, Panagia Panaxiōtissa from northwest (photo: V. Korać, M. Šuput) – source: ibid., fig. 183

Fig. 334 Gaurolimnē, Panagia Panaxiōtissa, ground plan (V. Korać, M. Šuput) – source: ibid., fig. 185

Fig. 335 Korōpi (Attica), Church of Transfiguration from southwest (photo: Melissa Publishing House, Athens) – source: Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας, Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική στην Ελλάδα (Αθήνα: Μέλισσα, 2001), fig. 57

Fig. 336 Gatsounē (Peloponnese), Church of Theotokos hē Katholikē from southwest (photo: Ch. Bouras, L. Boura) – source: Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, fig. 98

Fig. 337 Gatsounē, Church of Theotokos hē Katholikē, ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (Ch. Bouras, L. Boura; redrawn after R. Traquair) – source: ibid., fig. 99

Fig. 338 Chōnikas (Argolis), Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos, ground plan, longitudinal section facing south, combined transversal section through the naos and narthex facing east, and north elevation (A. Struck) – source: ibid., fig. 383

Fig. 339 St. Nicholas tēs Rodias, near Arta, ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (A. Orlandos) – source: ibid., fig. 76

Fig. 340 Monastery of Hosios Loukas, two main churches, Katholikon (south) and Church of Panagia (north), ground plan (R. Schultz and H. Barnsley) – source: Βογιατζής, «Κιονοστήρικτοι λιτές στη μοναστηριακή αρχιτεκτονική», fig. 1

Fig. 341 Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Church of Panagia, longitudinal section facing south (R. Schultz and H. Barnsley) – source: ibid., fig. 1

Fig. 342 Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Church of Panagia, interior of the narthex looking northeast (photo: H. A. Rosbach, 2009) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Haros / Hans A. Rosbach) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hosios_Loukas_Panayia_20091116-1.JPG

Fig. 343 Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Church of Panagia, exonarthex from west (2011) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Bgabel) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GR-osios-loukas-detail-klosteranlage.jpg

Fig. 344 Hosios Meletios, katholikon, ground plan (A. Orlandos, modified by R. Ousterhout) – source: Vasileios Marinis and Robert Ousterhout, “‘Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them’: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9th – 15th Centuries),” in Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein (eds.), Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of

Fig. 345 Hosios Meletios, exonarthex and narthex of the katholikon from southwest (2012) – source: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/78858725

Fig. 346 Sagmata Monastery, katholikon, ground plan, longitudinal section facing south, and south elevation (S. Voyadjis) – source: Σωτήρης Βογιατζής, «Παρατηρήσεις στην οικοδομική ιστορία της μονής Σαγματά στη Βοιωτία», ΔΧΑΕ 18 (1995): 49-70, figs. 2, 3, 4

Fig. 347 Varnakova Monastery, katholikon, ground plan (Ch. Bouras) – source: Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, fig. 80

Fig. 348 Areia, Hagia Monē, katholikon, ground plan, sections, and north elevation (A. Struck) – source: ibid., fig. 70

Fig. 349 Chernigov, Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Sobor from west (photo: N. Shestakova, 2013) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Nataliya Shestakova) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NSH_Chernigiv_Spaso-Preobrazhenskiv_Sobor_001.JPG

Fig. 350 Chernigov, Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Sobor, plans of the ground and gallery levels, and longitudinal section facing south (A. Komech) – source: А. И. [Алексей Ильич], Комеч, Древнерусское зодчество конца X - начала XII в.: Византийское наследие и становление самостоятельной традиции (Москва: Наука, 1987), pp. 136, 137

Fig. 351 Chernigov, Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Sobor, reconstruction of the west elevation (Yu. S. Aseev) – source: П. А. [Павел Александрович] Раппопорт, Зодчество Древней Руси (Ленинград: Издательство "Наука", Ленинградское отделение, 1986), p. 21

Fig. 352 Chernigov, Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Sobor, interior of the narthex looking southeast – source: Комеч, Древнерусское зодчество конца X - начала XII в., p. 140

Fig. 353 Chernigov, tribêlon of the west gallery from southwest – source: ibid., p. 144

Fig. 354 Kiev Caves Lavra, Uspenskii Sobor, ground plan (later additions hatched) – source: internet

Fig. 355 Kiev Caves Lavra, Uspenskii Sobor, reconstruction of the north elevation (N. V. Kholostenko) – source: Раппопорт, Зодчество Древней Руси, p. 37

Fig. 356 Kiev Caves Lavra, Uspenskii Sobor, reconstruction of the west elevation (Yu. Aseev and V. Kharlamov) – source: Ю. С. [Юрий Сергеевич] Асеев (ed.), Искусство
Fig. 357  Kiev Caves Lavra, Uspenskii Sobor, reconstruction of the north elevation, variant with the north chapel as single-storied and a vestibule sheltering the main church’s west entrance (N. G. Logvin) – source: Г. К. [Георгий Карлович] Вагнер, Т. Ф. [Татяна Феодосьевна] Владышевская, Искусство древней Руси (Москва: Искусство, 1993), p. 53

Fig. 358  Kiev, Vydubitskii Monastyr’, Church of Archangel Michael from southwest (photo: N. Babenko, 2015) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Бабенко Наталія) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Михайлівський_собор_Видубицького_монастиря.jpg

Fig. 359  Kiev, Vydubitskii Monastyr’, Church of Archangel Michael, ground plan of the present building – source: Н. Л. Жариков (editor in chief), Памятники градостроительства и архитектуры Украинской ССР (Киев: Будівельник, 1983-1986), Vol. 1, p. 24

Fig. 360  Kiev, Vydubitskii Monastyr’, Church of Archangel Michael, axonometric cut-off (A. Komch) – source: Комеч, Древнерусское зодчество конца Х - начала XII в., p. 264

Fig. 361  Kiev, Vydubitskii Monastyr’, Church of Archangel Michael, reconstruction of the original appearance from northwest (Yu. S. Aseev) – source: http://artclassic.edu.ru/catalog.asp?ob_no=13658&cat_ob_no=12517

Fig. 362  Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo from southwest (2013) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Posterrr) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Церква_Спаса_на_Берестові_DSC_4940.JPG

Fig. 363  Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo, ground plans of the present and original church (A. Komch) – source: Жариков (ed.), Памятники градостроительства и архитектуры Украинской ССР, Vol. 1, p. 109 and Комеч, Древнерусское зодчество конца Х - начала XII в., p. 292 (respectively)

Fig. 364  Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo, interior of the narthex looking southwest – source: Комеч, Древнерусское зодчество конца Х - начала XII в., p. 293

Fig. 365  Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo, interior of the chapel looking north – source: ibid., p. 294

Fig. 366  Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo, reconstruction viewed from southwest (Yu. Aseev and V. Kharlamov) – source: Асеев (ed.), Искусство Киевской Руси, pl. 57
Fig. 367  Eletskii Monastyr’ (Chernigov), *katholikon* of the Dormition from southwest (2004) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Did Panas) -
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chernihiw_Elecky_dp1.jpg

Fig. 368  Eletskii Monastyr’, *katholikon* of the Dormition, ground plan – source: Жариков (ed.), *Памятники градостроительства и архитектуры Украинской ССР*, vol. 4, p. 266

Fig. 369  Eletskii Monastyr’, *katholikon* of the Dormition, reconstruction of the west elevation (P. Rappoport) – source: Раппопорт, *Зодчество Древней Руси*, p. 53

Fig. 370  Chernigov, Church of Sts. Boris and Gleb from northwest (2014) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Neovitaha777) -
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Чернігів_.Собор_Бориса_й_Гліба_у_со
нячних_променях.JPG


Fig. 372  Kiev, Church of Sts. Cyril and Athanasius of Alexandria, ground plan and reconstruction of the original form, axonometric cut-off – source: Раппопорт, *Зодчество Древней Руси*, pp. 56, 57

Fig. 373  Kiev, Church of Sts. Cyril and Athanasius, reconstruction from northwest (Yu. S. Aseev) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Palukopa) -
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Кирилівська_церква_реконструкція_YO
.A.Aсєєв.jpg

Fig. 374  Kiev, Church of Sts. Cyril and Athanasius, interior of the gallery from northwest – source: http://turbina.ru/guide/Kiev-Ukraina-112309/Zametki/Kirillovskaya-tserkov-52568/photo1317547/

Fig. 375  Novgorod, Church of the Annunciation at Gorodishche and Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor (St. Nicholas of Yaroslav’s Court), ground plans (А. Комеч, after М. К. Кarger) – source: Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X - начала XII в.*, р. 300

Fig. 376  Novgorod, Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor from southeast (2014) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Ludvig14) -
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:VNovgorod_StNicolasChurch_Yaroslavsv
Court_VN288.jpg
Fig. 377  Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor, west gallery from east (photo: R. A. Bobkov) – source: [http://temples.ru/show_picture.php?PictureID=100725](http://temples.ru/show_picture.php?PictureID=100725)

Fig. 378  Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor, remains of spiral stairs in the south bay of the narthex, viewed from north (photo: R. A. Bobkov) – source: [http://temples.ru/show_picture.php?PictureID=100730](http://temples.ru/show_picture.php?PictureID=100730)

Fig. 379  Novgorod, Antoniev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of the Birth of Theotokos from southwest (2012) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Belliy) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Собор_Рождества_Пресвятой_Богородицы_в_Антониевом_монастыре_(1117-1119)_в_Великом_Новгороде.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Собор_Рождества_Пресвятой_Богородицы_в_Антониевом_монастыре_(1117-1119)_в_Великом_Новгороде.jpg)

Fig. 380  Novgorod, Antoniev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of the Birth of Theotokos, ground plan of the original church (A. Komech) – source: Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X - начала XII в.* , p. 307

Fig. 381  Novgorod, Yuryev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of St. George, ground plan (A. Komech) – source: *ibid.*, p. 302

Fig. 382  Yuryev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of St. George from west (photo: D. Jarvis, 2009) – source: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/archer10/4133380214/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/archer10/4133380214/)

Fig. 383  Yuryev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of St. George, view of the gallery from the naos – source: Комеч, *Древнерусское зодчество конца X - начала XII в.* , p. 302

Fig. 384  Yuryev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of St. George, interior of the gallery from northwest – source: *ibid.*, p. 303

Fig. 385  Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church from northwest (photo: L. Szeder, 2006) – source: Wikimedia Commons (author: László Szeder) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polatsk-St._Euphrosine1.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polatsk-St._Euphrosine1.JPG)

Fig. 386  Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, plans of the ground and gallery levels (V. V. Rakitskii) – source: Владимир Д. Сарабьянов, *Спасо-Преображенская церковь Евфросиньева монастыря* (Москва: Северный паломник, 2009²), pp. 14, 15

Fig. 387  Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, longitudinal section facing south (V. V. Rakitskii) – source: *ibid.*, p. 17

Fig. 388  Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, reconstructions of the west and south elevations (V. V. Rakitskii) – source: *ibid.*, pp. 22, 23

Fig. 389  Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, interior of the south chapel in the *katēchoumena* looking east (photo: V. Sarabianov) – source: *ibid.*, p. 199
Fig. 390  Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrasiniavskii Monastery', Transfiguration Church, interior of the south chapel in the *katēchoumena* (Ivan Trutnev, 1866) – source: Wikimedia Commons (Vilnius University Library, public domain) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polacak,_Eŭfrasiίnia_Połackaja. Полацк, Эўфрасіньня_Полацкая_(I_.Trutnev_.1866).jpg

Fig. 390A Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrasiniavskii Monastery’, Transfiguration Church, interior of the south chapel in the *katēchoumena* looking east (photograph published in journal *Русский паломник*, No. 26, in 1910) – source: Wikimedia Commons (in public domain) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Połacak,_Eŭfrasiίnia_Połackaja. Полацк,_Эўфрасіньня_Полацкая_(1910).jpg

Fig. 391 Nea Monē (Chios), *katholikon*, ground plan (S. Voyadjis, after Ch. Bouras) and longitudinal section facing south (S. Voyadjis) – source: Sotiris Voyadjis, “The Katholikon of Nea Moni in Chios Unveiled,” *JöB* 59 (2009): 229-242, figs. 1, 2

Fig. 392 Nea Monē (Chios), *katholikon*, north elevation (S. Voyadjis) – source: *ibid.*, fig. 3

Fig. 393 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, reconstruction of the narthex’s west façade as it appeared before the *exonarthex* was added (S. Voyadjis) – source: Σωτήρης Βογιατζής, «Νέατα στοιχεία για την οικοδομική ιστορία του καθολικού της Νέας Μονής Χίου», *ΔΧΑΕ* 14 (1987-1988): 159-172, fig. 13

Fig. 394 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, reconstruction of the original west façade of the *exonarthex* (Ch. Bouras) – source: Charalampos Bouras, *Nea Moni on Chios: History and Architecture* [translated by David A. Hardy] (Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece, 1982), fig. 104

Fig. 395 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, domes from west (photo: N. Vatopoulos, 2010) – source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/nikosv/5067145011/

Fig. 396 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, exonarthex’s south conch, from west (2011) – source: internet

Fig. 397 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, exonarthex and narthex from southeast – source: http://www.reckovdetailech.cz/res/1846/173/1024x600/img-6702.jpg

Fig. 398 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, interior of the narthex looking north (photo K. Manōlēs) – source: Ντούλα Μουρίκη, *Τα ψηφιδωτά της Νέας Μονής Χίου* (Αθήνα: Έκδοση Ελληνικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας, 1985), Vol. 2, fig. 190

Fig. 399 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, interior of the narthex looking south (photo K. Manōlēs) – source: *ibid.*, Vol. 2, fig. 191

Ixiii
Fig. 400 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, blind dome of the narthex viewed from below – source: [http://greckaoliwka.blogspot.com/2016/06/klasztor-nea-moni-chios-poza-szlakiem-mastichy.html](http://greckaoliwka.blogspot.com/2016/06/klasztor-nea-moni-chios-poza-szlakiem-mastichy.html)

Fig. 401 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, interior of the *exonarthex* looking southeast – source: [http://www.reckovdetailech.cz/res/1846/188/1024x600/img-6726.jpg](http://www.reckovdetailech.cz/res/1846/188/1024x600/img-6726.jpg)

Fig. 402 Nea Monē, *katholikon*, centerpiece of the *exonarthex*’s floor pavement from west (photo: M. Delù, 2014) – source: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/ikimuled/14970799842/sizes/l](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ikimuled/14970799842/sizes/l)

Fig. 403 Hosios Loukas Monastery, Katholikon from southwest (2009) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Sogal) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Όσιος_Λουκάς_ο_εν_Στειρίω_7.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Όσιος_Λουκάς_ο_εν_Στειρίω_7.JPG)

Fig. 404 Hosios Loukas, Katholikon with the *exonarthex* (demolished), from southwest – source: Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, fig. 240

Fig. 405 Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, axonometric cut-off – source: Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (see List of Abbreviations), p. 519

Fig. 406 Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, west gallery seen from the *naos* (photo: J. Housen, 2009) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Jeanhousen) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:20090803_hosiosloukas19.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:20090803_hosiosloukas19.jpg)

Fig. 407 Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, interior of the narthex looking north (2009) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Joan) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monastery_Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_-_view_from_South_wall_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monastery_Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_-_view_from_South_wall_01.jpg)

Fig. 408 Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, narthex, mosaics of the north bay, from south (2014) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Shakko) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_-_North_wall_(Washing_the_feet)_03_(October,_2014)_by_shakko.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_-_North_wall_(Washing_the_feet)_03_(October,_2014)_by_shakko.jpg)

Fig. 409 Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, narthex, mosaics of the south bay, from north (photo: H. A. Rosbach, 2009) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Haros / Hans A. Rosbach) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_-_South_wall_(Doubting_Thomas)_03.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_-_South_wall_(Doubting_Thomas)_03.jpg)

Fig. 410 Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, narthex, mosaics of the central bay’s vault (2014) – source: Wikimedia Commons (User: Shakko) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_-_center_ceiling_01_(October,_2014)_by_shakko.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_-_center_ceiling_01_(October,_2014)_by_shakko.jpg)
Fig. 411 Athens, Panagia Sōtēra tou Lykodēmou, west façade from southwest – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 412 Athens, Panagia Sōtēra tou Lykodēmou, from south – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 413 Athens, Panagia Sōtēra tou Lykodēmou, reconstructed original layout: longitudinal section facing north, plan of the gallery, ground plan (Ch. Bouras) – source: http://www.byzantineathens.com

Fig. 414 Daphni Monastery, aerial view of the katholikon from northwest – source: http://www.otkrivam.com/img/gallery/gallery_826.jpg

Fig. 415 Daphni Monastery, katholikon, ground plan – source: George Pantazis, Maria Papathanassiou, “On the Date of the Katholikon of Daphni Monastery: A New Approach Based on Its Orientation,” Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry 5, No. 1 (2005): 63-72, fig. 3

Fig. 416 Daphni Monastery, katholikon, west part of the naos viewed from east – source: https://classconnection.s3.amazonaws.com/301/flashcards/875301/png/church_of_the_dormition1352787540564.png - also in Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, fig. 351 (photo: A. Frantz)

Fig. 417 Daphni Monastery, katholikon, west part of the naos looking south, with mosaic of St. Eustratios in the top part of the conch (photo: R. Hamann-Mac Lean, 1953) – source: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, Neg. No. 227.022 – link: http://www.bildindex.de/document/obj20382864?medium=gr00091c14

Fig. 418 Daphni Monastery, katholikon, narthex looking south (photo: R. Hamann-Mac Lean, 1953) – source: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, Neg. No. 227.028 – link: http://www.bildindex.de/document/obj20382864?medium=gr00091d07

Fig. 419 Monemvasia, Hagia Sophia from northwest (2012) – source: Wikimedia Commons (user: Jeroenu) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monemvasia_Church_of_Hagia_Sophia.jpg

Fig. 420 Monemvasia, Hagia Sophia, longitudinal section facing south and ground plan (E. Stikas) – source: Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, fig. 395

Fig. 421 Christianoi, Church of the Transfiguration, ground plan, longitudinal section facing north, and transversal section through the narthex facing east, with reconstructed engaged arches (S. Voyadjis) – source: Σωτήρης Βογιατζής, Έφη Δεληνικόλα, «Νεότερες παρατηρήσεις στην οικοδομική ιστορία του ναού Μεταμορφώσεως του Σωτήρος Χριστιάνων Μεσσηνίας», ΑΧΑΕ 23 (2002): 41-58, figs. 2, 4, 12
Fig. 422  Christianoi, Church of the Transfiguration, perspective cut-off (E. Stikas) – source: Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (see List of Abbreviations): fig. 242

Fig. 423  Christianoi, Church of the Transfiguration from south – source: Μπούρας, Μπούρα, *Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα*, fig. 380

Chapter 4

Fig. 424  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on a drawing by P. Mylonas) – source: Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite,” fig. 2

Fig. 425  Ivērōn, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 39)

Fig. 426  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on a drawing by S. Mamaloukos) – source: *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition, History, Art*, Vol. 1, drawing 14

Fig. 427  Zygou, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 122)

Fig. 428  St. Demetrius, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 151)

Fig. 429  Xenophōntos, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 117)

Fig. 430  St. Procopius, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 177)

Fig. 431  Voroskopou, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 179)

Fig. 432  Melissourgeiou, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 182)

Fig. 433  Ravdouchou, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 12)
Fig. 434  Kalamitsiōn, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 13b)

Fig. 435  Plans of floor pavements of few monastic churches (P. Mylonas): 1-Great Lavra, 2-Ivērōn, 3-Nea Monē (Chios), 4-Vatopedi, 5-Hilandar, 6-Xenophōntos – source: Mylonas, “Remarques architecturales sur le catholicon de Chilandar,” fig. 6

Fig. 436  Vatopedi, katholikon, plan of the floor pavement (S. Mamaloukos) – source: Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawing 25.1

Fig. 437  Great Lavra, katholikon, plan of the floor pavement (P. Mylonas) – source: Mylonas, Atlas of Athos, Fasc. 3, pl. 101.4

Fig. 438  Constantinople, Pantokratōr Monastery, South Church, plan of the floor pavement (A. H. Megaw) – source: Megaw, “Notes on Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul,” fig. A (between pp. 336 and 337)

Fig. 439  Hilandar, katholikon, nave, deacon reading from the Gospels on the feast of the Transfiguration, 2015 (photo: Milutin Hilandarac) – source: https://www.hilandar.org/preobrazenje-u-hilandaru-2015-foto/

Fig. 440  Hilandar, katholikon, nave, reader reading from the Epistles (Apostolos) on the feast of the Transfiguration, 2015 (photo: Milutin Hilandarac) – source: https://www.hilandar.org/preobrazenje-u-hilandaru-2015-foto/

Fig. 441  Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, narthex, mosaic in the lunette above the entrance to the naos (photo: H. A. Rosbach, 2009) – source: Wikimedia Commons (user: Haros) - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hosios_Loukas_(narthex)_East_wall,_central_(Pantocrator)_02.jpg

Fig. 442  Nicaea, Dormition Church, interior of the narthex looking south – source: Cyril Mango, “The Date of the Narthex Mosaics of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea,” DOP 13 (1959): 245-252, fig. 4

Fig. 443  Nicaea, Dormition Church, narthex, mosaics in the vault of the central bay – source: ibid., fig. 1

Fig. 444  Hilandar, narthex, frescoes of the central east vault and wall above the central entrance to the naos (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 445  Nea Monē, katholikon, reconstructed ground plan of the narthex and exonarthex (Ch. Bouras) – source: Bouras, Nea Moni on Chios, fig. 71b

Fig. 446  Veljusa Monastery, katholikon, reconstructed ground plan (P. Miljković-Pepek) – source: Петар Миљковиќ-Пепек, Велјуса: Манастир Св. Богородица Милостива
Fig. 447 Veljusa Monastery, katholikon, reconstructed south elevation (P. Miljković-Pepek) – source: ibid., pl. 1

Fig. 448 Aynali Kilise Monastery, blind dome in the narthex (photo: D. Osseman, 2011) – source: http://www.pbase.com/dosseman/image/139636842

Fig. 449 Midye, rock-cut church complex, ground plan (M. Dupin, 1969) – source: Semavi Eyice, Nicole Thierry, “Le monastère et la source sainte de Midye en Thrace turque,” CahArch 20 (1970): 47-76, fig. 1

Fig. 450 Midye, rock-cut church complex, interior of the narthex looking northeast (photo: Dumbarton Oaks) – source: Courtesy of Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., neg: D.O. Field Committee # A69.102

Fig. 451 Kutaisi, Bagrati Cathedral, western portico looking south (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 452 Kutaisi, Bagrati Cathedral, blind dome of the southern portico – source: http://eurasia.travel/files/bagrati_cathedral_1024x768_a5z.jpg

Fig. 453 Manglisi, Sioni Cathedral, vault of the south porch (2010) – source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/50998809@N08/4706023806/sizes/o/

Fig. 454 Nikortsminda, church, south vestibule’s blind dome (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 455 Nikortsminda, church, decoration above the south entrance (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 456 Nikortsminda, church, fresco decoration of the dome (photo: I. Margalitadze, 2007) – source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/22249039@N05/2267973097/

Fig. 457 Chronicle of John Skylitzes, “Madrid Skylitzes” (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 33r, illumination depicting Emperor Theophilos (then still the co-emperor to his father Michael II) and the Patriarch leading a procession with the True Cross and the garment of Theotokos during Thomas the Slav’s siege; they arrive to what is probably the Church of the Theotokos in Blachernai – source: http://bdh.bne.es/bnesearch/detalle/1754254

Fig. 458 Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 41v, illumination depicting the usurper Euphēmios being killed in front of a church in Syracuse by two brothers whose sister was abducted by him – source: http://bdh.bne.es/bnesearch/detalle/1754254
Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 43r bottom, illumination depicting Emperor Theophilos’s weekly ride to the Blachernai church – source: http://bdh.bne.es/bnsearch/detalle/1754254

Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 114v top, illumination depicting Emperor Leo VI the Wise showing precious liturgical vessels in the Hagia Sophia to the Arab ambassadors from Tarsus and Melitênê – source: http://bdh.bne.es/bnsearch/detalle/1754254


Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen (Paris, Bibliotheque nationale de France, MS Par. Gr. 510), fol. 143v, illumination of King David being rebuked by Prophet Nathan – source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84522082

Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen (Paris, Bibliotheque nationale de France, MS Par. Gr. 510), fol. 239r, illumination of Gregory before Emperor Theodosius I – source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84522082

Homilies of John Chrysostom (Paris, Bibliotheque nationale de France, Ms. Coislin 79), fol. 2bis-r, illumination of monk Sabas reading to Emperor Nikêphoros – source: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8470047d

Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 34r, illumination depicting Emperor Michael II negotiating with the men of Thomas the Slav – source: http://bdh.bne.es/bnsearch/detalle/1754254

Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 46r bottom, illumination depicting the widow bringing up her complaints to Emperor Theophilos – source: http://bdh.bne.es/bnsearch/detalle/1754254

Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 115v top, illumination depicting Emperor Leo VI finding a letter while attending a
service in the Hagia Sophia and praying inside the *mētātōrion* in the gallery – source: http://bdh.bne.es/bnesearch/detalle/1754254

Fig. 470 Ravenna, San Vitale, mosaic panel of Empress Theodora with her retinue – source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theodora_mosaik_ravenna.jpg

Fig. 471 *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Mount Athos, St. Panteleēmōn’s, Cod. 6), fol. 100r, illumination depicting the death of Patriarch Athanasius – source: Bogdanović, “Canopies: The Framing of Sacred Space in the Byzantine Ecclesiastical Tradition,” Cat. No 285

Fig. 472 *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Jerusalem, Library of the Greek Patriarchate, Cod. Taphou 14), fol. 113r, illumination depicting the death of Basil the Great – source: *ibid.*, Cat. No 286

Fig. 473 *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Grec 543), fol. 130v, illumination depicting the death of Basil the Great and Gregory’s oration – source: *ibid.*, Cat. No 483

Fig. 474 *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Grec 543), fol. 260v, illumination depicting the death of Patriarch Athanasius and Gregory’s oration – source: *ibid.*, Cat. No 484

Fig. 475 Hilandar, *katholikon, exonarthex*, reading of the Gospels over the body of the newly reposed *hēgoumenos* Moses (March 22, 2010) – source: http://www.mitropolija.com/galerija-fotografija/?album=22201003

Fig. 476 Hilandar, *katholikon, naos*, funeral service to the *hēgoumenos* Moses (March 22, 2010; photo: S. Žutić) – source: http://www.hilandar.org/upokojio-se-iguman-hilandara-arhimandrit-mojsije/

Fig. 477 Constantinople, Basilica of St. John of Stoudios, ground plan (S. Ćurčić) – source: Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, fig. 91

Fig. 478 Constantinople, Basilica of St. John of Stoudios, west wall of the nave viewed from east (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1936) – Nicholas V. Artamonoff Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., Neg. No. RA252d (ICFA.NA.0091) – source: http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/500

Fig. 479 Constantinople, Hagia Sophia, three central entrances in the nave’s west wall (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 480  Constantinople, Hagia Sophia, interior of the narthex looking southeast, with three central doors and three another to the south (photo: C. Gilliland, 2014) – source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/26781577@N07/15903210248/

Fig. 481  Hilandar, *katholikon*, interior of the narthex looking northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 482  Hilandar, *katholikon*, interior of the narthex looking southeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 483  Constantinople, Chora Monastery, *katholikon* (Kariye Camii), interior of the inner narthex looking north, with two doors opening into the *naos* and two mosaic icons of Apostles Peter and Paul flanking the larger door at the far right (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1937) – Nicholas V. Artamonoff Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., Neg. No. RA319b (ICFA.NA.0134) – source: http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/232


Fig. 485  Stavronikëta, *katholikon*, east wall of the narthex, with the niche for the holy water font on the right – source: Μανώλης Χατζηδάκης, *Ο Κρητικός ζωγράφος Θεοφάνης. Η τελευταία φάση της τέχνης του στις τοιχογραφίες της Ιεράς Μονής Σταυρονικήτα, θεολογικό σχόλιο αρχιμ. Βασιλείου Σταυρονικήτοιο (Αγιον Όρος: Έκδοση Ι. Μονής Σταυρονικίτα, 1986)

Fig. 486  Hilandar, *katholikon*, narthex, lower north part of the east wall (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 487  Mt. Menoikeion (near Serres), Monastery of St. John Prodromos, *katholikon*, niche with a holy water font embedded in the east wall of the inner narthex, close to the southeast corner (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 488  Vatopedi, Middle Byzantine marble *phialē* – source: *Treasures of Mount Athos*, Exhibition Catalogue, Managing Editor: Athanasios A. Karakatsanis (Thessaloniki: Holy Community of Mount Athos, Ministry of Culture – Museum of Byzantine Culture, Organization for the Cultural Capital of Europe, Thessaloniki 1997, 1997), entry 6.7, p. 243

Fig. 489  Pantokratôros, Middle Byzantine marble *phialē* (photo: P. Androudis) – source: Pascal Androudis, “Nouvelles données archeologiques sur les monastères abandonnés de l’Athos,” Годишник на Софийския университет „Св. Климент Охридски“, Център за славяно-византийски проучвания „Иван Дуйчев“ 93 [12] (2003): 87-93, 364-378, fig. 14b

Fig. 490  Hilandar, *katholikon*, *phialē* in the exonarthex from northwest (photo: author, 2008)
Chapter 5

Fig. 491 Hilandar, *katholikon, phialē* in the exonarthex from north (photo: M. Kovačević) – source: Olivera Kandić, “Fonts for the Blessing of the Waters in Serbian Medieval Churches,” Ζωράφ 27 (1998-1999): 61-77, fig. 5

Fig. 492 Hilandar, *katholikon, phialē* in the exonarthex, drawing with measurements (O. Kandić, after S. Nenadović) – source: ibid., fig. 4

Fig. 493 Hilandar, *katholikon, litē*, furnishing of the central east bay, including all lighting devices characteristic for Athonite narthexes (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 494 Vatopedi, *katholikon*, narthex, tomb of the founders, transversal section and axonometric rendering of the original form (P. Theocharidēs) – source: Θεοχάρης Ν. Ποζαράς, «Ο τάφος των κτητόρων στο καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου», Βυζαντινά 17 (1994): 407-440, drawing 3

Fig. 495 Êleia (Peloponnese), Vlacherna Monastery, *katholikon*, ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (R. Traquair) – source: Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, fig. 85

Fig. 496 Êleia (Peloponnese), Vlacherna Monastery, *katholikon* from northwest (photo: M. Kavvouras, 2011) – source: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/63727020

Fig. 497 Lake Bafa, Kahve Asar Adası, church, longitudinal section facing north and ground plan (Th. Wiegand) – from Theodor Wiegand (ed.), Milet: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre 1899, Band III, Heft 1: Der Latmos [by Theodor Wiegand] (Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1913), fig. 65

Fig. 498 Lake Bafa, Kahve Asar Adası, church, remains of stairs leading to the over-narthex viewed from northeast (photo: Th. Wiegand) – from ibid., fig. 68

Fig. 499 *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, upper floor, interior of the room south of the chapel, large arched niche (walled-up opening?) in the south wall viewed from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 500 Constantinople, Chora Monastery, *katholikon* (Kariye Camii), plan of the upper level, with the library flanking the *naos* to the north (A. Van Millingen) – source: Van Millingen, Byzantine Churches in Constantinople, fig. 107
Fig. 501  Constantinople, Chora Monastery, katholikon (Kariye Camii), transversal section facing east (R. Ousterhout) – source: Robert G. Ousterhout, “The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul,” PhD Dissertation (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982), pl. 17

Fig. 502  Mt. Menoikeion (near Serres), Monastery of St. John Prodromos, katholikon, plan of the katēchoumena, situated above the exonarthex (P. Xydas) – source: Nikolas Bakirtzis, “Library Spaces in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monasteries,” Modern Greek Studies Yearbook 22/23 (2006/7, published in 2012): 39-62, fig. 4

Fig. 503  Mt. Menoikeion (near Serres), Monastery of St. John Prodromos, katholikon, interior of the katēchoumena’s south chamber looking west (photo: N. Bakirtzis) – source: ibid., fig. 6


Chapter 6

Fig. 505  Enez (Ainos), church, ground plan (T. Blatner, after S. Eyice) – source: Robert Ousterhout, “The Byzantine Church at Enez: Problems in the Twelfth-Century Architecture,” JōB 35 (1985): 261-280, fig. 5

Fig. 506  Enez (Ainos), church viewed from west (photo: R. Ousterhout, 1982) – source: ibid., fig. 4

Fig. 507  Constantinople, Stoudios Basilica (İmrahor Camii), entrance portico from west (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1935) – Nicholas V. Artamonoff Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., Neg. No. RA8 (ICFA.NA.0004) – source: http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/502

Fig. 508  Constantinople, Stoudios Basilica (İmrahor Camii), inside the entrance portico looking northwest (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1936) – Nicholas V. Artamonoff Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C., Neg. No. RA252a (ICFA.NA.0088) – source: http://images.doaks.org/artamonoff/items/show/501
Fig. 509  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *exonarthex*, Washing of Feet, wall painting in the center of the north wall’s topmost register (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 510  Great Lavra, *katholikon*, interior of glazed porch looking northeast – source: [http://www.uec.eu/athos.html](http://www.uec.eu/athos.html)


Fig. 512  Dionysiou, portico in front of the refectory from west (photo: V. Protopapas, 2011) – source: [http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Europe/Greece/Macedonia/Agion_Oros/Agion_Beza/photo1337904.htm](http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Europe/Greece/Macedonia/Agion_Oros/Agion_Beza/photo1337904.htm)

Fig. 513  Vatopedi, *katholikon*, Chapel of St. Nicholas, tomb in the south wall of the narthex (photo: Th. Pazaras) – source: Παζαράς, «Ο τάφος των κτητόρων στο καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου», fig. 13

Fig. 514  Grigoriou, monk walks out the *katholikon* while striking a *sēmantron* (photo: R. Byron, 1926) – The Courtauld Institute of Art, Conway Collections – source: [http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/087ab529.html](http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/087ab529.html)

Fig. 515  Dionysiou, belfry viewed from west (photo: R. Byron, 1926) – The Courtauld Institute of Art, Conway Collections – source: [http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/7cf659ca.html](http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/7cf659ca.html)

Fig. 516  Koutloumousiou, drawing of the monastery, detail (V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744) – source: Барский, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, pl. between pp. 162-163

Fig. 517  Great Lavra, south half of the refectory porch from northeast (photo: author, 2008)


Fig. 519  Hilandar, *katholikon*, *sēmantra* in the northwest corner of the *exonarthex* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 520  Great Lavra, *phialē*, iron *sēmantron* hung in the southeast intercolumniation (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 521  Meteora, Great Meteoron, *katholikon*, *sēmantra* in the portico – source: internet

Fig. 522  Meteora, St. Stephan’s Monastery, *katholikon*, iron *sēmantra* in the portico (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 523  Mt. Menoikeion (near Serres), Monastery of St. John Prodromos, *katholikon*, portico with two *sēmantra* in end openings, viewed from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 524  *Kellion* of St. Procopius, stone bowl lying west of the church (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 525  Great Lavra, *phialē* from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 526  Great Lavra, stone basin inside the *phialē* viewed from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 527  Great Lavra, *stro bilion* in the *phialē* as in 2008 (photo: author)

Fig. 528  Great Lavra, *stro bilion* in the *phialē* as in 1926 (photo: R. Byron) – The Courtauld Institute of Art, Conway Collections – source: [http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/73cb7ebb.html](http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/73cb7ebb.html)

Fig. 529  Great Lavra, *phialē* (drawing by V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744) – source: Барский, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, pl. facing p. 132

Fig. 530  Great Lavra, *phialē*, parapet slabs of the northeast and north intercolumniations, viewed from northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 531  Great Lavra, *phialē*, parapet slabs of the south intercolumniation, viewed from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 532  Great Lavra, *phialē*, parapet slabs of the southeast and south intercolumniations, inner sides viewed from northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 533  Vatopedi, *phialē* from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 534  Vatopedi, *phialē*, vaults viewed from west (photo: author, 2006)

Fig. 535  Vatopedi, *phialē*, section facing north and ground plan (P. Mylonas) – source: Mylonas, *Atlas of Athos*, Fasc. 3, pl. 102.1

Fig. 536  Vatopedi, drawing of the *phialē* as in 1744 (V. Grigorovich-Barskii) – source: Барский, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, pl. facing p. 212

Fig. 537  Ivērōn, yard between the *katholikon* and refectory from north (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 538  Ivērōn, *phialē* viewed from north (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 539  Ivrēnō, phialē viewed from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 540  Zōgraphou, phialē and katholikon, detail of a drawing (V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744) – source: Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pl. between pp. 250-251

Fig. 541  Esphigmenou, phialē and katholikon, detail of a drawing (V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744) – source: Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pl. between pp. 220-221

Fig. 542  Constantinople, St. George at Mangana, ground plan of remains (C. Mango, after E. Mamboury) – source: Кораћ, Шупут, Архитектура византийског света, fig. 164

Fig. 543  Constantinople, Evergetis Monastery, reconstruction of the phialē: 1) aspect, 2) ground plan (L. Rodley) – source: Paul Magdalino (with an additional note by Lyn Rodley), “The Evergetis Fountain in the Early Thirteenth Century: An ekphrasis of the Paintings in the cupola,” in Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis (see List of Abbreviations): 432-447, figs. 43.1, 43.2

Fig. 544  Studenica Monastery, katholikon, remains of a phialē in the exonarthex from northwest (photo: author, 2016)

Fig. 545  Studenica Monastery, phialē: a) elevation and ground plan of remains (M. Čanak-Medić), b) reconstructed elevation (M. Radan-Jovin) – source: Kandić, “Fonts for the Blessing of the Waters in Serbian Medieval Churches,” figs. 2, 3

Fig. 546  Thessaloniki, Basilica of St. Demetrius, phialē after the 1917 fire – source: Георгіос Сотиріу, Μαρіа Σοτηρiou, Η Βασιλική του Αγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης, Λεύκωμα: Πίνακες αρχιτεκτονικής, γλυπτικής, ζωγραφικής ευρήματων και αναστηλώσεως του μνημείου (Αθήνα: Εν Αθήναις αρχαιολογική εταιρία, 1952), pl. 3.β

Fig. 547  Bogoliubovo, phialē (N. N. Voronin): a) remains, b) reconstructed elevation – source: Н. Н. [Николай Николаевич] Воронин, Зодчество северо-восточной Руси XII-XV веков (Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР, 1961-1962), Vol. 1, figs. 123, 124

Fig. 548  Docheiariou, phialē and its surroundings (katholikon to the right) viewed from west (photo: A. Dekanski, 2014) – source: http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Europe/Greece/Macedonia/Agion_Oros/Dochiario u/photo1487153.htm

Fig. 549  Docheiariou, phialē, section facing north and ground plan (P. Mylonas) – source: Mylonas, Atlas of Athos, Fasc. 3, pl. 110.1
Introduction
Definition of the Problem; Its Architectural and Historic Aspects

The narthex (Gr. νάρθηξ or νάρθηκας) is the front part of the church, which primarily provides an entrance space.\(^1\) However, it is not a mere shelter for the main door. Rather, the room invites one to prepare, both formally and functionally, before entering the naos, the central space of the church, or the church proper. In that way, the narthex functions as the transition zone between the profane space of the outer world and the sacred area of the church building. The narthex has been regarded as a common feature in Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture; the great majority of Byzantine churches, regardless of the type and the period of their construction, had a narthex or some sort of entrance space, built either simultaneously with the rest of the church or added on later. Although found already in Early Christian churches, the narthex reached the status of a standard element in church planning by the beginning of the Middle Byzantine period (843/867-1204),\(^2\) and retained its importance to the end of the Byzantine Empire (1453) and beyond.

The narthex’s liminality – i.e. the passage from this world to the transcendental realm of the Heavens, symbolically and mystically present in the naos and the Divine Liturgy celebrated therein – is fully emphasized in the rites and services performed inside the narthex. In the Early Byzantine period (4\(^{th}\)-6\(^{th}\) centuries), it functioned as a preparatory space for one of the two major

\(^{1}\) Other terms applied to narthex in Byzantine Greek sources are πρόναος, προτεμένισμα, προπύλαιον (προπύλαια), and στοά, which all bear Ancient reminiscences and reflect either the narthex’s location – preceding the naos (pronaos), the temple (protemenisma), or the gate (propylaion) – or its form – open portico (stoa). Cf. Vesna Milanović, „Kultno-liturgijske osnove za izučavanje ikonografskog programa u pripratama srpskih srednjovekovnih crkava“, MA Thesis (Beograd: Univerzitet u Beogradu, Filozofski fakultet u Beogradu, 2000), pp. 35-37; Marinis, Architecture and Ritual (see List of Abbreviations), p. 64; and Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones, with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 1490, 1496, 1647.

processions into the naos, the Lesser Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, and thus played a role within the church ritual. The narthex was also reserved for catechumens and penitents.

Beyond this, little else is known about what would take place in that part of the church and how it was furnished. More, though by no means complete, information can be found on the use and interior arrangement of the narthex in the Middle and Late Byzantine periods.

According to the information provided by contemporary sources, the Middle Byzantine narthex accommodated various religious offices that were performed either as a part of or in relation to the Divine Liturgy, but which also needed to be conducted beyond the limits of the naos’s sacred area. These services can be defined as rites of passage, or were closely related to them, such as baptism, betrothal and wedding, funeral, commemoration of the deceased, and others. In addition to these, the narthex of a monastic church was the place where a portion of the tonsuring rites was performed, where the members of the community would gather and prepare themselves for participating in a service in the church, and where the Hours were read and confessions heard. In terms of the annual cycle of services, the narthex was the setting for the ritual washing of the feet on the Holy Thursday and for the greater blessing of the water on the Feast of the Epiphany. On Pentecost Sunday the community would not go to the refectory after the Divine Liturgy, but would have a piece of blessed bread and some wine in the narthex instead. Also, monastic councils were occasionally held within narthexes. All these describe

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5 A detailed exposition and discussion of various instances of the narthex being used for certain ritual celebrations, recorded in monastic foundation documents, can be found in Chapter 3.
the narthex as a para-liturgical space, which served as a transitional zone between the church proper and the rest of the monastery.

Despite the multifarious and complex uses of the narthex, its actual architectural layout usually does not immediately indicate most of them. Or, perhaps, it is precisely due to this diversity of use that the narthex was conceived as a simple rectangular hall-like structure. Appended to the west of the naos and commonly built integrally with it, the narthex encloses the main access into the nave and appears to be nothing more than a narrow and transversally elongated entrance hall. Such an impression is reinforced by an austere interior, which, furthermore, in almost all cases has lost its original furnishings and iconographic decorations, if it had any at all. In certain cases, the dimensions of the narthex are so modest that it makes one wonder how a larger group of participants could be accommodated. This may explain the occasional addition of a second narthex in front of the first. This second narthex has been labeled exonarthex (i.e. “outer narthex”) in order to be distinguished from the first, which – under these circumstances – is usually referred to as esonarthex (i.e. “inner narthex”). The latter sometimes have an upper storey, which – if opened towards the naos – forms a part of the galleries or, otherwise, serves as a subsidiary space, often including one or more chapels.

On Mount Athos, all surviving Middle Byzantine katholika (the main churches of coenobitic communities) were built between the 960s and the middle of the 11th century. Most of them belong to the cross-in-square type, which was very popular at the time throughout

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6 The 6th-century writer Procopius of Caesarea suggests that the word νάρθηξ is applied to this part of the church “because of its great length” or “because it is not broad” – Procopius [of Caesarea], Buildings [Περί κτισμάτων], with an English translation by H. B. Dewing, with the collaboration of Glanville Downey (Cambridge MA – London: Harvard University Press, 1940), I, iv, 7 (pp. 44, 45), and V, vi, 23-24 (pp. 348, 349).
7 In terms of function, the Byzantines often did not differentiate between the two, since the exonarthex was usually assigned purposes similar or related to those of the narthex – Vasileios Marinis, “Defining Liturgical Space,” in Paul Stephenson (ed.), The Byzantine World (London – New York: Routledge, 2012): 284-302, p. 296.
8 For terminology pertaining to the Athonite and, in general, Byzantine architecture, monastic life, and liturgy – refer to a Glossary at the end.
Byzantium and the regions under its cultural influence, and which was employed particularly frequently in monastic churches. Nonetheless, a few of the extant churches make the use of the basilican type. Regardless of the type, each church has a narthex of a design that is typically found in the coeval churches outside Athos, as well: a three-bayed layout, communication with the naos via three doors, large openings to the exterior, with the main entrance located in the middle of the west wall and two doors at the north and south ends. As a rule, Athonite narthexes have an upper storey, usually referred to as katēchoumeneion or katēchoumena (κατηχομενείον, κατηχομένα, lit. “the place of the catechumens”). By means of a tribēlon, katēchoumena’s middle portion opens to the naos, whereas the north and south compartments, liturgically equipped and, in some cases, surmounted with domes, most probably functioned as parekklēsia (subsidiary chapels). This twin-domed design is rarely found beyond Mount Athos.

As a further point of departure from a typical Middle Byzantine church layout, the three oldest katholika acquired chapels, built against the north and south sides of the narthex soon after the completion of the main core. Moreover, the churches always received either a portico or an exonarthex, also shortly after the original building had been completed. The phialē, an open kiosk housing a holy water font in the monastery yard, is commonly located in the entrance zone. This agglomeration of various rooms and structures in the narthex area seems to be a specific Athonite manifestation of the apparent significance of this part of the church in the monastic context.

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10 Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 91. This terminology brings a reminder into the monastic context of the narthex’s function in Early Byzantine times, when it indeed was reserved for the catechumens preparing to enter the Christian community (see above, note 4). For the use of galleries by catechumens in the Early Byzantine period, see Mathews, op. cit., pp. 128-132.
Relevance and Aims of the Present Study

The narthex’s prominent presence in Athonite and other monastic churches of the Middle Byzantine period leaves the impression that by the 10th century the structure built around the church’s entrance had become a necessity for a monastic community. However, this part of the church building, its specific functions, and its formation during the Middle Byzantine period have been generally omitted from discussions of church architecture and liturgical planning, which have tended to focus on the naos. While it is true that the naos and the sanctuary,

11 The narthex is also found in lay, non-monastic churches of this period, but not so commonly, especially not with smaller churches. Often, the existence of certain subsidiary buildings is the only way of distinguishing a monastic from non-monastic church (Mango, Byzantine Architecture, p. 10). And many, if not all of these subsidiaries are in Athonite monasteries appended to the church’s main core exactly in the narthex area (see below, Main Research Issues and Questions).

12 There are only a few comprehensive studies that include examinations of the narthex’s architecture, function, and meaning in any period of the Byzantine history and a small number of them entirely dedicated to this part of the church building and related or appended spaces. The most important in the former group are Mathews, op. cit. (see note 3), pp. 125-130, 138-147 and Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, esp. pp. 64-99, both dealing with Constantinopolitan material, but in different periods. The book by Natalia B. Teteriákov, The Liturgical Planning of Byzantine Churches in Cappadocia (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1996), pp. 129-164, 167-173, 175-178, offers an insight into building and liturgical approaches devised within a characteristic provincial architecture. More relevant to the study of Athonite material is Basileios Λ. Μεσσηγ, «Ναοί αθωνικού τύπου» PhD Dissertation (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης - Σχολή Φιλοσοφίκη, Τμήμα Ιστορίας και Αρχαιολογίας, 2010), pp. 73-76, 299-329.

devised to stage the Divine Liturgy, constitute the primary liturgical space in the Byzantine

church, certain religious rites and ceremonies were performed in the narthex, thus making it an


Агіоу Δημητρіοу», in: Παρіς Γουναρίδєς (ед.), Іерά Μονή Βατοπεδίоу – Ιστορία και τέχνη, Αθωνικά Σύμμεικτα 7
(Αθήνα: Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών – Ινστιτούτο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 1999): 171-196; Στάυρος Μ. Μυμυλόκος,
«Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίος: Ιστορία και αρχιτεκτονική» PhD Dissertation (Αθήνα: Εθνικό Μετσόβιο
Πολυτεχνείο - Τμήμα αρχιτεκτόνων, Σπουδαία ιστορίας της αρχιτεκτονικής, 2001), pp. 50-58, 68-104, 122-
129, 154-155, 157-159, 279-295; Ioakeim Ath. Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos (Thessaloniki: [M.
Triantafyllou], 2005), pp. 20-33; Pascal Androudis, “Le catholicon du monastère byzantin de Saint Démétrios
(Chalkéôs) au Mont Athos (actuel kyriakon de la skite de Saint Démétrios de Vatopédî),” ΔΧΙΕ 29 (2008): 195-206;
Στάυρος Μυμυλόκος, «Το βατοπεδινό Κέλλι του Αγίου Προκόπιο: Η οικοδομική φάση του 16ου αιώνα στα
πλαίσια της αθωνικής αρχιτεκτονικής της εποχής» in Νικόλαος Τουτός (εδ.), Το Αγίον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο
αιώνα: ΣΤ’ Διεθνές Επιστημονικό Συνέδριο – Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αγοραπειρική Εστία, Αριστοτέλειο

There are also monographic studies of other relevant Middle Byzantine monastic churches that address

narthex in a substantial manner: Arthur H. S. Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine
αρχιτεκτονική (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις της Εθνικής Παιδείας, 1981), pp. 56-70 (analysis of the ex

exonarthex), 71-75 (analysis of the narthex), 110-114 (discussion on the original forms of both); Cecil L. Striker,
and Y. Doğan Kuban (eds.), Kalenherhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, Their History, Architecture, and Decoration –
Final Reports on the Archaeological Exploration and Restoration at Kalenherhane Camii 1966-1978 (Mainz am
Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1997), pp. 88-95 (cumulative description and reconstruction of the narthex area
in all successive building phases on the site); Vasilios Marinis, “The Monastery tou Libos: Architecture, Sculpture,
and Liturgical Planning in Middle and Late Byzantine Constantinople,” PhD Dissertation (University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign, 2005), pp. 61-63, 80-81, 167-171, 172-178; Tassos Papacostas, “The History and Architecture of
the Monastery of Saint John Chrysostomos at Koutsouendis, Cyprus,” with a preface by Cyril Mango and an

In the study of narthexes, more scholarly attention has been given to the wall decoration in these rooms. I
list here some of them that deal with the iconographic program, as well as its interrelationship with the narthex’s
function: Гордана Бабић, „Иконографски програм живописа у припратама цркава краља Милутина,” in
484.

(see note 1 for full reference); Charles Barber, “Mimesis and Memory in the Narthex Mosaics at the Nea Moni,
Programs of the Subsidiary Spaces of Late Byzantine Monastic Churches in Macedonia,” PhD Dissertation (College
Park: University of Maryland, 2005); Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, “The Proskynetaria of the Templon and Narthex:
Form, Imagery, Spatial Connection, and Reception,” in Sharon E. J. Gerstel (ed.), Thresholds of the Sacred:
Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West
as Desert: The Symbolism of the Entrance Space in Orthodox Church Buildings,” in Pamela Armstrong (ed.), Ritual
and Art: Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter (London: Pindar Press, 2006): 144-159; Георги Геров,
„Изображението на Кръщението Христово върху западната фасада на Боянската църква – функция и
контекст,“ in Пенкова (ед.), Боянската църква между Източна и Запада в изкуството на християнската
Европа (see above): 151-161. As it is evident from the titles, the majority of these works have Late Byzantine
material for their subject, as it has been better preserved than that of the Middle Byzantine period.
additional, or extended liturgical space. Such a prominent role for the narthex, particularly pronounced within monastic ritual, seems to have taken shape towards the end of the Iconoclastic controversy, in the ninth century. The process coincided with a resurgence of monasticism and the Stoudite monastic reform movement, which was dominant in Constantinople and areas influenced by it from the 9th to the 12th centuries. However, the possible influence of this movement on the function and the form of the narthex has not yet been a subject of scholarly enquiry. It is therefore essential to detect from the outset what the exact rituals were that required the narthex – and other facilities separated from the nave and located in the entrance area – as their venue(s), as well as to analyze the architectural form and constituting features of these spaces. Also, it is important to determine how the rituals held in the narthex influenced its form and organization, and, conversely, how the space of the narthex directed the performance of the rituals staged inside. Furthermore, the narthex’s spatial and functional relationship with the naos and other parts of the church building need to be explored.

The present study is intended to examine precisely these issues, by using an analysis of Athonite narthexes and adjacent structures as a case study. There are several reasons that make these examples important for the study of Byzantine architecture. They belong to a number of churches built for monastic communities that were located not far from each other. All churches are dated within a relatively brief period and share similarities in form that imply that there were common architectural concerns behind the designs of these buildings, perhaps stemming from

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the common ancestry of these institutions: the founders of Vatopedi and Ivērōn started their careers as monks of the Great Lavra. This means that the three monasteries shared monastic views, liturgical practices, and architectural experiences. These, in fact, may have been imported from other monastic centers, such as Bithynia and Constantinople, as the founder of the Great Lavra had spent some time as a monk in Bithynia, was in close contact with the elite of the empire, and embraced the ideals and regulations of Stoudite monasticism. An examination of this transmission of ideas, practices, and related forms will enable us to better understand the design process involved in the creation of liturgical spaces, on the one hand, and the organization of Stoudite monastic communities and their view of church architecture, on the other.

It is also important that many Athonite monasteries have had continuous occupancy and an uninterrupted tradition, while their churches have almost never experienced extensive destruction. Given that churches in other monastic centers of the period survive damaged or have been completely lost, the extant Athonite churches and the liturgical traditions practiced in them are an invaluable resource for understanding the liturgical architecture of post-Iconoclastic Byzantium. Furthermore, these establishments formed an important and highly influential monastic federation, which played an important role from the very beginning and eventually assumed leadership in the monasticism, as well as the culture and architecture, of Byzantium and the Orthodox Christian world at large. This is especially evident in the Late Byzantine (13th-15th centuries) and Post-Byzantine periods (16th-19th centuries). These reasons make a study of the Middle Byzantine narthexes and adjacent spaces on Mount Athos of vital importance. Besides rendering a better acquaintance with the architecture, function, and meaning of these monuments

14 St. Athanasius of Athos, who founded the Great Lavra with the financial and political backing by the Emperor Nikēphoros II Phōkas (ruled 963-969), started his monastic career in the monastery of Kyminas, located in the area of Mount Olympus in Bithynia – see the so-called Vita prima of St. Athanasius, # 19-37, published in Jacques Noret (ed.), Vitae duae antiquae Sancti Athanasii Athonitae (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982). The rule Athanasius drafted for the Great Lavra is based on that of the Stoudios Monastery (see BMFD, p. 205).
in their own right, while setting them within broader processes and trends in the contemporary monasticism, the present research aims to contribute to the general understanding of the forms, organizational patterns, and functions of narthexes in Byzantium, as well as the mechanisms that governed the formation and the transmission of certain liturgical practices and their corresponding architectural settings.

**Main Research Issues and Questions**

One of the key questions that should be posed in the study of the Middle Byzantine narthexes of Mount Athos is what it was that made the narthex become a requisite part of the monastic liturgical space. It is also important to ask whether the development of the narthex or, at least the manner of its use, was conditioned by coenobitic monasticism and its requirements. Most of these questions apparently revolve around the issue of function, particularly the role of the narthex, *exonarthex*, and lateral chapels in liturgical ritual. Did certain liturgical actions necessitate the inclusion of the narthex, or was the existence of a separate room at the church’s entrance the thing that inspired the migration of specific parts of the ritual there? A functionalist approach to this issue would assume that monastic ritual developed before the architecture and that the latter was devised to accommodate the former. However, this seems unlikely, because the narthex or a vestibule space had existed for centuries before the practices of post-Iconoclastic monasticism took shape. Other questions pertaining to the nature of the ritual also need further elaboration. Did the meaning of certain services call for their celebration away from the *naos*, thus instigating the preservation of the narthex as a separate and distinct space? How did the
services performed in the narthex influence the layout and organization of the narthex and its furnishing? Or, conversely, were there any impacts of the existing spatial setting on the services and how they were performed? Even though it might prove hard to determine whether function led to form or form shaped the function, the relationship between the two can nonetheless be established for certain architectural features and pieces of furnishing employed in the narthex. Exploration of these instances may help us to better understand the development of the narthex.

Another issue concerns the architecture of the narthex, its appearance as an essentially plain, even ‘formless’, rectangular space. Does the variety of liturgical and non-liturgical functions that were allotted to the narthex and the spatial demands stemming from them account for the relatively undefined interior space? Is the apparent lack of specific furnishings manifested because items that used to furnish the space are no longer extant, or because the space was never in fact furnished? And, if the former is the case, were the pieces of furnishing permanent or portable? The idiosyncratic architectural features found in Middle Byzantine narthexes on Mount Athos can help us to grapple with these questions. Were there any local peculiarities in the liturgy, use, and meaning that could have had such an impact on narthex design? These issues require a thorough examination. Such an examination actually makes up a large part of the present study, addressing each of characteristic features, underlining what is particular about them, and bringing to attention the problems arising from their specificities.

For example, the middle of the three bays in the interior of the Athonite narthex is often square in plan and covered with the vault of a domical shape, normally a sail-vault. Since there is no apparent structural reason for such a solution, it brings up the question of its purpose and meaning. A similar question arises from the existence of three doors between the narthex and the naos, when, practically speaking, one should be sufficient in serving a relatively small space.
The twin-domed silhouette of the double-storey narthex constitutes a trademark of the Athonite katholika and, as such, invites the examination of their purpose and origin. Moreover, why do certain churches have an upper storey while the others do not? What was the role of lateral chapels on the ground level and why were they appended to the narthex? What did instigate the addition of an exonarthex or a portico? And what was the reason for the phialē, whose location in the narthex in other monasteries of the time is mentioned in sources and attested in some churches, to acquire a separate, free-standing protective canopy outside the church?

When these structures adjacent to the narthex – i.e. katēchoumena, exonarthex, subsidiary chapels, porches, and phialē – and issues pertaining to them are taken in their totality, a few overarching questions can be posed as well: Were these structures functional extensions to the narthex, as their location suggests? Are these idiosyncratic architectural solutions the expressions of a monasticism that differs from monasticism practiced elsewhere in Byzantium? Do strictly monastic needs merit the presence of these structures? I investigate what functions each of these elements were assigned when they were included and, if possible, what determined their roles and locations within the ‘narthex zone,’ while trying to find potential non-Athonite ‘relatives’.

Finally, regarding the problem of the planning and design, i.e. the transmission of the specific architectural solutions, I find particularly important the issue of monastic contacts and networks. It is known that there were monastic connections between certain monastic regions and individual monasteries, such as Bithynia, Constantinople (the monasteries of Stoudios and Evergetis), Mount Athos, and Kievan Rus’. The plans of known monastic churches in these places predominantly, if not exclusively, feature cross-in-square naoi with three-bayed narthexes. That prompts the question whether this particular type of a church was associated
with a certain specific form of monasticism. Are the prominence and the form of the narthex conditioned by certain requirements of the coenobitic monasticism? Did the transmission come only as the result of the employment of the same or similar liturgical rules? Or was there a conscious awareness of and experience with a particular form of the liturgical space that was deliberately chosen and repeated in newly-founded communities? These important questions are, however, only partially addressed, since their more rounded treatment requires the study of the naos and other parts of the church as well. On the other hand, for the numerous questions presented above, I believe that searching for their answers have proven fruitful, thus shedding light on the narthex as one of the basic conceptual and spatial units of the Byzantine church building and on its place in Byzantine religious architecture in general.

**Methodology, Study Materials (Evidence), and Pertinent Issues**

Architectural formations and transformations are the results of complex changes, including a gradual restructuring of church ritual actions, especially in terms of the space (venue) and manner in which they are conducted, rather than the actual content. Therefore, changes in liturgy are often detectable only or primarily in architecture, such as, for example, the migration of the rite of the Prothesis from the church’s entrance zone, or somewhere outside the church, to the sanctuary area, which is first recorded in few 6th-century monuments and was finalized by the Middle Byzantine period.15 Such evidence does not, however, provide a full and clear picture of

the transformative processes in architecture, particularly because the liturgy was not the only
driving force behind them.

Similarly, a point of departure for the study of the Athonite narthexes lies in the
examination of their architecture, which offers a reflection of what used to take place there.
Unfortunately, apart from the actual structures, other elements or furnishings intended for the
narthex rarely survive and so can only partially assist in addressing liturgical and other uses. In
pursuing the functional aspects of the narthex, architectural material needs to be examined
against information that can be extracted from written sources, from contemporary wall paintings
and their iconographic programs, and from surviving ritual practices. Therefore, I categorize the
research materials into three primary groups: spatial (architecture, iconographic decoration,
furnishings, organization), written (legal and instructional documents, hagiography, travelers’
accounts), and unwritten/performative (liturgical practices and customs). The spatial evidence
can be found in the extant Byzantine churches of Athos and in their contemporaries elsewhere in
the Byzantine world. The major sources of written evidence are foundation typika, but they are
augmented by information provided by other documents, and written or pictorial accounts.
Unwritten or performative evidence can be observed in Athos’s present-day liturgical ritual
which, as an unbroken tradition, preserves many practices and customs pertaining to the narthex
which accord with the original use of the space. Only through a juxtaposition of these three
groups of evidence can one hope to attain full insight into an architectural phenomenon as
complex and multifaceted as the narthex.

Therefore, the functions of the narthex are always examined as they relate to the
narthex’s form and position in the church building, with an aim to potentially establish whether
and how the function influenced the form and vice versa. In pursuing this, Athonite narthexes
and their idiosyncratic features are compared to narthexes of other, primarily monastic churches of the period and are interpreted within contemporary trends in liturgical planning. These comparisons will assist in: the analysis of the historic and architectural aspects pertaining to the conception, formation, and development of the three-bayed, double-storey narthex, the type associated with monastic cross-in-square churches; the search for the origins of this specific narthex’s plan in regard to both monastic and non-monastic traditions that may have shaped it; and the establishment of what is particular about Middle Byzantine Athonite narthexes’ form, function, meaning, and organization.

Spatial (Architectural, Archaeological, and Artistic) Evidence

The core architectural material from Mount Athos comes from the katholika of the three oldest monasteries, the Great Lavra (constructed ca. 960 – ca. 1001), Ivērōn (980-983, with additions dated to the first half of the 11\textsuperscript{th} cent.), and Vatopedi (end of the 10\textsuperscript{th} cent.; subsidiaries appended during the first half of the 11\textsuperscript{th} cent.). These churches have retained a lot of original features and furnishings in spite of continuous development, adjustments necessitated by changes in the needs of the communities, repairs, and other alterations that have taken place over the past millennium. A few thorough rebuilding campaigns that affected the entire church building and their results, as well as the appearances of the previous structures, are often well recorded and allow us to trace what has been done and thus to reconstruct the original layouts.\footnote{In this respect, descriptions and drawings by Russian monk and traveler Vasiliĭ Grigorovich-Barskii, produced in relation to his visits (1725-1726 and 1744-1745), are most valuable. See note 18 below for the information on the editions of his work used in this study.} Moreover, the close spiritual and other connections maintained between these monastic communities likely account for the similarities in the architectural designs of their narthexes. Therefore, a
comparative study of them can help establish a better picture of how the space of the narthex was understood in the first decades after coenobitic monasticism was introduced on Mount Athos.

The material from these major Hagiorite churches is supplemented by the contemporary material offered by the Prōtaton church (ca. 965) in Karyes and a few other surviving churches, which belonged to smaller monastic communities, such as those of the Monastery of Xenophōntos (end of the 10th cent.), of the Skētē of St. Demetrios (mid-11th cent.), of the Kelli of St. Procopius (second half of the 11th cent.), and of the Kelli Ravdouchou (11th cent.), as well as three that have come to us only as archaeological remains, Voroskopou (beginning of the 11th cent.), Melissourgeiou (ca. 1030), and Kalamitsiōn (11th or 12th cent.?). The old katholikon of the Philotheou monastery, which is known only from written accounts and a drawing made prior to its demolition in the 1740s, is also examined. Except for the Prōtaton, which has served as the congregational church for the entire peninsula, all others are more modest churches, with reduced functional demands, or perhaps just with a smaller number of monks whom they serviced. In these circumstances, the churches have not been subject to repeated changes through the centuries, unlike the churches of the larger monasteries on Mount Athos. As such, and due to the state of preservation of some of them (i.e. archaeological remains), they have retained information regarding certain original architectural features, as well as clues to how they were used at a particular time period. One especially useful example is located at the site known as Frangokastro and was the katholikon of a monastery, most probably that of Zygou. The site, which is now outside the borders of the monastic republic, has been the subject of ongoing archaeological excavations for several years and has yielded important information on this church, dated to ca. 1000 (with additions constructed during the 11th-cent.). The data on both groups of churches presented in this study are gathered from existing studies and research
reports, as well as from my own field observations, notes, sketches, and photographs, which are of particular importance in the cases of the narthexes that have not been properly studied and published. In seeking a fuller explanation of these structures and an understanding of their conception and function, I occasionally turn to Late Byzantine and even Post-Byzantine examples, avoiding artificial chronological divisions, which often do not apply to Athonite materials.

The narthexes of Byzantine monastic churches built outside Mount Athos during the same period (10th-11th centuries) are used in the study as well. The information they provide is compared to the material offered by their Athonite counterparts, similarities are examined and differences established, so as to explain the form and function of Hagiorite narthexes. The selection of churches has been governed by two criteria: shared architectural forms – namely the cross-in-square naos with a three-bayed narthex – and geography, i.e. the regions of known contact or influence, in both the spheres of architecture and of monastic traditions.

The most important among those monuments are a few Constantinopolitan monastic churches of the Middle Byzantine period: the northern church of the Monastery of Constantine Lips (tou Libos, consecrated in 907), Myrelaion (ca. 920-922), Eski İmaret Camii (11th cent.), and Vefa Kilise Camii (ca. 1100?), which are closely examined. These are joined by extant and documented examples from Bithynia, the region southeast of Constantinople, which during this period was a major monastic center that maintained contacts with Mount Athos:17 Fatih Camii in Tirilye (ca. 800); the remains of a church, likely that of the Pelekētē Monastery (9th cent.?); the remains of a church in the vicinity of Kurşunlu (9th-10th cent.); the remains of a church in the vicinity of İznik (ca. 12th cent.?); the remains of a church at Yılıncı Bayır (9th-12th cent.?); the remains of a church in the village of Çeltikdere (11th cent.); and the remains of a church at

17 See above, note 14.
Pendik (11th cent.?). Also included are two churches built in the peninsula’s vicinity and perhaps under its monastic and architectural influence: Panagia tōn Chalkeōn (1028) in Thessaloniki and the remains of a church at Olynthos (mid-11th cent.) in the Chalkidikē peninsula.

In order to get a broader picture of the Middle Byzantine monastic narthex, as well as to avoid the traps of a typological approach, monastic churches of other types and from other locations are also briefly examined and their features called to attention when relevant to the study of the Athonite material. Churches in Asia Minor, Greece, and Kievan Rus’, and of various layouts – cross-in-square, domed basilicas, domed octagon, and other – are included. Special attention is given to the complex of the Pantokratōr Monastery (south church, 1118-34; north church, 1136), due to the survival of both its architecture and typikon, and to the renowned domed octagon churches of the monasteries of Hosios Loukas (Katholikon, consecrated in 1011 or 1022), Nea Monē on Chios (1042-1056), Daphni (ca. 1100), and others, since mosaic decorations of their narthexes are almost the only ones that survive from the period. Here, it should be said that the wall decoration of the narthex has not been treated thoroughly in this study. This is primarily for the reason that almost none of the Middle Byzantine decoration in Athonite narthexes has survived. However, I turn to the decoration preserved in contemporary narthexes, i.e. to the themes placed at certain strategic places in the narthex, only when they can shed more light on the form, function, and meaning of the narthex and its architectural elements. Therefore, examples such as mosaics in the narthex of the Koimēsis Church in Nicaea (executed shortly after 1065), recorded before the church’s destruction in 1922, are also consulted. The comparative material from this and many other churches contributes to a fuller understanding of Athonite narthexes within broader monastic, liturgical, iconographic, and architectural contexts.
Written Evidence

Written sources, such as monastic foundation documents (typika), service books, hagiographies, and travelers’ accounts, offer another source of information. They primarily provide references to the services that took place in the narthex, including prescriptions regarding the occasions, frequency, and – sometimes – manner in which they were to be performed. Also, other uses, which were not necessarily liturgical, are occasionally recorded in documents and duly examined here. From some of the documents, especially when the data found in them are compared with the actual building that may have survived, information about the contemporary use of space and furnishings can be extracted. That kind of information is offered also by travelers’ accounts, most notably that of Vasilii Grigorovich-Barskii (1701-1747), who visited Athos in 1725-1726 and 1744-1745, and left valuable written descriptions and even more valuable drawings of monasteries, some of which have been rebuilt since then.¹⁸

Monastic foundation charters and regulatory documents (typika) constitute the most useful sources for monastic instructions and information regarding the liturgical use of the narthex. However, there are only a handful of such regulating documents drawn for Athos’s monastic communities from the period: the Rule of St. Athanasius the Athonite for the Monastery of the Great Lavra (original composition, 963; possibly revised ca. 1020), the Typikon of the Emperor John Tzimiskes for the all of Mount Athos (971/972), the Typikon (973-975) and the Testament (after 993) of St. Athanasius the Athonite for the Great Lavra, the Typikon of Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos for the entire peninsula (1045), the Rule of Neophytos for

¹⁸ Here, I use the more substantial account of his second visit, originally published as Васи́лий Григо́рьевич-Барский, Стра́нствования Васи́лия Григо́рьевича-Барского по святым местам Востока с 1723 по 1747 г. (С.-Петербургъ, 1885-87), Vol. III: Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы (1744) (С.-Петербургъ: Издание Афонского Русского Пантелеимонова монастыря, 1887). When needed, I also cite passages from its translation in Modern Greek, Βασίλι Γκρηγκορόβιτς Μπάρσκι, Τα ταξίδια του στο Ἁγιον Ὑρώς, 1725-1726, 1744-1745 [μετάφραση: Ελένη Στεργιοπούλου], με την προετοιμασία και τα σχόλια του ακαδημαϊκού Παύλου Μυλωνά (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αγιορειτική Εστία, [Αθήνα]: Μουσείο Μπενάκη, 2009), which is accompanied with valuable commentaries by Pavlos M. Mylonas.
the Monastery of Docheiariou (*ca.* 1118), and the *Typikon* of St. Sava of Serbia for the Hilandar Monastery (1199). Among these, only two are concerned with some liturgical prescriptions, the Rule of St. Athanasius the Athonite and the Hilandar Typikon. And they provide only a few pieces of information on the services conducted in the narthex. This is somewhat problematic for the study of the Athonite narthexes. However, the problem can be partially overcome by turning to *typika* of other Byzantine monasteries, especially to the rules of the Stoudios and Evergetis monasteries in Constantinople. Both of these had a strong impact on the creation and content not only of the *typika* for some of Athonite monasteries, but on many others throughout the empire. Additionally and occasionally, information from liturgical manuscripts and hagiographies, most notably from the two *vitae* of St. Athanasius, are used to shed more light on certain liturgical situations or architectural settings.

**Unwritten (Performative) Evidence**

In some cases, written documents provide clear information on the narthex as the space where a service was supposed to take place, but do not inform us on the manner of the performance, i.e. how the actual space is organized and used. This problem can be ameliorated

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19 English translations (with commentaries) of all of these, except the last one, can be found in *BMFD*. A critical edition of the last one, with a translation into the modern Serbian, is published in Димитрије Богдановић (ed.), *Хиландарски типик* (Београд: Народна библиотека Србије; Београд: Завод за међународну научну, просветну, културну и техничку сарадњу Србије, 1995). These *typika* are not what merely survives of Athonite regulating documents, but may rather be all that was issued in this period. With the existence of ‘territorial’ *typika*, as those of Tzimiskēs and Monomachos were, individual rules for monasteries were most likely viewed as unnecessary (see Rosemary Morris, “Symeon the Sanctified and the Refoundation of Xenophontos,” in *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries*: 443-464, pp. 454-455).

20 The Rule of St. Athanasius the Athonite for the Lavra Monastery is modeled very closely on the Rule of the Monastery of St. John Stoudios in Constantinople (after 842) – *BMFD*, pp. 213-214. The *Typikon* of St. Sava the Serbian for the Hilandar Monastery is closely based on the *Typikon of Timothy for the Monastery of the Mother of God Evergetis in Constantinople* (first edition 1054-70; periodically revised later; put in final form 1098-1118) – *BMFD*, p. 1331, n. 5; see also Мирија Живојиновић, „Хиландарски и Евергетидски типик, подударност и разлике“, ZRV 33 (1994): 85-102, and Љиљана Јухас-Георгиевска, „Типик Светог Саве за манастир Хиландар,“ in Богдановић (ed.), *Хиландарски типик* (see previous note), pp. 97-132, for more detailed discussions of the relationship between two documents.
by observations of the present-day monastic ritual of Mount Athos. Athos’s modern liturgical scheme is a millennium old and, in the course of time, has naturally accumulated some modifications and additions. However, due to the extreme conservatism of the Athonite communities, the liturgy still preserves many acts and practices from the original ritual, which potentially indicate how the actual space of the narthex was used during the celebration of certain offices and explain certain features and spatial arrangements involved in a particular rite. Moreover, some still practiced customs that may have not been mentioned in medieval documents can point to additional uses of the narthex. In this way, the present-day ritual serves as a sort of ‘living,’ intangible, performative evidence, which often contributes to current research by providing illustrations or additional clarifications for certain liturgical actions otherwise unrecorded in the written sources. Observations on the manner of a service’s performance, made during my stays in several Athonite monasteries, especially regarding the positions of the participants and their movements within actual spaces contribute to this study by confirming or complementing information acquired from written sources.

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21 My longest sojourns were in the monasteries of Vatopedi and Hilandar in 2008 and the most of information I use in this study comes from these two communities. I here express my deep gratitude to the two brotherhoods and to their respective abbots Ephraim and Methodios, in particular, for allowing me to stay in their monasteries, explore architecture and liturgical ritual of the katholika, and take photographs.

22 My observations are supplemented by the information provided by published systematizations of the liturgical practice that is more or less common for all Athonite monasteries today: Χρυσοστόμος, Ιερομονάχος Ι. Κ. Ευαγγελισμού Καρεών (ed.), Αγιορειτικόν τυπικόν της εκκλησιαστικής ακολουθίας (Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης, 2004), and Ονυφριά Χιλανδάρας, Σветогорски богослужбени устав ([Београд]: Удружење поштовалаца Свете Горе Атонске, 2004). A more detailed rule, assembled (or, rather, just written down) in 1909, most probably based on the local practices and unwritten traditions in the Monastery of Dionysiou, can be found published as Τυπικόν της εν Άθω Ιεράς Μονής του Αγίου Διονυσίου (Άγιον Όρος: Ιερά Μονή Αγίου Διονυσίου, 2004).
However, in regard to all three categories of study material, there are certain problems and cautions that limit the study of Athonite narthexes. I address each of these objective limitations imposed by the available evidence and propose ways to overcome them.

1. Rebuilding, remodeling, and changes in architectural form, organization, and the furnishing of the narthexes have inevitably brought about a loss of information about the original layouts in certain cases, most notably that of the Great Lavra. However, the information from written and pictorial records, as well as a detailed comparative study of all extant Athonite narthexes does yield good results. Moreover, certain similarities in plan, form, and features shared between Athonite narthexes can help establish what was common for this specific period and for Athos as a region.

2. Since the original iconographic decoration has been lost, in most cases due to repainting in later centuries, the examples from other places that have retained much of their original Middle Byzantine decoration are consulted, despite the fact that the programs might belong to narthexes whose architecture and use are not necessarily the same as those of the Athonite ones.

3. A lack of archaeological excavations at the sites of ruinous or completely raised Athonite churches limits the comprehension of the complete form and organization, as well as the dating of these monuments. This problem is greatly alleviated by the existence of the written and pictorial records of V. Grigorovich-Barskii for such places as the Great Lavra and Philotheou. The missing information is also supplied by analogy with other places.

4. There is a scarcity of written sources, especially foundation documents and hagiographical texts pertaining to the actual monasteries. These problems are approached through an examination of other contemporaneous monastic documents, with special attention
given to those written in the Stoudite and Evergetine traditions.\(^{23}\) I believe that those *typika*, in combination with a few other hagiographic sources, *synaxaria*, and other documents, provide sufficient material to picture the place of the narthex in the life and ritual of a Middle Byzantine coenobitic community. Also, an analysis of historical information related to the foundation of each monastery, with an emphasis on the role of the founding father (monk-*ktētōr*), his monastic background (monastic genealogy and inherited traditions or advocacy of certain innovations), and his relationship with imperial and other secular sponsors provide a better understanding of the circumstances that may have influenced the planning and form of a narthex.

5. Finally, the present day liturgical ritual, although the result of an uninterrupted tradition, has not reached our times unaltered. It includes certain customs and practices that have been introduced after the period in question. Therefore, the information provided by today’s practice should be used with caution. This means that each relevant piece of information should be judged whether it indeed belongs to the original liturgical scheme. That has been accomplished through comparative checks against relevant Middle Byzantine sources.

**Some Additional Methodological Remarks**

The nature of this study requires complex analyses and an interweaving of materials of various kinds. Therefore, many diverse elements are brought into a comparative examination, pulling together different pieces of information provided by the evidence in order to shape certain ideas and provide arguments for them. That is why such a broad scope has been taken, with the inclusion of Middle Byzantine monastic narthexes from a wide geographical area and of all

\(^{23}\) See above, especially note 20.
surviving *typika* and other written, pictorial, and performative evidence. In dealing with such diverse types of material, a comparative and multidisciplinary approach seems most appropriate.

Nonetheless, before embarking on a final comparative analysis, which will yield a more rounded understanding of the narthex, it is essential to establish a clear apprehension and a full grasp of the relevant material. It is first necessary to provide a detailed description and an architectural analysis of surviving narthexes and adjoining rooms and related structures, including all of their elements, some of which are characteristic of Athos, with a particular emphasis on their roles in the confirmed and probable functions of the narthex.\(^{24}\) For this reason, the focus is almost exclusively set on the interior features rather than those of the exterior. Careful observations and detailed descriptions greatly facilitate analysis and can crucially contribute to the collective knowledge of the Middle Byzantine narthex. That is why I have decided to systematically present and describe the narthexes’ architecture and their recorded functions, before moving to an analysis of their form, use, and meaning, as well as their importance within Athonite monasticism. Therefore, this study is not merely object-oriented, but perhaps rather ‘phenomenon-oriented’. It takes into account all elements – tangible and intangible – that constitute the narthex and the various aspects that define its function and form.

Therefore, a positivistic treatment is maintained in dealing with the material: detailed descriptions of the monuments analyzed are used to establish firm evidence, since my intention is to avoid hypothesizing and theorizing, as much as that is possible. However, in certain

situations, where there is insufficient evidence or research questions go beyond the available data, I cautiously propose possible explanations based on comparative examples, as well as on my own architectural and liturgical experience and observations. In cases where no comparative material makes sense and no conclusion is logically available for consideration, I refrain from asserting my own interpretation.

The architectural material has been organized according to typological similarities, mainly out of practicality. However, typological comparanda may point to similar uses, a certain meaning associated with particular form, or to a common model. As a case in point, it became obvious that the cross-in-square plan, with a three-bayed narthex, the core plan of the Athonite katholika, often figures in churches built to serve coenobitic monastic communities in other regions as well. In this case, typological approach is useful in tracing possible associations between architecture and particular organizations of monastic life and ritual. Also, similarities in form may point to monastic and architectural contacts between certain regions, although they might be geographically fairly distant. Therefore, the typological method has occasionally been employed with an awareness of some of the problems inherent in such an approach.25

On the other hand, the obstacles associated with determining the function of an architectural structure and the problems in interpreting form as the result of function, have not been overlooked, either. Form does not necessarily follow or reflect function, in this case the liturgical ritual set within the church building.26 This seems to be the case with the narthex as

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26 Arguments for and against the causal relationship between form and function can be found in Mathews, op. cit., pp. 3-5; Mango, Byzantine Architecture, pp. 10, 70-71. For the most recent discussion of the problem, see Marinis, “Some Notes on the Functional Approach in the Study of Byzantine Architecture: The Case of Constantinople,” esp. pp. 21-22, 32. I, however, cannot agree with Marinis in regard to his diminishing of the importance of function and,
well. Nonetheless, one of the objectives of this study is to determine the manner in which the
narthex as a liturgical space was used, as well as to trace the possible rationale for its
organization. Also, the functional approach is necessary when it comes to certain features, such
as the presence of wall niches and masonry benches in some narthexes, or when entire rooms
subsidiary to the narthex (such as katêchoumena and lateral chapels) are concerned. One of the
problems in the functional method that has rightly been pointed to is the assumption that the
original function of a building is the most important one in determining the form and the use of
the space.\(^{27}\) I could perhaps add that the definition of a building’s ‘original function’ can be
described in two ways: as either the intended function, i.e. the purpose desired by the patron that
guided the building’s design, but which was never really implemented after its completion, or as
the way the building was actually used after its completion, regardless of the intentions of the
patron and its realized design. In the latter case, modifications and additions subsequent to the
building’s completion can be indicative of this new use.

Since the present study seeks to establish what the functions of Middle Byzantine
narthexes were exactly in the time when they were built, such considerations can be very
beneficial. I believe that they are necessary in the attempt to explain the emergence of certain
structures related to the narthex and the importance gained by the narthex itself in this period.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., pp. 21-22, 30-31.
Therefore, the functional approach should not be avoided, but rather needs to be applied, only with all necessary cautions and additional considerations.28

Dissertation’s Structure

The dissertation is organized to cover the objectives set above. The exposition is divided in two parts, with six chapters in total. The first three chapters make Part I, *Evidence for the Study of Athonite Middle Byzantine Narthexes*, and are described below.

**Chapter 1**, *Middle Byzantine Narthexes and Adjacent Structures on Mount Athos (10th-11th Centuries): Descriptions and Examinations*, furnishes a detailed description of the material that is the subject of this study. I include all known narthexes of the period, even those that have been lost due to rebuilding, but their original form can be reconstructed with the help of certain textual and visual records, or some archaeological remains. As already stated,29 I regard detailed examination of the narthexes, with all their constituent parts and appended structures, essential to this study. This exposition provides the foundation for the analyses undertaken in the last three chapters.

**Chapter 2**, *Narthexes in the Cross-in-Square Churches of Constantinopolitan and Other Monasteries of the 10th and 11th Centuries*, examines narthexes with pronounced architectural similarities to the Athonite narthexes. These similarities include the plan, ratio, and three-bayed

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28 One of these considerations concerns the relevance of the evidence provided by monastic *typika* and how it can help a study of liturgical architecture. On this problem, see Svetlana Popović, “Are *typika* Sources for Architecture? The Case of the Monasteries of the Theotokos Evergetis, Chilandari and Studenica,” in *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis*: 266-284, and Nicholl, op. cit. (see note 12). Charles Barber, “The Monastic Typikon for Art Historians,” in *Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism* (see List of Abbreviations): 198-214, has discussed a similar problem in relation to pictorial decoration that features liturgical themes.

29 See above, *Some Additional Methodological Remarks.*
organization, as well as the employment of the three-door arrangement between the narthex and the naos, and the existence of an upper storey. The same architectural and building traditions may have been shared due to the similar monastic backgrounds and, in certain cases, possibly through the employment of the same building workshops.

This chapter is accompanied by an Excursus, Narthexes in Middle Byzantine Monastic Churches (9th-12th Centuries). It surveys other monastic churches of the period, in order to assess the trends in church planning and the general characteristics of narthex designs, regardless of the church types. Examples from various regions of Byzantium and beyond (Kievan Rus’) are included, with particular emphasis on the important monastic centers of the time (e. g. Bithynia and Cappadocia). Various types of churches and their organizations are addressed, but special attention is given to cross-in-square churches.

Chapter 3, The Narthex in the Monastic Life and Ritual: The Evidence from Foundation Documents (typika), establishes what segments of the liturgical ritual were celebrated in the narthex and, when possible, offers detailed insight into the manner of their staging in the narthex. Services and rites that comprise the daily, annual, and other cycles are presented and analyzed. Other, non-liturgical uses of the narthex are also examined. Monastic foundation documents (typika) provide the basic information, which is occasionally supplemented by data from other sources and from the present-day usage. In addition to this, a discussion of the narthex’s symbolical dimensions (meanings) and its possible role in the broader context of the organization of a coenobitic community is included.

All considerations found in the previous three chapters make a basis for the next three chapters. These are organized in a more unified whole, Part II, entitled Cumulative Analyses and Interpretations of Athonite Narthex Areas: Characteristic Architectural Elements and Pieces
of Furnishing, and Their Role in Staging Functions and Conveying Meanings. Through thorough analyses of Athos’s early narthexes, their elements, and appended spaces and structures, these three chapters offer an all-encompassing view of the architecture, function, and meaning of this part of a coenobitic katholikon.

Chapter 4, Narthex Proper (Ground-Floor Room), is envisaged as a comparative analysis of Athonite narthexes’ general form and constituent architectural elements. Also pursued are certain, likely, or possible interpretations for all characteristic design solutions (e.g. three-bayed layout and three doorways leading into the naos), architectural features (e.g. domical vault over the central bay, wall niches, and external openings), and pieces of furnishing in the narthex. Additionally, the issues of the transmission or migration of forms and the innovation in planning are discussed in the view of so many monastic churches featuring the same or similar layouts, and within particular demands imposed by certain type of coenobitic monasticism and its liturgical ritual.

Chapter 5, Narthex’s Upper Storey (katêchoumena), seeks to explore the katêchoumena. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first of them analyzes the physical form and organization of the narthex’s upper floor, including its characteristic twin-domed form and the question of access into these elevated chambers. The second part aims at investigating the functions accommodated there. Special attention is dedicated to interpreting the presence of these functions and searching for possible origins of such an accommodation.

Chapter 6, Spaces and Structures Adjacent to the Narthex, examines each of these additions – the exonarthex, porches, connecting corridors, the subsidiary chapels, and the phialê – as well as some features and objects housed there, such as burials, holy water fonts, and sêmantra. The discussion of holy water fonts and burials is divided between this chapter and
Chapter 4, as they can be found in the narthex, *exonarthex*, side chapels, and outdoor *phialai*. This chapter also includes a brief discussion of the ‘aggregated narthex area’ as a whole.

At the end, there are *Conclusions*, which are meant to furnish final and encompassing observations and to underline the results of the present study. All major aspects, such as form and spatial organization of the narthex and adjacent structures, their function and meaning, relationship between form and function, and transmission and innovation in planning, are covered.

The dissertation is accompanied by hundreds of photographs and drawings. The majority of photographs were taken during my visits in conjunction with the research conducted for this study. They and the drawings, mostly taken from the secondary literature, constitute an inseparable segment of the thesis, meant to facilitate a better comprehension of the materials, ideas, and the arguments presented here.
PART I:

Evidence for the Study of Athonite Middle Byzantine Narthexes
Chapter 1

Middle Byzantine Narthexes and Adjacent Structures on Mount Athos: Description and Examination

Mount Athos (Gr. Ὄρος Ἅθως), also known as the Holy Mountain among Orthodox Christians, is a peninsula in northern Greece. Today, a monastic republic, or more correctly, a federation of 20 self-governing monasteries, it is inhabited exclusively by monks. Its geography and relative isolation – a mountainous stretch of land, particularly steep at its south end and surrounded by the sea – have made it appealing for a secluded and ascetic life for centuries. The earliest records of monastic presence on the peninsula go back to the 8th and 9th centuries, and then it was only one of several “holy mountains” in the Byzantine world, holy either for the Biblical events associated with them – like Mount Sinai and Mount Tabor, or for charismatic and saintly personages that inhabited them – Mount Auxentios, the Wondrous Mountain, Mount Latros (Latmos), and Mount Olympus (in Bithynia). They all attracted monks and hermits and had a substantial number of monastic communities, some of which developed into large coenobitic

1 Ἁγιόν Ὄρος in Greek, მთაწმინდა in Georgian, Свята Гора in Church Slavonic and Russian, Света Гора in Bulgarian and Serbian, Sfântul Munte in Romanian.

establishments. However, due to the gradual loss of the eastern provinces first to the Arabs and then to the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks, Mount Athos became the sole and preeminent Holy Mountain. The holiness of Athos was additionally emphasized by a tradition according to which it had been allotted to the Mother of God and enjoyed her special protection.

Athos began to rise to prominence in the late 10th century, with the establishment of the coenobitic monasteries of the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Ivērōn. These large and powerful houses marked the introduction of the communal (coenobitic) monasticism to Athos, which was previously dominated by anchoretic forms of monastic life. They were organized according to the rules associated with St. Theodore of Stoudios (759-826). This essentially meant the implementation of the monastic principles developed ca. 800 for the Monastery of Stoudios in Constantinople and maintained by it until the 12th century. They were based on an ideal koinobion (coenobium) of St. Basil the Great, with a stress on communal work and communal prayer, as well as on economic self-sufficiency and political independence. The coenobitic monasteries on Athos were established by charismatic monks, who soon acquired a large following. The most notable of these was St. Athanasius the Athonite (925/930-ca. 1001), who founded the Great Lavra, the first Athonite establishment of this kind. The establishment of these communities was backed by substantial imperial support, which brought to them both financial security and legal protection. The latter included an exemption from local and, to some extent, central ecclesiastical control. Such autonomy from both secular and church authorities was gradually enhanced and continued to be maintained during the periods of Serbian (1345-

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5 For a brief account on St. Athanasius, see ODB, Vol. 1, p. 219 (“Athanasiou of Athos”); for some examinations of his role in the foundation of the Great Lavra and the construction of its katholikon, see Kallistos Ware, “St. Athanasius the Athonite: Traditionalist or Innovator?” in Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism: 3-16; Dirk Krausmüller, “An Ascetic Founder: The Lost First Life of Athanasios the Athonite,” in Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries (see List of Abbreviations): 63-86; and Paul M. Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite,” CahArch 32 (1984): 89-112.
1371) and Ottoman (1387, 1393-1403, 1430-1912) possession of the area. This situation enabled independent and, at times, creative developments in the spheres of theology, liturgical practice, and the arts. Nonetheless, the proximity of great centers – Constantinople and Thessaloniki – as well as the financial support coming from the highest echelons of Byzantine, Georgian, Serbian, and Bulgarian societies, due to the Holy Mountain’s rising religious prestige, meant that Athos remained fully engaged with trends in Byzantine culture. As much as being a receiver of developments in the cultural sphere, Athos was also a producer, particularly during the Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine periods.

This generative role also applies to the architecture of Mount Athos. Extensive and elaborate complexes of monasteries, including their katholika (main churches), were constructed. The great majority of these churches employ the cross-in-square plan. The type can be described as a structure covered with vaults that form a cross, which is inscribed within the shell of perimeter walls built on a square plan. The arms of the cross are formed by barrel-vaults and a dome supported by four columns occupies the crossing. The four corner compartments are lower and roofed with either groin-vaults or sail-vaults. The unobstructed interior space that is thus achieved is used for the naos. A row of three additional bays is appended to the east to form the sanctuary, where the north and south bays serve as the prothesis and the diakonikon respectively. Characteristically for Athos, the cross-in-square naos is also equipped with lateral conches, located at the ends of the north and south arms of the inscribed cross. This triconch plan was employed in the late-10th-century katholika of the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Ivērōn, the three oldest, highest ranking, and most influential foundations of the Holy Mountain. Several

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6 The history of Mount Athos under Serbian control is presented by Душан Кораћ, „Света Гора под српском влашћу (1345-1371),“ ZRVI 31 (1992): 5-199. For the first two centuries of the Ottoman rule over the peninsula, see Александар Фотић, Света Гора и Хиландар у Османском царству (XV-XVII век) (Београд: Балканолошки институт САНУ; Света Гора Атонска: Манастир Хиландар; Београд: Свети архијерејски синод СПЦ, 2000).
7 Only at the Great Lavra are there masonry piers instead of columns.
other early establishments, built during the 11th century – Xenophōntos (the old katholikon in its original form), Zygou, St. Demetrius, and St. Procopius – also make use of the cross-in-square plan. However, these lack the lateral conches, suggesting that this innovation was not unanimously accepted by the Hagiorite communities in this period. There are also a few churches, such as the Prōtaton (10th cent.) and Radvouchou (11th cent.), which feature basilican plans. This type, however, has never been as popular as the triconch cross-in-square plan, which was to become almost the exclusive solution for church planning in the monastic republic and has been treated in literature as the ‘Athonite church plan’.

All these churches, regardless of the type their naoi adhere to, include narthexes at their west ends. Additionally, the largest katholika acquired exonarthexes, subsidiary chapels, and other structures appended to the narthex. Here, I am going to examine in detail all surviving Middle Byzantine narthexes and adjacent structures on Mount Athos. They are addressed in a sequence according to the date of the church’s initial construction, starting first with a few churches of a basilican type, which are not common for Athos but appear to be older, and then moving to katholika of the ‘regular’ Athonite plan. A close description and careful examination of these narthexes and their subsidiaries enables better insight into the form and organization of the narthex and its functions within the life and ritual of Hagiorite monastic communities. This material, in combination with the materials presented in the rest of Part I, provides the foundation for a detailed analysis and interpretation of Middle Byzantine Athonite narthexes and their elements in Part II.

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a) Narthexes of Basilican Churches

**Prōtaton**

The best known exception from the triconch cross-in-square architectural pattern, common on Mount Athos, is the church of the Prōtaton (Πρωτάτον) in Karyes, designed as a basilica (Figs. 1, 2). Constructed or, more likely, reconstructed around 965 on the site of an older church, the Prōtaton is the oldest surviving church on Athos.\(^1\) Besides being the central church of Karyes, a settlement of loosely connected monastic cells,\(^1\) it served as the venue for regular annual assemblies (synaxeis) of Athonite monks on the occasions of major feasts – Christmas, Easter, and the Assumption (the patronal feast of the Prōtaton) – both for the solemn liturgical celebrations of the feasts and, on the following days, for plenary meetings that discussed issues concerning the entire peninsula.\(^1\) Extraordinary meetings, when special situations demanded them, were also held there.\(^1\) Judging from its plan and form (Fig. 3), it was built or rebuilt in keeping with older architectural traditions, probably relying on the plan and remains of the

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\(^{10}\) П. М. Милонас, „Заметкы об архитектуре Афона,“ in: А. И. Комеч, О. Е. Этингофф (eds.), Древнерусское искусство: Балканы, Русь (Санкт-Петербург: Издательство „Дмитрий Буланин”, 1995): 7-81, pp. 16; Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους (see List of Abbreviations), p. 47. According to # 104 of the *Vita Prima* of St. Athanasius of Athos, the church built after 964 (the time of Athanasius’s trip to Constantinople) with resources given by Leo Phōkas (died after 971), Emperor Nikēphoros II’s brother, was “larger and prettier” than the previous – *Свети Атанасије Атонски: Увод, житије, коментари* (Превод са грчког: Марина Вељковић) (Краљево: Манастир Жича, 2012), p. 222, commentary of # 56; cf. Λυσινθία Παπαχρυσάνθου, *Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός* (as cited in note 2), pp. 225-226, notes 207-209, and p. 299. Pavlos M. Mylonas (Милонас, „Заметкы об архитектуре Афона,“ pp. 10-12) believes that the original church, which was built around 900, was only remodeled at that point, mainly in the area of the central part of the naos. Pantelēs Phountas, however, is of an opinion that the present church was built in its entirety around 965 at the initiative of Athanasius (see Mamaloukos, “Α Contribution to the Study of the ‘Athonite’ Church Type of Byzantine Architecture,” p. 44, n. 82; Phountas’s doctoral thesis, Παντελεήμων Γ. Φουντάς, «Ο ναός του Πρωτάτου: Ιστορία και αρχιτεκτονικές ματαρορφώσεις» (Αθήνα: Εθνικό Μετσόβιο Πολυτεχνείο - Σχολή Αρχιτεκτόνων Μηχανικών, 2008), has remained unavailable to me).

\(^{11}\) Karyes are in some documents referred to as the Middle (or Central) Lavra, η Μέση (see Παπαχρυσάνθου, *O αθωνικός μοναχισμός*, pp. 308-310, and below, note 49).

\(^{12}\) Παπαχρυσάνθου, *O αθωνικός μοναχισμός*, pp. 297-299; see also Denise Papachryssanthou (ed.), *Actes du Prōtaton – Édition diplomatique*, Archives de l’Athos, VII (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1975), pp. 115-121. The assembly meetings and the administration of Athos were moved to a separate building sometime between 1089, when a session was still held in the church, and 1153, when two edifices – the church and the administration building – are mentioned (Παπαχρυσάνθου, *O αθωνικός μοναχισμός*, pp. 299-300, notes 56, 57).

\(^{13}\) See (15) Constantine IX, [Introduction], in *BMFD* (see List of Abbreviations), p. 285 for a brief description of such an assembly.
previous church on the site. Such a view does not apply only to the *naos*, which is of a three-aisled basilican plan, characteristic for the Byzantine “Dark Ages” (7th-9th centuries), but also to the tripartite narthex.\(^\text{14}\) I will not discuss here the several different phases of the remodeling of the church,\(^\text{15}\) nor will I address the architecture of the *naos*, since they did not affect the form of the narthex. I will just briefly turn attention to the narthex, basing my observations and discussions largely on architectural plans, produced by Pavlos Mylons.\(^\text{16}\)

The narthex appears as a simple vestibule, oblong in plan, flanked by two corner rooms of square plans (*Fig. 3*).\(^\text{17}\) These three directly correspond to the three aisles of the basilica. The two side rooms now connect with both the narthex and side aisles through simple arched openings, but originally, doors may have been affixed inside the openings, at least those leading into the aisles. The rooms form an integral part of the narthex area, which was further stressed when the openings to the side aisles were blocked at some later point. The north room most probably served – as it does today – as a stairwell, providing access to the narthex’s upper floor and, possibly, to galleries over the side aisles of the *naos*. Such a tripartite or, in this case, rather triple-roomed narthex, resembles the narthexes of urban and cathedral basilicas, such as those of the Basilica in Ćurlina, near Niš (6th cent.), the Old Metropolis in Mesembria (Nesebăr; 6th and 10th/11th centuries), the Basilica of St. Nikon in Sparta (between 6th and 10th centuries), the Elenskata Bazilika in Pirdop (phase II, 6th cent.), Hagia Sophia in Bizye (Vize; after 833), Hagia

\(^{14}\) See *Chapter 2, Excursus* for an overview of basilicas of the Middle Byzantine period.
\(^{15}\) For the construction phases, proposed by Mylons, see Paul M. Mylonas, “Les étapes successives de construction du Protaton au Mont Athos,” *CahArch* 28 (1979): 143-160, and Милонас, „Заметкы об архитектуре Афона,“ pp. 8-22. Mylonas labeled the mid-10th-century phase as “Протатон В” (Милонас, „Заметкы об архитектуре Афона,“ pp. 12-16). He dates the original “Протатон А” to sometime at the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th century (*ibid.,* pp. 10, 11).
\(^{16}\) Mylonas has not dedicated much attention to the narthex of this church in his articles.
\(^{17}\) It seems that the church has had the narthex since its foundation; the narthex was possibly two-storied, but its original form remains unknown (*cf.* Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή* [see *List of Abbreviations*], p. 279).
Sophia in Ohrid (the 11th-century phase), and the Vlacherna Monastery (Éleia; the 12th-century core).

It is hard to say how the narthex was equipped and used, since the original furnishings and wall paintings are missing. The present architectural form – acquired with the narthex’s rebuilding in 1507/08 – might not be the same as the original one. In fact, it is possible that the upper floor (Fig. 4), with katēchoumeneion and a chapel over the southwest corner room, was added only at this point. This supposition may be supported by the somewhat different architectural treatment of the south façade in the area of the chapel, where the sequence of large windows bringing light to the naos is not continued (Figs. 5, 6). Additionally, if the narthex originally had an upper floor, the stairwell would have been formed within an extra room.

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18 For these basilicas, see Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 227, 229 and 309, 231, 233, 318, 398-399, 414-415 (with bibliography in the notes), and figs. 239, 242 and 326, 245, 248, 339, 434, 455A, respectively. Cf. Dorde Strišević, “La rénovation du type basilical dans l’architecture ecclésiastique des pays centraux des Balkans aux IXe-Xle siècles,” in Actes du XIIe Congrès international d’études Byzantines, Ochride 10-16 septembre 1961, Vol. 1 (Belgrade: Comité yougoslave des études byzantines, 1963): 165-211. For a brief discussion of these basilicas’ narthexes, see Chapter 2, Excursus.

19 According to a Slavonic inscription on a marble plaque, once visible on the wall between the narthex and the nave, published by G[abriel] Millet, J. Pargoire et L[ouis David] Petit, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos: Première partie (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1904), No 1, p. 1. Cf. Милонас, „Заметки о архитектуре Афона,” p. 19 (as part of the Prōtaton D phase) and Petre Ş. Năsturel, Le mont Athos et les roumains: Recherches sur leurs réalisations du milieu du XVe siècle à 1654 (Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1986), p. 295. The narthex on the ground level was decorated with wall paintings, of which some red-painted fragments were discovered above the upper parts of newer, 18th-century wall paintings (Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Ὀρους, p. 61; for the 18th-century painting of the narthex’s north chamber see Γεώργιος Χρ. Τσιγαράς, «Οι τοιχογραφίες του βόρειου ναρθηκα του Πρωτάτου», in Γεώργιος Κυρ. Παπαζόγλου (ed.), Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης Βαρθολομαίος ο Α’, Δεκαέντε έτη ευκλέους πατριαρχείας (1991-2006) – Δόμημα μνήμης (Κομοτηνή: Δημοκρίτειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θράκης, 2007): 1-16). The composition of the Dormition (Κοιμήσις) of the Virgin in the lunette above the main entrance to the naos, with an inscription from 1511/12, is the only older painting that survives (Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Ὀρους, p. 61; for the inscription, see Millet, Pargoire, Petit, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos, No 2, pp. 1-2). Mylonas thought that the entire lower-level narthex was painted in 1512 (Μιλόνας, „Ζαμετκις οβ αρχιτεκτυρε Αφωνα,” p. 19). One, however, does not need necessarily to trust the 1507/8 inscription in the part that Voivode Bogdan III of Moldavia (1504-1517) “constructed everything,” i.e. the entire narthex. He might have contributed towards some repairs and remodeling of this area of the church. However, it seems very likely that at least the upper southwest corner room – if the upper floor was integral part of the original narthex – was transformed into the chapel (see further below, note 23). To make this issue more complicated, there is another source, a vita, which makes a reference of the Prōtaton’s narthex being built “from foundations” by prōtos Serapheim before 1539 (Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο άθωνικός μοναχισμός, p. 393, n. 236).
flanking the tripartite narthex, as it is the case in most of the above-mentioned urban basilicas. On the other hand, the Prōtaton church is a basilica of compact design and it is also possible that stairs were initially fitted in the northwest room as they are today. Thus, it is not impossible that there was an upper floor above the narthex as part of the original design.

The chapel in the southwest corner of the upper floor, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, was decorated with wall paintings only in 1525/6. On the ground level, the blocking of the openings between the corner rooms and the side aisles of the naos testifies to the fact that these rooms had gradually become subsidiary spaces – the south one having been transformed into a chapel, now dedicated to St. Cosmas the Prōtos rather than parts of the narthex, which was reduced to the central vestibule. Thus, the narthex of the Prōtaton underwent the process of reduction, the opposite of what was experienced by most of the Athonite churches of the time, whose narthexes – as it will be presented below – were enlarged. Since the church of the Prōtaton had a very specific function, first serving as Athos’s cathedral of sorts and later as the main church of a lavra formed around it, but always as an assembly church of the monastic community of Athos, its narthex was designed according to the needs imposed by such a

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21 Cf. Great Basilica of Pliska, Elenskata Bazilika, St. Sophia of Ohrid, and Vlacherna Monastery in Ėleia, all in the Balkans (above, note 18), as well as the church of Dere Ağzı (early 9th cent./?), in Asia Minor (James Morganstern, The Byzantine Church at Dereağzı and Its Decoration (Tübingen: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1983)).
22 See above, note 17. I did not have an opportunity myself to make an inspection of the actual stairwell and get a better understanding of its architectural and structural context. That is why I keep various solutions for the original narthex – single-floor or double-floor design, as well as stairs within or out of the northwest room – possible.
23 Painted donor’s inscription on the south wall in the chapel (Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Ἁγίου Ὄρους, p. 62; Millet, Pargoire, Petit, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos, No 7, p. 3).
25 The formation of a side chapel was, perhaps, an attempt to provide the main church with subsidiary liturgical spaces flanking the narthex in emulation of similar provisions in major katholika on the peninsula, such as the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Iveron (for these churches, see below; for a further discussion of the presence of lateral chapels in Athonite katholika, see Chapter 6).
26 See above, notes 12 and 13. In all likelihood, the basilican naos served as the assembly hall on those occasions, as the narthex would have been too small to accommodate large gatherings.
function. This may explain why this narthex survives almost unaltered, although different in form and organization from other narthexes of Athos, which were parts of monastic katholika and were intended to accommodate parts of specific monastic rituals.

**Philotheou**

Despite apparent peculiarities associated with the form and use of a basilica and its accompanying narthex, the Prōtaton was not the only church with a basilican plan on Athos. The old katholikon of the Philotheou monastery, according to a drawing of the monastery’s complex (Fig. 7) and a description of its church, both produced by Vasilii Grigorovich-Barskii during his 1744 visit, resembled a basilica (Fig. 8).27 The church was razed to the ground in order to make space for the present katholikon, built in 1746, only two years after Barskii’s visit.28

The old church’s atypical plan and form suggest that it may have been one of the oldest in the peninsula, probably dating back to the times before the foundation of the first major coenobitical communities, thus relating it both in form and function to the Prōtaton church.29

The eponymous founder of the monastery, one Philotheos, apparently was a contemporary of St. Athanasius the Athonite. According to a document, he founded, or rather re-founded, the

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27 The church “does not have any dome, but is covered with a vault or circular-shaped ceiling [barrel vault], affixed lengthwise” on four round masonry pillars (Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы [see List of Abbreviations], p. 120 and fig. between pp. 118 and 119). Mylonas (Милонас, „Заметкы об архитектуре Афона,“ p. 61 and his reconstruction of the church’s ground plan on p. 59) was convinced that the katholikon of Philotheou was a basilica similar to the Prōtaton and the church of the kelli of Ravdouchou (for the latter, see below).


29 This opinion was expressed already by Barskii (Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 120). In modern scholarship, it was raised again by Mylonas (Paul M. Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” in: Actes du XVe Congrès international d’études byzantines – Athènes, 1976: II, Art et archéologie: Communications (Athènes, 1981): 545-574, pp. 557-559, and Милонас, „Заметкы об архитектуре Афона,“ pp. 61-62), who applied it generally to all Athonite churches of a basilican plan (Prōtaton, Philotheou, and Ravdouchou) and who entertained an idea that Philotheou’s ancient church might have dated to the pre-monastic times of Athos. One of Mylonas’s arguments was that the basilican structure of these three churches was well-suited for simple liturgical rituals of anchorite monks (ibid.).
monastery in 991/2, because his act was viewed as belonging to the monastery’s second period of existence. This means that there was a monastic community at the site before the end of the 10th century. However, it is hard to determine if the basilican katholikon was built before or after this supposed foundation date. Robert W. Allison has expressed the opinion that this church probably dated from the 1141 re-foundation of the monastery under a certain Arsenios, whereas the original community gathered around Philotheos was organized as a monydrion (small monastery). Although the view of the 10th through 11th-century Philotheou as a small community appears correct, the construction of a basilica in the mid-12th century to serve as a katholikon seems highly unlikely, especially since Arsenios re-established the monastery in accordance with Evergetine ideals. It is more likely that the basilican church was inherited from some previous monastic community, perhaps older than the 10th century, and only renewed and appended with structures that may have been deemed necessary, such as the narthex.

Barskii records seeing two narthexes – an inner and an outer – and a porch; but he did not provide any details about their form apart from mentioning that the outer narthex is entered through two doors, the inner narthex through one door, and that the porch housed a source of running water. Also, he provides the rather vague information that each of the two narthexes had a pair of masonry piers. Therefore, the evidence is insufficient to allow us to determine the layout of either the church or its narthexes with any certainty. However, Barskii’s description and drawing of a belfry above the narthex allow us to propose a possible plan for the inner

30 If my reading of the document is correct. See the Greek passage and its English translation in Allison, op. cit., pp. 470-471.
31 Ibid., p. 465, n. 2.
32 Ibid., pp. 474-477.
33 See ibid., p. 482. Two surviving churches that belonged to communities organized on the Evergetine principles, the Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople and Kosmosoteira, feature cross-in-square plans. This is also the case with all contemporary katholika on Athos.
34 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 120.
35 Ibid.
narthex: it was a narrow room, as suggested by the size of the bell tower that protrudes from the roof, which covers both narthexes, and takes less than half of the roof’s length; judging by the height of the roof, the narthex probably had an upper floor. Beyond that, nothing more can be said.

Mylonas has proposed an ideal reconstruction of the church’s ground plan (Fig. 9a), but it certainly needs corrections in the narthex area. The large bulk in front of the church appears to be a later addition. In Barskii’s drawing, the bell tower protrudes from the roof, but is obviously attached to the front not to the side of the basilica, as shown in Mylonas’s plan. It is also likely that the inner narthex was integral to the original basilica, whereas the entire bulky structure added to the west constituted the outer narthex, possibly structured as a litē. However, since there is not enough evidence in regard to other details, especially in the interior, only a minimally corrected version of Mylonas’s proposal is provided here (Fig. 9b).

Ravdouchou and Kalamitsiōn

There are two more churches with a layout similar to that of the Prōtaton and, possibly, the katholikon of Philotheou that Barskii saw. The first is the church of the kellion of Ravdouchou (του Ῥαβδούχου) and the other has been discovered recently in a ruinous condition and identified as the katholikon of the Monastery of Kalamitsiōn (Μονή των Καλαμιτσίων). The kellion of Ravdouchou, located east of the Holy Mountain’s capital Karyes, was a monastery, active at least between 1142 and 1316, the years when its abbots are mentioned in documents.

36 Thus, the two masonry piers mentioned by Barskii (see previous note) may have been used to form a six-bayed hall.
37 Lit. “cell”, but in fact a smaller, monastic community, dependant on one of the bigger, self-governing monasteries (see Glossary).
38 Those are hegoumenos Gregory and hegoumenos Theodosius respectively, the latter mentioned as a dikaios to the prōtos (Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός, pp. 409, 419, n. 344). According to Kosmas Vlachos, the monastery is repeatedly mentioned in 11th-century documents as well (Кοσμάς Βλάχος, Η χερσόνησος του Αγίου...
By the 14th century, the monastery apparently declined to the extent that, after being damaged in a Turkish raid, it was given to the *megas primikirios* Alexios Palaiologos and his brother, the *protosebastos* John, in 1356 or early 1357. This was, however, the base for the establishment of a new monastery, Pantokratoros, to which Ravdouchou has belonged to this day.

The church and a tower, now part of a compound built around them in 1773 and expanded in 1851, are apparently all that remains of the medieval architecture of this small monastery (*Fig. 10*). Judging from the church’s morphology and sculptured stone decoration, the construction can be dated to the 11th century. As Mylonas has shown, here one can see an attempt to reproduce the form of the *Prōtaton*, only on a more modest scale (*Fig. 11*). The same may have been the case with a ruined church located at the site of a monastery known as ‘Ορους Αθω και αι εν αυτη μοναί και οι μοναχοί παλαί τε κα και νυν: Μελέτη ιστορική και κριτική (Βόλος: Πανθεσσαλικόν τυπογραφείον Αθ. Πλατανιώτου, 1903), pp. 35, 43; cited after Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” p. 547, and Nikolaoς Touts and Geōrgios Foustoris (Τοοτός, Φουστέρης, Ευερετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, p. 330) have done – then the monastery was founded some time in the 10th century.

Георгије Острогорски, Секрец одбасни после Душанове смрти (Београд: Научно дело, 1965), p. 112, and Душан Кораћ, „Света Гора под српском влашћу (1345-1371),“ ZRVI 31 (1992): 5-199, pp. 134-135. Mylonas, in his articles “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” p. 547, and „Заметки об архитектуре Афона,“ pp. 55-56, maintained the view that the damages were inflicted by either the Unionists (in 1270s) or Catalans (at the beginning of the 14th century).

Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” pp. 547-549; Μυλωνάς, „Ζαμετκυ οβ αρχιτεκτυρε Αφοια,“ p. 56. These two articles are virtually the only studies of the Ravdouchou church’s architecture. Unfortunately, neither discusses the narthex.

Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” pp. 549-550; Μυλωνάς, „Ζαμετκυ οβ αρχιτεκτυρε Αφοια,“ p. 56; Μαμαλόύκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 280. The oldest surviving frescoes in the church are paintings of Apostles Peter and Paul, dated to ca. 1200 (Μυλωνάς, „Ζαμετκυ οβ αρχιτεκτυρε Αφοια,“ p. 58; Τοοτός, Φουστέρης, Ευερετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, p. 330, with older bibliography).

Kalamitsiōn, which is almost identical in plan and size to that of Ravdouchou (Fig. 13).\(^4\)

However, despite the similarities with the Prōtaton, both smaller churches feature narthexes that differ from that of the supposed prototype, not only in terms of their dimensions relative to the naos, but also in the plan and form (Fig. 12). Each of the two narthexes consists of a single, oblong room, its length being the same as the width of the naos. There is only one entrance from outside, in the center of the west wall, and one door connects it with the naos. The only other openings were probably windows, one on the north and south side, as well as another two flanking the main entrance on the west façade.\(^4\) All the churches’ façades were enlivened with stepped pilasters and recessed arches, positioned in a rhythm roughly corresponding to the building’s internal structural organization (see Figs. 12, 13d).\(^4\)

Inside the narthex at Ravdouchou, there are two semicircular niches in the east wall, on each side of the door leading to the naos (Fig. 12). It is recorded that an arcosolium used to

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\(^4\) The remains of a church at the area of Kalamitsiōn in the vicinity of the Vatopedi monastery were discovered and cleared up in 2005, during a woodcutting in a dense forest (Σταύρος Μαμαλούκος, «Η προσέγγιση της διαδικασίας του σχεδιασμού στη Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική μέσα από τη μελέτη των μνημείων. Μια αφορμή για προβληματισμό σχετικά με τη χρήση προπλασμάτων», in Ιωάννης Δ. Βαράλης (ed.), Προπλασμάτα στη Μεαιωνική αρχιτεκτονική (Βυζάντιο, ΝΑ Ευρώπη, Ανατολία). Θεματικές εξηγήσεις, ελεύθερες παρεμβάσεις και συζήτηση – Πρακτικά (Θεσσαλονίκη: University Studio Press, 2009): 37-48, p. 40, n. 11). A photo of the remains and drawings of the church’s plan, section, and reconstructed façades were published in ibid., figs. 8-10. The monastery of Kalamitsiōn is mentioned by Γεράσιμος Σμυρνάκης, Τό Άγιον Όρος (Αθήναι: Α. Κωνσταντίνουδης, 1903, reprinted: Καρυές: Πανσέληνος, 1988), p. 451. A comprehensive study of this church, including its dating, is yet to be published. The similarities with the church of Ravdouchou and the preserved elements of the external articulation of the east apses and parts of the façades suggest a Middle Byzantine date.

\(^4\) See Mamaloukos’s reconstructions of the ground plans of Ravdouchou in Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, the illustrations section, p. 125, drawing 87 (reproduced here as Fig. 12) and of Kalamitsiōn in Μαμαλούκος, «Η προσέγγιση της διαδικασίας του σχεδιασμού στη Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική μέσα από τη μελέτη των μνημείων», fig. 10 (reproduced here as Fig. 13).

\(^4\) For Ravdouchou, see drawings by Mylonas (Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” fig. 11 on p. 557) and Mamaloukos (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawing 87, Fig. 12 here). The upper parts of the south façade are discernible in a photograph reproduced in Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” fig. 2 on p. 546, whereas a photograph of a part of the north façade is included in Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 358, fig. 450. When it comes to the church of Kalamitsiōn, its south and north walls have completely fallen down and only modest remains of the west façade can confirm the same architectural treatment as at Ravdouchou.
occupy the south end of the narthex. At Kalamitsiōn, only the lower part of the east wall’s north section has survived and the south section is completely gone, so it is impossible to confirm if concave niches were also employed there. The entire church of Ravdouchou was covered with a wooden-truss roof, and the same may have been the case at Kalamitsiōn too. The height of the narthex, as reconstructed by Mamaloukos in both cases, allows for the possibility of the existence of an upper floor, but given the low height of the remnant walls, I would not exclude the possibility that the narthexes were lower, without additional floors, and covered with wooden lean-to roofs.

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These few known examples of basilican churches on Mount Athos raise questions about the reasons for the employment of this architectural type and the causes for its later abandonment. It is plausible that some of oldest Athonite monasteries (i.e. lavrai of anchorites), now no longer extant, had their churches built as basilicas, possibly better suited for their non-coenobitic or, rather, semi-coenobitic monastic life style. We know for sure that the Prōtaton was the central church of the monastic settlement (Karyes, Mesē, or the Lavra of Karyes) that seems to have been structured as a lavra or a skētē. The preference for a basilican layout over

46 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 280, and shown on his drawing of the ground plan (Fig. 12 here).
47 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 280.
48 See above, note 29. For an examination of the relationship between the coenobitic and anchorite monasticisms in Byzantium, and particularly of the lavriotic organization as the form halfway between the two, with the special regard to how the relevant distinctions and interdependences manifested during the period between the 8th and 11th centuries, see Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός, pp. 56-81.
49 The term η Μέση (lit. middle or central) is often applied to Karyes in documents between the 980s and the 1370s (Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός, p. 308). The name Lavra of Karyes (η Λάυρα των Καρυών) first occurred in the Life of St. Athanasius the Athonite (beginning of the 11th century), but was more often used from the late 13th onwards (ibid., pp. 309-310). Dionysia Papachrysanthou considers the application of the term “lavra” to Karyes as purely honorific, not as a reference to the organization of the settlement (ibid.). However, it is possible that the actual physical appearance of the settlement, which was comprised of a number of dispersed houses and dwelling compounds, as well as the presence of independent cells, i.e. small monastic units of few individuals (also
others can be justified through the likely situation experienced in the lavriotic communities, namely a less frequent occurrence of liturgical, \textit{i.e.} Eucharistic gatherings, limited to Sundays and great feasts, but with greater numbers of attendees involved. Monks living virtually as solitaries or in smaller groups would gather only for solemn occasions, while their daily liturgical rule would be carried out either in the chapels adjacent to their monastic abodes or in their own cells. In such a situation, there was a need for a central church building with a large \textit{naos}, whereas the narthex, as well as other subsidiary spaces, was of lesser importance, perhaps even unnecessary.\textsuperscript{50} Under these circumstances, a basilica seems better suited than any other architectural accommodation.\textsuperscript{51}

The only other \textit{lavra} of the period presently known to me are two monastic complexes on Mount Latros, those of Kellibarōn and Stylos, which have been dated to the 10\textsuperscript{th} century and identified as \textit{lavra} by their explorers.\textsuperscript{52} There is evidence of three small, single-naved churches at Kellibarōn and none of them can be identified as the main church of the community.\textsuperscript{53} At Stylos, which was founded by St. Paul of Latros (d. 955), there is a large church, which was originally single-aisled, with two side aisles added later; each of the three aisles is preceded by a

\textsuperscript{50} For the role of the narthex and adjacent spaces in the liturgical ritual of coenobitic communities, see Chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{51} Similarly, the predominant use of the basilica as for Early Christian urban churches can be explained through their congregational character and accommodation of large numbers of attendants.

\textsuperscript{52} Anthony Kirby, Zeynep Mercangöz, “The Monasteries of Mt Latros and their Architectural Development,” in \textit{Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis} (see \textit{List of Abbreviations}): 51-77, pp. 65-69, 75, figs. 11, 12. These \textit{lavra} were transformed into \textit{koinobia} at least by the late 11\textsuperscript{th} century (\textit{ibid.}, p. 69). Using information from the \textit{vita} of St. Paul of Latros (written in the second half of the 10\textsuperscript{th} century), Papachrysanthou has inferred that these and some other \textit{lavra} of Latros were organized as coenobitic communities that included a number of dependent anchorites (see Παπαχρυσάνθου, \textit{Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός}, pp. 72-75).

\textsuperscript{53} Kirby, Mercangöz, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 61, n. 46, and p. 65.
corresponding narthex (Fig. 14).\(^{54}\) It seems that there was a preference for elongated, hall-like churches with these two communities. One is reminded that a similar church serves the Lavra of St. Sabbas near Jerusalem (Fig. 15). However, these few examples are perhaps not sufficient to establish a firm relationship between lavriotic monasticism and basilican church types. Moreover, one should be careful in employing such a simplistic explanation and in drawing direct connection between function and form. A better knowledge of the organization and lifestyle of monastic communities that espoused particular forms of monasticism is needed, as well as the exploration of the remains in other monastic centers from the same period, in order to help us confirm or reject this explanation of obvious differences in church planning. Nonetheless, I think that an awareness of the role of the monastic life and organization in church planning and design is needed.

This awareness also applies to the subject of this study, the narthex, which poses a similar question as to whether a particular type of narthex can be associated with a certain form of monasticism. Since no other basilicas survive on Athos and we know virtually nothing of the physical structures of early lavriotic communities on the peninsula, it is hard to say if there was any common and well-established design pattern, which – if it existed – was halted by the introduction of the cross-in-square type with lateral choroi by St. Athanasius of Athos.\(^{55}\) All the other surviving katholika of Athos followed up the precedent established by Athanasius, both in their naoi and their narthexes. The churches of Radvouchou and Kalamitsiōn, although featuring naoi similar to that of the Prōtaton, have narthexes that are well integrated into the whole building and show no apparent difference in plan from the other smaller churches of the period.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., p. 68. For Paul of Latros, see ODB, Vol. 3, p. 1608; an English translation of his testament for the Stylos monastery can be found in BMFD, pp. 135-142.

\(^{55}\) Cf. Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” p. 559.
on Mount Athos.\textsuperscript{56} I believe that this is not a product of the smaller scale, as it may appear, but rather a conscious decision driven by current trends in monastic circles of that time, namely the spread of coenobitic monasticism on the peninsula, on the one hand, and the rising need for the space provided by a narthex, on the other. We should be reminded that the church of Ravdouchou was built in the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, when the major coenobitic establishments had been in place for several decades and the new needs that conditioned their narthexes and benefits achieved by their presence and form were well known on the Holy Mountain. Therefore, I would be inclined to see the narthex of Ravdouchou as an embodiment of current trends in function and form of this part of a coenobitic monastic church, whereas the naos was still in keeping with local building traditions, perhaps because local builders were employed or, if we accept the idea that the basilica was closer to the needs and preferences of a lavriotic community, because it was built for such a monastic group. Or, it merely paid homage to the revered church of the Prōtaton by emulating its plan and form.\textsuperscript{57} I now turn to the Middle Byzantine cross-in-square churches, some of them belonging and still serving the oldest and most prestigious coenobitic communities of Athos – the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Ivērōn.

b) Narthexes of Cross-in-Square Churches

\textit{Great Lavra}

The \textit{katholikon} of the Great Lavra (\textit{Figs. 16 to 21}), the monastery that ever since its foundation has been the leading, highest-ranking, and trend-setting community, was constructed about the same time as the Prōtaton, but was designed according to a new, cross-in-square plan. At the

\textsuperscript{56} Such as the churches of St. Procopius, Voroskopou, and Melissourgeiou, which are presented below.

\textsuperscript{57} See note 42 above and Μαμαλούκος, «Η προσέγγιση της διαδικασίας του σχεδιασμού στη Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική μέσα από τη μελέτη των μνημείων», p. 40.
moment of the *katholikon*’s construction, the cross-in-square plan had been relatively recently adopted in Constantinopolitan church architecture and was soon to become the dominant type in Byzantine church planning during the following centuries.\textsuperscript{58} This plan was modified on Athos only with the addition of conches at the ends of the inscribed cross’s north and south arms, probably in order to accommodate two choirs of chanters, thus acquiring a distinct layout (Figs. 22 to 27).\textsuperscript{59} The change was first introduced in the Lavra and soon Ivērōn, whose *katholikon* apparently followed suit and underwent the same process.\textsuperscript{60} This composite plan was later adopted for church designs of almost all *katholika* on Athos, thus becoming defined by modern scholarship as the “Athonite church plan,” even when used for churches outside the Holy Mountain.\textsuperscript{61}

According to Pavlos Mylonas, the construction of the *katholikon* of the Great Lavra began around 960.\textsuperscript{62} The works were conducted by St. Athanasius the Athonite, who had founded the monastery soon after his arrival on Mount Athos.\textsuperscript{63} The church was mostly finished before Athanasius’s death (ca. 1001). Its present form is a result of these original building efforts, as well as many rebuildings, alterations, and additions that have taken place over the past millennium. However, thanks to the records of those works and several graphic renderings of the church in periods between transformations, as well as to some archaeological observations, Mylonas was able to determine its building history.\textsuperscript{64} He distinguished at least eight major

\textsuperscript{58} See Chapter 2 and Chapter 2, Excursus.  
\textsuperscript{59} Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite” (cited in note 5 above), esp. pp. 96-98.  
\textsuperscript{60} See below, note 116.  
\textsuperscript{61} For the most recent study of the “Athonite plan,” as well as Byzantine and Post-Byzantine churches that feature it, see Μεσσής, «Ναοί αθωνικού τύπου» (cited in note 8); see also Mamaloukos, “A Contribution to the Study of the ‘Athonite’ Church Type of Byzantine Architecture” (also cited in note 8).  
\textsuperscript{63} For bibliography on the circumstances related to the Great Lavra’s foundation, see note 5 above.  
\textsuperscript{64} Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra…,” pp. 103-106.
phases in the evolution of this structure, providing ideal reconstructions of the church’s plan in some of them (Fig. 29).

Mylonas’s study of the church confirmed that the original plan of the naos was not a triconch (Fig. 29a), since the lateral apses were added only around 1001 under the direction of Athanasius himself (Fig. 29b).65 The original design included a narthex,66 very much in line with what can be observed in contemporary churches of the cross-in-square building type.67 This narthex is now lost, due to the transformation of this part of the church into a litē in 1814 (Figs. 25, 26).68 Fortunately, the original stone floor pavement has survived (Figs. 27, 27A, 28), incorporated in the paving of the present litē, revealing the size and layout of the original narthex. Most likely, its east, north and south walls – being shared with the naos and two side chapels – also survive. The position of the west wall of the narthex cannot be precisely determined without archaeological excavations. However, there are a few pieces of evidence that can help in establishing the wall’s most probable position. First, inferring from the westward range of the ancient flooring, the wall had approximately the same position as the pair of columns of the present litē, perhaps slightly more westward (Fig. 30).69 That is confirmed by the information on the size of the original narthex provided by two 18th-century accounts: Barskii gives six paces of the “measuring and ordinary human walk” as the width of the narthex and

65 Ibid., p. 104.
66 That the katholikon had a narthex already during the lifetime of St. Athanasius is confirmed by his Hypotyposis – (11) Ath. Rule, # [1], [21], [26], in BMFD, pp. 221, 225, 226; cf. Милонас, „Заметки об архитектуре Афона,” p. 28, n. 104.
67 See Chapter 2 and Chapter 2, Excursus.
69 As reconstructed by Mylonas (Милонас, „Заметки об архитектуре Афона,” p. 24, drawing on p. 29; here reproduced as Fig. 29). It is possible that the present pair of columns use the foundation of the west wall of the original narthex.
Sabbas, a *skeuophylax* of the monastery, measured the width at 14 spans (σπιθαμή). These dimensions range from *ca.* 3.10m (14 spans) to *ca.* 3.60m (6 paces). Thus, the narthex was about half the size of the present *litē* and had its lateral doors – now leading to the side chapels – positioned centrally in the north and south walls. Such a layout can be confirmed in a precious visual record left by Barskii, a sketch of the church’s ground plan (*Fig. 24*). Only there, the west wall of the narthex is aligned with the west walls of the lateral *parekklēsia*; but this must be a mistake made by Barskii, who otherwise gives fairly accurate spatial relationships in his plan.

The two lateral chapels – the northern one dedicated to the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia and the southern to St. Nicholas – were attached to the sides of the narthex, together with small narthexes of their own, in the course of the 11th century (*Fig. 29c*). Mylonas has proposed the period of *ca.* 1010-1020 as the time when the chapels were constructed, but it is also possible that at least one of them was built during Athanasius’s lifetime. The northern *parekklēsion* was built to house the tomb of Athanasius or, more likely, he was actually buried in the already existing chapel, in its northwest bay (*Fig. 31*). This chapel’s construction had probably preceded

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71 Calculations made by Gabriel Millet, “Recherches au Mont Athos,” *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 29 (1905): 55-98, п. 90, who uses the Attic span (0.222m) and a pace of 0.60m. The latter value most probably comes from the comparison of the measurement given by Barskii for the naos’s length (from the west entrance to “the end of the altar”) and width (including the side conches), i.e. 26 and 30 paces (Барский, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, п. 17), and the actual values, *ca.* 14.30m (measured between the west and east walls, excluding the altar apse) and *ca.* 16.70m. This means that Barskii’s pace was *ca.* 0.55m. However, the measure of 55 paces he provides for the length of the *exonarthex*, which extends in front of the inner narthex and the two side *parekklēsia*, as Barskii notes himself (*ibid.*), when compared with the actual dimension of *ca.* 24.40m, results in the value of 0.44m for Barskii’s pace. Therefore, there is a possibility that the narthex’s width was less than 3.60m and closer to 3.10m, as it comes out from the measurement provided by Sabbas the Skeuophylax. Nonetheless, Millet proposed an unlikely reconstruction, following the plan produced by Barskii, which had the narthex’s west wall aligned with the west walls of the *parekklēsia*, making the narthex 4.42m wide (Millet, *op. cit.*, п. 90 и fig. 5). This has been rectified by Mylonas (see note 69 above).

72 Барский, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, the plate inserted between pp. 76 and 77.

73 Милонас, „Заметки об архитектуре Афона,“ п. 30, based on the fact that a chapel is mentioned in the *Hypotyposis* (dated to 963 and possibly revised ca. 1020) – (11) Ath. Rule, # [1], in *BMFD*, p. 221. Both *vitae* of St. Athanasius give accounts of him hearing confessions of his monks in a subsidiary chapel (see *Chapter 3* and *Chapter 6*), thus suggesting that one or both chapels existed already during his lifetime. For further discussion of the problems pertaining to the dating of the chapels, see *BMFD*, p. 210, n. 31, and p. 229, n. 1.
the erection of its southern counterpart. Barskiǐ’s drawing also shows an elongated exonarthex (see Fig. 24), which on its northern and southern ends extended into the narrow narthexes of the parekklēsia and shared the west façade with them. This part of Barskiǐ’s drawing is probably accurate. Ancient stone pavements of the chapels’ narthexes still survive, confirming that although fairly small, narthexes existed and accompanied the two subsidiary churches (Fig. 27).

The construction of the exonarthex was most likely instigated by the existence of the chapels and the need to have the remaining space between them covered and can be dated to the 11th century. The octagonal baldachin-like phialē was built in front of the exonarthex, at some distance to the west, in 1635. It most probably was erected as a replacement for the phialē consecrated in 1060.

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74 See previous note. Mylonas has erroneously proposed that Athanasius was originally buried somewhere else and that his remains were only translated to the north chapel upon its completion ca. 1010-1020 (Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra…” pp. 95, 104; Mylonas, „Заметкы об архитектуре Афона,“ pp. 28-30). For a discussion of burials in chapels attached to the catholikon, including examples of burials of the monastic founders, see Marinis, Architecture and Ritual (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 84-86.

75 The exonarthex is labeled in the drawing as “ο δευτερος εξωτερικος ναθρης”, whereas the inner narthex is marked as “ο πρωτος ναθρης” (Barskiǐ, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, the legend accompanying the plan of the church inserted between pp. 76 and 77). The text uses the same term, nanepra (“narthex”), for both the inner and the second narthex (labeled as the inner and outer, внтр[е]ния и внтр[е]ння, respectively — Barskiǐ, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 14), whereas the outermost room, apparently a light-structured porch that existed at that time (see below), is termed предпращея (lit. “the room preceding the door”), most likely corresponding to the Greek word προπύλαιον or, rather, προθύρα (as it is written in the plan’s legend) — Barskiǐ, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 14 (cf. Modern Greek translation, Βασίλης Γρηγοριοβίτης Μπάρσκι, Τα ταξίδια του στο Αγιον Όρος, 1725-1726, 1744-1745 [μετάφραση: Ελένη Στεργιουπούλου], με την φροντίδα και τα σχόλια του ακαδημαϊκού Παύλου Μυλωνά (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αγιορετική Εστία, [Αθήνα: Μουσείο Μπενάκη, 2009], p. 225, where the last term is rendered as προναρθύνας). It is interesting to note additional designations of these spaces found in Barskiǐ’s chart: the naos’s west part is described as the place reserved for deacon-monks and pilgrims («О тός των ιεροδιακόνων και προσκυνητών»), the inner narthex was assigned to “simple monks” («των απλων μοναχών»), and the outer narthex to “all monks” («πάντων των μοναχών»). I have not found any similar description in medieval sources, so I presume that these bear witness of certain contemporary uses, which occasionally can still be observed today during services in Athonite katholika, when non-ordained monks tend to stay in the narthex while attending a service, most likely out of humility.


Mylonas believes that this agglomeration at the church’s west end, although first recorded in the form outlined above only in the early 16th century, had not been significantly changed since the end of the 11th century (Fig. 29c). Based on some 16th-century and early-19th-century pictorial renderings of the katholikon (Fig. 32), as well as on Barskii’s record of four columns immured in the west wall of the exonarthex, Mylonas has reconstructed the exonarthex as a porch, with four columns supporting the roof and five arched openings in between (Figs. 29c, 33). The arcade of the portico was walled up (Fig. 29d), presumably after one of several earthquakes that inflicted some damage on the church in the 16th century. And this new wall – connecting the west walls of the parekklēsia’s narthexes – was not exactly parallel to the other wall, contrary to what is shown in Barskii’s plan. It had to be adjusted to the narthex of the south chapel, which was narrower than the other. At the time of Barskii’s 1744 visit, in addition to the inner and outer narthexes, there was a porch (Fig. 24), clearly built of light materials, most likely timber (Fig. 29d). Everything was completely transformed in 1814.

After both narthexes had been demolished, a new, larger narthex in the form of a litē – with two
columns, six bays, and a dome over the main entrance bay – was constructed (Figs. 25 to 27). Essentially, the wall separating the old narthex and the exonarthex was removed and their spaces were merged into one to form the present litē.

The 16th-century paintings of the church (Figs. 32 a, b) are virtually the only sources of information concerning the elevation of the two narthexes. The exonarthex, as mentioned, had five openings and assumed the appearance of an arcaded portico. According to the paintings, it was seemingly lower than the inner narthex behind it and stretched left and right in front of the parekklēsia (represented with domes). Nonetheless, taking into account the specific mode of representation, Mylonas concluded that the five-arched opening of the portico took up only the space between the two chapels (Fig. 33). As a confirmation of this view, he relied on Barskii’s drawing of the ground plan and descriptions, and compared the feature to a similar solution applied to the exonarthex of Vatopedi’s katholikon.83

The west façade of the inner narthex is shown rising above the portico’s roof and it is fairly elaborate: it is divided into three arched segments, with the central one being wider and taller than the other two, and has many windows (Figs. 32 a, b, c). The central window extends slightly lower than the others and thus appears as a door (Fig. 32b). All these make clear reference to the existence of the second floor above the narthex, which was also recorded by Barskii.84 He mentions katēchoumena placed above the narthexes and “between the two little domes,” but such a position and the way the interior is described probably meant that only the inner narthex had an upper storey.85 This room visually communicated with the naos through an

83 Милонас, „Заметкы об архитектуре Афона,“ p. 28. For Vatopedi’s exonarthex, see further below.
84 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 15 (Мпáрсκи, Τά ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος, p. 225).
85 The word used by Barskii, хоры, literally means “choirs” and comes from the Greek χόροι, but actually stands for “gallery” and, although grammatically in plural, it implies singular – cf. Б. М. Волин, Д. Н. Ушаков (eds.), Токовый словарь русского языка, Том IV (Москва: Государственное издательство иностранных и национальных словарей, 1940), p. 1179. An upper floor of the inner narthex would have stood exactly between
opening, now blocked, but whose position is indicated on the *naos* side by the recessed area in the west wall lacking wall paintings. The rectangular shape of the unpainted area suggests that the opening was in the form of a *tribēlon* with arches of the same height, similar to that at Vatopedi (see Figs. 53, 79, 80).

The existence of a storey above the narthex is also mentioned in the testament of St. Athanasius (dated to after 993): “I leave it [i.e. the testament] with the monk Michael, the ecclesiarch, to be kept safely in the *katechoumeneion*.” This confirms that this part of the narthex was included in the original design of the church. Moreover, the context – the safekeeping of the document – suggests that at least a part of the *katēchoumeneion* was used as the archive/library or the *skueophylakion*. A library located in the *katēchoumena* was also noted by Barskii. It is very likely that both records refer to the same room or, at least, the same use of the over-narthex through the centuries. However, this was not the only facility accommodated there. Barskii also witnessed a small chapel, dedicated to the Holy Five Martyrs.

The two domes of the side chapels. For further information provided by Barskii on the *katēchoumena*, see next paragraph.

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86 See diagram of the *naos*’s iconographic program (painted in 1534/5) in Toutóς, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής τού Άγιου Ὄρους, p. 67. Barskii saw this opening (Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 127). The upper elements of the opening were revealed during the reconstruction works on the church’s roof, which were presented by Sotiris Voyadjis at the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Belgrade, on August 24, 2016 – http://byz2016.rs/SSS/Sreda/029_potvrdj%20chair_Byzantine%20Architecture%20_%20Part%202.pdf (accessed on September 9, 2016).

87 (14) Ath. Testament, # [1], in *BMFD*, p. 274. For the date of this document, see *ibid.*, p. 271, n. 1.

88 Anastasios Tantsēs, in his doctoral dissertation (Αναστάσιος Α. Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία» PhD Dissertation (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης - Σχολή Φιλοσοφική, Τμήμα Ιστορίας και Αρχαιολογίας. Τόμος Βυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας, 2008), pp. 81-82), has expressed reservations about this information in regard to whether it points to a space located above the narthex and whether the room was part of the church at all, although he admits that the room over the narthex would have been “ideal for storing valuable documents and other objects,” due to the hidden position of the room and the controlled access to it. At other places in his dissertation, where he reiterates the positive arguments on the safety of the narthex’s upper storey (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 170, 184), he allows the possibility that the Lavra’s *katēchoumeneion* could have been used as a library. I believe that the use of the term *katēchoumeneion*, which at the time was used to refer to the over-narthex (see Chapter 5), and the entrusting the matter to the ecclesiarch, who was in charge of affairs pertaining to the church building, clearly point to the space which certainly was within the *katholikon* and most likely located at the upper level of the narthex. On the other hand, the question of the exact function of the room – library, archive, *skueophylakion*, or a combination of all three – remains open (see Chapter 5).

89 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pp. 15, 32 (for a Greek translation, see Μπάρσκι, Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Ὄρος, pp. 225, 240).
(Eustratius, Eugene, Auxentius, Mardarius, and Orestes) and located “to the right”, i.e. to the south,\(^90\) and a cell in which St. Athanasius lived “to the left”, i.e. north.\(^91\) Apparently, an abbot’s quarters that included his cell, a room or area used as a library, and a chapel, intended for his private prayers and devotions, was organized in the over-narthex.

The architectural layout and form of this area deserve examination. Mylonas has speculated that the *katēchoumena* extended above the northwest and southwest corner bays of the *naos*, forming a U shape in plan, and that the chapel may have taken the room above the southwest bay, whereas the cell occupied the room above the northwest bay.\(^92\) This calls to mind the architectural solutions in the Theotokos church of the Lips monastery and, particularly, in Eski İmaret Camii at Constantinople (see *Figs. 195, 220, 224*).\(^93\) Mylonas does not provide any evidence or argument that may have led him to this idea. But the possibility for such a layout, nonetheless, should not be dismissed. First, the corner bays of the Lavra’s *katholikon* are considerably larger than those of the two Constantinopolitan churches and a fair-sized chapel could have been easily accommodated above each of them. Moreover, the altar apse of the chapel would have fit well within the thickness formed by the massive pier and the external wall.\(^94\) Still today, the height of the *naos*’s western corner bays is considerably greater than that of the corresponding areas at the east end (see *Figs. 19, 34*), which further supports the possibility that there were rooms accommodated on the upper level.\(^95\) And second, the way

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\(^90\) Барский, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, pp. 12 (with the names of the martyrs listed) and 15.

\(^91\) *Ibid.*, p. 15. That by “left” Barskii indeed meant “to the north” can be confirmed at another place in his book (see *ibid.*, p. 128).

\(^92\) Μπάρσκι, *Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Ὄρος*, p. 225, n. 37.

\(^93\) See Chapter 2.

\(^94\) The recesses and passageways on the east sides of the corner bays at the ground level seem to correspond to the apse (in the chapel) and a possible recess (in the cell) and they may have been designed purposefully, to relieve the bulkiness of the piers in the areas that did not play role in carrying any structural load.

\(^95\) These two areas need closer inspection in order to determine whether any potential remnants of the two rooms of the *katēchoumena* still survive.
Barskii describes the area of the *katēchoumena*, as being covered with three spherical vaults,\(^96\) suggests the three-bayed structure of the space and seemingly points to the over-narthex area as an undivided room. If this was the case, the chapel and the cell could have been accommodated only in the areas above the *naos*’s western corner bays (*Fig. 35*). The less likely alternative is that the *exonarthex* also had an upper floor and that it was the room with three domical vaults Barskii saw.\(^97\) The chapel and the cell then could have been housed in the area above the inner narthex, at the south and north ends respectively. In such a constellation, the room on top of the *exonarthex* would have assumed the role of an antechamber for the chapel and abbot’s cell and would have housed the library.\(^98\) However, since the *exonarthex* most probably did not have an upper storey,\(^99\) the solution proposed by Mylonas and elaborated above seems more likely.\(^100\) It is not known how the *katēchoumena* were accessed and the solution of this problem can only be speculated. This issue and, more importantly, the placement of what appears to have been the abbot’s quarters in the over-narthex area are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

The above-mentioned historical depictions of the *katholikon* (*Fig. 32*) seem to be fairly accurate renditions of the architectural articulation of the inner narthex’s west façade both in its totality and in its details. The west façades of the contemporary narthexes of Vatopedi and, probably, Ivērōn were very similar: a tripartite division, with stepped pilasters – corresponding to

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\(^96\) Барский, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, p. 15 („трема кругамы или зводамы заклепенны‟, i.e. “covered with three spheres or vaults”). These must have been sail-vaults, since in referring to blind domes of the *exonarthex*’s upper storey at Ivērōn, Barskii uses another word, главицы, i.e. “little domes” (*cf. ibid.*, p. 127).

\(^97\) In this form, the *exonarthex*’s upper storey would have resembled its counter part at Ivērōn (see previous note and below).

\(^98\) See below for a similar organization of the *katēchoumena* at Vatopedi.

\(^99\) See above.

\(^100\) Nonetheless, the possibility that there were chambers ontop of *naos*’s west corner bays was dismissed by the results of the research conducted in relation to the reconstruction works on the roof of the church, when it was revealed that there were no such rooms. This information was made available in the presentation of the works by Sotiris Voyadjis at the 23\(^{rd}\) International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Belgrade, on August 24, 2016 – [http://byz2016.rs/SSS/Sreda/029_potvrda%20chair_Byzantine%20Architecture%20%20Part%202.pdf](http://byz2016.rs/SSS/Sreda/029_potvrda%20chair_Byzantine%20Architecture%20%20Part%202.pdf) (accessed on September 9, 2016), but came too late to be fully included in the present study, which I decided to leave unrevised regarding this issue both here and in Chapter 5.
the three-bayed arrangement in the interior – and recessed arches, whose outer edges form the roofline. The only difference is the lack of a pair of small domes in the Lavra, whereas they cover diminutive chapels on the upper floors of the other two katholika. If the painted representations are to be trusted in this segment – and I do not see a reason why they should not be – then the upper floor of the Lavra’s narthex did not have domes and, as seen above, was covered with some sort of spherical vaults – either blind domes or sail-vaults. Whichever solution was applied, the vaults were not visible above the roofline and therefore not represented in the pictorial renditions.

Returning to the interior of the narthex, the tripartite division of the narthex’s façade in the renderings can be used with a fair amount of certainty as a further proof of the three-bayed organization of the narthex’s upper, as well as lower level. Such a structural system can not only be observed in the churches of Ivērōn and Vatopedi, but also in other Middle Byzantine churches of the cross-in-square type, both in Constantinople and elsewhere. Based on the dimensions and ratio of the original narthex and a comparison with these churches, I would suggest that the position of the two arches dividing the narthex’s interior into bays was such that the central bay on the ground floor was of a square plan and possibly covered with a blind dome or a sail-dome (Fig. 30). The possibility that the central bay had a domical vaulting is additionally accentuated by a more elaborate treatment of the stone pavement in this area: there is a

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101 For the reconstruction of Vatopedi’s katholikon’s original west façade, see further below.
102 See above, note 96. Contrary to this, Voyadjis, “The Initial Phase of the Katholikon of the Greatest Lavra Monastery, Mount Athos through Evidence of Its Phiale” has proposed that the katēchoumena did include twin domes over its north and south compartments. According to him, the two small domes depicted in the painted renditions (see note 79 above) belonged to the katēchoumena, not the chapels adjacent to the main church. However, I do not see grounds for such an interpretation, because at least the two 16th-century paintings clearly show the domes seating on roofs below the narthex’s upper storey, which is set between them. Moreover, Barskii definitely saw only three domes in the entire katholikon and precisely describes them as belonging to the main church and the two side parekkλēsia on the ground level (see Барский, Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος, p. 225).
103 See Chapter 2.
104 See more about this in Chapter 4.
105 Compare with surviving vaults at Ivērōn and Vatopedi (see below).
decorative, geometrical design, fitted into a square frame (Fig. 28). Whether a conscious reminiscence of such an architectural arrangement or not, a full dome with a twelve-sided drum is part of the present litē’s design (Figs. 20, 21, 25). It is only positioned further westward, above the west central bay, immediately after one enters the space through the west door. It is interesting to note again that both lateral parekklēsia had narthexes of their own and that their stone floor pavements have designs that include special treatment of the bay in front of the entrance to the nave (see Fig. 27). And in these two cases we know that there certainly were three bays in each narthex, due to the preserved pairs of pilasters on the narthexes’ east walls, which correspond exactly to the inner structures of the chapels. The three-bay arrangement of the narthex’s upper floor and its vaulting are already discussed above and a hypothetical reconstruction is shown in Fig. 35.

In terms of openings, the original narthex at the ground level apparently had two lateral doors, later used to make access to the side chapels, and a pair of two-lobed internal windows in the east wall, to the naos (see Fig. 26), apart from the centrally positioned doors in both west and east walls, of which the former are now gone. Windows must have existed on the west wall, to bring natural light into the interior, but they are conspicuously absent in the plan by Barskii. They are depicted in both the 1535 painting and the 1810 etching, so they must have existed in 1744 as well. However, it is difficult to determine their exact form and number, since the rhythm with which they are represented in the renderings seems to be adjusted to the five-part

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106 For a brief description and dating of this part of the floor pavement, see Δημήτριος Λιάκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στα Βυζαντινά δάπεδα σε τεχνική opus sectile των ναών του Αγίου Όρους», Βυζαντινά 31 (2011): 107-146, pp. 113-114.
107 Here, one is reminded of the design of Hilandar’s exonarthex (mid-14th century), whose sole dome is positioned in exactly the same manner, above the west central bay.
108 Their original west walls, which were positioned more eastward than the present ones and made the narthexes narrower, are lost due to rebuilding. I do not undertake a more detailed examination of these two narthexes, despite their most probably 11th-century dating, because they belong to subsidiary chapels and, strictly speaking, not to the main monastic church.
109 He did not omit to record the internal windows (cf. Fig. 24).
structuring of the portico in front. Nevertheless, it is apparent in both renderings that the windows were arranged in two tiers, one above the other, thus echoing the design still preserved in the internal windows between the litē and the naos and found in other churches of the time.\textsuperscript{110} There were probably two sets of such windows, one on each side of the door. When it comes to the windows of the upper floor, the situation seems slightly clearer. The rendition located in the refectory (\textit{Figs. 32b, 33}) appears to be the most accurate, showing the two-tier arrangement of windows, similar to what is proposed for those on the lower level and most likely the same as those that once used to close the openings in the same position at Vatopedi (see \textit{Figs. 58, 61}).\textsuperscript{111}

Regarding the furnishing of the interior, the only evidence is again Barskii’s plan (\textit{Fig. 24}), which shows only \textit{stasidia}, placed along the walls and providing seats for the overflow of monks. It is difficult to determine if this is in keeping with medieval practices or not.

With the help of all these visual and written sources, we can get a pretty good image of the original narthex. This is very important not only for the establishment of the original layout of the Lavra’s \textit{katholikon}, but – in regard to the influence it exercised in the architecture of the peninsula – also as a source of information that can help us understand other narthexes, especially those of the churches that were, as we will see, directly influenced by it – Ivērōn and Vatopedi.

\textit{Ivērōn}

The \textit{katholikon} of the Ivērōn Monastery (\textit{η Μονή των Ιβήρων}, “The Monastery of the Georgians,” \textit{Figs. 36 to 38}), dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God, was probably

\textsuperscript{110} As at Vatopedi (see below).
\textsuperscript{111} The windows of the \textit{katēchoumeneion} in Mylonas’s reconstruction (\textit{Fig. 33}) are stylistically closer to some Late Byzantine solutions than to those typical for the Middle Byzantine architecture.
constructed during the years of 980-983, immediately after the Monastery of Clement (του Κλήμεντος), which stood on the same site, was given to Iberian (i.e. Georgian) monks, John and his son Euthymios, who moved there (most likely accompanied with other monks of Georgian origin) from the Great Lavra. Subsequently, the church went through many changes, which entailed additions and modifications rather than reconstructions and full rebuilding. Pavlos Mylonas was able to establish the building phases, marking them I to X in his presentation of the katholikon. The original core (Fig. 39) – consisting of a cross-in-square naos and a three-bayed, two-storied narthex (Phase I) – was first appended with the north chapel, dedicated to the Holy Archangels, at some point between 1005 and 1028 (Phase II). This was followed by the addition of side conches before 1029 and the construction of the south chapel, dedicated to St. Nicholas, during the 11th century (Phases III and IV, respectively). A second, outer narthex was built subsequently (Phase V), towards the end of the first half of the 11th century, since the stone pavements of the naos, south chapel, and in the center of the outer narthex were executed in the next phase (Phase VI), dated on the basis of their style to the middle of the 11th century.

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113 John the Iberian was the first abbot of the monastery (980-1005), his son St. Euthymios the Iberian was the second (1005-1019; died in 1028), and Euthymios’s cousin George was the third (1019-1029) – ODB, Vol. 2, pp. 757, 1025-1026.
114 Ibid., p. 67, n. Q; according to the Vita of Sts. John and Euthymios the Iberians (Vita §22, see Bernadette Martin-Hissard, “La Vie de Jean et Euthyme et le statut du monastère des Ibères sur l’Athos,” RÉB 49/1 (1991): 67-142, p. 100), the chapel was built by Euthymios to house the tomb of his father John, who died in 1005 (Lefort et al. (eds.), Actes d’Iviron I: Introduction /J. Lefort/, p. 61). One should be reminded that the north chapel in the Lavra was added at the same period, most likely only a few years earlier, and also houses the tomb of the founder (see above, note 73).
115 Mylonas, “Notice sur le katholikon d’Iviron,” pp. 64-68.
116 Ibid., p. 67, n. Q: according to the Vita of Sts. John and Euthymios the Iberians (Vita §22, see Bernadette Martin-Hissard, “La Vie de Jean et Euthyme et le statut du monastère des Ibères sur l’Athos,” RÉB 49/1 (1991): 67-142, p. 100), the chapel was built by Euthymios to house the tomb of his father John, who died in 1005 (Lefort et al. (eds.), Actes d’Iviron I: Introduction /J. Lefort/, p. 61). One should be reminded that the north chapel in the Lavra was added at the same period, most likely only a few years earlier, and also houses the tomb of the founder (see above, note 73).
117 Mylonas, “Notice sur le katholikon d’Iviron,” p. 66. S. Mamaloukos is of an opinion that the north parekklesion may have originated in the Middle Byzantine period, whereas it would be hard to determine – without archaeological examination – whether the south parekklesion in its present form belongs is medieval at all (Μαμαλουκός, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 286).
118 Mylonas, “Notice sur le katholikon d’Iviron,” p. 64. According to the Vita of George Mt’ats’mindeli (“the Hagiorite”; died 1065), it seems that the second narthex was built under his direction, during his tenure as the abbot (ca. 1045-1056); the Vita mentions it as τστοε or stoa, i.e. “portico” (Vita §30, see Bernadette Martin-Hissard, “La Vie de Georges l’Hagiorite (1009/1010-29 juin 1065): Introduction, traduction du texte géorgien, notes et
The double-storied exonarthex was originally envisaged without an upper floor, which was added later. Mylonas has proposed that this addition (Phase VII) was executed in 1513, the date given in an inscription on a marble plaque attached to the west façade of the exonarthex. He did not exclude the possibility that this year marked the completion of the entire exonarthex, which was built to replace an older open portico.

Two centuries later, in 1725, a clock tower was erected in the space between the exonarthex and the south parekklēsion (Phase VIII). The last segment added to the narthex zone was a long porch (Phase X), which stretches the entire front of the building ensemble, from the north chapel to the clock tower (Figs. 40, 41). The porch is mentioned and described by Barskii, so it must have been built between 1725 and 1744. It is interesting to note that a blind dome covers the part of the porch located immediately in front of the main entrance to the church (exonarthex). The porch is now glazed and the fenestration might be as old as 1758, the date inscribed on a marble plaque fixed in the porch. The phialē, situated in the area between the fronts of the church and the refectory,
dates to 1863, but another one, of a very similar form and located on the same site or close to it was seen and recorded by Barskii in 1744.

Unlike the narthex in the Lavra, that of Ivērōn has survived in its original architectural form. What is now the inner narthex was part of the initial design and served as the church’s only narthex. However, the wall paintings belong to a later period. The room’s oblong space is divided into three bays, unequal in shape and size (Fig. 42a). The central bay is square in plan and covered with a blind dome, whereas the other two are slightly smaller and covered with groin-vaults. Apart from the main portals in the middle of the west and east walls, there are two other, smaller ones in the north and south walls. The latter two were originally meant to provide additional access from outside, but were soon assigned the role of connecting the main church with the two parekkōlesia. In the east wall, there are two more doors, allowing access to the west corner bays of the naos. With the main portal – often labeled as the “royal door” or “royal gate” in the sources – these two smaller doors form a tripartite arrangement often seen in contemporary churches of the cross-in-square type in Constantinople and elsewhere. In regard to the number and position of windows, it seems that there were only two of them, located on the west wall, to the right and left of the main entrance. However, they were probably blocked when the exonarthex was built. In the arched niches left in place of windows on the inner narthex’s side, there are cenotaphs of the founders (in the south niche) and of St. Peter the Athonite and St. Onouphrios the Egyptian (in the north niche), whose relics, according to a tradition, once were kept in the Monastery of Clement (present-day Ivērōn).

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123 Millet, Pargoire, Petit, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos, No. 274, p. 87.
124 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pp. 133-134 (see also Мпάρσκι, Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος, p. 332, including commentaries by P. Mylonas). For a brief discussion of this phialē, see Chapter 6.
125 See, for example, BMFD, pp. 98, 100, 221, 740.
126 See Chapter 2. For the role of such an arrangement in the church ritual, see Chapter 4.
On the upper floor of the narthex, there is a *katēchoumeneion* (Figs. 42b, 39 [the section]), which used to communicate with the *naos* via an opening, probably a *tribēlon*, blocked at some later point and painted over on the *naos* side. The *katēchoumeneion* is structured as a three-bayed oblong room, following the layout of the lower level, but the north and south bays are here slightly larger than the central one, square in plan, and covered with domes on eight-sided drums (Figs. 37, 43). These domed spaces do not have any other architectural feature (such as a concave niche in the east wall) that would point to a possible liturgical function.

Unlike the *katēchoumeneion* of the Lavra, there is no information on how its *Ivērōn* relative was used. Nowadays, it serves as the *skeuophylakion*.

The façades of the narthex form a continuation of those of the *naos* (Figs. 38, 43). They are articulated in a manner similar to that applied in the façades of the Ravdouchou church.

Stepped pilasters and recessed arches are positioned in a rhythm that fully reflects the church’s internal structural organization. Only the treatment appears subtler than that in Ravdouchou thanks to the use of plastering of external surfaces.

Although a later addition, the *exonarthex*’s façades were given the same design, probably in an attempt to make it appear as an integral part of the original church (Figs. 37, 40, 41, 44).

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128 The wall paintings in the *naos* have been dated to the second half of the 16th century (probably after 1577) – see Τουτός, Φοοστέρης, *Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους*, p. 167, with older bibliography. The blocking of the opening may have taken place around that time or earlier. However, Barskii saw the opening in 1744 (Barskii, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, p. 127) and this information makes it more likely that the walling-up actually occurred between 1744 and 1842, when the frescoes of the *naos* were repainted (for the date of this campaign aimed at renewing and refreshing of the church’s wall paintings, see Τουτός, Φοοστέρης, *Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους*, p. 167).

129 Cf. the corresponding spaces at Vatopedi (see below).

130 This information was given to me by the local monks in 2008.

131 See above.
Nonetheless, this did not minimize the massive and heavy appearance of this part of the church, especially in relation to the more balanced articulation of the naos. In the interior, on the other hand, the exonarthex’s design looks as if there was either no awareness of the already existing narthex or that another of the same form was required: although slightly larger than the inner narthex, the outer narthex is shaped as a three-bayed structure at both lower and upper levels (Fig. 42 a, b). On the ground floor, the arches between the bays are each supported on the east side by a column set against the wall. The bays are covered with groin-vaults. On the upper floor, in the place of columns there are massive pilasters and all three bays are covered with blind domes, the central one slightly larger than the other two. All three form the roof and are visible from the outside (Figs. 37, 44).

The exonarthex, as already mentioned, was added later and may have been built as a single-level structure, perhaps in the form of an open porch.\textsuperscript{132} However, judging from the sheer width of its massive walls, as well as the use of columns to provide support on the east side,\textsuperscript{133} it seems more plausible that this additional narthex either had or was meant to have an upper storey from the very beginning. If that was the case, would it mean that the entire structure belongs to post-medieval times? This is difficult to ascertain, especially with the lack of any close architectural and archeological examination of the katholikon. An element in favor of a Middle Byzantine dating of at least the lower level of the exonarthex is its plan and architectural form.

In the view of the developments of the narthex – especially its transformation into the litē – in the Late Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods, it seems unlikely to me that this robust and fairly narrow exonarthex was built in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. Therefore, until other evidence may be found, I

\textsuperscript{132} See above, note 117.
\textsuperscript{133} The columns may have been added because the walls of the inner narthex are thinner and, perhaps, were too weak to provide support for another set of vaults.
would hold to the dating proposed by Mylonas: mid-11th century for the lower and 16th century for the upper level.

**Vatopedi**

The present form of the *katholikon* of Vatopedi (Μόνη του Βατοπεδίου, *Figs. 45 to 48*), one of the oldest foundations and the second-ranking community in the hierarchy of the monastic republic, is also a result of a number of successive restorations and additions (*Fig. 49*). However, the medieval architecture and wall paintings here are almost completely preserved. Moreover, the church has been much better studied than any other Middle Byzantine Athonite structure, making it one of the best-documented *katholika* and enabling researchers to study it at a deeper level. In the area of architecture, the research of Stavros Mamaloukos, conducted in the 1990s and published in his doctoral thesis in 2001, is paramount.\(^\text{134}\) This study has provided a great deal of insight into every segment of the church complex (*Figs. 49 to 55*), building history, and function, which has led to a better understanding of this very important monument, and also has placed it into the larger context of architectural trends and activities of Middle Byzantine Mount Athos.

No written source survives as evidence for the church’s initial construction or provides us with a firm date for this. A likely chronology, therefore, can only be established by weighing the archaeological data and a close examination of the church’s morphological and structural elements against the information found in archival sources relevant to the monastery’s early

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\(^\text{134}\) Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*. My study of Vatopedi is greatly indebted to the material, results, and ideas Mamaloukos published in his book, augmented when necessary with my own field observations. In my examinations, I depart only occasionally and perhaps in small details from what he has already revealed about the narthex, *exonarthex*, and other adjacent structures and has proposed for their original form.
history, as well as the building histories of the katholika of the Great Lavra and Ivērōn. The lateral conches were included from the very beginning, unlike the cases of the Great Lavra and, possibly, Ivērōn. Another narthex – also two-storied, but envisaged as an open portico – was added to the west shortly after the completion of the church, most likely at the beginning of the 11th century (Figs. 60 to 62). The present wall paintings at the lower level belong to a renovation campaign, finished in 1311/1312. Two subsidiary chapels, positioned similarly to those at the Great Lavra, were built later than the second narthex, as indicated by structural evidence. The one to the north, dedicated to St. Demetrius, was most likely added in the first half of the 11th century, whereas the other, dedicated to St. Nicholas, can


136 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 204-205. The timeframe seems to be marked by the monastery’s foundation (between 972 and 985) and the first burial in the founders’ tomb (according to Theocharēs Pazaras, between 1012 and 1018 – see Παζαράς, op. cit., p. 417). Although Mamaloukos is aware that a monastery’s foundation is often followed by the construction of cells, production and storage facilities, and chapels, and then by the erection of the main church (cf. Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός, p. 211, n. 132), he believes that the katholikon was part of the building program set upon Vatopedi’s foundation and might have been built shortly after (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 204-205). For a similar dating by other scholars, see ibid., p. 204, n. 537. See above.

137 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 205-206, and 391 (English summary). The architecture and, especially, sculpted decoration support such dating. Although it cannot be proved, it is possible that the construction of this part of the church was carried out under the energetic abbot Athanasius, whose name appears in sources between 1020 and 1048 (ibid.). For these references to Athanasius, see Lefort et al. (eds.), Actes d’Iviron I, p. 229, and Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός, p. 237.

138 Τούτος, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, pp. 113-114, 128 (with older bibliography); also Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 210-211. The year has been recorded in an inscription, painted on the south wall in 1819 (published in Millet, Pargoire, Petit, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos, No 48, pp. 15-16, and Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 69, 257-258; there is a photograph of the inscription in Τούτος, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, p. 129).

be tentatively dated to the mid-11th century (Figs. 63 to 65).141 The phialê – an open pavilion with a holy water font (Fig. 66) – might have been initially built in the mid-14th century and certainly before the second quarter of the 17th century, though its present form is the product of a partial rebuilding in 1810.142 It was detached from the church, at a short distance away from it, before the present exonarthex – a long porch – and the clock tower were built at the end of the 17th century, certainly before 1704 (Fig. 67).143 The last works associated with the narthex area were carried out in 1882, when the two parekklêsia found on the upper floor of the older narthex were “renovated and decorated”.144

The first narthex, as mentioned, has two stories (Figs. 68, 56, 57, 53). The lower one is known among monks today as “mesonyktikon” (μεσονυκτικόν), after a homonymous mid-night service performed daily in this part of the church.145 It is single-spaced elongated and narrow room, ca. 3.30 by 10.80 meters,146 clearly divided into three bays with two pairs of pilasters on the east and west walls and two arches that spring from the pilasters (Figs. 69, 70). All of the bays are covered with sail vaults, the central one being of a slightly different form – more regular, due to its square plan, and deeper (Figs. 71, 72). It is further accentuated with a fresco program, which is described below. There are three doors opening into the naos, the central one

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141 The chapel of St. Demetrius has been dated through its analogy with the two parekklêsia of Lavra’s katholikon (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διάτριβη, pp. 206-207, and 391). It is very difficult to date the chapel of St. Nicholas and, in determining the time of its construction, Mamaloukos has turned again to some comparative examples, not excluding a later date (ibid., pp. 207 and 391).

142 Ibid., pp. 211-212, 214, 219, and 391-392 (English summary). The 14th-century date is based on now-lost capitals once employed in the phialê’s domed core. They bore the monograms of a Kantakouzēnos family member. The dome was painted in the second quarter of the 17th century and the entire domed core remained unchanged after the 1810 works, which comprised reconfiguration of the ambulatory from a square into a circular plan. For the paintings in the dome, see Τούτος, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, pp. 140-143.

143 The porch and clock tower were apparently constructed sometime between 1678 and 1704 (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διάτριβη, pp. 214-215 and 392).

144 Ibid., pp. 222 and 392 (English summary). For donor’s inscriptions preserved in each of the chapels, see ibid., pp. 255-256, and Millet, Pargoire, Petit, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos, Nos. 96 and 97, p. 31.

145 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διάτριβη, pp. 50 and 378 (English summary); for the service, see Chapter 3.

146 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διάτριβη, p. 50.
larger than the other two and axially located, but all of them with marble doorframes (see Figs. 68, 53). In the west wall, there is a centrally positioned entrance door, framed with decoratively carved marble pieces and flanked with two large windows, corresponding to the lateral bays (see Figs. 68, 54, 73 to 75). A small door pierces the north wall (Fig. 69). It originally provided additional access from outside and may have been mirrored with another one in the south wall, unless the *arcosolium* built in that wall was envisaged from the very beginning (Figs. 70, 71). Above the *arcosolium*, there is a small window and another one may have occupied the same position on the north wall, above the door, bringing some extra light into the narthex.

The *arcosolium* houses, in the form of a pseudo-sarcophagus (Fig. 76), what in the monastery’s tradition is known as the “tomb of the founders” (“τάφος των κτιτόρων”). It has been confirmed that it indeed contained the remains of the three original founders of the monastery, Nicholas, Athanasius, and Anthony, buried in succession.

The floor is paved mostly with white marble slabs, some of which are quite large (Figs. 69, 70). The design comprises three rectangles. The one in the center, stretching between the west and east doors, is formed by four long dark gray, naturally white-veined slabs, grouped together and framed with red marble pieces. The other two are placed lengthwise on either side of the first, each consisting of a large single slab of white marble and a bordure of an *opus sectile*

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147 For a description of this door, see *ibid.*, pp. 51-52.
148 A description of this door can be found in *ibid.*, pp. 52-53.
149 If that indeed was the case, the window was blocked and covered with wall paintings when the narrow room for a staircase was constructed at the outer side of the wall.
geometric pattern, inlaid with alternating pieces of various colors (Fig. 77). A bordure made of gray pieces frames the entire floor, filling the spaces between the pilasters (Fig. 70).

The walls and vaults are completely covered with frescoes, the topmost layer painted in 1760. Two older paintings are preserved on the intrados of the south arch: representations of St. Phōkas, dated to the mid-12th century, on the west side and of Christ Pantokrator, dated stylistically to the second decade of the 14th century, on the east side and continuing further below on the pilaster (Fig. 78). The position of the fresco of Christ is particularly interesting. It was surely mirrored by a fresco of the Theotokos on the north pilaster flanking the main entrance to the naos, a disposition attested in the narthex programs of Athonite katholika, e.g. the almost contemporary wall paintings in Hilandar. That this was the case is further confirmed with the arrangement of two modern wooden proskynētaria with icons of Christ and the Virgin exactly in front of the pilasters (Fig. 70). However, this choice of images was part of the 14th-century iconographic program for the narthex and there is no evidence if the same was the case in the Middle Byzantine period. The ensemble around the door was once crowned with a mosaic representation of Christ in the lunette above the door, as was recorded by Barskii in

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152 For a more detailed description of the floor pavement, see Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 53-54.
153 According to the donor’s inscription, painted in the mesonyktikon above the south door leading to the naos and published in Millet, Pargoire, Petit, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos, No. 51, pp. 16-17, and in Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 51, 252-253. A layer of older paintings was visible within two control soundings opened on the vault and east wall of the north bay when I visited the church in 2008.
156 There is no evidence for earlier icons at these locations in the narthex of Vatopedi, or any comparable evidence from other Middle Byzantine narthexes for this practice. See a discussion of this subject in Chapter 4.
but this mosaic has since been replaced by a fresco of the Annunciation (see Fig. 70).

In addition to the two wooden proskynētaria, the room is presently furnished only with wooden stasidia along the walls and a reader’s stand to the right of the icon of Christ (Figs. 69, 70).

The upper floor, or katēchoumeneion, is divided into three chambers, corresponding to the bays at the lower level (Fig. 68). These were initially open and formed three bays of an integral space (see Fig. 56), which visually communicated with the naos through a tribēlon in the center of the east wall. The latter is still in place and has not been blocked (Figs. 79, 80), but only the central bay retains access to it, since the lateral bays were turned into separate rooms when the arched openings in between were walled up at an unknown date.158 The central chamber (the katēchoumeneion proper) is a small barrel-vaulted room. Its floor is paved with simple square plaques of white marble.159 Remains of a Post-Byzantine fresco decoration can be found at the crown of the vault.160 Besides the tribēlon, the only other opening in the room is a door in the west wall (Fig. 81). Before the addition of the second narthex, this was probably a window (see Figs. 56, 58).161 The two lateral chambers have functioned as parekklēsia, perhaps ever since the church was erected, because each has a semicircular niche in the east wall that serves as a diminutive sanctuary (see Figs. 56, 53).162 Later, perhaps in the 1882 renovation campaign, smaller cavities were hewn out in the masonry to the north of the sanctuary conches to

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157 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 206.
158 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 56.
159 Ibid., p. 55.
161 The original arched top (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 55) suggest this.
162 As mentioned above, the two chapels were renovated in 1882 (see above, note 144), but it is known that they have been chapels since at least the 18th century (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 222, n. 671; interestingly, Barskii does not mention these chapels in his brief description of the katēchoumena – cf. Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pp. 196-197; Μπάρσκι, Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος, p. 392). The north chapel is dedicated to the Holy Trinity and the south one to the Holy Archangels (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 56).
function as the *prothēsis* niches (see Fig. 68). Moreover, the two chapels are covered with domes on eight-sided drums and, in order to make a transition from slightly rectangular into square plans (for the bases of the domes), arches were constructed to the east, adding extra space to the sanctuary areas. In addition to its potential as an architectural and decorative feature, a dome can bear a powerful symbolical meaning as a representation of the Dome of Heaven, which is closely related to the setting of a liturgical space and, as such, is another element that strongly suggests that these two areas were envisaged as chapels from the *katholikon*’s very inception. However, they apparently remained unadorned until the 1882 renovation; and even then, only certain strategic parts of the *parekklēsia*’s vaults received painted decoration in this campaign: the semi-calottes of their sanctuary conches, the pendentives, and the crowns of the domes (*Figs. 82 to 84*). The floors are paved in the same manner as that of the *katēchoumeneion* proper. Light comes in through the windows piercing the domes and the north and south walls. The entrances are located in the west walls, where windows may originally have stood. The articulation of the west façade, now covered with frescoes on the lower level and plastered on the upper, can still be discerned: a series of three recessed blind arches at each level framed the openings (*Figs. 85, 58*).

The overall exterior design, with the distinctive twin-domed composition, is shared with Ivērōn and some other Middle Byzantine churches, most notably the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn in

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163 For their description, see *ibid.*, p. 56.
164 Admittedly, this is a minor extension, but the fact that it was done to the east, not to the west, putting the domes slightly off the axis of both north and south façades (see *Fig. 57*), speaks in favor of the conscious decision made by the architect to enlarge the space intended for the sanctuary and that the chapels were part of the original design. For a description of all elements of the chapels’ upper parts, see Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, p. 56.
166 Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, p. 57.
168 Two of eight windows of the north dome are now blocked, as are three windows of the south dome (*ibid.*, p. 56).
Perhaps resulting from a functional need to accommodate liturgical spaces in the over-narthex, it became an architectural theme that would be employed frequently in the Late Byzantine church design. The question remains as to how the over-narthex was reached before the second narthex was built. Was there a bridge on the north or south side, connecting it with upper floors of neighboring buildings? Or was there a wooden porch on the west side, doubling as a balcony for the upper floor? Or was there just a flight of wooden stairs along one of the church’s sides? Any of these is possible, but none proven. However, the most effective solution would have been an upper floor of the second narthex – perhaps necessitated precisely by the need to reach the katēchoumena. The exonarthex’s upper deck would have formed a true antechamber for the chapels (Fig. 86).

The exonarthex, or the litē, as it is referred to by monks today, was built shortly after the initial core of the church. Although added to the west of the mesonyktikon, it is slightly longer and considerably wider, with interior measurements of ca. 11.70 by 4.60 meters (Fig. 86). It is an unobstructed space, covered with a wooden ceiling (Figs. 87, 88). The west wall is entirely taken up by a five-part arcade (pentabēlon, Figs. 55, 89, 97). Except for the central opening, which contains the main door set in a decorated marble frame (Figs. 90, 91), the other four have been glazed since the very beginning. The door leaves are plated on their external sides with bronze rectangular pieces, decorated with incised ornaments. Two plaques – set separately in the

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170 See above (for Ivērōn) and Chapter 2 (for the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn).
171 Good examples are the parekklesion of the Pammakaristos church in Constantinople and the litē of the Hilandar monastery, which features a transformed version of the motif. For an examination of this architectural phenomenon, see Slobodan Ćurčić, “The Twin-Domed Narthex in Palaeologan Architecture,” ZRVI 13 (1971): 333-344, and for a discussion of its presence in the Middle Byzantine Athonite narthexes, see Chapter 5.
172 On the issue of access to the katēchoumena, see Chapter 5.
173 See above, note 138. The designation “litē” is transferred, as in the case of the mesonyktikon (see note 145), from the homonymous prayer service conducted in this part of the church (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 68). The Litē service and its performance in the Athonite context are briefly discussed in Chapter 6.
174 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 68.
middle of each door leaf – bear figures of Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin in low relief, together constituting the composition of the Annunciation, a reference to the church’s dedication (Fig. 92). The marble portal was part of the original setting, but the plating of the doors is later, perhaps executed in 1426 with pieces assembled here in secondary use.\(^{175}\) The other four openings are closed at the parapet level with marble slabs, embellished with carved geometric patterns (see Fig. 98). The glazing consists of windows in marble frames in the middle register and in wooden frames in the upper register (see Fig. 89).\(^{176}\) In place of the upper windows, there were initially sets of smaller glass discs (oculi or “crown glass”) mounted onto stucco frameworks (transennae).\(^{177}\) This whole ensemble provided abundant light for the interior, but it also impressively embellished the west façade (see Figs. 64, 65).

Besides the main entrance, there is a door in the middle of the south wall (Fig. 87) and another in the north wall (Fig. 88). The latter is actually set in an annex, in the form of an alcove, connected to the rest of the room by a large arched opening (Fig. 93). The alcove is elongated and barrel-vaulted (Fig. 95), and seems to have been designed, together with an extension along the mesonyktikon’s north wall (to which it connects through a door in the east wall, Fig. 94), only to serve as the substructure of the stairs to the litē’s upper floor (see Figs. 60 to 62).\(^{178}\) The north door itself led into what might have been the beginning of a corridor or

\(^{175}\) An inscription on the marble lintel mentions the year of 1426, but without reference to what was actually done in that year (ibid., p. 71; the inscription is published in Millet, Pargoire, Petit, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos*, No. 46, pp. 14-15, and in Μαμαλουκός, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, No. 33, p. 258). Mamaloukos proposes that the present door leaves may have been set in that year (Mamaloukos, “The Buildings of Vatopedi and Their Patrons,” p. 117; Μαμαλουκός, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, p. 212).

\(^{176}\) For a detailed description of the “pentabēlon” (five-lobed opening), see Μαμαλουκός, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, pp. 70-72.

\(^{177}\) Remains of decoratively carved stucco frameworks are recorded in ibid., p. 72.

\(^{178}\) For a description of the annex and the elongated room (known as the “Διαβατικό που της Αντιφωνήτριας”), see ibid., pp. 73-76. Their original purpose as the substructure of a stairway is proposed and discussed in ibid., p. 124. The accommodation of stairs was suggested already in Mamaloukos, “The Buildings of Vatopedi and Their Patrons,” p. 115, n. 5.
covered passageway, which connected the church with the monastery’s building range (dormitory or, perhaps, abbot’s quarters?) to the north of it (see Figs. 60, 63).179

The floor is paved with marble slabs, with the largest pieces being set in an east-west direction (see Figs. 87, 88). The whitish uniformity is enlivened with several large pieces of a darker (light-grayish) hue, which thus appear to be framed with white plaques, and with an opus sectile pattern, set in the center of the room. The latter consists of an interlacing band that forms a rhombus and four circles, with another circle in the middle, according to a design commonly found in the Middle Byzantine period (Fig. 96).180

When furnishing is concerned, the room currently has stasidia along the north, west, and south walls, and a few candleholders (Figs. 87, 88). There is also a modern, moveable holy water font, set on a wooden stand left of the door to the mesonyktion (see Figs. 88, 96). Along the east wall, there is a low masonry bench, clad with marble plaques (see Figs. 87, 88). This may have served as a pedestal for the original façade, comparable to a similar feature discovered at Zygou (see Figs. 135 to 138).181 However, a masonry bench, with wooden planks fixed atop, also exists outside, within the later-built porch (Fig. 97). Additionally, there is a marble abbot’s

179 I believe that such an arrangement was quite possible. Be this the case or not, the way the stairs were positioned, i.e. along the old narthex’s north wall, confirms that there was a conscious decision to leave the access to the new narthex from the north unobstructed. Otherwise, a stairwell with a several flights of stairs and intermediate landings (as apparently was the case in the church of Theotkos of Lips – see Chapter 2) would have taken less space than the adopted design with the straight stairway. See further below, for a similar facility attested in the monastery of Zygou, where it provided the access to the over-narthex. As an additional argument in support of the proposed explanation for the north corridor at Vatopedi, the abbot’s quarters (hēgoumeneion) in the Great Lavra were located in the monastery’s north wing (see Ploutarchos L. Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” in Georges Galavaris (ed.), Athos, la Sainte Montagne: Tradition et renouveau dans l’art, Αθωνικά Σύμμεικτα 10 (Αθήνα: Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών – Ινστιτούτο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 2007): 97-128, pp. 99-100 and fig. 1 [nos. 3, 4]).

180 For a description of the opus sectile centerpiece, see Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διακριτική διατριβή, pp. 72-73, as well as fig. 263, and drawing 25.5. For other similar designs, see Paloma Pajares-Ayuela, Cosmatesque Ornament: Flat Polychrome Geometric Patterns in Architecture (New York – London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), pp. 156-161, 196-246. For interpretations of the placement of this design in Athonite narthexes, see a discussion in the Chapter 4.

181 See below.
throne, just off the main entrance to the building (Fig. 98). Clearly, the space of the porch was used for occasional gatherings of the brotherhood, presided over by the superior. Was that the case with the bench inside as well, before the porch was constructed? There are no written records confirming such use. However, in regard to the way the litē is still used in certain rituals (e.g. in the daily rite of mutual forgiveness and reception of abbot’s blessing), I would not exclude that possibility.

The wall paintings of the litē are well preserved. However, with the exception of the mosaic composition of the Deēsis above the entrance to the mesonyktikon, dated to the 11th or 12th century (Figs. 73, 99), they do not belong to the period of construction. There are two more mosaics, on the pilasters of the east wall, of the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary (Figs. 100 to 102), creating the image of the Annunciation, the feast to which the katholikon is dedicated. However, these two were probably executed in conjunction with the decoration of the entire space with frescoes in 1311/1312, supposedly following an otherwise unrecorded damage caused by the attack on the monastery by Catalan pirates in 1307. The rest of the wall paintings had to be fitted to limited wall surfaces, since doors and windows take up most of the wall area and the wooden ceiling could not accommodate fresco paintings (see Figs. 87, 88, 101, 102). Moreover, the east wall, once the façade of the first narthex, consists of a series of recessed arches and pilasters, which also influence the way the program was distributed. The

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183 My own observations from Vatopedi made in 2008. See also Chapter 3 for a description of the rite and its medieval references.
184 Τούτος, Φοιστέρης, Ευρεσιτείρων της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, p. 128 (with bibliography).
185 For a study of the Anunciation composition, see Efthymios N. Tsigaridas, “The Mosaics and the Byzantine Wall-Paintings,” in The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition, History, Art (Mount Athos: Monastery of Vatopaidi, 1998), Vol. 1: 220-284, pp. 230-232, and for the frescoes, see ibid., pp. 235-237, 259-279. It is not known if the walls of this room were painted before the 14th century. For the Catalan incursion, see Μαμαλούκος, To Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, pp. 210-211.
narrow surfaces could receive only individual figures of saints or just their busts in medallions (see Figs. 74, 103). Larger compositions were accommodated within the north and south walls, in the north annex, and on the spandrels of the east and west walls. The most prominent part of the program is the series of narrative compositions illustrating the Passion of Christ, arranged in a narrative sequence and placed in the topmost register, close to the ceiling. The cycle commences with the Last Supper, the Washing of the Feet, and the Counsel after the Washing of the Feet on the north wall; it continues with the Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Fig. 103) and Betrayal on the east wall, and ends with the Flagellation, the Ascent to the Cross, the Deposition from the Cross, the Entombment, the Descent into the Hades, and the Women at the Empty Tomb on the south wall. A representation of the Ladder of Divine Ascent adorns the north wall and part of the east wall in the annex (Figs. 93, 94). The spandrels of the west wall arcade were painted with images of the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zachariah (Fig. 104), Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Hosea, and Zephaniah. All the rest are representations of individual saints, mostly holy monks and ascetics.  

The storey over the litê seems to have been provided only to enable access to the katêchoumena, particularly to the chapels above the mesonyktikon. Such a conclusion comes from the plain, featureless design within its single-spaced interior (see Figs. 86, 60). At least, this is presently the case and there is no architectural feature or other element to suggest otherwise. Only a small library or a depository of liturgical books, recorded by Barskii as located in the “katêchoumena”, may have been accommodated within this space. The access

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186 Some of these images were over-painted in 1819. For the full list of paintings and their locations, see Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευερτήρων τῆς μνημειακῆς γεγονότων τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρος, pp. 129-130.  
187 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 196 (see also Мпάρσκι, Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Ὁρος, p. 392, notes 678, 679). Barskii does not provide any description of this library beyond saying that it was used for the “ecclesiastic [liturgical] rule”, i.e. for storing liturgical books. Therefore, it is not completely certain whether the library was set in the area above the exonarthex or above the inner narthex. My first thought is that it was the former, since hidden compartments containing fragments of valuable manuscripts were found during the
to the upper floor was provided by means of a flight of stairs housed in the narrow annex to the north (see Figs. 60, 62).\(^{188}\) It is possible that the landing of the stairs may have served also as the vestibule for a sort of bridge connecting the church complex with the monastery’s north wing.\(^{189}\)

If the interior of the upper floor was simple and stark, that was definitively not the case for the west façade. Now concealed behind the upper storey of the porch, it is still fully preserved (Fig. 105). It is a large, gallery-like ensemble, consisting of three two-lobed arched openings with columns in the middle (see Fig. 55).\(^{190}\) The play of light and shadow on the flat surfaces and cavities is further enhanced by the insertion of two arched concave niches into the piers between the openings. The original appearance was probably less dramatic, since the openings were closed with parapet slabs, windows, and stucco *transennae*, in a manner similar to the windows of the lower level (see Fig. 61).\(^{191}\) Nonetheless, it was more ornate, with a lace-like impression of the decoratively carved stucco frameworks and marble slabs. With the *pentabêlon* of the lower level, it formed an elegant, airy composition, which brought certain lightness to the bulky core of the church, thus enhancing rather than diminishing its monumentality (see Fig. 65).

The symmetry of the façade was interrupted only by the north extension, formed to envelop the staircase.

The narthexes of the two lateral chapels present interesting cases (see Figs. 49, 54, 63). The chapel of St. Demetrius most likely did not have a narthex built simultaneously with it.\(^{192}\) This can be inferred from the chapel’s west façade, presently the east wall of the narthex, which

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\(^{188}\) See above.

\(^{189}\) See note 179 above.

\(^{190}\) For a detailed description, see Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου* - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 78.

\(^{191}\) See above, note 177.

\(^{192}\) Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου* - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 125.
is articulated with recessed blind arches, typical elements in architectural decoration of façades.

The present narthex was added sometime before 1791, when its walls were painted.193 These paintings covered an earlier layer of frescoes on the east wall, the chapel’s original façade. The faces of Christ ο Φιλάνθρωπος and St. John the Forerunner in the Deēsis composition, north of the door, as well as a wall-painted icon of the Παναγία Εσφαγμένη, to the south, were not over-painted and they have been dated to the first half of the 14th century.194 On the south wall, in the lunette above the door leading to the litē, there is another early composition, which has been dated based on style to the end of the 13th century.195 The presence of these medieval paintings suggests that this area, if not defined and built as a narthex, was enclosed or at least sheltered under a canopy of sorts by that time. Furthermore, the theme of the 13th-century composition in the lunette – the healing of the hyparchos by St. Demetrius – points to the possibility that there was a larger program dedicated to St. Demetrius and his miracles, which was accommodated within a narthex built prior to the end of the 13th century. As mentioned above, this narthex may have been merely a part of a covered passageway connecting the katholikon with the north wing of the monastery’s compound.196 Such an arrangement seems to be confirmed by the design of the neighboring parekklēsion of the Panagia Paramythia (built by and frescoed in 1678), particularly of its substructure.197 The chapel is literally squeezed between the chapel of St. Demetrius and the monastery wing built along the north enclosure wall. Situated on the second floor rather than at ground level, it rests on a vault stretched between four massive piers, thus

193 Ibid., pp. 90-91; Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, p. 136 (with bibliography).

194 Ibid. For a photograph the Deēsis, see Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, fig. 289.

195 Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, p. 136. For a photograph, see Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, fig. 236.

196 See above, note 179.

197 For the date of construction, see Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 214. For a detailed description, see ibid., pp. 105-107.
leaving the ground unobstructed and open in both directions, east to west and north to south.

The southeast pier abuts the north wall of the chapel of St. Demetrius, which aligns the north-south under-passage with the chapel’s narthex and, farther south, the north door of the litē. At the other end of the under-passage, there is the beginning of a staircase, which continues into the monastery’s north range, constructed at the end of the 17th or beginning of the 18th century (see Fig. 49). The stairs seem like a natural end-point to the proposed route starting in the litē. The route, then, would have been cut off when the south arch of the Paramythia’s substructure was walled up, most likely shortly before 1791, when the wall, still in place, was covered with fresco paintings.

The narthex of the chapel of St. Nicholas was built integrally with the chapel’s naos and the narthex’s original architecture survives almost completely. It is a single-paced, unusually tall, rectangular room, measuring approximately 3.05 by 6.50 meters and around 7.50 meters high (see Fig. 54). Its three bays are distinguished only by three vaults, which are separated by two arches. It connects with the litē through a door in the north wall and another door opens in the west wall, just across from the door to the chapel’s naos.

A few of this narthex’s features deserve special attention. The first is the existence of two semicircular niches in the east wall, each in the middle of its north and south halves (see Fig. 54). The function of these is not clear, but they often occur in the same arrangement in

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198 Ibid., drawing 64 (reproduced here as Fig. 49) and the hatching chart on the preceding page.
199 Ibid., fig. 333.
200 Ibid., p. 97.
201 The niches can be seen in ibid., figs. 375, 376. The program of frescoes, painted in 1802 (ibid., p. 97, with further reference), has individual depictions of monastic saints placed in the niches, with no special distinction given to them in regard to the rest of wall surfaces in that register. To me, this shows that the 19th-century painters and their clients were not aware of the original function of the niches or that this function was not relevant any more.
narthexes of main churches. The other feature is a tomb within a walled-up *arcosolium* inserted into the narthex’s south wall. Due to its location, it has been identified as belonging to a *ktētōr*. The front marble plaque, decorated with a relief of three crosses and two cypress trees between them, has been dated to the period after the middle of the 11th century. The narthex’s unusual height – it is taller than the *litē* – and the position of a tri-lobed window high on the south wall (*Fig. 106*), as well as the probable proximity of the original south wing of the monastery (*Fig. 107, 109*), raise some questions. Was the height of the narthex intended to counterbalance the height of the possible extension (with its two floors) in front of the north chapel? Was there initially a door in the south wall, in place of the *arcosolium*, which may have been fashioned only at a later date? If so, could the narthex have served as the south extension and another vestibule of the *katholikon*, serving those coming from the south wing, before the arched opening was assigned to the burial?

An affirmative answer to the last question would be hypothetical but not completely unfounded. Similar physical connections at both sides of the *katholikon*’s west parts were recorded at the Great Lavra as part of the church as it appeared at least during the 16th century.

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202 See in this chapter above, the church of Ravdouchou, and further below, the churches of Zygou, St. Demetrius, and Voroskopou on Mount Athos, and *Chapter 2* for the Fatih Camii in Tirilye. For a discussion of this feature and its possible functions, see *Chapter 4*.

203 Μαμαλόκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, pp. 97, 261-262 and drawing 62 (for a description, a recorded inscription, and further reference), and Παζαράς, «Ο τάφος των κτιτόρων στο καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου», p. 415, n. 26 (for the attribution to a founder). For some further details, see *ibid.*, pp. 415-416, fig. 13, and Παζαράς, *Τα βυζαντινά γλυπτά του καθολικού της μονής Βατοπεδίου*, pp. 96-97, fig. 138, drawing 39 (by N. Ζάχιος and slightly imprecise in certain details).

204 Παζαράς, *Τα βυζαντινά γλυπτά του καθολικού της μονής Βατοπεδίου*, p. 97.

205 For an idea that, up to ca. 1200, the monastery’s south enclosure wall was at a short distance from the *katholikon* and most probably included the lower parts of the 1427 belfry, see Ploutarchos L. Theocharides, “Recent Research into Athonite Monastic Architecture, Tenth-Sixteenth Centuries,” in *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism* (see *List of Abbreviations*): 205-221, p. 212, and fig. 16.2 (reproduced here as *Fig. 109*).

206 In order to either prove or reject this hypothesis, both the tomb and the wall need a careful examination. Presently, the façade is plastered and it is not possible to determine if an opening existed in the place of the tomb. *Cf.* Μαμαλόκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, p. 101.

207 Theocharides, “Recent Research into Athonite Monastic Architecture, Tenth-Sixteenth Centuries,” p. 211, and fig. 16.1. The narthexes of the lateral chapels in the Great Lavra could have provided a similar corridor-like
Archaeological evidence in the church at Frangokastro (Zygou), discussed below, confirms that such facilities existed also in the Middle Byzantine period. In fact, the presence of a covered passageway attached to the south wall of the narthex of St. Nicholas would explain why the tri-lobed window was placed so high. If this was indeed the case, the communication corridor that might have been established along the north-south direction, all the way from the south wing, through the *litē*, to the north wing was apparently blocked not long after. However, the role of a continuous passageway was taken up by the open porch, built along the west façade around the end of the 17th century. Initially, there was an arched opening at the porch’s south end (see *Fig. 49*), which was walled up sometime before 1843, when that part of the porch was frescoed. Its north end remains open and still connects directly to the monastery’s north wing (*Fig. 108*). Together with the examples from the Great Lavra and Zygou, this possible arrangement in Vatopedi points to a broader issue of the narthex (or narthex area) as the communication hub between the prime liturgical space (i.e. the *katholikon*) and the rest of the monastery, an aspect that is examined at greater length in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

**Xenophōntos**

The Monastery of Xenophōntos (*Fig. 110*) was most likely established at the end of the 10th century. Its Old *Katholikon* (*Figs. 111 to 113*), dedicated to St. George, was built either soon after or in the course of the 11th century, since both of two accounts relating the ‘re-foundation’ connection between the *katholikon* and the monastery’s other buildings, particularly those abutting the north and south enclosure walls.

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208 See below, notes 236, 244.
209 See above, note 143.
210 Μαμαλόκος, *To Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, pp. 109, 221, fig. 416.
211 “Xenophōn, monk and hēgoumenos of St. George [monastery]” is signed as a witness to some documents dated to 998, 1001, and 1007 (see Rosemary Morris, “Symeon the Sanctified and the Refoundation of Xenophontos,” in *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (see *List of Abbreviations*): 443-464, pp. 444-445, for other references to the monastery’s history up to 1076 and older bibliography).
of the monastery between 1078-1081 mention that the church was only “beautified” in the process, not built anew.\textsuperscript{212} The late 10\textsuperscript{th}-century dating seems to be more likely judging by the style of the church’s sculptural decoration.\textsuperscript{213} The naos of this church still survives, with some later additions, most notably the lateral conches (added in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century), whereas the narthex was partially demolished and transformed into a six-bay lité at some point prior to 1564, when its fresco decoration was executed (Fig. 115).\textsuperscript{214} The rebuilding may have taken place after 1544, when the painting of the naos was completed.\textsuperscript{215} The lité has a dome above the central eastern bay (see Figs. 111, 113, 115) and there used to be two more domes crowning the northwest and southwest bays, as recorded by Barskii in his rendering of the monastery (Figs. 114, 114A).\textsuperscript{216} There is also an exonarthex, or rather a transitory room connecting the lité to the trapeza. This room was frescoed in a long campaign between 1632 and 1654, and possibly built shortly before this period.\textsuperscript{217}

\textsuperscript{212} Cf. ibid., pp. 447-448 (with references to the documents). The ‘reoundation’ of the monastery was rather an economic and legal consolidation of this community by Symeon, formerly megas droungarios Stephanos (ibid., pp. 443-446; see also Мирјана Живојиновић, „Почетки манастира Ксенофонта“, in Четврта казивања о Светој Гори (Београд: Просвета; Друштво пријатеља Свете Горе Атонске; Византолошки институт Српске академије наука и уметности, 2005): 300-312). This building campaign, according to the same documents, involved only the construction of monastic cells and other building buildings of the monastic compound. This church is known today as the Old Katholikon. The new katholikon was built between 1817 and 1840 (Πεντζίκης, Άγιον Όρος, Vol. 2, p. 43).


\textsuperscript{214} For the frescoes and the inscription that includes the date, see Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Άγιου Όρους, pp. 402-405 (with older bibliography).

\textsuperscript{215} For the wall paintings and the dating, see ibid., pp. 393-401 (with bibliography).

\textsuperscript{216} For the frescoes and the inscription that includes the date, see Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Άγιου Όρους, pp. 402-405 (with older bibliography). More about this structure and its chronology can be found in Θεοχαρίδης, «Προκαταρκτική θεώρηση των βυζαντινών φάσεων του περιβόλου της μονής Ξενοφόντος Άγιου Όρους», p. 448.
On the south side of the church there are some structures, which were appended in the 14th century. One of them is the parekklēsion of St. Demetrius, located at the east end of this row. The chapel still survives almost completely, except for the dome, which collapsed at some point after 1744, when it was included in Barskii’s drawing (see Fig. 114A). Structures to the west of the chapel are more extensive and apparently once formed a portico. A segment of the portico that is adjacent to the main church’s narthex was reconfigured into a chapel, which is dedicated to St. Lazarus, probably in the 18th century. It is quite likely that these surviving structures are only the south arm of a portico that in the 14th century enveloped the katholikon in the form of a perambulatory, similar to the peristōa of contemporary churches in Thessaloniki.

What remains of the katholikon’s original narthex is its east wall, shared with the naos and pierced with three doors. As in the case of the narthex at the Great Lavra, most of the original floor pavement (central and south bays) was retained after the enlargement of the room (Fig. 116). It is also possible that a large portion of the south wall of the narthex may have survived, serving as a lateral wall for the southwest parekklēsion. If this wall was indeed the original narthex’s south wall, then the existing door leading into the chapel marks the center of

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219 The wall paintings inside this chapel are dated to the second half of the 14th century (Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, pp. 408-409, with older references). It is interesting to note that Barskii, probably in accordance with the local tradition present at the time of his visit, ascribes the foundation of this church to the monastery’s founder Xenophōn (Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 289).

220 The frescoes painted on the exterior of the western wall of the chapel are dated to the 18th century (Τουτός, Φουστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, p. 406), suggesting that the wall was built at the same time or prior to that.

221 Θεοχαρίδης, «Η αρχιτεκτονική στο Άγιον Όρος την εποχή των Παλαιολόγων», p. 377; for a comprehensive study of the peristōa, see Ευαγγελία Χατζητρύφωνος, Το Περιστόο στην υστεροβυζαντινή εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική: Σχεδίασμα και λειτουργία (Θεσσαλονίκη: Ευρωπαϊκό κέντρο βυζαντινών και μεταβυζαντινών μνημείων, 2004).

222 It is not completely clear whether the north and south of these three doors were part of the 10th-century layout or were opened in the 16th century. A closer inspection is necessary in order to resolve this issue.

223 See above.
the narthex’ south wall. This information, together with the extant floor pavement, which marks the position of the original narthex’ west wall and the size of the interior, helps us to reconstruct the initial ground plan of the room (Fig. 117). Furthermore, there are two stone impost immured in the east wall at the springing points of two arches that support the dome. These impost are comparable in form and decoration with the similar elements in the naos, suggesting that they all were manufactured at the same time. This raises the possibility that the impost were retained in their original positions and that they most likely served the same purpose as they do today. In this way, the exact places of two arches that supported the original vaulting are indicated, furnishing further information about the areas of three bays and the height of the initial narthex. It is possible that the central bay, slightly wider than the other two, was covered with a sail-vault, as it is in the cases of Ivērōn and Vatopedi. The present dome in the same position, over the bay immediately preceding the central door of the naos, perhaps preserves the memory of the previous spherical vaulting. However, it cannot be established whether the narthex had an upper storey or not.

Although a 14th-century structure, the south portico deserves additional attention. The present state of research on the monastery and its katholikon indicates that the portico and its placement on the church’s south side was the result of the architectural organization of the monastic complex at the time. The two factors were apparently crucial: the position of the entrance gate on the south side of the complex and the proximity of the older, medieval

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224 Παζαράς, «Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος του παλαιού καθολικού της μονής Ξενοφόντος στο Άγιον Όρος», p. 42.
225 See above.
226 Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” p. 106 and figs. 6, 7. Remnants of a Middle Byzantine pathway leading from the site of the former inner gate (still extant in 1744 and recorded by Barskii – see Fig. 114) to the katholikon have been revealed in an archaeological excavation in the area south of the church (Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” p. 106, n. 33).
refectory, located to the southwest of the church (Fig. 118). Within this spatial configuration, the south portico seems to have functioned as an exonarthex, accommodating entrance from the south, from the open courtyard and from the direction of the monastery’s inner gate, as well as providing a covered connection corridor between the church and the refectory (Fig. 119). There may have been an additional arm of this covered access space, inserted between the narthex and the rest of the monastery’s west wing. This structure could have also provided an enclosed connection to the north wing. The entire architectural solution testifies to the use of an exonarthex, regardless of its form and position, to direct the major pathways between the katholikon and other important facilities of the monastic compound and to protect them from the elements.

Zygou (Frangokastro)

The ruins of a fortified complex not far from the modern Ouranoupolis have been known for some time under the name of Frangokastro (Φραγκόκαστρο, “Frankish fort”). This name is first recorded in 1551, but comes from the period ca.1206-1211, when a Frankish crusader took up residence there, converted it to a castle, and used it as an outpost from which to plunder the Athonite monasteries. The site, which is outside the present borders of the monastic republic, has been the subject of ongoing archaeological excavations since 1992 (Figs. 120, 121). The excavations, led by Iōakeim A. Papangelos, have yielded important archaeological information about the fortified monastic complex and enabled detailed examination of its katholikon. The

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227 Θεοχαριδῆς, «Προκαταρακτική θεώρηση των βυζαντινών φάσεων του περιβόλου της μονής Ξενοφόντος Αγίου Όρους», p. 449; see also Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” p. 106, and figs. 6, 7.

228 An extension of the narthex’s west wall to the north and other remains have been detected during archaeological excavations and represented in the plans by Theocharidēs (see Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” figs. 6, 7; for the excavations, ibid., p. 106).


230 For the chronology of the research of and excavations at the site, see ibid., pp. 7-8.
monastery was identified by archaeologists as the Monastery of Zygou (του Ζυγού), which had previously been known only from written sources.\textsuperscript{231} Recorded as early as the end of the 10\textsuperscript{th} century, Zygou was one of the oldest monasteries on the peninsula.\textsuperscript{232} The community was active during the entire 11\textsuperscript{th} century, but must have declined in the second half of the 12\textsuperscript{th} century, as the monastery had been derelict for some time in 1199, when it was given to Hilandar.\textsuperscript{233} From the period when it was Hilandar’s metochion, it is known that Zygou was dedicated to Prophet Elijah.\textsuperscript{234}

Excavations have revealed a well-designed, well-executed, and lavishly decorated katholikon (Fig. 122), which was a result of four clearly identifiable building phases (Fig. 123).\textsuperscript{235} First, around the year 1000, the central core, consisting of a cross-in-square naos and a narthex, was built. The construction of an elongated extension, attached to the north side of the narthex, was realized a few decades later.\textsuperscript{236} An exonarthex was erected against the west side of the narthex around the middle of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{237} A chapel attached to the south side of the inner narthex was the last thing added.

The present inner narthex is a simple, elongated room, with no pilasters to indicate possible subdivision into bays (Figs. 124 to 126). Nonetheless, the tripartite arrangement of the west wall – with the main entrance in the middle and two windows on either side (Figs. 127 to 129) – and, especially, two deep-protruding pilasters on the façade suggest the existence of two

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{232} Nikon, the abbot of the monastery, signed a document from 996. That is the earliest mention of the monastery, but it is possible that it existed already before 958 (see Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός, pp. 238-239, notes 262-266).
\textsuperscript{233} See Мирјана Живојиновић, Историја Хиландара, I: Од оснивања манастира 1198. до 1335. године (Београд: „Просвета“, 1998), pp. 67-69, and Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, pp. 14-15. Small objects – including coins, lead seals, metal book closures, pottery, and glass – found in the excavations at the site have been all dated to the period between the end of the 10\textsuperscript{th} century and the 1190s (ibid., pp. 36-41).
\textsuperscript{234} Живојиновић, Историја Хиландара I, pp. 119, 213; the information dates to 1299.
\textsuperscript{235} Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, pp. 20-22.
\textsuperscript{236} The floor pavement inside the chapel within the extension, immediately attached to the narthex, has been dated to the first half of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century (ibid., p. 30).
\textsuperscript{237} According to the dating that has been proposed for the floor of the exonarthex (ibid.).
arches spanning the narthex’s width and dividing it into three bays. All three of them were most likely of the same size and square plan. In addition to the main entrance, there is another door just opposite to it, leading to the naos, and two smaller doors in the north and south walls (see Fig. 124). There are two niches in the east wall: a semicircular niche placed in the center of the wall’s south segment (Fig. 130) and a rectangular niche close to the northeast corner, positioned quite low, just slightly above the floor level (Fig. 131). The functions of these two are not clear, since no accompanying features – such as furnishings or wall paintings – are extant. However, it is possible that one of the niches served as the space for a holy water font. Parts of an inlaid stone floor pavement still remain (Figs. 124, 132). Large rectangular marble slabs, originally laid lengthwise, along the north-south direction, are missing, probably looted in the past. The pavement of the square area of the central bay has a slightly different design. This special treatment of the central area can be interpreted as yet more evidence for the three-bayed layout, where the central bay was of a square plan and possibly further emphasized by a spherical vault of some sort. Thick walls and strong external pilasters suggest that the narthex had an upper storey. It is worth noting that the two middle pilasters of the west façade, protruding to the exterior beyond the other two, corner pilasters, may have been initially part of a small, single-bayed, open porch, similar to the one that originally existed in the north church of the Lips Monastery. However, this possibility has not been confirmed by any other remains, such as a pair of pier foundations to the west.

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238 See a more detailed discussion of the proportions of this narthex and its interior subdivision in Chapter 4.
239 The low north niche could have well accommodated the font. Compare this to a similar, but later arrangement in Stavronikêta monastery, where the font niche rises from floor level, with the exception that it is located south of the door (see Chapter 4).
240 Cf. a discussion of the specially treatment of the narthex’s middle bay in Chapter 4.
241 See Chapter 2.
The first part of the north extension wing is a single-spaced chamber, with a semicircular niche in its east wall (accompanied by another small one on its left side) and a tomb, placed against the north wall (Figs. 135, 133, 134). It apparently functioned as a funerary chapel and Papangelos believes that the tomb housed inside belonged to the monastery’s founder. The area immediately above the tomb is covered with an arch, thus forming a large arcosolium. The remainder of the space is square in plan (Fig. 135) and may have been covered with a blind dome or a sail-vault. The chapel could be accessed only from the narthex. Daylight was provided by a relatively large window in the chapel’s west wall. The modest architectural form is greatly enriched by a masterful opus sectile pavement on the square-shaped floor, with a geometrical quincunx (penteomphalon) pattern executed with inlaid stones of various colors (Fig. 133). Of all the pavements in the church, this one is in the best condition. It can be dated to the first half of the 11th century and represents one of the finest inlaid-stone works on Mount Athos. The rest of the extension wing once connected the church with the part of the monastic compound – possibly dormitories – that was located on the sloping area above the church (see Figs. 120, 123). However, only its upper storey, presumably in the form of a corridor, could have been used, probably providing direct access to the narthex’s upper floor from the neighboring building. This confirms the existence of an additional floor above the narthex.

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242 Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, p. 21, has ascribed the tomb to the founder, without offering any evidence or argument for this supposition, but perhaps having in mind the analogy with other Athonite katholika (e.g. the Great Lavra and Ivērōn – see above).
243 Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, p. 30, fig. 24a. For a survey of other Athonite opus sectile floors, see Λιάκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στα Βυζαντινά δάπεδα σε τεχνική opus sectile των ναών του Αγίου Όρους» (with bibliography).
244 Cf. Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, p. 21. A similar connection corridor at the upper level may have existed at Vatopedi approximately at the same time (see above).
245 According to Papangelos (Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, p. 21), the narthex’s upper floor may have been used as the abbot’s living quarters. This is a probable, but rather speculative assumption, most likely based on a similar use of the katēchoumeneion at the Great Lavra (see above and Chapter 5).
The exonarthex, as long as the inner narthex, but significantly wider, is structured as a porch, with three large openings on the west side and another two, one each on the north and south sides (Figs. 135, 136). Openings to the left and right of the main door were closed with marble parapet slabs, decorated with carved ornaments (Figs. 137, 138). Marble frames set on top of the slabs formed windows (Fig. 139). The openings in the north and south walls most likely served as doors, since their marble thresholds are still in place (Figs. 140, 141). The exonarthex clearly had three bays, indicated not only by the two pilasters of the inner narthex’s west façade, but also by the layout of the floor pavement (see Figs. 135, 141). Deep-projecting pilasters seem to have provided the same structural arrangement as the pair of columns in the Ivērōn’s exonarthex. The inlaid stone pavement, despite being fragmented and missing its largest pieces, can be reconstructed with great accuracy (Figs. 141 to 143, 128, 129). Its design is very similar to that of the inner narthex’s floor, the difference being that the large white marble slabs – now lost due to looting – were placed along the east-west direction, rather than north-south. Again, the pavement of the central area is different and its design shows a special attention given to the central bay, which, like its counterpart in the inner narthex, was of a square plan (see Fig. 135). This segment of the pavement features a decorative quincunx pattern executed in opus sectile with stones of various colors (Fig. 144). It is very similar to the pavement in the north chapel, in the style, technique, and materials used, only having a slightly more elaborate design. However, it is not as well preserved as the other. It has been dated to the middle of the 11th century. A burial site has been discovered under the floor in the north bay

246 Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, pp. 25-26, fig. 17 (reproduced here as Fig. 139). The carved design of the slab is similar to that of two parapet slabs of the north window of the chapel of St. Demetrius adjacent to the katholikon of Vatopedi (see Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, figs. 310, 311). The chapel has been dated to the first half of the 11th century (see above, note 141).

247 See above.

248 Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, p. 30, fig. 24b.
(see Fig. 135). It may have belonged to a distinguished member of either the founder’s family or the monastic community. Additional burial in the south bay was accommodated below the inner narthex’s window, within a tomb resembling sarcophagus that was built after the wall was partially dug out (see Figs. 143, 129).

Some remains of wall paintings have been preserved. The largest portions still in place are the lower parts of an Annunciation composition, painted on the two pilasters flanking the door in the east wall (Figs. 145, 146). Also, there are two representations of gem-studded crosses. A plethora of wall paintings fragments, many of them featuring human faces, was found in the south part of the exonarthex and are believed to have belonged to the arcosolium below the south window of the inner narthex. These and the painted crosses have been dated to the middle of the 11th century.

The dates of both the wall paintings and the floor pavement point to the middle of the 11th century as the time of the exonarthex’s construction. When compared to the information found in a document of 1018, according to which the monastery had become too small (“too tight”) for the brotherhood and so was given more land, a question arises: was the exonarthex built soon after 1018, as a consequence of enlargement works that may have taken place within the monastery? It seems that the monastery was flourishing around that time and the number of its monks may have grown rapidly, requiring the enlargement of certain facilities. The excavations on the site have shown that the monastic complex also underwent enlargement at some point. Therefore, it is possible that the building of the additional narthex was meant to solve the

249 Ibid., p. 22. It is not mentioned, however, if the burial preceded the construction of the exonarthex or came in later.
250 Ibid., p. 26, figs. 18, 19. I have been unable to determine the location of the painted crosses.
251 Ibid., p. 26, fig. 20.
252 Ibid., figs. 19, 20.
253 Живојиновић, Историја Хиландара I, p. 67; cf. Папахрисантоу, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός, pp. 170-171.
254 Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos, p. 18.
problem of either the lack of space within the *katholikon* or an elaboration and differentiation of the ritual in the enlarged community. The construction may have taken place in the second quarter of the 11th century and was certainly completed by the middle of the century, when the paving of the floor and the painting of the walls are dated.

The southern chapel is a single-spaced structure with a square plan (see Fig. 135). The interior space only extends to the north, to connect with the narthex, and to the east, ending with an apse, semicircular inside and three-sided outside. An *arcosolium* within the south wall reveals that the structure was a funerary chapel (Fig. 147). It is very likely that the chapel was covered by a dome. On the left side of the apse, there is a diminutive semicircular niche that has two layers of painting, both featuring a frontal figure of a standing prelate, dated to the second half of the 11th century. A similar niche can be observed outside on the west façade within the north pilaster (Fig. 148). The exterior is treated in the same manner as that of the *exonarthex*, with triple-stepped pilasters that must have been topped with recessed arches.

The façades of the chapel were less open, with the access being provided only through the inner narthex, perhaps due to a difference in levels between the interior and the sloping terrain south of the *katholikon*. Only a small window is preserved in the apse, but additional daylight might have been admitted through a window in the south wall, above the tomb, and perhaps through windows piercing the dome.

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255 Mamaloukos is of the opinion that the *exonarthex* was built when the monastery was at its peak, that is in the 11th century (Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου* - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 294). For the functions of the *exonarthex*, especially those taken over from the inner narthex, see Chapter 6.

256 Papangelos, *Das Athos-Kloster Zygos*, p. 22, ascribes this burial to a founder or donor.


258 Papangelos, *Das Athos-Kloster Zygos*, p. 26, fig. 21. Papangelos believes that this architectural feature served as the *prothesis* niche and that the painted prelate might depict St. Nicholas (*ibid.*).

259 The same articulation of façades of these two parts of the *katholikon*, probably was what made Mamaloukos express the view that, although not physically connected, they may have been built at the same time (Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου* - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 295).
Skētē of St. Demetrius

The Skētē of St. Demetrius (Figs. 149, 150), presently under Vatopedi’s jurisdiction, was originally an independent monastery. A possible identification with the Monastery of St. Demetrius του Κυνόποδος or του Σκυλοπόδιου, which is mentioned in 11th-century documents, has been proposed.260 This identification, however, has been refuted by Paschalēs Androudis, who identifies the present skētē with the Monastery του Χαλκέως, active at least between 1025 and 1294, the period when its officials figure in documents.261 The present kyriakon (the main church of a skētē), of the triconch cross-in-square plan, was the monastery’s katholikon and can be dated to the first half of the 11th century.262 Its architecture is well preserved, except for the narthex, lost due to its rebuilding into a litē, which most likely took place in 1796 (Figs. 151 to

262 There is no information on the construction of the church, but the 11th century has been generally accepted as the time when it occurred (Χατζηαντωνίου, op. cit., pp. 172, 175, who dates the naos’s opus sectile floor of an elaborate design to the 11th century; Λιάκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στα Βυζαντινά δάπεδα σε τεχνική opus sectile των ναών του Αγίου Όρους», p. 120, however, has dated the floor to the 12th century; it indeed could have been executed some time after the church’s construction). Considering the architectural form and sculptural decoration of the church, Μαμαλούκος has proposed – with certain reservations – a more precise dating to the middle of the century (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 285). Androudis, regarding the church as a continuation of the employment of the triconch type established by the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Ivrēn the monastery of Phalakrou (ibid., pp. 203-205), favors instead the first half of the 11th century (ibid., p. 205). Most recently, in his detailed study of the church’s sculptural decoration, Παζαράς confirms the 11th-century dating and opts for the early 11th century (Παζαράς, «Τα γλυπτά του κυριακού της βατοπεδινής Σκήτης του Αγίου Δημητρίου», p. 417).
However, certain parts of it remain incorporated into the new structure and give an idea of the original narthex (Fig. 154).

First, the entire east wall, shared with the naos, is still extant. It includes a marble portal with an ornamentally carved lintel\textsuperscript{264} (Fig. 155) and a semicircular niche situated south of it. Presently, the niche is decorated with a fresco of the Apostles Peter and Paul embracing each other (Fig. 156), a subject that does not help us to determine its original purpose. The situation is additionally complicated, as the image belongs to a program painted after the later rebuilding of the space. Mamaloukos did not show the niche in his reconstruction plan of the original church (see Fig. 154),\textsuperscript{265} perhaps considering it as having been hewn out of the wall’s masonry during the campaign that transformed the narthex’s into the \textit{litē}. That is certainly possible. However, in light of the fact that similar niches are found in the same position in a few other narthexes,\textsuperscript{266} I believe that it could have been part of the original narthex’s setting. It is much less certain, though, if another niche, placed symmetrically on the other side, was included in the layout. If it had existed, then it was lost when a door was placed there, opening into the northwest bay of the naos, most likely as a part of the late-18\textsuperscript{th} century rebuilding of the space (see Fig. 151).

Other remnants of the original narthex are its south and, probably, north walls, now making up more than half of the \textit{litē}’s lateral walls.\textsuperscript{267} The north wall has been blocked by a

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263 The year 1796 is inscribed with bricks and specially made clay elements immured in the \textit{litē}’s south façade (see Figs. 153, 157). This inscription has been taken as a record of the year of construction also by Androudis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 197. Chatzēantōniou, however, suggests a possibility that the transformation of the narrow narthex into the \textit{litē} had taken place earlier and that the structure was only renovated in 1796 (Χατζηαντωνιου, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 177).
264 The lintel has been dated to the beginning of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century (Androudis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 203).
265 Μαμαλούκος, \textit{Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή}, drawing 91A.
266 See Fatih Camii, Tiryile, in \textit{Chapter 2} and Ravdouchou, Zygou, and Voroskopou in this chapter. For an examination of this architectural feature and its possible functions, see \textit{Chapter 4}.
267 The east portion of the \textit{litē}’s south wall can be determined as belonging to the 11\textsuperscript{th} century church thanks to two facts: the masonry is continuous with that of the naos and the façade is articulated in a manner different from the west portion of the wall, but similar to the rest of the church (these are my own observations; the same conclusion
chapel, built against the litē’s north side at the end of the 19th century, so nothing of it can be seen today. The south wall has remained unobstructed from outside, its extent is still traceable and the layout recognizable (Figs. 157, 158). The elements discernible on the façade can help visualize the original narthex to certain degree. The width of the original narthex is marked by two pilasters on the south façade, one corresponding to the west wall of the naos, the other on what once was the southwest corner of the narthex. Between the two, there were two blind arches, one set within the other, the inner one still intact and the outer one with only the lower, eastern part still visible. These created a well-known motif of recessed arches commonly found on Middle Byzantine church façades.

We thus know roughly what the width of the original narthex was. Determining its height is more difficult. One possibility is that the height of the surviving blind arch reflects the original height of the narthex, in which case the narthex was shorter than the naos and there was no upper floor. The other possibility is that the second blind arch did not perfectly circumscribe the still extant arch, but reached even further up, similar to its neighbors to the east, located on both sides of the south conch (Fig. 159). Moreover, there is another step preserved between this arch and the east pilaster that rises up to the roof eaves (Fig. 157) and it may have been part of the stepped composition of blind arches. Considering the three-stepped design of recessed blind arches stretching up to the roof level in the naos area of the south façade, the second solution, i.e. the existence of a taller narthex, seems more likely and an additional storey may have been accommodated within. In that case, a two-lobed window – now blocked on the side of the litē, but still visible from the naos, in the west wall above the central door (Fig. 160) – served as an internal opening, providing a visual contact between the katēchoumeneion and the church

has been reached by both Chatzēantōniou and Androudis, as it is shown in the architectural drawings reproduced in their articles – Χατζηαντωνίου, op. cit., drawings 1, 4, Androudis, op. cit., figs. 4, 7).
Given the relatively low position of this opening, the over-narthex would have been placed unusually low and its roof would have been below the roof of the *naos*. The double-floor arrangement of the initial narthex is also suggested in a rendering of the *skētē* dating to the second half of the 18th century (Fig. 161).

It is worth noting that this rendering shows a bell tower (labeled as “το Καμπαναρείον”) appended to what appears to be the narthex’s north side. In excavations around the church in 2008, remains of a structure, square in plan and with what seems to have been four massive piers, were discovered on the church’s south side (Fig. 162). They are located exactly in front of what used to be the original narthex’s side wall, with the foundations of the two north piers leaning against it. These are perhaps the remains of an open porch, which may have protected the narthex’s south door, which either led to the refectory or another building of the monastic compound. However, since there is no evidence for such a door and given the bulky and strong appearance of the remains, it is possible that these were in fact the foundations of the belfry mentioned above. Its position on the north side in the engraving can be explained by the print-production process: the artist most likely engraved the south aspect of the church, depicting the present refectory, built in 1888, is located at a short distance south of the church (see Figs. 149, 150). The *litē*’s south door, which is set directly opposite the refectory’s entrance, was protected by a wooden canopy (see a 1989 photograph in Androudis, *op. cit.*, fig. 1; two log holes above the door can be observed in Fig. 157), suggesting that the door provided a direct connection between the church and the refectory. The same may have been the case with the door that potentially existed farther east in the narthex’s south wall.

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268 According to Mamaloukos, the narthex was two-storied (*Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, p. 285), but he does not mention the evidence, if any, for that. The same opinion has been expressed by both Chatzēantōniou (*Χατζηαντωνίου, *op. cit.*, p. 176) and Androudēs (*Androudis, *op. cit.*, p. 201), but again without offering any evidence or argument. Perhaps, all three scholars have been instigated by the existence of the two-lobed opening at the *katēchoumeneion* level. Androudēs (*ibid.*), however, perhaps goes too far in suggesting that the over-narthex was surmounted with twin domes, just by calling upon the examples of Vatopedi and Ivērōn.

269 Mylonas, *Athos and Its Monastic Institutions through Old Engravings and Other Works of Art*, pl. 82, where dated to ca. 1800; reproduced also in *Χατζηαντωνίου, *op. cit.*, p. 174, fig. 18, who corrects the date to the second half of the 18th century. The image also shows a diminutive dome over the narthex, positioned close to the *naos*. The present *litē* has a dome at exactly the same position, above the central east bay. If this dome is what is depicted in the image, then Chatzēantōniou is correct in assuming that the *litē* was built earlier than 1796 (see above, note 263). However, if the *litē* was constructed in that year, then this old engraving can be regarded as evidence that the previous narthex also featured a dome or, otherwise, was indeed created in ca. 1800.

270 The present refectory, built in 1888, is located at a short distance south of the church (see *Figs. 149, 150*). The *litē*’s south door, which is set directly opposite the refectory’s entrance, was protected by a wooden canopy (see a 1989 photograph in Androudis, *op. cit.*, fig. 1; two log holes above the door can be observed in Fig. 157), suggesting that the door provided a direct connection between the church and the refectory. The same may have been the case with the door that potentially existed farther east in the narthex’s south wall.
the position of the belfry correctly, but when the impression was made, the resulting print became the mirror image of the original drawing, appearing to show the church’s north side. Furthermore, the modern bell tower is located slightly southwards from this position, above the entrance of the refectory (built in 1888). These assumptions need additional support provided by close analysis of the archaeological excavation data, which have not been available to me.271

**Kellion of St. Procopius**

The church of St. Procopius, now incorporated into a late 19th-century two-storey house of the modern *kellion* (Fig. 163), is believed to have been the *katholikon* of a *monydrion* (small monastery) of the same name.272 The Monastery of St. Procopius is mentioned in documents only twice, in 1057 and 1081.273 At some point during the subsequent centuries, it lost its independent status and became a *kellion* (dependency) of Vatopedi.274

The church is of a cross-in-square plan, similar in both size and form to that of St. Demetrius, only slightly smaller and with no lateral conches (Figs. 164 to 167). The original dome has collapsed and has been replaced with an awkwardly built blind dome (Figs. 165, 166).

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271 No report on these excavations has been published yet. I owe this information to Vangelis Maladakis of the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities (responsible for monuments of Mount Athos) in Thessaloniki, to whom I express my gratitude.

272 The first publication of the church and examination of its architecture was presented by Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” pp. 559-574. The most recent study was conducted by Στάφυρος Μυμπλόκος, «Το βασιλείαν Κελλί του Άγιου Προκοπίου: Η οικοδομική φάση του 16ου αιώνα στα πλαίσια της αθωνικής αρχιτεκτονικής της εποχής», in Νικόλαος Τουτός (ed.), Το Άγιον Όρος στον 15ο και 16ο αιώνα: ΣΤ’ Διεθνές Εκπαιδευτικό Συνέδριο – Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αγιορειτική Εστία, Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, 2012): 467-484. See ibid., pp. 467-468, n. 1, for the list of previous publications on the church.


It is preceded on the west side by a three-bayed two-storied narthex (see Fig. 164). The original upper floor is lost due to its rebuilding into a chapel, dedicated to the Evangelist John the Theologian, but its northeast corner and the original roofline of the north façade are still detectable above the roof of the house (Fig. 168).\textsuperscript{275} Preserved recessed blind arches on the west façade, going all the way up close to the roof line of the second storey, confirm that the original design indeed included an upper floor (see Figs. 164h, 174, 176). The rebuilding must have been conducted in the years preceding 1536/37, when the chapel was frescoed.\textsuperscript{276} The chapel’s sanctuary apse, with the holy table built in it, looks as if it may have been set into what was originally a gallery opening for the \textit{katēchoumeneion}, which provided a view into the \textit{naos} (Figs. 164 a, d, f, i, 169).\textsuperscript{277}

At the narthex’s lower level, the three bays are marked by two pairs of pilasters on the east and west walls (Figs. 164 b, g, 170). The western pair was later trimmed below the springing point, probably in order to allow more space for wooden \textit{stasidia} (Figs. 170, 171). The pilasters extend into arches, which support three groin-vaults above the bays (Figs. 170, 172). The bays are all rectangular, with the middle one being only slightly wider than the other two (see Fig. 164b). Presently, only the main entrance door in the west wall (Fig. 175) and another, leading to the \textit{naos} remain. Apparently, there were no additional doors in the north and south walls, since there is an \textit{arcosolium} in the south wall (Fig. 170) and, possibly, another \textit{arcosolium}.

\textsuperscript{275} \textit{Cf.} Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” p. 561. Mylonas believed that the original narthex was a single-storey structure. Nonetheless, he has not excluded the possibility that the church initially may have had a \textit{katēchoumeneion} (ibid., pp. 561-564).

\textsuperscript{276} Τουτός, Φουστέρης, \textit{Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους}, p. 162; \textit{cf.} Papazótopos, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 156. Mamaloukos allows for the possibility that the works on the chapel may have been connected to the reconstruction works in the \textit{naos}, dated to 1524 (the year \textit{αφκδ΄} is inscribed on the church’s south façade; \textit{Μαμαλόκος}, «Το βατοπεδίνο κέλλι του Αγίου Προκοπίου», p. 470).

\textsuperscript{277} \textit{Cf.} Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” pp. 559.
was set into the north wall as well, just below the window (Fig. 177). This window and another one in the west wall, also in the north bay (see Figs. 171, 175), appear to be original and most probably were accompanied by two others, correspondingly positioned, in the south bay. The two windows presently in the wall between the narthex and the naos are the result of an alteration (Fig. 173). It is only not clear whether they were opened to provide some light after the other windows of the narthex were walled up or if they were left open after lateral doors were blocked. However, considering the fact that the windows partially go under the two pilasters in the naos – which were apparently trimmed to make space for the windows – it seems more likely that there were no additional doors leading to the naos. A niche under the north window (Fig. 173), on the other hand, may have dated back to the initial layout, but that has to be confirmed by a closer archaeological examination.

The narthex’s exterior was simple and rather austere, only articulated by stepped pilasters (see Figs. 164h, 174 to 177). The two pilasters on the west façade do not match the interior structure: the spacing between them is bigger than the distance between the pilasters inside. That was most probably a conscious decision on the part of the architect, aimed at achieving a better composition of the façade, with the central field being larger and possibly taller than the lateral ones. Moreover, the dimension of the central field is only slightly smaller than those formed by the two central pairs of pilasters on the north and south façades of the naos, showing that these measurements, i.e. the cross-shaped roof, played a role in the composition, not the inner structure. The internal structural system followed its own logic, probably yielding to structural demands related to providing adequate support for the narthex’s upper storey.

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278 As proposed by Mamaloukos, in his ideal reconstruction of the original layout of the church (Μαμαλούκος, «Το βατοπεδινό Κέλλι του Αγίου Προκοπίου», fig. 5; reproduced here as Fig. 177).
279 It seems that the uppermost parts of the west façade are still preserved inside the attic space of the house’s roof (see Fig. 164h).
Drawing a comparison with the churches of Panagia tōn Chalkeōn (1028) in Thessaloniki and Eski İmaret Camii (traditionally identified as the Christ Pantepoptēs and dated to 1081-87) in Constantinople, Mylonas has proposed the period 1081-1100 as the time when St. Procopius was built. This dating has been contested by Mamaloukos, who has expressed a view that it would be difficult to justify such a comparison due to a more modest scale and the poorer quality of execution at St. Procopius. He believes that the construction of the Athonite church can perhaps be moved back to the middle 11th century, when the Monastery of St. Procopius occurs in documents. Vasilēs Messēs, in regard to certain architectural and stylistic features, prefers the end of the 11th century as the date. Given the lack of any firm evidence for the time of construction, I would opt for a broad dating to the second half of the 11th century.

c) Narthexes of Other Churches

**St. Symeōn (Voroskopou)**

In the area northwest of Hilandar Monastery, close to the shore, there are the ruins of a church dedicated to St. Symeon (Fig. 178). It was the *katholikon* of the monastery of Voroskopou (του Βοροσκόπου). The monastery is mentioned in documents from 1015, 1024, and 1141. At

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280 Mylonas, “Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos,” pp. 570-574. For the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn and Eski İmaret Camii, see Chapter 2.
281 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 286.
282 Μεσσής, «Ναοί αθωνικού τύπου», p. 120.
283 This date can be further supported by the style of a marble slab affixed in the apse of the church’s north *parabēma* to serve as the *prothesis* table. The slab bears an incised design, immediately recognizable as a pattern frequently used in parapet slabs and sanctuary screens – an interlacing band that takes the shape of a rhombus with a circle inside and another four smaller ones outside of it – but, in this case, never completed. The closest parallels, in terms of both design and geography, can be found in the *templon* parapet slabs of the Xenophontos Monastery’s old *katholikon*. The slabs are dated to the second half of the 11th century, possibly the 1080s (Παζαράς, «Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος του παλαιού καθολικού της μονής Ξενοφόντος στο Άγιον Όρος», pp. 45-46, figs. 48, 49). That information may give more weight to the dating proposed by Mylonas and Messēs.
some unknown date, probably at the end of the 12th century, it came into Hilandar’s possession. Based on references to the monastery provided by Athonite documents, Mamaloukos has proposed the beginning of the 11th century as the time of the church’s construction.\textsuperscript{285}

Partial excavations in 1974 revealed the architectural features of a relatively small \textit{katholikon}\textsuperscript{286}. The \textit{naos} is of a cross-in-square plan, but with an atypical architectural arrangement: instead of four columns, there are two masonry piers to the east and two strongly projecting pilasters to the west (\textit{Fig. 179}). It seems that the modest dimensions (probably instigated by the intention to serve a small community) and limited financial means were the reason for the employment of this somewhat reduced variant of the cross-in-square plan. The narthex, however, was apparently unaffected by such a solution. It is a standard-sized room, which is almost as large as the central space of the \textit{naos}. Beside the main doors in the center of the west and east walls, there are two more doors, smaller in size, in the north and south walls. In the east wall, there are two semicircular niches, placed symmetrically in relation to the door.\textsuperscript{287} The height of the preserved west wall does not allow us to determine if there were windows to the left and right of the door, but they must have been in those positions – possibly similar to the windows of the inner narthex at Zygou (see \textit{Figs. 128, 129}) – and were the only means by which to bring natural light inside. In the room’s southeast corner, there are remnants of what appears to have been a sail-vault (\textit{Fig. 180}).\textsuperscript{288} Their position indicates the possibility of the existence of an upper storey to the narthex. It seems that the vaulting consisted of three segments, thus suggesting that there were three bays in the interior. The two arches between the


\textsuperscript{285} Μαμαλούκος, \textit{Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή}, p. 290. Taking into account all that was known about the church at the moment, Athanasios Papazōtos expressed the same opinion (Papazōtos, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 151).

\textsuperscript{286} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{287} The same arrangement can be observed in the Ravdouchou church (see above).

\textsuperscript{288} \textit{Cf.} Papazōtos, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 151, Pl. 1.
vaults were probably slightly closer to each other than Mamaloukos assumed in his ideal reconstruction of the church’s plan, most likely corresponding to the position of the pilasters on the west façade. Therefore, the middle bay was square in shape or close to it. The façades were enlivened by pilasters, which are positioned exactly at the points of structural importance, thus both reinforcing the walls and providing for their decorative articulation.

**St. Nicholas (Melissourgeiou)**

The ruins of the church of St. Nicholas at Palaiomelissa (*Fig. 181*), in the ancient region of Komētissa, which is just outside the present border of the Holy Mountain, have been identified by Iōakeim Papangelos as the church of the monastery of Melissourgeiou (του Μελισσουργείου). The monastery is first mentioned in a document from 1056. According to documents from 1062 and 1063, when its monks apparently tried to gain freedom from Ivērōn, it was already the latter’s metochion (dependency). The remains of a rather small church confirm that it used to serve a modest community. The church was excavated by Papangelos, who dated it to ca. 1030.

After the excavation, it became apparent that the church’s naos was of a free-cross triconch plan, in which the arms of the cross are reduced in length but architecturally enriched by conches (*Fig. 182*). The central space was covered with a dome. Such an architectural solution makes the church very different from the other known Athonite katholika, but similar to the south chapel at Vatopedi (see *Figs. 49, 63, 106*). However, the church of Melissourgeiou is

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289 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawing no. 99.
290 In a report by him, published in the magazine *Prōtaton* 12-13 (1984), p. 103 (as cited in Lefort et al. (eds.), *Actes d’Iviron I*: Introduction / J. Lefort/, p. 75, n. 7; the magazine has been unavailable to me).
291 Lefort et al. (eds.), *Actes d’Iviron I*: Introduction / J. Lefort/, p. 75.
292 Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός, p. 176, notes 9, 10.
293 Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 293.
twice as large as Vatopedi’s south chapel. On the west side, the *naos* is preceded by a simple oblong narthex of the same length as the north-south arm of the cross and fairly narrow (about 2.30 m). There is one door connecting it with the *naos* and another in the opposite wall that functioned as the main entrance. Two smaller doors on the sides lead to rooms integrally built at the narthex’s north and south ends. The south room is not well preserved, whereas its north counterpart is in better condition. It is a single-spaced chamber with a semicircular niche in the east wall, an *arcosolium* set within the north wall, and covered with a combination of an arch and a blind dome. These features indicate that it was used as a funerary chapel. The narthex may have had an upper storey. If that was the case, the lateral rooms were probably lower than the narthex.

* The detailed descriptions of all extant Middle Byzantine narthexes of Mount Athos presented in this chapter will serve as the base for further analyses and for drawing some conclusions about the design of narthex and adjoining spaces, as well as about their place in the life and architectural setting of the monastic communities of the Holy Mountain. The synthetic discussions are presented in Part II.

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294 *Cf.* Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, p. 294. With all these elements, it looks very similar to the north chapel in Zygou (see above).

295 *Cf.* Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή*, p. 293 and his reconstruction drawings, *Σχ. 109 Α-Γ*. A church of a similar plan, dated to the beginning of the 12th century, can be observed in the village of Platani in the Achaia region of the Peloponnese (Στάυρος Μαμαλούκος, «Ναός Αγίου Νικολάου στο Πλατάνι Αχαίας. Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία», *ΔΧΑΕ* 31 (2010): 33-46). This church’s design, however, is less compact, since the narthex is not integrated in the overall plan and looks as if it has been merely appended to the triconch *naos*. Mamaloukos has proposed that the narthex originally had an upper floor (*ibid.*, pp. 43-44, figs, 6-8).
Chapter 2

Narthexes in the Cross-in-Square Churches of Constantinopolitan and Other Monasteries of the 10th and 11th Centuries

In order to reach a better understanding of the architectural and functional characteristics of the Middle Byzantine katholika of Mount Athos and their narthexes, one needs to set them within a broader context and to take a look at other monastic churches of the period. A plethora of these will be presented in a survey appended to this chapter. Here, I bring attention to a selection of relevant parallels based first on chronology, namely the 10th and 11th centuries, and then form, that is the three-bayed narthex appended to the cross-in-square naos. I trust that the chronological reasons are clear enough. But the focus on the narthexes of cross-in-square churches needs some explanation. Apart from the churches of Prōtaton, Ravdouchou, and Kalamitsiōn, all Athonite katholika feature the cross-in-square plan. The particular type of their narthexes appears inseparable from that plan and the structural organization of the naos, seemingly instigated by the cross-in-square layout.¹ This is clear from surviving churches at Athos, in Constantinople, and from other regions where this architectural and functional trend was manifested. Furthermore, the trend seems to stem from the liturgical and spatial experience of a certain monastic tradition that prevailed after the period of Iconoclasm.² It is for this reason


² The idea that the cross-in-square structure may have been originated within monastic circles has been suggested by Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 178-180, and developed by Vincenzo Ruggieri,
that I only introduce the narthexes of monastic churches of cross-in-square plan as parallels for the Athonite narthexes.

I pay particular attention to Constantinopolitan monastic foundations. Scholarship has viewed the building technique, four-column cross-in-square plan, and certain architectural features of the early Athonite katholika, including the recessed brickwork and even the lateral conches, as having their origins in Constantinople. Agreeing with that on a general level, I will put more emphasis here on similarities in spatial concepts and habits, rather than the particular details in form and design, which may occasionally vary. Experience of the liturgical space and spatial habits were influenced by liturgical practices and their performance, which the Athonite communities shared with those of the capital, i.e. the Stoudite liturgical rule, and perhaps by monastic traditions transmitted to both Constantinople and Athos from the communities of Bithynian Olympus and the Hellespont, probably the leading monastic region at the beginning of the Middle Byzantine period. It is possible that architectural solutions traveled together with Byzantine Religious Architecture (582-867): Its History and Structural Elements (Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1991), pp. 139-141. For further discussions of the origins, early representatives, and evolution of the type, see Hans Buchwald, “Western Asia Minor as a Generator of Architectural Forms in the Byzantine Period: Provincial Back-Wash or Dynamic Center of Production?,” JöB 34 (1984): 199-234, pp. 223-227, idem, “Criteria for the Evaluation of Transitional Byzantine Architecture,” JöB 44 (1994): 21-31, pp. 27-30, Ousterhout, Master Builders of Byzantium, pp. 15-23, 30-32, and Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 271-272.


4 St. Athanasius the Athonite came from one of these communities, located on Mount Kyminas and run between ca. 925 and 961 by his spiritual father St. Michael Maleinos (ca. 894-961). On Michael, see ODB (see List of
these liturgical practices and their requirements, especially when the solutions were successful in accommodating the functional demands set before them. I believe that an important role in the transmission of liturgical customs and forms associated with them was played by experience with the actual space (‘memory of space’) in an already existing environment. This means that the founder of a monastery would build a church for his new monastic community as an emulation of the church in his previous monastic home. This would be out of reverence for his ancestral house and its traditions, but it was also no less due to an effort to preserve and employ monastic values and organization, which involved certain liturgical and ritual customs, which were associated with specific architectural accommodations. It seems as if the provision of a pre-defined architectural setting enabled a normal performance of liturgical offices, which thus secured the implementation of desired monastic ideals. The founder could also modify certain architectural features or add new ones as he deemed appropriate, in the same way as he could change or adapt monastic regulations for the new establishment. This process explains wide distribution of the same or similar architectural solutions and the occasional appearances of local variances. Therefore, I also include here all extant Bithynian churches of the period. A better understanding of the purpose, function, and organization of the narthex can be achieved through a comparative analysis of the surviving churches and their monastic charters, which sometimes

**Abbreviations**, Vol. 2, pp. 1276-1277, and Louis Petit (ed.), “Vie de saint Michel Maléinos, suivie du Traité ascétique de Basile Maléinos,” *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* 7 (1902): 543-603, with a description of the Mount Kyminas monastery on p. 560. For the period of Athanasius’s life spent in this monastery, see *Vita Prima of Athanasius*, # 19-25, in Jacques Noret (ed.), *Vitae duae antiquae Sancti Athanasii Athonitae* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), and Ο Άγιος Αθανάσιος ο Αθωνίτης: Εισαγωγή, κείμενο, μετάφραση, σχόλια (Ορμύλια: Εκδόσεις Ιερού Κοινοβίου Ευαγγελισμού της Θεοτόκου, 2003). Athanasius could have brought to Athos the experience of liturgical space in his former monastic home, which might have had an impact on the architectural planning at the Great Lavra (for a similar opinion, see Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, pp. 231-235). The plans of surviving churches and remains at a few sites in Bithynia (see further below) strongly support the likelihood that *katholika* of Bithynian monasteries had architecture similar to that of the Athonite *katholika*. 

107
contain regulations or prescriptions for services, sacraments, and other activities performed in
there.\(^5\)

The narthexes I examine here belong to the following churches: Theotokos tou Libos, Myrelaion, Eski İmaret Camii, and Vefa Kilise Camii, all in Constantinople. A few cases from Bithynia, including Fatih Camii (Tirilye), and Thessaloniki (Panagia tön Chalkeōn) are also addressed. They all share the same or similar architectural features with their Athonite counterparts and, additionally, they were sometimes the result of the same monastic and liturgical influences – as evidenced by the close connections between Bithynia, Constantinople, and Athos – or benefited from imperial patronage. Moreover, building workshops from Constantinople might have been employed in the construction of several churches on Athos, serving as another means of transmission of plans and forms. Therefore, by examining these churches, I seek to explore spaces that most likely were close relatives to the Athonite narthexes, either furnishing the models for the latter or sharing with them a common ancestry in some early churches that are now lost. Either way, I strongly believe that all these churches stem from a common monastic tradition, shared with and further developed by the coenobitic communities of Mount Athos. This will become evident after a closer inspection of their narthexes that follows and which sheds more light on the form and function of Athonite narthexes.

\(^5\) A more detailed examination of liturgical practices related to the narthex, including charters of now lost monasteries, is the subject of the **Chapter 3**. For an analysis of the architecture of Athonite narthexes in relation to the ritual and other functions encompassed therein, see **Chapter 4**.
a) Constantinopolitan Churches

Theotokos tou Libos (North Church of the Monastery of Lips)

The present Fenari İsa Camii (Figs. 183 to 186), a complex of two churches, was the *katholikon* of the Monastery of Lips (Μονή του Λίβος). The older of the two, dedicated to the Mother of God the *Πανάχραντος* (Fig. 187), was commissioned by Constantine Lips, a high military official and court dignitary, and constructed by 907/8, when it was inaugurated. It is the earliest surviving church of the cross-in-square plan with four columns in Constantinople and was one of the finest architectural achievements of the time. The second church, dedicated to St. John the Forerunner, was added to the south some time between 1282 and 1303, as a commission by the widow of Emperor Michael VIII, Theodora Palaiologina, who restored the monastery. Shortly after this, the two churches were enveloped on the west and south sides with a common perambulatory (see Figs. 185, 186), which was used mainly for the burials of members of the imperial family.

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7 For the date of the inauguration, see Mango, Hawkins, op. cit., p. 300, and ODB, Vol. 2, p. 1232 (s. v. “Lips”).

8 A study of the original architecture of the church, with a proposed reconstruction, was published by Arthur H. S. Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” DOP 18 (1964): 279-298. For further elaboration and, in some segments, different interpretations of archaeological evidence, see Marinis, “The Monastery tou Libos,” pp. 43-87. On the development of the cross-in-square plan and the north church of Lips as its ultimate and perfect expression, a result that was repeated in later buildings only with variations, see ibid., pp. 70-74, 77, and Ousterhout, Master Builders of Byzantium, pp. 7-11, 15-19, 30-33.


The narthex of the Theotokos church is rectangular in plan, 9.50m by 3.20m (Figs. 188, 189). It is divided into three equal bays, which are discernable only by three groin-vaults supported by two arches, since there are no pilasters (Fig. 190). The arches and vaults spring above the point marked by a marble string cornice (Fig. 191), which runs continually along all four sides. The wall surfaces from the floor up to the cornice were originally decorated with stone revetment, as attested by numerous holes in the masonry, where the holding nails were affixed; the areas above the cornice were covered with mosaics. The narthex connects with the naos via three doors, all aligned with the west bays of the naos. In the west wall, there are three openings: the central one was the main entrance, whereas the other two were perhaps not doors – as Arthur H. S. Megaw’s reconstruction drawing (Fig. 199) indicates – but rather were closed with parapets on the lower level and thus functioned as windows. The main entrance was originally preceded by a small porch (see Figs. 188, 199), which was presumably demolished when the outer ambulatory was added. Most likely at the same time, the side openings were stripped of their marble parapets and window panes, and transformed into simple passageways. The narthex’s north and south ends terminate in shallow conches, which rise to the entire height of the room (see Figs. 188, 190). Both of them are pierced by doors, the south

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14 Similar to the openings on the west façade of the exonarthexes in Vatopedi and Zygou, Mount Athos (see Chapter 1). As a proof that this might have been the case, no marble doorsills were recorded at the bases of the two side openings during the 1920s survey, unlike the main entrance door, the three doors leading to the naos, and the door to the staircase tower (see Macridy, “The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi,” figs. 5 [here, Fig. 186], 48; Arthur H. S. Megaw recorded only the last one – Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” drawings A and F). Also, the doorsill of the north door has not been detected, but I believe that it was either removed when the door was walled up or it remains hidden under the masonry of the blockage.
15 The springing parts of the lateral arches were detected on the pilasters flanking the door and the foundations of the porch were discovered by Megaw (Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” p. 295).
one leading to a square staircase tower (Figs. 188, 189, 192). The stairs inside were wooden\textsuperscript{16} and were the means to reach the second floor of the narthex (Fig. 193). The tower is plain, with no external reinforcement pilasters or other architectural articulation, only windows on each side. Most likely, it was covered with a low, pyramidal wooden roof.\textsuperscript{17}

The narthex is very tall and, as such, it is slightly unexpected that an additional floor was accommodated above it (Fig. 194). The upper storey was, nonetheless, necessary as it provided access to four diminutive \textit{parekklēsia}, embedded between the vaulted arms of the cross-in-square core of the \textit{naos}. The west chapels are entered directly from the over-narthex (Fig. 195), whereas the two above the \textit{parabēmata} were once presumably reached by exterior walkways, set on corbels (see Fig. 199).\textsuperscript{18} However, almost nothing of the narthex’s upper storey structures remains (Figs. 196, 197) and only a little of it was recorded, providing a rather vague idea of the west wall’s appearance.\textsuperscript{19} According to Ernest Mamboury’s plans (Figs. 194, 195), it was relatively open – which was indeed likely the case – and the over-narthex’s lateral bays served as antechambers to the chapels. Megaw reconstructed the roofing of these bays as domes, which thus completed a five-domed design for the church, with another pair of domes crowning the east chapels (Figs. 198, 199).\textsuperscript{20}

This otherwise well documented and very convincing reconstruction has been questioned by Vasileios Marinis in regard to the four corner domes: the evidence that had been used to

\textsuperscript{16} Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” p. 294. Four lengths of column shafts embedded in the floor, which served as foundations for the four newel-posts of the stairs, are still preserved (\textit{ibid.}; see Figs. 188, 189, 192).

\textsuperscript{17} Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” p. 294. Megaw has expressed doubts that this tower doubled as a belfry (\textit{ibid.}, n. 35).

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 290-291. For an examination of the problem of how the two east roof chapels were accessed, with a review and reassessment of previous scholarship, see Marinis, “The Monastery tou Libos,” pp. 44-53, 56-58. Finding the existence of side aisles – as proposed by some scholars – improbable in view of the archaeological evidence, Vasileios Marinis has accepted Megaw’s solution of catwalks on corbels (\textit{ibid.}, p. 57).


\textsuperscript{20} See Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” pp. 292-294.
propose the existence of domes was apparently disputable. He, instead, argued that the lateral bays, with their relatively open sides, were covered with timber roofs, similar to that over the staircase tower. Although I agree that the structure of the over-narthex was probably lightweight and fairly open, and possibly without domes, I am reluctant to accept this solution for the roofing of the bays. If there were no domes, I think that the bays could have been topped with groin-vaults or other masonry covering. On the other hand, Mamboury’s drawing of the longitudinal section through the north aisle (Fig. 194) indicates that the vaulting of the west and east chapels was asymmetrical. If correct, that may be used as yet another argument in favor of the thesis that there were no domes with drums above the eastern pair of chapels. However, that does not exclude the possibility that a pair of domes with drums topped the narthex at its north and south ends. This twin-domed narthex design would relate this church to those of Ivērōn and Vatopedi on Athos, and the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn in Thessaloniki. Perhaps such a solution, i.e. the existence of relatively heavy domes over an open and light structure of the over-narthex, may have actually contributed to the latter’s devastating collapse and the disappearance of almost all traces of the upper floor’s architecture. In any event, the central bay, being nearly square in plan, may have been covered with a sail-vault.

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21 Marinis, “The Monastery tou Libos,” pp. 61-63, has argued against the existence of the four corner domes on the grounds that the theory lacks firm archaeological and structural evidence, and because he believes it improbable that the antechambers of the west parekklēsia had domes but the chapels themselves did not. Although I agree that sufficient evidence is missing and that liturgically and symbolically it would have been better to have a dome over the actual liturgical space, I would not disregard the architectural and compositional reasoning behind potential placement of a pair of domes over the narthex’s corners as a way to achieve a symmetrical configuration of four domes together with the other pair at the east end. But, that is only if the east parekklēsia indeed had domes, which seems now almost impossible to confirm (cf. ibid., pp. 62-63).

22 Ibid., pp. 63, 69-70.

23 For the first two, see Chapter 1, and for Panagia tōn Chalkeōn, see below. The presence of the twin dome motif in Athonite katēchoumena is discussed in Chapter 5.

24 This is merely a conjecture based on my observation that central bays in narthexes are often square and topped with vaults of a domical shape (for some other examples in Constantinople, see below; functional and symbolical reasons for the presence of this architectural feature in the narthex zone are examined in Chapter 4). Therefore, a sail-vault seems more plausible to me than a groin-vault, which Megaw saw as appropriate for this location (Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” p. 292).
Due to the lack of firmer evidence, the issue of roofing has to remain an open question. However, there is some evidence for certain windows and other openings in the over-narthex. An internal opening in the form of a lunette, closed only with a parapet, was provided between the upper floor and the *naos*. According to the reconstruction drawing of the longitudinal section by Mamboury (Fig. 194), it seems that the west windows were partially closed with similar marble-slab parapets. In this way, the two windows on the sides corresponded with the plausible layout of the openings below, at the lower level. However, because of the lack of firm archaeological evidence for almost everything in the area of the narthex’s upper floor, anything said about its possible original form must remain at the level of hypothesis.

Turning to the narthex’s façades and in the view of what has been previously said, only a little information can be inferred about their articulation and this is only for the lower levels. The main elements of articulation were pilasters (*Figs. 197 to 199*). Their positions correspond to the interior structural layout (see *Figs. 188, 189*). Pilasters on the north façade project somewhat deeper and, according to Megaw, they provided support for the north walkway to the northeastern roof *parekklēsion* (see *Fig. 199*). There is some evidence suggesting that the lower parts of the walls may have been covered with marble revetment, thus adding to the richness of the façades.

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25 Insets carved into the jambs of the opening, which would have accommodated a parapet, have been recorded (Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” p. 292, n. 29).

26 See Macridy, “The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi,” fig. 7. Megaw’s reconstruction drawing has proposed the same solution for the central opening, whereas the two smaller ones left and right of it have masonry parapets instead (see Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” p. 293, drawing G, reproduced here in *Fig. 199*).

27 See above. In this manner, the whole narthex very much resembled that of the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas (see *Chapter 2, Excursus* and *Fig. 403*).


Myrelaion

The church of the Myrelaion (Μυρέλαιον) Monastery, today a mosque by the name of Bodrum Camii (Figs. 200 to 202), was erected by Emperor Romanos I Lakapēnos (920-944) probably between 920 and 922, upon his ascension to the throne. He added it to his former mansion, which had been built earlier on top of the remains of a vast 5th-century rotunda. The church, of a cross-in-square plan, was constructed upon a substantial substructure formed like a crypt, due to the sloping terrain and in order to bring the church to the same level as the mansion (Figs. 206, 207). The church initially served a female monastic community, which resided in the converted mansion, and became a burial place for Romanos and some members of his family, thus breaking the long tradition of imperial burials at the Church of the Holy Apostles. Once richly decorated, the Myrelaion Church was damaged in a fire in ca. 1200 and remained unrepaired for several decades. Around 1300, substantial restorations were undertaken in the church that modified its original form. Upon the conquest of the city, it was converted into a mosque. It suffered two more fires, in ca. 1784 and in 1911, and after the latter, the site

32 ODB, Vol. 2, p. 1429. First to be buried in the church was Romanos’s wife, Theodora, who died in 922 (Markos Fafalios, “Myrelaion Monastery (Bodrum Camii),” in Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World: Constantinople (published in 2008) [http://constantinople.ehw.gr/Forms/iLemmaBodyExtended.aspx?lemmalD=11766 – accessed on March 8, 2017], n. 3). Other family members that were buried there: Romanos’s sons, Christopher (in 931) and Constantine (in 946), the latter’s wife Helena (died after 940), Romanos himself (in 948), and finally (in 961) Helena, daughter of Romanos and widow of Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos (Striker, The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul, p. 6, with further reference in n. 5). For the likely circumstances and reasons behind Romanos’s decision to establish burial place for himself and his family away from the Holy Apostles’, see ibid., pp. 7-9.
33 See ibid., pp. 24, 29, on evidence for this fire and its date, as well as the possibility that it may have been the same as the great fire of August 18, 1203. Cf. also Fafalios, op. cit.
34 See Striker, The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul, pp. 11, 24, 29-30. Some time before 1315, the monastery had become a male community (ibid., p. 10, n. 21).
remained abandoned.\textsuperscript{35} In the 1960s, the building was subjected to the restoration work that gave it its present form (see Fig. 201).\textsuperscript{36}

The interior of the narthex is articulated by stepped pilasters and arches, which divide it into three bays, roughly corresponding to the structure of the \textit{naos} (Fig. 202). Three doors, placed in the east wall within each bay, connect the narthex and the \textit{naos}.\textsuperscript{37} The north and south bays are covered with elongated groin-vaults, whereas the central bay – formed over a square plan – is crowned with a smooth sail-vault (Figs. 203 to 205, 209, 210).\textsuperscript{38} Even more striking features are the two shallow and tall conches added to the north and south (see Figs. 202, 210). Unlike those of the Theotokos tou Libos, the curve of their walls is visible from outside (Fig. 208). Instead of doors, these terminals were pierced by large windows, probably originally enclosed with slabs at the parapet level, with marble-framed glass panes in the middle register, and with \textit{oculi} (“crown glass”), mounted onto stucco or stone frameworks (\textit{transennae}) within the arched tops.\textsuperscript{39} Additionally, there are fan-lights above a string course, making the interior

\textsuperscript{35} Fafalios, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{36} The restoration of 1964-1965 protected the building from further deterioration, but was largely arbitrary and many of the church’s original architectural features were lost or concealed (Striker, \textit{The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul}, p. 17 and \textit{passim}). Therefore, the present form might depart in certain details from the original. For a study aimed at tracing and examining the original form in detail, see \textit{ibid}.

\textsuperscript{37} Due to the absence of stone thresholds in the side doors, unlike those still \textit{in situ} and used for the main door of the narthex and central door of the \textit{naos}, Cecil L. Striker (\textit{ibid.}, p. 17) has expressed the opinion that the former two were opened at some later date. No firm conclusion can be reached, since the reveals of the both openings were completely rebuilt in 1964-1965. However, considering the level of the topmost layer of what appear to be the original foundations under the openings, and which is the same as that of the central door’s stone threshold, he believes that no thresholds existed and that the openings were possibly blocked with marble parapets. Being unaware of another case of internal windows opened between the \textit{naos} and narthex and allowing for the possibility that the side doors’ thresholds might have been placed slightly higher than that of the central door, I am inclined to see the three-door arrangement as part of the original design. Additionally, the existence of three doors seems to be a rule in church planning in Constantinople during the period (cf. Theotokos tou Libos, Eski İmaret Camii, and Vefa Kilise Camii, all included in this chapter).

\textsuperscript{38} For a discussion and an architectural drawing of the vaults, see Striker, \textit{The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul}, p. 23 and fig. 6.

\textsuperscript{39} Compare with similar windows of the \textit{exonarthex} at Vatopedi (\textbf{Chapter 1} and Figs. 61, 89). These two windows at Myrelaion were originally narrower than the surviving openings. This is indicated by remnants of a recessed arch of the opening in the north conch, recorded in a drawing of the north façade (Striker, \textit{The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul}, fig. 21b). Unfortunately, this detail was not rendered in the restoration.
well-lit and seemingly more open. Such an impression is further enhanced by the recessed lunettes and large windows of the west wall, which open to the side bays. The whole narthex, thus, had the appearance of a glazed porch (Figs. 202, 207). The wall surfaces were most probably marble-sheathed up to the string course, like those in the Theotokos tou Libos. Accordingly, the vaults were reserved for pictorial decoration, executed in mosaic. The floor was likely paved in the *opus sectile* technique, featuring a geometric pattern. Since there was plenty of room in the church’s substructure, which is almost identical in dimension to the church above it, all burials must have been accommodated within that space. Therefore, there are no burials in the narthex, unlike the practice commonly observed in other churches.

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40 These apertures, however, may only be the product of the 1964-1965 restoration works and may have been only blind arches in the initial stages (cf. *ibid.*, p. 20).
41 An open lunette seems to have existed above the west entrance, whereas the lunettes above the west façade’s side openings were in fact blind arches (see *ibid.*, p. 18, and previous note).
42 Apparently, the walls were covered with a polychrome marble revetment, with green Thessalian marble used in particular abundance (Striker, *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul*, p. 24). Also, pieces of ornamented polychrome ceramic revetment were found in debris accumulated inside the substructure (*ibid.*), but it is not certain which part of the interior were adorned with them. For the Theotokos tou Libos, see above, note 13.
43 Remnants of mosaics were recorded by Richard Krautheimer (Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* [see *List of Abbreviations*], p. 358). Mosaic tesserae were found scattered at various places in the church and this fact, along with other considerations, made Striker conclude that the upper zones in the interior were covered with mosaic decoration (Striker, *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul*, p. 24).
44 According to the finds in the church, diamond, hexagonal, and madorla shapes predominated among pieces used for the floor pavement (*ibid.*, p. 24).
46 In his study, Striker does not make any attempt to determine where the numerous 10th-century burials (see above, note 32) were accommodated, probably due to the lack of archaeological evidence (cf. Striker, *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul*, pp. 28, 30-31). It seems natural to me that the church’s ample substructure, in the form of a crypt, was used for that purpose, as it was in the Palaiologan period, when the church was restored (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 30-31). The bodies were most likely laid to rest in reused sarcophagi, which were, according to one source, transferred from the church of St. Mamas (*ibid.*, pp. 6-7, n. 10). The circumstance that the entrances into the substructure, located in its south wall, were partially blocked (in the parapet zone) soon after the completion of the church (*cf. ibid.*, p. 28) can, perhaps, be explained as the closing after the sarcophagi were brought in. The sarcophagi were looted during the Latin occupation and the bones perhaps collected and placed in the southeast compartment of the substructure, where dismembered bones and bone fragments have been found, suggesting that it may have been an ossuary (*ibid.*, p. 30). Therefore, Striker’s conviction that the original purpose of the substructure was purely utilitarian, “such as a storage room or tool shed” (*ibid.*, p. 28), has to be dismissed. And the Myrelaion’s resemblance to double-storied churches, whose lower floor is of a funerary character, might not be completely incidental, as categorically asserted by Striker (*ibid.*, pp. 33-34). *Cf.* James Morganstern, “Review of *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* by Cecil L. Stirker,” *Speculum* 58/4 (1983): 1090-1092, p. 1091, for similar criticism.
The exterior is articulated with pronounced semi-cylindrical pilasters, whose positions reflect the internal structure. Projecting relatively far out and being of an unusual form, they give the building a very decorative, almost sculptural appearance (see Figs. 201, 207). With a series of large openings, the wall surfaces are almost gone and the pilasters come to look like pillars supporting a lightweight canopy rather than a heavy roof. A marble string course – which runs along all sides, placed at the level of the vaults’ and arches’ springing points – and the arcading of lunettes above the cornice also contribute to this impression. Ultimately, the narthex, as well as the entire church, appears extremely open.

Despite the striking similarities with the narthex of the church of Theotokos tou Libos – the existence of conches at the shorter ends, three doors leading to the naos, almost the same dimensions (in ground plan), and similar interior decoration – the narthex of the Myrelaion does not have an upper storey. The reasons for the lack of a katēchoumeneion can only be a matter of speculation. One line of thought is that, if the over-narthex was normally reserved for the ktētor when attending a service, Romanos possibly waived these rights after becoming the emperor and moving to the Great Palace. The new position and duties perhaps did not allow for the incorporation of this private foundation into the annual round of church attendance required of the emperor. Moreover, the church became the katholikon of a nunnery and that fact led to the prohibition of attendance at services by males (abaton), most likely including the founder. Therefore, an upper storey was not built. However, the lack of any firm proof leaves all explanations in the realm of mere speculation.

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47 Striker keeps referring to them as buttresses (ibid., pp. 17-18 and passim), perhaps for their unobstructed and unvaried vertical run through the façades’ registers. While admitting that it would be hard to ascertain whether the semi-cylindrical pilasters were primarily formal or structural features, Striker (ibid., p. 34) is more inclined to see their enlargement as aimed at stiffening the supporting elements for the reason of the building’s great height (i.e. two stories). Agreeing with this, I am still slightly hesitant to call them buttresses, since they are not much structurally pronounced and pilasters, which I consider these features to be, may also be engaged in a reinforcing role.

48 See Chapter 5.
Eski İmaret Camii (Church of the Monastery of Christ Pantepoptēs?)

Eski İmaret Camii (Fig. 211) has been traditionally identified as the *katholikon* of the Monastery of Christ Pantepoptēs. In accordance with this identification, the building has been dated to the time between 1081 and 1087, when the monastery was founded.\(^9\) However, the identification was brought into question.\(^0\) Agreeing that the building could not be the *katholikon* of the Pantepoptēs Monastery, a more recent study has proposed its identification as the Church of St. Constantine, founded by the Empress Theophano (died 895 or 896) in the area of the Cistern of Bonus (Βόνος), moving its dating to the end of the 9\(^{th}\) century.\(^1\) Such identification was based on the proximity of Eski İmaret Camii to the site of the Cistern of Bonus, as well as on its architectural similarities to the contemporaneous *katholikon* of the Lips Monastery. However, the proposed identification is by no means definitive and the problem remains open.

Regardless of its Byzantine identification, its architectural features show that this church belonged among the finest examples of the Middle Byzantine church architecture in the capital (Fig. 212). The overall plan (a cross-in-square *naos* with a three-bayed narthex), treatment of architectural elements, and the style of the preserved carved decoration all make it a very close relative to both the Theotokos tou Libos and the Myrelaion. The study of the building’s relatively well-preserved architecture has not been exhausted, primarily due to the absence of

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0. The identification has been convincingly challenged by Cyril Mango, “Where at Constantinople was the Monastery of Christos Pantepoptes?” *AXAE* 20 [1998]: 87-88.

systematic archaeological and architectural examinations of the building. However, what has been done thus far confirms that the church was probably built in the 11th century. Shortly after its construction, an exonarthex was added. This was originally a portico with large, arched openings – presumably three at the front and one to each side – framed by supporting piers (see Fig. 212). Both the open form of the addition and the fact that it was erected not long after the main body are consistent with developments in Athonite katholika. However, due to a lack of most of the exonarthex’s original features, I will here turn attention only to the inner narthex.

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53 Ousterhout, “Some Notes on the Construction of Christos ho Pantepoptes (Eski Imaret Camii) in Istanbul,” pp. 49-52. See also Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 138, who finds the church’s style as fitting well in the architectural developments in Constantinople from the middle of the 11th to the beginning of the 12th century.

54 Ousterhout, “Some Notes on the Construction of Christos ho Pantepoptes (Eski Imaret Camii) in Istanbul,” p. 52. After analyzing its masonry and brick-patterned decoration of the original parts in the exonarthex’s south façade, Ousterhout has proposed an early 12th-century date for the exonarthex’s construction (ibid., p. 54). He saw the existence of an open portico in front of a church already in the Middle Byzantine period as an antecedent of what would become a popular arrangement in the Late Byzantine period, another example of continuity in Constantinople’s church architecture (ibid., p. 56). The rebuilding of the structure – executed after a presumable collapse due to the uneven settling of pier foundations – he dated to the Late Byzantine period (ibid., pp. 54-55). The later works are discernable in the raising of the height (the masonry of the upper parts is clearly Late Byzantine) and slightly pointed arches (comparable to those of Chora’s exonarthex), constructed to support new vaults inside (ibid., p. 55). These elements are probably what led Thomas F. Mathews to assume that the exonarthex was a Palaiologan addition (Thomas F. Mathews, The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey [University Park - London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976], p. 59). It is worth noting that the central of the exonarthex’s three bays is covered with a sail-vault.

55 See Chapter 6. The katholikon of the Kecharitoménē monastery, which was founded in the early years of the 12th century (BMFD, p. 649), acquired an exonarthex made of “Carian wood” (karikoxylon) before the monastery typikon was drafted (1110-1116; for this date, see ibid.). The structure was added by the very foundress, Empress Irene Doukaina Komnēnē, who restored the church’s already existing “very beautiful narthex” ([27] Kecharitomene, #73, in ibid., pp. 702-703). This shows that the practice (or a need) to have an exonarthex appended early after the establishment of a monastic foundation was present also in Constantinople. For specific uses assigned to each of these two narthexes, see chapters 33, 36, 38, 40, 70, 72, 76, 80 of the typikon (ibid., pp. 687-689, 699, 702, 704, 710).
The narthex has three bays, distinguishable only in the vaulting, since there are no pilasters (Fig. 213). They are all of the same size, nearly square in plan, and covered with groin-vaults, separated by broad arches. At the springing of the arches and vaults, there is an ornamentally carved stone cornice that runs along all four sides of the room (Fig. 214). The narthex’s north and south ends terminate in segmental conches that – identical to those at the Lips and the Myrelaion – rise from the floor level up to the vaults (Figs. 213, 215, 216). Like those at the Lips, the conches are only interior features and are not visible from the outside. They were once pierced by doors. The marble doorframe of the north conch is still preserved in situ, despite the door now being walled up (see Figs. 213, 216). The original appearance of the southern counterpart has been lost due to its transformation into a window during Ottoman times and, more recently, back into a door (see Fig. 227). On the west side, besides the main entrance (Fig. 218), there are two arch-headed openings, with rectangular marble doorframes inserted within (Fig. 217). These are mirrored by three doors leading into the naos. Their rectangular marble frames are well preserved (see Fig. 216).

There is a second floor to the narthex and it extends beyond the area of the narthex below, incorporating two small spaces over the west corner bays of the naos (Figs. 219 to 221). These extensions are shaped as individual chambers, separated from the rest of the katēchoumeneion, to which they connect through marble-framed doors (see Figs. 220, 221). The reason for the separation of the two rooms perhaps lies in the circumstance that their floor levels are higher than that of the second storey’s main area, positioned directly above the narthex, but the reason can be functional as well. The difference in floor levels results from the two rooms’

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56 A closer examination is necessary in order to determine whether these extra doors were part of the initial conception of the church or if they were established after the addition of the exonarthex, perhaps in places of windows.
floors resting on the corner bays’ vaults, which are higher than the vaults of the narthex. The main room is relatively spacious and well lit (Fig. 221). It is articulated with three bays, the central one overlooking the naos through an elegant tribelon, whose arches are supported by slender mullions (Figs. 222, 223). The two small chambers also communicate with the naos via relatively large internal windows in their eastern walls (Fig. 224). The central bay of the katēchoumeneion proper, roughly corresponding in size to the width of the naos’s central west bay, is of a square plan and covered with a domical vault, which is also clearly distinguishable on the outside, in the church’s roofing (Figs. 225, 226). The other two bays have groin-vaults. There are no pilasters and two arches supporting the vaults spring from scroll brackets, whereas the vaults’ springing point is marked by a carved cornice (see Fig. 221). Three windows in the west wall are now partially blocked by the Ottoman roof of the exonarthex (see Fig. 226). The katēchoumena were originally reached only from outside, through the door found at the main room’s south end, whose marble frame is still in place (see Fig. 227), and possibly from the upper floor of a building that once stood in the southern part of the monastic compound.

The narthex with three bays, all covered with groin-vaults, the katēchoumena extending over the west corner bays of the naos, and the concealed segmental conches at the north and south ends, make the church a very close relative to the Theotokos tou Libos, supporting the

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57 Besides the Theotokos of Lips (see above), Karagedik Kilise in the Ihlara Valley, Cappadocia is the only other Middle Byzantine church known to me with a similar design applied to the narthex’s upper floor (see Chapter 2, Excursus for this church).

58 In fact, these openings seem to rise almost from the floor level inside the chambers – which is higher than that of the over-narthex – and, thus, look more like doors (see Fig. 220). I have not been able to climb up the church’s upper floor and to enter these rooms, so I have not been in a position to inspect and verify this. If the openings were original, and if they indeed rise from the floor level of the chambers, they may have been closed with parapet slabs in order to accommodate potential occupants in observing events in the naos. Or, alternatively, were they there to provide an access – via an internal gallery – to chapels that once might have stood over the east corner bays and prosthēsis and diakonikon? The latter assumption is not a mere speculation, since the fact that the present restoration of the sloping roof above the diakonikon does not reflect the original form of this part of the church (Ousterhout, “Some Notes on the Construction of Christos ho Pantepoptes (Eski Imaret Camii) in Istanbul,” p. 48, n. 11) leaves the possibility that east corners were topped with an extra storey. This can be confirmed or rejected only after a removal of the present roof above parabēmata and a close inspection of the original masonry of the church’s east parts.
argument for a late 9th-century dating. On the other hand, the building technique and
decorative treatment of certain features of the south façade seem to be typical of 11th- and 12th-
century structures in Constantinople. Moreover, the way the katêchoumena are organized may
well go with a detail known from the history of the Pantepoptês Monastery. Namely, its
founder, Anna Dalassênê (died between 1100 and 1102), who was the mother of Alexios I
Komnênos, retired as a nun to private apartments there and resided “imperially and with honor”
for several years before her death, even though the monastery was a male establishment.

Although, I have no information regarding the interior of the two small chambers accommodated
over the naos’s west corner bays, they seem to lack liturgical furnishing and appear too small to
function as chapels. Instead, they may have been set off for a special member of the monastic
community, as Anna surely was. From there, she could follow liturgical services through small
internal windows, affording an oblique view of the naos (see Fig. 224). On more solemn
occasions, she could attend from the over-narthex, observing (and being observed from below)

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59 See note 51 above. As an additional point of similarity between the two churches, Krautheimer – who did not
contest the Eski İmaret Camii’s identification as the katholikon of the Pantepoptês monastery and dating to 1081-
1087) – suggested that the two small rooms at the upper level were surmounted with small domes, as in the proposed
reconstruction of the church of Lips (Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, p. 361). Although
the present flat roofline in those areas appears rather odd and seems to be modern (Ousterhout, “Some Notes on the
Construction of Christos ho Pantepoptes (Eski İmaret Camii) in Istanbul,” pp. 48-49), no evidence whatsoever has
been attested to support the assumption that the chambers were domed. Krautheimer may have based such a view
on a drawing of the church made by Charles Texier (now kept at the Royal Institute of British Architects and
305-336, p. 326, fig. 16), according to which there were two smaller domes above either the chambers or the lateral
bays of the over-narthex. However, it is believed that Texier did not actually see them and that they were
presumably his deliberation on the possible appearance of the church (cf. Mihaljević, “Constantinopolitan

49-52.

61 Lynda Garland, “Anna Dalassena, Mother of Alexius I Comnenus (1081-1118),” an online article (http://www.roman-emperors.org/annadal.htm; Copyright 2007 – accessed on March 8, 2017); see also ODB, Vol. 3,
p. 1574 (s. v. “Pantepoptes Monastery”).

62 Ousterhout, “Some Notes on the Construction of Christos ho Pantepoptes (Eski İmaret Camii) in Istanbul,” p. 48,
has expressed a similar opinion, that the rooms were “probably intended for private devotion – perhaps to be used by
the founder,” but without further elaborating this issue. See also Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 92, where the
two small chambers are likewise interpreted as rooms intended for the founder, who could observe services in the
naos through the openings.
through the *tribēlon*. Also, in light of the fact that the *katēchoumena* were originally entered only from outside, perhaps from a near-by building, where her living quarters could have been housed, as well as evidence of other instances of this part of the church being reserved for the monk-founder, one must consider the possibility that the surviving Eski İmaret Camii was indeed the *katholikon* of the *Pantepoptēs* Monastery. Leaving the problem of its identification to future researchers, I would simply suggest that the building’s over-narthex, with the domical vaulting of its central bay, was reserved for a person who had a special status within the original community. Therefore, this architectural and functional solution can be regarded as directly analogous to the two-storied narthexes of Athos’s Middle Byzantine *katholika*.

**Vefa Kilise Camii**

Vefa Kilise Camii (also known as Molla Gürani Camii), sometimes identified as the Byzantine church of St. Theodore, is another Middle Byzantine church that has not been sufficiently studied (*Figs. 228 to 230*). Its Byzantine identification has been only tentatively suggested and remains uncertain. The building has never been the subject of a systematic archaeological examination. However, most of its architectural elements are well preserved and clearly detectable, despite many additions and alterations (*Fig. 231*). The oldest part of the complex, a

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cross-in-square naos with a three-bayed narthex, has been roughly dated to the 11th century. There are structures of uncertain dates flanking the narthex to the north and south, including what appears to be the lower part of a belfry to the south. All of these are preceded by a long, arcaded exonarthex with three domes, which is a Palaiologan addition (Fig. 230).

In terms of proportions and spatial organization, the Middle Byzantine core is close to the Myrelaion church, particularly as regards the narthex, which lacks an upper storey and has a sail-vault over its central bay (see Fig. 231B). Another feature that unmistakably places the narthex among other Constantinopolitan narthexes of the period is the termination by shallow, segmental conches at the north and south ends (Figs. 232, 233). As in other churches of the group, there are three doors leading into the naos, all aligned with the latter’s west bays (see Fig. 231A). The two arches that separate bays in the narthex are supported by a pair of shallow pilasters only on the east side, while the west wall remains flat. Large windows flank the main entrance in the west façade (Fig. 234). Originally, these were round-headed openings rising from the floor level, closed with carved parapet slabs, as recorded in a drawing by Charles Texier (Fig. 235).

The remainder of the openings was most likely occupied by marble-framed windows placed on

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64 Mango, Byzantine Architecture, p. 271, puts the church’s construction around the 11th century. Krutheimer, basing his arguments on the building technique and façade ornamentation, finds the date of ca. 1100 or slightly later more likely (Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, p. 363, n. 11). Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls: Byzantion, Konstantinopolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts, unter Mitarbeit von Renate und Wolf Schiele, mit einem Beitrag von Nezih Fıratlı (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1977), p. 169, however, proposes an earlier date (ca. 10th-11th cent.), as well as Ćurčić does in his Architecture in the Balkans, p. 360 (ca. 1000). Theis, Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau, p. 97, sets ca. 1100 as the date, while Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 204, allows for a broad dating to either the 11th or 12th century.

65 These and other, now missing, but recorded structures along the church’s flanks were presumably added in the 14th century (see Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, p. 363, n. 11, and pp. 446-447; Mango, Byzantine Architecture, pp. 271-275). However, it is possible that they are slightly older, certainly predating the exonarthex, whose form is apparently a result of the need to reconcile the various already existing structures (see following note). The remaining part of a belfry is situated south of the narthex and is separated from the latter by a narrow corridor. The belfry apparently was not accessed from that corridor, but directly from exterior, through a door in the east wall.


68 Kept in the Royal Institute of British Architects (reproduced in Mango, “Constantinopolitana,” p. 328 and fig. 18).
top of the parapet slabs. More light is provided via a fan-light above the door, formed between the marble doorframe and the arch above, as well as via a row of three single-light windows in the upper register. The present arched windows in the lateral conches replace original doors (see Figs. 232, 233). As has been noted, there is no additional floor above the narthex and the relatively small height of the naos seemingly did not allow for the accommodation of a katēchoumeneion.

As mentioned above, the square structure to the south of the narthex may have been the base of a belfry. The function of the two-storied northern addition (see Figs. 229, 236) is not clear. Presently, neither its ground nor upper floor communicates directly with the narthex. The ground floor may have served as a large corridor, providing entrance to the complex from the east. Such an unusual direction of access was reconciled with the west entrance to the church thanks to the addition of the exonarthex (see Figs. 234, 237), which postdates both the north and south flanking structures. This suggests that there may have been an older exonarthex on the site of the present one. The upstairs room (or perhaps rooms) of the north annex has not been published and, therefore, its interior form and function are not known.

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Chronologically speaking, more than a century and a half separates the north church of Lips and the Myrelaion, and the next surviving church in Constantinople. It is difficult to say what developments occurred during that period. However, judging from Eski İmaret Camii and Vefa Kilise Camii, which were the latest to be built, it seems that not much had changed, at least as

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70 Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, p. 447.
71 If the late-11th-century dating is correct for them.
far as the form of the narthex was concerned. When it comes to the layout of the naos, the only exceptions from cross-in-square pattern are the monastic churches of the Theotokos Peribleptos (1028-1034)\textsuperscript{72} and St. George of the Mangana (1042-1055),\textsuperscript{73} as suggested by their substructures, which are all that remain of these buildings. The plans of both most likely belonged to another architectural current during the period, the ‘domed octagon’ type, exemplified by the preserved katholika of Hosios Loukas, Nea Monê, and others outside the city.\textsuperscript{74} However, the reconstructed plan of St. George shows that its narthex was in fact very different from the narthexes in the extant domed octagon churches, which exhibit design solutions closer to those used in cross-in-square churches. Additionally, the presence of other types of churches, particularly the cross-domed type, is confirmed by the surviving buildings of Atik Mustafa Paşa Camii (second half of the 9\textsuperscript{th} cent.) and Gül Camii (late 11\textsuperscript{th} or early 12\textsuperscript{th} cent.),\textsuperscript{75} providing evidence that the cross-in-square plan with a three-bayed narthex was not the only type employed in church buildings of the capital during the 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} centuries. However, since the cross-in-square plan is more prevalent among the known churches in the city and beyond, it

\textsuperscript{72} For most recent proposal of the original layout of this church, see Örgü Dalgıç, Thomas F. Mathews, “A New Interpretation of the Church of Peribleptos and Its Place in Middle Byzantine Architecture,” in Ayla Ödekan, Engin Akyürek, Nevra Necipoğlu (eds.), Change in the Byzantine World in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, First International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium: Proceedings (İstanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 2010): 424-431.


\textsuperscript{74} For this type of church and its narthex, see Chapter 2, Excursus.

\textsuperscript{75} For these two churches, see Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 123-124, 153-154, with older references. Both of them had narthexes, but none has survived. There is one more church dated to this period, the church of Theotokos Panagiotissa (or Mouchliotissa), whose original tetraconch naos has been dated to the beginning of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century and belonged to a male monastery (ibid., p. 199, with older bibliography). However, I doubt it could have served as the central church of the community. It seems more likely to me that it was either a subsidiary chapel or, if the sole church in the monastery, a result of special devotion and intended for a small community. Its lacking of adequate architectural facilities in serving a monastic community is suggested by the addition of a narthex in the late 13\textsuperscript{th} century, when the establishment was re-founded as a nunnery.
is possible that this type may have been favored by monastic communities, particularly those that were medium-sized and practiced a greater degree of seclusion.\footnote{This is based on the image given by the south church of the Pantokratōr monastery (see \textit{Chapter 2, Excursus}), which was reserved for monks and closed to lay visitors, who used the north church. The latter is of the cross-in-square type as well, thus furnishing a counter-argument to my theory. But, in this case, it may have just reproduced the form of its more important neighbor, the south church. It seems that those monastic churches of the capital that were included in the imperial ceremonial pattern and/or open to outsiders’ attendance were designed following the domed octagon or cross-domed plans. However, this may be an assumption based on an excessively typological approach and should be checked against the architectural and historical evidence for each particular church.}

The four churches examined above represent a group of closely related structures, not only because of their cross-in-square, four-columned \textit{naoi}, but also because of the similarity of their narthexes. Indeed, these narthexes are so strikingly similar as to appear almost uniform, as if repeating the same model. They all have conches at their north and south ends. These conches are only more pronounced (deeper and semicircular) in the Myrelaion, where they also protrude on the exterior. This architectural element seems to be characteristic of Constantinopolitan churches, since the narthex of the church of a monastery excavated in Küçükyalı, the Asia Minor suburb of Constantinople, apparently also featured semicircular ends.\footnote{For the most recent insights on this site, see Alessandra Ricci, “Reinterpretation of the ‘Palace of Bryas’: A Study in Byzantine Architecture, History and Historiography,” PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 2008).} However, similar solutions are also found outside the capital, most notably at Hosios Loukas (in the Katholikon, consecrated in 1011 or 1022, \textit{Figs. 340, 407 to 409}) and Nea Monē on Chios (in the \textit{exonarthex}, dated with the rest of the church to 1042-1056, \textit{Figs. 391A, 396, 397, 401}).\footnote{The design of the conches at Nea Monē is less sophisticated than those of the other churches, perhaps due to the involvement of local builders. However, common for both Hosios Loukas and Nea Monē is the transfer of conches further away from the \textit{naos}, to the outer narthex (in the latter) or to the narthex proper when there is an additional ambulatory enveloping the \textit{naos} (in the former). For the most comprehensive studies of the architecture of these two churches, see Ευστάθιος Γ. Στίκας, \textit{Το οικοδομικόν χρονικόν της μονής Οσίου Λουκά Φωκίδος} (Αθήναι: Η αν Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία, 1970) and Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας, \textit{Η Νέα Μονή της Χίου: Ιστορία και αρχετεκτονική} (Αθήναι: Έκδοση της Εμπορικής τράπεζας της Ελλάδος, 1981), pp. 45-168; for an examination of their narthexes and \textit{exonarthexes}, see \textit{Chapter 2, Excursus}. Concave recesses or full conches are also used in the narthexes of the monastic church of Daphni (late 11\textsuperscript{th} cent.), the cathedral church of Christianou (erected before 1086; Mango, \textit{Byzantine Architecture}, p. 222), Panagia Apsinthiotissa, Cyprus (12\textsuperscript{th} cent.), and at Asinou, Cyprus.}

Another Middle Byzantine cross-in-square church has survived in the capital, the church commonly identified as St. John en tō Troulō (see \textit{Chapter 2, Excursus}). However, its somewhat different plan, unclear dating (9\textsuperscript{th} or 12\textsuperscript{th} cent.), and unknown context (monastic or parish) provide difficulties in interpreting this monument and finding its place in the architecture of Constantinople.
features concave recesses in the thickness of the walls, whereas the latter has full conches projecting to the exterior. These two examples showcase two basic variants of the theme and both churches, as well as others with this characteristic feature, are considered to be of Constantinopolitan provenance. Concave recesses running from the floor level up may have been only decorative in purpose; nonetheless they provided some functional advantages, such as sound amplifying. Similar features can also be observed in other parts of the church building, such as the north and south sides of the bêma’s central bays in Vefa Kilise Camii, Gül Camii, and the two major churches of the Pantokrātōr complex, as well as the north and south walls of the sanctuary in Toklu Dede Mescidi (11th or 12th cent.), to mention but a few contemporary examples from Constantinople.79 The use of this feature in the narthex can be traced back to similar conches found in the narthexes of the Panagia Ekatontapylianē (built shortly after 550) and of the basilica of St. Epiphanius in Salamis, Cyprus.80 However, any further discussion of the function and possible ancestry of these conches goes beyond the scope of the present work.

There are a few more characteristics common to the four Constantinopolitan narthexes that should be underlined, because they are also found in their Athonite counterparts. All narthexes are connected to their naoi through three doors that are aligned with both the bays of the narthex and the western bays of the naos. There are three corresponding openings in the

79 For Toklu Dede Mescidi, see Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 202-203, with older bibliography.
narthex’s west wall: the central one serving as the main entrance door, while the two flanking it were enclosed with marble parapet slabs, above which windows were formed. These fixtures are now lost in all four churches, but evidence for their existence has been preserved in Vefa Kilise Camii and analogies can be found in the churches of Athos and elsewhere.  

Another common trait is that the central bay – at the ground level of single-storied narthexes and at the upper floor of two-storied ones – apparently enjoyed special treatment: all except Lips – whose upper floor’s vaulting is lost – are invariably covered with a sail-vault, resembling a blind dome, ultimately evoking the form of a baldachin.  

Apart from the western openings and, perhaps, lateral conches, it seems to me that the other features cannot be treated as simply stylistic or the product of a particular workshop’s practices. There are indications that they were necessitated by some specific liturgical needs or other functional demands. This applies particularly to the domical vaulting of the narthex’s middle bay and the triple-door access to the naos, which are shared with some of Athonite katholika, notably those of the first coenobia on the peninsula. Although these design solutions were most likely imported from Constantinople, the roots might be older and traceable in the designs of churches connected with imperial ceremonial. Analyses and possible explanations for the function of the three-door arrangement within church ritual and for the meaning of the special treatment of the central bay are given in Chapter 4.  

This and other architectural features are also shared in common with churches that rank among the earliest cross-in-square structures, thus suggesting another possible point of origin. These churches are found in the area not far from Constantinople, in Bithynia, once a strong

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81 For Vefa Kilise Camii, see above, note 68. Analogies are provided by katholika of Vatopedi, Zygou, and Nea Monē of Chios (Fig. 394).
82 For a more in-depth discussion of this feature, see Chapter 4.
83 See the churches of Ivērōn and Vatopedi, Chapter 1.
monastic center. However, only a handful of them survive and do not belong to the time frame set at the beginning of this chapter. Nonetheless, they demonstrate early stages in the development of the Middle Byzantine narthex, with some of its characteristic features already in place by around 800. I turn to them now.

b) Bithynian Churches

In the period between the 5th and 14th centuries, Bithynia was an important monastic area, with its ‘holy mountains’ – Mount Olympus and Mount Auxentios – dotted with monasteries and hermitages. It reached its zenith during the period of the Iconoclastic controversies and the following century, 8th-10th centuries, when it was the primary center of Byzantine monasticism. The geography of the region provided areas for monastic seclusion, as well as vast tracts of arable land to support coenobitic communities. Moreover, the proximity of the capital enabled constant spiritual and artistic exchange with highest echelons of society. It should be noted that such prominent monastic figures as St. Theodore the Stoudite and St. Athanasius the Athonite hailed from this region. In 783, Theodore (759-826), together with his uncle Plato (ca. 735-814), founded the monastery of Sakkoudion on a family property near Mount Olympus. Upon their transfer to the basilica of Stoudios in Constantinople in ca. 799, they most probably brought with them many if not all elements of the monastic organization that they had practiced in Sakkoudion, which at this point became a dependency of the Stoudion. These elements may

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have included certain spatial solutions concerning liturgical ritual, which were then adjusted to the existing spatial frame of the Stoudios basilica. Athanasius (925/930-ca. 1001) began his monastic career in the Bithynian monastery of Kyminas, where he lived _ca._ 952-958 under the abbot Michael Maleinos.\(^8^6\) In 963 Athanasius founded the Great Lavra on Mount Athos.

Scarce extant churches and the remains of churches have been discovered in Bithynia and have been published. Some of these slightly predate the Middle Byzantine period, but their characteristics herald the typical architectural features of the period to follow, most notably the cross-in-square plan with a fully developed and integrated narthex. The only still standing example is the **Fatih Camii** (Fig. 238), which I present first. The church, now a mosque, is located in Tirilye (previously Zeytinbağı), a small town close to Mudanya, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara. Its Byzantine name and dedication are not certain, although it is sometimes referred to as the Church of St. Stephen.\(^8^7\) It likely was the _katholikon_ of the Monastery of Trigleia, mentioned in _ca._ 800 and possibly established a few years earlier.\(^8^8\) This accords with the date of the building’s construction, which has been determined by means of dendrochronology as belonging to the first years of the 9th century,\(^8^9\) thus making it potentially

\(^8^6\) _ODB_, Vol. 1, p. 219; see also note 4 above. For the monastery of Kyminas (or τοῦ Μαλείνου), see Janin, _Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins_, pp. 115-118.


\(^8^8\) Cf. Mango, Ševčenko, _op. cit._, pp. 235, 238. Ruggieri, _Byzantine Religious Architecture_ (582-867), p. 229, sees the reduced depth of the sanctuary apse and the lack of high _synthronon_ as a likely response to the demands of the monastic ritual. In the same passage, he considers the rise in proportion of the narthex to the rest of the church (unlike small narthexes of churches of the earlier periods) as a reflection of the narthex becoming an additional scene of liturgical celebrations within a monastic compound. However, he does not support this view – which I find quite plausible – with any document or detailed argument.

the oldest surviving cross-in-square church in Byzantium (Figs. 239 to 241). The only other extant documents that contain the name of Trigleia belong to the 13th and 14th centuries and apparently only refer to the village of Trigleia. Therefore, it is possible that by that time the church had become home to a parish congregation.

The narthex appears plain in comparison to what would later become standard in Constantinople. It is an elongated, rectangular room with flat walls, having neither pilasters nor other means of articulation into bays, as the entire space is covered with a single barrel vault running perpendicular to the church’s axis (Figs. 239, 242). Three doors connect the narthex with the naos, each of them aligned with the latter’s west bays. In the wall segments between the doors, there are two semicircular niches that rise from the floor level, their height being lower than that of the doors (see Figs. 239, 241, 243). The interior was once decorated with mosaics. There is no second storey and it probably never existed. With such architecture, the narthex appears rather rudimentary. However, its sheer size in relation to the modest size of the naos, as well as the developed communication with the naos via three doors and the presence of niches in the east wall, indicates the importance of the room and anticipates the type of narthex that came into being in subsequent centuries.

91 There is only a limited amount of scarce historical information on Trigleia. It is collected in Mango, Ševčenko, op. cit., pp. 235-236).
93 According to an eyewitness report, they were revealed after the whitewash was removed in 1920-1922 (Mango, Ševčenko, op. cit., p. 236).
94 The use of a single barrel vault instead of three vaulted bays has been regarded as an “archaic feature” by Mango, Ševčenko, op. cit., p. 273. Other parts of the building, most notably the awkwardly fitted parabēmata, also point to still insecure handling with yet un-stabilized cross-in-square structure. This issue is briefly touched by Buchwald, “Western Asia Minor as a Generator of Architectural Forms in the Byzantine Period” p. 225.
A row of four ancient columns, capped with reused 6th-century capitals, is preserved in situ at some distance in front of the narthex (Figs. 244, 245), as well as a part of a wall extending westward from the narthex’s northwest corner (see Figs. 238, 239, 246). These and several other elements, including a molded door frame inserted into the central intercolumniation, now gone, but recorded by F. W. Hasluck at the beginning of the 20th century,95 led Stavros Mamaloukos to conclude that they were parts of an erstwhile exonarthex (Fig. 247). According to him, it may have been of a form similar to that of the exonarthex of the katholikon at Vatopedi.96 The pentabēlon motif, employed in both structures, is rather striking. However, more interesting is the sheer existence of an exonarthex, which places this church among those few that had an additional narthex. If this church was indeed monastic, its exonarthex contributes to the discussion of the form and purpose of exonarthexes in Athonite and, more broadly, Byzantine monastic church architecture.97

The church in Tirilye provides the best-preserved example, but it certainly was not the only representative of the cross-in-square type in the region of Bithynia, an important and influential monastic center during the entire Middle Byzantine period and even later.98 However, all of those monastic establishments are long since gone and only a few other churches have been recorded. I bring to attention six of them, surviving only as archaeological remains: the church identified as St. John the Theologian of the Pelekētē Monastery; the church that may have

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95 Hasluck, “Bithynica,” esp. pp. 288-289, and figs. 1.1, 2 (here reproduced as Fig. 246).
96 Stavros Mamaloukos’s research on this building is still in progress and only his reconstruction of the church’s plan has been published in Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 51, fig. 10 (here reproduced as Fig. 247). Prof. Mamaloukos has been kind enough to share his thoughts on the possible appearance of the exonarthex, which he finds very similar to the exonarthex ("litē") at Vatopedi (for this structure, see Chapter 1). Actually, the similarity between the two monuments was decisive for his reconstruction of Fatih Camii and its exonarthex.
97 For a more detailed discussion of exonarthexes and their uses in the monastic setting, see Chapter 6.
belonged to the Monastery of Megas Agros; a church near İznik; the *katholikon* of a monastery, possibly that of Nikētiatê, at Yılınca Bayır; and the two churches at Çeltikdere and Pendik.

The remains of **St. John the Theologian of the Pelekētē Monastery** are situated about 5 km west of Tirilye, close to the shore of the Sea of Marmara.\(^9\) The eastern parts of the church are better preserved, surviving up to the vault level, whereas the western parts remain buried in the ground.\(^10\) Clearly a cross-in-square church (*Fig. 248*), it shows an architectural treatment similar to that of the Fatih Camii in Tirilye: walls with flat external surfaces (probably because the strong interior pilasters were sufficient as reinforcement for the church’s structure) and three doors in the west wall (presumably the wall between the *naos* and a narthex), although only the northern jamb and a segment of the rounded head of the north door have been recorded.\(^11\) According to the history of the monastery\(^12\) and inferring from the church’s architecture, which is comparable to that of the Fatih Camii, it can be suggested that the church may have been constructed in the 8th century, thus overtaking the former’s position of the oldest extant cross-in-square church.\(^13\) However, a later date is also possible\(^14\) and, judging from the church’s more sophisticated architecture and better integration of constituting elements into a more compact form, it seems more likely. Unfortunately, until an archaeological excavation is conducted,


\(^10\) The remains have been published and examined in Mango, Ševčenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-248 (with older bibliography).

\(^11\) *Ibid.*, p. 248, figs. 40 (used as the base for *Fig. 248* here) and 41.

\(^12\) *Cf. ibid.*, pp. 242-246.

\(^13\) See above, notes 89, 90. Only the Church H of Side (Pamphilia), preserved in ruin, may be older. However, its dating is not certain (*cf. Buchwald, “Criteria for the Evaluation of Transitional Byzantine Architecture,”* p. 29).

\(^14\) Also acknowledging architectural similarities with the Fatih Camii, Ousterhout believes that the church of Pelekētē was slightly later in date (Ousterhout, “The Architecture of Iconoclasm”, p. 14), reverting from his previous impression that it may have been older than Fatih Camii (Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium*, p. 17). Hans Buchwald considers both the 8th and 9th centuries (and even later) as possible dates, without giving preference to either (*cf. Buchwald, “Criteria for the Evaluation of Transitional Byzantine Architecture,”* pp. 28-29).

nothing can be said about its narthex beyond that there were three doors connecting it with the rest of the church.

The remains of a church in the vicinity of Kurşunlu, a village situated farther west on the cost, in the foothills of the Karadağ (ancient Sigriane) mountain, are in an even poorer state of preservation.\(^{105}\) They are part of what used to be a larger monastery complex, the ruins of which can be detected at the site. The local Greek tradition had associated the site with the Monastery of Megas Agros, established *ca.* 787 by St. Theophanes the Confessor (died in 818), but such an identification is not entirely certain.\(^{106}\) Nonetheless, architectural similarities with the Fatih Camii encourage a dating during the period of Iconoclasm.\(^{107}\) Apparently a cross-in-square church (*Fig.* 249), it suggests a more advanced architectural treatment than what can be observed at Tirilye, i.e. pilasters on the façades, a three-faceted exterior for the main apse, more regularity in the interior composition, and better proportioning of the architectural elements. These put the church closer to Constantinopolitan examples, but it is hard to say if it was their precursor or was influenced by them. In any event, such architecture suggests that the church was probably younger than its two neighbors, perhaps dating to the 9th or even 10th century. Despite the church’s condition and, once again, a lack of archaeological excavation, the plan of its narthex is fairly legible from the few poor remnants of its walls visible above ground level. The narthex was an oblong room with no discernible pilasters on the walls’ interior surfaces (although they may have existed). It most likely had strongly pronounced pilasters on the west

\(^{105}\) The remains were published in Mango, Ševčenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-259 (with older bibliography). This village should not be confused with another Kurşunlu, situated about 12 km east of Mudanya, where the church known as Hagios Aberkios is located.

\(^{106}\) For the textual evidence on Megas Agros that suggests the site at Kurşunlu, as well as certain moments that present difficulties in this identification, see Mango, Ševčenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-267. See also Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins*, pp. 195-199. The other possible identification is another monastic foundation, Polichnion (or Polychronia), which was also associated with Theophanes and located close to Megas Agros (Mango, Ševčenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-263, 264).

façade, as is suggested by the remaining lower part of one that survives on the south end.

Between the pilasters were three openings, whereas the east wall was pierced with three doors that connected the narthex to the *naos*. The north and south façades were also framed with pilasters. According to a 1910 report, the floor of the narthex was executed in *opus sectile*. The interior surfaces of the walls were covered with marble revetment. It is not known if there was an upper storey to the narthex. The extant elements of the narthex provide a clear image of its plan, which invites comparisons with Constantinopolitan and Athonite examples.

Similarly advanced architectural design can be observed in the remains of a church in the vicinity of İznik (ancient and Byzantine Nicaea). The church (Fig. 250), once consisting of a cross-in-square *naos*, tripartite sanctuary, a narthex, and possibly open annexes at the north and south flanks, is located north of the old city. The walls were preserved up to 1.50 m of height in 1948. The façade pilasters, which are systematically employed and which correspond to the internal structure of the building, are mirrored by pilasters at the same points on the interior of the walls. In the narthex, there are two pairs of pilasters in its east and west walls, but their positions are independent of the *naos’s* structure. Instead, the four pilasters are placed at even intervals, matched by the same composition on the west façade. The presence of pilasters in the narthex’s interior clearly indicates the use of arches in the articulation of the space into three bays, which were of the same size. The narthex is relatively broad, suggesting that the use of this part of the church was well defined and required lots of space. There are additional entrances at the north and south ends, but it seems that there were no large door-length windows to flank the west entrance. The standard set of three doors leading into the *naos* is, however,

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109 Ibid., p. 257.
present. All these elements, as well as the church’s overall plan, support a dating into the later part of the Middle Byzantine period.\footnote{After having observed certain technical and masonry details, Semavi Eyice has proposed the dating between the end of the 11th and beginning of the 13th century (Eyice, “İznil’te bir Bizans kilisesi,” p. 51).}

A church excavated in 1906 at **Yılınca Bayır** (Fig. 251), near Diliskelesi in the Gebze Municipality (ancient Libyssa), a port city on the northeast shore of the Sea of Marmara, has been dated to the period between the 9th and 12th centuries.\footnote{Robert G. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1987), p. 104.} It has been identified as the *katholikon* of a monastery, possibly the Monastery of Nikētiatai.\footnote{Slobodan Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” *JSAH* 36/2 (1977): 94-110, p. 99 (with older bibliography).} The cross-in-square church and its narthex, as well as four satellite annexes located at the corners, are similar to the Constantinopolitan churches considered above, most notably that of the Theotokos tou Libos (see Fig. 187). The narthex is relatively narrow and was probably divided into three bays, which were separated by two pilasters on the east wall. Three doors in the east wall, each corresponding to a bay, open into the *naos*, whereas three openings, wider than the doors and rising from the floor level, made the west wall almost disappear. It is possible that the north and south openings of the three were closed with parapet slabs and *transennae*, in a similar manner to those in the Theotokos tou Libos.\footnote{See above.} Further west, there was a row of alternating columns and masonry piers that supported a roof and formed an open *exonarthex* or porch, which extended north and south in front of the two western annexes. Two additional doors at the narthex’s north and south ends led into the annexes, which are square in plan. They have been identified as chapels by Slobodan Ćurčić, but may have served some other purpose as well.\footnote{Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” p. 99, notes the existence of doors in the annexes’ east walls, but – by analogy with comparable arrangements in the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas (see *Chapter 2, Excursus*) – suggests the possibility that the west annexes were chapels in addition}
approximately the same in size as the stairwell of the Theotokos tou Libos – also located south of the narthex – and with its doors in three walls arranged almost in the same way as at Lips, may have likewise served as a stairwell.\textsuperscript{116} Regardless of the function of these two rooms, it is noteworthy that they do not communicate with the long porch. This circumstance opens up questions about the purpose of a porch of this form: was it just a covered corridor linking the parts of the monastic complex to the church? Was its top used to access an upper chamber or chambers that may have existed? These and other possible functions for the exonarthex are discussed at greater length in Chapter 6.

The remains of a church in the village of Çeltikdere (about 25 km southeast of the town of Seben in the region of Bolu, ancient Claudiopolis) are situated on the slope of a mountain (\textit{Figs. 252, 253}). It was a finely and soundly built structure.\textsuperscript{117} According to the reconstruction made by Yıldız Ötüken and Robert Ousterhout (\textit{Fig. 254}), the plan belongs to the so-called ‘simple cross-in-square’, i.e. consisting only of the cross-inscribed nine-bay structure, without an additional space for the sanctuary.\textsuperscript{118} Such reduction did not affect the narthex, which was built simultaneously with the rest of the church and takes the form of a standard rectangular room the same in width as the \textit{naos}. The narthex was entered from outside through a single door, placed centrally in the west wall. A pair of short and narrow windows was at each of the ends. Judging from a partially preserved arched passageway in the south part of the wall separating the narthex from the \textit{naos} (see \textit{Fig. 255}), there were three doors between the two parts of the church. The

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\textsuperscript{116} The possibility that the two western annexes may have been towers has been suggested also by Marinis, “The Monastery tou Libos,” p. 81. An inspection of the archaeological remains inside these rooms would help to confirm or reject this hypothesis.

\textsuperscript{117} See Yıldız Ötüken, Robert Ousterhout, “The Byzantine Church at Çeltikdere,” in Birgitt Borkopp, Barbara Schellewald, Lioba Theis (eds.), \textit{Studien zur Byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte: Festschrift für Horst Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag} (Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, 1995): 85-92, pp. 86-87. This work is the most complete publication of this monument and the present exposition draws primarily from it.

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Cf. ibid.}, pp. 86, 88.
vaulting of the narthex is preserved at its south end and it was a barrel-vault (Figs. 252, 255). The north, west, and south façades are articulated with stepped pilasters, which are in full correlation to the internal structure of the building, although there are no pilasters on the inner surfaces of the north and south walls of the naos.\textsuperscript{119} The three fields framed by the pilasters of the west façade are equivalent, suggesting a potential tripartite division in the interior as well. However, there were no pilasters inside and it seems that there were no arches either.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that if there were three bays in the narthex, they would have been of equal size and square in plan. The placement of the narthex’s vaulting on a level lower than that of the roof of the neighboring bay in the naos (see Fig. 252)\textsuperscript{120} indicates that the narthex was not tall or, more likely, that it may have had an upper storey.\textsuperscript{121} The church at Çeltikdere has been dated to the 11\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{122} Considering its remote and secluded location, as well as the presence of a cave settlement in the mountain-side north of the church,\textsuperscript{123} there is a great likelihood that the church originally served a monastic community.

The remains of a church at Pendik (Byzantine Panteichion\textsuperscript{124}), located on the northeast shore of the Sea of Marmara, in a modern suburb of Istanbul, were discovered in archaeological excavations in 1974-1975.\textsuperscript{125} The works have revealed that the church belonged to a monastic complex. Despite a lack of firm evidence, it has been proposed that the church was of a simple

\textsuperscript{119} This is indicated by the springing of arches preserved in the south wall (\textit{ibid.}, p. 86).
\textsuperscript{120} See also \textit{ibid.}, figs. 3, 4.
\textsuperscript{121} As also has been concluded by Μιχαήλ Γ. Κάππας, «Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο: Το παράδειγμα του απλού τετρακιόνιου / τετράστυλου» PhD Dissertation (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης - Σχολή Φιλοσοφική. Τμήμα Ιστορίας και Αρχαιολογίας. Τομέας Αρχαιολογίας, Τομέας Αρχαιολογίας, Τομέας Αρχαιολογίας, 2009), p. 229, n. 244; the same opinion is maintained in the presentation of the church in the catalog appended to the same work (Cat. No. 009, p. 33).
\textsuperscript{122} Ötüken, Ousterhout, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 91-92; the dating is based on the church’s close similarity to Çanlı Kilise in Cappadocia (see \textbf{Chapter 2, Excursus}) in plan, construction technique, and decorative details.
\textsuperscript{123} Ötüken, Ousterhout, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 87-88; the authors mention that previous researchers have noted the existence of churches and chapels inside the caves.
\textsuperscript{124} See Janin, \textit{Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins}, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{125} The only monographic study of this monument, C. Soyhan, “Pendik’te Bizans devrine ait manastir kazısı,” \textit{Sanat Tarihi Yılığı} 8 (1979): 139-158, has been unavailable to me. Therefore, I use the information from Κάππας, \textit{op. cit.}, Catalog No. 018, p. 48.
cross-in-square plan\textsuperscript{126} and has been dated to the Middle Byzantine period, possibly to the 11\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{127} To the west of the structure, there is a narthex constructed integrally with the rest of the building. I do not know how much of the original narthex has been preserved and accurately presented in the reconstructed ground plan (\textit{Fig. 256}). Judging from this plan, the narthex exhibits most of the elements characteristic of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century examples from Constantinople and Bithynia: three even-sized square bays, separated by arches on pilasters that are not aligned to the structure of the \textit{naos}; three doorways leading into the latter; two exterior doors at the north and south ends, in addition to the main entrance in the west wall.

These few Bithynian churches do not represent a mere selection from a wealth of material. They actually constitute virtually all that has been explored, recorded, and published on church architecture in this once vibrant monastic region. Now, one might question whether these monuments, only a few in number and with their typological uniformity, can be taken as a representative sample of ecclesiastical design and planning in the area from the 8\textsuperscript{th} to the 11\textsuperscript{th} century. That is, can one assume that a cross-in-square church with a three-bayed narthex was the norm for the \textit{katholika} of monasteries in the region? With the present state of scholarship on the monuments of the Middle Byzantine Bithynia, it would be hard, almost impossible to answer these questions. However, considering the predominance of the cross-in-square building type in the monasteries of Athos, Constantinople, and elsewhere, and particularly the use of the three-bayed narthex even in monastic churches that have different plans, I would propose that a typical church of a Bithynian coenobitic monastic community during late Iconoclasm and the first

\textsuperscript{126} As proposed by the excavator, C. Soyhan (see \textit{Κάππας, op. cit.}, Catalog No. 018, p. 48). Neither the bases of any internal support nor the pilasters shown on the internal faces of lateral walls have been identified during the excavation works (\textit{ibid.}). The positions of two strong pilasters on the south façade, not conforming to the present reconstruction of the \textit{naos} as a simple cross-in-square, open the possibility that a complex cross-in-square plan, only with relatively small corner bays (similar in plan to the church at Yilmez Bayır, but larger than it), may have actually been employed.

\textsuperscript{127} Soyhan has suggested the broad Middle Byzantine date and the 11\textsuperscript{th}-century dating has been proposed with some reservation by Kappas (\textit{Κάππας, op. cit.}, Catalog No. 018, p. 48).
centuries of the Middle Byzantine period consisted of a cross-in-square naos and an elongated, three-bayed narthex.

c) **Panagia tōn Chalkeōn in Thessaloniki and Church at Olynthos, Chalkidikē**

Two more examples, neither of which is located in Constantinople or Bithynia, need to be included in this discussion. One is the church known today as the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn (**Παναγία τῶν Χαλκέων**, “Virgin of the Coppersmiths,” *Fig. 257*), the only surviving Middle Byzantine church in Thessaloniki;¹²⁸ and the other is the ruined church at Olynthos on the Chalkidikē peninsula. According to the founder’s inscription incised on the stone lintel of the west entrance, the **Panagia tōn Chalkeōn** was built in 1028 and dedicated to the Mother of God.¹²⁹ The church was commissioned by the royal prōtospatharios Christophoros, katepanō of Longobardia (**Λογγοβαρδία, Λαγουβαρδία**), with his wife Maria, son Nikēphoros, and daughters Anna and Katakalē, all listed in the same inscription. It probably was the katholikon of a monastery, whose name is unknown.¹³⁰ The present epithet comes from the location in the neighborhood of a coppersmiths’ market.¹³¹

The church preserves its original architectural features, despite extensive and occasionally arbitrary restoration works in the 1930s. It is of a cross-in-square type with a two-storied narthex (*Figs. 258, 259*) and entirely built in the concealed-brick technique, that is with alternate courses recessed. This brick technique, the stepped blind arches around openings, and

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the plan are closely related to contemporary architecture in Constantinople, exemplified by the four churches presented above. The building technique and the use of semi-cylindrical pilasters in the upper register of the narthex’s façades (see Figs. 257, 261, 262) make the church particularly similar to the Myrelaion. Even certain subtle architectural details and solutions suggest a Constantinopolitan background.\textsuperscript{132} On the other hand, the treatment of other elements, such as the use of small simple windows rather than ample and elegant \textit{tribēla}, and the simplicity of the interior are more characteristic of provincial buildings, such as those found in mainland Greece. However, none of these make the design of the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn clearly Constantinopolitan or Helladic. The elements are organically blended and may reflect a particular development in the architecture of Thessaloniki during the Middle Byzantine period, of which presently almost nothing is known.\textsuperscript{133} Similarly, the existence of an upper storey above the narthex, surmounted with two domes on the corners (\textit{Figs. 261, 262}), may have been the result of some local blend of various concepts, coming from both the capital and provinces. This twin-domed arrangement is of a particular interest in the study of Athonite narthexes, since two of them – at Vatopedi and Ivērōn – acquired similar forms only a few decades earlier. I will return to this issue later, after first examining the ground floor.

The interior of the narthex is articulated into three bays by means of broad pilasters and arches springing from them (see \textit{Figs. 258A, 259B}). The bays are uneven, with the central being square in plan, but all are covered with barrel vaults, which spring above a continuous string course and look as if segments of a single semi-cylinder. Such vaulting of the narthex is another point of departure from the Constantinopolitan practice and resembles the simpler narthexes of

\textsuperscript{132} The stepping of the barrel vault of the inscribed cross’s east arm, i.e. the vault above the sanctuary being lower than that of the arm, has been regarded as characteristic to church architecture of Constantinople and is considered unusual when it occurs elsewhere (E[utychia] Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou, A[nastasia] Tourta, \textit{Wandering in Byzantine Thessaloniki} [translated by David Hardy] (Athens: Kapon Editions, 1997), p. 179).

the Fatih Camii at Tirilye and the church in Çeltikdere. Besides the main entrance in the west wall, there are two more doors at the north and south ends providing access from the outside. Three doors in the east wall, all with marble molded frames, lead into the *naos*. The light is admitted through fan-lights above the external doors, two small round-headed windows above the north and south doors, and another two flanking the west door. It should be noted that the central bay is of a square plan, something that has been observed above in the four Constantinopolitan churches and, also, in some of our Athonite *katholika*. Nonetheless, its vaulting is not different from those of the neighboring bays.

The vaults and arches are covered with paintings depicting the Last Judgment. The eastern half takes the form of the Great *Deēsis*, with Christ seated on a throne and surrounded by angels, the Virgin and St. John the Baptist, and Apostles *(Fig. 260)*. The western half is more damaged, but it seems that the central scene has a representation of the Paradise, with the gate closed and guarded by a cherub, perhaps the Virgin and the Good Thief, and an angel. Another angel on the north arch is rolling up the scroll of heaven *(Is. 34:4, Rev. 6:14)*, the north and south sections bear the personifications of earth and sea, respectively, with their creatures disgorging parts of human bodies on the day of the Judgment. This program is related to the funerary character of the church – there is an *arcosolium* in the north wall of the *naos*, directly opposite an additional entrance door from the south, presumably reserved for the tomb of the *ktētōr*,

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134 See Chapter 1.
On the northeast pilaster in the narthex, below the cornice, once there was a much damaged wall painting of the Baptism of Christ, likely belonging to a 14th-century renovation of the church.\cite{Anna Tsitouridou, “Die Grabkonzeption des ikonographischen Programms der Kirche Panagia Chalkeon in Thessaloniki,” XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Wien, 4.-9. Oktober 1981: Akten, II/5 [=JöB 32/5] (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1982): 435-441. \cite{See Ευαγγελίδης, op. cit., p. 64, n. 53; Papadopulos, op. cit., drawing 5.}\cite{This is the only groin-vault in the entire church (Ευαγγελίδης, op. cit., p. 20). In the drawings of the sections (Fig. 259), this vault is erroneously shown as a sail-vault.}\cite{The staircase shown in the plan by Diehl, Le Tourneau, and Saladin (also reproduced in Mango, Byzantine Architecture, fig. 226) within the thickness of the south wall between the naos and narthex actually does not exist and must be the result of pure assumption, likely based on the presence of such a staircase in the narthex of the Prophētēs Řiās church in Thessaloniki. I owe this information to Prof. Slobodan Ćurčić.}\cite{Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” p. 106.}

The upper floor’s interior is subdivided by pilasters and arches into three equally-sized square bays (Fig. 258B). The middle one is covered with a groin-vault,\cite{This is the only groin-vault in the entire church (Ευαγγελίδης, op. cit., p. 20). In the drawings of the sections (Fig. 259), this vault is erroneously shown as a sail-vault.} whereas the other two with domes, as mentioned above. In the west façade, there are three large arched apertures corresponding to the bays (Fig. 261, 262). Most probably, they were originally closed with parapet slabs, topped with windows. Two other openings in the north and south walls are slightly smaller and it has been suggested that they were doors, through which the over-narthex was originally reached from outside, presumably from a neighboring building, since there are no built stairs within the church.\cite{The staircase shown in the plan by Diehl, Le Tourneau, and Saladin (also reproduced in Mango, Byzantine Architecture, fig. 226) within the thickness of the south wall between the naos and narthex actually does not exist and must be the result of pure assumption, likely based on the presence of such a staircase in the narthex of the Prophētēs Řiās church in Thessaloniki. I owe this information to Prof. Slobodan Ćurčić.} An arched opening between the over-narthex and the naos in the middle bay provides the visual communication between the two spaces. In such constellation, one could easily imagine the corner bays functioning as parekklēsia. However, according to the over-narthex’s ground plan and transversal section (see Figs. 258B, 259B), there are no traces of any permanent architectural feature or furnishing that would suggest liturgical use. Also, the walls are not decorated with frescoes,\cite{Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” p. 106.} which – if they existed – could have helped in determining the purpose of the two compartments. Nonetheless, by analogy with

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{See Ευαγγελίδης, op. cit., p. 64, n. 53; Papadopulos, op. cit., drawing 5.}
\bibitem{This is the only groin-vault in the entire church (Ευαγγελίδης, op. cit., p. 20). In the drawings of the sections (Fig. 259), this vault is erroneously shown as a sail-vault.}
\bibitem{The staircase shown in the plan by Diehl, Le Tourneau, and Saladin (also reproduced in Mango, Byzantine Architecture, fig. 226) within the thickness of the south wall between the naos and narthex actually does not exist and must be the result of pure assumption, likely based on the presence of such a staircase in the narthex of the Prophētēs Řiās church in Thessaloniki. I owe this information to Prof. Slobodan Ćurčić.}
\bibitem{Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” p. 106.}
\end{thebibliography}
Vatopedi and Iviron, it is quite possible that these spaces were indeed chapels.\textsuperscript{142} With the addition of some moveable furnishing, it would have been easy to set a liturgical space, especially if it were reserved only for private devotion and not for Eucharistic services.\textsuperscript{143}

Notwithstanding the function of the domed compartments, their role in the articulation of the west façade is quite clear (\textit{Figs. 261}, 262). The domes, together with elongated bays framed with recessed arches and columnar pilasters, form a symmetrical layout and create a rather monumental effect. The desire for symmetry probably justified the existence of the two domed compartments even if, for example, only one of them served as a chapel.\textsuperscript{144} Furthermore, the domes’ eight-sided drums, with four external concave niches alternating with four windows, all framed with arched dog-tooth friezes, make the domes appear as if sculpted. At the lower register, additional concave niches, rounded pilasters, recessed arches, and the scalloped roofline further enhance the relief-like quality of the exterior surfaces. Such an expression is fairly different from that achieved by the exterior design of the rest of the church. For that reason and due to a considerable height difference between the narthex and the \textit{naos} (perhaps resulting from the relatively great height of the narthex’s ground floor), there is less unity on the lateral façades above a strongly accentuated marble string course (see \textit{Fig. 257}). The ultimate impression is that the narthex is not organically connected to the rest of the church.\textsuperscript{145} This and the discrepancy between internal and external subdivisions of the narthex’s elevation perhaps imply a non-expert

\textsuperscript{142} The opinion already expressed by Ćurčić, who – in addition to Athonite churches – brought to the discussion a parallel from Russia (see his Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” p. 106, n. 46). For a discussion of the domed compartments and their functions in Athonite katêchoumena, see \textbf{Chapter 5}.


\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Cf.} Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” p. 106.

\textsuperscript{145} Such an appearance and the form and style of the two domes, different from those of the main dome, perhaps led Dêmêtrios Evangelidēs to make an erroneous conclusion that the over-narthex was added later (Tsitouridou, \textit{The Church of the Panagia Chalkeon}, p. 17). Evangelidēs’s view was rejected by Papadopulos, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 13-15.
integration of the upper floor into the overall design, i.e. the unfamiliarity of the builders with such solutions.\textsuperscript{146} That, again, raises the question of how much this church owed to Constantinople and how much it expressed local traditions and trends.

The issue of ‘capital or province’ also applies to the church’s narthex. Its elongated form, topped with two domes, may not have been such an oddity and exception as it appears today. The almost contemporary narthexes at Vatopedi and Ivērōn also feature twin-domed arrangements at their roof levels and could have been part of some local trend, present in the region of Macedonia. Or, this church might have been directly influenced by the design employed only a few decades earlier on Athos.\textsuperscript{147} However, ideas and solutions similar to the twin-domed narthex already floated in Constantinopolitan architecture – likely in the Theotokos of Lips and perhaps in Eski İmaret Camii (if Texier’s drawing can be trusted) – but the way they were carried out in the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn suggests a more developed concept and a stronger significance given to it. Such an impression largely comes from the sheer size and form of the two domes, which possess relatively tall and decoratively articulated drums. Furthermore, the triangular configuration of three domes gives the church a more dynamic appearance than a rectangular configuration of five, which appears more stable and static. If the \textit{ktētōrs} and builders were indeed conscious of this, it was possibly just an expression of regional taste. Perhaps, the maturity of the concept and the intensified expression were not only due to the years of development that had preceded the church’s construction, but were very likely related to the evolution of the function of the over-narthex’s corner spaces as well. Knowing Vatopedi and Ivērōn as the only other contemporary cases, it is hard to postulate anything more concrete than to say that these spaces must have had a ritual, perhaps even a liturgical purpose, despite their

\textsuperscript{146} Cf. Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” p. 106.
\textsuperscript{147} For a discussion of the twin dome motif in Athonite architecture, see Chapter 5.
diminutive interiors and restricted accessibility. Another explanation could be that by the time of
the church’s construction, domes had become a means not only of symbolical, but also of
decorative expression, thus serving as no more than visual accents to the church’s west façade.
In order to confirm or reject either of these two explanations, one would need to make a closer
examination of these spaces.\footnote{148}

The remains of a \textbf{church on the site of the ancient Olynthos} were exposed in
excavations conducted by David Robinson in 1938 (\textit{Fig. 263}).\footnote{149} The site was known to locals
and, according to tradition, the church was dedicated to St. Nicholas.\footnote{150} This opens the
possibility that the church may have been part of the \textit{metochion} (monastic dependency) of St.
Nicholas in the area of Myriophyton, which is mentioned in two Athonite documents of 1047
and 1363.\footnote{151} Panagiōtēs Vokotopoulos dates the building to the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, assuming that it is
the same as the church mentioned in 1047.\footnote{152} More precisely, he identifies the influence of the
Panagia tōn Chalkeōn and so places the church’s construction in either the 1030s or early
1040s.\footnote{153}

The surviving foundations give witness to a structure that consisted of a \textit{naos} of a
complex cross-in-square plan, i.e. including an additional row of three bays to the east for the
sanctuary, and of a large narthex, of the same width as the \textit{naos} and built simultaneously with it
(\textit{Fig. 264A}). The uncommonly spacious narthex exhibits an unusual plan too, with pairs of

\footnotetext[148]{\footnotesize I have not been in position to enter the upper-floor rooms of either the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn or Ivērōn’s \textit{katholikon}.}

\footnotetext[149]{\footnotesize Published in David M. Robinson, \textit{Excavations at Olynthus, Part XII: Domestic and Public Architecture}
(Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), pp. 318-322, plates 262-270. However, the information regarding the church provided in the book is incomplete. This has been rectified by Παναγιώτης Λ. Βοκοτόπουλος, "Ο Βυζαντινός ναός της Ολύνθου", in \textit{Βυζαντινή Μακεδονία, 324 – 1430 μ.Χ.: Διεθνές συμπόσιο, Θεσσαλονίκη 29-31 Οκτωβρίου 1992} (Θεσσαλονίκη: Εταιρεία Μακεδονικών σπουδών, 1995): 45-56.}

\footnotetext[150]{\footnotesize Robinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 318; Βοκοτόπουλος, "Ο Βυζαντινός ναός της Ολύνθου", p. 45.}

\footnotetext[151]{\footnotesize Βοκοτόπουλος, "Ο Βυζαντινός ναός της Ολύνθου", pp. 54-55 (with references).}

\footnotetext[152]{\footnotesize \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 55-56. Robinson, \textit{Olynthus}, pp. 318-319, n. 1, proposed earlier a 12\textsuperscript{th}-century date, using mostly
geo-graphically distant and historically unrelated monuments of Peloponnese as his comparative material.}

\footnotetext[153]{\footnotesize Βοκοτόπουλος, "Ο Βυζαντινός ναός της Ολύνθου", p. 56; \textit{cf.} pp. 51-54.}
pilasters in the west and east walls directly flanking the two doorways. Moreover, two pairs on the opposite walls are not precisely aligned. This perhaps led Vokotopoulos to reconstruct four blind arches along the walls between pilasters and the corner half-pilasters (Fig. 264B).\textsuperscript{154} He has also proposed that the vaulting was in the form of a single transversal barrel-vault.\textsuperscript{155} This solution seems plausible, but no actual evidence has survived.\textsuperscript{156} Another solution could be that there were two arches spanning the narthex transversally between the pilasters. However, due to the fact that the two pairs of pilasters on the opposite walls are not mutually aligned and are fairly distant, this would have resulted in oblong and fairly elongated bays (along the east-west direction).\textsuperscript{157} Still, they could have contributed to the support for a second storey, which may have been of a form similar to that in the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn.\textsuperscript{158} There are no doors in the north and south walls and it is not known what were the number, position, and form of any potential windows. The only standard feature seems to be the use of three doors to connect the room with the naos. As an interesting detail it should be noted that there is a door in the south wall of the naos, providing access to its southwest bay.

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From this large group of examples that provide closest parallels to Athonite narthexes, it can be concluded that there were several features characteristic for the narthex of the cross-in-square church of the 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} centuries. First, the narthex is always of the same width as the naos

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., p. 47.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., p. 53.
\textsuperscript{156} The height of most of the extant walls does not exceed 40 cm (ibid., p. 45).
\textsuperscript{157} Similar situations, although not so drastic in proportions, do exist and can be observed in the vaulting of the narthexes at St. John in Troulo, Constantinople (Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 158-159, fig. XII-1), and St. Procopius, Mount Athos (see Chapter 1). Panagiōtēs Vokotopoulos has also allowed for an alternative tripartite vaulting solution, with barrel-vaults covering end bays and a groin-vault spanning the central bay (Βοκοτόπολος, «Ο Βυζαντινός ναός της Ολύνθου», p. 53). The two supporting arches between the bays would not necessarily conform to the pilasters, but could have sprung from corbels in the east and west walls (ibid.).
\textsuperscript{158} Vokotopoulos, too, does not rule out the possibility that there was an upper floor to the narthex (ibid.).
and integrally built with it, indicating that by this time the narthex had become a standard element of the church building. At the beginning, it was a simple hall, covered with a transversal barrel-vault (e.g. Fatih Camii in Tirilye). Later on, the vaulting became more complex, divided into three segments, which are supported by two arches. The arches spring either directly from flat walls (with the springing points occasionally strengthened with corbels or string courses) or from pilasters. Such solutions, especially with the addition of external pilasters, seem to have been devised as a way to reinforce the structure of those narthexes that had many large openings (e.g. Theotokos of Lips and Myrelaion). Although not necessarily related to the presence of an additional storey above the narthex, this reinforcing system contributes to securing a sound structural support for the upper floor and architectural elements that might occur there, such as domes. The second storey is not the rule and appears in both early and later churches. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as a typological feature, but rather as an asset that was included if a certain need necessitated it. On the lower level, all examples examined here invariably feature three doorways in the wall between the narthex and naos. Additional entrances in the north and south walls are very common, especially in the Constantinopolitan cases.

Exonarthexes and porches added in the Middle Byzantine period are included only in few situations. The Theotokos of Lips has a stair tower attached to its narthex and the church at Yılinca Bayır, in addition to a long porch at the west front, has two square chambers of unclear function flanking its narthex. No other annexes appended to the narthex have been recorded.
[Chapter 2] **Excursus:**

**Middle Byzantine Monastic Churches and their Narthexes**

The exposition that follows is an addition to the examination of close parallels to Athonite narthexes that is the subject of Chapter 2. This excursus aims to provide a brief survey of other Middle Byzantine monastic narthexes, regardless of the church types with which they were associated. The examples featuring the cross-in-square plan might appear numerous, but that is because this type was frequently used across the territory of the empire and in regions under Byzantine cultural influence. Urban basilicas are included as well, mainly as comparanda for the few Athonite basilican churches. The narthexes are examined in regard to their plan, organization, the presence of certain architectural features (such as domes, niches, *arcosolia*, fonts, etc.), and the existence or lack of an upper floor, as well as how these relate to the church core. Also, attention is paid to churches with lateral chapels, *exonarthishes*, and porticos. The reason for including such a large pool of examples lies in an effort to gain a larger picture of the contemporary monastic narthex and its variants, as well as to avoid the possible traps of a typological approach when focusing solely on cross-in-square churches.¹

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From the 6th century onwards, Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture was characterized by a gradual development of compact church plans, in which the narthex gets fully integrated into

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the church building. This process was continuous and it is hard to mark a distinct delineation between the Middle Byzantine and preceding periods. However, it is evident that the development reached its peak in the Middle Byzantine period, yielding mature examples already at the very beginning of the period. The basilica survived, but a variety of centralized plans, whose naoi were normally crowned by domes, became dominant. Almost every church, regardless of its form, has a narthex, now integrally planned and executed with the main body of the church. Although the narthex was not uncommon in the earlier centuries, taking the form of either an open entrance porch, often part of the atrium, or an enclosed vestibule, it apparently becomes a standard feature only in the Middle Byzantine period, when more enclosed solutions for narthex prevail. There are cases of churches built originally without narthexes, to which these were added only in the 11th century, witnessing to the rising importance ascribed to this part of the church building.

Two distinct types of church plans particularly stand out and architecturally mark the Middle Byzantine period. The first of them, known as the ‘domed octagon’, was employed in fewer foundations. However, its strikingly complex and sophisticated architecture, with an impressive dome topping a spacious and unobstructed naos, on the one hand, as well as fine mosaic decoration, rarely preserved in other churches, on the other, make the type figure prominently and as such has often been regarded as iconic for the period. The second type, described as the ‘cross-in-square’ or, less commonly in English, ‘cross-inscribed,’ is actually

4 For definitions of the domed octagon, see Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, p. 518, and *ODB* (see List of Abbreviations), Vol. 1, pp. 459-461 (s. v. “Church Plan Types”).
more frequently used, particularly for monastic churches.\textsuperscript{5} Employing a less complex layout, it was easier to construct and more accommodating for various kinds of auxiliary spaces and structures, such as narthexes and chapels, not necessarily integrated in the core body of the cross-in-square \textit{naos}. These advantages made the type quite vital and it was the base for the planning of many churches around Byzantium and its periphery – from Sicily, in the West, to Georgia and Russia, in the East – throughout the period, dominated in church architecture in the Late Byzantine period, and remained frequent in the Post-Byzantine centuries.\textsuperscript{6}

Both of these characteristic types were used mainly, although not exclusively, for monastic churches. The types’ characteristic layouts conditioned the forms of their respective narthexes, but not in a radical way, attesting to basically the same functions of the space and the lesser impact of the \textit{naos}’s structure on the narthex’s form. The narthexes are oblong, slightly elongated, and usually subdivided into three bays. In basilicas and churches with extra aisles on the sides, additional bays are added in order to conceal the aisles from the west. Nonetheless, it is evident that by this period the narthex had become a fully defined and distinct space, physically separated from the rest of the church, regardless of the church type. On the other hand, apart from this roughly standard general layout, rarely any other architectural element or piece of furnishing is preserved as a witness to the narthex’s function. That is especially the case with urban churches, which I will address briefly in an examination of basilicas and for which


\textsuperscript{6} The wide currency and long persistence of the cross-in-square layout, as well as its hierarchical form, has made Otto Demus regard it as “the classical type of middle Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture” and ideal framework for the standard Middle Byzantine iconographic program, which was “developed to suit” it (Otto Demus, \textit{Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium} (London: Routledge, 1948), pp. 11 and 14-16). Such a high esteem of the type in relation to the monumental decoration is hardly tenable. It is difficult to ascertain whether the program was devised to fit the architectural background or the architecture was designed or adjusted to accommodate the imagery and its distribution, since the great majority of early cross-in-square churches have lost their decoration. Even Demus himself had to limit his discussion of the Middle Byzantine mosaic decoration almost exclusively to domed-octagon churches, all dating to the 11\textsuperscript{th} century and located in central Greece (\textit{cf.} also Ousterhout, \textit{Master Builders of Byzantium}, pp. 243-244).
we have little or no other evidence but their architecture. In order to try to detect at least some of the narthex’s functions and for the purpose of the present study, I will focus on the two above-mentioned centralized plans, particularly the cross-in-square, and almost exclusively on monastic churches.  

The present survey of extant churches and their narthexes uses typological criteria to organize a plethora of examples. This can assist in the examination of the relationship between certain variants of narthexes and the *naoi* they accompany. Taking a look at narthexes of basilican and cross-in-square churches is particularly useful as a way to examine a wider background for what were the common architectural solutions of churches on Mount Athos. Also, possible regional differences in narthex design, regardless of whether they stem from local building traditions or from potential variations in function and meaning of the narthex, are considered.

**a) Narthexes of Basilicas and ‘Domed Basilicas’**

The *basilica*, a church type characteristic of earlier centuries, continues to be employed, mainly for urban churches and, among them, most notably for episcopal sees. However, there were

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7 From the present discussion, I omit cross-domed churches with ambulatories, a number of which are to be found in various regions of the empire (cf. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans* [see List of Abbreviations], pp. 318-321, 400-401), primarily for the reason that what probably functioned as a narthex is structurally and spatially part of the ambulatory. Moreover, the ‘narthex area’ in these churches is commonly separated from the *naos* by a *tribelon* rather than a wall.

8 In fact, the basilica reemerges in provinces, namely in the Balkans, in two waves: in the 9th century – seemingly with the process of re-Christianization of the region after the Slavic settlement – and in the 11th century – probably following the re-conquest of the areas that formerly were part of the realm of the Bulgarian *tsar* Samuel and his successors (997-1018). Both moments can perhaps be viewed as architectural expressions of the *renovatio imperii*, explaining the construction of churches on older ecclesiastical sites and the turning to the basilica for planning. For this issue and general trends in the building of basilica type churches in the Middle Byzantine Balkans, see Đorđe Stričević, “La rénovation du type basilical dans l’architecture ecclésiastique des pays centraux des Balkans aux IXe-XLe siècles,” in *Actes du XIIe congrès international d’études byzantines, Ochrid 10-16 septembre 1961*, Vol. I (Beograd: Comité yugoslave des études byzantines, 1963): 165-211, and Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, pp. 308-318, 395-400, 414-415, with respective bibliographies for the issue and representative monuments. Two articles by Vojislav Korač are also useful: „О архитектури катедралних цркава XI века на византијском
certain changes at the west end: the atrium disappears, whereas the presence of a narthex becomes a standard.\(^9\) Moreover, the narthex now appears to be an organic part of the church body, echoing the whole width of the church and rising often to the full height of the nave.

Illustrative examples are offered by the designs of the “Basilica of the Catechumens” in Servia, Greece (ca. 1000, Figs. 265, 266),\(^{10}\) Hagios Achilleios at the Mikrê Prespa Lake (built some time between 985/6 and 1002 to be the seat of the Bulgarian patriarch, Fig. 267),\(^{11}\) the so-called Old Metropolis in Mesêmbria (Nesebår, Bulgaria), a sixth-century basilica remodeled in the 10\(^{th}\) or 11\(^{th}\) century (Figs. 268 to 270),\(^{12}\) the Old Metropolis of Veroia (last decades of the 11\(^{th}\) c., Fig. 271A),\(^{13}\) the Metropolis in Kalambaka (end of the 11\(^{th}\) c., Figs. 271B, 272),\(^{14}\) and the Hagioi Theodôroi, the cathedral of Serres (end of the 11\(^{th}\) c., Figs. 273, 274).\(^{15}\) They are all three-aisled basilicas, with two rows of oblong piers used as supports rather than the rows of columns that

\(^{9}\) The narthex was not necessarily a substitute for an atrium, at least not in the 5\(^{th}\)- and 6\(^{th}\)-century Constantinople, as witnessed by its churches of the period, almost all having both an atrium and a narthex (Thomas F. Mathews, The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy (University Park - London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), pp. 107-108). Each had its role in the liturgical ritual, the atrium in providing the space and a potential shelter (the covered stoas along its sides) for the congregation awaiting the arrival of the emperor and patriarch, and the narthex in offering the setting for the patriarch and emperor with their retinues (and the rest of the congregation) in waiting and preparing for the Lesser Entrance (ibid., p. 145). However, by the Middle Byzantine period, the church ritual had gone through changes, and the narthex and, perhaps, the naos had assumed some if not all of atrium’s functions, rendering it superfluous. For a summary of liturgical changes between the Early and Middle Byzantine periods and disappearance of the atrium and some other parts of the church building, see ibid., pp. 178-179.

\(^{10}\) Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, pp. 310-311, fig. 327A.

\(^{11}\) Korać, „О архитектуре катедралних цркава XI века на византијском културном подручју“ (as in note 8), p. 58; Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, pp. 311-312, fig. 327B. For a detailed study of this monument, see Николаос К. Муцопулос, Η βασιλική του Αγίου Αχιλλείου στην Πρέσπα: Συμβολή στη μελέτη των Βυζαντινών μνημείων της περιοχής (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, Κέντρο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 1989), 3 vols.

\(^{12}\) Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, p. 309, fig. 326A.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., pp. 395-396, fig. 430A.

\(^{14}\) Korać, „О архитектуре катедралних цркава XI века на византијском културном подручју“, p. 60. The churches present form appears to be of the late-12\(^{th}\)-century date (Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, p. 396).

\(^{15}\) Анатасиос Орлάνдος, «Η Μητρόπολις των Σερρών,» ABME 5 (1939-1940): 153-166.
were usually deployed in earlier periods. Only the last three feature alternations of piers and columns (Veroia and Kalambaka) or columns alone (Serres). All, except for the basilicas in Servia and Kalambaka, had galleries over the side aisles and, presumably, over the narthex, as is the case in the Hagioi Theodōroi of Serres. The upper parts of the others’ western areas have not survived, but such a use of the over-narthex is attested also in domed basilicas of the period (discussed below).

All basilicas feature a narthex designed as a simple, undivided, oblong room, with three doorways providing access to each of the basilica’s aisles. Only the narthex of Nesebăr’s Old Metropolis, which also communicates with the aisles of the naos, is additionally subdivided into three rooms, directly corresponding to the aisles (see Fig. 268).\(^\text{16}\) The central passage between the narthex and the naos was kept open; in Servia, Veroia, and Kalambaka this was structured as a tribēlon, which can be viewed as a conservative solution.\(^\text{17}\) A door at this position is only firmly attested in Serres and may also have existed in Nesebăr.\(^\text{18}\) In the narthexes of all basilicas, an entrance in the west wall is accompanied by two smaller ones in the north and south walls. The lateral doors are located centrally only on the two walls in Nesebăr, while in all other cases the two doors are off the north-south axis to the east.\(^\text{19}\)

The period also saw further development of the ‘domed basilica’ type, which is characterized by the retention of a basilican plan on the ground level while employing a cruciform solution for the building’s upper parts, with barrel-vaulted arms of the cross supporting a dome. This apparently did not affect the narthex, which remains essentially the

\(^{16}\) In all these elements, the narthex of the Old Metropolis of Mesēmbria is comparable to that of the Prōtaton of Mount Athos. The two churches are also similar in size and planning, with the Athonite basilica only being different at the upper level: there are no galleries above the side aisles and the naos was modified soon after the church’s construction, acquiring a cruciform layout (see Chapter 1).


\(^{18}\) See *ibid.*, figs. 326A, 430C.

\(^{19}\) Compare this arrangement with the same observed in the church of the Panagia in Skripou and a proposed explanation for it (below, note 30).
same, its three bays fully conforming to the three aisles of the nave and communicating with them through passageways or doors. It only gets more often than not an upper floor, which is spatially treated as a mere part of the galleries which extend above the side aisles. This church type may have come as the result of rebuilding older structures, which were simple basilicas, as was the case with the basilica of the lower city in Amorium (constructed in the late 5th or early 6th c.; rebuilt in the late 9th or early 10th c.; Fig. 275), which probably was the city’s cathedral.20 This church is very illustrative not only for the process of the introduction of a dome to the basilican layout, but also for how this transformation affected the narthex. While virtually remaining the same, especially in terms of organization and the position of door openings, it had its walls reinforced, most certainly due to the introduction of vaulting and an upper floor.

As more characteristic representatives of the domed basilica of the period, one can call attention to the Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya, Süleyman Paşa Camii) in Vize (mid-9th c.),21 which was probably the cathedral of Bizyē22 and features a design very close to a cross-in-square structure (Figs. 276 to 280), and another Hagia Sophia, the seat of the Archbishops of Ohrid (first half of the 11th c., Figs. 281 to 283).23 They both have galleries above the aisles and over the narthex. The narthex is fully enclosed on both levels. The area on the upper floor visually communicates with the central nave through a *tribēlon* and connects with the side galleries through passageways. On the ground floor, the narthex at Vize is articulated into three bays,

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22 See Bauer and Klein, *op. cit.*, p. 251, n. 11.
which were placed to exactly correspond to the aisles of the nave. The middle bay is covered with a longitudinal barrel-vault, whereas the other two are topped with groin-vaults. The narthex in Ohrid has an unusual configuration of five bays, with the central one larger and square in plan. In both churches, the bays are separated by pilasters and arches. The upper floors of both narthexes lack any pilasters and subdivisions, suggesting that the areas were covered with timber roofs, which were lighter than vaults. The Ohrid cathedral’s large, open, and double-storied exonarthex with two domes at its ends, which is appended to the west, was constructed in 1314. 

The Church of the Panagia in Skripou (Orchomenos, Boeotia, 873/4) has usually been described as a domed basilica, probably due to the impression it leaves of a pronouncedly elongated structure (Figs. 284 to 288). It, in fact, takes a ‘transitional’ form between a basilica and a cruciform centralized plan, where a tall transept cuts through all three aisles and even protrudes out of the north and south perimeter walls. The nave and transept together form a cross, whose central bay is crowned by a dome, the solution that once may have been applied also in the Prōtaton church. The building was apparently envisaged as a triple church, possibly built to serve as the katholikon of a monastery. The smaller two of the three churches take up the spaces of what technically would be the side aisles of a basilica. The elongated narthex, constructed integrally with the church, spans its entire width and, featuring no subdivisions, consists of a single, undivided space. Three arched passageways open into each of the aisles.

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24 The over-narthex area in the Ohrid cathedral is presently covered with a single barrel-vault, which may have been added in one of later rebuilding campaigns. 
25 Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, p. 574. 
26 For the most exhaustive study of this church, see Amy Papalexandrou, “The Church of the Virgin of Skripou: Architecture, Sculpture and Inscriptions in Ninth-Century Byzantium,” PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 1998), with pp. 84-93 and 245-250 dedicated to the narthex. 
27 See Chapter 1. 
28 For the triple-church organization, see Papalexandrou, op. cit., pp. 259-264; for a discussion of a presumable monastic context, see ibid., pp. 21-22, 306-312.
The central opening is larger and was left open, i.e. did not have an imbedded door, as witnessed by the horizontal molding enveloping its jambs.\textsuperscript{29}

In addition to the main entrance door in the west wall, the narthex originally had two doors at the north and south ends. They are moved slightly off the axis to the east, similarly to the basilicas of Servia and Hagios Achilleios.\textsuperscript{30} The west door is protected with a small open porch, supported by a pair of spur walls, perforated with arched openings, whereas the side doors once had diminutive cantilevered canopies, carried by brackets projecting from the wall above the doors. Somewhat idiosyncratically, there are two large tri-lobed windows, located at each side of the western door (\textit{Fig. 288}).\textsuperscript{31} Additional natural light was originally admitted to the interior through two smaller bi-lobed windows, one above each of the side doors.\textsuperscript{32} Despite the relatively great height of the \textit{naos}, there is no upper floor to the narthex. As such, and with its undivided space and continuous barrel vaulting, this narthex ranks among the ‘conservative’, or rather rural and provincial ones and resembles that of the Fatih Camii in Tirilye.\textsuperscript{33} This narthex and its geographically distant relative at Skripou may have been designed in emulation of urban narthexes, but adjusted to monastic needs.

\textbf{b) Narthexes of Cross-in-Square Churches}

The cross-in-square plan represents one of the most advanced solutions in the development of compact church plans, with the compactness achieved in the layout and structure of both the

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Cf. ibid.}, p. 85. This continuous molding of the same design goes along the walls of the middle of the three churches and of the narthex (see \textit{ibid.}, fig. 54), perhaps witnessing to the narthex’s primary (if not exclusive) assignment to the main church.

\textsuperscript{30} Amy Papalexandrou explains this occurrence as the result of the planning that had external composition in mind (see \textit{ibid.}, p. 87).

\textsuperscript{31} Almost identical arrangement was applied in the \textit{exonarthex} of the Katholikon at Hosios Loukas (see below and \textit{Fig. 404}).

\textsuperscript{32} Papalexandrou, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 85, 87-88.

\textsuperscript{33} For this church, see \textbf{Chapter 2}. 
*naos* and the narthex. The former is structured as an open room of a square (or close to square) plan, covered with vaults, which are supported on four columns or, occasionally, four masonry piers. Thus the room is subdivided into nine bays, those in the center and corners featuring square ground plans and the remaining four taking up rectangular forms. The central bay, the largest of all, is covered with a dome on a drum. The four rectangular bays on the main axes are barrel-vaulted in such manner that the vaults together make a cruciform configuration. The corner bays are most often covered with groin-vaults, situated on a lower level (at the springing point of barrel-vaults or below), leaving the arms of the cross fully exposed in the exterior. The sanctuary consists of three separate rooms, which follow the tripartite configuration of the *naos*’s east side and each ends with an apse. The central part (*bêma*) opens fully to the *naos* and houses the altar table. The two end rooms, which serve as *prothesis* (north) and *diakonikon* (south), communicate with the *bêma* and *naos* through arched doorways. In literature, this is known as ‘complex cross-in-square’ plan, whereas a church that does not feature this additional row of bays for the sanctuary, but accommodate it within the three east bays of the very cross-in-square structure, is labeled ‘simple cross-in-square’ church. Unaffected by these typological variances, the narthex is attached to the west of the *naos*, separated from it with a wall, which is pierced only with one or three doors.

The cross-in-square plan’s simple, open, and unobstructed interior, as well as modest dimensions, was apparently deemed convenient for monastic, as well as palatial and private churches. The reason for such popularity may well stem from the type’s well accommodation of small congregations of mutually familiar and closely connected people and, therefore, no physical separation/segregation of the attendants and partition of the space were required.\(^\text{34}\) The

\(^{34}\) For discussions of the type, particularly in regard to its possible origins, see Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, pp. 340-344, Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, p. 178, Dorothea Lange, “Theorien zur
type enjoyed a wide currency throughout Byzantine Empire and beyond. Several regional variants, demonstrating certain differences in form and planning particularly in the narthex area, can be detected. Therefore, besides chronology, this has been used as the main criterion for grouping and analyzing surviving monuments, which are discussed here.

Probably the oldest extant churches of the cross-in-square type are located in the region of Bithynia, in the northeast Asia Minor, opposite Constantinople. A few known and documented churches located in this area feature either ‘complex’ or ‘simple’ cross-in-square plans and their narthexes range from single-vaulted to three-bayed oblong halls. By definition, they maintain communication with the naos through three doors. Exonarthexes have been recorded in only two cases, Fatih Camii and Ylinca Bayır. Due to great typological similarities with Constantinopolitan and Athonite narthexes, as well as the region’s paramount importance in the Middle Byzantine monasticism, these narthexes are examined in Chapter 2.

The Middle Byzantine churches of Constantinople form a distinct and typologically unified group of monuments, which has been regarded in scholarship as the standard for the period. They all feature the ‘complex’ cross-in-square naoi and three-bayed narthexes. Four of these – those belonging to the Theotokos of Lips, Myrelaion, Eski İmaret Camii, and Vefa Kilise Camii – bear close similarities with the Athonite narthexes and were put under a greater scrutiny.

in Chapter 2. I here turn to another two churches, one dated earlier and one dated later than the others. It is not only chronology that excluded them from the detailed discussion of the other four churches, but also certain architectural differences. The first of the two monuments is the church known as St. John en tō Troullō (probably 9th cent.; today Hıramı Ahmet Paşa Camii; Figs. 289 to 291). Its narthex shares only a few elements characteristic for the other four churches, such as the subdivision into three even bays, all covered with groin-vaults, and the presence of three doorways in the east wall, which are present despite the modest size of the church (see Fig. 291). The room is dominated by four deep arched wall recesses, resembling arcosolia, two set in the north and south walls, and two flanking the main entrance in the west wall (Fig. 290). Small windows above them provide natural light. It is not known whether originally there was an upper floor.

The second building is Molla Zeyrek Camii (Fig. 292), which used to be the katholikon of the Pantokratōr Monastery, an imperial establishment. It is very important, both historically and architecturally, as it represents one of only a few preserved monastic churches whose typikon also survives. The complex consists of three churches: the south church, dedicated to Christ ho Pantokratōr and constructed between 1118 and 1134; the north church, dedicated to the Theotokos hē Eleousa, added before 1136; and a funerary chapel of Archangel Michael, known

35 Marinis, Architecture and Ritual (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 158-159 (with bibliography).
36 In this and the rectangular shape of the bays, it only resembles the narthex of the church of St. Procopius (see Chapter 1 and Figs. 170, 177).
37 I have not had a chance to visit the church and inspect its narthex, which was heavy-handedly restored in the 1960s (Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 159). The available literature and published material do not provide information for a discussion more detailed than the one presented here.
38 For a brief account on this monument and bibliography, see Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 143-144. For its typikon, commentaries, and bibliography, see BMFD (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 725-781.
39 The year 1124 is commonly found in the literature as the date by which the construction of the initial katholikon must have been finished. That is based on the fact that the Empress Irene, the co-founder of the monastery with her husband John II Komnēnos, was buried in the church and on the previous assumption that she died in 1124. However, it is now accepted that she actually died in 1134 (see Prosopography of the Byzantine World, online: http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/113003, accessed 11 February 2016), hence my use of this year as the terminus ante quem.
also as *Hērōon*,
inserted between the two also prior to 1136 (Figs. 293, 294). The plans of the north and south churches, including their narthexes, are deeply rooted in the planning and design of their predecessors in the city, but also exhibit certain departures and further developments. Both structures feature ‘complex’ cross-in-square *naoi*, preceded by narthexes to the west, through which the two churches were initially connected. The south church is slightly larger and served the monastic brotherhood, whereas the other one was open to lay attendance.

The south building shows a few modifications of the Middle Byzantine canon, notably the inclusion of additional aisles, along the north and south flanks. This seemingly led to a distinct solution for the narthex, which, in addition to three bays corresponding to the cross-in-square core, has two more bays (Fig. 295). They apparently answered the need to embrace the western fronts of the original north and south auxiliary spaces. These two bays originally also had *arcosolia* in the west wall and were intended as funerary spaces.

The north church’s narthex has one extra bay to the south, which undoubtedly was added both to establish a connection with the older church and to enable the creation of a slight gap between the two *naoi*.

Some departures in design are to be observed on the upper level, as well. In both churches, the second stories are accommodated above the narthexes’ entire lengths. Both upstairs rooms seem not to have been subdivided into smaller chambers, appearing as long galleries (see Fig. 296). They visually communicate with the respective *naoi*, but unlike the

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40 See (28) Pantokrator, # [29], [34] (*BMFD*, pp. 753-754, 756).
42 Two easternmost groin-vaulted bays of the south aisle were first recorded by Arthur H. S. Megaw, “Notes on Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul,” *DOP* 17 (1963): 333-371, p. 340, who likened it to a “lateral narthex”. It indeed may have been a mere open portico along the church’s south side. For the reconstruction of the church with flanking aisles, see Robert Ousterhout, “Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and a Few Examples,” *DOP* 54 (2000): 241-250, fig. 10. The presumed north aisle was undoubtedly removed in order to provide space for the *Hērōon*.
44 This bay was integrally built with the rest of the narthex (*ibid.*, p. 344). The empty space between the churches, originally intended for securing natural light for both of them, soon received the *Hērōon*. 

162
katēchoumena in the Theotokos of Lips and the Eski İmaret Camii, which overlook the nave through a tribēlon at the end of the west arm of the inscribed cross, the galleries in the Pantokratōr are given a broader view through three large openings, which correspond with the naos’s three aisles (see Figs. 297, 298). This was possible due to the greater height of the naos. A tribēlon in the south church and a triple window in the north church, but both are situated in the topmost tier, recall as similar feature found in older Constantinopolitan churches. However, these openings are above the gallery’s roof and originally admitted daylight into the naoi (see Figs. 294, 297 to 299). The tribēlon of the south church was eventually blocked by the subsequent addition of a dome above the gallery’s central bay (Figs. 294, 300). This may have happened in conjunction with the construction of an exonarthex, mentioned already in the typikon (1136). This also led to the transformation of the narthex’s lower level, namely the enlargement of the openings in the west wall (Fig. 301) and the removal of the central bay’s vaulting. Both were intended to bring more daylight into the narthex, now enclosed by the north church, the exonarthex, and an annex to the south (see Fig. 293). The exonarthex is rather spacious (Fig. 302), taking the entire width of the narthex and similarly consisting of five groin-vaulted bays, each repeating the width of the corresponding bay of the inner narthex (see Fig. 293). The depth of the exonarthex, however, is greater than that of the narthex and the central bay thus acquired a squarish plan. The height of the room is proportionally enlarged too, reaching the mid-point of the gallery’s windows (Fig. 294). The resulting hall is truly impressive, indeed worthy of the imperial foundation and mausoleum.

Cappadocia was another important monastic region in the Early and Middle Byzantine eras. The great majority of its extant churches feature cross-in-square designs, cut inside living

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rock, which are very characteristic for the architecture of the region. Only a few built churches have survived to our times and even fewer possess narthexes. I would like to bring to attention three of them, all located in the same area (the Aksaray province): Çanlı Kilise, between the villages of Çeltek and Akhisar on the Hasan Dağı (church: early 11th c., narthex: before the middle of the 11th c.), Karagedik Kilise (St. George, İlanlı Kilise), near Belisırma (Gr. Peristrema; dated to the period between the end of the 10th and second half of the 11th c.), and Kilise Camii (St. Gregory, Aziz Gregorius Kilise) in Güzelyurt (formerly Gelveri, Gr. Karbalê). Their plans, certain architectural features, and building technique disclose probable influence from the capital, but they also possess elements characteristic for the eastern provinces of the empire.

This is especially evident in the planning of Çanlı Kilise (Figs. 303, 304). Its ‘simple’ cross-in-square naos (Figs. 305, 306) fits well in the planning scheme of Cappadocian cave

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47 It seems that churches without narthexes were common in the central Asia Minor. For few examples, see Κάππας, «Η εφαρμογή του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη μέση και την ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο: Το παράδειγμα του απλού τετρακιόνιου / τετράστυλου» (cited in note 34), Catalog Nos. 006, 010-013.


50 To these three churches, two more, both of the simple cross-in-square plan and located in Lykaonia, can also be added: Ala Kilise (mid-11th c.), on Ali Suması Dağı, southwest of Konya, and the church in the village of Fisandon (first half of the 11th c.). The former seems to have had an upper storey; the narthex of the latter apparently did not. For both, see W. M. [William Mitchell] Ramsay, Gertrude L. Bell, The Thousand and One Churches (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), pp. 399-403, and more recent Κάππας, op. cit., Catalog Nos. 017, 016, respectively (with bibliographies).

51 Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, pp. 398-399 (for Çanlı Kilise), and Ousterhout, Master Builders of Byzantium, p. 192 (for Karagedik Kilise).

52 Cf. Ousterhout, A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia, pp. 64-68, 75-76.
churches, which often feature this plan. However, a three-bayed double-storied narthex (see Figs. 307, 308) untypically precedes the naos and, despite being added at a later date, was probably envisaged from the very beginning. This is suggested by the fact that some elements of its north extension (burial room) actually predate the church and may have been the reason for the church’s foundation. The attachment of a burial chamber to the narthex is common for a number of cave churches in the region, but also finds its parallels in few Athonite katholika. The location of the annex to the north may have been the result of the site’s configuration: the chamber is partially buried into the slope and its top conveniently provides the access to the narthex’s upper floor (Figs. 309, 310). The remains of the narthex show that its lower storey was covered with three groin-vaults, which were supported by two strong pilasters (or, rather, engaged piers) and three arches, all built against the naos’s west wall (Figs. 311, 312). Three doorways (see Fig. 310) connect the room with the naos and, in addition to the west entrance (see Fig. 304), there is another one in the south wall (see Figs. 308, 312). An opening in the north end provides access to the burial chamber. The upper storey features a series of door-length arched apertures that gave it the appearance of an open gallery (Figs. 303, 304, 309). The interior, following the configuration of the lower level, was subdivided into three bays (see Fig. 310), of which the central overlooked the naos through an arched opening (Figs. 307, 310, 313).

Karagedik Kilise (Fig. 314) is not so well preserved, but the surviving elements indicate that it featured a complex cross-in-square plan, with rectangular piers as supports and an

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54 Ousterhout, A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia, p. 61.
55 For burials in Cappadocian churches, see Natalia B. Teteriatiukov, The Liturgical Planning of Byzantine Churches in Cappadocia (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1996), pp. 165-178. For Athonite cases, see Chapter 1 and, for a more extensive discussion of burials in lateral annexes, Chapter 6.
56 In both the presence of a burial chamber on the lower level and an access corridor reaching directly from the descending terrain on the upper, this church bears resemblance with the Zygou katholikon on Athos (see Chapter 1).
integrially built narthex to the west (Figs. 315, 316). The narthex is relatively narrow, seemingly due to the church’s great size, which makes it appear more like a domed basilica, rather than a cross-in-square church (Fig. 317). It has been heavily damaged by the slippage of the hill side to the south of the church and debris covers much of the lower parts. Therefore, archaeological excavations are necessary in order to establish the exact plan of the narthex. However, the remnants of the upper structures of the naos’s northwest corner bay reveal a significant feature: a diminutive chamber of a square plan, with an absidiole on the east side (see Figs. 316, 318, 319). The room, which was most likely mirrored with another above the southwest corner bay, was entered from the west, from an upper storey to the narthex (see Fig. 317). This configuration recalls that of the katēchoumena in the Eski İmaret Camii in Istanbul.

Kilise Camii in Güzelyurt (Fig. 320) is very similar to Karagedik Kilise. It features an almost identical naos, also of the complex cross-in-square plan and with rectangular piers.

There are also indications visible on the lateral façades that it may have had a similar double-storied narthex. However, the present narthex (Fig. 321) is the result of an 1839 remodeling, which caused the loss of all the architectural elements of the original narthex. From the present

57 The way this room is described in Ramsay, Bell, The Thousand and One Churches, p. 421, gives impression that it was on the ground level. However, it is clear for Paschalēs Androuōdēs (Ανδρούδης, «Ο μεσοβυζαντινός ναός του Άγιου Γεωργίου (Karagedik Kilise) στην κοιλάδα του Περιστρεμμάτος (Belişırma) της Καππαδοκίας», p. 165, and idem, «Οι Βυζαντινοί σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένοι ναοί της Καππαδοκίας», pp. 133, 134-135) that it was part of the upper storey.

58 See Chapter 2.

59 The ground plan of the building can be found in Robert Ousterhout, “Messages in the Landscape: Searching for Gregory Nazianzenos in Cappadocia (with Two Excursions to the Çanlı Kilise),” in Angeliki Lymberopoulou (ed.), Images of the Byzantine World: Visions, Messages and Meanings – Studies Presented to Leslie Brubaker (Farnham – Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011): 147-167, fig. 10.3.

60 Ανδρούδης, «Ο μεσοβυζαντινός ναός του Άγιου Γεωργίου (Karagedik Kilise) στην κοιλάδα του Περιστρεμμάτος (Belişırma) της Καππαδοκίας», p. 169, and idem, «Οι Βυζαντινοί σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένοι ναοί της Καππαδοκίας», p. 138. The ground level part of the 1839 narthex was originally an open portico, as witnessed by immured columns on the west façade. Large arched openings were later blocked.

61 Although all annexes to the church, built along its west and north sides, seem to be part of the 19th-century renovation of the building (see Ousterhout, “Messages in the Landscape: Searching for Gregory Nazianzenos in Cappadocia,” pp. 155-157), the presence of three doors in the naos’s west wall – which all appear medieval and part of the original layout – indicates to me that there must have originally been a narthex. In order to confirm or reject this, a thorough investigation of the church, which would include some archaeological sounding, is necessary.
form of the building, it can only be deduced that there was an upper storey to the narthex and that it may have communicated visually with the naos through an uncommonly large opening, as it does today (Fig. 322).\(^6\) Moreover, the upper parts of the naos’s west corner bays seem to be original and indicate that, unlike Karagedik Kilise, there were no chambers accommodated above them.

The cross-in-square churches of mainland Greece, which are usually referred to as Attic or Helladic churches, constitute a very distinct and homogenous group, both typologically and stylistically. Most of them are slightly younger than the previous examples and belong to the 11\(^{th}\) and, particularly, 12\(^{th}\) century. These churches exhibit certain characteristic stylistic features and distinct idiosyncrasies, which make their architecture in some respects different from that of the capital, most notably in construction technique, decoration, and detailing.\(^6\) Here, I focus on the planning and form, while using as illustrations only a few monuments that are typical, close in date to the Athonite katholika, or known to have been built as monastic churches. The greatest concentration of them is found in Athens: St. Catherine (originally dedicated to Sts. Theodores; 2\(^{nd}\) quarter of the 11\(^{th}\) c.; \textit{Fig. 323}),\(^6\) Hagioi Theodōroi (mid-11\(^{th}\) c.; \textit{Figs. 324, 325}),\(^6\) the Panagia Kapnikarea (shortly after the mid-11\(^{th}\) c.; exonarthex added likely in the early 12\(^{th}\) c.; \textit{Figs. 326 to 329}),\(^6\) St. John the Theologian in Plaka (end of the 11\(^{th}\) or beginning of the

\(^6\) Ανδροδής, «Οι Βυζαντινοί σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένοι ναοί της Καππαδοκίας», p. 139, is of a contrary opinion, i.e. that an over-narthex had not been included in the original design of the church.

\(^6\) See Krautheimer, \textit{Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture}, pp. 379-383, for a summary overview of these characteristics and their comparison with elements of church architecture in Constantinople.


167
12th c.; Fig. 330), and the Panagia ἡ Gorgoepêkoos (Old Mêtopolis, now St. Eleutherios; second half of the 12th c. [?]; Figs. 331, 332). Of those outside Athens, the following are notable: the Panagia Panaxiōtissa (late 10th c. [?]; Figs. 333, 334) in Gaurolimnê, western Greece, and a church of similar plan and form, but perhaps older, the Transfiguration in Korôpi, Attica (10th c. [?]; Fig. 335), as well as the Theotokos ἡ Katholikê in Gatsounê, Peloponnese (3rd or 4th quarter of the 12th c.; Figs. 336, 337), the Dormition of the Virgin in Chônikas (12th c.; Fig. 338), and its namesake and architectural twin in Merbaka (ca. 1200), both in Argolis, and St. Nicholas tês Rodias (sometime between 1180 and 1220; Fig. 339) near Arta.

The following are the common characteristics of these churches. The naos is predominantly of the simple cross-in-square plan, without the additional bays for the bêma and parabêmata. Often, one door alone provides communication between the narthex and the naos. When there are three doors, the middle one is often structured as an open passageway (see Figs. 325, 338), occasionally taking the form of a tribêlon (St. John the Theologian of Plaka75) or dibêlon (Theotokos ἡ Katholikê, see Fig. 337). The narthex is entered from outside through a single door in the west wall; lateral entrances in the south and north walls are not common,

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67 Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας, Λασκαρίνα Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα (Αθήνα: Εμπορική τράπεζα της Ελλάδος, 2002), pp. 35-36 (with older bibliography); for additional information and images, see http://www.byzantineathens.com/alphagammaiotaomicronsigma-iotaomegaalphanunuetasigma-thetaepsilonomicronlambdaiotaomicronsigma-pilambdaalphakappasigma.html (accessed on 14 April 2016).

68 Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, pp. 44-49 (with older bibliography).

69 Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, p. 331, and Πανελλήνιος Α. Βοκοτόπουλος, Ἑκκλησιαστική ἀρχιτεκτονική της δυτικής Ελλαδής και της Ηπείρου: Ἀπὸ τοῦ τέλους του 7ον μέχρι του τέλους του 10ον αιώνος (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κέντρον Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 1992), pp. 80-86.

70 Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας, Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή ἀρχιτεκτονική στην Ελλάδα (Αθήνα: Μέλισσα, 2001), pp. 72, 74, 80, 293 (fig. 12).

71 Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, pp. 106-108 (with older bibliography).

72 Ibid., pp. 325-328 (with older bibliography).

73 For both churches and their affinities, see Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, pp. 423-425.

74 Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, pp. 86-88 (with older bibliography).

75 See a reconstructed plan in ibid., fig. 13.
appearing only in some large churches, such as those in Gaurolimné and Chônikas (see Figs. 333, 334, 338). In the interior of the narthex, there are three bays, the central one almost always covered with a transversal barrel vault. This often extends from the barrel vault of the naos’s west arm (see Figs. 323, 330, 331, 335, 339), but more commonly it is placed slightly lower (see Figs. 324, 327, 333, 338; occasionally, as in the Theotokos hê Katholikê, Fig. 336, considerably lower) in order to yield primacy to the arms of the inscribed cross and to give a stepped profile along the church’s west axis. In both variants, the central bay’s vault somewhat mirrors the similar extension of the vault above the bêma in the churches of the complex cross-in-square type (see Figs. 327, 328, 338). Commonly, there is no second storey to the narthex, despite its height matching that of the naos, perhaps because these churches are generally small and of relatively small height, which does not allow for the accommodation of two stories. An exonarthex appears rarely and only in monastic churches (e.g. Kapnikarea, see Figs. 328, 329).

Architecturally and stylistically close to the churches of this group are the Panagia church at the Monastery of Hosios Loukas (probably built between 946 and 955; Figs. 340 to 343),76 and the katholika of the monasteries of Hosios Meletios (ca. 1100; narthex refashioned ca. 1150; Figs. 344, 345),77 Sagmata (two phases: ca. 1105-1111 and the second half of the 12th century; Fig. 346),78 Varnakova (church 1077, narthex 1148, two exonarthexes 1151 and 1229; Fig. 347),79 and somewhat architecturally related to them, Hagia Monē in Areia (1149; Fig. 348),80 all located in Greece. Their cross-in-square naves belong to the complex type, close to

76 Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, pp. 298-300.
77 Ibid., pp. 390-391; Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελληνική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, pp. 232-236 (with bibliography).
79 Μπούρας, Μπούρα, Η Ελληνική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα, pp. 92-94 (with bibliography).
80 Ibid., pp. 81-85; Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, pp. 423-424. The typikon of this monastery has been preserved. For its English translation and commentaries, see BMFD, pp. 954-972.
that of the capital, with the only exception observed in Varnakova. However, they exhibit all the other architectural characteristics that are typical of the previous group, such as the three-door connection between the narthex and the naos\textsuperscript{81} and the transversal barrel-vault covering the bay preceding the central door (see Figs. 344, 348). The most notable difference, though, is the presence of large narthexes of six bays and two pillars, or nine bays and four pillars. Apart from the Panagia of Hosios Loukas, they all lack an upper storey. This specific type of narthex is known as the litē and it would gain prominence on Mount Athos and Athos-influenced monastic foundations in the Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine periods. These early examples of the type are unique in Middle Byzantine architecture and, despite the obvious architectural similarities with the later examples, cannot be viewed as their direct precursors.\textsuperscript{82}

All of the five churches were built as monastic katholika and the narthex’s unusual size might be a response to the specific needs of monastic ritual, the desire to encompass burials of the founders (such as those of holy monks Loukas and Meletios\textsuperscript{83}), and the pilgrimage that subsequently arose from their veneration. The litai at Hosios Loukas and Hosios Meletios were the replacements of original narrow narthexes\textsuperscript{84} and may have resulted from the merging of a

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\textsuperscript{81} Curiously, there is only one door in the Panagia of Hosios Loukas and the katholikon of Varnakova.


regular narthex with an *exonarthex*.\(^{85}\) This is suggested by the form of the vaulting in the *litē* at Hagia Monē: in the eastern bays, it fully conforms to the typical narthex of the Helladic group, including the transversal barrel-vault above the central bay, while in the western bays it appears as if it is part of a lower *exonarthex* (see Fig. 348). If the merger was indeed what led to this specific feature, then the fact that almost all of the churches in this group soon acquired additional rooms or porticos to the west of the spacious narthex – a large open porch at Hosios Loukas (see Figs. 340, 343) and Hosios Meletios (added around 1200; see Figs. 344, 345),\(^{86}\) an *exonarthex* (added in either 12\(^{th}\) or 15\(^{th}-16^{th}\) century; Fig. 346) at Sagmata, and two successive outer narthexes at Varnakova (see Fig. 347) – indicates that the *exonarthex* was not rendered superfluous by the process and that certain functions still required to be spatially separated from those conducted in the large narthex. Perhaps one of the main reasons for this was the accommodation of the relics of holy founders or other important persons in the narthex (see Figs. 340, 344), which thus became a place of honor and, although being quite spacious, could not be used as the stage for certain rituals that were regarded as belonging to the non-sacred, outer realm.\(^{87}\)

The uncommon form of these narthexes can also be explained as the result of the transmission of ideas between monastic communities that were interconnected. This was certainly the case at Sagmata, with the church there being founded by *Hosios* Clement (died in 1111), who was a disciple of *Hosios* Meletios. Here, the large narthex was conceived from the very beginning as an emulation of the one at the mother monastery and constructed simultaneously with the *naos*, even though it makes a departure by assuming a nine-bay form.

\(^{85}\) As Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, p. 391, concluded for the *katholikon* of Hosios Meletios.

\(^{86}\) *Ibid.* He suggests that this porch, as well as the similar one in front of the Panagia church at Hosios Loukas, may have been devised to accommodate the needs of visiting pilgrims (*ibid.*).

\(^{87}\) On this distinction drawn between the narthex and *exonarthex*, see Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.
The central bay was crowned by a blind dome. A similar nine-bay design was also chosen for the narthex at Varnakova.

The church architecture of the Rus’ in the 10th-12th centuries is characterized by the use of the cross-in-square plan. Some of these churches, especially those built in the second half of the 12th and in the 13th centuries in the northernmost principalities of Novgorod and Vladimir, have no narthexes. Instead, they often featured porches in front of their west entrances and these surely accommodated certain functions otherwise staged in the narthex. A few others had or still have galleries accommodated over their western bays, suggesting that the space underneath may have assumed the role of a narthex. Nonetheless, most of the churches from this period, notably those that served monastic communities, had proper narthexes. Some of them, which actually almost all belonged to monastic churches, are introduced here. After listing these churches, the contexts of their foundation, and certain individual architectural features, I will point to common traits in the design of their narthexes and adjacent spaces.

The oldest surviving in this selection is the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Sobor (Transfiguration Cathedral) of Chernigov (Chernihiv), whose construction started prior to 1036 and ended in the second half of the 11th century (Figs. 349 to 353). It was built as the city’s cathedral, but nevertheless exhibits many characteristic features pertaining to the narthex area that are shared with other churches of the Rus’ and are comparable with Athonite churches, such as the three-bayed articulation, the presence of an upper floor, and a chapel attached to the narthex. The next three chronological examples are located in Kiev: Uspenskii Sobor (the katholikon of the

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Dormition) of the Kiev Caves Lavra, built 1073-1079\textsuperscript{91} at the initiative of St. Theodosius of the Kiev Caves (d. 1074) as the main church of the community gathered around his teacher St. Anthony of the Kiev Caves (d. 1073), who spent his formative monastic period on Mount Athos;\textsuperscript{92} it had a chapel, which may have been double-storied, attached to the narthex’s north end (\textit{Figs. 354 to 357}); the Church of the Archangel Michael of Vyubitskii Monastyr’ (1070-1088\textsuperscript{93}), of which only the narthex and the west portions of the \textit{naos} survive (\textit{Figs. 358 to 361}); and the Savior Church at Berestovo (\textit{Figs. 362 to 366}), built by Vladimir Monomakh sometime between 1113 and 1125 to serve a monastery,\textsuperscript{94} which occupied the position of a former suburban princely residence.\textsuperscript{95}

Both the plan and dedication of the \textit{katholikon} of the Dormition of Eletskii Monastyr’ in Chernigov (early 12\textsuperscript{th} c., possibly shortly after 1113;\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Figs. 367 to 369}) bear witness to the inspiration coming from the Kiev Caves Lavra.\textsuperscript{97} Another monastic church of Chernigov, Sts. Boris and Gleb (1120-1123;\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Figs. 370, 371}), features almost the same design, which is also found in the monastic church dedicated to Sts. Cyril and Athanasius of Alexandria in Kiev (after 1139;\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Figs. 372 to 374}). Similar ground plans are shared by two Novgorod churches, the Church of the Annunciation (1103; \textit{Fig. 375A}), which was built in the princely residence of Gorodishche outside the city,\textsuperscript{100} and Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor (begun in 1113, consecrated

\textsuperscript{91} Жариков (ed.), \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. 1, pp. 46-47.
\textsuperscript{93} Раппопорт, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 33; Жариков (ed.), \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. 1, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{94} Раппопорт, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 40, 52. The monastery is first mentioned in chronicles under the year 1072 (Жариков (ed.), \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. 1, p. 108).
\textsuperscript{95} The church served as the mausoleum of Monomakh’s descendents (Жариков (ed.), \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. 1, p. 108), who may have been buried in the chapel north of the narthex. Only this chapel, the narthex, and the stair tower to the south survive, whereas the layout of the rest of the church is known only from the excavated foundations.
\textsuperscript{96} Раппопорт, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{98} Жариков (ed.), \textit{op. cit.}, vol. 4, p. 262.
\textsuperscript{99} Раппопорт, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 68-69. The residence’s foundations have been revealed through archaeological excavations.
in 1136\textsuperscript{101}; \textit{Figs. 375B to 378}), also part of a princely residential complex, known as Yaroslav’s Court. They only have more enclosed narthexes, which communicate with the \textit{naos} through one instead of three doorways. The access to the latter church’s gallery was originally provided from outside and, at the end of the 12\textsuperscript{th} century, when the wooden residences were demolished, a masonry spiral staircase was constructed in the south bay of the narthex (see \textit{Fig. 378}).\textsuperscript{102} The former church had a spiral staircase set in a massive tower appended to the north of the narthex as part of the original design.

The same architectural solution, i.e. the stair tower attached to the narthex and providing the access to the gallery level, is applied in another two Novgorod churches, the \textit{katholika} of Antoniev Monastyr’ (dedicated to the Birth of Theotokos, 1117-1122;\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Figs. 379, 380} and Yuryev Monastyr’ (St. George, 1119-1130; \textit{Figs. 381 to 384}). Both of these towers are crowned with domes, underneath which there are chapels, likely used by secluded monks.\textsuperscript{104} Similar gallery provisions, although of a different architectural design, are provided in the Transfiguration Church (mid-1150s, completed by 1161\textsuperscript{105}) of the Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Polotsk (\textit{Figs. 385 to 390A}).

Narthexes in all these churches are designed as enclosed rooms, with narrow windows, and such a treatment distinguishes them from Constantinopolitan examples, which feature large openings to the exterior. Nonetheless, all Russian monuments mentioned above exhibit a similar articulation of their façades with pilasters and recessed arches between them, which frame the

\textsuperscript{101} According to the First Novgorod Chronicle (see \url{http://www.russiancity.ru/text/nov03.htm}, accessed July 3, 2016).
\textsuperscript{102} Раппопорт, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 69-70.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Православная Энциклопедия}, Vol. 2, pp. 691-695.
\textsuperscript{105} Владимир Д. Сарабьянов, \textit{Спасо-Преображенская церковь Евфросиньева монастыря} (Москва: Северный паломник, 2009\textsuperscript{2}), pp. 7-16.
windows and shallow, flat niches (see Figs. 351, 355, 358, 362, 370, 382). Narthexes are of a three-bayed layout, structured in such a way that the bays directly correspond to the form and size of the naos’s aisles. The most enclosed examples (see Fig. 375) communicate with the naos through a single door only. In these cases, the side bays often were occupied with a chapel or stairs to the gallery, or both. The churches of the Archangel Michael of Vydubitskii Monastery and the Savior at Berestovo demonstrate that this functional distribution could be part of the original planning, thus leaving a single-spaced and reduced narthex set between the two independent rooms (see Figs. 359 to 363). However, most commonly there are there bays connected to the naos through three passageways, which occasionally take the size of the entire east side (see Figs. 359, 371, 380). This design approach gradually led to the reduction of the wall separating the narthex and the nave to two piers, best exemplified by the Transfiguration Church of the Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastery’ (see Figs. 386A).  

The presence of an upper floor is normal; none of these churches lacks it. The second storey has the form of an open gallery that commonly takes not only the area over the narthex, but also spreads above the west corner bays of the naos (see Figs. 360, 371, 374, 377, 383, 384, 386B) and, occasionally in city cathedrals, over most of the side aisles (see Fig. 350). Galleries, unlike those on Mount Athos, are fully open towards the naos; the two enclosed chambers in the Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastery’ (see Fig. 386B) seem to be the only exception. The double-storied narthex matches well the great height of the naos, making these two parts of the church building appear from the outside as an architecturally unified whole (see Figs. 361, 367, 370, 373, 376, 379, 382).

106 These two piers with the other four of the naos are the reason that this type of church is in Russian scholarship often termed the “six-columned church” in order to be distinguished from the “four-columned” version, which often lacks the narthex.
Access to the upper floor is provided from inside the church, usually from the narthex, either by a flight of stairs built within the thickness of a wall or via a spiral staircase set in a tower. Stair towers are appended at the north ends of the narthexes in the Transfiguration Cathedral of Chernigov (see Figs. 349 to 351), the church at Gorodishche (Fig. 375A), the katholikon of Antoniev Monastyr’ (see Figs. 379, 380), and the katholikon of Yuryev Monastyr’ (see Figs. 381, 382) or, as in some churches not included here, they are located to the south. Stairs are also found accommodated in one of the narthex’s lateral bays, taking the form of towers integrated within the church’s body, as in the Church of the Archangel Michael at Vyubitskii Monastyr’, where the room had to be enlarged on this account (see Figs. 359 to 361), the Savior at Berestovo (Fig. 363), and the Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor (Fig. 378). In later churches, stairs are provided within the narthex’s walls: for example, the west wall (see Figs. 371, 386) and the north wall (see Figs. 368, 372A).

Other rooms or structures adjacent to the narthex are rarely included. The most frequent features are small porches and enclosed vestibules protecting entrance doors (see Figs. 363B, 366, 369, 373). Another common asset is a chapel appended to the narthex, counterbalancing the stair tower on the opposite side of the narthex, like in Transfiguration Cathedral of Chernigov (to the south, Figs. 350, 351) and Uspenskii Sobor of the Kiev Caves (to the north, Figs. 354 to 357). Chapels are sometimes accommodated in one of the narthex’s side rooms (see Figs. 363B, 365, 353, 375B) or occupying its south bay (Figs. 368, 372). They also appear on the gallery level, as in Spaso-Evrosinievskii Monastyr’, on the upper floors of the ground-level chapels (see Figs. 350, 351, 355, 356), and on the tops of stair towers (at Antoniev and Yuryev monasteries). In some churches, an ambulatory exonarthex enveloping the church on three sides (remains in the Church of Sts. Boris and Gleb in Chernigov, Fig. 370) was added at a later date, combining

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107 This tower is entered from outside, instead from the narthex.
the functions of entrance porches and a number of subsidiary liturgical spaces, and putting them under one roof.

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This survey shows the wide currency of the cross-in-square plan throughout Byzantium and beyond during the Middle-Byzantine period. The three-bayed narthex figures as an integral part of the type. Only certain variances in form, vaulting, and organization appear, probably resulting from local needs and building traditions. The presence of an upper storey, exonarthex, and other structures appended to the narthex also seem to be governed by particular requirements of the community for which the church was built. For example, the predominant lack of katēchoumena in Attic churches witnesses to the absence of certain elements of monastic organization from the respective communities. Such a variability of the narthex area suggests that this part of the church was more flexible and less dependent on fixed liturgical rituals, but more on certain aspects of the monastic life and communal organization. Better architectural integration of the narthex, especially in those cases that feature a second storey, is found towards the end of the period, perhaps witnessing to the narthex’s fuller inclusion into the functional scheme, on the one hand, and its better integration in the overall planning and design of the church building, on the other.

c) Narthexes of ‘Domed Octagon’ Churches

Churches of the so-called ‘domed octagon’ type feature very different plan in their naoi, but their narthexes are similar to those of cross-in-square churches, thus necessitating an examination of them. The main characteristic of this church type is a large central square core surmounted with a dome, which is supported by engaged piers in eight points (hence the term ‘octagon’). The
four corner areas outside the dome perimeter are typically covered by squinches rather than pendentives. Two variants of the type can be distinguished: basic domed octagon, where the *naos* consists only of the domed core and three-bayed sanctuary, and ‘Greek-cross domed octagon’, which is an expansion of the preceding type, adding a sequence of subsidiary spaces to the north, west, and south sides of the core, where the central of these spaces open to the nave in the interior and, together with the *bēma* bay, form an inscribed cross at the roof level. Of a few selected churches whose narthexes I will briefly examine here, the *katholikon* of the Nea Monē on Chios belongs to the former variant, whereas others feature the latter. They all were built to serve monastic communities.

The Nea Monē (1042-1056) has a narthex, which was built integrally with the *naos*, an *exonarthex* added later, either shortly after the construction of the main core or in the 13th century, and an axial extension appended to the west, in the form of an arcaded corridor (Figs. 391, 392). The narthex consists of three bays separated with pilasters and arches, which support a pumpkin-shaped blind dome over the square middle bay (Figs. 398 to 400). The

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109 Charalambos Bouras, *Nea Moni on Chios: History and Architecture* [translated by David A. Hardy] (Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece, 1982), pp. 112-115, dates the *exonarthex*’s construction to the middle of the 11th century, as a part of the original program, only executed slightly later.


111 Sotiris Voyadjis dates this corridor to the mid-11th century and the blocking of its arches to a time prior to 1732 (Voyadjis, “The Katholikon of Nea Moni in Chios Unveiled,” p. 242). He allows the possibility that its purpose was to connect the church with an original belfry, which may have stood closer than the modern one.

112 These elements are shared with narthexes of cross-in-square churches (see above), providing additional argument for the idea that the *naos* of the Nea Monē may have been initially of a cross-in-square plan. This has been
room is rather enclosed, with only one doorway connecting it to the narthex and another in the west wall serving as the entrance (Fig. 393). Perhaps this necessitated the larger and more open exonarthex, which originally featured broad openings on its west side (Fig. 394). In the north and south end walls there are large semi-circular apses, which recall the similar conches found in Constantinopolitan narthexes (Figs. 396, 397). More strikingly, each of the exonarthex’s three bays is crowned by a dome, with the middle one only slightly larger than the other two (Figs. 394, 395, 401, 402). This outer narthex most likely housed one or more marble fonts (for the Blessing of Waters), sēmantra, and a larnax with the remains of the monastery’s founders.

The following are the best known examples of the ‘Greek-cross domed octagon’ variant: the Katholikon of the Hosios Loukas Monastery (1011 or 1022; Figs. 340, 403 to 410), the Panagia Sōtéra tou Lykodēmou in Athens (first decades of the 11th c.; Figs. 411 to 413), the katholikon of the Daphni Monastery (late 11th c.; Figs. 414 to 418), the Hodēgētria (also known as Hagia Sophia) in Monemvasia (1150; Figs. 419, 420), and the Transfiguration (Sōtēra) at Christianoi, Triphylia (11th and late 12th – early 13th c.; Figs. 421 to 423). They all possess

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113 There is also a small door in the north wall, but its diminutive size and the position off the center suggests that this additional entrance was provided at a later date (for the opposite opinion, see Bouras, Nea Moni on Chios, pp. 75-76). During the Post-Byzantine period, this door was protected by a baldachin-like porch with benches, which collapsed in 1881 (see ibid., pp. 78-79, 178-180, figs. 13, 15, 16, 24, 71a, 86, 135b, 162-164). Known as the sēmantēr, the porch also housed sēmantra and bells, suspended inside the arches (ibid., pp. 178-179).

114 See ibid., pp. 112-115, figs. 71b, 104 (reproduced here as Fig. 394).

115 See Chapter 2.

116 Bouras, Nea Moni on Chios, p. 113. There is a 19th-century record referring to the exonarthex as the lītē, suggesting that it may have also been used for processions (see Nicholl, “A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of Typika: The Case of the Narthex,” pp. 306-307, n. 105).

117 Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, p. 375. This church is almost identical with the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas, only reduced to three quarters of its size.

118 See ibid., pp. 388-390.

119 For the last two churches, see ibid., pp. 435-436. More detailed examinations of the Transfiguration Church at Christianoi are provided in Σωτήρης Βογιατζής, Έση Δεληνικόλα, «Νέοτερες παρατηρήσεις στην ιστορία του ναού Μεταμορφώσεως του Σωτήρος Χριστιάνων Μεσσηνίας», ΔΧΑΕ 23 (2002): 41-58, and Sotiris Voyadjis, “Further Remarks on the Building History of the Church of the Transfiguration of Christ at Christianou, 179
spacious oblong narthexes, articulated into three square bays, which are covered with groin-vaults (see Figs. 407, 418). Normally, there are three doors in the narthex’s east wall: the central one connects to the nave proper, whereas the other two lead into side chambers, which are commonly equipped as chapels. At Daphni, the three passageways open only to the naos (see Fig. 416); the side chapels are entered from the naos’s western row of bays. There are five doorways at Monemvasia, where the two outermost serve to connect the narthex with the lateral subsidiary spaces (Fig. 420).

The narthex in churches of the ‘Greek-cross domed octagon’ variant is designed as a separate room, but nonetheless takes the entire width of the church and is fully architecturally integrated with the rest of the building (see Figs. 403, 411, 412, 423). It is interesting to note that in all cases the narthex is not part of the enveloping ring of spaces around the central domed core, since there is an additional three-bayed space that belongs to the envelope and functions as an intermediary between the domed nave and narthex. Actually, there are some indications that the narthexes functioned only as outer narthexes. The three bays situated immediately west of the domed core – separated from it by a pair of piers and technically part of the naos (see Figs. 416, 417) – seem to have assumed the role of the inner narthex. This is suggested by the form of this part of the church (three bays, as well as conches at the north and south ends at Daphni and Christianoi, echoing those in Constantinopolitan narthexes), by the presence of communication with the lateral chapels (at Daphni, these are their only entrances), and by the iconography of the area – monastic saints (Hosios Loukas) and martyrs (Daphni), which are at Nea Monē depicted in the inner narthex.  

120 Also, a church of this type, St. Nicholas in the Fields (sta Kampaigna),


120 Compare diagrams in Demus, Byzantine Mosaic Decoration (cited in note 6), plates 42, 43A, and 43B.
where there are no other spaces that could have served as the narthex, supports this possibility. Nevertheless, it seems more likely that these spaces, set between the naos and the narthex proper, only took over some of the narthex’s functions, without rendering it superfluous. And this use, which took advantage of the specific spatial arrangement, may have been employed only before the church acquired a separate exonarthex. The Katholikon of Hosios Loukas was appended with an enclosed exonarthex, similar in form to the narthex at Skripou, in the 12th century (compare Fig. 288 and Fig. 404). Exonarthexes in the form of open porticos were added to the churches at Daphni (13th c.) and Monemvasia (here, also on the south side, in addition to the west).

All these ‘Greek-cross domed octagon’ churches, except for Daphni, have upper stories, which extend over the perimeter rooms, enveloping the naos and forming a gallery. With such a plan and being fairly open to the nave (see Figs. 406, 413, 422), these galleries are closer in spirit and form to large urban churches, rather than to small monastic ones. At Monemvasia, perhaps due to the more modest dimensions of the church, the gallery is accommodated only above the narthex (see Fig. 420).

The narthexes of the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas, Nea Monē, and Daphni are also very important for their iconographic decoration, executed in mosaics (see Figs. 398 to 400, 407 to

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121 For this church, see Ćurčić, _Architecture in the Balkans_, pp. 433-434 (with further references); see also Μπούρας, Μπούρα, _Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα_, fig. 396, for a more detailed ground plan and longitudinal section of the church. The west part of this church, which opens into the naos, seems to merge the narthex and west bays of the naos, which are two distinct and separated spaces in churches of the ‘Greek-cross domed octagon’ type, into one unified space.


123 A small open porch with a second storey (or a belfry), placed axially, and a compound of secular structures were appended to the west of the Transfiguration Church at Christianoi around 1200 and in the 13th or 14th century, respectively (Voyadjis, “Further Remarks on the Building History of the Church of the Transfiguration of Christ at Christianou, Messenia, Greece,” pp. 466-467).

124 At Christianoi, there was a wooden deck serving as the floor of the gallery above the narthex (Voyadjis, “Further Remarks on the Building History of the Church of the Transfiguration of Christ at Christianou, Messenia, Greece,” p. 465).
410, and 418). They constitute almost the only complete narthex programs of the Middle Byzantine period and thus can help in shedding more light on the use and meaning ascribed to the narthex at that time. However, I will not go into a detailed analysis of these programs, since we know virtually nothing of the decorative programs in other churches, particularly those on Mount Athos, so it would be hard to establish how these three compare to the others and whether they exemplify an iconographic pattern that was common for monastic foundations of the time. I only call to attention some segments that might support certain ideas on the narthex’s function and symbolic meaning when discussing its elements in depth, in Chapter 4.
Chapter 3

The Narthex in the Monastic Life and Ritual: The Evidence from Foundation Documents (typika)

After examining possible architectural predecessors and relatives of the Middle Byzantine Athonite narthexes, I would like to turn attention to certain liturgical and other needs that might have governed the planning and design of the narthex during this period. I examine services known to have been performed in the narthex, as well as the manner of their performance and the spatial requirements it entailed. Symbolic and devotional considerations, as well as non-liturgical uses, if recorded or presumed, will be discussed as well. The existing information pool draws predominantly from foundation typika and only occasionally from liturgical typika, liturgical treatises, vitae, and other written sources. Almost all of them do not derive from nor are directly related to Athonite monasteries, but they nonetheless provide information on the type and manner of the narthex’s use in the period under examination.¹ Special attention is given to the foundation typika of the Studios and Evergetis monasteries in Constantinople. Both of these had a strong impact on the creation and content not only of typika for some Athonite monasteries, but on many others throughout the Empire. When appropriate, the present-day monastic ritual practices of Athonite monasteries, based on my own observations and on the Holy Mountain’s common liturgical typikon,² provide additional information and clarification.

¹ See Introduction – Methodology, Study Materials (Evidence), and the Pertaining Issues.
² Liturgical practices common for Athonite coenobitic communities has been exposed in Αγιορειτικόν τυπικόν της εκκλησιαστικής ακολουθίας, νπό συνοδίας Χρυσοστόμου Ιερωμονάχου Ι. Κ. Ευαγγελισμοῦ Καρεών, (Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης, 2004), and Ονυφρίης Χιλανδαράς, Светогорски богослужбени устав (Београд: Удружење поштовања Свете Горе Атонске, 2004). The latter work seems to be largely based on the former, but also adds some information that cannot be found in the former.
Moreover, observations on a service’s performance, the positions and movements of the participants within the actual space are invaluable to the study of the subject and often confirm, or complement and clarify information acquired from written sources. In this way, they constitute ‘unwritten’ evidence. Also, a few surviving pictorial programs are equally relevant and are occasionally consulted, since they may shed additional light on the meaning and function of certain parts of the narthex.

The references brought to attention here, however, by no means provide an exhaustive image of the narthex’s role within a *katholikon*. The information is mainly drawn from foundation *typika* and, partially, from other sources. The focus on the corpus of foundation documents has been determined for technical and practical reasons – their importance for the establishment of the monastic life and governance within a particular community, and their availability in a modern critical edition.\(^3\) The selection of documents was decided by their date

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\(^3\) This is John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of Surviving Founders’ Typika and Testaments* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000), in five volumes. It is cited in an abbreviated form as *BMFD*. The following *typika* contain information relevant for the present study (the numbers in brackets preceding the titles of documents indicate the enumeration as it appears and is used when documents are cited in *BMFD*; the numbers will be used in the same way here in order to facilitate finding the appropriate references in the collection):

- (2) *Typikon* of John for the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner on Pantelleria (probably late 8\(^{th}\) century);
- (4) Rule of the Monastery of St. John Stoudios in Constantinople (after 842) – the main church is still extant, under the name of İmrahor Camii; it is a basilica with a narthex in the form of a porch;
- (10) Rule of Manuel, Bishop of Strumica, for the Monastery of the Mother of God Eleousa (1085-1106) – the church survives and has an integrally built narthex; an *exonarthex* and a few other annexes were added in the late 12\(^{th}\) century – see Петар Миљковић-Пеун, *Везјуса: Манастир Св. Богородица Милостива во селото Везјуса край Струмица* (Скопје: Факултет за филозофско-историски науки на Универзитетот „Кирил и Методиј“, 1981);
- (11) Rule of St. Athanasius the Athonite for the Great Lavra (originally composed in 963, possibly revised ca. 1020) – when the document was drawn, the *katholikon* apparently had only the narthex and at least one of the two subsidiary chapels; the *exonarthex* was added later (see Chapter 1);
- (20) Regulations of Nikôn of the Black Mountain (ca. 1055-1060) – written in an attempt to establish a monastery, which never came to a realization (see *BMFD*, p. 377);
- (22) *Typikon* of Timothy for the Monastery of the Mother of God *Evergetis* (first edition 1054-1070, then periodically revised and put in its final form 1098-1118) – the monastery has not survived; its *katholikon* had a narthex, as well as an *exonarthex* (see Lyn Rodley, “The Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis, Constantinople: Where It Was and What It Looked Like,” in *Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism* (see List of Abbreviations): 17-29, pp. 25-27, where some concerns on the actual appearance of the *exonarthex* – which may have been a mere porch, προπύλαιον – have been expressed, and Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual* (see List of Abbreviations), p. 65, n. 5);
be easily found in the appropriate edition of the original text.

translations, for the sake of practicality and brevity, and because any particular passage that might be of interest can be easily found in the appropriate edition of the original text.

In addition to this major collection of documents, data from two more typika are used in the present study: the typikon of the Monastery of St. John Chrysostom at Koutsovendis, Cyprus (written in the first half of the 12th century).
of composition – i.e. Middle Byzantine – or their relation to either the Stoudite or the Evergetine tradition, but most importantly by their references to the narthex and services and actions related to it. Such a focus was set for the purpose of the present study, whereas any future expansion of the subject should include all other relevant written sources, which may add to and perhaps revise the picture of the monastic narthex.

The available information does not necessarily furnish material for ‘form-follows-function’ arguments. However, knowing what took place in narthexes – and, on Mount Athos, often still does – can help us understand how the particular space of narthexes was utilized and organized. Nonetheless, one should be aware that foundation documents, due to their nature, often do not provide enough information on liturgical practices. If a certain liturgical service or a ritual action is not mentioned in typika, it does not necessarily mean that they were not part of the communal office pattern. Their performance was perhaps regulated by some other instructional books and documents or by unwritten customs and practice. That is why in certain cases I turn to present-day ritual. Nonetheless, when liturgical information is present in a
foundation typikon it is all the more valuable, as it refers to a specific church – one that might still exist – and to the actual physical space. I expect that more can be extracted from the large corpus of saints’ lives, but due to limitations in time available for this research, I have used only a few hagiographic sources that I consider crucial for the present study, primarily the so-called Vita Prima and Vita Secunda of St. Athanasius the Athonite.6 Additionally, I have relied on references from travelers’ accounts, most notably that of Vasilii Grigorovich-Barskii, and insights from the use of narthexes in the current Athonite liturgical practice. The latter has a long tradition, occasionally confirmed by medieval written documents, and has preserved many ancient customs. However, due caution has been employed in dealing with the evidence that does not strictly belong to the period under discussion.7

The essential functions of the Middle Byzantine monastic narthex, at least those associated with the practice of the Evergetis family of monasteries, have been determined, pointed to, and discussed in relation to certain spatial and architectural issues by Gail Nicholl.8 Vesna Milanović, in her master’s thesis, has provided a comprehensive study of the liturgical use of the narthex in medieval Serbia and Late Byzantium.9 My aim here is to furnish a broader and more detailed examination of Middle Byzantine practices, both liturgical and other, by using a greater number of typika and other sources. This ultimately corrects some of Nicholl’s views and leads to slightly different conclusions, which are based on additional information and

6 Jacques Noret (ed.), Vitae duae antiquae Sancti Athanasii Athonitae (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982). For a more recent edition, which includes a Modern Greek translation and commentaries, see Ο Άγιος Αθανάσιος ο Αθωνίτης: Εισαγωγή, κείμενο, μετάφραση, σχόλια (Ορμύλια: Εκδόσεις Ιερού Κοινοβίου Ευαγγελισμού της Θεοτόκου, 2003).
7 See Introduction – Methodology, Study Materials (Evidence), and the Pertaining Issues.
8 Nicholl, “A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of Typika: The Case of the Narthex,” (as cited in note 3). The functions of the narthex and its upper storey are briefly surveyed by Νίκος Σιώμκος, «Παραπρήφασις στη λειτουργική χρήση του ναρθέκα και των κατηχουμενείων», in Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική και λατρευτική πράξη (see List of Abbreviations): 63-68. Vasilieos Marinis in his recent book has also dedicated a substantial attention to the ritual and other functions of both the narthex and exonarthex, as well as galleries in Constantinopolitan churches of the Middle and Late Byzantine periods (Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 64-76, 91-93).
different arguments. Perhaps, this should not be surprising, as the materials I deal with here pertain to a period and monastic traditions that precede those that were the foci of Nicholl’s and Milanović’s studies, and likely exhibit somewhat different practices and meaning.

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The main purpose of the *katholikon*, in the same way as of other, non-monastic churches, is to provide a space for the Divine Liturgy. The *naos* (nave) and *bēma* (sanctuary) constitute the primary stage for the service and, by the beginning of the Middle Byzantine period, almost all of the specific spatial accommodations for certain segments of the Eucharistic service within these areas had been defined.  

10 The greatest importance is put on the sanctuary, located at the east side and separated by a stone or wooden barrier from the *naos*. By the 9th century, the sanctuary had stabilized as a tripartite area, with its central area reserved for the altar (holy table) and the two lateral spaces or separate chambers (*parabēmata, pastophoria*) for related functions.  

11 The northern of the two, furnished with a small table set in a niche in the east wall, had been assigned to the accompanying act of *Prothesis*, which prior to the 6th century was usually accommodated in a room outside the church, but often adjacent to the narthex.  

12 The southern *pastophorion*, known as the *diakonikon*, most often equipped with no permanent furnishing, had a less formal role, serving as a storage room for liturgical vessels and vestments, taking over much of the functions of the Early Byzantine *skewophylakion*.  

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10 *Cf.* the most recent study on the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 10-63 (with relevant bibliography).


13 For a general study of *parabēmata* or *pastophoria*, see Georges Descoeudres, *Die Pastophorien im syro-byzantinischen Osten: Eine Untersuchung zu architektur- und liturgiegeschichtlichen Problemen* (Wiesbaden: Otto
Located on the opposite side of the church and serving primarily as an entrance vestibule, the narthex apparently did not play any role in the performance of the Divine Liturgy, except for certain remnants of solemn processions.\textsuperscript{14} However, its liminal position between the outside world and the interior sacred space made it a fitting venue for rites that marked a transition or purification, such as baptism, confession, and the funeral. Although part of the church building, the narthex was apparently treated as a non-sacred space, which again stemmed from its location at the entrance and farthest away from the sanctuary. This topographical situation was later assigned a symbolic and mystic dimension: the \textit{naos} was interpreted as the Heavens, where the sanctuary was likened to the Heaven beyond Heavens, while the narthex stood for the Earth or even the realm of Hades.\textsuperscript{15} As such, the narthex was reserved for those who were uninitiated or under penance, and thus banned from partaking in the mysteries and receiving the Holy Communion, i.e. from being in the \textit{naos}.\textsuperscript{16} This is in line with the ancient practice, which dictated that the uninitiated, i.e. catechumens remain in the narthex.\textsuperscript{17} Thus the term

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} In Constantinopolitan churches included in the scheme of imperial attendance on certain major feasts. See Mathews, \textit{The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy}, pp. 145-147.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Symeon of Thessalonika \textit{The Liturgical Commentaries}, edited and translated by Steven Hawkes-Teeples (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2011), p. 90/91 (Greek/English), and Symeon of Thessalonike, \textit{Treatise on Prayer: An Explanation of the Services Conducted in the Orthodox Church} [Translated by Harry L. N. Simmons] (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1984), Chapter 12 (p. 23), Chapter 17 (p. 26), Chapter 58 (p. 83).
\item \textsuperscript{16} Theodore the Stoudite, in \textit{PG} (see \textbf{List of Abbreviations}), 99: 1733, and Symeon of Thessalonika, \textit{The Liturgical Commentaries}, pp. 90/91, 94/95 (cf. also Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, pp. 66, 69, notes 12, 13, 23). See \textit{Vita Prima} of St. Athanasius the Athonite, # 173 (for publications, see note 6 above), for a reference to the penitents being ordered to stand at the door of the church (in the narthex?) and ask for forgiveness from their brethren leaving the church.
\item \textsuperscript{17} For the location of the catechumens and penitents in the narthex during the Holy Mysteries, as directed by certain canons – ascribed in medieval collections and commentaries to St. Gregory Thaumaturgos and St. Basil the Great –
\end{itemize}
katēchoumenion came into use and was retained up to the medieval times (however, only for the over-narthex), although there were no longer un-baptized adults, or at least they were not common enough to require separate spatial facilities. Similarly, women in menstruation were also deprived of communion and were required to stay in the narthex. The same applies to attendants who do not belong to the Orthodox Church.

However, the narthex is set aside not only for those who are denied a full participation in the mysteries. As a space that is adjacent to the sacred precinct of the church, yet physically separated from it, the narthex is a good setting for other, non-Eucharistic services. Most of them, like the Liturgical Hours and other services that are part of the daily prayer cycle, do not require the use of the altar table and the sanctuary, often even the presence of a priest is not necessary. Therefore, these offices theoretically could be sung privately, in a space that is not necessarily a church, even within one’s home or monastic cell. Nonetheless, from as early as the typikon of the Stoudios monastery (mid-9th cent.), there was an evident emphasis on maintaining the communality within a coenobitic establishment by gathering the entire brotherhood to partake jointly not only in the Divine Liturgy, but also in non-Eucharistic


18 See Taft, op. cit., pp. 50-55, for an examination of the spatial segments of this exclusion discussed by the 12th-century canonist Theodore Balsamon. It seems that Balsamon advocated for the menstruating women’s use of a room, more detached from the naos then the narthex was (ibid., p. 54), perhaps an exonarthex. Cf. also Alice-Mary Talbot, “Women’s Space in Byzantine Monasteries,” DOP 52 (1998): 113-127, p. 126, n. 98.

19 This is the policy maintained today in many monasteries of Mount Athos and some communities outside the peninsula related to them in monastic organization and practice. Some vivid instances of the policy’s enforcement are described in Graham Speake, Mount Athos: Renewal in Paradise (New Haven - London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 247, 259.

20 The narthex, although separated from the naos, was considered part of the sacred enclosure of the church. Atrium and other outer spaces, however, were considered profane (see Taft, op. cit., pp. 50-55).

21 See (27) Kechatiromene, #33 (BMFD, p. 687); see also notes 134 and 136 below.
services.  Such an attitude figures even more prominently in the Regulations of Nikōn of the Black Mountain:

It should be known that always, whether it is a feast or an ordinary daily service, it is necessary to sing the canonical hours complete with their mesoria; […] Likewise it is also necessary that compline and the midnight office and simply the whole office of vespers be sung [by all the assembled brothers] together as the cenobitic constitutions decree.

Concerning the canonical hours of the rest of the year, it is necessary for all to assemble together, first striking the wood [semantron], and together to sing each hour at its respective time, with their mesoria, and likewise the ninth hour and in short, always, unless the brothers are scattered afar for their duties. But when the brothers are away, they must sing what is ordained for each hour where they are and at its proper time. Those remaining in the monastery must do the same in the church for each assembly, first striking the wood [semantron]. In short, the service of the cenobitic rules must be observed in this way, just as Basil the Great ordered in his Ascetical Treatises.

It is necessary to know that brothers are not permitted to eat alone in the cell [except] for the one in particular who has the permission of the superior [to eat] outside of the refectory. In the same manner, according to tradition, neither prayer nor singing properly should be done alone, but everyone together. In the cells singing is only fitting when it is expressed for comfort, prayer or the raising of conscience.

Although constituted in the 11th century and reflecting some of the concerns of the monastic reform movement of the second half of that century, this document draws from and relies upon

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22 Cf. (4) Stoudios, Version A, #2 [BMFD, pp. 98-99]. The regulations describe a gathering in the narthex for the vigils services of the Easter. However, further below within the same chapter, it is prescribed that “the aforementioned assembly of brothers in the narthex […] extend[s] to the whole year.” (ibid., p. 99) For the Stoudite liturgical reform, see Robert F. Taft, The Byzantine Rite: A Short History (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 52-66 (with older bibliography), and more recent Pott, Byzantine Liturgical Reform, pp. 115-151. Dirk Krausmüller has linked the more intensive use of the narthex to the increased communalization of the reading of daily services in the monastic context (Dirk Krausmüller, “Private vs. Communal: Niketas Stethatos’s Hypotyposis for Stoudios and Patterns of Worship in Eleventh-Century Monasteries,” in: Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis: 309-28, p. 324-325). See also Nicholl, “A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of Typika: The Case of the Narthex,” pp. 294, 297.
23 (20) Black Mountain, #7 (BMFD, p. 385).
24 (20) Black Mountain, #9 (BMFD, p. 386).
25 (20) Black Mountain, #24 (BMFD, p. 391). Cf. also #72 (pp. 404-405), according to which all psalmody is to be communal. Another, though a century younger illustration of this liturgical communality can be found in the Typikon for the Monastery of the Mother of God in Areia: “I ordain that on each occasion every doxology be celebrated zealously and without any omissions, and with the fitting attention and sobriety in accordance with the Studite synaxarion of the ecclesiastical office. It should be celebrated communally by all the brethren, since their life is communal.” – (31) Areia, #T1 (BMFD, p. 964).
older practices of both the Studios monastery and the Lavra of St. Sabbas.\textsuperscript{26} In that way, it probably reflects the views built into these two strongest monastic traditions in the Byzantine world at the time, both considered role models for coenobitic communities. As a result, the performance of non-Eucharistic services was relocated to the church, the community’s prayer building \textit{par excellence}, yet not necessarily to the \textit{naos}, the church proper, but rather to the narthex, a room less sacred but fairly sizeable and capable of receiving a typically-sized community of about twenty to fifty individuals in major foundations.\textsuperscript{27} The choice of the narthex may have been further justified by its users because of its symbolic meaning, associated with the Earth and present life of the fallen man.\textsuperscript{28} With that in mind, praying in the narthex, before the closed doors of the Heavens, would seem appropriate for people still living earthly lives, but in the general state of repentance, waiting and pleading to be admitted to the Heavens. They would be allowed access to the \textit{naos} only for the participation in the Divine Liturgy, which itself is the prefiguration of the life to come.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{26} Cf. \textit{BMFD}, pp. 379-381. On the 11\textsuperscript{th}-century reform movement, whose flagship was the Evergetis monastery of Constantinople, see \textit{ibid.}, pp. 441-453.

\textsuperscript{27} For another instance of the support for communal prayer – in this case conducted in the very narthex – see an instruction on the performance of Matins in the narthex of the Eleousa Monastery near Strumica (further below, note 116). For the size of monastic communities during the Middle Byzantine period, see prescriptions on the numbers of monastics in (9) Galesios (issued in 1053), #246 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 164: forty in the main monastery and twelve in each of two smaller communities), (10) Eleousa, # 5 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 176: ten), (13) Ath. Typikon (dated to 973-975), # [12], [36], [37] (\textit{BMFD}, pp. 253, 260: Great Lavra’s initial size, including monastery and dependent cells in its vicinity, set at eighty monks in the chrysobull of Nikēphoros II Phōkas; the \textit{typikon} increased this number to one hundred twenty), (16) Mount Tmolos (drafted between 975 and 1000), # [1], [2] (\textit{BMFD}, p. 311: superior and twelve monks, plus four assistants in the attached old age home), (19) Attaleiates (issued in 1077), # [27] (\textit{BMFD}, pp. 346-347: seven, due to limited resources and the small-sized communal church), (23) Pakourianos (issued in 1083), # 6 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 531: fifty plus superior), (27) Kecharitomene, # 5 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 671: twenty-four, which could be increased to thirty or as many as forty, plus superior), (28) Pantokrator, # [19], [28] (\textit{BMFD}, pp. 749, 752-753: eighty, fifty of which were assigned to the church; six dependent communities, only one coenobitic, had between six and eighteen monks each), (29) Kosmosotera, # 3 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 800: fifty “appointed as cantors” and twenty-four serving them), (30) Phoberos, # 42 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 923: up to twelve), (32) Mamas, # 5 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 1000: twenty), (33) Heliou Bomon, # 5 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 1057: twenty, including those in a dependency); see also \textit{BMFD}, pp. xvi-xvii, 48, 172, 196, 200, 207-208, 304, 612, and Vincenzo Ruggieri, \textit{Byzantine Religious Architecture (582-867): Its History and Structural Elements} (Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1991), p. 175.

\textsuperscript{28} See above.

All these suggest that the assignment of specific functions to the narthex was primarily governed by its position in the church’s entrance zone and its provision of a transitory space between the profane and the sacred. The narthex’s liminality, therefore, appears to be the main defining characteristic when it comes to the narthex’s meaning and purpose within the church building. In order to gain a fuller understanding of what takes place in the narthex, I have systematized references dispersed in foundation typika and other sources that pertain to the narthex according to its role in the life and ritual of a monastery. The functions are roughly categorized into the following groups: A) the narthex as a gathering space, B) daily offices performed in the narthex, C) annual celebrations and rites staged in the narthex, D) sacraments and other individual rites ministered in the narthex, E) ritual observances in the narthex, and F) non-liturgical and other uses of the narthex.

A) The Narthex as a Gathering Space

The emphasis on the communal in the liturgical life within a monastery is most commonly expressed in the use of the narthex as a gathering place for the community before the start of daily services in the church, regardless of whether it is a celebration on a regular day or a more solemn ritual for a feast:

At the striking of the [sacred] semantron, let [the monks] gather at the porch of the church and go into the church as soon as the elders arrive.30 (Typikon of the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner on Pantelleria)

[for the Easter vigil] While all the brothers assemble in the narthex of the main church and pray silently, only those consecrated – both the deacons and the priests – together with the superior enter the church. […] Arriving at the so-called royal gate,31 he makes the sign of the cross over the middle of the lintel and begins to cense the brothers. […] Immediately, he

31 The central door between the narthex and the naos.
begins the *troparion* “Christ is risen” in the first plagal mode. As all the brothers sing together in the same manner, they enter the church.\(^{32}\) (Rule of the Monastery of St. John Stoudios in Constantinople)

[for Matins] It should be known that the aforementioned assembly of brothers in the narthex […] extend[s] to the whole year. In the same way the priest’s rite is performed without delay at every matins service except for the doxology in the narthex instead of the sanctuary. On account of the holy resurrection of Christ our God, the fathers decided to change the routine of this Radiant week only.\(^{33}\) (Rule of Stoudios)

[for the Easter vigil] **It must be noted** that after the third watch of the night, that is the ninth hour, has passed, **and the tenth is beginning**, the signal of the water clock strikes, and at this signal **they immediately arise and** sound the wooden semantra. While all the brothers assemble in the narthex of the main church and pray silently, the priest takes the censer in his hands and censes first the holy sanctuary and from there, with a large candle being borne in front of him, he walks through the screen in front and passes along the north side of the church **by the Forty Saints**. Arriving at the royal gate he censes the brothers and immediately returns by the south side. The brothers then enter the church behind him **carrying large candles, while** the priest **enters the sanctuary through the oratory on the right.**\(^{34}\) (Rule of Athanasius the Athonite for the Great Lavra)

[for Vespers, without reference to narthex] Those who are laboring in the vicinity of the monastery should assemble in the church at the doxology of the office of lamplighting and then go in to table. Those who have gone further away should come for compline.\(^{35}\) (Rule of Athanasius the Athonite)

[for Midnight Office and Matins] When the hour of the ecclesiastical office and service arrives, the rites of the church will be performed each day like this. The waker will get up and […] sound the semantron. Then as the brothers assemble in the church [presumably the main church of the *Pantokrator*] he will sound the service semantron which is also called the great one. So when the monks have gathered in the narthex, they will perform the midnight office of psalm-singing […]\(^{36}\) (Typikon of the Monastery of Christ *Pantokrator* in Constantinople)

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\(^{34}\) (11) Ath. Rule, # [1] (*BMFD*, p. 221). This chapter is based on # 2 of the Rule of Stoudios (see the preceding citations). Parts in the boldface type denote the interpolations not found in either Version A or Version B of the Rule of Stoudios. It is interesting to note the specific topographical references to the actual *katholikon* of the Great Lavra, i.e. the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia, appended to the north (see Chapter 1). This is what in fact made Paul M. Mylonas, “Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite,” *CahArch* 32 (1984): 89–112, p. 96, propose *ca. 1020 – at which time he believed that the subsidiary chapels were added – as the time of the Rule’s revision (cf. *BMFD*, p. 229).


This practice was probably initially intended to provide a chance for the abbot or an elder to check on who was present and who was missing. The importance of attendance is stressed in spiritual counsels and occasionally reinforced by punishments prescribed against those who do not attend or are late for communal offices without acceptable reason. In ancient times, atria and porches served the purpose of a gathering place, but later and, in regions with harsher climates, enclosed narthexes assumed the role.

Another very common use of the narthex is for a gathering of the community after the Divine Liturgy, before proceeding to the refectory. The monastics would probably have used the narthex as the place to wait for the abbot or an officiating priest, who had presided over the just-finished service, to lead the congregation in what, according to some typika, appears to be a solemn procession with psalmody. The narthex itself is often not mentioned in older documents, but since the assembling of the monks always happens after the Eucharist and in relation to the collation – the post-communion distribution of pieces of blessed bread (and sometimes wine) that almost invariably takes place in the narthex — it is fairly safe to assume that the narthex was the venue:

When the liturgy is finished, the wooden semantron sounds three times, and all the brothers assemble in the same place, and after singing the required verses and receiving the blessed bread, they go down to the refectory. (Rule of Stoudios)

[…] everyone [must] depart after the liturgy and reassemble again when it is time for the refectory. (Regulations of Nikōn of the Black Mountain)

It should be known that he who is serving the brothers [in the refectory] must strike the wood semantron and that all must assemble and depart to the refectory, reciting the psalm, “I will

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37 Cf. (2) Pentelleria, # [8], [11], (11) Ath. Rule, # [17], and (23) Pakourianos, # 6 (BMFD, pp. 63, 64, 224-225, 532, respectively).
38 For the collation, see further below.
40 (20) Black Mountain, # 30 (BMFD, p. 393). In # 73 of this typikon (ibid., p. 405), the post-communion collation is prescribed to be taken at the sacristy (diakonikon?) rather than in the narthex. However, due to other similarities in liturgical practices between this and other documents, I assume that the gathering before the meal used to take place in front of the refectory or somewhere close to it, so the narthex could have been the venue.
exalt thee, my God, my king” (Ps. 145 [146]:1) and be seated, with piety of conduct and word, and with the rest of the ritual in accordance with the rule.⁴¹ (Regulations of Nikōn of the Black Mountain)

After the customary collation has taken place in the narthex, when the divine liturgy has already been completed, all the monks should gather and sit there waiting for the summons to the table which is given by the striking of the refectory semantron. When the semantron has been struck, going out at once with the priest who officiated at the liturgy, you should make obeisance to the superior and then beginning to recite audibly the customary psalm⁴² walk to the refectory, that is the superior and all those without exception who have been instructed to sit down at the table during the first sitting.⁴³ (Typikon of Evergetis monastery)

[…] when the holy and divine liturgy has been completed they must remain in the narthex waiting for the summons to the communal refectory by the semantron as is usual. When the semantron has been struck, they must go out with the ecclesiarchissa, make obeisance to the superior, and then beginning the customary psalm in a quiet and fitting voice, that is the one that begins “I will extol thee, my God and King” (Ps. 144 [145]:1), they must walk quietly to the refectory, and when they have completed the psalm, sit down in an orderly manner in whatever way the superior arranges their seats.⁴⁴ (Typikon for the Convent of the Mother of God Kecharitōmenē)

After the conclusion of the divine eucharist, or, if it is not celebrated, after the office of the customary hours, the monks should assemble in the narthex of the church. The semantron should be struck [as a signal] for mealtime. Then the monks should walk to the refectory singing aloud the customary psalm,⁴⁵ with the superior leading the way, and following behind him the others who are going to eat at the first sitting.⁴⁶ (Typikon of the Monastery of the Mother of God in Areia)

The close temporal connection between certain liturgical services and meals in the refectory⁴⁷ also explains their spatial relationship, i.e. the position of refectories within monastic

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⁴¹ (20) Black Mountain, # 33 (BMFD, p. 394).
⁴² It is Ps. 144 [145], as stated in (27) Kecharitomene, # 40, and (28) Pantokrator, # [9] (BMFD, pp. 689, 743-744).
⁴³ (22) Evergetis, # 9 (BMFD, p. 478). This regulation can be found repeated word for word in the typika for the monasteries of Kosmosōteira, Phoberos, and St. Mamas: (29) Kosmosoteira, # 21, (30) Phoberos, # 21, and (32) Mamas, #17 (BMFD, pp. 810, 908, 1005, respectively). The Machairas typikon borrows only partially from that of the Evergetis, but keeps the same instruction: “After the dismissal of the sacred and divine mystery [of the Eucharist], as they are all coming out of the church and sitting together in the narthex, the refectory semantron is sounded, as is customary and the priest who performed the service leading . . . [Gap in text]” - (34) Machairas, # 61 (BMFD, p. 1142; borrowings in boldface type).
⁴⁴ (27) Kecharitomene, # 40 (BMFD, p. 689). The portions of the text in boldface type indicate borrowings from the Evergetis typikon (see previous citation). It should be noted that the katholikon of Kecharitōmenē monastery in addition to the narthex had an exomarthex (cf. BMFD, pp. 702-703, and – for some of its uses – see further below).
⁴⁵ Ps. 144 [145] (see above, note 42).
⁴⁷ See further below, about the office of Compline, which takes place immediately after the evening meal.
compounds, especially on Mount Athos.\textsuperscript{48} They are invariably located west of the \textit{katholika}, just opposite the main entrances, thus enabling fast and unimpeded communication between these two most important facilities of the monastery. The narthex, thus, naturally yields itself as a preparatory zone between the two.

Probably in the same manner, the monastic community would assemble in the narthex before solemn processions for certain festal occasions. The most common was the procession on Easter day, but there were other feasts or special ritual needs and observances that required a procession to a place out of the church or even out of the monastery:

Next morning,\textsuperscript{49} at the second hour of the day when the precentor knocks three times, we assemble in the Church of [St. John] the great Forerunner. Vested in their priestly robes, the priests and all the brothers take up the venerable crosses and the revered and holy icons. We circle the vineyard close to the monastery with all of us saying in a loud voice the “Christ is risen.” Then, we go out in the same manner to the shore of the sea. Having finished an \textit{ektenes}, we go over to the Church of the all-holy Mother of God. Saying an \textit{ektenes} there as well, we turn back to the Church of [St. John] the Holy Forerunner. Before the entry of the procession, the precentor gives a signal and the opening prayer is offered. When the priests have walked in, the divine liturgy takes place. In the same manner, we conduct processions on Palm Sunday and on the Annunciation if atmospheric conditions are clear.\textsuperscript{50} (Rule of Stoudios)

[Feast of Annunciation] It should be known that at the sixth hour the wooden semantron sounds and we all assemble in the house of the All-spotless Mother of God and before the office of lamplighting we raise up a litany as we march around the monastery. We return, sing the office of lamplighting, and then the entrance and complete liturgy take place.\textsuperscript{51} (Rule of Stoudios)

[apparently, a procession, vigil, and liturgy in sequence at some point during the Great Lent] It must be noted that at the completion of the fourth hour the wood is struck and we are led into the church. Taking up the litany we go off to St. Nicholas, if the weather is clear, and to the Forerunner. There we turn around and begin vespers, without reciting the psalter. Then

\textsuperscript{49} I.e. Easter Monday.
\textsuperscript{51} (4) Stoudios, # AB31 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 112).
we enter for the complete liturgy. We can then have fish, oil, and wine.\textsuperscript{52} (Rule of Athanasius the Athonite)

The festal processions originated in the lay urban environment and then they may have been adapted to the monastic usage and spatial conditions.\textsuperscript{53} Due to the fact that processions are occasionally mentioned in the foundation documents, one may conclude that this custom was rarely observed in the monastic context. It, perhaps, belonged to certain monastic traditions followed only in some monasteries located in urban areas, most notably Constantinople\textsuperscript{54}.

Although not mentioned, I am inclined to believe that the most probable starting point for these processions was the narthex, as is the case with solemn processions to the refectory after the Divine Liturgy.

The gatherings in anticipation of the beginning of a service or a procession can perhaps explain the appearance of low masonry benches in some narthexes, built internally along their walls.\textsuperscript{55} Assembling in the narthex would allow the monastics either to proceed in an organized

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\item \textsuperscript{52} (11) Ath. Rule, # [27] (BMFD, p. 227). George Dennis, in his introduction to the document’s translation, says that this outdoor procession preceding Vespers is “almost surely a new liturgical observance particular to [the] Lavra” (BMFD, p. 215). This comment, however, seems to contradict the fact that a similar procession before the Office of Lamplighting (Lychnikon, the first part of Vespers) existed already in Studios (see the previous citation). The church of St. Nicholas mentioned here is most likely the south lateral chapel of the same dedication (\textit{cf. ibid.}, p. 231, commentary on # [27]; see Chapter 1 for the chapel).
\item \textsuperscript{53} For liturgical processions in the urban contexts of Jerusalem, Rome, and Constantinople, see John F. Baldovin, \textit{The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy} (Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987).
\item \textsuperscript{54} \textit{Cf.} (27) Kecharitomene, # 75 (BMFD, p. 704).
\item \textsuperscript{55} See, for example, the Theotokos Church (main church) of Mar Saba Monastery, where both the western and northern narthexes feature low masonry benches (see Joseph Patrich, \textit{Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries} (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995), pp. 72-75, figs. 12, 19, 21). Very similar to these are the benches along the west wall in the narthex, as well as in the east half of what appears to have been an \textit{exonarthex} or covered open area appended on the north side of the narthex and facilitating the entry into the main church of the Monastery of Martyrius (active in the late 5\textsuperscript{th} and throughout the 6\textsuperscript{th} centuries), also in Judean Desert (see Yitzhak Magen, “The Monastery of St. Martyrius at Ma’alé Adummim,” in Yoram Tsafrir (ed.), \textit{Ancient Churches Revealed} (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society; Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1993): 170-196, pp. 177-179 and plan on p. 171; see also photographs at http://www.biblewalks.com/sites/MartyriusMonastery.html, particularly these two: http://www.biblewalks.com/Photos68/Martyrius41.jpg and http://www.biblewalks.com/Photos68/Martyrius8.jpg - accessed on March 14, 2017). Similar benches may have existed in Middle Byzantine monastic churches, but they either disappeared due to later remodeling and moved to \textit{exonarthexes} and entrance porches (as on Mount Athos – see Chapter 1) or have not been noticed and properly
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manner into the *naos* or to join a procession that commenced in the church. While waiting in the antechamber of the holy precinct (church), they would be also compelled to pray, instead of yielding themselves to idle talk and conversations. Episodes from the Passion of Christ and the images of martyrs and monastic saints, frequently depicted in the narthex, would provide material for pious contemplation of monastic virtues and vices. Such a spiritual activity could be a preparation for listening to the saints’ lives, which are read during the meals in the refectory.

**B) Daily Liturgical Offices Performed in the Narthex**

Another manifestation of the communal in the liturgical life in coenobia is the use of the narthex for certain segments of the services that constitute the daily liturgical cycle: *Hesperinos* (Vespers), *Apodeipnon* (Compline), *Mesonyktikon* (Midnight Office), *Orthros* (Matins), and *Horai* (First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours). I bring references here for each of these.

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56 E.g. the narthexes and adjacent rooms in the Katholikon at Hosios Loukas, Nea Monē, and Daphni (see Chapter 2, Excursus and Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (London: Routledge, 1948), plates 42, 43A, and 43B).

57 Cf. Robert Taft, S.J., *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, Second revised edition (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), particularly pp. 1-213 (the formation of the tradition) and 273-291 (the Byzantine Office). See also Gregory W. Woolfenden, *Daily Liturgical Prayer: Origins and Theology* (Aldershot - Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), esp. pp. 49-74 (Jerusalem and Palestinian monastic traditions), 93-120 (Vespers and Matins in the Middle Byzantine Constantinople and later developments). For an overview of the Athonite practice, see Emmanuel Amand de Mendieta, *Mount Athos: The Garden of the Panaghia* [translated by Michael R. Bruce] (Berlin: Akademie Verlag; Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972), pp. 286-300. Note that the Byzantines considered that a day began with the sunset, according to the ancient Jewish perception of time, which is based on the biblical tradition. Following this view, the actual beginning of the new day, liturgically speaking, was marked by the evening and the celebration of Vespers. The exposition of the sequence of daily offices in the foundation charters commonly starts with Vespers, and I here do the same.
a) Ninth Hour and Vespers

The celebration of Vespers (Ἑσπερινός) has had a long tradition and apparently various manifestations. That is attested by the Stoudios typikon, which provides references for the performance of the Office of Lamp-Lighting (i.e. Vespers) on different feast days, some of them requiring certain adjustments or entailing processions. However, there are no indications of a possible venue for the office, except in one case, at the feast of the Annunciation:

It should be known that at the sixth hour the wooden semantron sounds and we all assemble in the house of the All-spotless Mother of God and before the office of lamplighting we raise up a litany as we march around the monastery. We return, sing the office of lamplighting, and then the entrance and complete liturgy take place.

As it appears, the vesperal service was performed before a certain entrance, which I assume had the form of a ritual entry into the naos of a church, where the Divine Liturgy was subsequently officiated. If this indeed was the case, then Vespers were performed in the narthex, perhaps of the same church dedicated to the Mother of God from which the procession started. And the rite may have begun in the narthex or inside a porch at the church’s front, since an assembling of the community in the church preceded the procession.

At the same time, the Ninth Hour (Ἐννάτη Ὑρα) – which preceded Vespers – was apparently recited only on the days when fasting was observed, Wednesdays and Fridays, and

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58 Cf. (4) Stoudios, # 2, 3, B4, B9, 13, B14, 26, 30, 31, 33, A37, B38 (BMFD, pp. 100 sqq.).
59 The main church of Stoudios monastery was dedicated to St. John the Forerunner, so this must be some other church within the monastery’s compound. The procession started there because of the feast honoring Virgin Mary.
60 (4) Stoudios, # 31 (BMFD, p. 112).
61 Does the phrase “we return” means that the procession went back to the same church? If this was indeed the case, and I think it was, then the narthex would belong to this church, not to the katholikon, the fifth-century basilica of St. John (see above, note 59). On the other hand, St. Symeon of Thessaloniki describes the Vespers, together with the Divine Liturgy and Matins, as services that begin and end at the sanctuary (Symeon of Thessalonike, Treatise on Prayer, Chapter 39, pp. 51-52). The use of the sanctuary implies that the all three were conducted in the naos, rather than the narthex. However, this is significantly later evidence and it reflects the practice that may have developed after the period in question here.
during Great Lent – as the Stoudios rule has it – or during Great Lent and the Christmas Fast, as was the case in Athos’s Great Lavra. Today, the Ninth Hour and Vespers are commonly sung together, one after another. This practice is already recorded in the typikon of the Great Lavra and is again attested by the regulations of the Evergetis monastery:

The ninth hour should be sung in the same way as the preceding hours, with the striking of the semantron calling you to it as is usual. The regulation in the synaxarion sets out very clearly how the office of vespers should be carried out, with the night office immediately next, as well as compline after the supper. (Typikon of Evergetis monastery)

In modern practice, Athonite monks celebrate the Ninth Hour and Vespers daily, the former in the narthex, whereas they move to the naos for the latter. The Ninth Hour is led by the priest appointed for that week, while the central door between the narthex and the naos is closed with a curtain. Before the start of the office, the priest takes off his epanokamēlavchion (veil) and puts on a mandyas (cloak) and an epitrachēlion (stole), which hangs in the narthex next to the proskinētarion of Christ (on the right side of the door to the naos). The reader (διαβαστής) reads the prayers and hymns that constitute the service. The ecclesiarch, after receiving a blessing from the abbot, draws the curtain open towards the end of the office. After giving the

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62 (4) Stoudios, # 29, in BMFD, p. 110 (Wednesdays and Fridays in the period between the feast of the Holy Apostles, 29 June, and the beginning of the Christmas Fast), # 32, in ibid., p. 112 (Great Lent). This was the case with the communal celebration of the Hours; they were apparently sung in private during the rest of the year (see Krausmüller, “Private vs. Communal,” p. 319, n. 38).


64 A time gap between the Ninth Hour and Vespers is suggested by (4) Stoudios, # A[33] (BMFD, pp. 112-113).


66 (22) Evergetis, # 6 (BMFD, p. 475).

67 Cf. Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, pp. 28-30 (daily celebration), 39 (on eves of Sundays), 59 (as part of All-Night Vigil), and 84 (on eves of patronal feasts). Similarly, the participants move from the narthex to the naos within the celebration of the Midnight Office (see below). This progression from the narthex closer to the sanctuary in both cases is viewed by V. Marinis as a reflection of “the ancient processional character of the Byzantine rite” and as a symbolical movement from Earth to Heavens, from earthly concerns to a concentrated praise of God (Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 70). For the solemn procession from the narthex into the naos and its architectural and iconographic framing in the Late Byzantine period, see Warren Woodfin, “Wall, Veil, and Body: Textiles and Architecture in the Late Byzantine Church,” in Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, Brigitte Pitarakis (eds.), Kariye Camii, Yeniden / The Kariye Camii Reconsidered (İstanbul: İstanbul Araştırmalar Enstitüsü, 2011): 343-385, pp. 374-376.

68 My own observations. See also Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, pp. 28, 15.
usual dismissal, the priest takes off the *epitrachēlion* and leaves it in the narthex, then puts on his *epanokamēlavchion*, and moves to the *naos* through the now-open door.\(^{69}\)

Although the Evergetis rule does not indicate the venue, this Athonite practice perhaps originated in the reform movement associated with the Evergetis monastery, if it had not been part of the liturgical customs even earlier.\(^{70}\) The first firm reference to the narthex as the spatial setting for the Ninth Hour can be found in the *typikon* of St. Mamas:

\[\ldots\] **we must speak also concerning the ninth [hour] and the lamplighting office. The ninth [hour], must be sung in the narthex** in the same way as the preceding hours, **the small semantron being struck for this [hour] and calling us**, as is usual.\(^{71}\)

The *Typikon* of the Monastery of the Mother of God *tōn Hēliou Bomōn* (or *tōn Elegmōn*) borrows this prescription unaltered.\(^{72}\) The Rule of the Machairas Monastery in Cyprus keeps the celebration of the Ninth Hour in the narthex, but postpones it until after the evening meal:

\[\ldots\] as we sing this [psalm],\(^{73}\) we come out of the refectory with the proper decorum and order and go to the narthex of the church and there, finishing off this psalm, we begin the *trisagion* and sing the ninth [hour].\(^{74}\)

It is worth turning attention here to the moment when the curtain hanging in the door between the narthex and *naos* is opened. The Ninth Hour is the last service of the liturgical day, and drawing the curtain open and moving into the nave marks the beginning of the new day.\(^{75}\)

That is in compliance with the Byzantine (and Jewish) concepts of time: the new day starts at

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\(^{69}\) For the service that follows, the Vespers, the officiating priest puts on an *epitrachēlion* that hangs on the *templon*, by the Holy Doors (cf. Онуфрије Хиландарац, *Светогорски богослужбени устав*, pp. 17, 29).

\(^{70}\) According to the *Hypotyposis* of Nikētas Stēthatos, the monks of the Stoudios monastery in the late 11th century were supposed to recite the Ninth Hour in their cells (see Krausmüller, “Private vs. Communal,” p. 311).

\(^{71}\) (32) Mamas, # 47 (*BMFD*, p. 1027). This passage is based on (22) Evergetis, # 6; new interpolations are in boldface type.

\(^{72}\) (33) Heliou Bomon, # 46 (*BMFD*, p. 1083).

\(^{73}\) “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord’” (Ps. 121 [122]:1).

\(^{74}\) (34) Machairas, # 42 (*BMFD*, p. 1135).

\(^{75}\) I am grateful to Fr. Makarios of Simonopetra for turning my attention to this meaning, which has been part of the Athonite liturgical tradition. I have not been able to locate a medieval source that would ascribe the same symbolism to this particular act. The similar procession into the *naos* following the Midnight Office is described by Symeon of Thessaloniki, who gives it a related, but somewhat different and even more elevated meaning (see below, note 111, and *Chapter 4*, note 154).
sunset. This meaning is further confirmed with the fact that the festal icon of the day that follows is brought out and set on an analogion in the nave exactly at this point. The physical procession from the narthex into the naos is an image of the temporal procession from the day that has passed into a new day. Such an understanding is underscored by the custom of displaying the icon of the Resurrection in the narthex during the Ninth Hour on Apodosēs (Afterfeast) of Easter (the day before the feast of the Ascension). After the veneration of the icon and the last singing of the Paschal Troparion, the congregation leaves the narthex (and the Paschal season) and enters the naos (and the feast day of the Ascension). Similarly, the act of drawing the curtain open and the procession into the nave after the Midnight Office probably symbolically signify the liturgical moment of daybreak. The narthex’s meaning as the outer realm of the church is thus again underscored.

b) Compline and Mutual Forgiveness

The office of Compline is conducted immediately after supper (hence its Greek name 'Απόδειπνον, “after-supper [service]”). It has been a part of the daily cycle from at least the time of the Stoudite typikon, which gives various instructions depending on the occasion for celebration. Apparently, a shorter version was performed on the eves of Sundays (i.e. Saturday evenings) and of dominical and other important feasts. The service was completely omitted on the eves of Christmas and Epiphany, as well as on the evenings of Great Thursday and Great

76 Cf. Opufrije Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 39 (for the bringing out of an icon of the Resurrection on the eve of Sunday), and 59 (for the display of an icon of the saint whose memory is celebrated).
77 Ibid., p. 177.
78 See below.
79 Cf. (22) Evergetis, # 6 (BMFD, p. 475). It is the same in the modern practice of the Athonite monasteries (see below).
80 (4) Stoudios, # 2, B3, 10, B14, 18, 19, 20, 21 (BMFD, pp. 101 sqq.).
81 (4) Stoudios, # B3 (BMFD, p. 102).
Saturday, and substituted with the chanting of the *Trisagion*.\textsuperscript{82} St. Athanasius’s *typikon* for the Great Lavra copies most of these regulations.\textsuperscript{83} Regardless of the liturgical season, Compline was always celebrated communally.\textsuperscript{84} Similar instructions can be found in another seminal document, the Evergetis rule, which gives the impression that Compline was a routine office.\textsuperscript{85} Since the service is short and there is no need for the sanctuary, the narthex – commonly situated just across the yard from the refectory – provides a natural venue.\textsuperscript{86} However, none of the three rules provides any reference to the spatial setting\textsuperscript{87} and we need to refer to St. Symeon of Thessaloniki. He states that “in the large monasteries”, Compline is sung “before the gates of the nave”, i.e. in the narthex or another space preceding the *naos*.\textsuperscript{88} The *typikon* of Kecharitōmenē monastery, which is based on that of the Evergetis, is even more specific regarding the setting for Compline:

The office of compline will be carried out by you after supper in the exonarthex of the church during which you should genuflect, unless “God is the Lord” (Ps. 117 [118]: 27) is sung.\textsuperscript{89}

Clearly it was the *exonarthex*, rather than the narthex that was used for the Compline in this monastery.\textsuperscript{90} Perhaps this was because the outer narthex was a step closer to the refectory. Or

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{82} (4) Stoudios, # 20 (*BMFD*, p. 107).
  \item \textsuperscript{83} Cf. (11) Ath. Rule, # [2], [3], [4], [9], [29] (*BMFD*, pp. 221 sqq.).
  \item \textsuperscript{84} Cf. (11) Ath. Rule, # [29] (*BMFD*, pp. 227). For such a practice in the Stoudios Monastery in the late 11\textsuperscript{th} century, when almost all other daily services were conducted individually in monks’ cells, see Krausmüller, “Private vs. Communal,” p. 311.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} Cf. (22) Evergetis, # 6, 7 (*BMFD*, pp. 475-476).
  \item \textsuperscript{86} As it is the case on Mount Athos today.
  \item \textsuperscript{87} Perhaps the sole exception is found in (4) Stoudios, # B20 (*BMFD*, p. 107), which specifies that the singing of the *Trisagion* as a substitute when Compline is omitted (on the eves of major feasts) should be done in refectory. Therefore, the congregation did not reenter the church after supper. Since the same substitution for Compline was prescribed by (11) Ath. Rule, # [4] (*BMFD*, p. 222), it can be assumed that the early Athonite practice had the refectory used on these occasions as well. This perhaps changed with the introduction of the *litē* narthex in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century or even earlier, with the addition of larger *exonarthexes*, which could have provided a new venue for this liturgical act.
  \item \textsuperscript{88} Symeon of Thessalonike, *Treatise on Prayer*, Chapter 51 (p. 68).
  \item \textsuperscript{89} (27) Kecharitomene, # 36 (*BMFD*, p. 688). It is based on (22) Evergetis, # 6; new interpolations are in boldface type.
\end{itemize}
Compline may have been ranked among those more profane rituals that required a space less holy. Both of these incentives may have driven Nicholas, the author of the Rule for the Monastery of St. Nicholas of Kasoulon near Otranto, to set the performance of Compline on the eve of Epiphany in the refectory, even though the katholikon had a narthex: 91

In the evening after the service of the holy baptism [of Christ], we taste of the holy water and enter the refectory [singing] the “I will extol thee, my God” (Ps. 144 [145]:1), just as we do at dinner on Pentecost Sunday. We eat if the grace of the Holy Spirit has made provision for us. There in the refectory we sing the compline. 92

At the end of Compline, there was a special rite of mutual forgiveness, which marked the end of the day and dismissal for the night rest. This rite existed in some form already in Stoudite practice:

It should be known that at each compline all the community should greet one another with the hands in the form of a cross, 93 a sign of reconciliation one with another for all the offenses which have arisen during the day. 94

However, it acquired a more developed form by the 11th century, as recorded by the Evergetis rule:

When compline has been sung and the priest has said his customary prayer also, you should fall on your knees just as at the end of the first hour and incline your ear well to the superior as he says, “Forgive me in the Lord, brothers, for I have sinned in word, deed, and in thought,” and you should grant him forgiveness saying, “May God forgive you, father.” But you also should immediately beg this from him by adding, “Forgive us also yourself, honored father, for we have sinned in deed, word, and in thought,” then again he should pray for you and say, “May God through the prayers of our fathers forgive you all.”

Then standing up and according him the required obeisance, you should go away to your cells and carry out your night office in accordance with the regulation, and then full of gratitude and spiritual joy you should turn to sleep […] 95

90 The exonarthex is the venue for Compline also in some of Athonite monasteries today (Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 31, without specifying which monasteries follow this practice). I witnessed the performance of Compline in the outer narthex (lite) in Vatopedi in July 2006.  
91 Cf. (43) Kasoulon, # 7, 8 (BMFD, p. 1325).  
92 (43) Kasoulon, # 8 (BMFD, p. 1325).  
93 BMFD, p. 116, n. 17, refers to Nikētas Stēthatos, “De salutatione minibus facta,” in PG 120: 1009A–1012A, for a discussion of the form and symbolic meaning of this salutation.  
94 (4) Stoudios, # AB19 (BMFD, p. 107).  
95 (22) Evergetis, # 6 (BMFD, pp. 475–476).
This prescription is copied word for word by the typika of the monasteries of Kosmosōteira, Phoberos, St. Mamas, Hēliou Bomōn, and Hilandar, with none of them providing any reference to the place of the rite’s performance. It is reasonable to assume that the congregated community would remain in the room where they had just celebrated Compline, that is the narthex or, when available, the exonarthex. A clear confirmation is found only in the charter of the Machairas Monastery, which – although borrowing largely from the Evergetis rule – in this matter has many new additions. It provides references for the Forgiveness Rite in several chapters, in two of them setting its performance in the narthex:

[…] we come out of the refectory […] and go to the narthex of the church and there […] we begin the trisagion and sing the ninth [hour]. After its completion, while the priest is offering the usual prayer, the aforementioned mutual forgiveness by the superior and the brotherhood again takes place, and we are dismissed to our cells.

The regulation of the church’s typikon shows quite clearly how the office of vespers ought to be performed. At the completion of [this office], after the trisagion, which is customarily said in the narthex, it is proper for the aforementioned mutual genuflections and forgiveness to take place.

The narthex is the designated venue here, perhaps because there was no exonarthex.

As part of the ritual and before their departure to the cells, monks received the abbot’s blessing, as is still customary on Mount Athos. In Vatopedi, the second, outer narthex (known as the lité) is the venue, similarly to the cases mentioned above, perhaps not only for the reason of its location farther away from the nave, but more due to its spaciousness and ability to receive a great number of attendees. The members of the brotherhood and any pilgrims present proceed counterclockwise, venerate the icons displayed along the east wall (a large cross with

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96 (29) Kosmosoteira, # 15, (30) Phoberos, # 12, (32) Mamas, # 47, (33) Heliou Bomon, # 46 (BMFD, pp. 807-808, 897, 1027, 1083, respectively), and Богдановић (ed.), Хиландарски типик, # 6, p. 64.
97 (34) Machairas, # 42 (BMFD, p. 1135).
98 (34) Machairas, # 43 (BMFD, p. 1135).
99 Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 32.
100 For this structure, see Chapter 1.
the painted Crucifixion, Christ, Theotokos, see Figs. 87, 88), receive a blessing from the abbot standing at the north end, leave through the north door, and venerate the frescoed icon of Theotokos Esphagmenē before departing via the north chapel’s narthex. It is possible that for such a linear staging of the ritual, the open porches of Vatopedi, Great Lavra, Iviron (the latter two were later glazed) would have been highly appropriate. All three feature benches along the walls and, more indicatively, a marble abbot’s throne located immediately south of the entrance into the rest of the church (see Figs. 97, 98, 510, 511).

c) Midnight Office

The Midnight Office (Μεσονυκτικόν), which is the first service after the night rest and marks the beginning of the sequence of services preceding the Divine Liturgy, was performed in the narthex:

At the appropriate time when the nun carrying out the office of the ecclesiarchissa […] has struck the semantron, you will arrive and perform the midnight office in the narthex of the church […]. When you have completed the singing of the midnight office, the great semantron will be struck and furthermore the bronze one also. Then you will begin the office of matins, the preliminary part of which will be described next. (Typikon of the Convent of the Mother of God Kecharitōmenē in Constantinople)

[…] when the monks have gathered in the narthex, they will perform the midnight office of psalm-singing, being obliged in this office to sing the psalm “Blameless” (Ps. 118 [119]) so as to complete it at three stations, and at each of the stations, they should sing a trisagion with three troparia, two penitential [kathismata] and one theotokion.

When the psalm “Blameless” has thus been completed and the monks are now about to process into the church, the priest who has the duty for the day will go in with them and receive the censer from the ecclesiarch. (Typikon of the Monastery of Christ Pantokratōr in Constantinople)

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101 My own field notes from a visit to Vatopedi in July 2006.
102 (27) Kecharitomene, # 38 (BMFD, p. 688). The portions of the text in boldface type are borrowings from the Evergetis typikon. It should be noted that the katholikon of Kecharitōmenē monastery besides the narthex had an exonarthex (cf. ibid., pp. 702-703).
103 Presumably of the main church in the name of Christ Pantokratōr (see BMFD, p. 774, n. 7).
striking the small semantron in the customary way, he will rouse you to sing the celebration of the midnight office in the narthex which he himself will also sing all the time as he carries out the prescribed lighting of the church, and then when he has sounded the great semantron and the bronze one also, he will call you all for the dawn worship. (Typikon of the Monastery of St. Mamas in Constantinople)

Although many other typika provide elaborate instructions concerning night services, they do not specify the setting for their celebration. That does not mean that their narthexes were not used. Perhaps the founder felt that venue for the Midnight Office was well established and known.

The practice of using the narthex for this service has not changed on Mount Athos up to now.

The performance of the Midnight Office takes the same order as the Ninth Hour does: the officiating priest stands before the door closed with a curtain, takes off his epanokamēlavchion and puts on a mandyas and an epitrachēlion before the start, then the reader reads the appointed prayers and hymns, and – at the end – the ecclesiarch draws the curtain open and the priest after saying the dismissal and leaving the epitrachēlion in the narthex – leads the monks into the naos. Another instance that confirms the long tradition of the narthex’s assignment for the

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105 I.e. “the one who is in charge of the clock.”
106 (32) Mamas, # 47 (BMFD, p. 1027). This is a copy of (22) Evergetis # [6], with additions marked in boldface type. It is borrowed unchanged (including the mention of a narthex) by (33) Helou Bomon, # 46, p. 1083.
107 For example, it is known from several references in the Rule of Neilos, Bishop of Tamasia, for the Monastery of the Mother of God of Machairas in Cyprus (1210) that the monastery’s church had a narthex ([34] Machairas, # 26, 31, 35, 42, 43, 60, 61, 72, in BMFD, pp. 1132 sqq.). Nonetheless, the passage of the rule directing the celebration of the Midnight Office points only to “the church” as the venue ([34] Machairas, # 45, 46, in BMFD, p. 1136). “In the narthex before the church” as the place for the service is specified by Symeon of Thessaloniki (Symeon of Thessalonike, Treatise on Prayer, Chapter 12, p. 23). The inclusion of the penitential Psalm 50 in the Midnight Office makes the narthex quite an appropriate venue (see William Tronzo, “Mimesis in Byzantium: Notes towards a History of the Function of the Image,” RES: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics 25 (1994): 61-76, pp. 67-68).
108 Онюфрије Хиландац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, pp. 15-16. Exceptionally, Midnight Offices sung on the eves of Sundays (Resurrectional Midnight Office) and those sung during the Passion Week are performed in the naos (cf. ibid., pp. 42, 153).
109 See above.
110 In the Hilandar monastery, the curtain is open actually during the reading of the troparion “Open unto us the door of thy mercy, O blessed Mother of God” (Онюфрије Хиландац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, pp. 16-17). This troparion is sung also before the priest’s and deacon’s entrance to the sanctuary in the preparation of the Divine Liturgy (cf. Isabel Florence Hapgood (trans.), Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church (rev. ed.; New York: Association Press, 1922), p. 68).
111 Cf. Онюфрије Хиландац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, pp. 15-17. This solemn procession into the nave is ascribed a symbolical dimension by Symeon of Thessaloniki, who sees the narthex as the image of Earth and
Midnight Office is the term applied even today to the inner narthex in Vatopedi, mesonyktikon.\textsuperscript{112} However, there were exceptions. The katholikon of Phoberos monastery had a narthex, which was used for the Matins or a service preceding it.\textsuperscript{113} Nonetheless, the typikon instructed monks to conduct the Midnight Office in their cells.\textsuperscript{114}

\textit{d) Matins}

Matins (Ὄρθρος, meaning “early dawn”) was celebrated immediately following the Midnight Office. According to the Rule of Manuel, Bishop of Strumica, for the Monastery of the Mother of God Eleousa,\textsuperscript{115} Matins was held in the narthex of its katholikon:

When all the monks enter the divine church itself of the Mother of God at the time of the doxology and are going to perform the appointed office, I both wish and desire that this be performed by them with undistracted and intense eagerness, as I distinctly state in my typikon, and that they stand together at the time of matins in the narthex of this divine church.\textsuperscript{116}

However, this seems to be the only clear reference for the use of narthex for the Matins office.

According to other typika’s regulations for the celebration of Matins, apparently only its first part or, actually, the segment preceding Matins (the final part of the Midnight Office?) was sung in the narthex:

Then when he\textsuperscript{117} has sounded the great semantron and the bronze one also, he will call you all for the dawn worship. The preliminary part of which you must carry out as follows. For after the completion of the Psalm “Blameless” [(Ps. 118 [119])],\textsuperscript{118} the dismissal should

\textsuperscript{112} See Chapter 1. Compare this designation and preference for the inner narthex in relation to the performance of the Midnight Office therein to the same situation in the Kecharitomenē monastery, i.e. the existence of an exonarthex in addition to the narthex, recorded in its typikon (see above, note 102). In churches with two narthexes, the choice of the one closer to the naos to serve as the venue for the Midnight Office was undoubtedly governed by the order of services, \textit{i.e.} the movement into the nave for the service that followed the Midnight Office.

\textsuperscript{113} See below.

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Cf.} (30) Phoberos, # 12 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 898).

\textsuperscript{115} \textit{BMFD}, p. 167 sqq.

\textsuperscript{116} (10) Eleousa, # 6 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 176).

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{i.e.} the “one who is in charge of the clock.”

\textsuperscript{118} According to (28) Pantokrator, # [1] (\textit{BMFD}, p. 739), the recitation of this psalm was part of the Midnight Office.
be said outside in the narthex of the church by the priest who has the duty for the day, then, as we enter into the church we should sing at once a trisagion with the usual troparia, “May the Lord hear you,” and, “Kyrie eleison,” taking care to keep together as far as is reasonable while these are being sung. […] Then after the completion of the six psalms, the whole office of matins should next be celebrated as the synaxarion describes. (Rule of the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner of Phoberos)

The Six Psalms (Hexapsalmos) mentioned here, comprised of the reading of Psalms 3, 37 [38], 63 [64], 87 [88], 102 [103], and 142 [143] at the start of Matins. They are penitential and evoke the Last Judgment and, therefore, one would expect them to be read in the narthex. The wall painting of the Last Judgment in the narthex of the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn would have made an appropriate setting. However, none of the references in foundation typika describe them as being recited in the narthex. Therefore, it seems more likely that Matins were celebrated in the naos.

e) First Hour

According to the Rule of St. Athanasius the Athonite for the Great Lavra, the office of the First Hour (Πρῶτη Ἑρά) – theoretically at 7 a.m. – was celebrated only during Great Lent.

The reason behind this lies in the meaning ascribed to this particular hour, on which – according to the typikon of Eleousa monastery near Strumica – “the announcement of the resurrection was transmitted to all.” This service followed immediately after Matins:

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119 I.e. naos.
120 (30) Phoberos, # 13 (BMFD, p. 898). This regulation borrows extensively from (22) Evergetis, # 6; the parts in boldface type are interpolations in the Evergetis text.
121 See Chapter 2.
122 Cf. BMFD, pp. 99AB, 102AB, 105AB, 113AB, 177, 221, 222, 223, 224, 386, 389, 474, 532, 689, 740, 806, 808, 898, 1028, 1084, 1137, 1155.
123 This was certainly the case in the 15th century, when Symeon of Thessaloniki counts the Matins among services that require the use of the sanctuary both at its beginning and end, pointing thus to the naos as the venue (Symeon of Thessalonike, Treatise on Prayer, Chapter 39, pp. 51-52; see also above, note 61).
125 (10) Eleousa, # 7 (BMFD, p. 177).
So after the worship of matins, the office of the first hour should be sung by you following on immediately, as is customary, and at the end of this the following prayer should next be recited, “Thou who at all times and all hours” and what follows. After the prayer the customary genuflections should be performed, by the able-bodied on the bare floor but the weak should have some low supports. [...] Genuflections should be carried out] in unison and with fitting good order, not with some getting ahead and others falling behind, but all following the lead of the ecclesiarch or the priest on duty that day as he stands near the holy screen and indicates the successive movements.

That should take place when “God is the Lord” (Ps. 117 [118]: 27) is not sung during matins; but if it is, the performing of these genuflections in the church should be omitted but three deep bows should be performed [...].

The mention of the leading ecclesiarch or priest standing in front of the “holy screen”, i.e. templon, indicates that the naos was the venue for this service.

After the prayers of the First Hour, there was a shorter or longer break, depending on the liturgical season. On certain days during Great Lent, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated later in the day (immediately before the Ninth Hour and Vespers), making the break longer. In this case, the congregation would be dismissed to go to their cells for some rest or to assume their daily obédences (chores). As such, the service would finish with a mutual forgiveness between the abbot and the brethren, and with the abbot distributing his blessing for the day:

When the first hour has been completed, as we said, and the priest has spoken his customary prayer, all of you should immediately fall on your faces and hearing the superior asking for your prayers like this, “Brothers, pray for me in the Lord that I may be delivered from passions and the snares of the Evil One,” you should answer, “May God save you, honored father, and you pray for us, holy father, that we may be delivered from passions and the snares of the Evil One.” Then again the superior should say, “May God through the prayers of our fathers save you all.” Then rising, some must depart to their tasks, while others (will go) to their own cells, avoiding all meeting together and foolish distraction, idle chatter, and disorderly laughter.

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126 (22) Evergetis, # 4 (BMFD, p. 473). This detailed regulation is repeated in full in the Typikon of Hilandar (Богданович (ed.), Хиландарски типик, # 4, p. 61).
128 Cf. Krausmüller, “Private vs. Communal,” p. 310, which provides information on such a practice in the late-11th-century Studios.
129 (32) Mamas, # 47 (BMFD, p. 1026). This is a copy of a similar regulation in (22) Evergetis, # 4 (BMFD, p. 474), which is also copied in the typikon of the Athonite Hilandar monastery (see note 126 above); differences in boldface type. In this form, it is found unaltered in (33) Heliou Bomon, # 46 (BMFD, p. 1082).
The venue is not mentioned, but since this ritual takes place just before monks leave the church and in the view of the fact that a ritual similar to the one performed in the narthex after Compline was involved, I would be inclined to see the narthex as the setting. This suggestion is supported by a reference in a typikon related to that of St. Mamas, the Rule of the Monastery of the Mother of God of Machairas in Cyprus:

So after the worship of matins, the office of the first hour should be sung by you following on immediately, as is customary and at the end of this while the customary trisagion is being performed at the narthex, the priest says: “Pray for our holy fathers and founders.”

After its completion, you must depart to your cells, avoiding all meeting together and foolish distraction, idle chatter, and disorderly laughter.

**f) Third and Sixth Hours, and the Office of Typika**

After the monks were dismissed to go either to their cells or to perform their assigned obediences (chores), earlier typika direct them to say the prayers of the Third and Sixth Hours (Τρίτη Ἑχτή Ἐρα) privately in their cells or, accordingly, perhaps wherever they might happen to be with their chores:

Going away to your cells you should carry out the whole obligatory canonical procedure, with the customary prayers and genuflections in the manner mentioned above, I mean the six psalms, the third hour and the sixth according to custom when the semantra are struck.

*(Typikon of Evergetis monastery)*

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130 See above.
131 The “customary” Trisagion probably stands for some daily commemoration prayers said in the narthex. For commemoration services performed in the narthex, see further below.
132 (34) Machairas, # 31 (*BMFD*, pp. 1132-1133). Again, this is but a copy of the regulations in (22) Evergetis, # 4; differences in boldface type.
133 (22) Evergetis, # 4 (*BMFD*, p. 474). The Hypotyposis of Nikētas Stēthatos for the Stoudios monastery (late 11th century) instructs monks to recite Third Hour and Sixth Hour in their cells (see Krausmüller, “Private vs. Communal,” p. 310). This was perhaps the practice in this monastery also in the 9th century (cf. [4] Stoudios, # B14, in *BMFD*, pp. 106, which do not specify any particular place where Hours should be said) and other monastic houses that followed the Stoudite traditions, such as the Great Lavra (cf. [11] Ath. Rule, # [8], [15], in *BMFD*, pp. 223, 224, again without any reference about the venue). Note here that the Six Psalms (*Hexapsalmos*) of Matins was also to be recited in cells (cf. above, on the celebration of Matins).
The reason lies in the fact that these Hours were temporally disconnected from the Matins and First Hour, on one side, and the Divine Liturgy on the other, and – for the sake of practicality – there was an incentive to avoid opening the katholikon and gathering monks that might be relatively far away as they performed their daily obediences. This is why there was a blessing after the dismissal of the First Hour, marking the separation of the community until the Divine Liturgy or, if it was not celebrated on a particular day, until evening services.

However, already the typikon of the Kecharitōmenē convent, which extensively borrows from the Evergetis typikon, instructs the celebration of the Hours either in the cells or in the katholikon’s exonarthex, with the decision left to the abbess’s discretion:

When the proper time comes, the semantron will be struck and at that point you will sing the mesoria of the first hour, then the third and the sixth hour [p. 83] with their mesoria, prayers, and prostrations, wherever the superior wishes, either in the dormitory or in the exonarthex of the church. You will sing the typika in the narthex of the church; […]

It is interesting to note the distinction that this charter makes between the exonarthex and the narthex: the former may be used as a setting for the Hours, whereas the latter is the designated venue for the Typika (Τυπικά), an office celebrated after the Sixth Hour on days when there is no Divine Liturgy (i.e. on certain days during the Lenten period). As a matter of fact, this is the only reference to the Typika in monastic foundation documents. The service is conducted in lieu of the Divine Liturgy, yet does not require the sanctuary. Therefore, the narthex – in this case closer to the naos (the church proper) than the exonarthex – is one level higher in sacredness and

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134 In this spirit, Nikōn of the Black Mountain, although he admonishes the monks of his monastery that “it is necessary for all to assemble together, first striking the wood [semantron], and together to sing each hour at its respective time, with their mesoria,” immediately adds “unless the brothers are scattered afar for their duties. But when the brothers are away, they must sing what is ordained for each hour where they are and at its proper time.” ([20] Black Mountain, # 9, in BMFD, p. 386)

135 See BMFD, pp. 650-652.

136 (27) Kechatitomene, # 33 (BMFD, p. 687). Chapter 33 is partially based on (22) Evergetis, # 4, but this particular passage is a new addition. The alternative celebrating of the Hours and Mesoria in the dormitory was also conducted in group, not individually as it might seem. For this reason, this option has been viewed as another expression of communality, perhaps taken to an extreme (Krausmüller, “Private vs. Communal,” p. 324, n. 57).
presents itself as the most natural choice for the venue. Such a practice still survives on Mount Athos, where on Great Thursday and Great Saturday, the Hours and the Typika are read in the inner narthex (in some monasteries referred to as the mesonyktikon).137

A further development in the assignment of the narthex to the celebration of the Third and Sixth Hours is marked by the rule for the monastery of St. Mamas. Although essentially drawn after the Evergetis typikon, it has many new chapters, among which is the chapter regulating the performance of the two offices:

When the semantron then, is struck at the time that is proper, all must assemble in the narthex and sing together the third and sixth hours along with the prayers138 that accompany them.139

Commonly, i.e. on Sundays and feast days, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated after the Third Hour.140 Therefore, it was convenient for brethren that were already assembled in advance of the Liturgy to say the Third Hour communally. This prescription was copied word for word by the foundation typika of the monasteries of Hēliou Bomōn and Machairas. Interesting for the study of the narthex, both of these rules make a slight addition to the borrowed text: “all must assemble in the narthex and there sing together the third and sixth hours.”141 It seems as if a clarification was needed for some who might have thought that the monastic community would only gather in the narthex and then sing the Hours in the naos. The added word “there” appears as a stamp, sealing the custom of celebrating of the two offices in the narthex.142

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137 Ονυφριје Хилендарц, Светогорски богослужбени устав, pp. 154, 161. The Divine Liturgy of Great Thursday is served in the evening, as a continuation of Vespers (ibid., p. 154).
138 I.e. mesoria (cf. [34] Machairas, # 35, in BMFD, p. 1133).
139 (32) Mamas, # 31 (BMFD, p. 1015).
140 Cf. (11) Ath. Rule, # [8], and (20) Black Mountain, # 35 (BMFD, pp. 223, 394, respectively).
141 (33) Heliou Bomon, # 31, (34) Machairas, # 35 (BMFD, pp. 1072, 1133).
142 In some Athonite monasteries today, the Hours are said in the narthex (Ονυφριје Хилендарц, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 20).
g) **Catechetical Instruction in the Narthex**

The reading of spiritual and edifying texts, most commonly the writings of the Church Fathers and important monastic leaders, is another activity that can be – and usually is – performed by monks individually. Also, it does not have to be related to or done in conjunction with the liturgical celebrations of either the day or the season. However, according to the sources, in certain communities and on certain occasions – most commonly daily during Great Lent – listening to catechetical precepts was prescribed for the entire community, usually interpolated between two offices in the church. In these cases, the readings were related to the liturgical season, even to the actual day or feast. Moreover, they were performed in the narthex, while the brethren were seated. The importance of catechetical instruction for all members of the community was stressed as early as the 4th century, in the Pachomian Rule. This both acquainted illiterate monks with important spiritual texts and enabled the abbot to offer interpretation or his own counsel as he found it fitting for his community. The Stoudite Rule brings catechetical instruction back into prominence and further emphasizes it by connecting it to the daily liturgical routine:

> It should be known that on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, the *Catechesis* of our God-bearing father Theodore is read after the dismissal of matins. Thereupon, the superior imparts one of his own [thoughts] to instruct the brothers. After this *Catechesis* is completed, they say the doxology together with the “Our Father” and the “Bless, O holy ones, bless O father.” Then they are dismissed. This is the order throughout the whole year.

> It should be known that at almost all of the compline services during Holy Lent either the superior or one of the older brothers who is also experienced in speaking should give a catechism lesson to the brothers.

143 *BMFD*, p. 35. Note the existence of masonry benches along the walls in the narthexes of some Early Byzantine monasteries in Palestine (see note 55 above). The benches were meant for seating perhaps on some other occasions, as well.
144 Cf. *BMFD*, p. 92.
145 (4) Stoudios, # B16 (*BMFD*, p. 106).
146 (4) Stoudios, # AB21 (*BMFD*, p. 107).
The signal sounds again three times at lauds\textsuperscript{147} when the *Catechesis* of the great father and superior Theodore is about to be read.\textsuperscript{148}

None of these prescriptions was adopted by St. Athanasius the Athonite, although he largely based his rule for the Great Lavra on that of Stoudios. However, that does not mean that catechetical instruction was absent from monastic life of the Lavra, since its existence is attested in the *Vita* of St. Athanasius.\textsuperscript{149} He may have only disassociated the reading of catechetical texts from the daily offices. On the other hand, his rule for the Lavra offers evidence for a similar communal reading being regularly practiced in the monastery:

\begin{quote}
I want all of these regulations which I have laid down to be read regularly in the assembly so that none of the brothers may be able to plead ignorance.\textsuperscript{150}
\end{quote}

The reading “in the assembly” implies the presence of the entire community, which could have been gathered only in the church or refectory. Considering the profane or, rather, less sacred content of the text to be read, it can be assumed that occasions when the brethren were assembled either in the refectory (i.e. for a meal) or in the narthex (between two church services) were used to read the rule.

These documents do not bear any clear reference to the venue for the readings. In the case of Stoudios, the association with liturgical celebrations suggests the church as the setting and I would be inclined to see the narthex or other adjacent space serving the purpose, since the readings occurred at the end of Matins and at Compline, and because seating was probably involved, as clearly stated in another document:

\begin{quote}
We know even now a similar small rule that is said to be in the holy monastery of lord Antony on the mountain of St. Auxentios, opposite Constantinople. For during the night and day vigil during the reading when all the monks are seated, they weave each with his own
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{147} I.e. praises, one of several segments at the closing of Matins.
\textsuperscript{148} (4) Stoudios, # AB36 (*BMFD*, p. 113).
\textsuperscript{149} See *Vita Secunda*, # 65, in Noret (ed.), *Vitae duae antiquae Sancti Athanasii Athonitae*, p. 200 (reference to the instructions in the works of St. Theodore the Stoudite). Cf. also *BMFD*, p. 247.
\textsuperscript{150} (11) Ath. Rule, # [37] (*BMFD*, p. 228).
hands what among us are called raso braids, on the one hand in order to stay awake and listen to the lections, and on the other to have these as a blessing, since they were made at the time of the common assembly in the church.\footnote{151} \textit{(Regulations of Nikōn of the Black Mountain)}

Here one should note that the gathered monks were not only permitted to sit while listening to catecheses, but also did handiwork in order to keep themselves awake. Interestingly, what they produced on those occasions was considered sanctified through the communal gathering and prayer in the church. Therefore, if the place where the monks assembled for the reading was indeed the narthex, it was viewed in this case as a holy space in the same manner as the naos was.\footnote{152}

The Evergetine tradition also keeps catechetical instruction as part of the vigil after Matins and First Hour:

Then after these genuflections or bows all should repeat the following prayer aloud with hands raised, “O eternal God, everlasting Light without beginning, the Maker of all creation.” Immediately after the prayer the short \textit{catechesis} from the words of the Fathers should take place, read by the superior, just as we received it from our most blessed father, and this should never be omitted unless set aside by the synaxarion.\footnote{153} \textit{(Typikon of Evergetis monastery)}

So then after \textbf{the completion of} the worship of matins, we must \textbf{continue with} the first hour in the customary way and at the end of this the following prayer should be said, “Thou who at all times and all hours.” After the prayer the customary genuflections should be performed, \textbf{[...]} \textbf{a reading of the catechesis will be set out for you}, and after the reading you will \textbf{perform} the prescribed \textit{trisagion} which is for us.\footnote{154} \textit{(Typikon of Kecharitōmenē convnet)}

However, the venue – be it the narthex or another part of the church – is not mentioned in any of these. This is especially striking in the case of the rule for the Kecharitōmenē Monastery, whose

\footnote{151} (20) Black Mountain, # 76 \textit{(BMFD}, pp. 406-407).
\footnote{152} Unlike what has been pointed to above, that the narthex was not considered part of the sacred realm of the church.
\footnote{153} (22) Evergetis, # 4 \textit{(BMFD}, p. 473). For the texts that were used for catecheses, see \textit{ibid.}, p. 500, n. 4.
\footnote{154} (27) Kecharitomene, # 32 \textit{(BMFD}, p. 686). It borrows substantially from (22) Evergetis, # 4; the changes and additions are indicated in boldface type. The same or similar provisions for catechetical instruction after Matins and First Hour can be found in (29) Kosmosoteira, # 13, (30) Phoberos, # 9, (32) Mamas, # 47, and (33) Heliou Bomon, # 46 \textit{(BMFD}, pp. 805, 895, 1026, 1082, respectively).
*katholikon* is known to have been equipped with both a narthex and an *exonarthex*. This rule often made a clear distinction between the two in assigning them to the performance of a specific service. Does this, then, mean that neither of the two was used for catechetical readings? Because of what is said at end of the above-cited passage – “after the reading you will perform the prescribed *trisagion* which is for us” – I believe that one of the two narthexes, most likely the inner one was used. This is supported by the following arguments. The *Trisagion* is an intercessory prayer, in this case in favor of the author of the rule (“for us”), i.e. for the founder. It is conceivable that the prayer was said above the founder’s tomb, which was most likely located in the narthex. If the nuns attending catechetical instruction were in the narthex, they could just rise up at the end and chant the *Trisagion*.

It is apparent from most of these documents that catechetical instruction took place after Matins and the First Hour, or during all-night vigils. It probably was a way to give a meaningful content to the intermission between the two services that formed the vigil: instead of going back to their cells for a brief period of time and sleeping there, the monks could get some rest as they listened to spiritual counsel or to a homily related to the feast. To me, the narthex – a part of the church and at the same time separated from it – would be an ideal venue. Monks may have used the benches along the walls that are extant in some narthexes to sit during this time.

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155 BMFD, pp. 702-703.
156 Cf. (30) Phoberos, # 9, in BMFD, p. 895 (which mostly copies (22) Evergetis, # 4, as also does the Kecharitōmenē *typikon*): “At this point after the reading, the *trisagion* for our holy father and founder, which is prescribed for us, should take place.”
157 See a discussion of the founder’s and her relatives’ burials in Kecharitōmenē monastery further below.
158 To the previous references, another can be added from the Testamentary Rule of Neophytos for the Hermitage of the Holy Cross near Ktima in Cyprus (1214), which prescribed catechetical readings for every Sunday – (45) Neophytos, # 13 (BMFD, p. 1356). Although the time of the day is not mentioned, but since it was on Sundays, when all-night vigils were conducted according to the Sabbaite tradition, catecheses may have been read during the vigils, set within breaks between two services.
159 For some monastic churches featuring benches in their narthexes, see note 55 above.
To conclude, although there was no uniform practice in the celebration of daily services, the typical pattern of the daily liturgical use of the narthex was as follows:

1) Ninth Hour – in the narthex; immediately followed by  
2) Vespers – not in the narthex;  
   - (meal in the refectory)  
3) Compline and Forgiveness – in the narthex; during Great Lent, there was catechetical instruction – likely in the narthex  
4) Midnight Office – in the narthex; immediately followed by  
5) Matins – apparently not in the narthex, but in the naos;  
6) First Hour – not in the narthex; catechetical instruction – likely in the narthex;  
7) Third and Sixth Hours – either in the narthex/exonarthex or, alternatively, in the monks’ cells;  
8) The Divine Liturgy – in the naos; if no Liturgy, then Typika – in the narthex;  
   - (on non-fasting day, the meal after the Liturgy is served in the refectory).

The majority of references for the use of the narthex for certain daily services comes from documents dated to the second part of the Middle Byzantine period, although the narthex was architecturally fully defined already by the beginning of the 10th century. Thus, it appears that the availability of such an asset with all its spatial and architectural characteristics, immediately adjacent to the naos, was gradually identified and recognized as a convenient setting for certain daily offices, already practiced at that time. If this was the case, there were many other uses of the narthex that chronologically preceded its assignment to daily liturgical services. Some of them, such as the assembling of monks in the narthex in advance of a service...
that took place in the church, probably were a catalyst in the process of turning the narthex into the venue for certain daily services. Others gradually became less important (or less recognizable in the definition of the narthex as a liturgical space), due to a lesser frequency of their occurrence during the year. In any event, although the appearance of the Middle Byzantine narthex coincides with the formation of the daily cycle of offices, it is hard to say to what extent they influenced each other. One thing that is certain is that the narthex in its form and with its location in the zone of transition between the outer world and the sacred space of the church building was recognized as the venue for several offices of a liminal character and that it served this purpose so well that its architecture remained virtually unchanged during the entire period. I will now turn to other various and diverse functions of the narthex, grouping them according to their nature and place in the life of the monastic community.

**C) Annual Celebrations and Rites Staged in the Narthex**

The narthex also has its place within the annual liturgical cycle, i.e. on certain feast days. On these occasions, the narthex provides the spatial setting for the ritual pertaining to a particular feast. On the eve and once again on the very day of the Feast of the Epiphany, the Greater Blessing of the Waters is performed at a *phialē*, which was often located in the narthex or * exonarthex*, or outside the church, commonly in front of it.\(^{160}\)

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\(^{160}\) For the order of offices for the feast of the Epiphany, see Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (trans.), *The Festal Menaion* (London: Faber, 1969), pp. 295-387. For the office of the Greater Blessing of the Waters, see Παναγιώτης Ν. Τρεμπέλας, «Η Ακολουθία του Μεγάλου Αγιασμού», *Θεολογία* 21 (1950): 387-393; and Θεολογία 22 (1951): 40-50, and Πατριαρχική Ενυπάκτοις, «Παναγιώτης Ν. Τρεμπέλας, [The Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis](Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, the Institute of Byzantine Studies, the Queen’s University of Belfast, 2000-2007), Vol. 1, pp. 414-420 (Greek) and 415-421.
It should be known that on the vigil of the Feast of Epiphany after the dismissal of the divine liturgy, we receive blessed bread. Afterwards, those who have received communion take a sip of a drink, but we do not eat the blessed bread. Having collected the vessels, the priest goes to the holy doors and, having offered a prayer, he exits to the fountain [in the atrium of the church] together with the brothers who sing the troparion “The voice of the Lord on the waters” in the fourth mode. When this has been chanted three times and the customary readings have been finished, the deacon recites the synapte. When this is finished, the priest begins the prayer of blessing [of the waters]. After the waters have been blessed, and the brothers have been sprinkled, the troparion “While thou wert being baptized in the Jordan, O Lord” is sung in the first mode. After this troparion has been sung three times, we go into the church singing the troparion “Today the Trinity in the unity of Divinity.” When this is sung three times, the priest offers a prayer and the holy doxology is finished. Thereupon, the brothers file out in order to the refectory.

The divine festival of light during the world-wide feast of Epiphany will also be celebrated in the same narthex, in which the phiale stands, with the bronze chandeliers hanging in it and receiving their full lighting. In the same way the chandeliers of the church must also be lit then, and two candelabra with large candles stand on this side and on that of the phiale. (Typikon of Kecharitomenē convent)

One should be reminded that the katholikon of the Kecharitomenē Monastery, in addition to the narthex, also had an exonarthex. However, the phialē apparently was not in the exonarthex or outside, as one would expect in regard to the position of phialai on Athos, but in the inner narthex. That suggests the possibility that the phialē of the Kecharitomenē Monastery was placed in the narthex before the exonarthex was built.

There is no archaeological evidence in Athonite Middle Byzantine katholika for where their original phialai were located. The oldest surviving phialē, that of Vatopedi, only dates to the mid-14th century. It takes the form of a baldachin with a basin inside and is set in front of the church, as are all of the later phialai of Athos. Today, the Greater Blessing is ministered in

(English translation), for a detailed description of the rite of the Blessing of Waters within a 12th-century monastic context. This source shows that the narthex was not the exclusive architectural setting for this rite, which was celebrated wherever the water basin was located, making the use of the narthex only incidental (cf. Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 73).

161 On consuming blessed bread and wine (the collation) after the Divine Liturgy, see below.
162 (4) Stoudios, # A[38] = # B37 (BMFD, pp. 115 and 113-114, respectively).
163 I.e. in the same inner narthex where the Washing of the Feet on Great Thursday was to be performed (see below).
164 (27) Kecharitomenē, # 72 (BMFD, p. 702).
165 See Chapter 1.
this canopied phialē. The solemn procession out of the church to the phialē in the courtyard is also part of the ritual pattern. It is worth mentioning that modern Athonite liturgical practice also includes the Lesser Blessing of the Waters, performed at the beginning of each month. It can take place after the First Hour, Sixth Hour, or following the Divine Liturgy. The usual venue is the phialē, but originally, it may have been staged in the narthex or wherever the water basin was located, as it is instructed in a Constantinopolitan euchologion dated to 1027. More about the form of the Athonite phialai and especially about their location in relation to the narthex is discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

In the evening of Cheesefare Sunday (the Sunday of Forgiveness), the ceremony of mutual forgiveness is conducted, as is customary for the beginning of Great Lent. On Mount Athos, immediately after the Little Compline, the congregation moves in procession to the inner narthex (mesonyktikon). The ritual takes place in there and involves all the members of the community, each going to the standing abbot, prostrating before him, and asking for his forgiveness. The abbot likewise makes a prostration before each member and asks for

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166 Cf. Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, pp. 126-127. The second blessing of the waters on Epiphany takes place on the very day. At Hilandar, it is performed on a stream outside the monastery, whereas the monks of Ivērōn go in procession to the sea shore (ibid., p. 127). In some other monasteries of Athos, this blessing is set in the phialē, whereas the blessing on the eve of the feast is performed inside the katholikon, perhaps in the narthex (ibid.).


168 Алексей Дмитриевский, Описаные литургических рукописей хранящихся в библиотеках православного Востока (Киев: Типография Университета св. Владимира, 1895-1917), Vol. 2, p. 1051 (cited after Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 72, n. 51). Prof. Marinis is of an opinion, and I can agree, that the Lesser Blessing, being performed more frequently and less solemnly, may have been set in the narthex out of convenience, as to avoid bringing the entire congregation to the phialē located outside the church (Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 73). Cf. also Георги Геров, „Изображение на кръщението на Христово върху западната фасада на Боянската църква – функция и контекст,“ in Бисерка Пенкова (ed.), Боянската църква между Изток и Запад в изкуството на християнска Европа (София: Национален исторически музей, 2011): 151-161, pp. 152-153.

169 See Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (trans.), The Lenten Triodion (London - Boston: Faber and Faber, 1977), pp. 180-183.

170 Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 143.
forgiveness, as do the monks between each other. The ceremony is followed by the reading of some catechetical text on Lent.\footnote{Ibid., p. 143. Compare this with the daily catechetical readings during Great Lent (see above).}

On Great Thursday (Maundy Thursday), the narthex is the setting for the ritual reenactment of the Washing of the Feet (\textit{ακολουθία του νιπτήρος}), in which the abbot washes the feet of twelve monks.\footnote{For a study on this ritual, see André Lossky, “La cérémonie du lavement des pieds: Un essai d’étude compare,” in Robert F. Taft, Gabriele Winkler (eds.), Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (1872-1948): Acts of the International Congress, Rome, 25-29 September 1998 (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2001): 809-832, and on the narthex as its setting see Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, pp. 71. For the way in which the enactment was performed in the 11\textsuperscript{th}-century monastic context, see Tronzo, \textit{op. cit.} (see note 107), pp. 66-67 (with references).}

In earlier centuries, the ritual was most probably performed in the atrium of the church, as was still the case in the 9\textsuperscript{th}-century Stoudios:

\begin{quote}
In the same fashion\footnote{I.e. as the rite of the Great Blessing of the Waters (see above, note 162).} the washing of the feet takes place on Holy Thursday after [the monks have received] communion and taken a sip of a drink. When all have had their feet washed, they file out [to the refectory].\footnote{(4) Stoudios, # A[38] = # B37 (BMFD, pp. 115, 114, respectively).}
\end{quote}

The ritual obviously takes place after the Divine Liturgy, celebrated later in the day and followed by the collation (a serving of wine and, sometimes, bread),\footnote{On the post-Eucharistic collation of wine and bread (\textit{diaklysmos}), which was served in the narthex, see below.} and before the meal in the refectory.\footnote{Examining this rite in the Evergetis monastery, John Klentos expressed an opinion that the performance around noon and independently of other services – instead of having it within Vespers, as it was the case in Jerusalem, at the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, and other places – was unique to the Evergetis monastery (see John Klentos, “The Synaxarion of Evergetis: Algebra, Geology and Byzantine Monasticism,” in Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis: 329-355, p. 352). The evidence from the Stoudion shows that such practice was not unique, but perhaps characteristic for monastic communities – in light of the fact that the rite’s integration into Vespers has been recorded in urban churches – or to a certain monastic tradition.} The atrium was used because the water fountain was there, but possibly also because it may have served as a place of transition from the church to the refectory. Later, the narthex becomes the venue, perhaps for the same reasons, as well as for the advantage of being an enclosed, better-sheltered space. Nonetheless, there are only a few references in the foundation documents for such use, the first in the \textit{typikon} of the Kecharitōmenē Monastery:
[...] on Holy Thursday the washing of the feet must be carried out by the most venerable superior in the narthex of the church, where the washing of the feet by the Savior has been portrayed, according to the procedure contained in the synaxarion and the rule contained in it.177

The other reference explicitly mentioning the narthex as the venue is found in the 12th-century typikon of the Monastery of St. John Chrysostom at Koutsovendis, Cyprus.178 Rubrics in a Praxapostolos of the 12th century, housed in the Athonite monastery of St. Panteleēmōn, provide evidence that the same practice was present on Mount Athos as well.179 Although the written reference in earlier documents is missing, pictorial decorations in the narthexes at Vatopedi (in the exonarthex), Hosios Loukas (Katholikon), Nea Monē, and Daphni, which include a scene of Christ washing the feet of the Apostles, similar to that in the Kecharitōmenē narthex, confirm that the performance of the ritual took place in their narthexes.180 Moreover, the modern Athonite practice, which also uses the narthex as the venue, witnesses to an unbroken tradition.181 However, the image of the Gospel event in the narthex was not isolated and

177 (27) Kecharitomene, # 72 (BMFD, p. 702). Once more, it should be remembered that the Kecharitōmenē katholikon had a narthex as well as an exonarthex. It is not clear why the former was chosen to be used for the ritual instead of the latter, but likely because the phialē was situated in the narthex (see above) and because an image depicting Christ washing the feet of the Apostles was located therein, as the document stresses. For an analysis of the ritual in the Evergetine tradition, see Gregory Myers, “Slavonic Witnesses to Evergetine Liturgy and Music: The Order of the Washing of Feet on Great and Holy Thursday,” in Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis: 367-385.


180 The connection between the image of Christ washing the feet of the Apostles in the narthex and the performance of the office of the Washing of the Feet therein has been noted and analyzed by Svetlana Tomeković, “Contribution à l’étude du programme du narthex des églises monastiques (XIe - premièrie moitié du XIIIe s.),” Byzantion 58 (1988): 140-54, Tronzo, op. cit., and Charles Barber, “Mimesis and Memory in the Narthex Mosaics at the Nea Moni, Chios,” Art History 24/3 (2001): 323-337. However, it remains unclear whether the presence of the image prompted the performance of the ritual or if it was the other way around. In regard to this issue, Tronzo, op. cit., p. 75, is slightly inclined to accept the latter development, whereas Barber, op. cit., pp. 334-335, argues that the ritual cannot be seen as the source for the imagery in the narthex at Nea Monē and demonstrates that visual and textual elements were of equal importance in constituting the program (ibid., passim).

181 I possess this information, but could not confirm it in any survey of modern monastic life and liturgical practices on Mount Athos, and I have not witnessed the ceremony myself. Εὐχόλογιον το Μέγα, περίεχον τας των επτά μυστήριων ακολουθίας [Περιμνησία Σπόρων Ζέρβος, ed.] (Βενετία: Εκ του Ελληνικού Τυπογραφείου «ο Φοίνιξ», 1891), p. 361, prescribes the celebration to be conducted “outside the large door of the naos, at the basin of the
exclusively intended to furnish the ritual with an adequate biblical illustration. It was rather a part of the iconographic cycle depicting the Passions of Christ. Therefore, the connection between the image and the ritual action most likely was incidental and noticed only retroactively, after the rite was already set in the narthex due to the presence of a water basin or a source of water therein.\textsuperscript{182}

A few words on the furnishing set for the Washing of Feet. In one witness to the Stoudite tradition, the text tells us: “Then\textsuperscript{183} they all gather in the narthex [and] where there is [to be] the washing. There is a table standing before the Royal Doors,\textsuperscript{184} and on it towels. The Gospel is placed [on it].”\textsuperscript{185} The officiating priest started the service in front of the table. Also, appointed passages from the Gospel of John were read at certain points of the ritual from a Gospel book set on the table. Thus, the table functioned as the focus of the organization and the movement during the ritual. The actual washing presumably was performed on the side, most likely in the north half of the narthex.\textsuperscript{186} This instance testifies to the use of simple and moveable furnishing for this service. It can be assumed that such occasional furnishing was also deployed for other services, which similarly did not require extensive props. This perhaps explains why there was not much permanent furnishing in the narthex.

Nicptēr [i.e. Washing of Feet],” where the attendants are to come in procession after the prayer behind the ambo at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

\textsuperscript{182} For a similar view on the incidental aspect of the narthex’s selection and its allocation to the rite being the result of “circumstances rather than on rigid rubrics and theological symbolism,” see Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, p. 73. On this problem see also Nicholl, “A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of \textit{Typika:} The Case of the Narthex,” pp. 295-296, who compares the location of the image in the north part of the narthex in several extant programs with a designation of the north part of the \textit{naos} for the very ritual at the Evergetis monastery. For the inclusion of the scene of the Washing of the Feet in the program of Middle Byzantine narthexes, see Tronzo, \textit{op. cit.}, and Barber, \textit{op. cit.} (note 180 above).

\textsuperscript{183} I.e. after the celebration of the Ninth Hour.

\textsuperscript{184} The central of the three doors between the narthex and \textit{naos}.

\textsuperscript{185} From the 11th-century \textit{Tipografskii Ustav} (Tretiakov Gallery Ms. K5439), Folio 6r (as cited in Myers, “Slavonic Witnesses to Evergetine Liturgy and Music,” p. 380). On this liturgical \textit{typikon}, which reflects the Stoudite tradition, see \textit{ibid.}, pp. 372-374.

\textsuperscript{186} See note 182 above.
The holy mysteries (sacraments) are part of the liturgical life of every Christian, whether a monastic or not. Except for the Eucharist and ordination into the priesthood – which both require the use of the sanctuary – the sacraments can be ministered anywhere. The narthex, as the antechamber for the space reserved for the Divine Liturgy (which is the prefiguration of the “world to come”), came to be regarded as a metaphorical space representative of the “outer world”. Therefore, the narthex is an ideal venue for the sacraments that mark, to a greater or lesser extent, a transition from one spiritual state to another, i.e. baptism, chrismation, repentance and confession, unction, marriage (matrimony), tonsuring, and ordination. To these, funeral rites can be added, as well. However, not all of them are performed in the narthex, and some of them are entirely absent from the monastic realm, such as the baptism, chrismation, and marriage. For monastic narthexes, there are records of their use for confessions, funerals, and the first part of ritual tonsuring.

The initial part of taking one’s monastic vows, or tonsuring, takes place in the narthex as part of a monk’s symbolic renunciation of the outer world and his entrance into the monastery. According to modern practice, the candidate enters the narthex at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, takes off his outer clothes and shoes, and remains there. After the Lesser Entrance, the abbot brings him into the nave, immediately in front of the templon, where the rest of the ritual is performed. The order of the ritual is not expounded in any of foundation typika, perhaps

188 Ευχολόγιον το Μέγα, p. 190. See also Онуфрие Хиландарци, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 189.
189 Ibid. See Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 70-71, for short descriptions of two variants of the ritual, based on medieval sources. One of them is an 11th-century euchologion and contains prayers for the initiation into the novitiate and monasticism – Miguel Arranz, S.J. (ed.), L’Eucologio constantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI: Hagiasmatarion & Archieratikon (Rituale & Pontificale), con l’aggiunta del Leiturgikon (Messale) (Roma: Editrice Pontificia università gregoriana, 1996), pp. 397-431. This document testifies to an order of the ritual essentially the
because it was well known to the monks, or was perhaps described in service books. The only reference to a new monk’s entrance into the community and the use of the narthex for a related ritual action is found in the typikon of the Machairas Monastery:

One should, however, consider also those who come from a different monastery, for the purpose of making a beginning in it. Let him, therefore, who has been chosen by the monastery to be admitted as a monk, be ordered to observe its regimen, and after the passage of six months in it, let the present rule be read to him personally. If, indeed, he is obviously pleased, with all [the things] that are written in it, let the priest in the narthex, as I said, say “Blessed [is our God]” as well as the trisagion; and in the church let the monk bow down and present his head uncovered to the superior. The latter, as he makes the sign of the precious cross over it, reverently says the following, [etc.]

Although this is the prescription regulating the admission of a monk from another monastery, even in this case, the ritual induction starts in the narthex, as was customary for the rite of tonsuring. The ordination into the minor levels of clergy, such as the reader and subdeacon, also takes place in the narthex.

As early as the establishment of the Stoudite rule, hearing confessions by the superior of the monastery was set during Matins, in advance of the Divine Liturgy and as a part of the preparations for communion:

It should be known that at each matins service the superior leaves the choir at the beginning of the fourth ode, and taking his seat, receives the brothers who come forward for confession and ministers to each one of them for their benefit.

The narthex is not mentioned here. However, since Matins appear to have taken place in the nave and in regard to the practice of hearing confessions in the narthex maintained in later

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190 Such as euchologia (see Arranz, pp. 397-431).
191 (34) Machairas, # 60 (BMFD, p. 1141). Borrowed from (32) Mamas, # 22; new interpolations are in boldface type.
192 Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 68-69, n. 21 (with older references). Marinis believes that the narthex was chosen out of convenience, since the bishop was already seated in the narthex, waiting for the procession of the Lesser Entrance (ibid., p. 115).
193 (4) Stoudios, # AB22 (BMFD, p. 107).
monasteries,\textsuperscript{195} one can assume that the abbot of the Stoudion left the nave and moved to the narthex or another physically separated room in order to administer this sacrament in private. One of the prerequisites required of such an isolated space would be that it is near enough to, if not directly accessible from, the naos, where the monks were during the service, so they could easily leave for confession and return after being done with it. That makes the narthex, or some other adjacent room, a logical choice.

The rule that generally marks the beginning of the next stage in the development of monastic organization, the Evergetis typikon, sets aside two distinct moments for confessions in the daily routine, at Matins and after Compline:

[...]the superior must sit in a private place twice a day, and leaving aside all other work whatsoever and all the trouble of managing and directing, must take most diligent care to hear those who wish to make confession and set for each one the appropriate healing. We specify that after the reciting of the psalms at matins has begun there should be one time when he will bring healing to those who live continuously in the monastery and are not employed in any ministries; and after compline he will bring healing to those ministering inside or outside who are present.\textsuperscript{196}

Once again, there is no reference to the exact place where the abbot was to sit and the katholikon of the Evergetis monastery does not survive so as to propose any “private place” in the church for confessions to be heard – if it indeed was in the church. In modern Athonite practice, confessions also take place during Matins and are administered in the narthex (to which the

\textsuperscript{194} Cf. (4) Stoudios, # A[2] (BMFD, pp. 99-100). See also above, on the celebration of Matins.
\textsuperscript{195} See below.
\textsuperscript{196} (22) Evergetis, # 7 (BMFD, p. 476). This prescription is copied by the typika of Kosmosôteira and Phoberos monasteries - (29) Kosmosoteira, # 16, (30) Phoberos, # 14 (BMFD, pp. 808, 898, respectively). The only variation is the point during Matins that was set as the time for the superior to leave: “after the doxology at matins,” according to the former, and “after the second reading at matins,” in the latter.
doors are closed during that time). Assuming that there was no other enclosed and isolated room in the Evergetis katholikon, the narthex seems a likely venue for confessions.

Another possible location for confessions may have been a subsidiary chapel, as suggested by the practice in the Great Lavra of Mount Athos during the life of its founder. According to the writer of the Vita Prima of St. Athanasius the Athonite, the saint would enter one of the two chapels he built adjacent to the katholikon, on either side of the narthex, and hear the “confessions of nocturnal and morning thoughts” from his monks after “the last reading” of the morning services. In the Vita Secunda, the time of confessions is described only as “during a service”; but the place is specified as the chapel of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia, located to the north, where Athanasius was entombed. Perhaps this testifies to a further development of the practice after Athanasius’s death: the hearing of confessions would have been accommodated in the chapel where the founder was buried and, thus, confessions continued in the presence of his holy relics, i.e. in his spiritual presence.

In the Machairas Monastery on Cyprus, according to its typikon, which belongs to the Evergetine family, the “private place” convenient for confessions was found in the sacristy, even though there was a narthex appended to the monastery’s katholikon:

[...] the superior must enter the sacristy at each vigil at the time which he himself chooses for this, and leaving aside all work whatsoever and all the trouble of managing and directing,

197 I witnessed the practice at Hilandar in 2008, where it was only transferred to the exonarthex, as a more isolated room, since those entering the church during the service tend to use the inner narthex’s lateral doors, which provide the shortest connections between dormitories and the church.

198 The katholikon of the Evergetis monastery had both a narthex and an exonarthex (see above, note 3). The latter seems to have been open, in the form of a portico. Thus, if there was no other enclosed chamber adjacent to the nave, I presume that narthex would have been the only space connected to the naos that could offer the necessary privacy.

199 The exact wording is «ἐν ἐνὶ τῶν ἐκτεχνίων» (“in one of the chapels”, Vita Prima, #85, in Noret (ed.), Vitae duae antiquae Sancti Athanasii Athonitae, p. 40, line 11). Such a phrasing allows that the chapel that was located in the katêchoumena (see Chapter 1) could have also been used. But, since the chapel had to be easily accessible to the monks (see above), I exclude this possibility.

200 Vita Secunda, # 27, (Noret (ed.), Vitae duae antiquae Sancti Athanasii Athonitae, p. 155, lines 8, 9). For a brief descriptions and discussions of both chapels, which still survive, see Chapter 1.

201 See above, on the admission of a monk to Machairas monastery (note 191).
must take most diligent care to hear those who wish to make confession and set for each one the appropriate remedy.202

It is not known why preference was given here to the sacristy, i.e. διακονικόν – as the original text has it – over the narthex.203 The use of the diakonikon for confessions and private counseling has been also recorded at some other monasteries, which are located in Bithynia and Constantinople.204 Perhaps the sacristy was more isolated and better suited than the narthex. Yet more important are questions of where the sacristy/diakonikon was located in the church and what its architectural form was. Considering the preparations that take place in the sanctuary, especially during the rite of Prothesis, the service that immediately precedes the Divine Liturgy, it is unlikely that the room adjacent to the sanctuary and commonly known as the diakonikon would be used for confessions, unless it was fully physically separated. Another possibility is that the sacristy mentioned in the typikon was in fact a different room, not located next to the altar but instead in the narthex area, perhaps on its upper floor.205 This room may have been structured as a chapel, as it apparently was in another Cypriot foundation, the Monastery of St. John Chrysostom at Koutsovendis, whose katholikon was consecrated in 1090 and likewise included a narthex.206 However, considering the lack of any information on the layout of the

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202 (34) Machairas, # 50 (BMFD, p. 1137).
203 The original text can be found in Ιωάννης Π. Τσικνόπουλος (ed.), Κυπριακά τυπικά (Λευκωσία: Κέντρον επιστημονικών ερευνών, 1969), pp. 3-68, and the cited passage is on p. 25.
204 Cf. Ruggieri, Byzantine Religious Architecture (582-867), pp. 177-178, with references to sources, mostly hagiographies.
205 The use of the over-narthex areas as sacristies (skeuophylakia) is confirmed in the Post-Byzantine practice, i.e. in Vatopedi (my own field observations) and Ίβερον (related to me by local monks), and at Great Meteōron (Αναστάσιος Κ. Ορκλάνθος, Μοναστηριακή αρχιτεκτονική (Αθήνα: Ευξεμήνη, 1958), p. 74 and fig. 97). The upper-floor chamber of the north annex at Chora, Constantinople, may have also served as a skeuophylakion (Robert G. Ousterhout, The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1987), p. 51). For a further discussion of the possible use of the katechoumeneion or a part of it as a skeuophylakion (sacristy), see below and Chapter 5.
206 See Papacostas, “The History and Architecture of the Monastery of Saint John Chrysostomos at Koutsovendis, Cyprus.” According to the 12th-century typikon of the monastery, its skeuophylakion was the repository of a relic of the True Cross and was furnished with an altar table, two προσκυνήματα του βήματος (icon stands of the sanctuary, probably fixed in the templon area), a πετρόποδον (movable stand), pews, and a six-light fixture (ibid., p. 54). Tassos Papacostas presumes that the skeuophylakion was either located close to the katholikon or built as a part of it,
medieval church of Machairas, these observations must remain in the realm of speculation. Yet, for the purpose of this study, the possible existence of a room in the narthex zone, which could have doubled as the sacristy and a private room for confessions, should be noted. Also, as confessions relate to earthly matters that should not taint holy space, they are expected to take place away from the sanctuary, even outside the naos. Thus, the narthex, with its liminal nature, and adjacent areas seem a better location.

The assignment of the narthex as the place for confessions was firmly established in convents. Strict observance of the abaton, i.e. the banned or controlled presence of males, even priests, on the premises of a female monastery, permitted the father in charge of hearing confessions to access only the narthex:

It is my wish that all the nuns be subject to one spiritual father, so that they may thus appropriately be called “sisters.” He should be a man who is distinguished and known for his virtue, but it makes no difference whether he is a solitary or lives in a cenobitic monastery. I order that he come every month for a stay of three days and no more, and that he should reside in the small rooms assigned for this purpose in the hospital. From early morning he should sit in the part of the narthex of one of the churches to receive the confessions of each nun.²⁰⁷ (Typikon of the Convent of Lips)

I want the nuns of this convent to adhere to the same way of life [as at Lips], and thus they should choose the superior, thus they should seek out and accept a spiritual father with a pure heart, and should joyfully fulfill his instructions, as has already been laid down, when he visits the convent and meets with [the nuns] in the narthex.²⁰⁸ (Typikon of the Convent of Sts. Kosmas and Damian [Anargyroi] in Constantinople)

[The community’s spiritual father is to be summoned] to come to your convent when you wish to partake of the divine mysteries. As he sits in the narthex of the church, or inside the convent, if the weather is cold, each of you should confess to him your thoughts with piety and fear of God; and after he rests in my cell, you should dismiss him again with honor and provisions to return to his own cell.²⁰⁹ (Testament and Typikon of Neilos Damilas for the Convent of the Mother of God Pantanassa at Baionaia on Crete)

possibly in the over-narthex area (ibid., pp. 116-117). However, I have not been able to locate information regarding the place for the hearing of confessions in this monastery (whether in the narthex or in the skeuophylakion) and this parallel is brought only to show that a sacristy in a slightly earlier and geographically close monastery was structured as a chapel.

²⁰⁷ (39) Lips, # 11 (BMFD, p. 1269).
In these cases, which entailed the priests coming from outside the convents, narthexes were perhaps found to be most suited for the purpose of hearing confessions, because they were a part of the consecrated precinct (church), but also exposed to the view of others, preventing any inappropriate contact and conduct. Although we lack contemporary evidence that narthexes were likewise used for confessions in male communities, a similar logic may have been applied there, as well. And the modern Athonite practice of hearing confessions in the narthex or exonarthex is most likely a mere continuation of the tradition established early on.

Death and the funeral had an important place in monastic life. On Mount Athos, funeral services and related rites are conducted in the exonarthex. The same was the case in medieval times, as recorded in the typikon of the Convent of Kecharitōmenē:

The customary things done for the dead nun should be carried out in the exonarthex, I mean both the singing of psalms and all the clothing of the remains […]\(^{211}\)

This provision was copied word for word in the typika of St. Mamas and Hēliou Bomōn, with the exception that the word ‘monk’ substituted the word ‘nun’.\(^{212}\) The “customary things” were most likely the same as those done today in Athonite communities: as soon as a monk dies, his body is wrapped in his habit and laid on the bier in the narthex, if he was a non-ordained monk, or in the naos, if he was a priest or a deacon.\(^{213}\) An analogion is set in front of the bier (on the

\(^{210}\) On the monastic death, burial, and mourning, see Dorothy Abrahamse, “Rituals of Death in the Middle Byzantine Period,” \textit{GOTHR} 29 (1984): 125-134. For the monastic funeral service as practiced in the 11\(^\text{th}\) and 12\(^\text{th}\) centuries, see Elena Velkovska, “Funeral Rites according to the Byzantine Liturgical Sources,” \textit{DOP} 55 (2001): 21-51. For the changes in the order of the monastic funeral during the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, see Peter Galadza, “The Evolution of Funerals for Monks in the Byzantine Realm: From the Tenth to the Sixteenth Century,” \textit{OrChrP} 70 (2004): 225-257.

\(^{211}\) (27) Kecharitomene, # 70 (BMFD, p. 699).

\(^{212}\) Cf. (32) Mamas, # 39, and (33) Heliou Bomon, # 39 (BMFD, pp. 1020, 1077, respectively). The latter of the two copies the regulation from the former, which in turn borrowed from the Kecharitōmenē typikon.

\(^{213}\) The same assignment of spaces depending on the deceased’s status was recorded in the 15\(^\text{th}\) century by St. Symeon of Thessaloniki (see Vasileios Marinis, “Tombs and Burials in the Monastery tou Libos in Constantinople,” \textit{DOP} 63 (2009): 147-166, p. 156, n. 52, for the citation and reference). It apparently has a long ancestry, since a similar custom in regard to the gradation of sacred spaces is to be found in the instructions by Pseudo-Dionysius (6\(^\text{th}\) century): “If the deceased belonged to one of the clerical orders, then he is placed at the foot of the divine altar. […]}
west side) and a Gospel book placed upon it for a deceased cleric, or a Psalter book for a plain monk. The community members take turns in reading from these books continuously overnight until the funeral, which is administered after the Divine Liturgy on the following day. At the end, before departure for the cemetery, the brethren bid their last farewells by kissing both the icon, placed on the chest of the deceased, and his forehead.\textsuperscript{214}

The fact that the \textit{exonarthex} rather than the narthex was assigned for funerals in the \textit{katholika} of Kecharitōmenē, St. Mamas, and Hēliou Bomôn, with the same practice present in Athonite monasteries, brings up two questions. First, would the narthex have been used instead in a monastic church without an \textit{exonarthex}? And, secondly, did some issue of belief or practicality exist that dictated that funeral rites be ministered farther away from the \textit{naos}, thus precipitating the addition of \textit{exonarthexes} and open porches to churches already equipped with narthexes not long after their construction? To the first, it seems safe to say that indeed the narthex accommodated funerals when there was no additional space in front of the church. Although there is nothing definitive to confirm this hypothesis in foundation documents, support can be found in some other contemporary sources\textsuperscript{215} and also in modern practice, in which the funeral office takes place in the narthex (or porch) if the church has one.\textsuperscript{216} Similarly, funerals of ordinary monks and nuns are also conducted in the narthex, but funerals of priest-monks and superiors take place in the \textit{naos}.\textsuperscript{217} The second problem is more complex and relates to beliefs

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{215}] For these sources, see Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, p. 75, notes 77-80.
\item[\textsuperscript{216}] \textit{Ευχολόγιον το Μέγα} (see note 181 above for the full reference), pp. 395, 438; see also Hapgood (trans.), \textit{Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church} (cited in note 110), pp. 370, 394.
\item[\textsuperscript{217}] \textit{Ευχολόγιον το Μέγα}, p. 422; see also Онуфрије Хиландарац, \textit{Светогорски богослужбени устав}, p. 192.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
and customs that are rarely documented in sources. One can only assume that the funeral and other ‘less liturgical’ rites required a less sacred setting and, perceived as such, factored in the decision to establish an additional liminal space in a monastic church. In the case of open, porch-like *exonarthexes* and those lacking pictorial decoration, there arises yet another question: were they generally meant as non-sacred and non-liturgical additions to churches, accommodating some other uses, as well? In order to establish an answer, further study of yet untapped written sources and liturgical practices is needed. Some considerations regarding the usage and form of Athonite cases are elaborated in Chapter 6.

When speaking of the funeral rites that take place in the narthex, it is worth mentioning another rite related to death, the Office (sometimes Canon) for the Dying (*Ακολουθία επί ψυχομαχούντα και βιαζόμενον, Ακολουθία εἰς ψυχορραγούντας*). It is administered to a person in the throes of dying.\(^{218}\) I have not been able to locate any reference to where the person would be placed during this office. One could reasonably assume that this rite could be performed anywhere, and most likely it took place in the person’s room (or cell), at his deathbed. However, the only two surviving pictorial cycles depicting the stanzas of the canon – apart from those in manuscripts – are located in churches and, more precisely, are related to the churches’ narthex zones. The older of the two cycles, dated to the first half of the 13\(^{th}\) century,\(^ {219}\) is part of the fresco decoration of an ambulatory enveloping the north, west, and south sides of the chapel of St. George on the top floor of the homonymous tower at Hilandar monastery.\(^ {220}\) The other, dated

\(^{218}\) For the text of the Canon, see *Ευχολόγιον το Μέγα*, pp. 389-393, and Vasileios Marinis, “‘He Who Is at the Point of Death’: The Fate of the Soul in Byzantine Art and Liturgy,” *Gesta* 54/1 (2015): 59-84, pp. 80-84 (with an English translation).

\(^{219}\) As dated by Бранислав Тодић, „Фреске XIII века у параклису на пирамиду св. Георгија у Хиландару,“ *Хиландарски зборник* 9 (1997): 35-73, p. 70.

\(^{220}\) Besides the study by Branimir Todić (previous note), the following works has addressed these paintings: Светозар Радојчић, „Чин бивајеми на разлучење души од тела у монументалном сликарству XIV века,“ *ЗРВИ* 7 (1961): 39-52, Monica Hirschbichler, “Contemplating Death: The Murals of the Canon for the Dying in the Pyrgos of St. George at Chilandar Monastery,” *BSC* 30 (2004): 51-52, Бранка Иванић, „Прилог тумачењу...
to mid-14\textsuperscript{th} century, is in the upper floor (open gallery) of the \textit{exonarthex} of the Cathedral of St. Sophia of Ohrid.\textsuperscript{221} Putting aside discussions of the imagery and its meaning, as well as the reasons to have such a cycle in a tower chapel of a monastery and in the \textit{exonarthex} of a town cathedral, respectively, I would emphasize that, in both cases, illustrations of the canon adorn the walls of rooms in the narthex zone. This brings up the possibility that the narthex, as a room at the entrance to the \textit{naos}, which is symbolic of the Heavens,\textsuperscript{222} was at least occasionally used as the place to lay a dying person and administer the Office for the Dying. In light of the location of the pictorial ensemble illustrating the Canon at Hilandar within a chapel on the top floor of a tower, thus not part of the \textit{katholikon}, and of the possible role of Ohrid \textit{exonarthex}’s upper level in the ritual potentially administered to the archbishop, who most likely enjoyed the privilege of using the upper storey of the \textit{exonarthex} and who ultimately was a monk, it seems plausible that the narthex of a \textit{katholikon} or, more likely, its upper-floor chamber may have been used for this rite only in the case of a dying abbot.\textsuperscript{223} Due to the lack of any direct evidence – written or archaeological – and dating to the Middle Byzantine period, this question must remain open.

\textbf{E) Ritual Observances in the Narthex (Burials, Commemorations, and Collations)}

Closely related to funerals are burials in the narthex, which were considered a privilege and were only granted in exceptional cases, most commonly to founders. A patron’s burial in a monastery

\textsuperscript{221} Бранка Иванић, „Чин бивајеми на разлученије души от тела у Светој Софији у Охриду,“ Зборник Матице српске за likовне уметности 26 (1990): 47-88; Радојчић, \textit{op. cit.}; Цветан Грозданов, \textit{Охридско зидно сликарство XIV века} (Београд: Филозофски факултет – Институт за историју уметности, 1980), pp. 87-91; Marinis, “‘He Who Is at the Point of Death’: The Fate of the Soul in Byzantine Art and Liturgy”.

\textsuperscript{222} See above.

\textsuperscript{223} For a further discussion of this idea, see \textit{Chapter 5}. 
is a traditional right, often mentioned in the foundation documents. However, the exact place of the tomb is not always specified. When it is, then the tomb is almost exclusively located in the narthex or the exonarthex and occasionally in an adjacent chapel. Both solutions came as a way to obey the ban on burials in the church proper, while securing the proximity of a sacred space and the benefits from constant prayers being said there. In this context, the narthex is an ideal place. Subsidiary chapels seem to have been used in the case of privileged burials, such as those of royal patrons and benefactors, as, for example, in the Pantokrator Monastery of Constantinople and in the Monastery of Lips (in the Late Byzantine period). Similarly but rarely, subsidiary chapels were the site for the initial entombment for monastic founders, such as St. Athanasius of Athos and the founders of Ivērōn. In the monastic context, chapels are more often reserved for secondary, more elevated burials, given to individuals who were considered

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226 Prof. Marinis has argued that tombs were located in the narthex “as a compromise between the desire to be buried in a spiritually beneficial location and the canonical prohibition against burying the dead in the church” (Vasileios Marinis, “Some Notes on the Functional Approach in the Study of Byzantine Architecture: The Case of Constantinople,” in Robert Bork, William W. Clark, Abby McGehee (eds.), New Approaches to Medieval Architecture (Farnham, Surrey – Burlington, Vi.: Ashgate, 2011): 21-33, p. 31). For an overview of the legislation against burials in the church and archaeological evidence opposing it, see Marinis, “Tombs and Burials in the Monastery tou Libos in Constantinople,” pp. 149-151.


228 See Chapter 1 and Chapter 6.
holy, like St. Paul of Latros and St. Theodora of Thessaloniki. When located in the narthex, the tomb of the founder is almost always placed at the south end, often within an arcosolium (e.g. Vatopedi and Veljusa). In Kosmosōteira, according to the founder Isaac Komnēnos’s typikon, his tomb was placed “on the left side [i.e. in the north part] of the narthex, there where I made an extension to the building on account of the tomb.” This, as well as the evidence in several other churches, shows that the north side was equally acceptable if the church’s topography directed so. Leaving the issue of location aside, these and some other examples

229 The body of Paul of Mount Latros (died in 995) was originally buried in the narthex of the Stilos church. The remains were disinterred and reburied in a chapel built exactly for this purpose (BMFD, p. 135, referring to the vita of St. Paul). For Theodora of Thessaloniki’s burial in a chapel located “in the middle of the right hand colonnade” of the katholikon of her convent, see Alice-Mary Talbot (ed.), Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints’ Lives in English Translation (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), p. 209. For aspects pertaining to the burial provisions made by the founder, who was also regarded as a saint, on his own behalf, see Dimitra Kotoula, “The Tomb of the Founder-Saint,” in Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries (see List of Abbreviations): 210-233.

230 For Vatopedi, see Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 (with references). In Veljusa, a masonry tomb, probably belonging to the founder Manuel, was found in the south arcosolium of the narthex (BMFD, p. 169; Мильковиќ-Пепек, Вељуса [see note 3 above], pp. 85-86, drawing 10). The tomb of St. Clement of Ohrid (died in 916), which he constructed for himself, was similarly situated “on the right side of the pronaos” of the church of St. Panteleēmon in the monastery he had established (Marinis, “Tombs and Burials in the Monastery tou Libos in Constantinople,” pp. 159-160, n. 73). Notably, the tomb of Plato of Stoudion, which he probably built himself, was in the south part of the narthex of the basilica of St. John of Stoudios. The remains of his nephews, St. Theodore the Stoudite and Joseph of Thessaloniki, were transferred and laid in the same tomb in 844 (Cyril Mango, The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 184, and Ruggieri, Byzantine Religious Architecture (582-867), p. 196, with references in notes 44, 45).

231 (29) Kosmosōteira, # 89 (BMFD, p. 838). “[…]I wish the tomb to be divided from the entire narthex by the bronze railing that I mentioned earlier, but access to the tomb [should be] through [this railing].” (ibid., #90, p. 839). Robert Ousterhout has proposed that this, in fact, may have been the reference to the northwest corner of the naos, whose entire west part – not separated physically from the rest of the naos – was functionally considered a narthex (see note 3 above). Founders’ tombs similarly located in the naos – although commonly on the south side – can be observed in churches built by Serbian kings as their mausolea throughout the 13th century – cf. Slobodan Ćurčić, “Medieval Royal Tombs in the Balkans: An Aspect of the ‘East or West’ Question,” GOTH 29/2 (1984): 175-194, and Даница Поповић, Српски владарски гроб у средњем веку (Београд: Филозофски факултет у Београду – Институт за историју уметности; Београд: Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе; Приштина: Институт за проучавање културе Срба, Црногораца, Муслимана и Хрвата, 1992). However, I think that this was not the case in the Kosmosōteira. Its founder mentions the narthex twice, leaving the impression that this is a separate room in the church. Moreover, he underscores that his tomb is located within “an extension to the building” which was provided “on the account of the tomb”, i.e. purposefully built to house it, thus suggesting that the tomb may have even been placed inside a small chapel, separated from the rest of the narthex by a railing. However, nothing of the original narthex and potential annex survives and, therefore, this issue remains open.

232 The (re)burial of Hosios Meletios in the katholikon of his monastery is one such instance (see Vasilieios Marinis and Robert Ousterhout, “‘Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them’: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9th – 15th Centuries),” in Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein (eds.), Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2015): 153-172, pp. 164-165, fig. 8.7). In the Koimēsis church at Nicaea, the compartment north of the narthex sheltered a sarcophagus.
show that the narthex is rarely used for monastic burials, unless the monks or nuns were *ktētōr*, i.e. benefactors, or distinguished superiors.\(^{233}\)

However, commemoration prayers for both former founders and benefactors, and deceased members of the community are held in the narthex.\(^{234}\) Common commemorations were prescribed for all Saturdays and, more specifically, for the Saturday of Meatfare Week, the second, third, and fourth Saturdays of Great Lent, and Pentecost Saturday.\(^{235}\) As a part of this office, *kollyva* (boiled wheat) is blessed and distributed to the attendants. Commemorations apparently had had a long tradition by the 9th century, when the writer of the *typikon* of Stoudios found it appropriate only to regulate occasions when the commemorations are not observed in the customary manner:

> It should be known that until Pentecost, even though we neither sing the hours nor bend our knees, we do sing the canons for the dead on Saturdays, and we sing them on any other day if there happens to be a commemoration of a brother.\(^{236}\)

\(^{233}\) with relics (Oskar [Konstantin] Wulff, *Die Koimesiskirche in Nicäa und ihre Mosaiken nebst den verwandten kirchlichen Baudenkmalen: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Kunst im I. Jahrtausend* (Strassburg: J. H. E. Heitz (Heitz & Mündel), 1903), pp. 29-30). Another example, the burial of Nikēphoros (died in 813) in Medikion (Bithynia), the monastery he founded, “in the church of the archangel, to the left part of the narthex, as he, when still alive, had arranged for [his] tomb” (Marinis, “Tombs and Burials in the Monastery *tou Libos* in Constantinople,” p. 159, n. 71, with the reference and original passage), shows that the choice of the north side was not uncommon. On the site of this monastery, its *katholikon*, and surviving remains which seems to have been a basilica restored by Nikēphoros, see Cyril Mango and Ihor Ševčenko, “Some Churches and Monasteries on the South Shore of the Sea of Marmara,” *DOP* 27 (1973): 235-277, pp. 240-242, 274-276.

\(^{234}\) A brief overview of commemorations held in the narthex, with appropriate references, is provided in Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 75-76.

\(^{235}\) Cf. Дмитрије М. Калезић (ed.), *Енциклопедија Православља* (Београд: Савремена администрacija, 2002), p. 702 (s. v. „Задушнице“). See also below, note 254.

\(^{236}\) Stoudios, # B7 (*BMFD*, p. 103).
It should be known that on the Saturday of Pentecost at the *exapostelarion* we sing the “O Lord, the remembrance of those who have fallen asleep.” Singing this, we go to the graves of the brothers, and while standing there, we sing the *stichera* of the day, and matins closes. We do this again on the Saturday of Meatfare.237

Almost exactly the same provisions, including the chanting at the graves of deceased community members, are found in Athanasius’s rule for the Great Lavra.238 The Evergetis *typikon* provides more detailed instructions on the observance of commemorations:

 [...] commemorations should take place every year for all those who have accomplished for the monastery something worthy of remembrance and have specified that they should be remembered by us, and equally for those brothers whose names were and will be inscribed on the diptychs. In addition, whenever someone has recently died, he should be remembered every day during each service, and I mean during matins and the liturgy and vespers, in *ekteneis* until his commemoration on the fortieth day, during which also every day an offering will be made on his behalf. In addition to this the ecclesiarch must note down the commemorations of each of those who die so that you may not forget them and may perform them without fail.

Yet on this matter I must prescribe something more practical: for as the numbers of brothers dying increases, it is possible that sometimes the commemorations for three or four or even more will fall in the same week and those who are going to carry out the commemoration for each brother during the night office are forced always to leave out the canons prescribed for the night offices which are an obligatory duty for you each day, and chant the canon for the deceased. So that this may not happen, we command that, if some of the brothers should prefer to go away and chant the funeral canon, while the rest carry out that laid down for the night office of intercession, that should be carried out and is acceptable to us and, I think, to God. But if perhaps because of winter or even illness, that I may not mention laziness, you would not want to do this, then you must observe all the commemorations that you know occur together in one and the same week, and carry them all out for all of the people at the same time during one night office, unless there is a commemoration for one of your former superiors. For his commemoration must be carried out on its own, since he will be rendering account on behalf of you all. In that way you are satisfying your obligation to commemorate your brothers and you are not failing in the canon. So in both the night offices and in the liturgies on their behalf it is fine that

237 (4) Stoudios, # B8 (*BMFD*, p. 103).
238 (11) Ath. Rule, # [6] (*BMFD*, p. 222; this is borrowed from (4) Stoudios, # B8 – see previous note). Going to “the graves of the brothers” in the Great Lavra meant going out of the monastery’s enclosure to the graveyard with a chapel (which includes an ossuary on the lower level), located southwest of the monastery (for the chapel, tentatively but with reservation dated to the 10th century, see Paschalis Androudis, *Les Églises cimetériales monastiques du Mont Athos: contribution à l’étude des églises funéraires byzantines et post-byzantines des monatères de la Sainte Montagne (Hagion Oros, Grèce)*, thèse de doctorat en archéologie byzantine (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Presses Universitaires Septentrion, 1997), pp. 15-34).
commemorations should take place for them all at the same time during one service as long as offerings are made for each one.  

As is clear, there is no reference to the narthex as the venue in any of these documents. Nonetheless, in order to chant the funeral canon “away” from the ongoing service in the naos, “while the rest carry out that laid down for the night office of intercession,” a monk could have excused himself to the partitioned space of a side chapel or to the narthex. Additionally, the temporal placement of the commemoration prayers at Matins and Vespers, that is after their dismissals, which most likely were performed in the narthex, point to the possibility that those who were in charge of commemorations would stay in there to offer the appointed prayers. Moreover, the presence of tombs in the narthex certainly made its use as the place for commemoration quite appropriate. Such a consideration is confirmed by provisions found in the typika for the Kecharitomenē and Kosmosoteira monasteries, both largely indebted to the Evergetis typikon:

[commemorations at the founder’s tonsured relatives’ tombs, which were in the exonarthex] The commemorations of those who will be buried thus in this convent and the lighting of lamps on the tombs of those who have not chosen to dedicate anything at all in the convent will be carried out as my majesty decreed, with one lamp lit for each tomb to burn continuously; but [the commemorations] for those who were glad to offer and dedicate something of their own possessions by their own decision and choice, will be carried out in whatever way they decree from what is given by them, that is, as an addition to what has been decreed by us. (Kecharitomenē)

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239 (22) Evergetis, # 36 (BMFD, pp. 493-494). Parts of this chapter are borrowed by (27) Kecharitomene, # 70 (BMFD, p. 700: They also should be remembered every day with ektoēs in the divine liturgies and at matins and vespers until the fortieth day, and an offering should be made specifically for a nun until the completion of her forty-day commemorations.” – new interpolations in boldface type), and almost entirely copied by (30) Phoberos, # 50 (BMFD, p. 928).

240 Cf. (27) Kecharitomene, # 70 (BMFD, p. 700: “A common commemoration of all the nuns must take place each Friday after the office of lamplighting [i.e. Vespers], unless a feast prevents it […]” after the “office of lamplighting”), and (29) Kosmosoteira, # 90 (BMFD, p. 839: prayers should be said for the founder “every evening, after the dismissal of vespers”; see also below).

241 Cf. the chanting of commemorative prayers at the graves of deceased monks in the Stoudion and the Great Lavra (see above).

242 (27) Kecharitomene, # 76 (BMFD, pp. 704-705).
[...] I wish the tomb to be divided from the entire narthex by the bronze railing that I mentioned earlier, but access to the tomb [should be] through [this railing]. Every evening, after the dismissal of vespers, I want the superior and the rest of the monks to enter, and in front of the holy icons standing there, to pronounce the trisagion and say a certain number of Kyrie eleisons for mercy upon my soul. They [must] not fail to make the dismissal in this way, but [must] propitiate God and the Mother of God for me, with these [prayers].

(Kosmosōteira)

Although largely borrowing from the charter of the Kecharitōmenē monastery, the typikon of St. Mamas monastery provides strong evidence for the use of both the narthex and exonarthex for commemoration services. The narthex apparently was the setting for individual commemorations during the forty-day period after a monk’s death, whereas the exonarthex provided the venue for regular common (group) commemorations for all deceased members of the community:

The commemorations on the third, ninth, and fortieth days for the one who has died should be sung in the narthex of the church, and kollyba prepared on those days on his behalf, and let an offering [of eucharistic bread] be made for each liturgy on his behalf until the fortieth-day commemoration and let him be commemorated. But he should also be remembered at matins and vespers until the aforesaid fortieth day.

His name also must be written on the diptychs and he, too, must be commemorated [in the future] along with the rest. So that a common commemoration of all the monks may take place, on each Friday after the office of lamp-lighting, unless a feast prevents it, they must sing a canon for the dead in the exonarthex and an ektenes should be made for all those who have already departed.

Such spatial distinctions seem to be unique, but nevertheless the place given to the narthex and exonarthex in the perception of the progression of sacred spaces in the church is rather revealing.

To this, a prescription from the typikon of the Koutsovendis monastery that assigns the

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243 (29) Kosmosoteira, # 90 (BMFD, p. 839). For some proposals of the actual location of the founder’s tomb, see above, note 231.

244 (32) Mamas, # 39 (BMFD, p. 1020). This is based on (27) Kecharitomene, # 70 (BMFD, p. 700); new additions in boldface type. The Mamas chapter was copied in its entirety in (33) Heliou Bomon, # 39 (BMFD, p. 1077), with a minor but significant addition “in the exonarthex or at the grave”. Commemorations at the graves of deceased monastics are discussed below.

241
performance of the *pannychis* commemorating the deceased members of the community to the narthex can be added.  

In any event, it seems that the presence of tombs in the narthex (or * exonarthex*) instigated the offering of commemorative prayers within these spaces. The spatial reference “at the graves” is frequently found in *typika* and, when deceased members of community are concerned, that means going out of the *katholikon*, even out of the monastery, to the graveyard.

Therefore, the use of the narthex for commemorations probably began with offering prayers on behalf of founders buried in the narthex:

Whenever you offer an *ektenes* on his behalf at every office of the divine ritual, say aloud six times “*Kyrie eleison*” at both vespers and matins, and the liturgy, and, after the dismissal of vespers and matins on every day that is free of fasting, apart from Sundays and feasts of the Lord, sing at his grave the customary *parastasimon* and “Among the spirits of the righteous,” and the rest, and let also an *ektenes* be made on his behalf, the “*Kyrie eleison*” being sung fifteen times; and at each liturgy let one offering [of eucharistic bread] be offered on his behalf. So much for the daily services. (Typikon of St. Mamas)

It was perhaps out of convenience that the commemoration of deceased monks or nuns within the narthex gradually became habitual. Moreover, it is possible that burial vaults and ossuaries for monastics in some monasteries were accommodated in the narthex or in adjacent areas, as suggested by the existence of a burial ground close to the *katholikon* in the Monastery of St. Mamas:

[After the funeral rites in the *exonarthex*, the body of the dead monk] should be transported to the *burial-place* with the bier and be buried in the tombs of the monks on

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246 See above, notes 237 and 238.
247 I.e. on behalf of George, the “new builder”.
248 The emphasis is mine.
249 (32) Mamas, # 40 (*BMFD*, p. 1021). I presume that, since George was considered “rather as the primary and true founder of the monastery” (*ibid.*), his tomb was in the narthex.
250 For funeral rites conducted in the narthex or *exonarthex*, see above.
the right side, that is, of the church, in which the brothers alone must be buried, no one of those from the outside being buried with them.\footnote{251}{(32) Mamas, # 39 (BMFD, p. 1020); drawn after (27) Kecharitomene, # 70 (BMFD, p. 700), with differences shown with boldface type.}

The same instructions are found in a chapter of the typikon of Hēliou Bomōn.\footnote{252}{See (33) Heliou Bomon, # 39 (BMFD, p. 1077).} This chapter also makes provisions for the performance of commemorations in either the exonarthex or at the gravesite, confirming thus their spatial interchangeability:

[The name of the departed monk] also must be written on the diptychs and he, too, must be commemorated [in the future] along with the rest. So that a common commemoration of all the \textit{brothers} may take place, on each Friday after the office of lamp-lighting, unless a feast prevents it, they must sing a canon for the dead in the exonarthex \textit{or at the grave} and an \textit{ektenes} should be made for all those who have already departed.\footnote{253}{Ibid. (departures from (32) Mamas, # 39, in BMFD, p. 1020, indicated with boldface type).}

The use of either the narthex or the cemetery chapel for weekly commemorations – at Vespers on Fridays (i.e. the liturgical beginnings of Saturdays) – remains the tradition on Mount Athos, but today preference is given to the cemetery chapel.\footnote{254}{Cf. Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 34. This regular commemoration (\textit{μνημόσυνον}) is meant for all deceased members of the community, whose remains rest in the cemetery. It is exempted only on Fridays between the Friday of the sixth week of Great Lent (eve of Lazarus’s Saturday) and Sunday of Thomas \textit{(ibid.}, p. 151). The service takes place before Vespers and \textit{kollyba} is blessed, but it is served only after Vespers \textit{(ibid.}, pp. 34-35). For distribution of \textit{kollyba} in narthex in relation to commemorative services, see below.} On the other hand, the “Great Commemoration,” which occurs on the eve of Meatfare Saturday, takes place in the narthex in some monasteries at Athos.\footnote{255}{Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 141. The Great Typikon presently used in the Orthodox Church prescribes the performance of yet another common commemoration service in the narthex: the \textit{Litić} for the Departed, celebrated on the Clean Monday (the first Monday of the Great Lent) after the Hours (Григорије С. Дебољски, Дани богослужења Православне саборне источне цркве, translated by Милivoј Р. Мијатов [Сомбор: Златна грана, 1996], p. 125, n. 277). Grigorii Debol’skii connected this custom to the prayers said for the Emperor Theophilos, established after the victory of the Iconodoules in 842 \textit{(ibid.).}}

As a place located between the \textit{katholikon} and the refectory, the narthex also becomes the site for certain meal-related prayer services and rituals, such as the collation. Post-meal thanksgiving prayers said in the narthex are recorded in the rule of the Great Lavra:

\footnote{256}{Онуфрије Хиландарац, Светогорски богослужбени устав, p. 141. The Great Typikon presently used in the Orthodox Church prescribes the performance of yet another common commemoration service in the narthex: the \textit{Litić} for the Departed, celebrated on the Clean Monday (the first Monday of the Great Lent) after the Hours (Григорије С. Дебољски, Дани богослужења Православне саборне источне цркве, translated by Милivoј Р. Мијатов [Сомбор: Златна грана, 1996], p. 125, n. 277). Grigorii Debol’skii connected this custom to the prayers said for the Emperor Theophilos, established after the victory of the Iconodoules in 842 \textit{(ibid.).}}
It must be known that at the signal given by the bell, when the brothers come down to the midday meal, they should carry a verse [of the psalms] upon their lips, just as [they should] after rising [from the table] until they have gone over to the narthex to perform the thanksgiving for the food they have shared.\(^{256}\)

It is possible that this prayer took place just before or within Compline, which was performed in the narthex after supper.\(^{257}\) I was unable to find references in other typika of a similar, post-meal thanksgiving prayer service.

More commonly, the narthex is used as the venue for the collation (\textit{diaklysmos}, lit. “rinsing of the mouth”), a ritual taking of a piece of blessed bread with a little wine.\(^{258}\) The collation takes place on various occasions and under slightly different circumstances. The most common is the collation following the Divine Liturgy:

When the liturgy is finished, the wooden semantron sounds three times, and all the brothers assemble in the same place,\(^{259}\) and after singing the required verses and receiving the blessed bread, they go down to the refectory.\(^{260}\) (Rule of Stoudios)

It should be known that on the vigil of the Feast of Epiphany after the dismissal of the divine liturgy, we receive blessed bread. Afterwards, those who have received communion take a sip of a drink, but we do not eat the blessed bread. […] In the same fashion the washing of the feet takes place on Holy Thursday after [the monks have received] communion and taken a sip of a drink. When all have had their feet washed, they file out [to the refectory].\(^{261}\) (Rule of Stoudios)

Strictly speaking, there is no reference to the venue for the collation. However, since it comes between the Divine Liturgy (in the \textit{naos}) and other rituals (the Great Blessing of Waters in the

\(^{256}\) (11) Ath. Rule, # [21] (BMFD, p. 225); this is based on (4) Stoudios, # [AB28] (BMFD, p. 109), additions marked with boldface type.
\(^{257}\) On Compline, see above.
\(^{258}\) For further elaboration of \textit{diaklysmos} and instances in monastic typika, see BMFD, pp. 116-117 (note 27). Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, pp. 110-111, unlike Nicholl, “A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of \textit{Typika}: The Case of the Narthex,” pp. 288-293, holds this and another type of collation, which is discussed further below, as practical, not ritualized actions. Although I can accept his arguments, I am more inclined to see the collations as at least ritual-related if not necessarily ritualized actions, because both types were inseparable from specific liturgical services and for the obvious concern to have each of the two actions performed in the narthex, i.e. inside the church.
\(^{259}\) It is not clear what place is referred to here. I believe it was the narthex, since the assembling of monks was immediately followed by their procession to the refectory.
\(^{261}\) (4) Stoudios, # [A38] = # B37 (BMFD, pp. 115, 113-114, respectively). Note that “a sip of a drink” was restricted to those who had received communion.
atrium and the Washing of the Feet in either the narthex or atrium) or meals (in the refectory),
the narthex seems to be the most likely candidate for the setting. Alternatively, as seen above in
the discussion of confessions, there are cases when the collation was served in the sacristy:

It should be known that with respect to collation in church only those who take communion
may partake of the collation privately at the sacristy, consisting of a little of the water only or
of the wine if it is fitting, and a small piece of blessed bread—but the others not at all—just
as the divine [St. John] Chrysostom permitted those partaking of the communion to taste a
little something for the sake of a rinse.

As for the [phrase] “privately at the sacristy,” in this rule [it means] just as they also do
[at the Monastery of St. Antony] on the mountain of St. Auxentios in the rule about
eucharistic wine. (Regulations of Nikon of the Black Mountain)

The post-Eucharistic collation had become a regular part of the liturgical scheme and the
narthex had become its customary venue by the time that the Evergetis typikon was written:

After the customary collation [diaklysmos] has taken place in the narthex, when the divine
liturgy has already been completed, all the monks should gather and sit there waiting for the
summons to the table which is given by the striking of the refectory semantron.

The typika of Kosmosōteira and Phoberos, both belonging to the Evergetine family of typika,
copy this provision word for word. The same is the case in another Evergetine typikon, that of
the Athonite Hilandar monastery, whose author deems it fitting to insert a short explanation of

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262 As identified in BMFD, p. 419, n. 97. For this Bithynian monastic house, originally known as the Monastery of
St. Stephen, see Raymond Janin, Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins: Bithynie, Hellespont,
263 (20) Black Mountain, # 73 (BMFD, p. 405). Perhaps the sacristy was some sort of diakonikon, flanking the
bēma, and turning to such spatial solution was instigated either by the lack of a narthex or by local customs of a
small, idiosyncratic community in a mountainous region. Or, the sacristy may have been located in the narthex
zone. However, as the community for which this document was supposed to provide a set of regulations was never
established and the layout of the church at the Monastery of St. Antony is presently unknown, it is impossible to tell
what would have been the actual venue for collation and its spatial relationship to the church.
264 (22) Evergetis, # 9 (BMFD, p. 478).
265 Cf. (29) Kosmosoteira, # 21, and (30) Phoberos, # 21 (BMFD, pp. 810, 908, respectively). The diaklysmos, as
described and instructed in the typika of the Evergetine family, and its performance in the narthex are the subject of
Nicholl, “A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of Typika: The Case of the Narthex.” Gail Nicholl
treats this rite as inseparable from the solemn procession to the refectory that follows. However, another form of
diaklysmos, discussed below, was part of the vigil and not accompanied by a procession. Nicholl stresses the
communality of the collation as an important aspect, which called for the use of the narthex, i.e. a part of the church,
the communal building par excellence (ibid., p. 293).

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what the *diaklysmos* is, as it may have been a novelty for the brotherhood. Two other Evergetine *typika*, St. Mamas and Hēliou Bomōn, also copy the instructions, but contain no mention of the narthex, even though we know from other chapters that the *katholika* of these monasteries had both narthexes and *exonarthexes*. This must have been an omission on the part of the writer of the *typikon* of St. Mamas, since the writer of the Hēliou Bomōn rule – who used the St. Mamas document – felt that both the place and time needed to be specified and thus added “in the holy church, after completion of the divine liturgy” where the Evergetis rule has the word “narthex”. Explicit mention of the narthex as the venue for administering of the collation (*diaklysmos*) is found in the 12th-century *typikon* of the Cypriot Koutsovendis monastery. Additional attention to the post-Eucharistic collation, which apparently had an important place in Evergetine monasticism, is signaled by the *typikon* of Areia *(ca. 1149)*, where the use of richer lighting during the ritual is instructed:

The so-called collation should take place at each eucharist, in accordance with the wishes of the superior, and the illumination should be more lavish.

On Mount Athos, there is a modern custom of taking blessed water after the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy and the reception of the *antidōron*, which may be a continuation of this practice. It is notable because the water is consumed in the narthex, where it is kept in a large vessel. On the days when there is a commemoration, the *kollyva* is also distributed in the

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266 "After the customary *diaklysmos* [spelled as διακλύσμα] has taken place in the narthex, that is after a little of the *anaphora* has been taken and [wine] has been drunk, […]" – Богдановић (ed.), *Хиландарски типик*, # 9, pp. 19 (text), 67 (modern Serbian translation); English translation is mine.

267 Cf. (32) Mamas, # 17, and (33) Heliou Bomon, # 17 (*BMFD*, pp. 1005, 1062, respectively).


269 Cf. (33) Heliou Bomon, # 17 (*BMFD*, p. 1062).


271 The word διακλύσμα is used in the original text (*BMFD*, p. 970, n. 8).


narthex, immediately following the consumption of blessed water. However, it is given to all attending, including those who did not partake in the communion.

There was another variant of the collation, which took the form of the distribution of blessed bread and wine in place of a meal in the refectory. This was prescribed for certain occasions when monks abstain from any food, especially cooked meals, i.e. when they keep vigil on the eve of a great feast and in awaiting the reception of communion at the Divine Liturgy. It seems that the practice is related to the blessing and distribution of the five loaves, wine, and oil during solemn vigils. It may have been developed in relation to the custom of keeping a strict fast (i.e. not eating at all) on Great Saturdays until after the Divine Liturgy, which would take place in the evening. Shortly after, the vigil and night services for Easter would commence, ending up in the festal Divine Liturgy. The short time between the two sequences of services presented a concern not to break the fast before the communion. In the Stoudios rule, in order to refrain from a proper meal but to sustain the vigilant until Easter morning, a little bread (and fruit) and wine was served:

On Holy Saturday, the office of lamplighting begins at the eleventh hour and when the dismissal has come, we eat bread and fruit and drink each two cups of wine.

Athanasius in his rule for the Great Lavra draws upon this instruction, but is even stricter, ordering the vigilant not to go to the refectory, but to remain in the church and to consume the collation in the narthex:

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274 Ibid., pp. 37-38, and my own observations and field notes. The commemorations and blessings of kollyva are held at the end of Saturday liturgies (for all deceased) and of daily liturgies (exempting those on Sundays) during the forty days after passing of a monk (ibid., pp. 37-38).

275 The rules of fasting for Great Saturday are strict, prohibiting even the use of oil in preparing food, making it the only Saturday in the year that oil is not permitted. For this reason, in the rite of blessing of five loaves, only wine accompanies them, but not oil, while both are used in the rite performed on other occasions (cf. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (trans.), The Lenten Triodion, pp. 659-660). For the serving of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great on Great Saturday later in the day, in connection to Vespers, see Дебольский, Дани богослужение Православие саборные источники церкви, pp. 236-239.

On Holy Saturday in the middle of the twelfth hour we begin vespers, and the dismissal will come at whatever time [the service is concluded], but the refectory is not opened because the liturgy finishes so late and because a large meal would weigh heavily on the stomach and on the mind. We are content with the blessed bread, and can partake of about two servings of wine in the narthex.278

By the start of the Evergetine monastic tradition, the Great Saturday collation had become a standard component of the Easter vigil:

On Holy Saturday all anxiety that produces distraction must be avoided and there should only be a collation, as is customary.279 (Typikon of Evergetis)

I believe that the narthex had become the venue for the collation by this time and was considered one of the “customary” elements of the ritual, rendering the mention of the setting unnecessary. That this was the case is suggested by the Hilandar typikon, which copies this rubric word for word and only inserts the phrase “in front of the church” after the word “collation”280 and before “as is customary”.281 This clarification was necessary because the practice was probably new to the monks of Hilandar. The phrase “in front of the church” implies either the narthex, whose existence is attested in another of the typikon’s chapters,282 or an open porch appended to the narthex’s front. In some other cases the refectory could be an alternative venue, depending on the monastery, its individual traditions, and its actual architectural setting. Thus, the refectory was used in St. Mamas and Hēliou Bomōn:

On Holy and great Saturday there should be only a collation in accordance with the traditional custom. [The monks], however, will enter the refectory for the sake of quietude

277 It seems that some monasteries would have collation in the refectory, as in the case of the community of Nikōn of the Black Mountain: “It is necessary to eat this common bread with fruit in the refectory on Holy Saturday according to the rule of the Holy Mountain. But if there happens to be wine also, it is necessary to drink it according to the rule.” – (20) Black Mountain, # 65 (BMFD, p. 403). This might have been because the church of this community that never came to existence (see note 3 above) was not planned to have a narthex, at least not in the beginning. 278 (11) Ath. Rule, # [26] (BMFD, p. 226), 279 (22) Evergetis, # 10 (BMFD, p. 481). The exact wording is also used in (27) Kecharitomene, # 47 (BMFD, p. 693, with the augmentation: “even if the feast of the Annunciation of our all-pure Lady the Mother of God occurs”), and (29) Kosmosoteira, # 27 (BMFD, p. 814). 280 Word диаклизмо (diaklizmo) is used. 281 Богдановић (ed.), Хиландарски типик, # 10, pp. 24 (original text), 70 (modern Serbian translation). 282 See above, note 266.
and have a collation there in accordance with the traditional form and custom, even if the feast of our wholly undefiled Mistress and Mother of God should occur [on it].

In the Phoberos monastery the collation was distributed “in the holy church”:

[…] on Good Friday those who are able should not eat at all, and likewise on Holy Saturday, even if the commemoration of the Mother of God should occur. But all anxiety that produces distraction in us must be avoided, and there should only be a collation, as is customary, in the holy church after the holy communion, at the sixth hour of the night on Holy Saturday. For that is the hour which the holy fathers have handed down to us.

The phrase “in the holy church” may have been inserted for emphasis, underlining that the collation should not be served in the refectory, but rather in the church or, more specifically, in the narthex, which is known to have existed in the katholikon of Phoberos and was used as the venue for post-communion collations. However, the narthex is clearly named as the place for collation on Holy Saturday only in the rule of the Machairas Monastery:

On Holy Saturday let there be a collation only in the narthex after the dismissal of the divine consecration [of the Eucharist], which must be celebrated around the third or fourth watch of the night.

The customary Easter vigil collation was gradually assigned to the vigils on the eves of other great feasts, as well, as is evident from the 12th-century typika of the Phoberos and Kasoulon monasteries:

If the vigil of Christmas or the Epiphany should happen to occur on a Saturday or a Sunday, we celebrate the customary liturgy early in the day as always and then partake of a collation in the church.

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283 This instruction is exactly the same in both (32) Mamas, # 18, and (33) Heliou Bomon, # 18 (BMFD, pp. 1007, 1064, respectively). The feast meant here is the Annunciation, which commonly falls during the Great Lent.
284 (30) Phoberos, # 28 (BMFD, p. 915). Provisions for “a collation in the church” on the vigils of Christmas and the Epiphany are made in # 19 (see below, note 287).
286 (34) Machairas, # 72 (BMFD, p. 1145).
287 (30) Phoberos, # 19 (BMFD, p. 907). Similarly, the Evergetis Synaxarion prohibits entering the refectory and prescribes a collation when Christmas Eve falls on a Saturday or a Sunday. This collation (a distribution to each “a piece of bread and similarly a glass of wine as dictated by the abbot, but nothing more”) comes as an addition to the post-Eucharistic “eating [of] the blessed bread and washing the mouth from the divine gift [i.e. diaklysmos] in the narthex” (Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 110, n. 56). This shows not only the use of the narthex as the venue for both types of collation, but indicates that they were clearly differentiated and were done in succession, i.e. one not excluding the other.
It should be known that on Pentecost Sunday after the divine liturgy we do not go to the refectory, but we eat the blessed bread and have only one cup of wine in the narthex of the church.

After vespers, the signal for the refectory is struck, and we enter the refectory and eat what the grace of the Holy Spirit has provided for us. (Rule of Kasoulon)

Similarly, on the vigil of Christ’s birth and on the vigil of the holy Epiphany, if they happen to be on a Saturday or a Sunday, we sing the holy liturgy at its appointed hour. Then, we eat only the blessed bread and drink one cup of wine in the narthex of the church.

In the evening after the service of the holy baptism [of Christ], we taste of the holy water and enter the refectory [singing] the “I will extol thee, my God” (Ps. 144 [145]:1), just as we do at dinner on Pentecost Sunday. We eat if the grace of the Holy Spirit has made provision for us. There in the refectory we sing the compline.

According to the typikon of the Pantokrator monastery in Constantinople, collations were also offered after certain commemorative services, as a sort of treat and refreshment for the attendants:

On the occasions of the commemorations of the sovereign and father of my majesty of blessed memory, and of the lady of blessed memory, my very dear wife, and furthermore when commemorating my own majesty and my very dear son the basileus Lord Alexios (if he also wishes to be buried in the same tomb with me, as has often been mentioned), all these people will gather in the church of the most immaculate Lady and Mother of God with those of the sick who are able to move, carrying out a procession and singing “Remember, Lord, thy servants since thou art good,” and “Rest with the saints,” and “Ardent intercession.” Then they should make an ektenes, say Kyrie eleison forty times and “God will bless the founders,” and they should partake in a collation and depart. Four maritime modioi of eucharistic bread will be provided for the collation and four similar measures of wine.

In a similar vein, a type of collation, which was meant as a treat for the poor on the occasion of the patronal feast, was served at the Kosmosoteira on the day of the Assumption of the Mother of God:

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288 (43) Kasoulon, # 7 (BMFD, p. 1325). The Divine Liturgy on the Pentecost Sunday is immediately followed by Vespers (see Hapgood (trans.), Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church, pp. 245, 248), which most likely was the reason for a brief break and collation in the narthex between the two long and tiring services; a full meal was served in the refectory after Vespers.

289 (43) Kasoulon, # 8 (BMFD, p. 1325).

290 (28) Pantokrator, # [44] (BMFD, p. 759). The church in question here is the north one of the surviving complex. It has a narthex and used to have a portico along its north façade (see Chapter 2, Excursus). These two areas may have been the venues for the distribution of the collation; to me, the narthex seems more probable as the setting due to typikon’s mention of the participants’ departure (presumably from the church) after the collation.
They [i.e. one hundred poor brothers] should be seated on the floor [of the narthex?] in a line or a circle, to partake of the food in a more dignified way. When they will be filled, I want them to rise all at once from their places, to raise their hands up high and to recite for my sake the Kyrie eleison forty times, and then to go on home. I wish that this particular action of the monks at the time of the feast never once cease, nor ever be altered, in the present age. For I myself have judged it necessary to discuss matters pertaining to the feast in this way, and may I not despair of the intercession of the Mother of God on this account. 

All variants of the collation rite demonstrate yet again that the narthex was seen as a semi-sacred space, quite convenient for rituals that required some sort of proximity to the sacred space of a church, but were not “holy” enough to be staged in the naos. The physical position between the naos and a not-too-distant refectory made it perfect for the rites that involved food distribution and consumption.

F) Non-Liturgical Uses of the Narthex

Information about the non-liturgical or non-ritual functions of narthexes can be occasionally found in the sources. I bring a few cases to attention here. Their number is not great, but the nature of each of them well demonstrates the various ways in which the narthex could be used, adding further to the image of this part of the church that has been drawn thus far.

Narthexes functioning as meeting or council halls occur most frequently. The monastic community often had a need to resolve issues of common interest and importance. In such cases, assemblies of monks, usually of those higher in the hierarchy and more experienced, gathered to discuss the problem and to reach a decision as to how to resolve it. One occasion was the election of a community’s superior, when – according to the typikon of Hilandar – a group of monks, consisting of the oikonomos, ecclesiarch, and ten to twelve selected elders, met “in the

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291 (29) Kosmosoteira, # 10 (BMFD, p. 803).
The election of the abbot, as opposed to an appointment by either an internal or external authority, is rather uncommon for the monasteries of the period between the 10th and 12th centuries and the use of the church as the council space at Hilandar was unique. This *typikon* borrows extensively from the Evergetis rule and this regulation is based on the similar self-governing rights of monasteries established in the spirit of Evergetine monastic reform. However, none of the other documents of the Evergetine family, including the prototype, provide information on where an elective council was convened. Similar autonomy was apparently maintained on Mount Athos as well, where it was devised in conjunction with specific circumstances around the foundation and early development of the Great Lavra. But, again, there is no reference to the place where the electors met. Leaving aside the issue of whether or not the election of the abbot was a local Athonite tradition, I am more interested if the use of the church for this meeting was usual or unique. An answer is not presently forthcoming, since no other documentation for this has been uncovered. However, one should also ask where precisely in the church the election took place. Could it not have been in the narthex?

With the exception of the refectory, the narthex was probably the monastery’s largest enclosed room and thus could accommodate large meetings of an administrative nature. The

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293 Богдановић (ed.), *Хиландарски типик*, # 13, pp. 72-73. This is very similar to regulations in (14) Ath. Testament, # [12], [13] (*BMFD*, p. 277), except in the part that this older document does not mention the venue for the meeting of the election council. However, Athanasius urged the electors to “offer prayers and ekteneis” before reaching the decision and these prayers were likely said by the electors together, perhaps in the church, just before the meeting.

294 The opinion expressed by Филарет Гранић, „Црквеноправне одредбе Хиландарског типика св. Саве о настојатељу и осталим манастирским функционерима”, *Богословље* 10 (1935): 171-188, p. 176. Judging from the testamentary will of St. Athanasius the Athonite (see previous note), it seems that the election of the superior was the Athonite tradition and right. The use of the church as the council meeting venue was most likely customary and the Hilandar *typikon* probably just records this, or needs to tell this to Serbian monks who might have not been familiar with the tradition.

295 *Cf.* the chapter that regulates the selection procedures, duties, and status of the abbot in (22) Evergetis, # 13, 14 (*BMFD*, pp. 483-486); commentaries on pp. 502-503 provide reference to similar provisions of other related *typika*. On the self-governing status of Evergetine monasteries, see introductory commentaries in *BMFD*, pp. 460-461, (for the Evergetis *typikon*), 613, 862 (for other related documents).

296 See *BMFD*, pp. 194-197, and notes 292, 293, and 294 above.
refectory would perhaps be too big and inappropriate if confidentiality was required. The naos – which was also sufficiently large – was likely too sacred for such a gathering. However, since divine guidance was always invoked at the beginning of these meetings, the proximity of the church and its sanctuary was certainly of considerable importance. Therefore, the narthex presents the most reasonable space. The low masonry benches, which can be observed in some narthexes and exonarthexes, would have been ideal for seating those attending. Such occasional use of the narthex is further suggested by the presence of depictions of Ecumenical Councils in Post-Byzantine wall paintings in the narthexes of some monasteries, as is the case at the Stavronikēta (see Fig. 485) and Great Meteōron monasteries. It is interesting to note that in serving this purpose, the narthex could be compared to the chapter houses of monastery complexes in medieval Western Europe, buildings that are entirely lacking in Eastern monasteries.

The distribution of bread and wine in the narthex (diaklysmos), as a part of or in continuation of a service, or in lieu of a regular meal in the refectory on certain days (‘plain’ collation), is discussed above. I am not aware of any evidence of the “informal eating and drinking” mentioned by Vasileios Marinis in his recent book. He, perhaps, has in mind these distributions of bread and wine, which he apparently does not consider ritualistic. However, there are other instances of the ‘informal’ uses of the narthex. One of them was for resting and

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297 Cf. note 293 above.
298 The porticos of the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Ivērōn can be mentioned as examples from Mount Athos. Additional parallels and a discussion of the presence of benches in the narthex can be found in note 55 above.
299 My field notes. The same theme is found in the Late Byzantine paintings on the vaults of the narthex of St. Nicholas in Myra (see Nicole Thierry, “L’art monumental byzantin en Asie Mineure du XIe siècle au XIVe,” DOP 29 (1975): 73-111, p. 110) and on the barrel-vault of the upper storey of the inner narthex of St. Sophia in Ohrid (painted ca. 1346; see Цветан Грозданов, Охридско зидно сликарство XIV века (Београд: Филозофски факултет – Институт за историју уметности, 1980), pp. 71-75). More broadly on images of Ecumenical Councils in Byzantine art, see Christopher Walter, L'iconographie des conciles dans la tradition byzantine (Paris: Institut français d’études byzantines, 1970).
300 Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 110.
301 See above, note 258.
even sleeping. As it appears from vitae and other accounts, people involved were usually pilgrims, visitors, or itinerant monks. More generally, narthexes may have been reserved for pilgrims as a place to sit and rest. However, there is also evidence of monastics local to the place sleeping or dozing in the narthex, perhaps during short intervals between services in the church.

The 11th-century vita of St. Symeon the New Theologian by Nikētas Stēthatos contains a narrative that describes the spreading out of crops in the narthex to dry, an act that apparently did not cause any disturbance among the community as something strange:

One day, while Arsenios occupied the office of cellarer, he had washed some grain in water and then spread it out in the narthex of the church, leaving one of the doors open to let the breeze blow in. Some crows flew down from somewhere, went inside, and started enjoying as much of the grain as they could, hopping about and cawing.

Enraged by this, Arsenios shut the door and killed the birds. The abbot, St. Symeon, brought Arsenios to realize what he had done and Arsenios repented for his rage and for killing the birds. However, he was apparently not reproached for his use of the narthex to spread grain. The impression is that this was not uncommon and it provides another instance of the narthex being treated as a non-sacred or a less sacred space. It should be noted that although the word ‘pronaos’ is used in the Greek original, suggesting the form of a portico, the existence of several doors – one of which was opened – indicates that the form was of an enclosed room, i.e. a proper narthex.

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303 Talbot (ed.), *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints’ Lives in English Translation*, p. 199, n. 203. It seems that such stories often involve nuns, perhaps tendentiously aimed at showing the weakness pertaining to their sex.
Before ending, various uses of the *katēchoumeneion* for non-liturgical purposes should be mentioned. It apparently accommodated a monastic cell and library at the Great Lavra, and possibly was used as a sacristy (*skeuophylakion*) at Koutsovendis, Cyprus. These and other functions of the *katēchoumeneion*, as well as issues pertaining to them are elaborated in the appropriate segment of Chapter 5.

Perhaps there were other non-liturgical uses of the narthex. However, due to the nature of the sources I have been looking at, I have not come across any of them. All available cases examined above clearly point yet again to the understanding of the narthex as a space that was not as holy as the *naos*, despite its being part of the church. As such, the narthex could accommodate a variety of functions that were not deemed sacred enough to take place within the *naos*, but that still retained a certain degree of holiness and so necessitated the use of a room associated with the church.

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Though likely not exhaustive, the materials presented in this chapter provide evidence for the complex role of the narthex within the monastic context. Perhaps a few more examples could be found in other sources. However, the uses that have been examined here are enough to give a good and clear picture of the narthex in a monastic community’s life and ritual. Ultimately, the narthex stands out as a preparatory space, a buffer zone between the church – the realm of the Divinity – and the rest of the monastery, its “secular” realm (e.g. refectory,

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305 See Chapter 1.
This spatial and symbolic aspect was nothing new, since narthexes served similar purposes in non-monastic churches and in earlier periods. Yet, narthexes become significantly more important in post-Iconoclasm monastic communities, as they get assigned additional functions and dimensions.

For example, the daily prayer cycle (the “Divine Office”) originated in the private sphere of devotion and was probably understood as pertaining to earthly existence. Hence, its performance was set in the narthex, which was associated with the earth, whereas the naos, often given the symbolic meaning of Heaven, remained reserved only for the Divine Liturgy, itself considered a prefiguration and image of the Heavenly Kingdom. Aside from these symbolic aspects of church architecture, the narthex is often the only other available space – besides the nave – to accommodate large gatherings, whether for a ritual or non-ritual purpose. Its liminal character makes it a good place for services that do not require the use of the altar and, hence, do not have to take place in the naos. Similarly, the use of a separate space is occasionally necessary for a service that is performed simultaneously with the Divine Liturgy. Commemorations and supplicatory prayers (Παράκλησις, молитва) are some of those special offices that require the church, but not the sanctuary. They can instead be conducted in subsidiary chapels, but also in the narthex, where burials of founders and other important people are commonly located.

However, it is not always easy to trace the actual architectural solutions that answered these functional demands, particularly in the interior of the narthex. Only a handful of katholika of the monasteries for which these typika were drawn survive. This makes it almost impossible

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308 Cf. Symeon of Thessaloniki, De sacra liturgia, # 98 (PG 155: 292A), and his De sacro templo, # 4 (PG 155: 704B).
to determine securely how and to what extent certain rituals and other monastic needs influenced the design of their narthexes, and how uniform this influence was across the Byzantine monastic world. Likewise, it is hard to establish, *vice versa*, to what extent the manner in which rituals were performed in the narthexes was directed by specific spatial arrangements and architectural forms. Moreover, even when a church has survived, it is usually only the primary architecture that is certain, whereas the original furnishings and interior arrangements remain unknown, as well as any pictorial decoration that might further shed light on the narthex’s functions. There are also cases where both the church and its *typikon* still exist, but neither the written rules nor the surviving architecture make absolutely clear how these narthexes served their communities, or how they related to the rest of the church building and to a larger monastic complex. The most illustrative example of such a situation is the complex of the two churches that served the Monastery of Lips in Constantinople. Both churches survive, as does the monastery’s late 13th-century *typikon*, which contains many liturgical prescriptions. However, there is only one clear reference to the narthex, which states that confessions were to take place there. And the document does not even specify which of the two narthexes (or three, if the outer perambulatory is counted) was to be used.\(^{309}\)

And yet, a great number and variety of functions associated with the narthex may have resulted in the development of a simple space, which – with the addition of a few movable pieces of furniture (such as a book stand, an icon stand, and the like) – could have been minimally equipped for a particular service being performed there. If this was the case – and most likely it indeed was, since the narthex is used in this manner today, as well – it explains why there are no permanent fixtures and almost no furnishings in the surviving narthexes from all regions of

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\(^{309}\) * Cf. (39) Lips, # 11 (*BMFD*, pp. 1268-1269). See also above, the discussion of confessions in the narthex. The older of the two churches, i.e. its narthex is examined in Chapter 2.
Byzantium. They perhaps never existed, or they were portable and never meant to be permanent and fixed. Such a spatial flexibility made the use of the narthex for different services possible. The narthex provided a protected space where certain services and rites could take place, not due to its features and elements (with the exception of the Blessing of Waters and the Washing of Feet, which both required water\textsuperscript{310}), but because it lacked specificity and thus could easily accommodate a range of activities. Additionally, the narthex was the ideal location in terms of its transitional position between the church proper and the outer space, and in terms of the symbolic meaning that derives from such a position. The narthex has importance as a place of heightened sanctity, but not on the same level as the naos and sanctuary. Nestled between the sacred space of the naos and the sanctuary, on one side, and ‘profane’ space of the rest of the monastery, on the other, the narthex was unique and yet versatile.

\textsuperscript{310} The former depended on a water basin, often permanently set in the narthex, while the latter, in addition to the requirement of water, was apparently performed in the proximity of a wall paining or mosaic of Christ washing the feet of the Apostles, which was usually depicted in the narthex (see above, notes 180 and 182 and Chapter 4).
PART II:

Cumulative Analyses and Interpretations of Athonite Narthex Areas: Characteristic Architectural Elements and Pieces of Furnishing, and Their Role in Staging Functions and Conveying Meanings
Chapter 4

Narthex Proper (Ground-Floor Room)

In this and the following two chapters, I thoroughly explore the narthex, its significant parts, and adjacent rooms and areas, as they appear in the Middle Byzantine *katholika* of Mount Athos. I base my elaborations mostly on the features that have been detected and described in Chapter 1, where the surviving buildings have been examined. Textual evidence and architectural comparanda, presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 2, as well as some additional materials, are brought into discussion when appropriate. Not all, but only some elements, mainly in the interior of the narthex and its adjacent spaces that are characteristic to Athonite monuments, are analyzed here. Chapter 4 focuses on the narthex itself, which is followed by an examination of the narthex’s upper floor, the *katēchoumena*, in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, there is a discussion of the exonarthex, subsidiary chapels, *phialē*, and other structures adjacent or functionally and spatially related to the narthex.

a) The Three-Bay Layout, Size, and Proportions

All narthexes of Mount Athos constructed during the Middle Byzantine period, particularly those that accompany the cross-in-square *naoi*, are shaped as oblong spaces subdivided into three bays. However, the similarities among narthexes are not exhausted simply in ground plan. The narthexes are very close in dimensions or, at least, in ratios between their widths and lengths. Further on, they share the same or similar organization, structural systems, and vaulting solutions.
Plan, size, and ratio between the width and length, as well as the size in relation to the respective naoi, make the Athonite narthexes of the period immediately recognizable as a well-defined type, which one can also observe in other monastic churches of the period, specifically those in Constantinople. The first noticeable characteristic is the interior’s tripartite articulation, which is common for all narthexes. The three bays are manifested in the segments of vaulting, separated by means of two transverse arches. The arches can be supported by pilasters (as in the churches of İvērōn, Vatopedi, and St. Procopius; see Figs. 39, 49, 164), but more often they spring from flat walls (Great Lavra, Xenophōntos, Zygou, St. Demetrius, Ravdouchou, Voroskopou, and Melissourgeiou; see Figs. 30, 117, 124, 154, 11, 179, 182, respectively), nested only on stone brackets, as was the case in Xenophōntos (Fig. 115). The former group has parallels in the narthexes of Myrelaion, Kilise Camii (with pilasters employed only in the east wall), Pantokratōr, church near İznik, Yi lanca Bayır (also only in the east wall), Pendik, Panagia tōn Chalkeōn, and Olynthos (see Figs. 202, 231, 293, 250, 251, 256, 258, 264), whereas the latter can be compared to those of the Theotokos of Lips and Eski İmaret Camii, and the older cases of Fatih Camii (which, actually, does not have bays), Kurşunlu, and Çeltikdere (see Figs. 187, 212, 239, 249, 254). Earlier examples of narthexes without pilasters suggest that such treatment of the structure might be older and that the emergence of pilasters may have been a result of the transformation of a single-vaulted room (as that of the Fatih Camii) into a three-bayed space. Additionally, the use of pilasters may have contributed to strengthening the walls of those

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1 See Chapter 2.
2 See Chapter 1. Such a solution may have been employed in other narthexes that lack pilasters. Also, the arches may have sprung from string courses, thus resembling designs of the Theotokos of Lips and Eski İmaret Camii (see Chapter 2 and Figs. 190, 213, 214).
3 The narthex of the ruined Church H in Side (7th or 8th century?) appears to have been covered by a single barrel-vault, as suggested by the thickness of the west and east walls and lack of pilasters. For the dating and plan of this church, see Robert Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 17 and fig. 10, and Hans Buchwald, “Western Asia Minor as a Generator of Architectural Forms in the Byzantine Period: Provincial Back-Wash or Dynamic Center of Production?” *JōB* 34 (1984): 199-234, p. 226 and n. 94.
narthexes that had upper floors. However, the pilasters certainly were not a necessity in such cases, since there are two-storied narthexes without pilasters (e.g. Great Lavra, Lips, Eski İmaret Camii, and probably Zygou), as well as single-storied ones with pilasters (e.g. Myrelaion and Kilise Camii).

Constantinopolitan narthexes lacking pilasters have their arches and vaults springing from a marble string course, which is often ornamentally carved (see Figs. 190, 213, 232). This solution appears richer and more sophisticated: the string course, besides structurally strengthening the springing point, most likely functioned as a divider between the stone revetment of the lower areas of the walls and mosaics or frescoes of the vaults (cf. Lips, Eski İmaret Camii, and Hosios Loukas; Fig. 407). However, such solutions have not been recorded in Athonite churches, even in those that lack pilasters. This may suggest the use of more modest decoration in the Hagiorite foundations, perhaps due to limited financial resources, to poorer-skilled workshops involved in their execution, or to a more austere taste of their monastic communities. With almost all interior decoration now gone, it is hard to determine the exact reason for this evident departure from Constantinopolitan examples.

The sizes of Athonite katholika and their respective narthexes clearly set out three groups of monuments: 1) larger – Great Lavra, Ivērōn, and Vatopedi, 2) medium-sized – St. Demetrius and Zygou, and 3) smaller – Xenophōntos, St. Procopius, Kalamitsiōn, Ravdouchou, Melissourgeiou, and Voroskopou. The measurements within groups are almost the same (especially between Great Lavra, Ivērōn, and Vatopedi) or very close. Actual sizes of the narthexes, given approximately, are as follows: [3.40]x11.20 m (Great Lavra), 3.40x11.40 m

4 The churches of Melissourgeiou, Ravdouchou, and Kalamitsiōn do not belong to the cross-in-square type (see Chapter 1). Nonetheless, I include their narthexes in the examination since their form mostly fit into the typology of Athonite narthexes of cross-in-square churches.
(Ivērōn), 3.20x10.80 m (Vatopedi),[5] [2.80]x8.40 m (St. Demetrius), 2.10x7.90 m (Zygou),
[2.50]x6.80 m (Xenophōntos), 2.45x5.90 m (St. Procopius), 2.60x6.75 m (Kalamitsiōn),
2.40x6.30 m (Ravdouchou), 2.30x6.45 m (Melissourgeiou), and 2.30x5.80 m (Voroskopou).
The size of each, as the rest of the church, was most probably in direct correlation to the size of
the monastery and its financial power (or available sponsorship). However, it is not the mere
size that determines differences between the groups. Distinctions are also noticeable in the
proportions of the narthexes, i.e. the ratio of their widths and lengths, as well in the relative size
when compared to the corresponding naoi. The narthex’s width is taken as the unit (module) for
the following analysis.6 In each narthex of the Great Lavra, Ivērōn, and Vatopedi, the length
takes slightly more then three times its width (Figs. 424 to 426). The same measurement – the
width of the narthex – is also found in the length of the west and east cross arms of the naos:
they are exactly the same at Ivērōn (Fig. 425), whereas the lengths are slightly larger at the Lavra
(Fig. 424) and slightly smaller at Vatopedi (Fig. 426). When compared to the domed core of the
naos, the narthex’s width makes more than half the dome’s diameter – about 6/11 at the Lavra,
4/7 at Vatopedi, and about 2/3 at Ivērōn. The narthexes of the smaller katholika feature a
different proportion. The length/width ratio is about 2.50 at St. Procopius and Kalamitsiōn (Figs.
430, 434), about 2.66 at Ravdouchou and Voroskopou (Figs. 433, 431), and about 2.80 at
Xenophōntos (Fig. 429). The length of the narrow narthex of Melissourgeiou is almost three
times its width (Fig. 432). That means that these narthexes are relatively wider than those of the
large katholika. In the naoi of the smaller churches, the west cross arms are shorter than the

5 Stavros Mamaloukos provides slightly different measures, 3.3x10.8 m Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής
Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή (see List of Abbreviations), p. 50.
6 We possess no information whether this measurement was indeed used in setting the design of the narthex and
during the construction of a church. I would say probably not. However, I use it here out of convenience, as it
clearly indicates the proportions of the narthex, as well as the ratios between the size of the narthex and the size of
church’s other architectural elements.
narthexes’ widths and the domes’ diameters measure only slightly more than the narthexes’ widths. The proportions in the remaining two – St. Demetrius and, especially, Zygou – set them closer to the larger churches: the ratio length/width is 3.00 (St. Demetrius, Fig. 428) or more (Zygou, Fig. 427). Furthermore, the west cross arm of the Zygou’s naos is of the same length as the narthex’s width, which is about 2/3 of the dome’s diameter. The proportions in the naos of St. Demetrius, though, are similar to those of the smaller churches.

When speaking about the proportions of any narthex, one is reminded of the Biblical passage referencing the size of Solomon’s temple: The vestibule in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits wide, across the width of the house. Its depth was ten cubits in front of the house. The information that the revered building had a vestibule/narthex was certainly noticed by the Byzantines and not overlooked in any potential justification of the inclusion of the narthex in a church layout. However, the 1/2 ratio between the depth and width of the Temple’s vestibule clearly differs from the above ratios that range from 2/5 to 2/3. Therefore, potential concern for symbolism was apparently not a factor in the design of the narthexes under discussion here or, at least, was deemed as of lesser importance than functional and spatial demands, which likely determined the resulting ratios.

The proportions of the narthexes of the Great Lavra, Ivērôn, Vatopedi, St. Demetrius, and Zygou are closer to those of few Bithynian monuments discussed in Chapter 2. This may suggest that the plans and form of early Athonite katholika are the result of direct relationship between these two monastic centers. There certainly were direct monastic contacts, but it is hard to say whether architects would entirely overlook Constantinople and its churches. If these similarities of proportions can indeed be taken as a witness to direct architectural connections

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7 1 Kings 6, 3 (NRSV).
8 The rest of the church, the naos and sanctuary, show a similar disregard for the dimensions of the “house that King Solomon built for the Lord”, which was sixty cubits long and twenty cubits wide (1 Kings 6, 2).
between Athos and Bithynia, I would say that those who conceived Athonite *katholika* were not necessarily unaware of the Constantinopolitan churches. The plans and architectural elements of the *katholika* of Iveron, Vatopedi, and Zygou further suggest that their builders were of great skill and that they may have even been hired in the capital. As it appears, the cross-in-square plan with a three-bayed narthex was the common monastic type of the period, almost the norm outside Constantinople as well. With the rise of monasticism after Iconoclasm, the spatial arrangement provided by the type was most probably deemed convenient and likely supported by both monastic founders and imperial donors, enabling the introduction of the type to the capital. Perhaps only the actual master builders were hired from any of the numerous Bithynian communities, or came from the monastic ranks of the client community (perhaps the abbot himself), and they may have used measurements they were familiar with from the experience with churches in their native environment, i.e. the monastery where they started their monastic vocation. If this indeed was the case, then the occurrence of slightly greater widths in the narthexes in Constantinople can be explained as a result of particular circumstances within the city. The capital’s monasteries could have had frequent visits paid by the local lay population attending liturgical offices and celebrations, unless a monastery did not permit lay visitors. Also, some of the foundations, especially the imperial ones, would be honored by the presence of emperor and his retinue on certain festive occasions. In both cases, the narthex could have functioned as the room reserved for non-monastic attendants, who may have been banned from entering the *naos*. Slightly larger spaces would, therefore, prove more useful.

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9 See Chapter 2, Excursus.
11 Guesthouses, intended for both lay and monastic visitors, existed in the Stoudion, (4) Stoudios, # AB24 (*BMFD* [see List of Abbreviations], p. 108), at the Great Lavra, (11) Ath. Rule, # [18], and (13) Ath. Typikon, # [35] (*BMFD*, pp. 225, 260, respectively), in the Evergetis Monastery, (22) Evergetis, # 38 (*BMFD*, p. 495), and in the
Furthermore, the proportionally wider narthexes of the smaller Athonite churches – St. Procopius, Kalamitsión, Radvouchou, Voroskopou, and Xenophontos – can perhaps be attributed to similar concerns. These churches are smaller in size and if the ratio of their narthexes were kept the same as in larger churches, the rooms would have been uncomfortably narrow and probably inadequate to receive all necessary functions. Not neglecting functional and spatial demands speaks to the careful considerations applied to the design process. The proportions acquired in this manner, as well as the division of the narthex of St. Procopius into equally sized bays covered by groin-vaults, draw comparison to the Theotokos church of Lips. This may situate St. Procopius more closely to Constantinopolitan architecture; moreover, the general layout and the building technique of this church, as well as of the most of other larger Athonite katholika regardless of their narthexes’ forms, are comparable to those of the contemporary Constantinopolitan monuments. I will address these similarities, or potential differences, at a greater length further below when examining each of architectural elements characteristic for Middle Byzantine narthexes of Mount Athos.

b) The Emphasized Central Bay

Returning to the narthex’s division into three bays, it is important to note that the middle bay of most Athonite narthexes is of a square plan and covered by some sort of spherical vaulting, whereas the other two bays are slightly smaller, oblong, and covered by groin-vaults. This is the case at İvērōn, Vatopedi, and Voroskopou, most likely was at the Great Lavra and Zygou (as witnessed by the floor pavement and square proportions of that area in both), and perhaps was at

Kecharitōmenē Monastery, (27) Kecharitomene, # 17 (BMFD, pp. 679-680), to mention but a few relevant cases. However, I could not find any regulation governing the visitor’s attendance of church services.
Xenophōntos and St. Demetrius.\textsuperscript{12} It is not known what kind of vaulting was employed at Ravdouchou, Kalamitsiōn, and Melissourgeiou. Apart from these three, the sole apparent exception is the narthex of St. Procopius, whose equally sized bays are all covered by groin-vaults. Incidentally, this narthex and very likely that of Zygou were the only ones to feature bays of equal sizes.\textsuperscript{13}

The presence of a domical vault over the central bay, somewhat resembling a baldachin, deserves special attention. In all Athonite cases, the bay is of a square plan. The vaulting takes the form of a blind dome at Ivērōn, of a sail-vault at Vatopedi (see Figs. 69, 70), and perhaps of a sail-vault at Voroskopou.\textsuperscript{14} The square area of the bay is further emphasized by a floor pavement design, distinct from the pavement of the rest of the narthex. The designs range from just a plain square surface flanked to the north and south by framed slabs that form broad bands aligned with the arches above (Ivērōn, Fig. 435-2), through a rectangle of dark-gray stone, framed with a pink stone bordure (Vatopedi, Figs. 435-4, 436, 69, 70), and a square stone slab framed with a mosaic bordure (Zygou, Figs. 122, 124), to a framed chequer-work flanked to the north and south by two decorative bands (Great Lavra, Figs. 435-1, 437, 30, 28).\textsuperscript{15} Emphasized decorative treatment of the floor immediately before the entrance to the nave is also to be found in the narthexes of the lateral \textit{parekkléśia} at Great Lavra (see Fig. 437). Unfortunately, their original vaulting is lost, so it is impossible to attest if the form of the respective vaults conformed to the pattern set for central bays in narthexes of main churches.

\textsuperscript{12} See Chapter 1.
\textsuperscript{13} The three bays may have been equal in size at the Great Lavra, as well, if engaged arches were employed at the north and south ends, thus narrowing the lateral bays. The existing half pilasters in the east corners, if original, together with a similar pair in the west corners, would have provided support for these arches.
\textsuperscript{14} See Chapter 1.
\textsuperscript{15} The floor of the narthex at St. Procopius is presently covered with wooden planks, so it is unknown if there is any stone pavement beneath and what its design would be like.
Interestingly, similar emphasis of the central areas is found in a decorative treatment of the floor pavement along the *katholikon’s* main east-west axis: in the *exonarthexes* of Vatopedi (see Figs. 436, 87, 88, 96) and Zygou (see Figs. 135, 144), and in the west bays of the Great Lavra’s and Ivērōn’s naves (see Figs. 435-2, 437). The former two feature similar quincunx interlace (or *penteomphalon*) designs, which consist of five stone discs within an interlacing pattern executed in *opus sectile* technique, the one at Vatopedi only set within a rectangle rather than a square. The latter two have more complex designs, but each includes a quincuncial interlace: immediately beyond the main west entrance at Ivērōn and in the center of the west bay and just below the west dome-supporting arch at the Great Lavra (number 10 in *Fig. 437*). These decorative designs appear to mark what might have been the stations on a processional route along the church axis, at the entrance points of specific rooms or spatial units. The floors of the two *exonarthexes* feature designs even more ornate than those found in the narthexes. In this way, they seem to accentuate the entrance areas in the same manner as their counterparts in the narthexes, apparently even more than the latter. If the meaning laying behind the designs of both spaces was the same, then the *exonarthexes’* entrance areas – judging from the only entirely preserved one, that at Vatopedi – were not necessarily crowned by domical vaults. However, that perhaps was not always the case, since the square proportions of the space and the presence of a pair of massive pilasters at Zygou suggest that a domical vault may have been employed as the covering for its *exonarthex’s* middle bay (see *Fig. 135*).

This special decorative embellishment of the central bay’s floor pavement appears to be more than a mere centerpiece feature for the room’s pavement. It may have had significance in

\[16\] For a drawing of the Vatopedi piece, see Μαμαλούκος, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου* - Διδακτορική διατριβή, drawing 25.5.
\[17\] The floor of the central west bay of the *naos* at Zygou seems to have had a square design similar to that featured in the narthex (see *Fig. 135*).
certain rituals, marking the spot where either something important was conducted or an important person was accommodated, or both. That is suggested by the presence of similar designs at other strategic points, mostly in the *naos*. Moreover, the importance in some cases is underlined by the use of roundels made of porphyry.\(^{18}\) In order to examine the possible meaning and the role of these designs in the narthex, I bring here other instances of similar decorations used at other parts of several Athonite churches.\(^{19}\) First, in the *naos* of the Great Lavra, there are a square porphyry slab in the west central bay, a quincunx under the dome’s west supporting arch (number 10 in *Fig. 437*), and another porphyry slab further east, on the west side of the space under the dome, accompanied by two circular designs on the each side (number 14 in *Fig. 437*). Then, as already mentioned above, the narthexes of the both side chapels at the Great Lavra have the areas before the nave entrances marked with particularly ornate designs. Additionally, the west central bay of the south chapel’s nave features a pattern whose central element is a porphyry disc.\(^{20}\) Next, at Ivērōn, besides an exquisite *polyomphalon* that takes the entire surface under the dome in the *naos*,\(^{21}\) the spot in the west central bay, immediately past the main entrance, is distinctly marked (see *Fig. 435-2*). At Vatopedi, in the *naos*, there is a quincunx in each of the two *choroi* (lateral conches), and in the center of the south chapel’s nave,

\(^{18}\) Porphyry is a precious stone and was quarried in Upper Egypt until the mid-5\(^{th}\) century. It appears to have been reserved for imperial use, particularly in the 4\(^{th}\) century (*ODB* [see *List of Abbreviations*], Vol. 3, p. 1701).

\(^{19}\) Besides my own field observations, I use here the information from Δημήτριος Λιάκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στα Βυζαντινά δάπεδα σε τεχνική opus sectile των ναών του Άγιον Όρους», *Βυζαντινά* 31 (2011): 107-146, which is duly referenced when relevant.

\(^{20}\) For all these segments of the floor pavement at the Great Lavra, see Λιάκος, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-114, figs. 7, 9, 12, 13.

under the dome, there is a circular decoration (points marked with γ and ζ in Fig. 436). The pavement in the naos of Xenophōntos’s old katholikon features an unusual cruciform design underneath the dome (Figs. 435-6, 116). The cross’s east arm ends in a framed rectangle at the Holy (Beautiful, Royal) Doors of the sanctuary. At Zygou, there is a quincunx in the sanctuary, exactly in front of the altar table (Fig. 122), and another, larger quincunx that takes the entire floor of the north chapel (Fig. 133). Similarly, an elaborate polyomphalon occupies the square area under the dome in the naos of St. Demetrius.

Although the use of such decorative treatments at certain spots in a church are not uncommon elsewhere outside Mount Athos, the only similarly complex and consistent design applied to the entire floor pavement known to me is that in the naos of the south church of the Pantokratōr Monastery at Constantinople (Fig. 438). The pavement includes a series of large roundels set along the central east-west axis: the first in the west bay, the second directly under the dome, and the third in front of the spot where undoubtedly the Holy Doors were originally located. This succession ends in a penteomphalon in the sanctuary, in front of the altar table. Set off this axis, there are two more roundels of a comparable size placed in the pavement of the

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22 Λιάκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στα Βυζαντινά δάπεδα σε τεχνική opus sectile των ναών του Αγίου Όρους», pp. 115-116, figs. 16, 19.
23 Ibid., pp. 117-118, fig. 23.
24 Ibid., pp. 118-120, figs. 24-27. It is, perhaps, worth bringing to attention a few examples from a later church on Mount Athos. In Hilandar’s katholikon (ca. 1311-1316), few points are marked in the naos: central west bay (interlaced pattern with a small porphyry roundel in the center), at the Holy Doors (a modified quincunx, see ibid., fig. 31), and in the southwest bay, in front of the tomb of the founder, St. Symeon (quincunx) – see Слободан Ненадовић, “Архитектура Хиландара: Цркве и параклиси,” Хиландарски зборник 3 (1974): 85-208, pp. 134, 137, fig. 46 (upper right corner, the naos’s southwest bay). Additionally, there are three ornamental pieces in each of the chori (some of them feature quincunxes), but with no apparent reason, i.e. no connection to any specific spot or function. That, perhaps, is due to the disappearance or transformation of the meaning of such designs.
25 For example, designs marking the spots in front of the altar tables in the Panagia church of Hosios Loukas (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington DC, Image Collections and Field Archives, Mosaic Pavements, Box 12, neg: Ch. Bouras, #3-17-5) and in the katholikon of Sagmata Monastery (Αναστάσιος Κ. Ορλάνδος, «Η εν Βοιωτία Μονή του Σαγματά», ABME 7 (1951): 72-110 and 215, fig. after p. 110).
26 The opus sectile decorations of the entire areas under the west and east arms of the inscribed cross are significantly richer than those of the other two arms, as also has been noted by Arthur H. S. Megaw, “Notes on Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul,” DOP 17 (1963): 333-371, p. 336.
large archway leading into the middle church, on the north and south sides of a centrally placed set of three pairs of dowel holes.\textsuperscript{27} Presumably, these holes were used for affixing a pedestal on which the red stone slab from Ephesus, believed to be the stone of Christ’s unction before his burial, was laid.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, the last two roundels seemingly marked the points of access to and veneration of the holy object from both the south and middle churches.

Many of these ornamental designs, as already noted for some, include slabs or, more often, discs made of porphyry: in the west bay and further into the nave at the Great Lavra, as well as in the nave of its south chapel; seven discs (out of thirteen) of the \textit{polyomphalon}, in the \textit{naos} of Ivērōn, including the central and four other along the two main axes, and three more pieces on the west side of the area under the dome; the central disc of the quincunx in the \textit{exonarthex} of Vatopedi; the central discs of the quincunxes in both the \textit{exonarthex} and the north chapel of Zygou; at least one roundel out of four that are part of the centerpiece design in the \textit{naos} of Xenophōntos (it is the one to the east, closest to the sanctuary); the central disc in the design used in the middle west bay of the \textit{naos} at Hilandar; and the large disc in the middle west bay of the Constantinopolitan Pantokratōr Monastery’s south church.\textsuperscript{29} Judging from these, it seems that the porphyry pieces mark certain points along the west-east axis, perhaps those that played role in solemn entries into the church and other ritualized actions at certain spots in the church. Moreover, the ornamental designs used in the narthex and \textit{exonarthex} fit into this scheme, since these rooms were points of entry \textit{par excellence}.

\textsuperscript{27} For a more detailed description, see \textit{ibid.}, p. 342. This area was paved some fifty years later than the south church’s floor, in association with the addition of the middle church and the construction of the archway (\textit{ibid.}).


\textsuperscript{29} Cf. Megaw, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 337. This disc is surrounded by a circle with four representations of seasons and twelve signs of the Zodiac (\textit{ibid.}), which provide an additional level of importance to this spot/station. Was it reserved for imperial entrances/appearances?
The round shape of the porphyry pieces and their positions on the central spots in the narthex, naos’s west bay, under the dome, and in front of the sanctuary screen call to mind the modern use of the аєтός (Church-Slavonic орлецъ), a small circular rug with an image of a flying eagle.\textsuperscript{30} The rug is used during services officiated by a bishop. It is placed at spots where he is seated or standing, usually in the middle of the church, at his throne, before the altar table, and at the Holy Doors. The porphyry discs, with both their shape and imperial connotation, as well as their locations, resemble the use of the eagle rug, only set as permanent fixtures.\textsuperscript{31} Moreover, one of the spots marked with a porphyry slab at the Great Lavra, in its naos, on the west side of the space under the dome, coincides with what Barskii – in his famous drawing of the ground plan of the church with a service going on inside (see Fig. 24, number 16) – described as “the place where the reading takes place and where the one who is supposed to read goes to.” This seems to be the place reserved only for the Gospel readings, since another spot, also under the dome, marked with number 7 was designated as “The place where the Paroimia (Prophecies and Parables), Apostolos (Epistles and Acts), ‘Blessed is the man’, and the Psalms of the Polyelaios [service] are read.”\textsuperscript{32} The present-day practice in Hilandar, for example, confirms that this distinction is still applied even when there is no special marking in the floor pavement (Figs. 439, 440). This suggests that the deacon was also entitled to the porphyry ‘rug’ when reading the Gospel within a service and confirms that these spots were marked for a purpose. I


\textsuperscript{31} One such instance was the presence of a porphyry disc set in the floor before the Holy Doors in the Hagia Sophia, where the emperor stood while reading prayers before his entrance into the sanctuary (see Majeska, “The Emperor in His Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of St. Sophia” [as cited in note 21 above], p. 6, with further references in n. 24 there).

\textsuperscript{32} These are my translations of the Russian rendering of the captions, found in Барский, \textit{Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы} (see \textbf{List of Abbreviations}), facing p. 76. They need to be compared with the original captions, written in Greek in the legend under the drawing, which I have not been able to read.
leave further discussion of this issue for some future study, but I think it is clear that a related meaning was involved in the placement of similar designs in the narthex and *exonarthex*, and thus confirms the importance of the markings. However, I will return to the question of function of the narthex’s entire central bay below, after addressing its other constituent elements.

The apparent definition of the narthex’s central bay as an area of significance was completed with the painted decoration of the vault and wall surfaces. Unfortunately, the original paintings in most of our *katholika* are now completely lost. However, at Ivrēn and Vatopedi, where the surfaces have been over-painted, it seems that the new iconographies closely follow or even reproduce the original ones. The present fresco layer at Vatopedi (dated to 176033) includes the Ancient of Days in a medallion carried by angels depicted in the vault, the Annunciation (the church’s dedication) in the east lunette, and two prophets (one of them, King David) and two martyrs on the intradoses of the north and west arches (see Figs. 69, 70, 72). Christ *Pantokratōr* (*Fig. 78*) on the southeast pilaster (dated to the second decade of the 14th century) was almost certainly mirrored by a fresco of the Theotokos on the northeast pilaster.34

These programs are similar to those at the corresponding areas in monastic churches of the period that have retained their original iconographic decoration. The four segments of the central groin-vault in the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas (first half of the 11th cent.) bear the busts of the Virgin *Orans*, John the Baptist, and Archangels Michael and Gabriel placed in medallions surrounding another one with a bejeweled eight-armed cross, which symbolically represents Christ’s triumph or Christ in glory (*Figs. 407, 410*).35 The bust of Christ *Pantokratōr* with an open book, inscribed with the text “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never

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33 See Chapter 1, note 153.
34 See Chapter 1 and notes 154 and 155 there.
walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12), is depicted in the lunette above the door to the naos (Fig. 441). The iconographic setting is completed with six apostles represented on the soffits of the two arches – the rest of the Twelve are on the arches at the north and south ends – with the Chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul placed on the either side of Christ. Thus, all the most important saints surround the Ruler of the Universe, forming his heavenly court or a Deësis of sorts.  

36 Although slightly damaged, the mosaics in the blind dome in the narthex of the katholikon of Nea Monē on Chios (mid-11th cent.) clearly show that the central medallion was occupied by the Virgin Orans, whereas each of the eight concave segments around it features a standing figure of a warrior martyr (Fig. 400). The east pendentives contain images of Joachim (north) and Anna (south). Prophets Daniel and Isaiah (with now-lost Ezekiel and Jeremiah) are placed in the west lunette, whereas the mosaic of the east lunette, above the door to the nave, is completely lost, but it once bore a depiction of Christ, with whom the praying Virgin of the dome was in intercession.  

37 The mosaics in the central vault in the monastic church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Nicaea (modern İznik) were destroyed together with the church in 1922. However, there are photographs taken and studies published in the decades preceding the destruction, so the mosaics are well documented (Figs. 442, 443).  

38 Their execution has been dated to the time between 1065 and 1067, in association with the renovation of the church after it was damaged in an earthquake.  

39 Although the central bay was not square, but rather

For the disposition and brief description of mosaics in the central bay and images of some of them, see Nano Chatzidakis, Hostios Loukas, Byzantine Art in Greece – Mosaics, Wall Paintings Series [translated by Valerie Nunn] (Athens: Melissa Publishing House, 1997), pp. 22-23, 32-33, figs. 27-30.  

37 Cf. Ντούλα Μουρίκη, Τα ψηφιδωτά της Νέας Μονής Χίου (Αθήνα: Έκδοση Εμπορικής τραπέζης της Ελλάδος, 1985), Vol. 1, pp. 36-38, Vol. 2, figs. 192-223. For a record of the image of Christ in the east lunette and a text that accompanied before they were lost in a 19th-century earthquake, as well as their analysis, see Charles Barber, “Mimesis and Memory in the Narthex Mosaics at the Nea Moni, Chios,” Art History 24/3 (2001): 323-337, pp. 327-332 (with references).  


39 Ibid., pp. 245, 248-249, 251.
rectangular, it was covered by a sail-vault.\textsuperscript{40} The iconography was very similar to that at Hosios Loukas, only slightly varied: a bejeweled eight-armed cross in the central medallion, surrounded by another four that contain the busts of Christ (to the east), John the Baptist (west), Joachim (north), and Anna (south), and by seated figures of four Evangelists in the pendentives (see Fig. 443). The lunette above the door leading into the church proper was adorned with the bust of the Virgin Orans, exhibiting a disposition somewhat reversed from that at Hosios Loukas. In the katholikon of the Theotokos Eleousa (Veljusa), the fresco in the summit of the dome elevated on an eight-sided drum over the narthex features a medallion with the bust of Christ (painted 1085-1093). The image of Christ is heavily damaged, but it has been speculated that, in terms of iconography, he may have been represented as the Ancient of Days.\textsuperscript{41}

It is worth bringing in another example, Late Byzantine, but of Athonite provenience, that fits well into this scheme. It is the litē of Hilandar’s katholikon, the wall paintings of which were completed in 1321.\textsuperscript{42} The room is six-bayed and the central east bay, the one immediately preceding the entrance into the nave, is covered by a sail-vault. Moreover, its fresco decoration features the bust of Christ Emmanuel in a medallion carried by four flying angels (Fig. 444). Another four figures, depicted on the intradoses of the north and south arches – Prophets Moses and Isaiah (to the east) and Prophet Ezekiel and Righteous Noah (to the west) – seem to be part

\textsuperscript{40} As it is also the case in some other three-bayed narthexes of churches that feature the same or similar architectural type as the Dormition church, namely St. Clement in Ankyra (Ankara) and St. Nicholas in Myra (Demre).


\textsuperscript{42} For the date, see Мiodrag Мarković, Вилијам Тејлор Хостетер [William Taylor Hostetter], „Прилог хронологији градње и осликавања хиландарског католикона,“ Хиландарски зборник 10 (1998): 201-220, pp. 207-9, 211-13; also Miodrag Marković, “The Original Paintings of the Monastery’s Main Church,” in Gojko Subotić (ed.), Hilandar Monastery (Belgrade: The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1998): 221-242, p. 221. The frescoes were repaired and their visibility improved by partial repainting in 1803-1804 (ibid.).
of the composition.\(^{43}\) This and other visual settings described above – the Ancient of Days, Christ Emmanuel, Christ in Glory or Christ \emph{Pantokrатор}, Theotokos, angels, apostles, prophets, and holy bishops, namely an iconography that is condensed, but includes the highest hierarchy of saints – form the narthex’s “own heavenly zone,” as phrased by Otto Demus.\(^{44}\) It joins centralized architectural forms (ranging from groin-vault and sail-vault, to blind dome and dome proper) in pointing to a special sacred significance assigned to the area below it.

Before finally turning to the possible reasons for having such an architectural and iconographic setting placed in this part of the narthex or at the entrance of a church, I would like briefly to examine a few other instances of similarly designed spaces outside Mount Athos.

Domically covered entrance bays can be observed in the Constantinopolitan churches of Myrelaion (Figs. 203 to 205) and Vefa Kilise Camii (Fig. 231),\(^{45}\) and in the above-mentioned \emph{katholikon} (built in the 1040s) of Nea Monē on Chios (Fig. 400). The first two have sail-vaults covering the bays, whereas a blind dome (of eight concave segments) is used in the third. Nea Monē has an additional domed bay in its \emph{exonarthex}. Actually, the latter’s all three bays are surmounted by diminutive domes, but the central one is taller and, again, has eight concave segments (Figs. 391, 392, 394, 395, 401). The central bay is further accentuated with an ornate quincunx design in the floor pavement and with four columns at its corners supporting the dome (Figs. 445, 401, 402). In this way, the bay veritably resembles a ciborium. On the other hand, another two Constantinopolitan churches representative of the period and type, those of Lips and Eski İmaret, have narthexes with equally sized, groin-vaulted bays. The latter, though, has the

\(^{43}\) The three prophets turn to and look towards the vision of Christ, with Moses and Isaiah even pointing to it. Reading their scrolls would illuminate the nature of their relationship to the central composition.


\(^{45}\) For Myrelaion and Vefa Kilise Camii, see \textit{Chapter 2}. Interestingly, none of these two churches has an upper storey to the narthex. For the \emph{katholikon} of Nea Monē, see \textit{Chapter 2, Excursus}. 

276
central bay of its *katēchoumeneion* covered by a blind dome (see Figs. 219, 226); this may have been also the case at Lips, as well.\(^\text{46}\) The situation in Constantinople’s Pantokratŏr Monastery – where a full dome with a twelve-sided drum pierced by as many windows was built on top of the south church’s *katēchoumeneion* (Figs. 294, 300) – was apparently the ultimate stage in the development of this feature. A later removal of the floor between the two stories, probably after the addition of the *exonarthex*, in order to let natural light into the ground-level room, transformed the narthex’s central bay into a domed space.\(^\text{47}\) The *katholikon* of Veljusa (Eleousa) Monastery, built 1080, also has a dome on a tall drum over its narthex (Figs. 446, 447),\(^\text{48}\) just as there are domes at Panagia Krina and Hagioi Apostoloi at Pyrgoi, both on Chios.\(^\text{49}\) Similarly, the narthex area of the church in the village of Drenovo, Macedonia (late 11\(^\text{th}\) c.),\(^\text{50}\) probably was crowned by a blind dome, unless it was a part of the church’s rebuilding in the time of Stefan Dušan (1331-1355).

\(^{46}\) \textit{Cf. Chapter 2.}

\(^{47}\) \textit{Cf.} Robert Ousterhout, “Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and a Few Examples,” \textit{DOP} 54 (2000): 241-250, p. 249, who underlines the utilitarian character of this alteration, rejecting any possibility of it being a “response to ceremonial or liturgical concerns”. However, I believe that the utilitarian aspect of the dome’s presence at this strategic point did not necessarily exclude its ceremonial purpose and effect, and \textit{vice versa}. The narthex of the Kalenderhane Camii underwent a similar transformation shortly after 1195 – a full dome over the upper storey and an opening in the floor once existed there, too (see Cecil L. Striker and Y. Doğan Kuban (eds.), \textit{Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, Their History, Architecture, and Decoration – Final Reports on the Archaeological Exploration and Restoration at Kalenderhane Camii 1966-1978} (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1997), pp. 8, 69, 93-95) – thus likely following the example set in the Pantokratŏr church.

\(^{48}\) See above. Domes with drums over the narthexes’ central bays appeared more frequently in later centuries. Some examples are offered in Panagia Kanakaria in Lythrangomi, Cyprus (rebuilt in the 12\(^\text{th}\) and 13\(^\text{th}\) centuries; see A. H. S. Megaw, Ernest J. W. Hawkins, \textit{The Church of the Panagia Kanakariá at Lythrankomi in Cyprus: Its Mosaics and Frescoes} [Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1977]), Archangel Michael at Phrenaros, Cyprus (dated to the 12\(^\text{th}\) cent.), Lesnovo, Macedonia (1341, narthex added before 1346), and Psača, Macedonia (ca. 1354) to mention but a few. For the last two, see Воислав Кораћ, \textit{Споменици монументалне српске архитектуре XIV века у Повардарју} (Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности; Београд: Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе, 2003), pp. 153-211 (with older bibliography).


\(^{50}\) Ćurčić, \textit{Architecture in the Balkans} (see \textbf{List of Abbreviations}), pp. 400-401.
Blind domes can also be found in the entrance areas of several Cappadocian rock-cut churches of the Middle Byzantine period. Shallow domes are carved on the ceilings of the single-bayed, slightly cruciform narthexes at St. Barbara in Soğanlı (1006 or 1021), Şahinefendi Monastery (11th cent.), Aynalı Kilise Monastery (mid to late 11th cent., Fig. 448), and Açı̇k Saray Church No. 1 (wall paintings program dated to the late 12th or early 13th cent.), of the single-bayed rectangular narthex at Açı̇k Saray Complex No. 3, and of the porches at Ala Kilise (11th cent.) and Chapel A at Zelve (11th cent.). Interestingly, the domes at Ala Kilise and Açı̇k Saray Church No. 1 bear frescoes of Christ Pantokratōr, whereas those at St. Barbara in Soğanlı and Aynalı Kilise Monastery are each decorated with a painted cross. In both versions, these images represent Christ, pointing to the importance that was given to the domical form and its placement at the main entrance.

Another instance where emphasis on the bay preceding the entrance into the naos can be observed is the rock-cut church at Midye (Kiyiköy, ancient Salmydessos), on the Black Sea coast of the Turkish Thrace. The narthex of this, presumably, monastic church is relatively long and

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51 See Lyn Rodley, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia* (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 203-206, fig. 39a; diminutive narthexes of both the main church and the chapel appended to the north have the same form. Cf. also Natalia B. Teteriatnikov, *The Liturgical Planning of Byzantine Churches in Cappadocia* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1996), p. 137, ill. 64; Teteriatnikov treats the entrance space of the main church as a porch. However, it seems that the west side was originally less open than it is at the present (cf. ibid., ill. 64) and the tiny room had the form of an enclosed space.

52 See Rodley, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia*, p. 39, fig. 6; the naos is of a cross-in-square plan.

53 See ibid., pp. 61-63, fig. 11a, pl. 48; the narthex is located to the north of the naos.

54 See ibid., pp. 146-147, fig. 27a; a cross-in-square church, the entrance located to the north.

55 See ibid., p. 134, fig. 21a, pl. 131; another cross-in-square church, but with the narthex at its west end.


57 Ibid., p. 137.

58 Ibid., p. 137, ill. 63, and Rodley, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia*, p. 146, respectively.

59 See Teteriatnikov, *The Liturgical Planning of Byzantine Churches in Cappadocia*, ill. 64, and Rodley, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia*, p. 61, respectively.

60 Semavi Eyice, Nicole Thierry, “Le monastère et la source sainte de Midye en Thrace turque,” *CahArch* 20 (1970): 47-76. It is difficult to date this church ensemble, which consists of a three-aisled basilican naos, narthex, hagiasma, burial chambers, and other subsidiary rooms. Elements of and consistency in liturgical planning, as well as stylistic characteristics of sculpted decoration, suggest the 5th-6th centuries (ibid., p. 75), but there were later additions too. Eyice and Thierry ascribe the painted cross and an inscription, both located in the apse, to Iconoclasts and the 9th century (ibid., p. 76). Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, pp. 145-146, discusses the complex among
the most of its ceiling is carved in the shape of a barrel vault (Figs. 449, 450). However, the segment above the area preceding the west entrance into the nave is shaped as a groin-vault for no apparent reason, certainly not of a structural nature, since everything is cut into a living rock. The groin-vault is placed in the middle of the narthex and probably in relation to the door of the naos, since the narthex itself is entered from outside at its north end. Admittedly, the groin-vault is not domical in shape, but its centralized form, different from the elongated barrel-vault, and its location immediately above the entrance area, seem to reflect the same concern that square-planned and domically covered central bays in Athonite cases embodied.

In a similar vein, it is possible that the pronounced barrel-vaulted central bays of the Helladic churches of the Middle Byzantine period can be connected to the same need to give the entrance area an elevated form. Although the vaulting of these areas is not formally different from the rest of the narthex, the barrel-vault covering them takes the east-west direction (not the north-south one, as in the lateral bays), i.e. it is placed transversally in regard to the narthex’s layout, and protrudes through the roof level, often continuing the west arm of the inscribed cross of the naos. It should suffice here to mention but a few examples: Transfiguration at Korōpi, Attica (9th-10th cent. [?], Fig. 335), Panagia Panaxiotissa at Gavrolimnē, Epirus (late 10th cent.,

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61 The plan (Eyice, Thierry, op. cit., fig. 1; here reproduced as Fig. 449) shows the groin-vault as larger than it actually is and not centrally positioned, although the photographs of the actual space indicate otherwise (see ibid., figs. 5, 8, and Fig. 450).

62 A similar treatment can be observed in the portico or exonarthex of the 9th-century church at Dereağzi, where the central segment sheltering the main door is of a square plan and crowned with a groin-vault, whereas the other four segments feature barrel-vaults – see James Morganstern, The Byzantine Church at Dereağzi and Its Decoration (Tübingen: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1983), pp. 31-32, fig. 6, fold-out 2.

63 For the narthexes of Helladic or ‘Attic’ churches, see Chapter 2, Excursus.

64 See Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας, Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική στην Ελλάδα (Αθήνα: Μέλισσα, 2001), pp. 70-80.
Athenian churches of Hagioi Theodōroi (mid-11th cent., Figs. 324, 325), Panagia Kapnikarea (shortly after the mid-11th cent., Figs. 327, 328), and Panagia hē Gorgoepēkoos (second half of the 12th cent. [?], Figs. 331, 332). These all are believed to have been the katholika of monastic establishments. However, the same architectural treatment of the central bay’s vaulting is to be observed in non-monastic churches as well, suggesting that it may have in fact been only a formal and stylistic feature, perhaps meant to counter-balance the similar barrel-vault of the bēma bay.

Returning to domed or baldachin-shaped entrance spaces, it is worth noting that many of monastic churches in Georgia are preceded by open porches surmounted by shallow blind domes, sheltering their west and south entrances: Kumurdo (964; only at the south entrance), Bagrati Cathedral (completed in 1003, Figs. 451, 452) in Kutaisi, Manglisi Sioni Cathedral (restored in 1002, Fig. 453), Nikortsminda (1010-1014; only over the south entrance, Fig. 454), Samtavro Monastery (first half of the 11th century) in Mtskheta, and Ghelati Monastery (1106-1130; only in front of the south entrance), to mention but a few that are contemporaneous with the Athonite katholika. As it appears, the access at the south side of a church was often the preferred one and, occasionally, the only one. I would tentatively suggest that the south

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65 Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, p. 331.
66 Nikolaos Gkioles, “The Church of Kapnikarea in Athens: Remarks on Its History, Typology and Form,” Зоряны 31 (2006-2007): 15-27, p. 16 (for the dating). Even in the exonarthex of this church, added likely in the early 12th century, the bay preceding the main west entrance to the narthex has a vaulting different from those over the other bays: a groin-vault, instead of a barrel-vault (ibid., figs. 1, 8).
67 For a discussion of all these Athenian churches, see Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, pp. 375-378, with older bibliography, as well as Chapter 2, Excursus.
68 For an overview of these churches, see Nodar Janberidze, Irakly Tsitsishvili, Architectural Monuments of Georgia (Moscow: Stroyizdat, 1996), pp. 128-141, 154-184, 218-239.
69 Cf. ibid., pp. 50-52 (Jvari, dated to 586-604), 86-89 (Samtsverisi, 7th c.), 106-107 (Gurjaani, 8th c.), 142 (Korogo, late 10th-early 11th c.), and 272-274 (Pitarethi, 1213-1222), for examples with the sole entrance provided on the south side, and pp. 119-121 (Osishi, dated to 963-973), 128-141 (Kumurdo), 149-153 (Katskhi, 10th-11th cent.), 154-160 (Nikortsminda), 173-180 (Bagrati Cathedral), 218 (Samtavro), 224-227 (Manglisi), 228-231 (Ghelati), 258-259 (Betania, ca. 1207), 264-265 (Tsugrugasheni, 1213-1222), and 288-289 (Iqalto, 10th-12th c.), for cases having a prominent south entrances in addition to the main entrance at the west end. On another note, the ancient entrance gate of the Ghelati Monastery is located at the south end of the enclosure. Interestingly, inside the gate’s passage,
entrance may have been reserved for royal visitors and attendees. Two things lead to such a conclusion. First, the south entrance often provides a direct access to the south part of the church’s transept, the area that – analogously with the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople – may have been reserved for the ruler.\textsuperscript{70} And second, in several churches that have both west and south entrances, only the south one has a domed porch.\textsuperscript{71} The royal context of the transept’s south arm is confirmed in the church of Oshki (dated to 963-973), an important monastic center.\textsuperscript{72} Inside the church, there is a throne carved in stone and set against the southwest pier supporting a dome over the central bay. According to two possible scenarios, the throne was intended either as an actual seat for an attending dignitary, royal or ecclesiastic, or, alternatively, as a spiritual space reserved for Christ’s symbolic presence.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{70} Churches of Kumurdo, Nikortsminda, Bagrati, Manglisi, Ghetali, Tsugrugasheni, Pitarethi, and Iqalto (\textit{ibid.}, figures on pp. 128, 154, 173, 226, 230, 264, 273, and 288, respectively) may serve as examples. The south entrances at Samtavro and Betania are dislocated slightly to the west and lead into the west bays, rather than the transepts (\textit{ibid.}, figures on pp. 218, 258). For the location of the imperial \textit{mētatorion} in the Hagia Sophia, see below, note 92. Moreover, the south vestibule of the Hagia Sophia (which, in fact, leads into the narthex first) was used as a ceremonial entrance of the emperor during the Middle Byzantine period (Majeska, “The Emperor in His Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of St. Sophia,” pp. 2, 5; Philipp Niewöhner and Natalia Teteriatnikov, “The South Vestibule of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul: The Ornamental Mosaic and the Private Door of the Patriarchate,” \textit{DOP} 68 (2014): 117-156, pp. 154-155). For Georgia’s relations with Byzantium and a rising tendency in imitation of certain elements of the royal ceremonies by Georgian rulers from the mid-10\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, see Antony Eastmond, \textit{Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia} (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), pp. 21-30.

\textsuperscript{71} Porches with blind domes, either with eight ribs or eight concave segments, are found in front of south entrances at Kumurdo (the dome has fallen, but squinches in the corners have survived), Nikortsminda, Bagrati Cathedral, Samtavro, Manglisi, Ghetali, Betania, and Pitarethi (cf. Janberidze, Tsitsishvili, \textit{Architectural Monuments of Georgia}, figures on pp. 128, 129, 141; 154; 173, 177, 179; 218; 226; 230; 258; and 273).

\textsuperscript{72} The church was built by the rulers of Tao, brothers Bagrat (d. 966) and David III the Great (d. 1001) – cf. \textit{ibid.}, pp. 119-121, and Eastmond, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20. David III was granted Byzantine titles of \textit{magistros} (in 961) and, subsequently, \textit{kouropalatēs} (in 989), high-ranking dignities in the 10\textsuperscript{th} century, which testify to his close links with Byzantium (cf. Eastmond, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 20-22, 261; for these titles, see \textit{ODB}, Vol. 2, pp. 1157, 1267).

\textsuperscript{73} Cf. Eastmond, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 30-34, with detailed arguments and additional references. As another Byzantine reference, this throne’s topmost part is sculpted as a shell, repeating the element of royal imagery frequently used in Byzantium (see below and Fig. 470). It should be mentioned that the ancient throne of Georgian patriarchs in the cathedral of Mtskheta, Svetitskhoveli (1010-1029; for basic information, see Janberidze, Tsitsishvili, \textit{Architectural Monuments of Georgia}, pp. 185-200), is set against the southwest pier of the nave’s central bay (my own field observations and notes).
An additional note should be made regarding the iconography of Georgian entrance domes. They are all sculpted inside and have at least a simple cross-shaped form that consists of eight, twelve or more concave segments, such as in the blind domes in the southern and western porticos of Bagrati Cathedral (Figs. 451, 452). The more elaborate of domes have a relief image of gem-studded or ornamentally decorated cross set into the dome’s concavities, such as the dome in the southern porch at Manglisi (beginning of the 11th century, Fig. 453). The cross is sometimes lifted by angels, thus making a reference to Christ’s victory or functioning as a symbolic representation of Christ in glory. Also, there are cases, like the south porch of Nikortsminda, that include both variants: an ornamented cross in the dome and a relief depicting four angels elevating a cross in the lunette above the entrance into the church (Figs. 454, 455). The importance of the compositions of angels raising the cross in Georgian art can be illustrated with the 17th-century fresco in the naos dome of the same church (Fig. 456), which, although of a much later date, utilizes the same iconography in this important part of the church’s nave, shaped as a canopy. The use of this type of Christological iconography is, perhaps, characteristic for Georgia, but its application in the decoration of domed vestibules is thematically comparable to what has been seen in Byzantine instances that have retained their pictorial decoration.

In order to take a more complete look at this issue of the emphasized entrance bay in the narthex, a few other parallels outside of Mount Athos should be mentioned as well, here concerning the use of decorative patterns for the central part of the floor pavement. The first – which is also accommodated within a domical setting consisting of a dome with a drum placed

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74 See also the south porches of the churches at Betania and Pitarethi (Janberidze, Tsitsishvili, Architectural Monuments of Georgia, ground plans on pp. 258, 273).
75 A similar design, only set into a sixteen-segment dome, can be observed in the south porch of the katholikon of Gelati Monastery (ibid., ground plan on p. 230).
76 See ibid., photograph on p. 153, for a similar configuration at the south entrance area at Katskhi.
77 See above, decorations of the vaults in the narthexes of Hosios Loukas and the Dormition Church in Nicaea (Figs. 410 and 443, respectively).
on four columns – can be observed in the exonarthex of the katholikon of the Nea Monē on Chios (see Figs. 445, 401, 402). The design assumes the form of a large penteomphalon; the central of the five discs is larger than the other four and it is made of a dark green, almost black stone.\textsuperscript{78} The penteomphalon takes the entire square area of the bay, adding even greater emphasis to this space. Interestingly, the floor segment under the blind dome in the inner narthex, with its simple rectangular frame, is barely different from the floor of the rest of the narthex (see Figs. 445, 398, 399). Still, it is clearly distinguished and sufficiently contributes to the setting of the central bay as an area of special function and significance. However, judging from the use of a more elaborate design in the floor pavement of the exonarthex, it seems that the area of the latter, i.e. closer to the main entrance to the entire katholikon, was of greater importance. In such treatment, the Nea Monē is very similar to Vatopedi and Zygou.\textsuperscript{79} An additional reason for the more lavish treatment of the exonarthex may have been the fact that the founders’ tomb was located in there.\textsuperscript{80} In that way, the use of a quincunx floor design recalls the similar decoration of the north chapel at Zygou (Fig. 133).\textsuperscript{81}

The presence of domically vaulted or in other ways architecturally pronounced central bays in the narthexes of these various churches, or the areas immediately preceding the main entrances into their naoi, suggests that the use of certain forms was not accidental and was meant to achieve or underline a special meaning assigned to this part of the narthex. What was that meaning? And were any specific functions accommodated within this space? Returning to our

\textsuperscript{78} For a description and additional photographs, see Bouras, \textit{Nea Moni on Chios}, pp. 67-69, figs. 37 and 44.
\textsuperscript{79} See above and \textbf{Chapter 1}.
\textsuperscript{80} Bouras, \textit{Nea Moni on Chios}, pp. 113, 147.
\textsuperscript{81} See \textbf{Chapter 1}. According to Милковић-Пепек, \textit{Вељуса} (as cited in note 41 above), pp. 142-143, and based on few remaining pieces, the square area under the dome of Veljuša’s narthex – which also housed the founder’s tomb (\textit{ibid.}, pp. 85-86 and drawing 10) – was decoratively paved, whereas the rest of the narthex had a simpler pavement. Similarly, there is a polyomphalon design in the floor of the area where the relics of Hosios Loukas are enshrined in the Katholikon of his monastery (see Jelena Bogdanović, “Canopies: The Framing of Sacred Space in the Byzantine Ecclesiastical Tradition,” PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 2008), fig. 573).
Athonite narthexes, one notices that there is no apparent reason, either structural or compositional, for having the narthex’s central bay larger or vaulted differently than the other two. Moreover, a conscious decision was made to give the bay a domical vaulting, although a groin-vault would work as efficiently. Therefore, it is safe to assume that there must have been some symbolic or ceremonial significance lying behind the presence of such a structural solution. If we take a broad view of the narthexes with this arrangement at Athos, Constantinople, and Nea Monē as exhaustive, than it becomes clear that domed (or sail-vaulted) square bays were exclusive to imperial foundations. To my knowledge, the churches of Bagrati, Samtavro, and Ghelati were also royal foundations. The question, then, is what does a canopy-like structure have to do with the imperial or royal sponsorship?

Before answering this question, let us first establish that the domed bay was indeed understood as a canopy or ciborium. The square plan, covered by a spherical vault and occasionally framed by pilasters (Ivērōn and Vatopedi) and even columns (Nea Monē and late-13th-century St. Andrew en tē Krisei in Constantinople), physically resembles a baldachin. Perhaps, baldachin-like porches may have pre-existed the exonarthexes at Ivērōn, Zygou, Vefa Kilise Camii, and Lips, as witnessed by columns and pilasters on the narthexes’ west façades.

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82 To my knowledge, E. Baldwin Smith was the first to note this architectural feature and assign it a ceremonial significance (E. Baldwin Smith, Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1956), pp. 166-178, and passim).

83 Nea Monē’s principal benefactor was Constantine IX (OBD, Vol. 2, pp. 1446-1447). Myrelaion’s ktētōr was Rōmanos I Lakapēnos (see Chapter 1). The Byzantine history of Vefa Kilise Camii is uncertain, though (ibid.).

84 On this church, dated to the period 1284-1300, see Marinis, Architecture and Ritual (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 119-120 (with older bibliography). For the plan and few photographs of the bay surmounted with a blind dome, see ibid., figs. I-1, I-5, Thomas F. Mathews, The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), fig. 1-8, and Marina Mihaljević, “Constantinopolitan Architecture of the Komnenian Era (1080-1180 and Its Impact in the Balkans,” PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 2010), fig. 29 (on p. 368).

85 This is if pairs of columns set against the east walls in the exonarthexes of Ivērōn and Vefa Kilise Camii were indeed part of the initial designs. That a small porch was indeed a part of the original architectural layout of Theotokos tou Libos (of Lips) is confirmed by archaeological findings (see Chapter 2, note 15). However, that porch was of oblong, rather than square plan and presumably did not include a domical vaulting. Nonetheless, it provides archeological evidence for the existence of canopy-like porches sheltering west entrances.
That it was not uncommon for churches to be preceded by light-structured baldachins at their entrances is testified by illuminations found in the Madrid manuscript of the *Chronicle of John Skylitzes* (produced *ca.* 1150-1175; Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2, fols. 33r, 41v, 43r, 114v, and 125r; *Figs. 457 to 461*). Moreover, the quincunx *opus sectile* design on the floor, according to some interpretations, is a flat, two-dimensional image of a canopy and symbolically evokes the presence of a tridimensional baldachin. That is, perhaps, why an actual dome-like vauling was omitted in Athonite *exonarthexes* that feature this design very prominently in their floor pavements.

The baldachin is an ancient symbolic representation of authority, especially the one proceeding from or given by the celestial powers. The divine investiture and heavenly protection are particularly embodied by spherical or domical shape of the baldachin, which carries the semblance with the vault of heaven. The combination of heavenly protection and divine investiture made the baldachin and any related form ideal piece of furniture in royal ceremonials and rituals. One sees baldachin-protected thrones of Byzantine emperors and empresses in imagery quite regularly. Let it suffice to mention only a few most illustrative examples that

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88 It is also possible that, when needed, a portable baldachin was installed at the place marked by the quincunx pattern.


90 E. Baldwin Smith traces the origins of the baldachin’s royal symbolism in Asiatic, specifically Persian traditions, which were disseminated to the Greco-Roman world via Alexander the Great’s conquests and appropriations – E. Baldwin Smith, *The Dome: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950), pp. 81-83. If Persia was the source for such visual attributions, then its influences were constantly available to Byzantium in its early and middle periods through its continuous contact and cultural exchange with Persia.
roughly span the period under discussion: two ivory representations of an Empress, possibly Ariadne (?), one as standing and the other as seated, both produced ca. 500 (Figs. 462, 463); two illuminations that include depictions of the thrones of King David and Emperor Theodosius in the Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen (dated to 879-883; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Par. Gr. 510, fols. 143v and 239r; Figs. 464, 465); an illumination of monk Sabas reading to Emperor Nikēphoros from the Homilies of John Chrysostom (ca. 1071-1081; Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Coislin 79, fol. 2bis-r; Fig. 466); and, finally, two illuminations of seated emperors from the Madrid Skylitzes (Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2, fols. 34r and 46r; Figs. 467, 468). In the ecclesiastic context, it is known that the emperor attended services in major Constantinopolitan churches on certain feast days. The most notable was his attendance in Hagia Sophia, where he sat within an internal structure called mētatōrion, which was originally set in the naos and later in the south gallery. The latter situation is apparently depicted in an illumination of the Madrid Skylitzes (fol. 115v), which has Emperor Leo VI taking part in a service from the canopy-like mētatōrion at a gallery (Fig. 469).

91 The three manuscripts are available in digital formats at: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84522082, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8470047d, and http://catalogo.bne.es/uhtbin/cgisrisi/SJ/VHnU33OL/BNMADRID/17900155/9 respectively (all accessed on 30 December 2013). For the first three of these and some additional illustrative examples, see Bogdanović, “Canopies: The Framing of Sacred Space in the Byzantine Ecclesiastical Tradition,” Cat. Nos. 257, 258, 385 (respectively), and a number of other entries in the catalog.


93 According to Smith, Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages, p. 168, Leo is depicted in the moment of reading a defamatory libel on the worship of icons. For additional images of emperors and empresses enthroned under a domed baldachin within what appears to be a church context, see the same
believe that descendants of these gallery arrangements can be traced in the Middle Byzantine 
katēchoumeneia, especially those that feature blind-domed or sail-vaulted rooms overlooking the 
naos, like those in Eski İmaret Camii, Pantokrator, and perhaps Lips in Constantinople.  

For the present discussion of domically vaulted bays on the ground level, more 
commonly found in Athonite churches, it is important to point again to the illustrations on folios 
33r, 41v, 43r, 114v, and 125r of the Madrid Skylitzes (see Figs. 457 to 461), which bear 
representations of churches with their entrances sheltered by canopies. Furthermore, two of 
them – folios 33r and 43r (Figs. 457, 459) – depict the emperor in the moments of being 
ceremonially received at the church of Blachernai and heading a solemn procession at the 
entrance of another church (Hagia Sophia?). To these, the famous mosaic composition from San 
Vitale in Ravenna, depicting Empress Theodora bringing a chalice for the Eucharistic wine as a 
gift to the church (Fig. 470), may be added. Although the composition is located in the 
sanctuary area, the action appears to take place in the church’s entrance area, which is suggested 
by two elements: the fountain – which most likely stood in the atrium or in the narthex – and the 
entrance door, from which the curtain is being drawn back. The empress is set in front of a 
conch-like architectural feature (a niche with its top part in the form of a shell), which – either 
real or merely symbolic – serves the same purpose as a baldachin: a ceremonial protection for an 
imperial personage.

manuscript’s illuminations on folios 13v and 50v ( http://catalogo.bne.es/uhtbin/egisirs/SJVHnU330L/BNMADRID/17900155/9 ).  
94 I return to the issue of Middle Byzantine katēchoumeneia in the monastic context later on (see Chapter 5).  
95 For a discussion of this panel and the other one with Justinian and his retinue on the opposite wall in the context 
of the visual expression of the imperial ceremonial, see Sabine G. MacCormack, Art and Ceremony in Late 
96 For the interpretation of the two panels as depicting the Lesser Entrance from the narthex into the nave, see 
Mathews, The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy, pp. 146-147. Although the niche might 
be a reference to the actual side apses in the narthex of San Vitale, the conch-like backdrops are also commonly 
found in Early Christian imagery (for some examples, see John Lowden, Early Christian & Byzantine Art (London: 
Phaidon, 1997), pp. 82, 136-138, and figs. 43, 83; Robin Cormack, Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons
In the first two cases (*Madrid Skylitzes*, folios 33r and 43r), which are closer to our narthexes in both space and time, the domed porches depicted serve as a ceremonial meeting points and, therefore, symbolically are emphasized with an actual protective canopy. Also in both cases, the patriarch is involved, either meeting or accompanying the emperor. The same manuscript at other places (folios 21v and 47v) has depictions of the patriarch seated under a baldachin, suggesting that he was another person entitled to such a ceremonial setting. A 12th-century source provides evidence of the patriarch (or bishop) awaiting the Lesser Entrance, seated in the narthex, where he also recited the introit prayer. Therefore, a domed canopy may have ceremonially protected the patriarch’s seat as well. The patriarch’s canopy was perhaps more modest and distinctly inferior to that reserved for the imperial personages, necessarily reflecting their respective hierarchical positions.

Therefore, the domed bay of the narthex could stand in lieu of an actual baldachin, symbolically sheltering the representative of either the royal or ecclesiastic power, or both in the moment of their ceremonial arrival to the church. There are a few known instances of such ceremonial arrivals and meetings with the person who acted as the host indeed taking place in the narthex. The first is the meeting of the emperor by the patriarch in the narthex of Hagia Sophia during festal liturgies, immediately before the Lesser Entrance, which they led together, processing into the nave. Similarly, on Easter Monday, the emperor attended the Divine
Liturgy at Holy Apostles. Before the service’s commencement, he entered the narthex and waited there for the arrival of the patriarch. After the patriarch had arrived in the stational procession (μετά της λιτής) and recited the customary Introit Prayer in the narthex in front of the Royal Doors (the central door between narthex and nave), they entered the nave.99 Also on Easter Monday, the emperor visited the church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus, which was then part of a monastery set within or close to the Great Palace. The emperor was received by the hēgoumenos in the narthex, under the domical vault of the entrance bay.100 In another instance, when visiting the New Church (Nea Ekklēsia, inaugurated in 880) on the day of its dedication, May 1, the emperor was met by all the members of the Senate in front of the west narthex before his entrance through the Royal Doors.101 However, the narthex of Hagia Sophia lacks a dome or a spherical vault of any kind, and nothing firmly is known on the architecture of the narthexes of Holy Apostles and the Nea. But, considering the height of the narthex of the former, a portable baldachin could have been easily installed when needed and its presence may have influenced the formation of its permanent counterpart.102 Therefore, I would interpret the domed bay of the narthex as a marker of a ceremonial arrival point of the representative of either royal or ecclesiastic hierarchy, both invested by the divine powers. This is the reason, then, that the vault above bears some iconographic representation of God – the Ancient of Days (Vatopedi) or Christ Emmanuel (Hilandar).103 An element confirming the symbolic meaning given to this part of the

99 Robert F. Taft, “Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When – and Why?” DOP 52 (1998): 27-87, p. 42. The Royal Doors are the central doorway between the narthex and the naos. For a further explanation of the name and the use of this door, see below note 104.
100 Smith, Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages, pp. 166-167, and n. 3 (based on the information from De ceremoniis).
101 Ibid., p. 172.
102 Cf. ibid., pp. 166, 176, for the same conclusion.
103 See above. The firm establishment and persistence of such iconography applied to this particular part of the narthex can be seen in the 16th-century frescoes in the katholika of the Athonite monasteries of Koutloumousiou (Christ Emmanuel with the beasts of the Four Evangelists), Pantokratōr (the narthex of the north parekkλesion, Christ Pantokratōr with the four beasts), and Xenophōntos (Christ ho Megas Archiereys with Apostles) – cf.
church is the term often applied to the central door leading into the \textit{naos}, i.e. the door that is symbolically sheltered by the ‘baldachin’ in the narthex – the Royal Doors. The name most likely derives from the ceremonial practice of the Hagia Sophia, where this door was used by the emperor and his retinue for solemn entries.\footnote{\textit{Cf.} Day, \textit{The Liturgical Dictionary of Eastern Christianity}, p. 256 (s. v. Royal Doors), and Ken Parry et al. (eds.), \textit{The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity} (Oxford – Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp. 420-421 (s. v. Royal Doors). The central door of an Early Byzantine church may have been also the one originally used for the Little and Great Entrances, when the holy gifts were prepared in a room outside the sanctuary and nave. Apart from these occasions and royal entries, the Royal Doors may have remained closed and only side doors were used for daily access. Similar arrangement and use, and even the term ‘Royal Doors’, were gradually transferred to the templeon and its central door, the Holy Doors (for the Holy, Royal, and Beautiful Doors in the Hagia Sophia, see Majeska, “The Emperor in His Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of St. Sophia,” pp. 5-6). The application of the term ‘Royal Doors’ may have originated in the Hagia Sophia and its imperial ceremonial, and later (certainly by the Middle Byzantine period, as witnessed by monastic \textit{typika} – \textit{cf.} below, notes 166 and 168), by analogy, the term was applied to similar doors in monastic churches (Lyn Rodley, “The Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis, Constantinople: Where It Was and What It Looked Like,” in \textit{Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism: 17-29,} pp. 25-26). For further elaboration of the three-door arrangement of the wall between the narthex and \textit{naos}, see below.}

The location and form of the domed bay can be also ascribed to the ceremonial vesting of a dignitary in the narthex, performed before the procession into the nave.\footnote{Upon arrival to a church, the bishop is vested in his mantle and takes his staff (crosier) before he proceeds to the Holy Doors of the templeon to give blessings to the serving clergy and attending congregation (see Hapgood (trans.), \textit{Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church} (see note 30 for full reference), pp. 77-78). Similarly, the emperor, upon his entrance in the narthex of the Hagia Sophia, was divested of his crown (Majeska, “The Emperor in His Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of St. Sophia,” p. 5, n. 19). Compare also to the ablution performed by the emperor in the narthex of Hagios Mokios of Constantinople before his entrance into the nave and attendance of the service on Midpentecost Wednesday (Taft, “Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When – and Why?” p. 44).} This tradition has been preserved in the Athonite custom of vesting the abbot with the \textit{mandyas} (outer monastic cloak worn at formal occasions) in the narthex at Vigils before proceeding into the \textit{naos}.\footnote{Parry et al. (eds.), \textit{The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity}, pp. 420-421 (s. v. Royal Doors).} In addition to this, I believe that the custom of ceremonial meeting of a visiting dignitary, whether royal or ecclesiastic, was also transferred to Athos. It, perhaps, was not really practiced – no actual visit of an emperor or patriarch was recorded in the Middle Byzantine period. However,
their representatives must have paid visits. Moreover, the monasteries of the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Ivērōn, and later Hilandar and Dionysiou have been regarded as imperial foundations. The presence of an architectural feature resembling baldachin in their narthexes could serve both as the setting for a potential ceremonial reception of the emperor – perhaps occasionally enacted by an imperial representative – and as a memento of the emperor’s protection, declaring the church’s status as an imperial foundation. In both cases, the emperor was only symbolically present, but his presence was visually marked. The presence may have been actual, though, in the Constantinopolitan churches, as in Pantokrator monastery and, later, in Lips, whose south church – built at the end of 13th century when the monastery became an imperial foundation – was supplied with a domed narthex.

These and now lost architectural settings of actual imperial visits and attendances were, I believe, emulated in the domed bays of the Athonite narthexes. With the addition of an

107 I was not able to locate any explicit evidence for this. However, it is known that imperial envoys were sent to Mount Athos on several occasions to settle certain disputes among Athonites, illustrating the emperor’s right to procure legislation for the Athonite community, which was under his patronage (see BMFD, pp. 232, 281-283, 1613).

108 In all these cases, the actual founders were monks. However, legal and financial provisions required for the establishment and construction of the monasteries were secured by emperors. Furthermore, as in the case of Hilandar, the monasteries were exempted from any control by local secular and ecclesiastic authorities, and the abbots were elected by their communities and confirmed by the emperor himself. Under the pretext of avoiding expenditures that a travel of a newly-elected abbot to Constantinople would have incurred, Hilandar was even granted the right to keep a staff given by the emperor as the symbol of his confirmation of the new abbot, who was considered from then on as directly appointed by the emperor (Димитрије Богдановић (ed.), Хиландарски типик (Београд: Народна библиотека Србије; Београд: Завод за међународну научну, просветну, културну и техничку сарадњу Србије, 1995), # 13, pp. 27 [original text], 72-73 [modern Serbian translation], 120-122 [analysis]; see also Теодосије, Житије светог Саве [trans. Лазар Мирковић, ed. Димитрије Богдановић] (Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, 1984), p. 53). For a Middle Byzantine foundation with similar privileges and imperial patronage, Nea Monē of Chios, see Bouras, Nea Moni on Chios, p. 29; for the historical background, see ibid., pp. 21-27.

109 See the preceding note. It is worth noting that all monasteries of the Holy Mountain have enjoyed the stavropegial status, which means that they have been directly subordinated to the patriarch of Constantinople, with the local bishop having no right to interfere in the life and organization of the peninsula. Therefore, one wonders whether, in a manner similar to that of how the domically vaulted bay evoked the symbolic imperial presence, the bay could have stood also as a sign of the patriarchal spiritual authority and possibly copied specific, but now unknown furnishings and design solutions that were employed in patriarchal churches of the capital.

110 For the dome over the narthex at Pantokratōr, see above; the south church at Lips originally was crowned by a dome on an eight-sided drum (see Vasileios Marinis, “The Monastery tou Libos: Architecture, Sculpture, and Liturgical Planning in Middle and Late Byzantine Constantinople,” PhD Dissertation (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2005), pp. 104-105).
Exonarthex, it seems that the “point of entry” was shifted further west and was emphasized with a decorative floor pattern, if not necessarily with a permanent domical vault. This was the case at Vatopedi and the pavement at Zygou suggests the same, but the latter also may have been accompanied by a dome or other centrally shaped vaulting. It is also possible that the two different entrance points, in conjunction with the gradation of spaces in their importance or holiness, were reserved as greeting or vesting points for different dignitaries. However, in this case, the place further away was more honorable, since the more honored person is to be greeted as early on as possible, explaining why the floor pavements in exonarthexes are more ornate and richer than those in narthexes.

The form and meaning of the domed bay perhaps did not emerge in the Middle Byzantine period without precedents in architecture of previous centuries. As was the case with the mētatōrion, which must have been an emulation of the canopied setting of the imperial throne in the Great Palace, it seems that the domed bay in the narthex had also been borrowed from the non-ecclesiastic domain. Two important secular buildings of the Early Byzantine Constantinople, Chalkē Gate (532-536), the main entrance to the Great Palace, and the portico of the Senate House (rebuilt after 532), featured some sorts of domical vaulting. They have not survived and their appearances are known only from descriptions in Procopius of Caesarea’s Buildings. However, the information provided is sufficient for the reconstruction of their architectural forms: a sail vault resting on the arches, which sprang from four engaged piers (Chalkē Gate), and a blind dome set on four columns (Senate House). Although the

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111 At Nea Monē on Chios, besides the quincunx design in the exonarthex’s floor pavement, there is a dome above it too (see above).
112 See Chapter 6.
114 Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture, pp. 241-242, figs. 194A, 194B; for the Chalkē Gate, see a detailed study: Cyril Mango, The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of
connection with state ceremonial is obvious, what exactly happened within these structures in relation to the imperial introit (i.e. the order of the ceremonial) is not known.\textsuperscript{115} It is known, however, that the ritual reception and acclamation of the emperor before entering the building was staged within this salutatorium of sorts and framed by the baldachin-like setting.\textsuperscript{116} As parts of the setting, there was a circular slab of porphyry set into the pavement before the door of the Chalkē Gate and the image of Christ the Savior over the door.\textsuperscript{117} The emperor, Christ-like and Christ-inspired, stood there during court ceremonials “like a living omphalos beneath the image of his heavenly prototype.”\textsuperscript{118} This ritual frame, which included a dome, an image of Christ, and an omphalos design in the pavement, was later, by analogy, transferred to the realm of ecclesiastic architecture, first to churches used in the court ceremonial and then to some other, which also were invested with some sort of imperial aura.\textsuperscript{119}

In addition to the symbolic dimensions that seem to have been incorporated in the narthex’s domed bay, the particular form (spherical vault) and decorative elements (opus sectile

\textit{Constantinople}, With an Appendix by Ernest Mamboury (København: I komission hos Ejnar Munksgaard, 1959). The description of the Senate House’s porch is less clear than that of the Chalkē Gate. The word used (θόλος) may refer to both barrel-vault and dome. Richard Krautheimer has proposed that a blind dome was set above the entrance bay, whereas the rest was barrel-vaulted (Krautheimer, \textit{Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture}, p. 242). It is also possible that only the central bay was barrel-vaulted. In regard to the central vaulting of the Chalkē Gate, Krautheimer describes it as a “pendentive dome” (sail-vault), whereas the visual reconstruction displays a blind dome on pendentives (\textit{ibid.}, pp. 241-242, fig. 194A). Any of these fits Procopius’s description of the Chalkē Gate and does not affect the general semblance to a baldachin and the meaning associated with it. Procopius also provides a description of paintings on the vault, which depicted the triumph of Justinian and further contributed to the symbolism of the domed space (for a discussion of this image, see MacCormack, \textit{Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity}, pp. 73-78).

\textsuperscript{115} Cf. Smith, \textit{Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages}, p. 166.

\textsuperscript{116} For the analysis of symbolism of domed vestibules of Roman and Byzantine palaces and public buildings, see \textit{ibid.}, pp. 59-70, 107-140, and 166-178. Smith puts a special emphasis on Hellenistic royal parousia (epiphany) and Roman royal adventus as main sources for the presence of ciborium-like structure at the entrance point of a palace or other public building (\textit{ibid.}, pp. 132-133). For the migration of the form and its meaning into the Byzantine church architecture, particularly between 9\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} centuries, see \textit{ibid.}, pp. 172-178.

\textsuperscript{117} See Mango, \textit{The Brazen House}, pp. 84-85 (for the porphyry disc), 108-148 (for an extensive discussion of the image of Christ).

\textsuperscript{118} Smith, \textit{Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages}, p. 135.

\textsuperscript{119} Note a similar presence of porphyry discs and rectangular slabs at the entrance areas of the Great Lavra (in the naos and in the chapel of St. Nicholas, see Λύκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στα Βυζαντινά δάπεδα σε τεχνική opus sectile των ναών του Άγιου Όρους», figs. 7, 13), Vatopedi (exonarthex, \textit{ibid.}, fig. 17), Ivērōn (naos, \textit{ibid.}, fig. 20, and Fig. 354 here), and Hilandar (naos), which is discussed above.
pavement with porphyry pieces) were also most likely related to or utilized for certain functions accommodated within the room. First and foremost, the reading of daily services in the narthex certainly took place exactly in its center, as it still does today.\(^\text{120}\) In this case, the middle bay of the narthex may have been chosen not only for its centrality, but also by analogy and for the similarity of its architectural setting to the one provided inside the \textit{naos}. There, the area under the dome is used for some of the most important readings of the Divine Liturgy, the readings of the Gospel, Epistles, and other passages from the Holy Scriptures. At the Great Lavra and other Athnoite \textit{katholika}, there are actually two spots under the dome designated for the reading. One of them, located on the west side and marked with a porphyry slab in the floor pavement, is the place where the deacon reads from the Gospel. The other, closer to the sanctuary, is reserved for other readings.\(^\text{121}\) The \textit{naos}’s domed space, resembling a baldachin, comes as an architectural substitute for the ancient canopied ambo. In the same manner, the domical vaulting in the narthex provides an analogous setting for the liturgical acts that may have required a canopy.

Yet another function of the narthex perhaps contributed to the form of its ‘baldachin’ bay. Although the form did not necessarily arise from this use, funerals preformed for the abbots certainly benefitted from the domed setting in the narthex. There are a few medieval illuminations depicting the funerals of bishops staged under baldachins, as can be seen in illustrations of the funerals of St. Basil the Great and Patriarch Athanasius in several manuscripts of the \textit{Homilies} of St. Gregory Nazianzen: Mount Athos, St. Panteleēmōn’s, Cod. 6, fol. 100r, and Jerusalem, Library of the Greek Patriarchate, Cod. Taphou 14, fol. 113r (both dated to the 11\textsuperscript{th} century), and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Grec 543 (14\textsuperscript{th}-century), folios 130v, 260v

\(^{120}\) \textit{Cf. Chapter 3} (Ninth Hour, Compline, and the Midnight Office).
\(^{121}\) See above and \textit{Fig. 437} (spots marked with nos. 10 and 14).
As explained previously in Chapter 3, monastic funerals take place in the narthex or *exonarthex*. The funerals of abbots and bishops, however, are performed in the *naos*, which may be the setting shown in the four aforementioned illuminations. However, between the moment of death and the actual rite of funeral, the Gospels or Psalter are continually read over the body of the deceased, the former for a priest-monk, the latter for a simple monk. And, in modern Athonite practice, this rite takes place in the narthex or *exonarthex*, as it is the case in Hilandar. In 2010, the body of the newly departed *hēgoumenos* Moses was laid in the *exonarthex*, exactly under the entrance bay, which is surmounted by a dome (Fig. 475). When brought into the *naos* for the actual funeral service, the body was placed in the center, again under a dome, this time the main dome of the church (Fig. 476). There appears to be a special visual connection between the two spaces, even though it would be difficult to argue that the domed bay was produced specifically for funerals. Indeed, if that were the case, then other *katholika* would have had similarly designed narthexes. Yet, communities whose churches already had domed compartments in their narthexes may have taken advantage of this architectural and symbolic setting. Thus, although not rooted in funerary practices, the domed bay enhanced the reading of the Psalter (or the Gospels) and related rituals.

To conclude, the domically vaulted bay in the Middle-Byzantine Athonite narthexes can be viewed as a physical reminder of the emperor’s protection and of the symbolical presence of

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123 The illumination from the Cod. Taphou 14, fol. 113r is particularly interesting, since it displays three different baldachins – one over the altar table, second over the bier with the body, and third over a water font. In this way, the church building is symbolically shown in its entirety: the sanctuary, the nave, and the narthex or the atrium.
124 Another instance that points to the use of a baldachin in the entrance area for funerals is the custom of holding farewell ceremonies for a deceased emperor in the vestibule of the palace (see Smith, *Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages*, p. 138).
125 Cf. Chapter 3 (on funeral rites in the narthex). It should be noted that in the Orthodox Christian tradition the body of a deceased person is regarded as a sort of precious relic and treated with due respect, so a canopied setting seems appropriate and, in a way, required for its display, especially if the person was of some special political or ecclesiastic status.
his authority in the monastery. Also, the bay served as the architectural frame for some ritual actions: the vesting of a bishop or the abbot, the bishop’s waiting for the start of the Lesser Entrance, the performance of daily and annual services assigned to the narthex, and, perhaps, the funerals. In the first two cases, I would say that royal authority was symbolically transferred to the ecclesiastic leaders. Otherwise, they probably would not be entitled to use the heavenly sheltering of a baldachin. In the other two cases, it seems that the semblance with the central area of the naos may have accounted for the creation of an analogous space in the narthex or the use of an already available domed compartment in the narthex.

c) The Three-Door Arrangement and Other Elements of the Wall between the Narthex and the Naos

Another characteristic feature of the Middle Byzantine Athonite narthexes is the existence of three doors connecting the narthex with the naos. Such a solution of communication between the two spaces was not universally applied, since it is found only at Iveron, Vatopedi, and Xenophontos (see Figs. 39, 49, 117), and absent in all other churches, including the large katholikon of the Great Lavra.126 Nonetheless, it deserves some attention.

The presence of three doors is actually a common occurrence in many Middle Byzantine churches. It seems to be a Constantinopolitan feature, found in all known Middle Byzantine churches of the city: Theotokos of Lips, Myreleaion, Eski İmaret Camii, Vefa Kilise Camii, and both churches of the Pantokratōr Monastery.127 It is also present in the possibly Constantinople-influenced Panagia tōn Chalkeōn (Thessaloniki) and in the Bithynian churches of Fatih Camii,

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126 At the Great Lavra, there are two bi-lobed openings in the place of side doors (see Fig. 26). They may have functioned as internal windows originally, but later were used as passageways.
127 See Chapter 2 (for first four churches) and Chapter 2, Excursus (for the Pantokratōr Monastery). Also, St. John in Troullo (probably 9th cent.) features the same provision (see Chapter 2, Excursus and Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 158-159, with older references).
Pelekētē, and Kurşunlu. The feature may have evolved from a similar arrangement in Early Byzantine basilicas, which had three passageways from the narthex corresponding to the three aisles of the nave. The actual formal and functional impetus in the Middle Byzantine period, however, may have risen within the Stoudite monastic tradition and potential demands of its liturgical practices. That is suggested by the very Stoudios basilica, where three doors pierce the wall segment between the narthex and the central nave, although there are two separate doors opening from the narthex directly into the side aisles (Figs. 477, 478). This particular case perhaps was the earliest example of the three-door arrangement being set independently of the side entrances and, due to the monastery’s role in the Stoudite movement, may have served as the model for later churches. However, it must be mentioned that a similar solution is also to be observed in the Hagia Sophia, where three doors, out of total nine opening into the naos, lead to the central space (Fig. 479, 480). The close placement of three large doors suggests that they were more than functional provisions. The middle of the three doors had a special place in the ceremonial of the Great Church: it was solely reserved for the emperor’s solemn entry. Such a role was most likely the reason for the term ‘Royal Doors’ or ‘Royal Gate’ to be assigned to this entrance, though it was later applied to the central door at any church. I would say that the existence of three doors, the situation developed in conjunction with the three-aisled layout of basilicas, preceded any ceremonial use of the multiple-entrance arrangement. The eventual assignment of the central door to the emperor’s introit and other solemn occasions was possible only in cases where there were other means of entrance for non-ritual access or less-solemn movements, i.e. side doors.

128 See Chapter 2.
129 See the discussion of the Prōtaton church and basilicas of similar designs in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, Excursus.
130 See above, note 104.
One naturally wonders why such an arrangement, employed in the early basilicas and imperial churches, was transferred to Middle Byzantine churches, which were smaller in size and often monastic in their provenance. If there is a practical architectural reason, it is perhaps to be found in the allocation of a door to each of the three western bays of the cross-in-square naos, in the same manner as in basilicas. However, not all churches of the cross-in-square type have such a solution, using only one door for the communication between their narthexes and naves. And, again, some rather small cross-in-square churches feature three doors, although one would have been just enough. What was, then, the reason for supplying two more doors? Is this arrangement employed only in monastic churches? Is it the result of particular functional demands of the monastic ritual?

Before attempting to answer these questions, let us examine all the elements that nowadays constitute the specific architectural composition of the east wall in the narthexes of Athonite katholika. Of the three doors, each corresponding to the bays of the narthex, the middle one is larger and taller (see Figs. 53, 70, 481, 482). It has two leaves, whereas the other two are smaller and single-leafed. As another means to close the central door, there is a curtain, hanging on a horizontal metal rod, fitted above the door’s opening.\textsuperscript{131} The side doors lack curtains and the south one in some churches has even been blocked, suggesting a later discontinuation of its use. The wall spaces between the doors are often occupied by wooden proskynētaria, holding the icons of Christ Pantokrator on the south side and of the Mother of God on the north side of the main door. Although newer in date (generally Post-Byzantine), the position of the two icons

\textsuperscript{131} Such fittings can be observed in some Byzantine churches, most notably in Hagia Sophia. If the series of metal rings were not affixed later, in conjunction with their transformation into mosques during the Ottoman times (there is a custom of closing the entrance of a mosque with a leather curtain), then they confirm that the practice of hanging a curtain at doors existed in Byzantine times as well. The curtains “of the doors of the church” and “of the great doors outside” existed in the Old Hagia Sophia (Mathews, The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy, p. 13, with the reference in n. 17).
repeats the medieval program of these two wall areas, as witnessed by frescoes at Vatopedi (*ca.* 1310s; *Figs. 70, 78*) and Hilandar (1321). The painting programs of the rest of wall areas were less uniform and could vary greatly. However, they were thematically centered at the images of Christ and Theotokos on the either side of the main portal, and of Christ or the *Deēsis* in the lunette above it. The images of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint, or locally revered saints, and the saintly founders and benefactors were often included (see *Figs. 478, 482*). They may be considered part of an extended *Deēsis* group. However, since none of the Middle Byzantine programs on Mount Athos survive and the corresponding wall surfaces in the narthexes of Hosios Loukas and Nea Monē on Chios are marble-revetted, as part of the original embellishment, it is hard to establish whether the original wall decoration of the Athonite 10th- and 11th-century churches included similar *proskynētaria* icons (or frescoes) of Christ and the Virgin. Nonetheless, it is quite possible that portable icon stands and similar non-permanent displays may have existed, providing the visual and devotional focus for the congregation during the performance of services in the narthex.

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132 For the frescoes on the east pair of pilasters in the narthex of Vatopedi, see Chapter 1 (and note 154 there), for the frescoes at the same positions at Hilandar, see Marković, “The Original Paintings of the Monastery’s Main Church” (as cited in note 42), p. 232. For the perseverance of the same program, see the 16th-century fresco dispositions in the *litai* of the monasteries of Dionysiou, Koutloumousiou, Docheiariou, and Xenophōntos (Τουτός, Φουστέρης, *Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους*, pp. 242-244, 305-310, 344-348, 403-405, respectively). In the same positions at Pantokratōros and Stavronikēta, there are frescoes of the Mother of God and St. John the Baptist instead (*ibid.*, pp. 324, 384), forming with Christ, depicted above the doors, *Deēsis* ensembles.

133 At Hilandar, the frescoes of St. John the Baptist and St. Athanasius of Athos flank Christ from the south, whereas frescoes of St. Sava the Serb and St. Symeon the Myrrgusher, the re-establishers of Hilandar, are found on the east pilaster, just above the frescoes of Christ and Theotokos (Τουτός, Φουστέρης, *Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους*, pp. 186-189). In the same register, there are images of the royal benefactors, Emperor Andronikos II and King Stephen Uroš II Milutin of Serbia with his patron saint, Stephen the Protomartyr, to the south, and Emperor Andronikos III, King Stephen Uroš III Dečanski, and King Stephen Dušan to the north (*ibid.*; see also Marković, “The Original Paintings of the Monastery’s Main Church,” p. 32). Archangels Michael and Gabriel guard the main door, above which there are images of the enthroned Virgin with the Child, flanked with two angels, and of the Crucifixion further up (*ibid.*, see *Fig. 493*).

The majority of those churches that lack two additional doors have niches in the narthexes’ east walls instead. These are the churches of Ravdouchou (two niches, Fig. 12), Zygou (two niches, Fig. 124), St. Demetrius (one niche, Fig. 151), St. Procopius (one niche, Fig. 173), and Voroskopou (two niches, Fig. 179). The churches of Kalamitsiōn and Melissourgeiou may have also featured one or two niches respectively, but their walls do not survive enough to confirm or reject this. In almost all cases, the niches are placed on either side of the door, except for St. Demetrius, where the original north niche – if it existed at all – was replaced by a door, probably when the entire narthex was transformed into a litē (in 1796). Another exception is St. Procopius, whose only niche may have been part of the church’s original layout. The niches are concave, semicircular in plan, except for the north niche in Zygou and a similar niche in St. Procopius, also placed to the north of the door. These two are oblong in plan and arched at their tops (see Figs. 131, 173). It seems indicative that both of them are of the same form and similar in size, and similarly placed low, rising almost directly from the floor level, and close to the northeast corner. The semicircular niches, on the other hand, are all positioned symmetrically on the wall segments between the door and the corner – Ravdouchou, Voroskopou, and the right-hand-side niches at Zygou (Fig. 130) and St. Demetrius – and at some distance from the floor. Such form and position suggest their use for the display, most likely of devotional images and objects, thus being the same or similar to proskynētaria.

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Now, I can turn to a discussion of all these elements of the narthex’s east wall.

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135 See Chapter 1 (note 263).
136 That this niche might be as old as the church is suggested by its similarity in form and position with the north niche at Zygou (see following note).
137 The one at Zygou is in fact aligned with the naos’s northwest bay, on the other side of the wall (see Fig. 135).
As noted above, it is not certain whether the narthex proskynētaria were part of the original setting of the Athonite narthexes. They may have not existed in the Middle Byzantine period elsewhere either, since the earliest known examples belong to the 13th century and the most date to the 14th century, when these features become somewhat a common elements of the narthex’s iconographic decoration. Interestingly, the great majority of known narthex proskynētaria are located in monastic churches, suggesting that the interest in having them in that part of the church may have come from a special devotional practices and certain needs within the monastic context. They almost certainly descend from the proskynētaria flanking the templon, which are known to be part of the furnishing in some Middle Byzantine churches. In that vein, it is not uncommon that iconographic types and epithets chosen for the icons of Christ and Virgin set in the narthex proskynētaria reflect or even duplicate the imagery of the templon proskynētaria of the same church. Apart from their obvious role in the devotion of the local congregation or of the founder, they may have been introduced in order to literally bring closer the images of most common intercessors on behalf of the faithful, the icons of Christ and the Mother of God, and of the patron saint of the church or of a specially venerated saint. That may have happened because the painted programs during the period – judging from the surviving monuments, most notably Hosios Loukas and Nea Monē – were placed high above the beholders, on the vaults and upper zones of walls. Moreover, the saintly figures were parts of larger, narrative compositions and, thus, probably hard to spiritually connect with. The lower

138 Christ and Theotokos Hodēgētria are found in Holy Apostles of Thessaloniki (dated after 1328), an image of the Theotokos Paraklēsis survives on the north pilaster in the ἱερᾶ of Prophet Elijah, also in Thessaloniki (third quarter of the 14th cent.), depictions of the Virgin with the Child and St. Nicholas flank the entrance to the ναός of St. Nicholas Orphanos of the same city (1310-1320), and images of Christ and Theotokos are painted on the east walls of the narthex of Panagia Bellas (Kokkine Ekklesia) in Boulgareli (1295/96), in Epirus, and of the exonarthex of Porta Panagia at Pylaia in Thessaly (second half of the 14th or first half of the 15th cent.) – see Kalopissi-Verti, “The Proskenetaria of the Templon and Narthex,” (fully cited in note 134), pp. 123-124 (with bibliography).
139 For some examples, located on Cyprus, including Asinou (painted 1332/33), see ibid., pp. 125-126.
140 Cf. ibid., pp. 118-123, where some specific epithets assigned to the represented are also analyzed.
141 Cf. Chapter 2, Excursus.
zones were covered with stone revetment, allowing only portable icons or icons on stands to be accessible to the faithful at that level. Therefore, the proskynētaria may have come as secondarily adjusted furnishings, as a solution that would preserve the existing and highly valued natural stone decoration\(^\text{142}\) whilst allowing the permanent presence of devotional imagery on a physically closer level. Such a process is witnessed by the display of icons of Christ and Theotokos in the narthex of Hagia Sophia in the 14\(^{th}\) century. They stood on either side of the Royal Doors and apparently had been there at least since the 11\(^{th}\) century.\(^\text{143}\) Moreover, display of certain images of Christ and the Virgin, particularly when they are accompanied with specific texts and inscriptions on either scrolls (e.g. Theotokos ἡ Paraklēsis) or backgrounds, could send a message to the faithful. Although the visual evidence and written sources for such usage come from the Late Byzantine period, this does not necessarily mean that the setting of proskynētaria in the narthex was present only during this period. The more accessible display of icons and iconic representations to the faithful may have already started in earlier periods. This is suggested by the carvings of the east wall in the narthex of the rock-cut basilica at Midye, dated to the 5\(^{th}\) or 6\(^{th}\) century (see Fig. 450).\(^\text{144}\) Two shallow and flat niches with semicircular heads

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\(^{143}\) See George P. Majeska, “St. Sophia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: The Russian Travelers on the Relics,” DOP 27 (1973): 69-87, pp. 76-78, and idem, Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1984), pp. 206-209. In this case, the icon of the Theotokos – which had been brought from Jerusalem and was believed to be the image through which the Virgin forbade St. Mary of Egypt to enter the church of the Holy Sepulchre – was located to the south of the central portal. The icon of Christ, known as the “Confessor Savior”, was either a bas-relief image or a panel made of inlaid stone (or mosaic) and hung to the north (ibid.). The relic status of the former and, perhaps, its specific iconography (likely, the Virgin turning to the viewer’s left) may have been the reason for the unusual placement to the right of the Royal Doors, at the spot of greater prominence, commonly reserved for images of Christ. Alexei Lidov, citing some 11\(^{th}\) century travelers’ accounts, has argued that these two icons were installed as part of the program set by Emperor Leo VI the Wise (Alexej Lidov, “The Creator of Sacred Space as a Phenomenon of Byzantine Culture,” in Michele Bacci (ed.), L’artista a Bisanzio e nel mondo cristiano-orientale (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007): 135-176 and 366-371, pp. 146-149).

\(^{144}\) Since the church is a rock-cut, it is possible that some of its features were also added later (see above, note 60).
are set between three doors in the middle register, immediately above a dado, and appear as encasements prepared for icons, portable or frescoed, which have been either lost or were never painted at all. It is difficult, then, to say whether these were ever meant to function as *proskynētaria*, though they very much appear so.

The presence of *proskynētaria* icons in the narthex can be explained in other ways, too. One of them becomes apparent through the addition of the *templon proskynētaria* to the 12th-century nave of the church of Chōra (Kariye Camii) in Constantinople during the 1316-1321 renovation.\(^{145}\) The marble *proskynētaria* frame the mosaic icons of Christ η Χώρα των ζώντων (the Dwelling-Place of the Living) on the north side and the Theotokos η Χώρα του Αχωρήτου (the Dwelling-Place of the Uncontainable, lit. ‘Un-placeable’), the theological epithets of which directly evoke the name of the foundation.\(^{146}\) Similar *proskynētaria*, with the icons of the Apostles Peter and Paul, are fitted on the inner narthex’s east wall, as well (Fig. 483). The latter seems to be of a lesser importance in the local devotional sense, but still play their role within the program: the two saints were understood as the leaders of the Apostles and showed the way to reach the Dwelling-Place of the Living.\(^{147}\) For the present study, however, the churches where the images of Christ and Virgin are duplicated in the narthex are more illustrative. It is possible that the sole purpose of these was to bring the most important figures of general Christian devotion closer to the attendants, who – unable to reach the crowded *naos* on certain festal


\(^{147}\) The Apostles Peter and Paul are also represented in stucco-framed wall paintings in the narthex of the cemetery chapel of Bachkovo monastery (Bulgaria). The paintings are dated to the second half of the 12th century – see Елка Бакалова, Бачковската костница (София: Български художник, 1977), p. 64, figs. 34, 142, and Elka Bakalova et al., *The Ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery* (Plovdiv: Pygmalion, 2003), p. 82, fig. 17 (on p. 100), fig. 75 (plates at the end).
occasions – remained in the narthex. However, even within regular, daily circumstances, certain parts of a service – e.g. litanies (ektēnē, synaptē, and lītē),¹⁴⁸ some of which take place in the narthex – would bring the congregation into the narthex and put it in the position to address its prayers and petitions to Christ and Theotokos in front of their icons. This may have been the case with our Athonite examples as well, but perhaps during the Late Byzantine period, when the Jerusalem (Neo-Sabbaite) Typikon was introduced and the performance of the lītē occurred more frequently.¹⁴⁹ This helps to explain why visual evidence, i.e. the proskynētaria installations and wall paintings are prevalent in the monuments of the Palaiologan times and not found in earlier narthexes both on Mount Athos and elsewhere.¹⁵⁰

Yet, the fresco representations of Christ and the Virgin in the narthexes of Vatopedi and Hilandar, and other Late Byzantine examples, may have been translations of proskynētaria icons into wall paintings.¹⁵¹ In Post-Byzantine centuries, they went back to icons, encased in wooden proskynētaria. Interestingly, no icon stands are shown in Barskii’s drawing of the ground floor of the Great Lavra (see Fig. 24), so one wonders whether this means that they were introduced at a later date or that they had already existed and he just missed the opportunity to record them. I would opt for the former, assuming that the wall-painting representations were likely still in good condition and visible, and the portable icons may have come as replacements after the frescoes had deteriorated. Although it is an interesting and important issue, I must leave this question aside, since it belongs to another period. However, the continuity of the presence of

¹⁵⁰ For the narthex proskynētaria in Palaiologan churches outside Athos, see Kalopissi-Verti, “The Proskynetaria of the Templon and Narthex,” pp. 123-128 (with older bibliography).
¹⁵¹ This is suggested also by the icon-like depictions and epithets of the frescoed figures in other churches (cf. note 138 above).
images of Christ and the Theotokos in the narthex is evidence for the constant need of the faithful to have visual contact with the holy persons to whom they addressed their petitions.

It should be also noted that, at narthexes where icon-like images exist, the organization of the east wall evokes the structure of a templon or iconostasis and analogously points to a more elevated and more sacred space behind it, in this case the naos.152 This gradation of sacredness between the church spaces and the need to separate them is expressed by the symbolic meaning assigned to the three main parts of the church and theoretically formulated by the Late Byzantine period. According to St. Symeon of Thessaloniki (d. 1429), the bêma was the holy of the holies, reserved for the clergy, the naos was the space for the faithful and evoked the Heaven, whereas the narthex stood for the Earth and was set aside for sinners and penitents.153 Within such a constellation, the wall between the narthex and the naos as an architectural divider, similar in form, function, and symbolic value to the templon between the naos and the bema, assumes certain visual elements of the templon.154 The icon-like representations in the narthex, then, function in the liturgy in a similar way as their counterparts do in the naos. Thus, the narthex acquires a comparable iconographic setting for services conducted inside the room. An illumination in a manuscript of St. John Klimakos’s Heavenly Ladder (12th century; Mt. Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine, MS gr. 418, fol. 269r; Fig. 484) can be used as an illustration of this

152 On the role of the proskynētaria’s location at the threshold of a sacred space, see Kalopissi-Verti, “The Proskenetaria of the Templon and Narthex,” pp. 107-108, 128-130. The presence of various Deēsis ensembles is another direct reference to the templon iconography, where the Deēsis was included from 9th or 10th century (cf. ibid., pp. 120-122, with older references). For yet another “screen” of intercessory images that occasionally appears on the church’s west façade, see ibid., pp. 128-129. These most probably went together with an open porch, as in the Church of Prophet Elijah in Thessaloniki (my own field observations; see also Thanasis Papazotos, “The Identification of the Church of ‘Profitis Elias’ in Thessaloniki,” DOP 45 (1991): 121-127, p. 123, fig. 11).
role that icons on the narthex east wall play.\textsuperscript{155} It depicts an ongoing service, perhaps in a monastery, judging from the dresses worn by exclusively male figures. Icons of Christ and the Theotokos hang on a rod on the either side of a ciborium. Despite the presence of the ciborium, the scene does not take place in the sanctuary, but rather in the \textit{naos} or even perhaps the narthex,\textsuperscript{156} since not one of the participants is liturgically vested and the service is centered on the standing figure depicted reading from a book, which is placed on a lectern under the canopy, while two of the attendants are shown seated. The rod from which the two icons are suspended is fixed behind the ciborium and this spatial relationship further suggests that the canopy represents either the dome above the \textit{naos} or the domical central bay of the narthex.\textsuperscript{157} The gestures of three men (two standing and one kneeling) suggest that they are praying while looking at the icons.

Another example can, perhaps, be provided by the vesting of the serving bishop in the modern ritual of the hierarchical liturgy and his position at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. He is vested in the \textit{naos}, under the central dome and in front of the iconostasis, facing east. After the vesting, he remains seated on the same spot, awaiting the Lesser Entrance. The Middle Byzantine version of this ritual was likely conducted in the narthex, where the bishop would be seated under a dome of the narthex or a portable canopy,\textsuperscript{158} facing the open Royal Gates between the narthex and the \textit{naos}, flanked by icons of Christ and the Theotokos. The similarity of the settings may have prompted the moving of the ritual to the \textit{naos}, which certainly relates to the

\textsuperscript{156} Margaret English Frazer, “Church Doors and the Gates of Paradise: Byzantine Bronze Doors in Italy,” \textit{DOP} 27 (1973): 145-162, p. 150, identifies the action as taking place in the nave, in front of the chancel barrier.
\textsuperscript{157} Alternatively, the ciborium might be a symbol of the entire church building, indicating that the action takes place inside a church.
\textsuperscript{158} See above.
gradual diminishing of the processional character of the liturgy, as well as to the narthex’s reduced importance in the daily ritual and eventual disappearance in urban churches.

Even more illustrative to our subject is the way certain daily services, which are more commonly performed in monastic communities and where the narthex serves as the venue, are conducted. The *mise-en-scène* and ritual movement involved in the performance of the services take into account both the presence of the *proskynētaria* and the three-door arrangement. Two minor, almost unnoticeable liturgical acts, which have been part of the serving pattern of Athonite monasteries since their foundations, confirm that the three-door arrangement is by no means random. The first one has already been described above, in Chapter 3, when the orders of the services of *Mesonyktikon* (Midnight Office) and Ninth Hour were exposed. The officiating priest and the abbot stand (or sit) in front of the *proskynētaria* icons of Christ and the Virgin while the reader reads prayers aloud. For the duration of the office, the main door (‘the *Royal Gates*’ of written sources) remains closed with a heavy curtain. Directly before the service and during it, only side entrances can be used. After the dismissal, the curtain is drawn aside and the participants can proceed to the *naos* to attend the next segments of the morning or evening offices respectively. The officiating priest even leaves his *epitrachilion* at the doorpost and puts on another one that hangs at the Holy Doors of the iconostasis before he enters the *bēma*.

Symeon of Thessaloniki ascribes a symbolic dimension to the priest standing in the narthex before the closed door during the Midnight Office:

> The standing and chanting outside the nave indicates our expulsion from paradise […] and that heaven is closed to us […].\(^{159}\)

The same author gives the ritual procession into the *naos* following this service a further symbolic meaning:

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\(^{159}\) Symeon of Thessalonike, *Treatise on Prayer*, Chapter 58 (p. 83).
[…] when the Midnight office is ended, the doors of the nave open like the heavens and we enter as from the earth, just as Christ’s chosen will be taken up in clouds and be forever with the Lord. […] Then, when we have all entered – the leader\textsuperscript{160} through the Royal Door, which is closed to us, symbolizing the Theotokos, and which he opens to us like the gates of heaven, since he typifies Christ; the others\textsuperscript{161} from the sides, as his servants and under his wing – the priest as the minister of Christ gives his blessing from the sanctuary […]\textsuperscript{162}

The service of \textit{Apodeipnon} (Compline) is similarly ordered, with the central door (or even all three doors) between the narthex and \textit{naos} remaining closed during the entire service, as there is no use of the \textit{naos} and procession into it involved.\textsuperscript{163} If the sacristan needs to go to the nave or sanctuary (usually no one else at this point would need to go there), he may use only one of the side doors. Today, it is often the north one which is used and it appears that this practice started early, since there are cases where the north door is the only other entrance besides the central door.\textsuperscript{164}

Another liturgical act, the censing of the church and its attendants during the service, was apparently yet another instance that, although most likely was not the reason for having three doors in the narthex’s east wall, certainly made good use of this spatial arrangement. The reference is found in the \textit{Rule of St. Athanasius the Athonite} for the Great Lavra (originally composed in 963; possibly revised \textit{ca.} 1020), in the chapter that regulates the liturgical celebration of the Easter Sunday:

[...] after the third watch of the night, that is the ninth hour, has passed, \textbf{and the tenth is beginning}, the signal of the water clock strikes, and at this signal \textbf{they immediately arise} and sound the wooden semantra. While all the brothers assemble in the narthex of the main church and pray silently, the priest takes the censer in his hands and censes first the holy sanctuary \textbf{and} from there, with a large candle being borne in front of him, he walks through the screen in front and passes along the north side of the church \textbf{by the Forty Saints}.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{160}I.e. the priest.
\textsuperscript{161}I.e. the attendants.
\textsuperscript{162}Symeon of Thessalonike, \textit{Treatise on Prayer}, Chapter 17 (p. 26); another reference is found in Chapter 12 (p. 23); see also Chapter 57 (pp. 79-82), for another description of a similar acts within the “\textit{asmatic}” Matins.
\textsuperscript{163}See \textit{Chapter 3}.
\textsuperscript{164}E.g. the church of Chora, Constantinople (see Ousterhout, \textit{The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul}, figs. 8, 9, 26, 27, 51, and Figs. 483 here).
\textsuperscript{165}The north subsidiary chapel, dedicated to the Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia (\textit{cf. Chapter 1}).
Arriving at the royal gate he censes the brothers and immediately returns by the south side. The brothers then enter the church behind him carrying large candles, while the priest enters the sanctuary through the oratory on the right.  

The entire Rule closely follows the Rule of the Monastery of St. John Stoudios in Constantinople (after 842), but Athanasius did not fail to make appropriate adjustments, related to the existence of side chapels, in order to make the Rule’s prescriptions work within the actual space. This passage, at the same time, confirms that at least the north subsidiary chapel was constructed as early as the first quarter of the 11th century. The corresponding passage in the Rule of the Stoudion is more detailed:

While all the brothers assemble in the narthex of the main church and pray silently, only those consecrated – both the deacons and the priests – together with the superior enter the church. The person whom the superior shall designate to take the censer receives the superior’s blessing and with hands washed clean censes first the holy sanctuary. From there he walks through the screen in front and passes along the north side of the church while before him the ecclesiarch marches with a bright candle of large size. Arriving at the so-called royal gate, he makes the sign of the cross over the middle of the lintel and begins to cense the brothers. After he has censed all and when one of the deacons has said in a loud voice the “O Father, bless,” the priest intones the “Glory to the holy, consubstantial, and life-giving Trinity now and always.” Immediately, he begins the troparion “Christ is risen” in the first plagal mode. As all the brothers sing together in the same manner, they enter the church. The priest, however, returns by the south side while censing and enters into the sanctuary.

Having in mind the basilica of the Stoudion, with its five doors between the narthex and naos (see Fig. 477), one assumes that the side doors – either the two grouped together with the Royal Gate and leading directly into the central nave, or the two opening to the side aisles – were used, since there are no other ways of getting from the nave to the narthex.

To summarize, the celebrating priest – accompanied by the ecclesiarch carrying a candle – censes the sanctuary first, walks out through the sanctuary screen, probably at its north door, censes the sanctuary first, walks out through the sanctuary screen, probably at its north door,
continues censing the north side of the nave (perhaps while walking inside the north aisle),
moves into the narthex through one of the two north side doors (presumably through the one
aligned with the aisle), censes those gathered in the narthex and blesses the solemn entrance in
front of the Royal Gate, then returns to the naos through one of the south doors and, via the south
aisle, moves back to the sanctuary. 169 Such a movement pattern is still present in the ritual
practiced in those Athonite churches that have three doors, not only as a part of the Easter
celebrations, but also in all other services that involve the censing of the narthex and attendants
standing therein, undoubtedly keeping in with the ancient tradition. 170 The way the censing is
performed may have been introduced to the Holy Mountain through the liturgical rituals of the
Great Lavra and other early monasteries. Already the katholika of Iviron and Vatopedi feature
three doors, and the lack of a set of three doors in the Great Lavra does not mean that it lacked
this liturgical act. As described in the passage from the typikon above, the doors leading to the
chapels were used there instead. Moreover, the two bi-lobed internal openings between the
narthex and naos may have been used as passageways before the side chapels had been added.
The ultimate origin of the practice of using the north door and the north side of the nave most
likely can be linked to the similar movement patterns of the liturgical rites in the earlier periods,
i.e. when the Little and Great Entrances – which are conducted in procession from the sanctuary,
passing first along the north side of the nave and then via its middle, to end up back in the
sanctuary – went through the narthex, as well. 171

169 Interestingly, the modern liturgical practice has this movement done the other way around, most likely due to the
preference given to the south half of the nave, where the male part of the congregation has traditionally been
accommodated, while the north half has been reserved for the female attendants (my own observations).
170 My observations from Hilandar. Only the direction of movement has changed: the deacon walks around the
church clockwise, censing first the south side and then the north, but still using the north door to enter the narthex
from the naos.
Similarly, the imperial cortege would leave the nave through the north aisle after ceremonial actions at the beginning
Although the above-described liturgical acts seem to provide an explanation for the existence of three doors, it is still difficult to ascertain whether the function necessitated the architectural organization or the existing arrangement instigated the movement during certain services. I would be inclined to opt for the latter scenario, since the existence of three or more doors in the nave’s west wall of early basilicas predates the formation of the Middle Byzantine liturgical synthesis. And the movement patterns were more or less the same in earlier periods, as suggested above. It seems that the movement was integrated into the Middle Byzantine liturgy along with the architectural arrangement, with obvious adaptations, as well.\textsuperscript{172} The apparent interrelation between the performance patterns and the spatial organization of the church building leads to the question of whether the above-described uses were limited in the Middle Byzantine period to the monastic usage and cross-in-square churches, or not. To answer this question, it first must be established if the cross-in-square churches of the period were built exclusively for monastic communities and, then, if churches that feature a set of three doors leading from the narthex into the naos were all monastic. Alternatively, a study of liturgical practices within lay parishes (apart of great churches of the capital, which accommodated imperial visits) may help to establish this and other aspects of the relationship between liturgy and architecture.

However, if the presence of three entrances was so important in the monastic liturgical pattern, then it is strange that the additional doors are not found in all of Athonite churches. In the case of the katholikon of the Great Lavra, apparently the connections through side chapels were activated when the use of the Royal Doors needed to be by-passed. All smaller katholika of the liturgy had taken place in order to take seats at galleries in the some Constantinopolitan churches (see Taft, “Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When – and Why?” pp. 42-44).

\textsuperscript{172} I am grateful to Katherine Marsengill for advising me to pay further attention to this point, which helped me to articulate it better.
do not have the side doors, unless opened at a later period (as in St. Demetrius). Can only the smaller size of the church be used as the explanation for the lack? Is it possible that these smaller foundations followed a liturgical *typikon*, which to a lesser or greater degree differed from that observed in larger *koinovia*, and did not need three doors between their narthexes and *naoi*? At present, full and definite answers to all of these questions cannot be established. However, some possible avenues in pursuing them might be pointed out through an examination of other elements, such as niches, found in the east walls of some narthexes on Mount Athos. I turn to them here again, in order to describe their elements that are known from archaeological evidence and to propose possible function(s) for these features.

The Athonite narthexes that possess niches in their east walls have no more than one door opening to the *naos*: Ravdouchou, Zygou, St. Demetrius (its north door appears to have been opened up later), St. Procopius, and Voroskopou. No furnishings or wall paintings survive in any of these niches, so it is not easy to determine what their function was. The only other Athonite *katholikon* that has only one door leading into the *naos*, that of Stavronikêta monastery, has a semicircular niche south of the door (Fig. 485). The wall painting (dated to 1545/6) in the niche features the composition of the Baptism of Christ. A stone font is placed inside the niche. Both the font and the background iconography clearly point that the niche was used as the

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173 Outside Mount Athos, there are cases in which the existence of three doors between the narthex and nave did not necessarily prevent the inclusion of niches, as well. For example, the Fatih Camii in Tirilye (see Chapter 2) and the 10th-century phase of a church at Selçikler in Phrygia (see Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium*, pp. 89-91, fig. 57) feature three doors with niches set between them. Formally similar, but almost certainly completely different in purpose are the concave niches at the same positions in the upper floor of the narthex of Ayasofya in Vize, built ca. 900 (Curčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, p. 318; Franz Alto Bauer, Holger A. Klein, “The Church of Hagia Sophia in Bizye: Results of the Fieldwork Seasons 2003 and 2004,” *DOP* 60 (2006): 249-270, esp. figs. 1 and 7).

174 For the date of the wall paintings, see Τουτός, Φουστέρης, *Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους*, pp. 375, 384. There is a reasonable possibility that the *naos* of the building itself, including the wall in question, is older than 16th century, perhaps dating back to the Middle Byzantine period (cf. Νικόλαος Σ. Χαρκολάκης, *Παράδοση και εξέλιξη στην αρχιτεκτονική της Ιεράς Μονής Σταυρονικήτα Αγίου Όρους: Η παραδοσιακή εξέλιξη εισόδων αρχιτεκτονικού μνημείου και τα προβλήματα της αρχαιολογικής αντίληψης για τη διατήρησή του σήμερα* (Αγιών Όρων: Ιερά Μονή Σταυρονικήτα, 1999), p. 41).
stage for the Great Blessing of the Waters on the feast of Epiphany.\textsuperscript{175} The same arrangement – including both the semicircular niche and the painting of the Baptism – is found in the \textit{katholikon} of Koutloumousiou, whose paintings date to 1539/40.\textsuperscript{176} The older painting of the Baptism of Christ in Hilandar’s \textit{katholikon} (completed in 1321) also suggests the placement of the holy water font against the narthex’s east wall, yet there it is north of the central door and without a niche in the wall (\textit{Figs. 482, 486}).\textsuperscript{177} Another contemporary case, which is located outside Mount Athos, in the \textit{katholikon} of the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner near Serres, exhibits a stone holy water font built into a concave niche in the south part of the inner narthex’s east wall (\textit{Fig. 487}). Additionally, the niche is decorated with an early-14\textsuperscript{th}-century fresco of the Baptism.\textsuperscript{178}

Based on these examples, it can be proposed that one of the niches at the Middle Byzantine churches of Zygou, St. Demetrius, Radvouchou, and Voroskopou – most likely that on the south side – served as the place for a holy water font.\textsuperscript{179} It is less clear, though, what the function of the second niche was, especially the rectangular ones at Zygou and St. Procopius, was. Most likely, they were similarly equipped with certain pieces of furnishing that played a

\textsuperscript{175} For the Great Blessing of Waters performed in the narthex on Epiphany, see \textbf{Chapter 3}. The location and use of holy water fonts are discussed below and in \textbf{Chapter 6}.

\textsuperscript{176} Τούτος, Φουστέρης, \textit{Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους}, pp. 295, 305, 310. The niche is located south of the main door, whereas there is a side door to the north (\textit{cf.} ground plan in Mylonas, \textit{Atlas of Athos} [see \textbf{List of Abbreviations}], fasc. 3, pl. 106.1).

\textsuperscript{177} For a broader discussion of this fresco and the position of the holy water font at Hilandar, see below. Another example of a wall painting of the Baptism of Christ (dated to 1259) set in a niche and positioned north of the entrance door is to be found on the west façade of the narthex of the Church of Boyana (Bulgaria). On this niche and its purpose, see Георги Геров, “Изображението на Кръщение Христово върху западната фасада на Бойнската църква – функция и контекст,” in Бисерка Пенкова (ed.), \textit{Бойнската църква между Изтока и Запада в изкуството на християнска Европа} (София: Национален исторически музей, 2011): 151-161.


\textsuperscript{179} Similarly, the north and south end conches in the narthexes of Lips, Myrelaion, Eski İmaret Camii, and Vefa Kilise Camii may have provided backdrops for the rites of the Great Blessing of Waters or of the Washing of the Feet, as suggested by the mosaic decoration in the north conch in the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas (Chatzidakis, \textit{Hosios Loukas} [full reference in note 36], pp. 22-23, figs. 21, 22).
role in the liturgical rituals staged in the narthex. One idea is that bookcases for keeping liturgical books at hand might have been set inside. However, the great value of manuscript books at that time and the unusually low position of these two niches make this highly improbable. Yet, without further evidence to suggest some other type of use, the question of function has to remain open.

Inferring from the known Athonite cases, I would propose that, in the provision of niches in the east wall, the size of the narthex indeed mattered. The smaller narthexes needed extra space and it was acquired with the placement of the holy water font and, perhaps, something else into the niches in the east wall. Additionally, it is possible that larger monasteries had their phialai located in the yard – as it is currently the case with the great majority of monastic compounds – whereas the smaller foundations had to keep them in their narthexes. This prevented the opening of additional doors to the naos. In the churches of Ravdouchou and Voroskopou the introduction of extra doors was further impeded by the minimal dimensions of the naves’ western bays, about a meter in the former and even less in the latter. In view of these aspects, it is possible that the monastic typika governing liturgical issues did not vary significantly between Athonite communities and that only the spatial limitations in the narthexes of smaller churches, where certain features and furnishings had to be accommodated in the east wall’s niches, may have prevented the opening of two additional doors. That the three-door arrangement of the east wall gradually became the standard in the Athonite church planning is evident in the katholika built from the 14th century onward, which follow the pattern. The only exceptions are the katholika of Koutloumousiou and Stavronikēta, which feature only two doors.

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180 For further discussion of the location and the setting of holy water fonts in the narthex and outside the church, see below and Chapter 6.
and one door respectively, and those of Esphigmenou (built 1808-1811) and St. Paul (built 1839-1844), which go further by entirely removing the wall between the narthex and naos.\textsuperscript{181}

d) Furnishing, Lighting Devices, and Burials

As it has already been noted in previous chapters, not much of the original furnishing survives in the narthexes of either Mount Athos or elsewhere. The missing furnishing raises the question whether some pieces were made of less durable materials (e.g. wood) and, indeed, whether anything permanent at all was placed within. The use of portable objects and pieces of furniture would provide more flexibility in the use of a space that was assigned various purposes, purposes that often required quite different organizations of the space.\textsuperscript{182} Nevertheless, there were certain permanent fixtures, pieces of furniture, and accompanying objects, which are known from sources or later usage. Moreover, tombs, usually belonging to the founders, are located in the narthex. All of these features deserve attention.

One of those objects, which is known from both written and archaeological evidence to have been located in the narthex, is the holy water font. Often termed \textit{phialē} (flat bowel, basin) and, occasionally, \textit{hagiasma} (lit. something that is sanctified, i.e. holy water), \textit{lekanē} (basin) or \textit{loutēr} (washing tub),\textsuperscript{183} it was most commonly fashioned out of stone in the shape of a bowel on a pillar-like stand, permanently fixed in the narthex, and used for the Great and Lesser Blessings of the Waters.\textsuperscript{184} The former of the two rites is conducted just once a year, on the feast of Epiphany. The latter seems to have developed from the former, as a way to secure constant

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item For the years of construction of the latter two \textit{katholika}, see Γαβριήλ Νικολάου Πεντζίκης, \textit{Άγιον Όρος} (Αθήνα: Explorer, 2003), Vol. 2, pp. 412 and 127, respectively.
\item Cf. concluding remarks in \textbf{Chapter 3}.
\item For these words, see Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, \textit{A Greek-English Lexicon}, Revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones, with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 1930, 9, 1037, 1061 respectively.
\item For a short overview of these rituals and further references, see \textbf{Chapter 3}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
inflow of the holy water throughout the year. This was of particular importance in the monastic setting, due to a great number of daily services and blessings, which required the use of holy water. The existence of this, less ceremonial rite was recorded already in 1027, in a Constantinopolitan euchologion. According to this manuscript, the Lesser Blessing took place on Sundays and major feast days. The modern Athonite practice has it performed at the first day of every month. The customary venue for both the Great and Lesser Blessings is the phialē, a basin protected within a baldachin-like kiosk in the monastery’s yard. The phialē at Vatopedi (Fig. 66) is probably the oldest surviving, as its core dates to the mid-14th century, and the phialē at the Great Lavra (Figs. 20, 21, 25), although in its present form constructed in 1635, most likely replaces, reproduces, and perhaps incorporates some pieces of the original one from 1060. Therefore, an outdoor phialē seems to have been a standard feature of an Athonite monastery complex from the very beginning.

However, it is very likely that another, in some cases possibly the sole water font was housed within the narthex. This is suggested by the archaeological and artistic evidence, such as the marble font, dated to the late 10th or early 11th century, preserved at Vatopedi (Fig. 488) and another at Pantokratoros (Fig. 489), as well as iconographic settings, such as those found in

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187 See Chapter 1, notes 142 and 77 (for the dating of phialai at Vatopedi and the Great Lavra respectively).
188 The phialē located outside the church is discussed in Chapter 6.
189 The Vatopedi font (55 cm in diameter and 26 cm in height) has been described as a portable phialē and is published in Treasures of Mount Athos, Exhibition Catalogue, Managing Editor: Athanasios A. Karakatsanis (Thessaloniki: Holy Community of Mount Athos, Ministry of Culture – Museum of Byzantine Culture, Organization for the Cultural Capital of Europe, Thessaloniki 1997, 1997), entry 6.7, p. 243. It is not specified where this piece was originally located, but its modest size suggests that it could not have been used in the open phialē in front of the church, which would have required a larger water receptacle. The font of Pantokratoros is mentioned by Pascal Androudis, “Nouvelles données archéologiques sur les monastères abandonnés de l’Athos,” Годишник на Софийския университет „Св. Климент Охридски“, Център за славяно-византийски проучвания „Иван Дуйчев“ 93 [12] (2003): 87-93 and 364-378, p. 89, with a photograph (fig. 14b). It has been dated to the 10th-11th
the katholika of Hilandar and Stavronikēta, and described above.\textsuperscript{190} An alternative location was the exonarthex, as witnessed by a marble font fixed in the southeast bay of the exonarthex at Hilandar (Figs. 490 to 492). This font consists of two matching spherical segments (one serving as the lid) of a pumpkin shape, cautiously dated to the 15\textsuperscript{th} or 16\textsuperscript{th} century, set on a short square stand that features carved braids datable to the 12\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{191} The font most likely served as a secondary one, used for storing holy water, in addition to the one housed outside the church, in a pavilion-like phialē.\textsuperscript{192} However, it has been also proposed that the indoor font came as the replacement of an outdoor phialē, located west of the church, that had to be demolished in order to make space for the exonarthex, constructed ca. 1350.\textsuperscript{193} This hypothesis is in accordance with the above-proposed existence of a font or container of holy water in the inner narthex, north of the main portal of the naos. In the Post-Byzantine period, when a new outdoor phialē was erected north of the katholikon, the font in the exonarthex may have been reassigned to storing holy water, rendering the one in the narthex – which may have been portable, made of metal or ceramic – redundant and thus eventually removed altogether.\textsuperscript{194}

centuries (Γιώργος Πάλλης, «Λίθινες φιάλες και κολυμβήθρες με ανάγλυφο διάκοσμο της μέσης και ύστερης βυζαντινής περιόδου από την Ελλάδα», ΔΧΑΕ 33 [2012]: 119-130, pp. 119-120). A large fragment of a similar marble font (38 cm in diameter) was discovered in the south church of Constantinopolitan Pantokrator monastery, in a vault underneath the sanctuary floor (see Megaw, “Notes on Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul” [cited in note 26], p. 348, fig. 4).

\textsuperscript{190} The font set into the niche in the east wall of the narthex at Stavronikēta is the sole holy water font in the monastery precinct. The very tight courtyard, merely a narrow gap between the katholikon and the rest of the monastery’s initial complex, leaves no space for an outdoor facility (see Χαρκιολάκης, Παράδοση και εξέλιξη στην αρχιτεκτονική της Ιεράς Μονής Σταυρονικήτα Αγίου Όρους, fig. 3 on p. 87).


\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{194} For an example of a ceramic font (27 cm in diameter and 18 cm in height), dated to the 18\textsuperscript{th}-19\textsuperscript{th} century or later and in the possession of Simōnos Petra monastery, see Treasures of Mount Athos, entry 10.3, p. 376. Its small size suggests that it may have been used for either the Lesser Blessing of the Waters or the storing of the holy water. Another two ceramic bowls, also used as holy water containers and dating to 1835 and the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, are kept at Hilandar (Marija Bajalović - Hadži-Pesić, “Ceramics,” in Gojko Subotić (ed.), Hilandar Monastery (Belgrade: The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1998): 345-348, pp. 347-348).
In addition to these examples, a number of other *phialai* from outside Mount Athos, also set in narthexes or adjacent spaces, can be mentioned. The *typikon* of Kecharitómenē convent (1110-1116) refers to a holy water font as being located in the narthex.\(^{195}\) At the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas, a small holy water font was housed in the southwest chapel,\(^ {196}\) which closely communicates with the narthex. Similarly, a *loutēr* for the blessing of the waters on Epiphany at Koutsovendis was located in the side chapel of the Holy Trinity, presumably in its own narthex.\(^ {197}\) At the end of the 12th century, as part of a reconstruction and refurbishing of the Athenian Parthenon – which by then had been used as a church for centuries – a *phialē* was installed at the entrance, inside the porch or *exonarthex* that was formed out of the ancient temple’s *opisthodomos*.\(^ {198}\) A plethora of Serbian monastic churches, dating from the end of the 12th century to the late 14th century, have holy water fonts located in their narthexes.\(^ {199}\) A marble font, dating to the early 14th century or earlier, is embedded in a concave niche in the inner narthex of the *katholikon* of St. John the Forerunner near Serres (see Fig. 487).\(^ {200}\) Two marble fonts with lids, dedicated ca. 1600, once were located in the *exonarthex* of the *katholikon* of Nea Monē, Chios.\(^ {201}\)

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\(^{195}\) The passage is cited in Chapter 3 (note 164) and also below (note 222).


\(^{197}\) Papacostas, “The History and Architecture of the Monastery of Saint John Chrysostomos at Koutsovendis, Cyprus,” p. 54.


\(^{200}\) See above and note 178.

\(^{201}\) Bouras, *Nea Moni on Chios*, pp. 71-72, figs. 48, 49. The outer narthex was appropriately referred to as a “*phialion*” (ibid., p. 71). A third, smaller font, also found in the monastery, may have been included in the room (ibid., p. 72, fig. 50).
These all are somewhat late examples, suggesting that the exonarthex and other areas around the narthex were acceptable as the venue. On Mount Athos, no such cases are known in the Middle Byzantine period and, if they existed, I would regard these fonts only as secondary to the one housed inside the outdoor phialē, most likely serving as depositories for the previously blessed water. The daily consumption of the holy water after the Divine Liturgy and before the meal in the refectory, the custom still present in Athonite communities, supports the idea that indoor fonts were used for storing water. Therefore, I would argue that the Athonite standard comprised an outdoor facility for the Great Blessing of the Waters on Epiphany and a container of the holy water located in the narthex. The latter may also have been used for the Lesser Blessing and, only incidentally (e.g. in case of adverse weather conditions), for the Great Blessing. However, it was primarily intended for storing holy water after it had been blessed at the phialē in the courtyard and making it available to the monks after the communion on Sundays and Feasts. It seems that outside Mount Athos, especially in regions with colder climates – such as Serbia and Russia – the performance of the Great Blessing of the Waters was gradually transferred from an outdoor font to a font in the narthex, explaining why the great majority of indoor examples survive there.

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202 As it is often the case today, e.g. Hilandar (a portable container is situated in the narthex) and Vatopedi (a portable container is in the exonarthex). These indoor receptacles are made of metal. However, in the view of the great number of surviving medieval fonts made of stone throughout Byzantium and beyond, it is conceivable that Athonite narthexes were equipped with similar pieces, placed there as permanent fixtures (similar to the one in Hilandar’s exonarthex – see above and Figs. 490 to 492).
203 See Chapter 3, note 167.
204 See Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 97, n. 136, for euchologia containing rubrics for the celebration of the rite either inside or outside the church building.
205 See Kandić, “Fonts for the Blessing of the Waters in Serbian Medieval Churches,” p. 66, for a contrary opinion concerning Studenica, i.e. that its exterior phialē, due to its openness, was used for the more frequent Lesser Blessing of the Waters, whereas the Great Blessing was performed inside the narthex, at a font that has not survived. About the phialē at Studenica, see Chapter 6.
The *proskynētaria*, already discussed above, were also possibly fashioned as permanent furnishing. Here it can only be added that, in the view of present solutions in the Athonite *katholika*, the *proskynētaria* may have been structured as wooden stands encasing icons set against the east wall. However, it is much more likely that there were only fresco representations on the wall, because if any decorative encasements were used, it is reasonable to expect at least some of them to have survived.

Another segment of the permanent furnishing may have been constituted by *stasidia*, i.e. tall wooden stalls arranged along north, west, and south walls and evidenced only from the Post-Byzantine period. However, in regard to both the Athonite tradition of avoiding any unnecessary changes and the requirements of certain acts that take place in the narthex (i.e. assembling and resting, as well as listening to instructional readings), it is conceivable that some similar provisions for seating or resting in the narthex must have existed. It is possible that a low stone surround, perhaps the same one that now serves as the base for the *stasidia*, similar to masonry benches found in the porticos of the Great Lavra, Ivērōn, Vatopedi, and Dionysiou (see *Figs. 510, 511, 97, 512*, respectively), as well as in the narthexes and *exonarthexes* of some other churches outside Mount Athos, may have originally taken the function of the present-day *stasidia*. Two of the stalls, situated opposite the *proskynētaria* and usually not otherwise distinguished from the rest, are used by the abbot (facing the icon of Christ) and the officiating priest (facing the icon of the Virgin) during the services performed in the narthex.

207 For the former three, see Chapter 1; for Dionysiou, see Σωτήριος Καδάς, *Η Ιέρα Μονή Αγίου Διονυσίου: Ιστορία, τέχνη, κειμήλια – Προσκυνηματικός οδηγός* (Αγιον Όρος: Ιέρα Μονή Αγίου Διονυσίου, 20083), photograph on pp. 68-69.

208 My onsite observations. See also Αγιορειτικόν τυπικόν της εκκλησιαστικής ακολουθίας, υπό συνοδίας Χρυσοστόμου Ιερομονάχου Ι. Κ. Ευαγγελήσιο Καρεών, (Αθήνα: Καστανώτης, 20044), diagram on p. 255 (Nos. 10, 11).
on the side, often accompanied with a small cabinet for books and a reading lamp (see Fig. 486), is reserved for the reader.

The furnishing of the narthex most likely included portable pieces of furniture that might be temporarily required in order to provide adequate setting for a particular service conducted in the narthex. In the view of the type of services that were customarily performed in the room, i.e. reading of prayers and chanting, items that were commonly employed undoubtedly comprised lecterns, icon stands, candlesticks, and the like. When not in use, some of these, if not all could have been stored in the same room, just moved aside, in order not to obstruct the circulation.

We possess virtually no information regarding the form and use of lighting in Athos’s Middle Byzantine narthexes. However, a few nearly contemporary monastic typika, in their segments regulating the performance of certain church services on both daily and festive occasions, do provide glimpses of how narthexes were illuminated. This, compared with what has been by tradition preserved in use on Mount Athos today, may help us visualize this important segment of the narthex’s interior setting.

According to typika, the type, number, and distribution of lighting devices, as well as occasions for their use were apparently governed primarily by the status and financial means of the community. The daily arrangement of lighting was dictated primarily by practicality. However, the use of lighting was also influenced by particular architectural forms defining the interior space, as well as by specific iconographic programs and focal points. In the katholikon of the Kecharitōmenē monastery, for example, there were a few lamps constantly lit at several strategic points in the church:
Lamps must be kept burning continuously night and day, one in the conch of the apse, one before the Mother of God Kecharitomene,\(^{209}\) one on the templon, one in the narthex, and another in the exonarthex.\(^{210}\)

Clearly, the narthex and exonarthex were lit only for practical reasons, whereas the other lamps – although providing light for other parts of the church, i.e. the sanctuary and naos – were associated with certain religious objects. Similar provisions were made for the main church of the Pantokratōr monastery, Constantinople, whose narthex seems to have been continuously lit solely at night: “one [lamp] in the narthex, another in the exonarthex, and another before the [representation] of the ecumenical councils”.\(^{211}\) Yet, during daily services, three crater lamps\(^ {212}\) were to be lit in the narthex and two in the exonarthex, in addition to the night-lamps.\(^ {213}\) It is not clear whether these were suspended from the ceiling or displayed on floor stands. On the other hand, if compared to the distribution pattern of lamps in other parts of the church, which was associated with distinct architectural subunits of the building,\(^ {214}\) it seems safe to propose that the three lamps of the narthex corresponded either to the middle three of the five bays or to the one central and two end bays (see Fig. 293). Similarly, the two lamps in the exonarthex were placed in either the end bays or the second and fourth of the five bays, thus possibly alternating with those of the narthex and, combined together, providing enough minimal light for all ten bays through large openings between the two rooms (see Fig. 301).\(^ {215}\)

\(^{209}\) This is surely the patronal icon, displayed in a proskynētarion, which may have been located close to the templon.

\(^{210}\) (27) Kecharitomene, # 66 (BMFD, p. 698; underlining is mine).

\(^{211}\) (28) Pantokrator, # [6] (BMFD, p. 740). The image of the Ecumenical Councils, executed as either a wall paining or a mosaic, was most likely situated in one of these two rooms, as this iconographic theme was a common occurrence in the narthex programs, as in St. Nicholas in Myra (vaults on the ground level) and St. Sophia in Ohrid (vault of the upper storey), for example (see Chapter 3, note 299, for references). Interestingly, both of these were cathedral churches. As monastic churches are concerned, I am presently aware of only two cases, both Post-Byzantine in date, Stavronikēta (see Fig. 485) and Great Meteōron.


\(^{214}\) Ib id.; cf. following note.

\(^{215}\) Interestingly, three chandeliers in the six-bayed litē of Hilandar are distributed in a similar alternating scheme: one in the east central bay and two in the west corner bays. However, it also very likely that these elements of the
The narthex of the Pantokratōr monastery’s other church, that of the Eleousa, which was of a secondary status and open for the laity, was lit only when there was an ongoing service in the church. Compared to the previous two cases, this indicates another lighting regimen, which was more modest and thus accorded with the church’s status. However, the number of devices was not dramatically reduced: there were three lamps in the narthex, most likely placed in three main bays (out of four), since all other lamps that provided functional lighting in the church were located within architecturally defined spaces.\textsuperscript{216} However, in addition to these light sources, a standing lamp and a candle were to be lit “before [the image of St. John the] Forerunner above the door of the narthex […] and opposite him before the icon in mosaic of the Mother of God one candle”.\textsuperscript{217} The mosaic icon was most likely that of the Theotokos Eleousa, the holy patroness of the church, mentioned earlier in the same section of the typikon, and it appears to have been situated above the main door leading into the naos. The image of St. John the Baptist was then located above the external entrance door, on the narthex side. Both of these instances, as well as the example of the representation of the Ecumenical Councils in the monastery’s main church mentioned above, offer evidence that particular religious images in the narthex could be honored with special lighting provisions, as well as were those in the naos. Special illumination, probably of votive purpose, was also prescribed for the tombs in the narthex and exonarthex, and during commemoration services performed on the behalf of those buried there.\textsuperscript{218} Similarly, the

\textsuperscript{216} These included each of the three apses of the sanctuary and four corner bays of the naos – (28) Pantokrator, # [29] (BMFD, p. 753).
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., # [29], pp. 753-754.
\textsuperscript{218} (27) Kecharitomene (BMFD, # 71, p. 701).
relics of the founders of Ivērōn, kept in a marble casket in the narthex, were honored with three continuously burning lamps.  

There were lighting devices of a more modest appearance and cheaper make, which were used on daily basis, and some more lavish and made of precious materials, which were brought out for festive occasions. For example, the Kecharitōmenē τυπικον instructs simple crater lamps to be replaced with silver chandeliers, silver pot-shaped lamps, and silver crater lamps, for certain feasts. This flexibility suggests that there probably were no permanently installed pieces, but that light sources were rather hung on hooks suspended from ceilings or fixed on walls. The portable candleholders and lamp stands were presumably set on the floor. The narthex was particularly lavishly lit at the Feast of Light (Φῶτισμος), i.e. the Epiphany, due to the phialē’s location in the room and the latter’s use as the venue for the Great Blessing of the Waters:

The divine festival of light during the world-wide feast of Epiphany will also be celebrated in the same narthex, in which the phiale stands, with the bronze chandeliers hanging in it and receiving their full lighting. In the same way the chandeliers of the church must also be lit then, and two candelabra with large candles stand on this side and on that of the phiale.

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219 Vita of George the Hagiorite, # 29 (Bernadette Martin-Hissard, “La Vie de Georges l’Hagiorite (1009/1010-29 juin 1065): Introduction, traduction du texte géorgien, notes et éclaircissements,” RÉB 64-65/1 (2006-2007): 5-204, p. 58). Three silver lamps burning above the casket were also seen by Vasili Grigorovich-Barškii in 1744 (Барскii, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы [see List of Abbreviations], pp. 131-132). On this accommodation of the founders’ relics, which was their secondary burial, see below.

220 These are the feasts of the Dormition of the Mother of God (undoubtedly the community’s patronal feast), the Nativity of Christ, the Epiphany, Holy Thursday, Easter Sunday, and the Transfiguration – (27) Kecharitomene, # 59, 61, 63 (BMFD, pp. 696-697). The festive lighting was used in conjunction with celebration of other major holidays as well, but at a reduced scale – ibid., # 60, 62, 63, p. 697. Similar provisions are also to be found in (28) Pantokrator, # [7], and, later, in (39) Lips, # 37 (BMFD, pp. 741-742, 1276-1277, respectively). This preoccupation with the exact type, position, and number of lights depending on the occasion seems to be unique (Bouras, “Byzantine Lighting Devices,” pp. 479, 483) and perhaps reflecting these monasteries’ status of imperial foundations.

221 I.e. the same narthex where the Washing of the Feet on Great Thursday was performed.

222 (27) Kecharitomene, # 72 (BMFD, p. 702).
There were also cases, such as the celebration of the Midnight Office, when the lights in the narthex were adjusted, either reduced or completely extinguished, if the symbolic dimension of a service directed such an environmental setting:

The standing and chanting outside the nave indicates our expulsion from paradise [...] and that heaven is closed to us, and that all the departed and the righteous are in the power of Hades. Therefore we stand at the west of the church, as being [in] the darkness of hell and corruption, and as being subject to the horror of ignorance. We do not light big lamps because there is only partial light in us, the natural light of the knowledge of the just, of the prophets and of the Law, which is not able to enlighten totally.\(^{223}\)

Returning to the Athonite narthexes, it should be noted that original fixed lighting – if there was any at all – survives in none of our narthexes. However, there are chains and other suspension accessories in the narthex of Vatopedi that might date back to medieval times. They are placed at the spots exactly corresponding to those described in the typikon of the Pantokratōr monastery: chains are suspended from the apexes of the three bays’ vaults, corresponding to the architectural subdivision of the space (see Figs. 69 to 72), and a metal curved bracket is fixed immediately above the middle point of the central door’s architrave (see Figs. 69, 70). The use of three lighting devices suspended from the vaults of bays may have been common to three-bayed narthexes; it can be observed in the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas (see Fig. 407). Similarly, a metal hook still survives fixed in the apex of the vault of the narthex’s middle bay in the church of St. Procopius (Figs. 170, 172), suggesting that there was a lighting device suspended at that spot. The bracket above the door at Vatopedi carries a lamp that illumines the main entrance into the naos or, more likely, the wall painting of the Annunciation (the dedication of the church) in the lunette above the door. The mosaic of the Deēsis in the exonarthex above the door leading into the narthex is lit by a more elaborate device, which consists of an oil lamp

\(^{223}\) Symeon of Thessalonike, *Treatise on Prayer*, Chapter 58 (p. 83).
and two candles, suspended from the ceiling (see Figs. 73, 75).\footnote{For this lighting device, known today as “stavros”, see below, note 231.} These are seemingly equivalent to the placement of the standing lamps and candles before similar icons in the narthex of the Pantokratōr Monastery’s Eleousa church described above. However, I would not exclude the possibility that they doubled as continuous light sources, providing practical illumination for the entrance doors and entire narthex (or exonarthex). All presently-used lamps are modern and can be taken off the hooks at the ends of the chains and brackets. The use of suspension devices, which remain fixed, indicates that lamps could be taken off for cleaning or replaced with another set of more lavish lamps, as the typika of Kecharitōmenē and Pantokratōr prescribe. Different regimens of lighting could have been maintained also by choosing whether to have lit only selected or all of the available devices.

Portable floor candelabra of various shapes and holding variable number of candles were likely placed in front of the proskynētaria and other revered images, as is presently the case at Hilandar (see Figs. 481, 482).\footnote{See below; cf. also Bouras, “Byzantine Lighting Devices,” p. 480.} Alternatively, they could have been used to provide minimal and cheapest practical lighting if placed in the middle of the room, as it is the case in Vatopedi’s exonarthex today (see Figs. 87, 88).\footnote{Candles are increasingly employed from the 9th century onward (ODB, Vol. 2, pp. 1227-1228).} The candelabra may have taken the form ranging from something as elaborate as the bronze candelabra preserved in the Great Lavra, known as “of the Amalfitans” and attributable to the 11th century,\footnote{Bouras, “Byzantine Lighting Devices,” p. 480, figs. 1, 2.} to a simple candlestick, similar to a Post-Byzantine wooden example kept in the Skētē of St. Anne.\footnote{Treasures of Mount Athos, entry 9.51, pp. 355-356 (dated to the late 16th or early 17th century).}

Concluding this section on the illumination, I would like to use the lighting system of Hilandar’s litē, i.e. its eastern three-bayed half, as the example that summarizes all above uses of illumination (Fig. 493). Hilandar illustrates what can be regarded as the standard lighting of
Athonite narthexes today, and may as well have been typical of Middle Byzantine interiors. In the middle of the space, suspended from the apex of the central vault, there is a chandelier with multiple candles known as the *polyelaios* of the narthex (πολυέλαιος λιτής). Its candles are lit only on Sundays and major feasts, whereas a crater lamp (φανάριον), which is made of glass and hangs further to the west, above what would be the entrance area of a narrow narthex, provides light for practical purposes. Above the central door of the *naos*, there is a composite device consisting of an oil lamp suspended from an openwork cross (hence its name «σταυρός») and two candles supported by the cross’s right and left arms. This feature accompanies the lunette frescos of the enthroned Virgin and Child with two angels, and the Crucifixion. The oil lamp burns continuously, whereas the two candles are lit on festive occasions. Suspension devices of both the *stavros* and the crater lamp include pulleys, enabling the ecclesiarch to bring them down easily for refilling and lighting as needed. Two more oil lamps hang on brackets (δρακόντια) above the *proskynētaria* icons, which are additionally honored with a candle on a candlestick (μανουάλιον) each. The lamps remain continuously lit and the candles are lit only during services. In some Athonite narthexes, but not at Hilandar, there is also a lamp (known as φανός), which hangs above the *stasidion* assigned to the reader and has only utilitarian purpose. Originally, the reader may have used a simple candle to light the book from which he read. These all pieces comprise what can be regarded as the narthex’s

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229 In addition to my own observations from this church, I use illustrations and diagrams published at the end of Αγιορειτικόν τυπικόν της εκκλησιαστικής ακολουθίας, esp. on p. 255.
230 The use of this term, which is otherwise applied in sources to outdoor lanterns (see Bouras, “Byzantine Lighting Devices,” p. 480, n. 19), apparently does not reflect the lamp’s form, but rather its function: practical lighting.
231 See Bouras, “Byzantine Lighting Devices,” p. 481, fig. 7, for a 14th-century example of such device.
232 For *drakontia* or *drakontaria*, see Bouras, “Byzantine Lighting Devices,” p. 481; for *manoualia*, see *ibid.*, p. 480, n. 22, as well as figs. 1, 2, which show one of the 11th-century “*manoualia* of the Amalfitans”, kept in the Great Lavra.
233 See Αγιορειτικόν τυπικόν της εκκλησιαστικής ακολουθίας, p. 243, for a drawing.
234 See above.
essential illumination, which fulfills both liturgical and practical requirements, and it conforms to the evidence of the two 12th-century Constantinopolitan typika cited above, which attest to the use of very similar sets of lights and lighting regimens. Therefore, it can be concluded that the illumination of Athonite narthexes during the Middle Byzantine period was not much different.

Burials in the narthex have already been briefly discussed in Chapter 3. I would like to focus more closely on the few Athonite cases here. The most notable of those is the tomb of the three founders of Vatopedi – Nicholas, Athanasius, and Anthony. They were buried in succession in a common grave, located within an arcosolium in the narthex’s south wall (Fig. 70).236 Initially, it was the resting place of Nicholas, who died between 1012 and 1018 as the abbot of the monastery, and it had the form of an under-floor burial with a simple wall painting of a foliate cross between two cypresses decorating the back wall under the arch (Fig. 494).237 Athanasius died after 1048 and was buried in the same tomb; this is probably when the tomb was transformed into a pseudo-sarcophagus, with its decoratively carved marble front slab dated to the 11th century (Fig. 76).238 The third skeleton found in the tomb upon its opening in the 1990s most likely belongs to Anthony, third of the monastery’s founders.239 The pseudo-sarcophagus concealed the lower part of the original back wall painting with the cross and cypress trees, which has survived thanks to this concealment. The present wall painting of the Virgin with the

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236 Μαμαλόκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή, p. 50; see also Chapter 1. For an exhaustive presentation of the founders’ tomb, based on archaeological excavations, see Θεοχάρης Ν. Παζαράς, «Ο τάφος των κτιτόρων στο καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου», Βυζαντινά 17 (1994): 407-440. An analysis by Sarah Tyler Brooks, “Commemoration of the Dead: Late Byzantine Tomb Decoration (Mid-Thirteenth to Mid-Fifteenth Centuries),” PhD Dissertation (New York University, Institute of Fine Arts, 2002), pp. 381-384, is also useful.
238 Ibid., pp. 421, 425, drawing 5.
239 Ibid., pp. 424-425. Multiple burials in the same tomb, especially of successive monastic founders and early abbots, seem to have been a common practice. As an illustration, Nikētas, successor to Nikēphoros as abbot of Medikion, was buried in the narthex tomb of his predecessor (Vasileios Marinis, “Tombs and Burials in the Monastery tou Libos in Constantinople,” DOP 63 (2009): 147-166, p. 159, n. 72). For Nikēphoros’s tomb, located on the north side in the narthex, see Chapter 3, note 232.
Child (Theotokos Blachernitissa) on the back wall above the pseudo-sarcophagus was probably added when the entire church was repainted in 1311/1312.\(^\text{240}\) Inside the katholikon of Vatopedi, there is another tomb in a similar arcosolium, now walled-up, located in the south wall of the south chapel’s narthex.\(^\text{241}\) A marble plaque, which seems to be the front part of a pseudo-sarcophagus, is decorated with a relief representation of three crosses and two cypress trees inserted between them (Fig. 513), and has been dated to the period after the middle of the 11\(^{\text{th}}\) century.\(^\text{242}\) Since this burial is located in a lateral chapel, it is discussed in Chapter 6. However, a few of its aspects should be examined here. It is not known who was buried in the tomb. There is only the local tradition that ascribes the tomb to a ktétrōs.\(^\text{243}\) This has led Theocharēs Pazaras to propose the possibility that one of the founders may have initially been laid to rest in the chapel and that his relics were later translated to tomb in the main church’s narthex.\(^\text{244}\) This would have not been uncommon. Other similar translations of the remains of revered monastic founders and holy people have been recorded in written sources, one of which took place at Ivērōn.\(^\text{245}\) In the view of the chapel’s dating to the second half of the 11\(^{\text{th}}\) century, this could have happened to the bodies of Athanasius or Anthony, or to some later benefactor’s remains.

In the church of St. Procopius, the south wall of the narthex features something that appears like an arcosolium (see Fig. 170). It has not been investigated, so it is not known

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\(^{240}\) Παζαράς, «Ο τάφος των κτιτόρων στο καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου», pp. 421-422, 424.
\(^{241}\) See Chapter 1, note 203.
\(^{243}\) Παζαράς, «Ο τάφος των κτιτόρων στο καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου», p. 415 (with references).
\(^{244}\) Ibid.
\(^{245}\) Ibid. For another instance, see Marinis, “Tombs and Burials in the Monastery tou Libos in Constantinople,” p. 160, n. 75 (the relics of St. Ignatius, the 10\(^{\text{th}}\)-century abbot of the Monastery of Savior Bathyrhyax in Cappadocia).
whether it contains a burial. However, its similarity in both location and form to the *arcosolium* at Vatopedi suggests that this is highly likely.

Another known Athonite case of burial in the narthex can be found in the *katholikon* of Iviron. In the inner narthex’s west wall, there are two arched niches formed where there were originally windows before the addition of the outer narthex. The south niche houses a marble *larnax*, which contained the remains of the monastery’s founders, while the north niche frames the cenotaph of St. Peter the Athonite and St. Onouphrios. The relics of the latter two saints, according to tradition, were once kept in the Monastery of Clement, the predecessor of the present-day Iviron. The remains of the Georgian founders were translated to the *katholikon* with great pomp *ca.* 1045 by the abbot George the Hagiorite. He first deposited the relics of Euthymios, brought from the church of St. John the Baptist. George then added the relics of his uncle and Euthymius’s father, John, which were translated from the north subsidiary chapel, and the remains of John Grdzelisdze and Arsenios Ninots’ mindeli, which were miraculously discovered in a hermitage. The *larnax* was emptied and the relics of the

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246 See Chapter 1. *Larnax* (λάρναξ) is a chest or coffin used in the Ancient Greece for ashes and bodily remains of a deceased (see Liddell, Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 1030). The word *larnak’ti*, obviously a borrowing, is used in the Georgian *Vita* of George the Hagiorite, # 27 (Martin-Hissard, “La Vie de Georges l’Hagiorite,” pp. 55-56, notes 538, 549) for the funerary installation containing the founders’ relics set in the narthex (see also following notes). Bernadette Martin-Hissard puts this ossuary in the north part of the narthex (Martin-Hissard, “La Vie de Georges l’Hagiorite,” pp. 55-56, notes 538, 540), but this is not in accord with Barskii’s description of the location as being “on the right side in the west wall” (Барский, *Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы*, pp. 131-132). Πενζίκης, *Άγιον Όρος*, Vol. 2, p. 250, also places the *larnax* in the south part of the west wall.


249 See Chapter 1, note 115.

founders taken away in the late 13th century. Therefore, it can be said that these are in fact not proper burials, since one used to be a depository of the founders’ relics, and the other commemorates former burials within the monastery. However, both are in keeping with the traditional use of the narthex for privileged burials. Moreover, George’s transfer of the relics to the narthex of the “great church” and “glorious church” of the Mother of God, i.e. the *katholikon*, honored them with a more elevated setting. In this case, the narthex became the place for keeping precious and revered relics of locally recognized holy men, making them accessible for daily veneration upon entering the church.

These four cases are the only instances of narthex burials in Athonite *katholika* of the Middle Byzantine period. They are in compliance with the general Byzantine practice and usually taken as part of the Athonite tradition as well. However, the peninsula’s other churches of the period lack tombs in their narthexes in favor of other locations, yet still staying within the broader narthex area. It appears that subsidiary chapels, adjacent to the *katholikon* or even further away, as in the case of the original burial of Euthymios of Ivērôn, were by far more common choices for the accommodation of tombs of early founders than the narthex. A chapel appended to the narthex secures the proximity and, often, a direct communication with the

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252 See the section on burials in the narthex in Chapter 6 for a cumulative presentation of Athonite cases of burials in lateral chapels and their examination.

253 See Chapter 6 for a cumulative presentation of Athonite cases of burials in lateral chapels and their examination.
This was exactly the case with the earliest known burial of an Athonite founder, that of St. Athanasius in the north chapel at the Great Lavra ca. 1001. Soon after, in 1005 or later, John the Iberian was similarly buried in the north chapel at Ivērōn. Chapels, especially those that were not consecrated to be used for liturgical celebrations, may have been viewed as a more acceptable funerary setting than the narthex, which was part of the main church’s liturgical space. The transfer of relics and collective burials in Athonite narthexes happened around the middle of the 11th century – ca. 1045 at Ivērōn and after 1048 at Vatopedi. Outside Mount Athos, although there are instances of burying founders, who were often regarded as holy people, in the narthex dating to the 9th and 10th centuries, burials in the narthex seemingly occur more frequently, both in written sources and archaeological evidence, from the 12th century onwards. Therefore, it is possible that Athonite customs in the 11th century were still stricter in obeying legislation against burials in the church, including the narthex, and thus chose side chapels instead. Is this a sign of conservativeness? Or is it, perhaps, an expression of monastic humility on part of the founder who did not want to be treated as a saint? In my view, both are true. Such an approach to burials was likely in keeping with the general trend in the monastic circles during the 10th and 11th centuries, whereas the 12th century brought about a more liberal use of the narthex, as witnessed by the typika of Kecharitōmenē and Kosmosōteira. And, actually, the latter two were royal foundations, which allowed their ktētores to be buried in the narthex, as a part of the main church.

256 For an analysis of side chapels’ relationship with the rest of the katholikon, see Chapter 6.
257 See Chapter 1 and Chapter 6.
258 See Chapter 1, note 115, and Chapter 6.
259 Cf. Marinis, “Tombs and Burials in the Monastery tou Libos in Constantinople,” pp. 152-153, with a citation (n. 36) from a 12th-century source that makes a difference between unconsecrated chapels (termed euktēria) and those properly consecrated (by depositing a relic of a saint in the altar at the ritual of enkenia) in relation to the issue of burials in churches.
260 For the use of the narthex as the venue for certain church offices, see Chapter 3.
262 Cf. ibid., p. 150.
The placement of tombs in subsidiary chapels (Great Lavra, Ivērōn, Vatopedi, Zygou, and Melissourgeiou) and the subsequent translations of bodily remains of founders (Ivēron and, possibly, Vatopedi) signal that the narthex was viewed as a more sacred and elevated setting than a chapel. Such an understanding seems obvious, but probably was dependent on specific local factors, such as the topography of liturgical spaces, level of reverence given to them, monastic humility, and whether the burial chapel was consecrated and used for liturgical celebrations and commemorations. In that respect, it is possible that the narthex burial was perceived by the Athonites as right exclusive to the ktētōr in the strictest sense of the word, i.e. the one who financially supported the establishment of the monastery. And in the situation specific to Mount Athos and its early coenobitic foundations, most notably the Great Lavra, the ktētōr was no less than the emperor himself. The actual monastic founders and first abbots then refrained from using such a privilege and resorted to chapels, which seem to have been viewed as less sacred and more permissible than the main church’s narthex. Only in two cases, at Ivērōn and Vatopedi, did the second generations decide to translate the relics of the founders to the narthex, which was likely used as the way to underline the importance of their respective founders, by elevating them to sainthood, and to establish/secure the independence of the community. And this happened only in the second half of the 11th century or later, when burials in the narthex gradually were becoming acceptable and more common.

e) External Openings

In exterior, the narthex, with its fairly large openings, which are often nested within series of recessed arches, appears more open and lighter than the rest of the church. This openness calls

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263 See note 259 above.
264 This seems to have been particularly true for Ivērōn, which was established as a Georgian community in the generally Greek-speaking Holy Mountain.
to mind the form of a porch and, indeed, the narthex’s likely architectural ancestry can be traced back to porticoes and atria of earlier centuries. The main entrance door is located in the center of the west wall and flanked by two windows, which occasionally assume the form of tall openings, closed at the parapet level and glazed above it. In addition to the main entrance, narthexes often have smaller doors at their north and south ends. This is the case with all larger katholika (including that of Zygou), except the narthex of Vatopedi, where the south wall is occupied by an arcosolium.²⁶⁵ None of the smaller churches had doors on sides, except for Voroskopou. For comparison, all Constantinopolitan narthexes of the period, as well as that of Panagia tôn Chalkeôn, also had side doors. In some of these cases, it is possible that the two doors may have originally been closed with parapets and functioned as windows (e.g. Myrelaion). However, some other examples, such as the Panagia of Skripou, with remains of cantilevered canopies over these openings, confirm that there surely were doors, too.

Was there a real need for so many entrances to the relatively small room? It is possible that narthexes, especially in situations when the west façade is pierced by two large, door-sized openings, were reminiscent of open porch-like vestibules of the Early Byzantine churches. Therefore, the additional passageways and openings were elements in accord with this design approach. Turning from the formal to functional level, the narthex as a gathering space – i.e. accommodating a great influx of attendants in a short time – requires additional entrances;²⁶⁶ those at the north and south sides provide direct access for members of the community coming from north and south wings of the monastic complex, where the majority of dormitories and cells were likely located, as the refectory was to the west. Moreover, the west door, analogously to the central door of the nave, may have been reserved for more solemn occasions (e.g. liturgical

²⁶⁵ See Chapter 1.
²⁶⁶ On the use of the narthex as a gathering space, see Chapter 3.
processions to and from the refectory, other ritual processions out and into the church, the ceremonial entry of special visitors, etc.), thus further prompting the use of the lateral doors for daily, practical purposes. All of these reasons are suggested by the usage one can observe in the Athonite monasteries today. With the ancient refectories located directly west of the katholika in the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, Ívrón, Xenophōntos, and Zygou, the movement pattern most likely has not changed much since their construction.

In those katholika that later acquired lateral chapels, the north and south end doors were reassigned to the communication between the narthex and the chapels. This situation, in which the narthex was rendered inaccessible from the sides, perhaps necessitated the addition of an exonarthex as a replacement for the narthex in its role of the communication hub. In this respect, it is possible that the lack of side doors at some narthexes may have been the result of a planning that envisaged in advance the inclusion of an exonarthex, which would service the lateral access to the church. Also, the accommodation of burials at the narthex’s ends may have prevented the opening of doorways.

f) Transmission and Innovation in Planning

These concerns bring us to the issues of planning and design of narthexes. In many respects, the Athonite narthex belongs to what seems to have been the mainstream in architectural planning of the Middle Byzantine period. The form and organization are shared with Constantinopolitan and other major foundations of the period: a narrow, elongated, three-bayed hall, connected to the naos via three doors, and opening to the exterior on its sides in addition to the front. Also, its functional assignments are essentially the same. However, from the very beginning, the Athonite

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267 For the narthex as a starting and ending point of processions on certain daily and annual occasions, see ibid.
268 On this role of narthex, see examinations of Vatopedi and Zygou in Chapter 1, as well as the discussion of the exonarthex in Chapter 6.
narthex also acquired certain architectural features that resulted from some specific local functional demands and symbolic meanings, as well as from particular building traditions. The latter are manifested in the tendency to make the three bays equal and the position of the arches between them independent from the structure of the rest of church building. The presence of a spherical vault over the central bay is characteristic and of great importance, as it was apparently necessitated by certain functions – such as solemn entries and vesting – and, to a greater extant, by their symbolic value and ceremonial aspects. The different building practices on Athos, as well as the lack of or different treatment of certain liturgical rites may account for the absence of shallow conches at the north and south ends, which feature prominently in the Constantinople counterparts. On the other hand, Athonite narthexes were very often appended with structures, which acted as the narthex’s functional extensions.

It seems that both the central square bay and the three-door arrangement of the east wall, although not architecturally much dependent on the design of the Hagia Sophia, were influenced by the imperial ceremonial of the Great Church. I believe that the path of dissemination went via the capital’s important imperial church foundations of the 9th and 10th century, which likely were of the cross-in-square plan and often served as monastic katholika, and were included in the imperial ceremonial scheme. Another, equally important line of ancestry can be traced back to coenobitic communities of Bithynia, which were active and influential in the monastic world from the 8th century onwards. The cross-in-square type, with a three-bayed narthex, was standardized by the Stoudites and brought to Mount Athos by way of both Bithynia and Constantinople. In this way, Athonite churches both showcase a mature, refined stage of the

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269 For more on this structural characteristic, see Chapter 5.
270 These structures are the subject of Chapter 6.
development that started a few centuries earlier, and exhibit solutions in which the basic model was adapted to particular local requirements.

I believe that both the common and idiosyncratic features were decided upon, if not necessarily designed by, the founders of the monasteries, who aimed at establishing proper liturgical spaces for their coenobitic communities. It is conceivable that their decisions were driven by their own experiences of church spaces, often acquired in their previous monastic communities of Bithynia and other regions in Asia Minor, which may have already incorporated certain architectural features in their church designs that were deemed useful. Then, entire church plans were emulated in main churches of daughter communities. At the same time, as it is well discernable from the case of St. Athanasius and his involvement in the construction and reconstruction of the Great Lavra (i.e. the addition of lateral conches to the naos), the founders were ready to employ novel solutions if they were deemed better for the community and its ritual scheme. This is why the narthex included certain specific features and was appended by spaces that are not so frequently found outside Mount Athos.
Chapter 5

Narthex’s Upper Storey (katēchoumena)

The gallery above the narthex is usually referred to in written sources as katēchoumena (κατηχούμενα, κατηχουμενεία, lit. “the place of the catechumens”) or, alternatively and less frequently, hyperōa (ὑπερώα, “upper chambers”). It seems to be a rule in the Athonite church planning, as over-narthexes were, perhaps, included in all of known Middle Byzantine churches of Mount Athos. They still exist in the Prōtaton and the katholika of Ivērōn and Vatopedi, and once existed at the Great Lavra and St. Procopius, and most likely at St. Demetrius and

1 Marinis, Architecture and Ritual (see List of Abbreviations), p. 91. Regarding the term katēchoumena, its meaning and origin, and the time of introduction, see ibid., notes 86, 87 (for additional bibliography and alternate views), and Slobodan Ćurčić, “What Was the Real Function of Late Byzantine Katechoumena?” BSC 19 (1993): 8-9. Galleries and upper chambers in Middle and Late Byzantine churches have been the subject of the following studies: B[arbara Maria] Schellewald, “Zur Typologie, Entwicklung und Funktion von Oberräumen in Syrien, Armenien und Byzanz,” Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 27-28 (1984-1985): 171-218, particularly pp. 197-208 and 216-218, where the Byzantine tradition is examined; Ćurčić, op. cit.; idem, „Смисао и функција катихумена у позновизантијској и српској архитектури", in Гојко Суботић (ed.), Манастир Жича – зборник радова (Краљево: Народни музеј; Завод за заштиту споменика културе, 2000): 83-93; idem, "Monastic Cells in Medieval Serbian Church Towers: Survival of an Early Byzantine Monastic Concept and Its Meaning," in Α. С. Преображенский (ed.), ΣΟΦΙΑ: Σборник статей по искусству Византии и Древней Руси в честь А. И. Комеча (Москва: Северный паломник, 2006): 491-514; Нίκος Σιώμκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στη λειτουργική χρήση του νάρθηκα και των κατηχουμενείων», in Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική και λατρευτική πράξη (see List of Abbreviations): 63-68, esp. pp. 66-68; Αναστάσιος Α. Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία» PhD Dissertation (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης - Σχολή Φιλοσοφικής, Τμήμα Ιστορίας και Αρχαιολογίας. Τομέας Βυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας, 2008), with pp. 182-189 (monastic churches), 227-249 (Middle Byzantine period), and 321-330 (role of patronage during the Middle Byzantine period) especially relevant for the present study; Slobodan Ćurčić, “‘Living Icons’ in Byzantine Churches: Image and Practice in Eastern Christianity,” in Alexei Lidov (ed.), Spatial Icons: Performativity in Byzantium and Medieval Russia (Moscow: Indrik, 2011): 192-212; and Vladimir Sarašynov, “Приделы второго этажа в древнерусских церквах XII–XIII веков, их функции и иконографические программы”, in Бисерка Пенкова (ed.), Българската църква между Изток и Запада в изкуството на християнска Европа (София: Национален исторически музей, 2011): 178–197. Also relevant is Marinis, op. cit., pp. 91-93. Here, Василенос Маринис does not make a clear distinction between uses of the galleries in monastic and non-monastic contexts. The information often concerns imperial uses and that might be due to the nature of sources pertaining to church buildings of the capital. However, as I show below, such a use of the galleries in important Constantinopolitan churches may have exercised a substantial influence on the function and organization of monastic katēchoumena.
There is a lack of firm archaeological, textual, or other evidence that the rest of churches – Philotheou, Ravdouchou, Kalamitsiōn, Zygou, Xenophōntos, and Melissourgeiou – were equipped with galleries. Nonetheless, there are certain architectural elements that suggest the possibility that these, too, followed the pattern. For example, the first three churches, in their adherence to the basilican plan of the Prōtaton, may have included a gallery above the narthex as their model does. Moreover, the height of their tall naves would have easily permitted the accommodation of a two-storied narthex under the same roof (see Figs. 8, 11, 13). When it comes to the other three, remains of massive walls and the possible existence of an access corridor at an upper level at Zygou, remaining brackets that once supported arches at Xenophōntos and the mere height of its naos, as well as a great height of the naos at Melissourgeiou, point to the possibility that their narthexes also had upper stories. However, for the present chapter, which examines actual elements and aspects of Athonite katēchoumena, only the existing and well-attested cases from Mount Athos, as well as their parallels from elsewhere are discussed. Therefore, I turn primarily to Ivērōn and Vatopedi, and also to the Great Lavra and St. Procopius, where certain elements of their original layout and use are known. The Prōtaton’s upper floor is not included for two reasons: its present form might be the product of later reconfigurations of the church and, in the initial scheme of the church, the over-narthex may have been only a part of a gallery running above the side aisles, as well, and, thus, may have had

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2 See Chapter 1 for each of these churches. The narthex of St. Procopius still has an upper storey, but in its present form it dates to the 1520s or 1530s (Chapter 1, note 276). As for St. Demetrius, Paschalës Androudës has expressed the conviction that it originally had an over-narthex, but without citing any evidence (Pascal Androudis, “Le catholicon du monastère byzantin de Saint Démétrios (Chalkéis) au Mont Athos (actuel kyriakon de la skite de Saint Démétrious de Vatopedi),” ΔΧΑΕ 29 (2008): 195-206, pp. 197, 201). The impression is that the typological similarities of the church to the katholika of Ivērōn and Vatopedi led him to this conclusion. I agree that the church very likely had an over-narthex; however, better evidence lies in the relatively great height of the naos and the low position of the west double-light window, which in fact may have been an internal opening between a katēchoumenion and the nave (see Chapter 1 and Figs. 152, 160).

3 For similarities in plans between these three and the Prōtaton, see Chapter 1.

4 See Chapter 1.
a purpose different from that in other Athonite churches. Establishing the purpose of the over-narthex in the coenobitic *katholika* of Mount Athos, together with examining the form and specific features of this part of the church, is the aim of this chapter.

Before turning to Athonite *katēchoumena*, it is worth reviewing briefly the situation regarding the existence of an upper storey above the narthexes of churches in other regions during the period, especially those churches that are closest to the Athonite examples in form and monastic context. Of Constantinopolitan foundations of the period, the Eski İmaret Camii has an over-narthex (see Figs. 219, 221, 223) and Theotokos tou Libos used to have one (see Figs. 194, 195), whereas Myrelaion and Vefa Kilise Camii do not. Among the examined Bithynian churches, only the narthex of the Fatih Camii in Tirilye survives sufficiently enough to allow one to speak of its upper parts and it did not have a second storey. The Panagia tōn Chalkeōn of Thessaloniki has an upper floor (see Figs. 258, 259). When it comes to examples that are chronologically, typologically, or geographically more distant, over-narthexes exist in Constantinopolitan churches of the 12th century, i.e. both churches of the Pantokratōr Monastery (see Figs. 294, 296 to 298) and Kalenderhane Camii, and in the majority of masonry-built churches of Cappadocia and neighboring regions, Çanlı Kilise near Çeltek (Figs. 307, 310), Karagedik Kilise (İlanlı Kilise, Fig. 317) near Belisırma, Kilise Camii (St. Gregory, Fig. 322) in Güzelyurt (Gelveri), and Ala Kilise on Ali Suması Dağı. An upper storey is found also in the

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5 The function of the Prōtaton’s gallery was probably closer to that of galleries in urban basilicas rather than to that of monastic churches.
6 See Chapter 2.
7 To the latter two, the church of St. John in Troulo may be added (see Chapter 2, Excursus).
8 It is possible that the church at Çeltikdere also had an upper storey, but nothing of it remains (see Chapter 2).
9 On the Kalenderhane Camii’s upper floor, see Cecil L. Striker, and Y. Doğan Kuban (eds.), *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, Their History, Architecture, and Decoration – Final Reports on the Archaeological Exploration and Restoration at Kalenderhane Camii 1966-1978* (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1997), pp. 69, 93-95, figs. 31, 32, 63. For Ala Kilise, see W. M. [William Mitchell] Ramsay, Gertrude L. Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), pp. 399-403, figs. 324-327 (the existence of an upper storey to the narthex is not explicitly mentioned in the text; but, judging from a great height of the west
Panagia church of the monastery of Hosios Loukas (Figs. 341), whereas the _katholikon_ of Sagmata monastery, often typologically linked to the previous, does not have one (see Fig. 346).\textsuperscript{10} Cross-in-square churches of the Kievan Rus’, both monastic and non-monastic ones, almost always feature galleries.\textsuperscript{11} Monastic churches of the domed octagon type, those of complex plans (e.g. the _katholikon_ of Hosios Loukas) include galleries over their narthexes, whereas those featuring simple plans (such as Nea Monē on Chios and Panagia Krina) do not have upper floors, but there are also exceptions in both groups. Among churches of the period, the over-narthex is most notably absent in Helladic (Attic) churches of cross-in-square and other plans (e.g. Panagia of Skripou). It appears only occasionally and, when it does, it is usually in churches of later dates.\textsuperscript{12}

From this representative selection of monastic churches, it seems that the inclusion of a second floor to the narthex was not uniform. Moreover, the double-storied narthexes are not exclusive to any particular architectural type. However, the number of cases that do include an over-narthex is not insignificant and suggests that there were specific reasons that instigated founders and builders to include this additional space. In some situations, it is possible that the addition of an extra storey may have been a way to resolve the height difference between the _naos_ and narthex, which may have been considered visually unappealing.\textsuperscript{13} I believe that there were both functional and compositional considerations in the inclusion and architectural façade – visible in fig. 325 – and remains of ribs that supported a barrel-vault – noted on p. 400 – presumably on a lower level, below the window that once existed above the entrance, I have deduced that there must have been an additional floor on top of the narthex). The rest are briefly examined in Chapter 2, Excursus.

\textsuperscript{10} For both, see Chapter 2, Excursus (with bibliography). The _katholikon_ of Hosios Meletios, another church that features large narthex as these two, has an upper floor (see Fig. 345), but it may have been a later addition.

\textsuperscript{11} See Chapter 2, Excursus.

\textsuperscript{12} As in Monē Blachernas in Éleia (see note 25 below) and, possibly, in St. Nicholas in Platani (see Στάυρος Μαμαλούκος, «Ναός Αγίου Νικολάου στο Πλατάνι Αχαΐας. Συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία», ΔΧΑΕ 31 (2010): 33-46, pp. 43-44, figs. 6-8).

\textsuperscript{13} This demonstrates rising concerns about design, which would culminate during the Late Byzantine period (cf. Slobodan Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches,” _JSAH_ 36/2 (1977): 94-110).
treatment of katēchoumena within Athonite katholika. How and to what extent these considerations factored will be better understood after a closer examination of constituent parts and features of katēchoumena. They will be compared with examples located outside Mount Athos where similarities in form, function, and organization are detected.

Architectural Form and Spatial Characteristics

a) The Overall Layout and Relationship to the Narthex and Naos

Although the katēchoumena sits on top of the narthex, they are two functionally independent spaces, since there is no a direct communication between them. However, due to the placement of one on top of the other, their structural and spatial elements are interdependent. The narthex’s upper floor is of the same size as the lower room and, like the latter, has a tripartite layout. The subdivision into three segments assumes either a three-bayed form, when the entire room remains open and spatially unified, or a three-chamber setting, when walls separate three distinct spaces. The three segments are equal in size (Ivērōn, Fig. 42b) or almost equal (Vatopedi, Fig. 56), and close to square in plan. The north and south compartments are crowned by domes on eight-sided drums at both Ivērōn and Vatopedi (see Figs. 37, 43, 58, 59). Such structuring was apparently employed at the Great Lavra as well, only without domes. In St. Procopius, however, the segments are rectangular, with only the middle one being slightly wider, repeating the same arrangement of the narthex below (see Fig. 164 a, b). The location of the dividing

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14 Walls exist at Vatopedi, but they were most likely built at later date as partitions (see Chapter 1, note 158). The walls at the same positions in St. Procopius appear to have been inserted in a similar manner, although the rooms acquired different functions.  
15 See Chapter 1.
elements, i.e. arches with pilasters or without them, corresponds to the location of those at the lower level. This is the case in the *katēchoumena* of both Ivērōn and Vatopedi (see Figs. 42, 53), and most likely was the case at the Great Lavra, as well (see Figs. 30, 35). This sort of uniformity in planning – if one can consider it as such at all, since only two *katēchoumena* fully survive – is also found in the over-narthex of St. Procopius, suggesting that the arches supporting the blind dome (at St. Procopius) may have either followed the initial layout of the original roof structure, or even have been retained from it (see Fig. 164g).  

The over-narthexes in Constantinople and elsewhere are usually structured differently. For example, in both the Theotokos of Lips and Eski İmaret Camii, although the narthex proper has even-sized bays, the middle bay of the upper level is more than twice as wide as the other two and has exactly the same width as the central aisle of the *naos* (see Figs. 188, 195, 212, and 221). The situation is reversed in the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn in Thessaloniki: bays on the ground floor are uneven and the pilasters with arches correspond to the pilasters and arches in the *naos*, whereas the three bays of the upper floor are all of the same size and, with the aid of deeply protruding pilasters, reduced to square plans (see Fig. 258). The narthexes and their upper stories in churches of the Kievan Rus’ are structurally unified, i.e. pilasters and arches are set in the same vertical planes. But they are also aligned with the structural system of the *naos*, which puts the churches closer to the building traditions and spatial concepts of the capital, exemplified by both churches of the Pantokratōr Monastery (see Figs. 293, 350, 360, 363, 368, 371, 372, 375, 377, 380, 381, 383, 386).

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16 It appears that the arches were slightly trimmed on their sides to the central area, most likely in order to bring a rectangular base closer to a square plan and better accommodate the blind dome, the base of which nonetheless remains elliptical.

17 The similarities of this over-narthex to the Athonite ones do not end here. More importantly, its lateral bays are crowned with domes, just as those at Ivērōn and Vatopedi are. More about that will be said further below.
Therefore, it can be said that the structural arches in the Athonite *katēchoumena* follow the internal logic of the narthex and its upper storey, rather than conforming to the structure of the *naos*. The structural system and spatial organization of the narthex and its upper floor appear independent of the rest of the church building. This arrangement may be structural and, therefore, the result of a particular building practice; or, perhaps, it reflects a specific architectural tradition.\(^{18}\) However, evidence presented here indicates that there were certain spatial and functional concerns. The Constantinopolitan cases feature large openings between the *katēchoumena* and *naos*, suggesting a closer contact of the over-narthex area with the nave. Moreover, the central room is large and takes up the entire area above the narthex, allowing any additional rooms to be set only in the small compartments above the west corner bays of the *naos* (in both the Theotokos of Lips and Eski İmaret Camii). These aspects point to spatial and functional treatment characteristic for open galleries found in some other churches, such as Kalenderhane Camii and Gül Camii of Constantinople, Hagia Sophia in Vize (*Figs. 277, 280*), and churches of the Kievan Rus’. On the other hand, Athonite *katēchoumena*, as well as that of the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn, although maintaining a visual communication with the *naos*, show greater degree of separation from the main part of the church. Also, the space in the upper-level is subdivided into smaller rooms; those on the periphery are without visual contact with the nave.\(^{19}\) This suggests that there was a specific function assigned to the over-narthex on Mount Athos, which is discussed further below.

\(^{18}\) Here, it is good to bring the Çanlı Kilise near Çeltek as illustration (*Figs. 305, 310*). In this church, the alignment of the structural elements of the narthex’s upper and lower floors – which does not relate to the structure of the *naos* – seems to be conditioned by the fact that the entire narthex was appended after the main church’s completion (see Chapter 2, Excursus). Did the narthex at the Great Lavra or its presumable ancestors outside of Mount Athos go through a similar process, leaving the mark on the narthex’s structure even when it was built simultaneously with the *naos*?

\(^{19}\) See below, the section on lateral (domed) compartments.
This spatial and structural independence extends to the level of external composition, as well. Whereas the churches of Theotokos of Lips and Eski İmaret Camii feature narthex areas well-integrated into the overall church designs (see Figs. 199, 225), the katēchoumena of İvērōn, Vatopedi, and St. Procopius, as well as that of the Panagia tōn Chalkeōn, which all are taller than their naoi, appear as if merely appended to the core of the church or stuck on top of the narthex (see Figs. 37, 38, 48, 59, 167, 177, 257). The existence of twin domes at their tops makes this impression even stronger. The compositional unity in the two Constantinopolitan buildings is achieved mainly through the formation of additional rooms over the naos’s west corner bays. This, again, seems to be more related to the spatial and structural experience with the enveloping galleries in some of the capital’s churches and, generally, in basilicas of the previous centuries. The Athonite churches lack the two additional chambers and appear somewhat compositionally awkward. This may have been the result of either a lack of building experience with galleried churches on the part of the builders, or a deliberate intention to keep an upper-level area in the church smaller and simpler, whether it was intended for the same function as the galleries of the capital’s churches or not. However, as already noted above, the katholikon of the Great Lavra may have been designed differently: there might have been two chambers of the katēchoumena accommodated above the naos’s west corner bays, thus helping the church to achieve a more unified appearance. Even if this was indeed the case, I would nonetheless argue that the architectural integration of the narthex and naos was not the primary concern. The addition of the two small chambers would rather have come as an answer to the functional demands set before the katēchoumena.21

20 As the recent works on the restoration of roofs of the katholikon have shown, there were no rooms over the west corner bays of the naos (see Chapter 1, note 100).
21 For the function of the katēchoumena at the Great Lavra, see Chapter 1 and below.
Turning briefly to the façades, a few observations can be made. The façade surfaces are articulated with recessed arches, which roughly correspond to the internal structure. However, the two central pilasters on the west façade are slightly moved to the sides so the area between them is wider than the other two (Ivērōn, Vatopedi, Zygou, St. Procopius, and Voroskopou – see Figs. 39, 56, 124, 177, 179). This was done intentionally, to provide a broader arch and more elevated roof line in the middle (see Figs. 32, 33, 58). Unlike the lower level, the façades here feature mostly isolated, relatively small openings (Ivērōn and Vatopedi), which indicate a greater degree of enclosing of the katēchoumena. However, at the Great Lavra, according to the 16th-century renderings (Fig. 32 a, b), there were larger, multiple-light openings, as well as a door in the middle of the west façade. The doors, which provided access to the narthex’s upper floor, are the subject of the following section.

b) Access

The issue of access to the katēchoumena is important and not completely resolved, not only where Athonite katholika are concerned, but also regarding other Middle Byzantine churches. This is because almost all surviving monuments lack stairs or other means of reaching the upper level. And, as noted, the access is never provided from the narthex’s ground floor room. 22 This means that the access was always external. 23 How would one reach such a considerable height?

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22 As a significant exception, access from the narthex proper or even from the naos, most often accommodated in the thickness of a wall, is found in churches of the Kievan Rus’ (see Chapter 2, Excursus; also Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία» [as cited in note 1], catalog pp. 517-536). Similar solutions can be observed in several Late Byzantine churches, e.g. the Tarchaniotēs chapel at the Theotokos Pammakaristos in Constantinople, St. Sophia of Trebizond, Prophet Elijah of Thessaloniki, and Gračanica in Serbia (my own field observations; cf. also Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία», catalog #27, fig. 50, #118, figs. 177, 179, #152, fig. 68, and #230, figs. 64-66, respectively).

23 The external access, i.e. functional and – in this particular case – legal separation of the katēchoumena from the rest of the church building are suggested by a reference in (57) Bebaia Elpis, # 145, in BMFD (see List of Abbreviations), p. 1563, where a church is listed as part of the monastery’s property, but its katēchoumena are excluded from it.
Stairs come as the first thought and they indeed appear to have existed at Vatopedi. There, however, they were part of the second building phase, added together with the exonarthex, through which the rooms over the narthex were actually entered (see Fig. 60).24 Also, masonry-built and, in this case, even covered stairs are quite uncommon, since the only other examples known to me that included masonry stairs are to be found in the katholikon of Vlacherna Monastery at Èleia, Peloponnese (church with narthex built in the 12th century, over-narthex added in the 13th century, Figs. 495, 496)25 and in the katholikon of a monastery (dated to the 13th cent.) on Kahve Asar Adasi, an island in the Lake Bafa, below Mount Latmos (Figs. 497, 498).26 The upper level of the church of Theotokos of Lips was also accessed by way of stairs, this time made of timber, which were contained within what appears to be a tower appended to the south.27 This leads one to assume that there might have been wooden stairs in Vatopedi’s original phase that provided access to the katêchoumena. However, there is no archaeological or written evidence to confirm that.

In the katholika of the Great Lavra, Ivērōn, St. Procopius, and Voroskopou, there are no remains of any architectural feature that would resemble either the long stair corridor of Vatopedi or the stair tower of Theotokos of Lips.28 Similarly, the Eski İmaret Camii and Panagia tòn Chalkeōn apparently lack means of access to their upper stories. Only the large door-sized openings on the north and south ends of the katêchoumena at Vatopedi, St. Procopius, Eski

24 See Chapter 1.
25 Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας, Λασκαρίνα Μπούρα, Η Ελλαδική Ναοδομία κατά τον 12ο αιώνα (Αθήνα: Εμπορική τράπεζα της Ελλάδος, 2002), pp. 96-99 (with older bibliography); cf. also Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία», catalog #174, and Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 414-415.
26 Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία», catalog #39 (includes additional bibliography).
27 See Chapter 2. Such a solution is also found in many basilicas with galleries of this and previous periods (cf. Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία», catalog, passim).
28 In the Ivērōn katholikon, stairs in the belfry tower, adjacent to the exonarthex’s south end, provide presently the access to the upper-level chambers, but the tower dates to the 18th century (see Chapter 1, note 120). It is not known if it was preceded by a similar structure at the same location. The chapel and two small rooms set on top of the narthex of St. Procopius are all accessed from a large lobby at the second storey of a late-19th-century dormitory that envelops the church on its west side (see Chapter 1).
İmaret Camii, and Panagia tön Chalkeōn (see Figs. 57, 164a, e, 499, 221, 227, 257, 259) suggest that all of them were entered from the exterior. The two 16th-century pictorial renderings of the Great Lavra’s katholikon (Fig. 32 a, b) suggest that the entrance to its katēchoumena may have been provided in the middle of the west façade, through what appears to be a doorway. Therefore, either some wooden stairs, fixed as permanent or used on occasional basis, or some sort of a wooden bridge from the upper floor of a neighboring building of the monastery compound must have been provided.29 In the case of Athonite katholika, I am more inclined to accept the latter solution, since it can be confirmed by analogy with the upper-level connecting corridor that has been in use at Vatopedi at least since the end of the 17th century and with the similar ones that most likely existed at Zigou and, possibly, the Great Lavra.30 Similarly, the katēchoumena at Hosios Loukas (both of the Panagia church and the Katholikon), Pantokratōr Monastery of Constantinople, and Çanli Kilise were entered from buildings leaning directly against the north or south sides of these churches (see Figs. 340, 293, 309, respectively).31 However, I would not completely exclude the possibility that masonry or wooden stairs instead of or in addition to the direct upper-level access may have been used, as well. The katholikon of

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29 In the above-mentioned stairs at Vlacherna Monastery (Fig. 496 here), a small wooden platform spanning a gap between the topmost landing of the masonry-built stairs and the entrance door to the over-narthex had to be used since no built connecting passageway was provided. A masonry passage on top of an arch exists in the 15th-century katholikon of Pantanassa monastery in Mystra (Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία», catalog #179, fig. 115). An arch used to connect the initial flight of stairs at Kahve Asar Adası, as attested by a photo (Fig. 498), but most likely provided a support for an additional number of steps, whereas the landing before the entrance was further up.

30 See Chapter 1. To these three, the above-mentioned architectural solution at St. Procopius (see note 28) may be added. The upper level there directly connects to the dormitory’s second floor, which functions as the ground floor further to the south, due to the sloping terrain. Similar situation is found at Zygoú, only with the terrain sloping to the opposite direction, so the katēchoumena were most probably entered from the north. At another Athonite monastery, Dionysiou, the katēchoumena (constructed prior to 1616, when its north chapel was decorated with wall paintings, or perhaps even before 1546/7, when the entire church, including the litē was frescoed – for the dates, see Τούτος, Φοιστέρης, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους [see List of Abbreviations], pp. 233, 254; see also the longitudinal section through the katholikon on p. 234) are also directly entered from the upper level of the monastery’s west tract, in addition to stairs built within the thickness of the south wall (see Mylonas, Atlas of Athos [see List of Abbreviations], fasc. 3, pl. 105.1). Porches as connecting corridors are discussed at a greater detail in Chapter 6.

31 On the north side at Hosios Loukas (the galleries of the Katholikon, on the south side, most likely were entered only through the katēchoumena of the Panagia church) and in Çanli Kilise, and on the south side at Pantokratōr.
Vatopedi confirms this. It is only the question whether the same architectural solution as at Vatopedi would have been applied. Yet, it seems clear enough that external, same-level access was more common, almost a rule, rather than an access directly from the ground level, which would have made the over-narthex potentially more available to the members of the community and less protected. On the contrary, access to the katēchoumena was apparently restricted and well controlled.

c) The Katēchoumeneion Proper

The central of the three compartments of the katēchoumena, often referred to as the katēchoumenon or katēchoumeneion proper, is the only one that communicates with the naos. This contact, which is only visual, is established through an opening that survives completely at Vatopedi (see Figs. 51, 53, 68, 79, 80), is partially preserved at St. Demetrius (see Figs. 152, 160), if that was its original function, since the upper floor is missing,\textsuperscript{32} traceable at the Great Lavra and Ivērōn (Figs. 25, 42b), and conceivable at St. Procopius (Figs. 164a, 169). This internal window is most often structured as a tribēlon, consisting of three arched openings separated by two mullions. This is the case at Vatopedi and most likely was the same at the Great Lavra and Ivērōn, whereas the window in St. Demetrius is a dibēlon, double-light opening.\textsuperscript{33} The tribēlon at Vatopedi rises directly from the upper storey’s floor and the lower parts are closed by decoratively carved parapet slabs (Fig. 79). The same was the case at Ivērōn and, most likely, at the Great Lavra. The Vatopedi tribēlon further features three marble window frames, fixed within intercolumniations, and marble fretwork pieces enclosing the rest (Fig. 80).

\textsuperscript{32} See note 2 above.

\textsuperscript{33} A large and elegant tribēlon is also found in the Eski İmaret Camii, whereas Panagia tōn Chalkeōn has an arched opening with no subdivision (for both, see Chapter 2). It is worth noting that the corresponding parts of the galleries in both the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas (see Fig. 406) and, more importantly, the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople are structured as tripartite, arced openings.
It is easy to imagine some curtains or wooden shutters being used to close the openings if needed, providing privacy to the person attending. The over-all appearance of the room is of an observation deck and – due to its visual communication with the nave – it resembles the galleries or tribunes of city churches. It is only more enclosed and, in appearance, closer to a private balcony.

Set between two rooms, the *katēchoumeneion* proper is accessed either from one of the side rooms, or from the front, through the *exonarthex*’s upper storey. The walls that separate the central space from the other two at Vatopedi (see Fig. 68) were inserted at a later date, so the entire over-narthex area was originally a single room, as it is still the case at Iveron. No original furnishing is preserved in either of the two *katēchoumena* and there are no wall paintings. Therefore, it is almost impossible to conceive how the space was organized and used, except for standing or seating while observing a service in the *naos*. In both churches, the central bay is of a square plan and covered by a barrel-vault directed east-west. Thus, there is no architectural emphasis of the room similar to the one found on the lower level, in the form of a sail-vault. However, such a treatment is not absent from some of contemporary churches we have already encountered, namely the Eski İmaret Camii and Panagia tōn Chalkeōn, both featuring sail-vaults over square central bays in the *katēchoumena*, although the corresponding areas in the narthex below are not of square plans. Certain churches even have or had a dome with drum crowning the *katēchoumeneion* proper, e.g. the south church of the Pantokratōr monastery and Kalenderhane Camii, and later, Panagia Parēgorētissa in Arta (late 13th cent.), as well as Hodēgētria (Aphentiko) of the Vrontochion monastery (*ca.* 1310) and Pantanassa (completed

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34 *Cf.* Chapter 4.
1428), both in Mystra, to mention only some monastic churches.\textsuperscript{35} Undoubtedly, the form and meaning of the baldachin were employed in providing this special architectural setting. It is, therefore, significant that Athonite churches lack the feature. Although very similar in form and, probably, in function, the \textit{katēchoumena} of Constantinople and Late Byzantine capitals of Arta and Mystra must have accommodated personages of a more elevated status than those that used to occupy Athonite counterparts.\textsuperscript{36} This issue is further elaborated below, in the section on the function and meaning of the \textit{katēchoumena}.

d) North and South Compartments and the ‘Twin Dome Motif’

The north and south bays of the surviving \textit{katēchoumena} at Ivērōn and Vatopedi are square in plan and crowned by domes on eight-sided drums, pierced by windows (see Figs. 37, 43, 46, 53, 58, 59, 82, 84).\textsuperscript{37} The corresponding bays at the Great Lavra were most likely also square, but apparently lacked domes,\textsuperscript{38} whereas the ones in St. Procopius seem to have been rectangular and barrel-vaulted, if the present vaulting of the north and south rooms belongs to the original

\textsuperscript{35} For the domes in the Pantokrātor’s south church and in Kalenderhane Camii, see \textbf{Chapter 2, Excursus} and Striker, Kuban (eds.), \textit{Kalenderhane in Istanbul} (cited in full in note 9), p. 69, figs. 31, 32, 63, respectively. For the last three churches, \textit{cf.} Ταντσής, «Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία», catalog #153, #178, #179, and Ćurčić, \textit{Architecture in the Balkans}, pp. 567-569, 588-591, 592-593. It is interesting to note that the central east bay of the Post-Byzantine six-bayed \textit{katēchoumena} in the \textit{katholikon} of the Athonite Dionysiou Monastery is covered with a blind dome (see the longitudinal section of the church in Τουτός, Φουστέρης, \textit{Ευρετήριο της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους}, p. 234). The chapel, placed centrally in St. Procopius during the Post-Byzantine period, also has a blind dome (see \textbf{Chapter 1}). However, it should be taken into account that contexts in which these spaces were created were very different from those of the earlier centuries.

\textsuperscript{36} The presence of domes or baldachins in the western tract of Byzantine church galleries has already been noticed and discussed by E. Baldwin Smith, \textit{Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages} (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1956), pp. 166-178, and Jelena Bogdanović, “Canopies: The Framing of Sacred Space in the Byzantine Ecclesiastical Tradition,” PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 2008), \textit{passim} (see pp. 353 and 546 for considerations of the canopy-like structure in Parēgorētissa) and figs. 198-200. The royal connotation has been briefly discussed in \textbf{Chapter 4 (The Emphasized Central Bay)}, but this interesting issue deserves further study and fuller elucidation of the reasons for the presence of this architectural feature, which is invested with strong symbolism and meaning. See Bogdanović, “Canopies: The Framing of Sacred Space in the Byzantine Ecclesiastical Tradition,” pp. 90-91, for an exposition on the setting of the so-called “the empress’s lodge” on the west gallery in Hagia Sophia.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Cf. Chapter 1}.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Cf. ibid.}
structure, as seems to be the case (Fig. 164e).\textsuperscript{39} When it comes to St. Demetrius, Paschalis Androudis believes that it not only had an upper storey, but that the lateral compartments must have been surmounted by domes.\textsuperscript{40} Although plausible, this hypothesis, however, cannot be substantiated by any evidence. Despite the existence of a pair of domes being positively confirmed in only two churches, the ‘twin dome motif’ has been often regarded as a feature characteristic of the Athonite church architecture. This is perhaps because only two other, similarly designed \textit{katēchoumena} can be found outside Mount Athos: Panagia tōn Chalkeōn and the chapel of the Pammakaristos church (1315) in Constantinople.\textsuperscript{41} Furthermore, the Late Byzantine translation of the motif of the twin-domed over-narthex into a twin-domed narthex is also somewhat associated with Athos, appearing in the \textit{katholika} of Hilandar (by 1321),\textsuperscript{42} Koutloumousiou (1370s?),\textsuperscript{43} and Kastamonitou (now gone; possibly built in 1433), as well as outside the peninsula, most notably in the church of Prophet Elijah (1360s) in Thessaloniki.

\textsuperscript{39} Judging from the preserved north and south gable, as well as the building technique, which involves arranging bricks of the vault in square concentric rows at the top and results in a slight concave shape (my onsite observations; see also Fig. 164g).

\textsuperscript{40} Androudis, “Le catholicon du monastère byzantin de Saint Démétrios (Chalkéōs) au Mont Athos (actuel kyriakon de la skite de Saint Démétrios de Vatopedi)” (cited in note 2 above), p. 201. The same opinion has been expressed by Vasilēs Mesēs on the ground of typological similarities with the \textit{katholika} of Ivērōn and Vatopedi (Βασίλειος Δ. Μεσής, «Ναοί αθωνικού τύπου» PhD Dissertation (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αριστοτέλειο Πάνεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης - Σχολή Φιλολογίας, Τμήμα Ιστορίας και Αρχαιολογίας, 2010), p. 115, n. 405, and catalog #5, p. 56, n. 121). See also note 2 above.

\textsuperscript{41} Some scholars have speculated that the origin of the motif may have been in Thessaloniki, perhaps in the city’s Hagia Sophia church, in what once may have been the form of the west tripartite segment of the ambulatory (Γεόργιος Μ. Βελένης, \textit{Μεσοβυζαντινή ναοδομία στη Θεσσαλονίκη} (Αθήνα: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, Κέντρο ερεύνας της Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής τέχνης, 2003), p. 64). Others, however, while acknowledging that the motif appears in the churches of Mount Athos and the immediate area, have noted that similar concepts may have been present in the gallery chapels of the Theotokos of Lips, which may have had domes, and thus suggested that the ancestry may have been Constantinopolitan (Slobodan Ćurčić, “The Twin-Domed Narthex in Palaeologan Architecture,” \textit{ZRVI} 13 (1971): 333-344, pp. 337-338, 341-342; see also \textbf{Chapter 2}, esp. note 21). Given the fact that the evidence in both the Hagia Sophia of Thessaloniki and Theotokos of Lips is limited and circumstantial in this respect, the origins of the motif cannot be firmly ascertained (cf. Ćurčić, “The Twin-Domed Narthex in Palaeologan Architecture,” p. 342, and Mesēs, «Ναοί αθωνικού τύπου», pp. 308-309).

\textsuperscript{42} For the date of this monument, see Мидораг Марковић, Вилијам Тејлор Хостетер [William Taylor Hostetter], „Прилог хронологији градње и осликавања хиландарског католикона,” \textit{Хиландарски зборник} 10 (1998): 201-220.

\textsuperscript{43} Παντελής Γ. Φουντάς, «Η χρονολόγηση του καθολικού της Μονής Κουτλουμουσιών», \textit{Μακεδονικά} 32 (1999-2000): 443-482.
which itself is considered to be influenced by Athonite architecture. The motif continues to live in the Post-Byzantine architecture of Mount Athos (e.g. old Zographou 1502, Karakalou 1548-63, and Xenophontos 1564, to mention just a few earliest) and two domes reappear again on top of the over-narthex chambers at Dionysiou (prior to 1616 or 1546/7). Therefore, the twin-domed katēchoumena, although not a uniform occurrence on Athos, can be regarded as idiosyncratic of its early large katholika.

The presence of domes suggests the designation of these two compartments as parekklēsia. However, any potentially liturgical features or furnishing, as well as wall paintings are completely missing at Ivērōn, as well as in Panagia tôn Chalkeōn and the Pammakaristos chapel. In the case of Vatopedi, however, tall concave recesses in the east walls seem to be part of the original design (see Fig. 56) and almost certainly were diminutive sanctuary apses of chapels. At some later date, additional smaller recesses were hewn out of the wall masses immediately north of the apses in both rooms (see Fig. 68) and they were obviously meant to serve as the prothēsis niches. Therefore, the two domed chambers were certainly used for liturgical celebrations.

Chapels at similar positions in churches of the Middle Byzantine period

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45 For Dionysiou, see note 30 above. There is a visual record that the old narthex of the katholikon of Stavronikēta had two domes in 1545/6 (see Χαρκιολάκης, Παράδοση και εξέλιξη στην αρχιτεκτονική της Ιεράς Μονής Σταυρονικήτα Αγίου Όρους, fig. 2 on p. 20; cf. also p. 110 there). Apart from this, nothing is known of the date and internal structure of this narthex.

46 The use of the two chambers as chapels is attested as early as the 18th century (see Chapter 1, note 162). The apses show regularity in form (unlike the prothēsis niches – see below), rise directly from the floor level, and their arched tops are concentric with the arches that carry the domes. These all suggest that the apses were constructed at the same time as the rest of the katēchoumena.

47 Today, the north chapel is dedicated to the Holy Trinity and its south counterpart to the Holy Archangels (Μαμαλούκος, Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου - Διδακτορική διατριβή [see List of Abbreviations, p. 56]. See
are firmly attested in the Theotokos of Lips, where remains of templon stylobates, altar tables, and other liturgical features have survived (Fig. 195), in the katholikon of the Great Lavra,\(^49\) in Karagedik Kilise (St. George, İlanlı Kilise), near Belisirma in Cappadocia (Figs. 316, 317),\(^50\) and in St. Stephen in Kastoria (9\(^{th}\) cent.).\(^51\) The katēchoumena at the Athonite monastery of Dionysiou, although belonging to the Post-Byzantine period, also includes two domed chapels, situated at the north and south sides. These examples confirm that the presence of chapels in the over-narthex was not uncommon.\(^52\) However, they exhibit spatial solutions different from each other, leading one to conclude that the presence of domes at the narthex’s upper level in Athonite and other churches cannot be immediately taken as the evidence that the space below the dome was a chapel, or that the room without a dome was not a chapel. For example, evidently there were no domes over the katēchoumena at the Great Lavra and its three bays were all covered by the same (or similar) vaults of a spherical shape, possibly blind domes.\(^53\) At the same time, at least three different functions were accommodated in there and distinctly separated: a chapel (south), a monastic cell (north), and a small library/skeuophylakion (presumably in the middle or

\(^{48}\) Cf. Theodore Macridy, “The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi,” DOP 18 (1964): 253-277, p. 260, figs. 25, 26. There were two chapels above the narthex and another two above the pastophoria (ibid.; see also Chapter 2). All four chapels were possibly domed (see Chapter 2).

\(^{49}\) One chapel, dedicated to the Holy Five Martyrs of Sebasteia, was placed in the south part of the katēchoumena, according to Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы (see List of Abbreviations), pp. 12, 15. See also Chapter 1 and below.

\(^{50}\) At least one chapel, located above the northwest compartment of the naos (see Chapter 2, Excursus).

\(^{51}\) One chapel, situated in the south end of the over-narthex (see Nikolaos Siomkos, L’église Saint-Etienne à Kastoria: Étude des différentes phases du décor peint (Xᵉ-XIVᵉ siècles) (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κέντρο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 2005), pp. 100-114).

\(^{52}\) Ćurčić, “The Twin-Domed Narthex in Palaeologan Architecture,” p. 340, suggests that the katēchoumena chapels were interchangeable, both architecturally and functionally, with the chapels flanking the narthex on the ground level (for the latter, see Chapter 6). While it is true that they have some formal similarities (such as domes), I would argue that functionally they were of different nature. Unlike the ground-level parekkλēsia, the over-narthex chapels did not fulfill funerary and commemorative functions (ibid.), as also noted by Sloboda Ćurčić, but most likely served for private devotions of the katēchoumena’s occupant (see below).

\(^{53}\) It is also possible that the two of them on the sides were the result of a later rebuilding, perhaps necessitated by the collapse of domes caused by an earthquake (see below).
grouped together with the cell). Theoretically, all these were set within spaces of the same architectural form. The possibility that over-narthexes were entered from one of the sides – where chapels also tend to be located – further complicates the issue of form, function, and organization. Therefore, it is possible that in the twin-domed designs one dome was indeed intended to cover a liturgical space, whereas the other was apparently added only to balance the architectural composition. Later on, when an exonarthex was appended, the access could have been provided from the front – as it happened at both Vatopedi and Ivērōn – giving an opportunity for the second domed space, the one initially intended only for symmetry, to be transformed into a chapel, if so desired. This is one possible scenario, but not necessarily the case for all. For example, at the Great Lavra, the chamber symmetrically positioned opposite the chapel was presumably the cell of St. Athanasius. Although the room was associated with such an important figure and probably witnessed his monastic feats, it nevertheless was never turned into a chapel.

Due to the Great Lavra’s spiritual preeminence, acquired from its very foundation, the existence of a chapel in the katēchoumena of its katholikon could have provided a functional model for the chapels in the same position in the katholika of Ivērōn and Vatopedi, which were

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54 Cf. Chapter 1 and below.
55 As attested at Vlaherna Monastery and Kahve Asar Adası (see above). Also, there is a great likelihood that the over-narthex of the Eski İmaret Camii was accessed from the south, through the still-preserved opening that may have been a door, judging from the preserved marble revetment of the jambs (see Figs. 211, 221, and 227). Also, in few examples with inner stairs, the upper end of the staircase reaches the over-narthex in one of the lateral bays (e.g. St. Stephen in Kastoria, the Pammakaristos chapel, Prophet Elijah in Thessaloniki, and Dionysiou).
56 A chapel dedicated to the memory of St. Athanasius is in fact located in the old synodikon, in the north tract of the monastery’s enclosure, where Athanasius had dwelled at some point (cf. Ploutarchos L. Theocharides, “Recent Research into Athonite Monastic Architecture, Tenth-Sixteenth Centuries,” in Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism (see List of Abbreviations), 205-222, pp. 211, 221, fig. 16.1 [nos. 3, 4, 5]; idem, «Γνωμονευό-σκευοφυλάκιο της Μεγίστης Λαώρας. Ιστορία, έρευνα και πρόταση αποκατάστασης», Η Δεκάτη 2 (2005-2006): 76-87, pp. 80-82; and Δημήτριος Λιάκος, «Παρατηρήσεις στα Βυζαντινά δάπεδα σε τεχνική opus sectile των ναών του Αγίου Όρους», Βυζαντινά 31 (2011): 107-146, pp. 108, 110-112).
built shortly after the Lavra’s main church.\textsuperscript{57} It is not impossible that such a liturgical arrangement of the Lavra’s katēchoumena set an example also in terms of design. That is to say, the corner compartments of the narthex in the Lavra (housing the chapel and the cell) might have had domes, which may have suffered from earthquakes or other damage, and have subsequently been lost at some point prior to the 16\textsuperscript{th} century (when the oldest visual representations of the katholikon were made). Or, alternatively, the domically shaped vaults were shallow and not visible above the roofline from the outside and therefore were not represented in the pictorial renditions. These would nonetheless be important to the interior setting of these spaces and thus incorporated by the builders of Ivērōn and Vatopedi. There, the spherical shape of the vaults, seen at the Lavra and undoubtedly viewed as a member of the same ‘domical family’, could have easily been transformed into full domes.\textsuperscript{58} This also fits the image of the two later churches, which both overall and in detail are more sophisticated in design than their model.

On the other hand, the two chambers at the Great Lavra that functioned as a cell and a chapel may have not been part of the over-narthex at all. There is the possibility that the chambers were in fact situated above the northwest and southwest corner bays of the naos.\textsuperscript{59} Moreover, they may not have included domical vaults of any sort in their architectural setting. Could they, then, have provided a model for the domed compartments at Ivērōn and Vatopedi? Chambers at the same position are accommodated in the Eski İmaret Camii and Theotokos of

\textsuperscript{57} In a manner similar to how the Lavra influenced the addition of lateral conches to the cross-in-square naos and in the appending of two external chapels adjacent to the narthex.

\textsuperscript{58} Founders of both Vatopedi and Ivērōn were initially members of the Great Lavra’s community and close associates of St. Athanasius (see Chapter 1). Therefore, they must have had personal experience of the Lavra’s katēchoumena.

\textsuperscript{59} See Chapter 1. However, this idea has been dismissed by new discoveries (see note 100 in Chapter 1). This affects certain deliberations (exposed further below) on how the katēchoumena at the Great Lavra were organized in regard to the functions that are known to have been accommodated therein. However, having no access to the details of the research carried out in the Great Lavra and deeming the new information as not substantially changing my conclusions, I decided to leave the parts of the thesis dealing with this issue unrevised. Also, my awareness of the new discoveries took place when the dissertation had already been shaped and getting ready for the submission to the examination committee. I hope to include revisions in a potential future publication.
The two in the latter church, in fact, had some sort of domical vaultings, perhaps even proper domes. The west corner compartments in the Great Lavra katholikon are square in plan (see Fig. 35), which would allow for the construction of spherical vaults. Therefore, if the architectural solution applied at Ivērōn and Vatopedi was indeed based on these two chambers at the Lavra, then it resulted from a creative interpretation of the functional model set by the Lavra. Whatever the sources of the early twin dome motif might be, it rose to such a prominence to leave mark in the architecture of some of the later katholika of Athos.

An examination of the lateral compartments of the katēchoumena should also include a brief discussion of the above-mentioned possibility that at the Great Lavra there were additional chambers over the west corner bays of the naos. I do not want to dwell too much on this idea, because it is just a hypothesis, but it is worth examining certain elements and aspects of such an architectural solution. The hypothesis, put forward by Pavlos Mylonas, is supported by similar designs found in the Theotokos of Lips, Eski İmaret Camii, and Karagedik Kilise, as well as

60 See Chapter 2.

61 See above. Twin-domed over-narthexes can be observed in the early Russian architecture, as well, namely in the churches of the Nativity of the Virgin at Antoniev Monastery (Novgorod, 1117-1122), St. George of Yuryev Monastery (Novgorod, 1119-1130), the Dormition Church of Eletskii Monastery (Chernigov, shortly after 1113), and St. John (Pskov, mid-12th cent.) – for the dates and architecture of these, see П. А. Раппопорт, Зодчество Древней Руси (Ленинград: Наука, 1986), pp. 53, 70, 73, Ταντσής, «Το υπερόο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία», catalog pp. 532, 533-534, 536 (with older bibliographies), and Chapter 2, Excursus. In the first two churches and, possibly, in the Savior Church at Berestovo (Kiev, 1113-1125 – Раппопорт, Зодчество Древней Руси, pp. 40, 52; Ταντσής, «Το υπερόο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία», catalog p. 520; Chapter 2, Excursus), one of the two domes covers the stairwell and, at the same time, serves as a belfry and houses a chapel (see Сарабьянов, „Приделы второго этажа в древнерусских церквах XII–XIII веков, их функции и иконографические программы“ [fully referenced in note 1 above]). The other two churches feature two small domes crowning the naos’s west corner compartments, not the narthex. Although exhibiting architectural solutions that slightly differ from our cases, do these examples anyway echo the Athonite models? Generally speaking, Russian churches of the period tend to have an upper floor over the narthex and, sometimes, over the aisles, as well; such an arrangement might have been influenced by the architecture of Constantinople. However, the twin-domed designs of these few monastic churches seem to reflect the traditions of the Holy Mountain, transmitted perhaps through monastic connections established with the moving of St. Antony of Kiev Caves from the Athonite Esphigmenou monastery, where he was a monk, back to the Rus’ and establishment of the Kiev Lavra, the prototype of all Russian monasteries of the period (see Chapter 2, Excursus). This problem certainly deserves further research, which goes beyond the present study.

62 See above and Chapter 1.
many Russian churches of the period. The small rooms in Lips and Karagedik Kilise have the features associated with chapels, whereas those in the Eski İmaret Camii lack anything that would point to their original use. Furthermore, the entrance doors of the rooms in the Eski İmaret Camii are somewhat small and raised from the floor level of the over-narthex, suggesting a limited or infrequent access and isolation. The chapels at Lips, by contrast, are relatively open to the over-narthex room, which functioned as a kind of antechamber to the chapels at either side. Moreover, the plans and vaulting of the chambers vary, from a simple, square and barrel-vaulted room in Karagedik Kilise to a tetraconch with either sail-vaults or full domes in the Theotokos of Lips (Fig. 195). Therefore, any uniformity in form or function within these examples cannot be established and surviving parallels are too few to allow postulation of any commonality in planning. It can only be ascertained that one or both of the rooms could served as parekklēsia, as the south one at the Great Lavra may have. Both rooms there would have been of a square plan and would have fit well on top of what would have been their substructures, exhibited on the ground level (Figs. 25, 29). Certain liturgical features of the chapel, such as the apse conch and the prothesis niche, would have been easily accommodated within the massive piers and walls (Fig. 35), also lightening the masonry loads. One final question arises about why the two chambers were included in the katêchoumena: are they vestiges of galleries set on top of the side aisles, or are they the result of a desire to add more space to the over-narthex? Or, as

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63 For these, see Chapter 2 and Chapter 2, Excursus. The church of St. Gregory in Gelveri (Güzelyurt), located not far from Karagedik Kilise (briefly discussed in Chapter 2, Excursus), can perhaps be added to these churches. 64 For the chambers in the Theotokos of Lips and Eski İmaret Camii, see Chapter 2. The remnants of the northwest room in Karagedik Kilise is described and interpreted in Πασχάλης Ανδρούδης, «Οι Βυζαντινοί σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένοι ναοί της Καππαδοκίας», in Τρεις χιλιετίες Μικρασιατικού πολιτισμού: Επιστήμες, γράμματα, τέχνες – Πρακτικά συμποσίων 23, 24, 25 Νοεμβρίου 2007 (Νέα Ιονία: Κέντρο σπουδής και αναδείξης Μικρασιατικού πολιτισμού, 2008): 121-139, pp. 134-135. 65 As indicated in the plan drawn by P. Androudēs (Fig. 317 here). Similar spaces in St. Sophia in Vize (beginning of the 9th cent.), which served only as passages to the galleries over the side aisles, are also covered with barrel-vaults (see Figs. 277). 66 See Chapter 2. I possess no information on the vaulting of the two chambers in the Eski İmaret Camii. They might be short and oblong in plan, and groin-vaulted, as the compartments below them are (see Fig. 212).
suggested above, could they have been used to achieve better external integration of the narthex and naos parts of the church building? I think that all these aspects played role. However, since the existence of such chambers in katholika of Mount Athos is ultimately conjectural, with no actual remains, the discussion of these issues has to be left out to wait for some other study.

**Function(s) and Meaning**

All these considerations lead to the questions of function and meaning of the katēchoumena in Athonite katholika. Some of these issues, particularly those regarding the chapel and which parts of the narthex’s upper storey were allocated to it, have already been discussed. Now, I would like to examine why a chapel was needed at this part of the church building, what else was included in there, and what was the purpose/meaning assigned to the upper floor as whole.

All direct information pertaining to the function of an Athonite over-narthex comes almost exclusively from the Great Lavra. Although this katēchoumenion does not survive physically, two written documents provide not only information on its existence and, somewhat vaguely, its form, but also on what functions were accommodated within. The first document is the testamentary will of St. Athanasius the Athonite, dated to after 993, and the other is the famous account of Vasilii Grigorovich-Barskii, recording what he saw and was told during his visit in 1744. The testament mentions that it (the testament) was entrusted to “the monk

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67 For the dating of this document, see BMFD, p. 271, n. 1.
68 Barskii may have had at his disposal a “proskynētarion” (pilgrims’ guidebook), perhaps the very book written by the physician Iōannēs Komnēnos and published by Snagov Monastery (Romania) in 1701 – Ιωάννης Κομνηνός, Προσκυνητάριον του αγίου όρους του Αθώνος (Εν τη Μονή του Συναγόβου: Τύποις Ανθίμου ιερομονάχου Εξ Ιβρηρίας, 1701). Various pieces of information provided in Barskii’s travelogue can often be found in Komnēnos’s work as well. This original edition has been unavailable to me, so I use here the second edition: Ιωάννης Κομνηνός, Προσκυνητάριον του αγίου όρους του Αθώνος (Ενετίησι: Παρά Νικολάω Γλυκεί τω εξ Ιωαννίνων, 1745).
Michael, the ecclesiarch, to be kept safely in the *katēchoumeneion.* As mentioned above, Barskii witnessed a small chapel, located “to the right”, i.e. to the south, a cell in which St. Athanasius lived “to the left”, i.e. north, as well as a library “in front of the cell”. These elements suggest a monastic abode of sorts, which at first seems strange to be located in a church, especially on its upper level. Before exploring the reasons for this spatial and functional solution and its meaning, I want to examine each of the three functional components. Due to the limitedness of evidence pertaining to the Athonite *katēchoumena* and the Middle Byzantine period, data from churches of other regions and later periods are called to attention as potential *comparanda.*

a) **Repository of Relics, Liturgical Vessels, Documents, and Books (Skeuophylakion and Library)**

Turning first to the safekeeping of Athanasius’s testament in the *katēchoumeneion*, one faces the possibility that at least a part of the space was used as an archive or a *skeuophylakion*. Some doubts, however, have been expressed regarding this information, i.e. whether the room in question was indeed part of the *katholikon*, but they seem ungrounded to me, since “*katēchoumena*” had become the customary designation for the over-narthex area by this date. Moreover, a very similar if not the same function, a library, was still accommodated there in the 18th century, when recorded by Barskii, attesting the continuity of such a use of the space. He refers to this library as the “outer” of the two monastery’s libraries and as the one where the

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70 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pp. 12, 15. See also Chapter 1, note 89.
71 See Chapter 1, note 87.
72 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, pp. 15, 32. A “most splendid” («πανθαύμαστος») library, located “above the narthex”, and the cell of St. Athanasius close to the library were also recorded in Κομνηνός, *Προσκυνητάριον του αγίου ὄρους του Ἀθώνος* (1745; see note 68 above), pp. 5-6.
“ecclesiastic books are kept, intended for [the use in services prescribed by] the rule and [regular] readings”. This means that this was either a storage room for liturgical books or a reference library of sorts. In either case, the use justifies the library’s location within the church.

Barskii also mentions a small library of service books located in the katēchoumena of Vatopedi. In this case, the problem is how those who needed books in services would get to the library, since presumably there was no a direct access from the church. The only apparent solution is that the books would have been brought down by the ecclesiarch in advance of a service. It is not known whether this was also the situation in the Middle Byzantine period, i.e. whether there were two libraries in the monastery from the very beginning and if one of them was housed in the katēchoumena.

Barskii’s description of the over-narthex’s layout, with the chapel located to the south, the cell to the north, and the library in front of the cell („сопреди же оной келии“), most probably led Pavlos Mylonas to assume that the library was set in the central part of the katēchoumena. However, that would not have been the only possible solution. Barskii gave the position of the library only in relation to the cell, i.e. that it was in front of the cell, not

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73 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, р. 32 (the translation is mine).
74 Ibid., p. 196; it is not clear where exactly in the katēchoumena the library was located. See also Васи́лій Григо́рій Мпά́рсі, Τα ταζίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος, 1725-1726, 1744-1745 [μετάφραση: Ελένη Στεργιοπούλου], με την φροντίδα και τα σχόλια του ακαδημαϊκού Παύλου Μυλωνά (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αγιορειτική Εστία, Αθήνα: Μουσείο Μπενάκη, 2009), p. 392, notes 678, 679. Ιωάννης Κομνηνός also witnessed this library, describing it as “very rich” («πλουσιωτάτη») – Κομνηνός, Προσκυνητάριον του αγίου Όρους του Αθώνος (1745), p. 34. He also records the existence of “another library in the skeuophylakion, of many and most useful books” (ibid.). This means that the skeuophylakion at Vatopedi was not accommodated in the katēchoumena in the late 17th century.
75 On the content of the monastery’s library in this period, see Борис Л. Фонкич, „Библиотека Лавры св. Афана́сия на Афоне в X–XIII вв.“; Палестинский сборник 17 [80] (1967): 167-175. The existence of both a library and a storage room in the care of the sacristan (book depository or archive) was not an unknown situation during the Byzantine period. That is suggested by an instruction in the Typikon of Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of the Archangel Michael on Mount Auxentios near Chalcedon (dated to 1261-1280/1): “Let two identical panels of diptychs contain the names of the brothers which have been inscribed thereon for the sake of remembrance [i.e. commemoration] by the various superiors or ecclesiarchs. Let one copy be kept in the library of the monastery and the other in the care of the ecclesiarch.” – (37) Auxentios # [13], in BMFD, p. 1229. For the date of this document, see ibid., p. 1207, n. 1.
76 Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, р. 15.
77 Pavlos Mylonas’s commentaries to the Greek translation of Barskii (Мпάρсі, Τα ταζίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος, 1725-1726, 1744-1745, р. 225, n. 39).
between the cell and the chapel. This suggests that the library was located also to the north, grouped with the cell, and that the cell was entered through it.\(^\text{78}\) That this indeed may have been the case is confirmed by a manuscript account kept in the Great Lavra, which clearly indicates the library as set to the left of the katēchoumena, i.e. the katēchounemeion proper.\(^\text{79}\) This means that the north part of the over-narthex was subdivided into two functional if not spatial units. On the other hand, if the cell occupied the area above the naos’s northwest corner compartment, as proposed above, the over-narthex’s northernmost bay would have easily accommodated the library. Regardless of the actual spatial disposition and architectural solution, an abbot’s quarters that included his cell, a library, and a chapel, intended for his private prayers and devotions, was evidently organized in the over-narthex. In this case, the library may have been reserved only for the private use by the occupant of the katēchoumena and for the safekeeping of documents, books, relics, and other precious items.\(^\text{80}\) It may have been transformed into a reference library only during the Post-Byzantine period.

*Skueophylakia* and libraries accommodated in the upper-level chambers have been recorded in several other monastic churches of the Middle and Late Byzantine periods outside Mount Athos. Written sources usually make reference to *skueophylakia* as the repositories of holy relics. Thus, the *skueophylakion* of the Evergetis monastery (mid-11\(^\text{th}\) century), where a relic of the True Cross was kept, was located in the upper storey of the church, albeit the room’s exact location is not specified.\(^\text{81}\) The Testamentary Rule of St. Neophytos the Recluse of Paphos


\(^{79}\) «Εκ δε αριστερών αυτών [i.e. κατηχουμένων] είν' ἡ βιβλιοθήκη κτλ.» (Lavra, Λ. 51, p. 329; cited after Millet, “Recherches au Mont Athos,” p. 92, n. 2).

\(^{80}\) For a reference of relics being kept in the gallery of Blachernai, see Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, p. 93, n. 99. See below for a relic of the True Cross that was kept in an upstairs skueophylakion of the Evergetis monastery.

\(^{81}\) Robert H. Jordan (ed. and trans.), *The Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis* (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, the Institute of Byzantine Studies, the Queen’s University of Belfast, 2000-2007), Vol. 1, p. 52; cf. also Lyn Rodley, “The Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis, Constantinople: Where It Was and What It
for his Hermitage of the Holy Cross (the Enkleistra, Cyprus), drawn up ca. 1177 and revised in 1214, mentions a skueophylakion located above the narthex.\textsuperscript{82} The narthex, in the form of an open porch, still exists and there is a room above it, the present aspect of which is the result of a later remodeling.\textsuperscript{83} However, it hardly could have been more than it is today, a small room of a square plan (about 2.50 x 2.50m).\textsuperscript{84} And it undoubtedly was, as it still is, spatially detached from Neophytos’s cell with a private chapel (“Hagiastērion”), which communicates with the church through a shaft in the ceiling of the naos, as well as another two cave cells, one called “New Zion” (hewn out by Neophytos for himself in 1197) and the other dedicated to St. John the Forerunner. These two are located further up in the rock, above the Hagiastērion.\textsuperscript{85}

The typikon of the Koutsovendis monastery (also on Cyprus) mentions the skueophylakion as the repository of a relic of the True Cross.\textsuperscript{86} This storage of precious items was located somewhere in the katholikon (consecrated in 1090\textsuperscript{87}), possibly above the narthex or the porch preceding it.\textsuperscript{88} The likelihood of such a location is confirmed by the same position of the skueophylakion at the Enkleistra, as well as the form of its narthex as an open porch. This solution may have been modeled after that at Koutsovendis, where St. Neophytos the Recluse


\textsuperscript{83} See ibid., p. 136.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{85} The three separate rock-cut chambers, the Hagiastērion, the “New Zion”, and the cell of St. John the Forerunner are all mentioned in the Testamentary Rule of Neophytos ([45] Neophytos, # 20, in BMFD, p. 1360) and described in Mango, Hawkins, “The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and Its Wall Paintings,” pp. 190-193, figs. 115-118, B, D (fold-out plate at the end).


\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., pp. 26, 29.

\textsuperscript{88} See ibid., pp. 116-117.
was a monk for a brief period before moving to the site of the Enkleistra. An interesting circumstance about the Koutsovendis \textit{skeuphylakion} is that it was furnished as a \textit{parekklēsion}, since it included an altar table, movable and fixed icon stands, and pews. This suggests that the domed chapels at Vatopedi and Ivērōn may have been equipped in a similar way and assigned with both liturgical and repository function. The presence of a holy relic and liturgical setting would not exclude each other, since a service could have been conducted there when the occasion was not ceremonial and did not require the relic to be exposed to a great crowd in the main church. The \textit{katēchoumena} was a good place for safekeeping relics, liturgical books and vessels, and other precious objects on account of its difficult accessibility and somewhat hidden position, especially for the outsiders. That is probably why it continues to be used as the storage room for icons, books, and other church items today, as witnessed by the \textit{katēchoumena} of Vatopedi and Ivērōn. Moreover, the presence of a special relic – particularly, pieces of the True Cross, the most precious relic of all, appear repeatedly – may have required both a consecrated space (chapel) and an elevated position in the church, especially above its main entrance. The Great Lavra indeed possesses a piece of the True Cross, which was a gift by

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\textsuperscript{89} Neophytos was at Koutsovendis between 1152 and 1159 (\textit{ibid.}, p. 76). He was even appointed a \textit{parekklesiarchēs} (assistant sacristan) in 1157 (\textit{ibid.}). A similar arched porch, albeit without an upper storey, can be found in the nearby church of Panagia Apsinthiotissa, as well (see \textit{ibid.}, p. 117, figs. 22, 30).
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 54 (with the appropriate references to the monastery’s \textit{typikon}); see also \textbf{Chapter 3}, note 206.
\textsuperscript{91} On the subsidiary chapel as the repository of holy relics, see Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{92} See \textbf{Chapter 1}.
\textsuperscript{93} This is, perhaps, in emulation of the situation in the Hagia Sophia, where a relic of the True Cross was kept in the Small \textit{Sekretos}, which has been identified as a room located above the southwest vestibule, one of ceremonial entrances to the church (see Robin Cormack and Ernest J. W. Hawkins, “The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp,” \textit{DOP} 31 (1977): 175-251, pp. 248-251). If this indeed was the case, it gives an argument to the idea that a small room in the tower of the \textit{katholikon} of Žiča monastery in Serbia (1220s), placed immediately above the main entrance into the church and below a chapel, may have served as the repository for a relic of the True Cross. This proposal is based on the account of certain medieval sources and the wall paintings inside the chapel, including the Crucifixion on the east wall (\textit{cf.} Бранислав Живковић, \textit{Жича: Цртежи фресака} (Београд: Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе, 1985), p. 12), but has been largely abandoned in favor of the probability that a monastic cell was accommodated there instead (see Даница Поповић, “\textit{Sacrae reliquiae} Спасове цркве у Жичи”, в \textit{Манастир Жича – зборник радова} [ед. Ђојко Суботић] (Краљево: Народни музеј; Завод за заштиту споменика културе, 2000): 17-33, р. 28, with references, and Милка Чанак-Медић, „Архитектура и програм ексонартекса жичке Спасове цркве“, в \textit{the same collection of}

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Emperor Nikēphoros Phōkas.\textsuperscript{94} Therefore, the presence of such relic and its proper keeping may have been one of the reasons for the establishment of a chapel in conjunction with the 
skeuophylakion in the over-narthex area.

The accommodation of a library in the katēchoumena seemingly comes in later, as suggested by dates of the available sources. The library may have developed from the
safekeeping of liturgical books and important documents in the skeuophylakion. Both
organizationally and architecturally speaking, Byzantine libraries were set as storage spaces,
rather than reading rooms.\textsuperscript{95} The books were available for reading only when books were distributed by the bookkeeper and only for a controlled time, as described in the typikon of Stoudios (drawn after 842):

\begin{quote}
It should be known that on the days when we rest from our corporal work, the keeper of the books sounds the wooden semantron once, and the brothers assemble at the book station; each one takes a book and reads it until the evening. Before the signal for the office of lamplighting,\textsuperscript{96} the man in charge of the books sounds the semantron again, and all the brothers come to return their books in accordance with the register. If anyone is late in returning his book, he should suffer some penalty.\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

However, monks of distinction had small collections of books at their disposal in their own cells.

The placement of certain libraries in the proximity of monastic cells or vice versa could have been prompted by either the status of the monk (founder or abbot), or the duty assigned to him (sacristan), or the origin and nature of the book collection (personal library). These all might

\textsuperscript{94} Γαβριήλ Νικολάου Πεντζίκης, Άγιον Όρος (Αθήνα: Explorer, 2003), pp. 304-305.
\textsuperscript{96} I.e. the Vespers.
\textsuperscript{97} (4) Stoudios, AB # 26 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 108).
have been present at the Great Lavra, since Athanasius was both its founder and first abbot, and thus most likely put initially himself in charge of setting the church ritual and controlling it – he used to be the ecclesiarch (sacristan) in the monastery on Mount Kyminas, where he started his monastic career. Lastly, he also may have had a number of his own books or would still produce them, as he was also a scribe and calligrapher.

A similar combination of cell and library seems to have occurred in the church of Chora Monastery (1316-21) in Constantinople, albeit not accommodated above the narthex. Instead, the long and broad room on the upper floor of an annex attached to the north side of the church most likely served as a library (see Figs. 500, 501). The library was of a different nature here: it was the study library of the founder Theodore Metochitēs, a statesman and scholar, and comprised an extensive collection of books rather than serving as a reference library of a monastic or an ecclesiarch. This is perhaps the reason why it was accommodated in an area that was not part of the core church structures. Nonetheless, it connects to the naos by means of a window, suggesting that the occupant(s) of the room required the ability to follow services in the church. Another case of a library being housed in the katēchoumena is found in the katholikon of the monastery of St. John the Forerunner on Mount Menoikeion (Figs. 502, 503). The use of

98 Vita Secunda of St. Athanasius, # 9 (as cited in Свети Атанасије Атонски: Увод, житије, коментари [Превод са грчког: Марина Вељковић] [Краљево: Манастир Жича, 2012], p. 215, which is a commentary of # 25 of Vita Prima). For original texts of the two vitae, see Jacques Noret (ed.), Vitae duae antiquae Sancti Athanasii Athonitae (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982) and a more recent edition, Ο Άγιος Αθανάσιος ο Άθωνίτης: Εισαγωγή, κείμενο, μετάφραση, σχολία (Ορμύλια: Εκδόσεις Ιερού Κοινοβίου Ευαγγελισμού της Θεοτόκου, 2003).
99 Ibid. The lack of reference to any library in both the documents drafted by Athanasius and his vitae led Bishop Kallistos Ware to conclude that the Great Lavra was envisaged as a coenobitic community dedicated to manual labor rather than scholarly research (Kallistos Ware, “St. Athanasios the Athonite: Traditionalist or Innovator?” in Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism: 3-16, p. 14). However, this view considers only the potential absence of a communal library, open to all, without taking into account the possible existence of Athanasius’s personal library.
101 The accommodation of the library above the narthex may have also been prevented by some specific planning considerations regarding the narthex (ibid., p. 115).
a narrow chamber south of the parekkēsion of St. Nicholas on the exonarthex’s upper floor as a library was attested in the 19th century, and it is possible that the library’s presence in this part of the church was uninterrupted since the construction of the exonarthex in the early 14th century.\(^{102}\) However, there is no evidence whether the library occupied the same position and had the same or similar architectural setting. Nonetheless, the form of a geographically very distant but nonetheless related example, the library of the Coptic monastery of St. Paul in Egypt, is almost the same (Fig. 504), suggesting that the interior organization of other monastic libraries set in narrow rooms of the katēchoumena of other churches may have been very similar.

b) Liturgical Space (Chapel)

The second functional component of the Athonite katēchoumena, the chapel, has already been discussed to some extent above, with the examination of the form of the over-narthex’s north and south compartments. Here, I address some additional aspects. Chapels have been positively recorded only in the Great Lavra (one chapel) and Vatopedi (two chapels) and, although the evidence dates to the Post-Byzantine period, there is a great deal of probability that these chapels were there from the very beginning.\(^{103}\) Moreover, a number of similar instances have been confirmed in Middle Byzantine churches outside Mount Athos.\(^ {104}\) When it comes to the presence of a chapel, i.e. a liturgical space in the over-narthex, especially in association with a monastic cell present there, the obvious conclusion is that it was intended for a private use.\(^ {105}\) A

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\(^{102}\) Nikolas Bakirtzis has dedicated a few articles to this library and, generally, the issue of libraries being attached to the church building in Byzantium. The most comprehensive is Bakirtzis, “Library Spaces in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monasteries,” especially pp. 41-44. See also idem, “Hagios Ioannis Prodromos Monastery on Mount Menoikeion: Byzantine Monastic Practice, Sacred Topography, and Architecture,” PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 2006), pp. 185-186, 211-212.

\(^{103}\) See above.

\(^{104}\) See above, with notes 48, 50, 51.

\(^{105}\) Here, the private is understood as opposite to communal or corporate. On the private celebration of the liturgy in Byzantium and the archaeological (and some written) evidence for this practice, see Thomas F. Mathews, “‘Private’
diminutive size of each of the extant examples most probably resulted from such a purpose. Chapels were also used as a retreat of eminent members of the community at some points of the communal services and their private prayers were offered there.¹⁰⁶ That is why it was located inside the church building, i.e. the person of distinction could withdraw, but still be close to the communal space and follow the service that went on there. In this sense, the chapel may have been borrowed from certain non-monastic churches, particularly those that accommodated imperial and other high-level attendance.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, chapel was an essential part of a solitary monastic dwelling. The Athonite examples seem to combine these two aspects, i.e. the church attendance of a distinguished person and the dwelling of an ascetic monk devoted to a constant prayer. This double function/meaning is also contained in the monastic cell, which similarly combines the ascetic abode with the imperial attendance booth/apartment, which was recorded in the Hagia Sophia (see Fig. 469).¹⁰⁸

Praying in private was part of the monastic life of coenobitic monks, as well.¹⁰⁹ Oratories and chapels were included in dormitories and cells. Setting out a special space for prayer inside cells was occasionally advocated as being more conducive to individual prayer. The prayer space had to be distinct and separate from the rest of the cell, i.e. from the area(s) intended for sitting, reading, and work («κάθισμα» or «καθεσμάτιον»).¹¹⁰ Yet, the prayer room appears to be attached to the ‘sitting-room’, through which it is entered. There are also cases with the reversed

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¹⁰⁶ Mathews’s views have been slightly corrected in Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 79-80, by providing examples of chapels that were used for public and corporate celebrations of the Divine Liturgy. Those cases are not of relevance for the use of the chapel in the *katēchoumena*, but might be illustrative of the use of chapels adjacent to the narthex on the lower level (see Chapter 6). These and other aspects, such as the use of the latter chapels for the funerary and commemorative purposes, make the *katēchoumena*’s chapels functionally distinct from other *parekklēsia* (see also note 52 above).


¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92, with relevant references, especially in notes 88, 89, 93.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Krausmüller, op. cit., passim.

¹¹¹ In the Hypotyposis of Nikētas Stēthatos (late 11th century) – see Krausmüller, op. cit., p. 323, n. 54.
situation: the cell is entered only by going through the prayer chapel attached to it. Such an arrangement is found in the original cell of St. Neophytos the Recluse and several other anachoretic dwellings.

In the Great Lavra, the situation differed from both of these organizational patterns: the two areas of the monastic abode were detached from each other and set on the opposite sides of the over-narthex, with a room in between. Does this mean that the chapel was open to attendants other than Athanasius? Did Athanasius have a companion residing with him in the cell or within the *katêchoumenon* proper, set out as an antechamber, and thus having access to the chapel independently of Athanasius’s attendance? In his *typikon* (dated to 973-975), Athanasius prohibits the abbot to have a disciple “out of affection” in his cell, but was allowed to be served by a “person above suspicion”. Therefore, it is possible that there was a monk who accompanied Athanasius in the *katêchoumena*. The spatial arrangement may also have been the result of Athanasius’s previous experience as a solitary monk, both on Mount Kyminas and on Mount Athos, possibly even emulating architectural solutions of his previous ascetic dwellings. It is also conceivable that the mere form of the space available on top of the narthex dictated this particular organization of the upper floor.

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113 This question implies that the whole over-narthex was not accessed at its north end, i.e. through Athanasius’s cell, but rather through either the *katêchoumenon* proper or the chapel.
114 BMFD, p. 245, n. 1.
115 (13) Ath. Typikon, # [34] (BMFD, p. 259). This regulation was borrowed from the testament of Theodore the Stoudite for the Stoudios Monastery (written in 826) – see (3) Theodore Studites, # 18 (BMFD, p. 78).
116 This companion (*synkellos*) would have potentially resided in the *katêchoumenon* proper and would be able to go to the chapel without disturbing Athanasius. Additionally, he may have been entrusted with overseeing the *skewophylakion/library* as well.
117 On Athanasius spending periods in his life as a solitary monk (Mount Kyminas), as a companion to an ascetic, and again as a solitary monk, but with a companion (the latter two periods spent on Mount Athos), see his vitae (*Vita*
It is worth examining the dedication of the chapel Barskii witnessed in the katêchoumena of the Great Lavra’s katholikon. The parekklêsion was established in honor of the Holy Five Martyrs – Eustratius, Eugene, Auxentius, Mardarius, and Orestes.\textsuperscript{118} The memory of these martyrs of Sebasteia\textsuperscript{119} is celebrated on December 13.\textsuperscript{120} It would be interesting to know why this uncommon dedication was chosen by St. Athanasius.\textsuperscript{121} There is no written evidence that would point to the reasons for either this or the dedication of the north subsidiary chapel, where Athanasius was entombed, which is strikingly dedicated to a better known and more popular group of saints also martyred in Sebasteia (now Sivas, Turkey).\textsuperscript{122} The attachment of the chapel of the Five Martyrs to Athanasius’s cell suggests that the dedication was chosen out of a personal devotion. That indeed may have been the case.\textsuperscript{123} The esteem given to these martyrs may have risen among monks who formerly were soldiers, public servants, or hailing from the upper levels of society, as it was the case with Athanasius. The martyrs may have been admired for their ardent determination to leave their worldly positions and endure suffering for Christ, both of which could be compared to the monastic path to Christ, possibly pointing to Athanasius’s and,

\textit{Prima}, # 26-37, and \textit{Vita Secunda}, # 9-12, for the Kyminas period, and \textit{Vita Prima}, # 39-45, 52-59, for the Athos period; editions of the two \textit{vita} are cited in note 98 above).\textsuperscript{118} Барский, \textit{Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы}, pp. 12 (with the names of the martyrs listed) and 15.\textsuperscript{119} Not of Crete, as mistakenly identified by Millet, \textit{“Recherches au Mont Athos,”} p. 91, and, following him, cited in Ćurčić, \textit{“The Twin-Domed Narthex in Palaeologan Architecture,”} p. 340.\textsuperscript{120} See Makarios of Simonos Petra, \textit{Synaxarion: The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church} [translated by Christopher Hookway; Mother Maria (Rule) and Mother Joanna (Burton)] (Ormylia: Holy Convent of the Annunciation of Our Lady, 1998-2008), Vol. 2, pp. 400-404. The original and more extensive account on the martyrdom of the five saints was written by Symeon Metaphrastēs (available in \textit{PG} [see \textbf{List of Abbreviations}], CXVI, pp. 468-506).\textsuperscript{121} In line with his identification of the martyrs as the Five Martyrs of Crete (see note 119 above), Millet assumes that Athanasius’s devotion goes back to his time spent in the army of Nikêphoros II Phōkas and in the latter’s Cretan campaign (Millet, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 91).\textsuperscript{122} The Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia (see \textbf{Chapter 1}).\textsuperscript{123} See Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, pp. 80-84, for a well documented explanation for the multiplication of chapels in the Middle Byzantine period through the cult of saints and the belief in their intercession with God in exchange for deeds, charities, gifts, and the dedication of churches in their honor. A monastery dedicated to the Five Martyrs (\textit{Μονή των Αγίων Πέντε}) was located on Mount Auxentios, in the vicinity of Chaledon (for this monastery, see Raymond Janin, \textit{Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins: Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galésios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique} (Paris: Institut français d’études byzantines, 1975), pp. 48-49). It may have been the primary home of the cult of the saints and Athanasius could have visited the place while still monk in Bithynia (unless the monastery was founded later) and subsequently developed a devotion to them.
as initially expected, Nikēphoros II Phōkas’s transition to the monastic life. Moreover, in the account of their martyrdom, St. Eustratius appears as the leader, who advises and encourages the other four, and provides the example in enduring the trials. Does that symbolically refer to Athanasius’s invitation and spiritual support offered to Nikēphoros in his intention to turn to monastic life, and the former’s later struggles on Athos? Similarly, St. Eustratius’s leadership among his companions may have served as a saintly model and inspiration for the Lavra’s abbot in his acting on behalf of his monastic brothers.

On the other hand, the devotion to the Five Martyrs may not have been so uncommon in monastic circles of the period. The church tradition ascribes the authorship of a prayer included in the Midnight Office, the Third Hour, and Great Compline («Δέσποτα Θεέ, Πάτερ Παντοκράτωρ...», “O Sovereign Master, God the Father Almighty...”) to St. Mardarius, and of a prayer said during the Midnight Office for Saturdays («Μεγαλύνων μεγαλύνω σε, Κύριε...», “Magnifying I magnify Thee, O Lord...”) to St. Eustratius. The importance of daily offices in the monastic life and their performance in either the narthex or within private cells may have invited special veneration to these saints and prompted the placement of a chapel dedicated to them near the cell of the abbot, but also within the narthex zone. This is further suggested by the presence of mosaic depictions of these martyrs in the most prominent parts of the entrance areas of Nea Monē and Daphni. At Nea Monē, the Five Martyrs, together with another three martyrs, Sergius, Bacchus, and Theodore Stratilatēs, surround a medallion with the bust of the Theotokos

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126 See Chapter 3.
Orans in the blind dome of the narthex’s central bay (Fig. 400). At Daphni, Orestes, Mardarius, Auxentius, Eugene, and Eustratius are depicted in the south bay of the naos’s west area, which in fact may have functioned as an inner narthex. The first four occupy intradoses of two arches (to the north and to the east), while Eustratius was given the place of honor in the shallow conch of the south end (see Fig. 417), most likely in accordance with his leadership among them. The Five Martyrs were also given a prominent location in the wall paintings of the northwest chapel of the Katholikon of Hosios Loukas, depicted on the south wall of the east bay. These examples testify to the widespread veneration of these martyrs in the 11th century and their iconographic association with the narthex area. The Great Lavra also possessed the skull of the Great Martyr Eustratius, providing yet one more reason for the dedication of the over-narthex chapel, which may have even served as the repository for this relic.

It is noteworthy that Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine katēchoumena lack chapels. This suggests a gradual disappearance of the liturgical component of the space. Yet, the use of the over-narthex by important monastics persisted in the Late Byzantine period, while storing books, documents, and liturgical vessels in there occurred mainly in the Post-Byzantine

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128 See Chapter 2, Excursus.
129 Otto Demus, Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium (London: Routledge, 1948), plate 43A. At Nea Monē, Eustratios is placed closest to the east of all the Five Martyrs. Only depictions of St. Sergius and St. Theodore take more prominent positions (see ibid., plate 43B).
131 Middle Byzantine illustrations of the lives of the Five Martyrs have been the subject of a study by Kurt Weitzmann, “Illustrations to the Lives of the Five Martyrs of Sebaste,” DOP 33 (1979): 95-112.
132 Listed among the relics of the monasteries in Κομνηνός, Προσκυνητάριον του στίου όρους του Αθόνος (1745), p. 9, and in Πεντζίκης, Αγιον Όρος (as in note 94), Vol. 2, p. 305.
133 Besides the chapel’s dedication, its location in the katēchoumena, which is ideal for the safekeeping of the relic (see above), additionally supports the argument that the relic was housed there. On chapels as repositories of holy relics, especially of those saints to whom the chapels were dedicated, see Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 86, with relevant references.
The lack of a chapel means that private devotions expressed in a liturgical form ceased to be practiced or were discouraged in the later periods. However, a desire to dwell close to the holy, i.e. to the place of liturgical celebration, and to be in constant contact with services of the church did not disappear. It may have been the reason for two cases of setting out monastic cells immediately adjacent to the sanctuaries of the main churches on Athos in the late 12th century. This occurred first in Vatopedi, where such a dwelling was established for the monk Symeon, who was also the former ruler of Serbia (Stefan Nemanja, ruled *ca.* 1166-1196; died in 1199) and the father of St. Sava the Serbian. Both the father and son were monks at Vatopedi at the time and gave large contributions to the monastery, gaining the status of *ktētores*. The elderly *ktētōr* requested a cell to be built for him next to the sanctuary, “and a window looking into the holy sanctuary, so he constantly observes holy celebrants serving in the holy church. And the Holy Man carried on his own *kanōn* [prayer rule] and with silence dwelled in holy prayers day and night [...]”. A similar facility seems to have been repeated at Hilandar when the two monks moved there shortly before Symeon’s repose. Such an unusual monastic accommodation, perhaps granted not only because of Symeon’s status of a benefactor, but also on account of his old age and weakness, as well as personal holiness, may have also enabled him to spend his last days in emulation of the “sleepless” (*ακοίμητος*) ascetic monk, who was constantly vigilant and in prayer. This concept may have likewise factored into combining a

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134 The *katēchoumena* at Dionysiou, with its two Post-Byzantine chapels (see above, note 30), provides an exception to this trend.

135 Доменићан, *Житије светог Саве* [де Љиљана Јухас-Георгиевска, де Томислав Јовановић, eds.] (Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, 2001), pp. 72 (original text) and 73 (modern Serbian rendering); the English translation is mine.


137 Perhaps this is a distant echo of the prayer rule practiced in the 5th-century Monastery of *Akoimētoi*, where unceasing prayers were performed by monks in three shifts. On this monastery, see *ODB*, p. 46.
chapel with the cell and their placement in the *katēchoumena*. More about that is said further below, in the section addressing the meaning.

c) **Dwelling (Monastic Cell)**

The third functional component of the *katēchoumena* on Mount Athos is the monastic cell. It has been recorded only at the Great Lavra, as located at the north end and once occupied by the monastery’s founder, St. Athanasius.¹³⁸ In the 18th century, Barskii saw inside the cell a massive pedestal made of white marble, with two depressions on its surface, which – according to the monastery’s tradition – were marks left by Athanasius’s long standings and numerous genuflections made during his vigils and prayers.¹³⁹ This observation constitutes all the known information regarding the room’s furnishing. Surprisingly, none of the two *vitae* of St. Athanasius make mention of either this cell or the other two facilities accommodated in the narthex’s upper storey.¹⁴⁰ Would this mean that the holy man did not get the chance to use this monastic dwelling before he died in an accident, which occurred during the construction of the *katholikon*? Gabriel Millet is of the opinion that the ecclesiarch, as the custodian of the church, was the one who slept in the *katēchoumena*.¹⁴¹ That is not impossible and the proximity of the *skeuophylakion*, which was probably under constant watch, would have justified the location of the ecclesiarch’s cell. However, such a use may have been present in urban churches, whereas in the monastic context, the *katēchoumena* were reserved for the founders who became monks in

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¹³⁸ See above, note 70.
¹³⁹ Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 15. See also Millet, “Recherches au Mont Athos,” p. 92, n. 2, for other references. Mylonas (in Μπάρσκι, Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος. 1725-1726, 1744-1745, p. 582, n. 38) believes that this pedestal is the same with the piece of stone now placed in front of the tomb of St. Athanasius (see Fig. 31).
¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, some other manuscripts dated to the 10th-11th and 15th centuries, which were found in the Great Lavra and were taken to Moscow, refer to the existence of the *katēchoumena* (see Millet, “Recherches au Mont Athos,” p. 92, notes 4, 5).
¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 93.
their own religious establishments, for the abbots, or for other monastics of distinction. There are a number of examples of this arrangement outside Mount Athos. Moreover, Athanasius’s cell was apparently behind the repository, and thus was not ideally situated as the cell of a guardian, who was supposed to keep watch in front of the depository and protect its entrance. It seems more likely, then, that the cell indeed belonged to the founder and was used by him rather than by the custodian. The latter, who may have also been a cell companion to Athanasius, could have resided in the skeuophylakion, which doubled as an antechamber to Athanasius’s cell. Thus, the ecclesiarch could have both guard the items kept in there and attend to the abbot.

If the story about the marble pedestal in Athanasius’s cell dates back to the church’s founding, then it testifies to his practicing of individual devotions and prayers not only in the chapel, but also within his cell. Recalling the possibility that the katēchoumena may have included two chambers set above the naos’s west corner bays, one can imagine Athanasius’s immediate abode consisting of two distinct spatial areas: the north bay of the over-narthex area and the appended small chamber on top of the naos’s northwest corner. In accordance with the pattern described above, the former may have served as the ‘sitting-room’ and accommodated the library mentioned in sources, whereas the latter functioned as the ‘prayer-room’, with the marble pedestal and, perhaps, a sleeping mat. Thus, the oratory would have been set apart as advocated and, moreover, would maintain a visual contact with the main church’s nave (see Fig. 35). If so, the chapel of the Five Martyrs would have then been used only for liturgical (Eucharistic) celebrations, when Athanasius would have been accompanied by his cell attendant and some other persons.

This functional arrangement was perhaps applied in other Athonite katēchoumena despite slight variations in their architectural makeup. The appearance of the same use in a number of

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142 See above, note 110.
monastic churches of two members of the ‘Byzantine commonwealth’, Early Rus’ and Serbia, provide further support for this theory. They show a wealth of various spatial solutions and architectural forms, but all of the churches feature a combination of monastic cell and chapel accommodated above the narthex. The Russian and Serbian examples are briefly explored below, within a discussion of the general purpose and meaning of the rooms accommodated in the over-narthex.

d) Function and Meaning of the Entire Space – Solitary (Anachoretic) Habitation and Dwelling within the Holy

In comparison to the galleries of churches in the Early Byzantine period and contemporary urban churches, the katēchoumena of the Middle Byzantine Athonite churches appear rather closed off, separated, and autonomous – they communicate with the main church only visually, through the tribēlon, and are always accessed from outside the building. These characteristics can be observed in other monastic churches of the period that feature an over-narthex, both in Constantinople and elsewhere. All of them point to the arrangement of the katēchoumena as dwelling areas for reclusive monks. This phenomenon has been explored in two seminal studies by Slobodan Ćurčić. Focusing on a few Late Byzantine examples from Serbia (Žiča, exonarthex added ca. 1220s, and Gračanica, 1321), as well as Byzantium proper (Chora in Constantinople, 1315-1321, and Theotokos Peribleptos in Mystra, 1360s-1370s), Ćurčić explains that the upper chambers were “specially made in churches as eventual retreats for their patrons.

143 Ćurčić, “What Was the Real Function of Late Byzantine Katechoumena?” and idem, „Смисао и функција катихумена у позновизантијској и српској архитектури“ (both cited in note 1).
The patrons in question, on the other hand, were either high-ranking state or church officials who aspired to a monastic form of retirement and eventual burial within their own foundations.¹⁴⁴ Clearly, the *katēchoumena* served as a monastic dwelling (*askētērion*, *hesychastērion*) for a person who could live and pray in seclusion, and at the same time, keep following or even controlling “everything that is being done inside the divine church”.¹⁴⁵ Access to the *katēchoumena* was typically provided from outside and the dimensions of the spaces were modest, illustrating that they were meant not for a ceremonial attendance of dignitaries, but rather intended for monastic *askēsis*.¹⁴⁶ As such, the room (or rooms) located in the over-narthex area are similar to the monastic cells found in church towers in Serbia, which are the subject of another study by Ćurčić.¹⁴⁷ Dwelling in church towers may have originated in the late antique Syria and can ultimately be linked to the examples set by great founders of monasticism, St. Antony the Great, St. Symeon the Stylite, and St. Sabbas of Jerusalem, whose monastic feats included living inside a tower-tomb, on top of a column, and in a monastery tower, respectively.¹⁴⁸ However, because the cells in *katēchoumena* were part of communal church

¹⁴⁴ Ćurčić, “What Was the Real Function of Late Byzantine *Katechoumena*?” p. 9. On burials in the narthex, which in this context can be taken as the crypt to the cell and chapel in the *katēchoumena*, see here Chapter 4.
¹⁴⁵ Ћурчић, „Смисао и функција катихумена у позновизантијској и српској архитектури“, p. 84. The quotation is from “The Vita of Archbishop Arsenius” („Живот архиепископа Арсенија“) written by Daniel II of Serbia – in Данило Други, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских; Службе, Гордон Мак Данијел, Дамњан Петровић, eds. (Београд: Просвета; Српска књижевна задруга, 1988), p. 160 (English translation is mine). It is taken from a passage that describes St. Sava, then archbishop of Serbia, observing Arsenios, then ecclesiarch of the *katholikon* of Žiča monastery, from the *katēchoumeneion*.
¹⁴⁶ For these reasons, Prof. Ćurčić considers the ceremonial use of galleries in Constantinopolitan churches of the earlier periods irrelevant in the formation of the monastic *katēchoumena* (Ђурчић, „Смисао и функција катихумена у позновизантијској и српској архитектури“, pp. 83, 92). For a somewhat different opinion, see below.
¹⁴⁷ Ćurčić, “Monastic Cells in Medieval Serbian Church Towers: Survival of an Early Byzantine Monastic Concept and Its Meaning” (as cited in note 1). The analyzed monuments are Žiča, Sopočani (*exonarthex* and tower appended after 1268), Bogorodica Ljeviška (built 1306/7-1309/10), Pećka Patrijaršija (narthex with tower added ca. 1324-1330), Lazarica (1377/8-1380), and Nova Pavlica (tower added after 1380s and before 1464), as well as relevant Byzantine examples: St. George Omorphokklēsia (ca. 1300, possibly 12th cent.), St. Nicholas at Peroni (Albania, 13th century?), Zōodochos Pēgē near Samari (Peloponnese, 12th cent.), and St. Mary of Admiral “Martorana” in Palermo (before 1184).
¹⁴⁸ Ćurčić, “Monastic Cells in Medieval Serbian Church Towers: Survival of an Early Byzantine Monastic Concept and Its Meaning,” pp. 494, 496, 507-509. The phenomenon of a reclusive monk living on a column or a tower
buildings, seclusion was never complete. Evidently, habitation of a revered spiritual figure inside the katholikon permitted his constant presence and occasional apparition during the corporate liturgical services conducted in the central church of a monastic community. This aspect has been thoroughly examined also by Ćurčić in an article that has rounded up the picture of the monastic katēchoumena. The reclusive monk would thus be exposed to reverence of the community, which would also benefit from his example and potential spiritual counsel. On the other hand, an elevated place of askēsis, which recalled the pillars of stylite saints and towers of other solitary monks, but located inside the church, points to a type of asceticism and seclusion permissible within the coenobitic community and inside the confines of the monastery. Moreover, it could be housed even within the very katholikon, which signals that the holy life of a saintly figure was viewed as deserving a sacred setting.

It was not only the holy life of a holy personage required a holy environment, but the same accommodation may alike have been viewed as befitting his or her holy departure from this life. This possibility is suggested by the presence of wall-painted illustrations of the Office for the Dying in the ambulatory of the chapel placed on the top floor of the tower of St. George at Hilandar Monastery (13th century) and in the upper storey of the exonarthex of Ohrid’s cathedral of St. Sophia (14th century). These ensembles, although later in date, seem to have provided an adequate pictorial setting for the reading of the office over a dying monk – at Hilandar – and a dying archbishop – at Ohrid. Similarly, the abbot dwelling in the katēchoumena in an Athonite...
*katholikon*, could have been brought to the over-narthex’s central room in last moments of his life. This space, with its visual connection with the *naos*, would have been an appropriate venue for both saying the office for him and administering the last rites to him. However, we lack any firm evidence for such a practice and this must presently remain just a mere possibility.

Returning to the functions better attested in the Athonite context, other analogous cases outside the peninsula can shed additional light on the use of the over-narthex chambers. The above-mentioned Serbian examples (Žiča and Gračanica) belong to the period later than the Athonite *katêchoumena*, but were highly influenced by the Hagiorite monasticism and architecture. Therefore, they emulated certain functional and organizational models, although not necessarily absolutely following the architectural form of their Athonite precedents. If we are to look at chronologically and architecturally closer comparisons, which show that the understanding of the over-narthex area did not change much between the 10th and 13th centuries, we must turn to some 12th-century churches of the ancient Rus’. Three of them, studied by Vladimir Sarabianov, are especially valuable due to the survival of their fresco decorations, which offer additional evidence about the setting of the space that combines monastic dwelling with praying within a church building. Two of them, the Nativity of the Virgin of Antoniev Monastery (Novgorod, 1117-1122) and St. George of Yuryev Monastery (Novgorod, 1119-1130), have two domes at their west corners in addition to the large dome of the nave, recalling Athonite twin-domed *katêchoumena* (see Figs. 379, 382). The frescoes of chapels located on top floors of their staircase towers suggest that the rooms served as seclusion spaces for the

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152 The basic study of the Athonite influences in the Serbian architecture of the early 13th century is Војислав Кораћ, „Свети Сава и програм рашког храма“, in: Свети Сава: Историја и предање, Војислав Ђурић (ed.) (Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности, 1979): 231-244.
153 Сарабьянов, „Приделы второго этажа в древнерусских церквах XII–XIII веков, их функции и иконографические программы“.
154 See note 61 above.
founders and abbots of the two communities. The third one, the Transfiguration church of the Evfrosin’ev Monastery near Polotsk (completed by 1161), is of particular interest to the present study for the architectural solution and functional organization of its upper storey (Fig. 386). It includes two chambers located above the naos’s west corner bays. They are miniature in size and cruciform in plan. The south chamber initially served as the cell of the monastery’s foundress, St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk (ca. 1102 -1167 or 1173). In the first quarter of the 13th century, the chamber was decorated with frescoes (Fig. 389) and its program suggests that it functioned as a chapel dedicated to St. Euphrosyne of Alexandria, the patron saint of the founder. However, it may have had a similar function as a private chapel or prayer room from the very beginning. It may also have been the repository for the famous and revered Cross of St. Euphrosyne, a reliquary which was made in 1161 to hold pieces of the True Cross and Holy Tomb, and was originally housed in the church. In the 19th and early 20th century, the Cross of St. Euphrosyne was displayed in a case set inside the east niche of the chapel (Figs. 390, 390A). That this may have also been the case in medieval times seems to be suggested by the presence of a fresco of the Crucifixion on the uppermost zone of the chapel’s east wall (see Fig. 389), as well as by other examples of relics of the True Cross being housed in the katēchoumena or in a chamber on the church’s upper floor.

There are a number of well preserved and well documented cases of monastic cells in combination with chapels located in katēchoumena dating to the Late Byzantine period, some of

155 Сарабьянов, op. cit., pp. 181-184. Interestingly, the chapel at Antoniev Monastery was dedicated to St. Onuphrius the Great and St. Peter the Athonite (ibid., p. 179), confirming both the anachoretic character of the structure (both saints were anchorites) and monastic (and architectural) links to Mount Athos. The double dedication also might have resulted from the celebration of the two saints’ memories on the same date, June 12 (cf. Makarios of Simonopetra, Synaxarion, Vol. 5, pp. 462-470).
156 On the gallery of this church, see Сарабьянов, op. cit., 184-188, and more extensively, idem, Спасо- Преображенская церковь Евфросиньева монастыря (Москва: Северный паломник, 20092), pp. 5-25, 200-221.
157 Сарабьянов, Спасо-Преображенская церковь Евфросиньева монастыря, pp. 9-11.
158 For these examples, see above and notes 81, 86, 88, 90, 93, 94; for the chapel’s fresco of the Crucifixion, see Сарабьянов, Спасо-Преображенская церковь Евфросиньева монастыря, illustrations on pp. 199, 201.
which have been examined by Ćurčić. As mentioned above, the chapels featured in churches of this period are usually not fully furnished as liturgical facilities, but rather reduced to personal oratories, often integrated with the cells in such a manner that they form unified spatial units. This differs from what we have seen on Mount Athos and elsewhere in the earlier period, but it demonstrates the same concept, which integrates two distinct aspects: solitary (anachoretic) habitation, as the highest and most praised level of monastic vocation, and dwelling within the holy (i.e. sacred space of the church). Both of these aspects imply that this was a place reserved for persons of the highest monastic distinction and holiness, usually founders or abbots of their respective communities. In my opinion, the first aspect has been well described and supported with sound arguments in the studies by Ćurčić. He has also referred to the importance of these men living within the church’s sacred space. Yet, this phenomenon requires further elaboration and can be elucidated by examining the iconographic programs of the katēchoumena and by revisiting possible antecedents, as well as ideas and meanings behind them that may have been interwoven with the two leading characterizations.

The internal openings between the katēchoumena and naos at Žiča, Gračanica, and Peribleptos of Mystra are incorporated into painted compositions of the Assumption of the Virgin on the naos sides in such a way that the openings either appear as a continuation of the gate of Heaven or as a substitution for it, thus signaling that the area behind (i.e. the katēchoumena) is part of the heavenly realm.\textsuperscript{159} The iconography inside the relatively small katēchoumena at Gračanica – besides including, among certain ascetic saints, two holy stylites, Symeon and Daniel, thus underlining the analogy of the elevated cell with the column – is dominated by a large composition of the Presentation of the Virgin into the Temple and her

\textsuperscript{159} Ćurčić, „Смисао и функција катихумена у поновизантијској и српској архитектури“, pp. 86-90, and idem, “‘Living Icons’ in Byzantine Churches: Image and Practice in Eastern Christianity,” pp. 198-201.
dwelling within the Holy of Holies, which is painted on the room’s barrel vault. This has a somewhat thematic continuation in the upper zones of the east and west walls, where the standing figures of prophets and high priests of the Old Testament (Samuel, Aaron, Isaiah, and Zachariah) are depicted in the tympana. These images infuse the space with meaning, emphasizing its function: dwelling within the holy space. Such understanding, if not present already in earlier centuries, clearly had developed by the early 14th century. This is perhaps why a physical separation between the chapel and the cell were no longer needed, since both were considered integrated parts of one and the same sacred space. However, this meaning may have been ascribed to the katēchoumena in response to potential concerns raised in regard to habitation within the church building. Biblical references may have been brought in to make the practice not merely acceptable, but exclusive, thus additionally underlining the elevated status of a recluse: a holy person may (or, rather, should) reside in the holy space.

In the complex of the Enkleistra of St. Neophytos (ca. 1197), which has been examined from this aspect by Ćurčić, one can see a link between two periods and an example of the gradual accumulation of symbolism and meaning ascribed to an elevated monastic dwelling within a church building in order to justify such a practice. Neophytos himself named one of his cells above the cave church the hagiastērion (i.e. “the place of sanctification”), which also included a chapel where he was “sanctified by partaking of Christ’s sacraments and by the chanting of the holy hymns”. This cell, cut into the rock, maintains a visual contact with the

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162 (45) Neophytos, # 20 (BMFD, p. 1360).
church through a shaft in the former’s floor, but was accessible only from outside.\textsuperscript{163} The iconography of the church’s ceiling – the Ascension of Christ – is arranged in such a manner that Christ appears as if ascending through the observation hole of the cell, suggesting that the cell is part of the heavenly sphere.\textsuperscript{164} The achieved setting is similar to the cases of Gračanica and Peribleptos of Mystra in both the artistic treatment and the conveyed message that the holy monk’s cell was part of a transcendent realm. Another cell or “the new hermitage of the New Sion,”\textsuperscript{165} was dug out further up on the precipice and very likely named in reference to the upper chamber at Zion, where the Last Supper took place, the upper chamber to which the apostles went after the Ascension, and ultimately the Heavenly Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{166} This demonstrates that Neophytos, in creating his new reclusive abode, did not deviate from the idea employed in his previous cell.

These meanings and ideas seem to have developed gradually, as a way to justify the presence and dwelling of a monk within the church. When it comes to the actual origins of this practice, I believe that the exclusivity of the gallery space in the church can be taken as one of the key factors. Indeed, the example set by the imperial usage of the galleries in certain Constantinopolitan churches may have initially been of greater importance than any symbolic meaning.\textsuperscript{167} In this context, the references to a small apartment – which included a chamber (κοιτών), a changing room (μητατόριον), and a dining room (τρίκλινος) – set for the emperor

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\textsuperscript{163} See Mango, Hawkins, “The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and Its Wall Paintings,” p. 190, figs. 18, 21, 22, 115, D (fold-out plate at the end), and Ćurčić, “‘Living Icons’ in Byzantine Churches: Image and Practice in Eastern Christianity,” pp. 196-197.


\textsuperscript{165} Neophytos, # 20 (BMFD, p. 1360).

\textsuperscript{166} Cf. Cormack, \textit{Writing in Gold}, p. 249.

\textsuperscript{167} See Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, pp. 91-92; cf. also \textbf{Chapter 4} (The Emphasized Central Bay).
and his retinue in the galleries\textsuperscript{168} are of particular significance, suggesting that something resembling an essential residing area, perhaps additionally accompanied by a private oratory, was organized in the upper floor. The practice of using galleries for such facilities seem to have originated before the Middle Byzantine period and was not necessarily reserved for royalty, as described in a 7\textsuperscript{th}-century text.\textsuperscript{169} Similarly, in the Early Rus’, galleries both accommodated visits of local princes and their families in cathedrals and served as ascetic cells in monastic churches. Athonite \textit{katêchoumena}, used by a reclusive founder and \textit{hêgoumenos}, clearly belonged to this second group. However, in regard to the status of imperial foundation, which the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Iviron enjoyed, it is possible that the middle bay, the \textit{katêchoumenon} proper, with its broad and elegant \textit{tribêlon} overlooking the nave, could have been transformed into a loge during the occasional visit of a high dignitary.

By way of conclusion, I would like to propose a possible line of development in the formation, spread, and eventual disappearance of the \textit{katêchoumena}. They originated in the galleries of the Early Byzantine basilicas and, through some functions associated with the court ceremonial in the capital, were introduced into the cross-in-square churches, but retracting to the area only above the narthex. Later on, within the monastic context, but based on the private use of the space in imperial churches, the \textit{katêchoumena} were reserved for the founder or another monastic of a high status in the community. The reverence for this personage and the elevated position of the room led to its understanding as part of the heavenly sphere. The library and \textit{skeuophylakion} could get accommodated there, as well, particularly because the safekeeping of a precious relic was better at this hardly accessible and constantly guarded part of the church building. The sacred meaning ascribed to the over-narthex, as well as the presence of a chapel,

\textsuperscript{168} Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, p. 92, notes 92, 93.
\textsuperscript{169} See Ђурчић, „Смисао и функција катихумена у позновизантијској и српској архитектури“, pp. 90-92, n. 22 (with reference).
most likely made it even more suitable for the housing of relics. In the Late Byzantium, there are fewer examples featuring the *katēchoumena*, perhaps due to the gradual discontinuation of their use by founders. But those that exist, witness to further merging of areas reserved for living with those for praying. Functional and architectural alternatives were provided by *typikaria*, rooms attached to the sanctuary, which appeared on Mount Athos in the late 14th century and assumed the role of *skeuophylakia*, on one hand, and occasionally by rooms that physically take the place of the *diakonikon*, but may have in fact served as monastic cells with chapels, on the other.\textsuperscript{170} Both architectural solutions, with their proximity to the sanctuary, testify to the eventual prevalence of the sacred aspects over the profane ones in *skeuophylakia* and monastic cells. This explains their disassociation from the narthex area, which was viewed as part of the earthly realm. On the other hand, the balance of the sacred and profane previously perceived in *skeuophylakia* and, particularly, abodes of reclusive monks was most likely what recommended their accommodation in the over-narthex during the Middle Byzantine period.

Chapter 6

Spaces and Structures Adjacent to the Narthex

In addition to the narthex proper and its upper floor, katēchoumena, the Athonite katholikon features a number of spaces and structures located adjacent to the narthex. They are closely related to it not only by location, but also by their functions, thus appearing as spatial and functional extensions of the narthex. The most frequently encountered is the exonarthex, the “outer narthex”, an additional room similar to the narthex and appended to its west side. One or – as it is more often – two subsidiary chapels were built against the narthex’s north and south sides and communicate with it. In the courtyard, there is the phialē, an open pavilion that houses a basin for the blessing of waters on Epiphany. It is usually detached from the church building, but it is located very close to it, within its entrance zone and functionally associated with the narthex. The location of these structures in regard to the narthex and connection to it and the rest of the church, their architectural characteristics, and the functions allocated to them are all examined and presented below.

a) *Exonarthex, Porches, and Connecting Corridors*

The following of our churches have or had an exonarthex: the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, Ivērōn, and Zygou. It is noteworthy that the rest of churches, those of cross-in-square plan and smaller in size, as well as basilicas, lacked this facility. Strikingly, the exonarthexes were all added within a relatively short period of time upon the completion of the core churches, ranging from about 30
to 60 years, and the four katholika acquired their exonarthexes by the middle of the 11th century. The combination of two narthexes in a church has been viewed by some scholars as a characteristic of Constantinopolitan architecture, manifested already in the 11th century. However, none of the typologically and temporally closest parallels, those in Constantinople and Bithynia, had such an extension, unless added in the Late Byzantine period. The only exceptions are the Eski İmaret Camii, which was appended with an extra narthex in the form of a portico at the beginning of the 12th century (see Fig. 212), and the Fatih Camii of Tirilye, which had a porch-like addition at the front, apparently featuring a lavish pentabêlon on its west façade (see Fig. 247). The church at Yılanca Bayır also had a porch in front of its narthex (Fig. 251).

The most notable Middle Byzantine katholika that had exonarthexes are Hosios Loukas (12th century; demolished in the 1880s; Fig. 404), Nea Monē of Chios (either 1050s or, more likely, 13th century; see Figs. 391, 394, 401), and the south church of the Pantokrator monastery in the capital (prior to 1136; Figs. 293, 294, 302). Monastic churches of the 11th century at other places also acquired exonarthexes only in the 12th century. It suffices to mention but two of

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1 See Chapter 1, notes 76, 117, 138, and 237, for the dates of the exonarthexes at the Great Lavra, Iviron, Vatopedi, and Zygou, respectively.
3 See Chapter 2. See also Marinis, Architecture and Ritual (see List of Abbreviations), p. 65.
4 Chapter 2, note 54.
5 Chapter 2 and note 96 there. It is unknown when this structure was appended to the church, but it presumably happened at an early date.
6 Chapter 2.
7 Λασκαρίνα Φιλιππίδου-Μπούρα, «Ο εξωνάρθικα του καθολικού του Οσίου Λουκά Φωκίδος», ΔΧΑΕ 6 (1970-1972): 13-28. The other large church of Hosios Loukas Monastery, the Panagia Church, also has an exonarthex, structured as an open loggia (see Figs. 340, 343).
10 The south, north, and middle church, as well as the exonarthex were constructed in three successive phases in the short period between ca. 1118 and 1136 (see Robert Ousterhout, “Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and a Few Examples,” DOP 54 (2000): 241-250, pp. 245-250, fig. 9; also Chapter 2, Excursus). The exonarthex is mentioned in the monastery’s typikon (see note 13 below).
them, Panagia Kapnikarea in Athens (church built shortly after the mid-11th century, exonarthex added in early 12th century; Figs. 326 to 329)\textsuperscript{11} and Veljusa (the church of 1080 was enlarged with an exonarthex ca. 1160-1175).\textsuperscript{12} Looking at the contemporary written sources, in particular monastic typika, the situation is just the same. A number of them bear witness to churches that had both an inner and an outer narthex,\textsuperscript{13} but the dates of these documents suggest that this part of the church building emerged in the capital only in the 12th century.\textsuperscript{14} Therefore, according to both the surviving monuments and available written evidence, the addition of an extra narthex cannot be viewed as a Constantinopolitan invention, but rather a custom that emerged in large coenobitic monasteries in the countryside, including Mount Athos. The Athonite communities may have actually been the first in this process and may have given the lead, unless they


\textsuperscript{12} For the dates, see Пећар Миљковић-Пепек, Велјуса: Манастир Св. Богородица Милостива во селото Велјуса крај Струмица (Скопје: Факултет за филозофско-историски науки на Универзитетот „Кирил и Методиј”, 1981), pp. 116-118.

\textsuperscript{13} (27) Kecharitomene, # 33, 36, 66, 70, 76 (BMFD [see List of Abbreviations], pp. 687, 688, 698, 699, 704, respectively), with a clear distinction of what liturgical services or other purposes are assigned to this part of the church; (28) Pantokrator, # [6], [7] (ibid., pp. 740-741); (29) Kosmosoteira, # 107 (ibid., p. 844); (32) Mamas, # 39 (ibid., p. 1020); and (33) Heliou Bomon, # 39 (ibid., p. 1077). Also, the Synaxarion of the Evergetis monastery provides information that its katholikon had an exonarthex (see Lyn Rodley, “The Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis, Constantinople: Where It Was and What It Looked Like,” in Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism [see List of Abbreviations], 17-29, pp. 25-27, and Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 65, n. 5). On the state of preservation of these churches and what is known of their exonarthexes, see Chapter 3, note 3.

\textsuperscript{14} In regard to the fact that these typika often share the same regulations, which ultimately stem from the typikon of the Evergetis Monastery (cf. Robert Jordan, “The Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis, Its Children and Grandchildren,” in Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism: 215-245; see also charts in BMFD, pp. 663, 990), one wonders whether the emergence of the exonarthex in the 12th century was an architectural manifestation of the Evergetine monastic and liturgical reform. Naturally, there is the question: does the copying of a typikon necessarily lead to emulating the actual physical setting, as well, or is it a mere borrowing of regulations and repetition of the nomenclature without the adequate response in architecture? This does not exclude the likely possibility that the founders of the new communities in their striving to follow the monastic model set at the Evergetis Monastery did not only turned to its written regulations, but also to what may have been perceived as the architectural embodiment of certain ideals and adequate setting for related liturgical customs. The actual experience with the spatial solutions in model communities may have played a greater part in this dissemination. The process can be compared with a similar proliferation of outer narthexes in Serbian monastic foundations of the 13th century, which in their monastic organization trace their ancestry in the Evergetine traditions (cf. Мириана Живојиновић, „Хиландарски и Евергетидски типик, подударност и разлике“, ZRVI 33 (1994): 85-102), as much as they owe to the Athonite monasticism and architecture (cf. Воислав Корач, „Свети Сава и програм рашког храма“, in: Сава Немањић – Свети Сава: Историја и предање, Воислав Ђурић (ed.) (Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности, 1979): 231-244).
themselves followed an example set earlier by now unknown establishments in other monastic centers.

Athonite katholika exhibit two patterns in the addition of their second narthexes: a) the exonarthex resulted from what seems to be a need to cover the area between the two lateral chapels (Great Lavra, see Figs. 29c, 33), or b) the exonarthex was designed as an extension to the narthex and built independently of the two lateral chapels (Ivērōn, Fig. 42) or even preceding their construction (Vatopedi, Figs. 60 to 62, and Zygou, Fig. 123). In the former case, the porch was instigated basically by utilitarian reasons, but the latter indicates the presence of some other concerns. At Zygou, for example, the exonarthex may have been constructed soon after 1018, as part of an enlargement of the monastery and its katholikon.\(^{15}\) Similarly, the church complex of the Pantokratōr Monastery in Constantinople was appended with an exonarthex shortly upon the construction of two large churches and a chapel between them. However, there, this addition was made, very significantly, to the south church, which served the monastic community and was not open to the laity, but not built onto the other church, which accommodated the lay attendants. Clearly, such an architectural facility was required only by the monastic congregation and perhaps provided in conjunction with the establishment of the monastery, which – judging from the date of its typikon (1136) – was instituted only upon the completion of the entire church complex.\(^ {16}\) The available evidence of the presence of the exonarthex only in the monastic churches in the Middle Byzantine period raises the question of whether this structure was only part of the monastic liturgical scheme. If not, then the reasons for its addition

\(^{15}\) In this year, the abbot of Zygou requested a plot adjacent to the monastery in order to enlarge it due to an increase in number of monks (Мирјана Живојиновић, Историја Хиландара, I: Од оснивања манастира 1198. до 1335. године (Београд: „Просвета“, 1998), p. 67, n. 101).

\(^{16}\) See above, note 10.
and the functions assigned to it in the monastic context were certainly different from those in lay churches.

Appended to the west, in front of the church’s main entrance, the first impression of the *exonarthex* is of a mere additional entrance room. Moreover, its form, often more open than that of the narthex, suggests that it is in no way different from a porch. However, the size, which is the same as that of the narthex and occasionally even larger, indicates that the room was something more than this and that it must have served a purpose and accommodated certain functions. Also, the fact that it appears only in Mount Athos’s larger *katholica*, i.e. at major monasteries, suggests that it was necessitated by the size of the community or made possible through its economical capacity, or both. But, before dealing with the reasons for building an *exonarthex* and its functions, a closer look into its form would be in order.

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The general appearance of the *exonarthex* is of an open porch, which is due to the presence of large external openings. They rise from the floor level up to the summit of recessed arches, as exhibited at Zygou, where they were distributed on three sides: three of them on the front façade and one on each of the lateral sides (*Figs. 135 to 141*). At the Great Lavra, the *exonarthex* was nested between preexisting structures and opened to the exterior only on the west side, which was entirely taken by a colonnade of four columns and five arched openings, i.e. a *pentabēlon* (*Fig. 33*). The same design was employed at Vatopedi (*Figs. 61, 89, 97*), although the structure’s construction preceded the appending of lateral chapels. The intercolumniations

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17 The number of monks in the Great Lavra apparently increased from one hundred to seven hundred by 1045, the year when the *Typikon* of Constantine IX Monomachos was issued (see (15) Constantine IX, # [4], in *BMFD*, p. 287; cf. also *ibid.*, pp. xvi-xvii). The size of the community was initially set at eighty monks, including both those residing in the very monastery and those living in dependant cells (for references, see Chapter 3, note 27). The size of the community is treated as directly dependent on (i.e. limited by) the size of the church, as the communal prayer space – in this case, existing before the foundation of the monastery – in (19) Attaleiates, # [27] (*BMFD*, pp. 346-347).
were closed (Great Lavra, see Fig. 29d) or still are (Vatopedi) by a door in the middle and parapet slabs and glazing set in frames on the sides. This may have been done soon after the construction in order to provide an enclosed area, protected from the elements, but preserving an abundance of natural light much needed in the now blocked inner narthex. The same solution was applied to the two openings of the west façade at Zygou, as recorded by archaeological remains (Fig. 139), whereas those at the north and south ends were used as additional entrances, confirmed at least for the north one by the presence of a door sill still in situ (Figs. 140, 141).

The open, porch-like form fits the picture given by extant or recorded examples at other places: such were *exonarthexes* of the Fatih Camii and the church of Yılanca Bayır, as well as at Nea Monē, Hosios Loukas (both Panagia, Fig. 343, and Katholikon), Hosios Meletios (Figs. 344, 345), Kapnikarea, Pantokratōr, and possibly Evergetis. The portico with alternating columns and piers of the church at Ainos (Enez, 12th century; Figs. 505, 506) was most likely covered by a lightweight wooden roof, and the *exonarthex* at Kecharitōmenē monastery was apparently entirely made of timber, suggesting that its form was light and open. Such an architectural treatment of this part of the church continues into the Late Byzantine period. Therefore, it is a bit surprising that the *katholikon* of Ivērōn, whose architecture—as we have seen—is in many aspects very similar to those of the Lavra and Vatopedi, shows a major departure when it comes to its *exonarthex*. In plan and organization, it is closer to that of Zygou, but unlike this it is more enclosed and cannot be compared to a porch, although a contemporary

18 Bouras, *Nea Moni* (see note 8 above), p. 113, n.3.
document refers to it as the *stoa*, i.e. portico. Its west façade, in addition to the door in the middle, has only two small and relatively narrow windows (see *Fig. 42a*). There are two doors at the north and south ends, but they are narrow and appear as if opened at some later point. It is not known why such an approach in design was chosen. When speaking of the porch-like form, it is worth adding some further observations and thoughts on the two design approaches, i.e. the more open, with the use of columns, and the more enclosed, with a masonry structure. The former may have been employed when column shafts and capitals were at the builders’ disposal. On Mount Athos, there were no ruined settlements that would yield such lavish building material, so it had to be imported at some cost, meaning that a community had to either possess its own financial resources or to secure a sponsorship. In both of our cases that succeeded in this, the Great Lavra and Vatopedi, the chosen design was of a colonnade, rather than an alternation of columns and masonry piers, as seen at some other monuments. That may have resulted from the relatively short length of the space between the two lateral chapels at the Lavra. At Vatopedi, the reasons were perhaps a desire to emulate the same design out of reverence for the ‘mother community’ and the suitability of the architectural solution devised for the predecessor. However, such a design was possibly not all that uncommon, as witnessed by a *pentabêlon* motif, very similar to that at Vatopedi, employed in the Fatih Camii, Tirilye. Moreover, the portico of the Stoudios basilica, which has five openings and may have been glazed in the same manner at the time – two marble frames are preserved in

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22 See *Chapter 1*, note 117.
23 The north door seems to be original and its size influenced by the position of the north chapel’s west wall.
24 Pavlos Mylonas has suggested that the present *exonarthex* may have been constructed in 1513 as a replacement of an older one in the form of a portico (see *Chapter 1*, note 118). If this was the case, the form was perhaps the result of a changed understanding of the purpose of this facility and the actual needs of the community at the time.
25 The churches of Yilanca Bayır and Enez, for example (see above).
26 See above.
the second and fourth intercolumniations (Figs. 477, 507, 508) – may have been emulated in some of the communities that were organized after the Stoudite monastic model.

The second design approach, exemplified by the exonarthex of Zygou, may have been influenced by either a lack of spoliated columns or a desire to repeat the structure of the narthex, but only in a more open form. Also, the massive piers were better suited for the inclusion of an upper storey, as it is the case at Ivērōn. The openness is achieved mainly by the application of door-length openings flanking the western entrance (see Fig. 136). They can be observed in both Athonite and Constantinopolitan churches, and were used in the outer and inner narthexes alike. It has already been suggested and in some places attested (i.e. Vefa Kilise Camii, Fig. 235, and Zygou, Fig. 139) that these openings were closed by parapet slabs and glazed. The west façade of the exonarthex at Nea Monē most likely was originally structured in the same manner (Fig. 394). Such a treatment may have been merely stylistic. On the other hand, it is possible that these openings were originally left open, since it was more pressing to have the naos finished first, temporarily entrusting the narthex or the exonarthex with the form of a porch. The openings could then have been glazed within few years after the completion of more important parts of the church or when resources became available. I think that such a scenario is very likely, because many of the narthex’s known functions can easily be accommodated within an open porch. The same may have been the case with the pantabēlon porch of Vatopedi and certainly with that at the Lavra, where the intercolumniations were apparently walled up only at some point between the 16th and 18th centuries. Also, fresco decoration in exonarthexes was

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27 See Chapter 2 (for Vefa Kilise Camii and also Lips Monastery) and Chapter 1 (for Zygou).
28 Bouras, Nea Moni, pp. 112-113.
often executed at later dates, as at Vatopedi (1311/1312) and Hilandar (as late as 1803), for example.\textsuperscript{29}

Turning to the interior of Athonite \textit{exonarthexes}, one immediately notices a three-bayed structure, similar to that of the inner narthexes. However, the bays are not of equal size, since they follow the rhythm set by pilasters on the narthex’s external façade (Ivērōn, \textit{Fig. 42a}, and Zygou, \textit{Fig. 135}). This design approach was not applied at Vatopedi and probably not at the Great Lavra, either, due to the presence of a \textit{pentabēlon} and wooden ceiling, which rendered the use of supporting masonry arches unnecessary. However, the central area of the room at Vatopedi is emphasized in the floor pavement, which features an \textit{opus sectile} design (\textit{Figs. 87, 88, 96}), giving this part of the interior a special significance. A similar design is to be found in the same position at Zygou, as well, here taking up the entire area of the middle bay (\textit{Figs. 135, 144}). And at both Vatopedi and Zygou this emphasis is present in their narthexes as well.\textsuperscript{30}

The mural decoration survives only at Vatopedi and belongs to the early 14\textsuperscript{th} century; therefore, it is almost impossible to say much about the original meaning given to the room. However, it is noteworthy that the main cycle is dedicated to Christ’s passions and one of the scenes, located in the middle of the north wall, represents the Washing of Feet (\textit{Fig. 509}), which occurs in the known iconographic programs of Middle Byzantine narthexes, also at the room’s north end (\textit{Figs. 398, 407, 408}).\textsuperscript{31} The presence of this image in the narthex has been connected to the ritual reenactment of the Washing of Feet yearly on Great Thursday,\textsuperscript{32} so it is possible that

\textsuperscript{29} In both cases, any potentially older layers of wall paintings have not been detected, although their existence cannot be completely dismissed.

\textsuperscript{30} See \textbf{Chapter 4} for a discussion of the special treatment of the central areas in both the narthex and \textit{exonarthex} and their possible meaning.

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Cf. Chapter 2, Excursus.}

\textsuperscript{32} See \textbf{Chapter 3}, notes 177 and 180.
the transfer of the image to the *exonarthex* means that the performance of the ritual was moved too.\(^{33}\)

Apart from securing the communication between the narthex and exterior, the *exonarthex* maintains connections to the two lateral chapels via their own narthexes (Great Lavra and Vatopedi, *Figs. 29c, 63*) or spaces in front of their west entrances (*Ivērōn, Fig. 39*). Only at Zygou, the lateral doors open to the exterior, since the two small chapels connect only to the inner narthex (*Fig. 122*). In both situations, the outer narthex serves as crossroad or communication hub at the entrance of the *katholikon*, funneling into the church monks coming from various parts of the monastery and enabling various patterns of circulation within the building. That is perhaps why the furnishing of the interior is almost absent, being limited to more or less moveable *stasidia*, lamps, candleholders, and a vessel for keeping holy water (see *Figs. 87, 88*). Certain Post-Byzantine sources mention a *phialē*, *sēmantra*, and a sarcophagus with the founders’ remains located in the *exonarthex* of Nea Monē.\(^{34}\) The housing of the *sēmantron* can certainly be explained by the openness of structure, with the possibility that the wooden board was hung within one of the openings, if needed.\(^{35}\)

In the *exonarthex* at Vatopedi, along its east side, there is something that appears as a low masonry marble-clad bench (see *Figs. 86 to 88, 100 to 102*). This element of furnishing is fully repeated in the 17\(^{th}\)-century porch added to the *exonarthex*’s front (*Figs. 89, 97, 108*). Here, the bench again takes mostly the east side and two central sections are topped with wooden planks (clearly meant for sitting). Immediately south of the main entrance to the church, there is a

\(^{33}\) The depiction of the Washing of Feet is also located in the *exonarthex* at Daphni (added in the 13\(^{th}\) century), at its north end (see Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (London: Routledge, 1948), pl. 43A).

\(^{34}\) Bouras, *Nea Moni*, pp. 60, 71, 113.

\(^{35}\) More on the housing of the *sēmantron* in the narthex area is said below.
marble throne of the abbot (Fig. 98). The same features are found in the Great Lavra (Fig. 510), Ivērōn (Fig. 511), Dionysiou (porch that connects the katholikon with the refectory, Fig. 512). This transfer is yet another instance suggesting that the Post-Byzantine porticos came as substitutes of exonarthexes, assuming some of their functions.

The exonarthexes of Ivērōn and Vatopedi have upper floors, which seem to have been constructed primarily, if not exclusively, in order to enable access to the narthex’s second storey. Massive walls of the exonarthex at Zygou suggest that it may have had an additional storey, whereas the outer narthex of the Lavra, according to the 16th-century renderings of the katholikon (Figs. 32a, b), did not have an upper floor. The access at Vatopedi was provided via a flight of stairs built together with the exonarthex against the inner narthex’s north wall (Figs. 60, 62). At Zygou, the access must have been accommodated on the upper level of the narthex’s north extension. The belfry, which doubles as a stair tower at Ivērōn is of a much later date (1725), but – considering the church’s great distance from other monastic structures in the compound – the belfry might be a successor of a similar facility that enabled access to the church’s upper-level chambers.

When it comes to the upper storey’s form, it is a simple three-bayed room, covered by either a timber roof (Vatopedi, see Figs. 54, 85) or three blind vaults (Ivērōn, see Figs. 42b, 37, 44). Likely following the layouts of their respective ground-level rooms, the upper chamber at Vatopedi was envisaged as an open area, with three large two-light windows on the west façade (Figs. 61, 105), whereas the one at Ivērōn is rather enclosed and features only three simple and

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37 Mylonas is of the opinion that the upper storey at Ivērōn or, perhaps, the entire exonarthex was constructed in 1513 in place of an older single-storied portico (see Chapter 1, notes 118, 119).
38 For more on this extension and its role in providing access to the over-narthex, see Chapter 5.
39 Chapter 1, note 120.
small windows. Virtually nothing is known about the function of these two cases beyond their modern use as a storage room for icons, i.e. the *skeuophylakion*, which is in keeping with some older traditions.⁴⁰

* We can now turn to the purpose and function(s) of the *exonarthex*.

The fact that the *exonarthexes* were appended to the *katholika* within a short time of their construction indicates that already the community’s second generation of monks oversaw the addition and that this was in order to accommodate some purpose(s) that could not be fulfilled by the existing church building. Was that in response to the community’s rapid growth in number of monks, as it possibly was the case at Zygou, as well as the Great Lavra?⁴¹ Or were there some other concerns and needs that a structure similar to the narthex both in form and position could accommodate?

Open porticoes or covered shelters for the church entrances existed in Byzantine architecture of the previous centuries.⁴² Commonly, they were built integrally with the rest of church building. Similarly, the *exonarthex* of the Great Lavra’s *katholikon*, although appended a few decades after the church’s completion, was seemingly provided as a shelter for the entrance and a means to cover the area framed by the existing narthex and two side chapels. In this connecting role, it is reminiscent of the porticoes of church atria of the Early Byzantine period. At Vatopedi, the pattern of the *exonarthex*’s addition was reversed from that at the Lavra, i.e. the acquisition of an extra room preceded the construction of the chapels. However, both its design

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⁴⁰ On the use of the inner narthex’s upper storey as the *skeuophylakion*, see *Chapter 5*.
⁴¹ See above, notes 15 and 17.
⁴² It suffices to mention but two examples: the evidence of a small porch in front of the Theotokos of Lips (see *Chapter 2*) and the elaborate porch running along the entire front of the church at Dereağzı that protects its three entrances (see James Morganstern, *The Byzantine Church at Dereağzı and Its Decoration* (Tübingen: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1983), pp. 31-32, 56-58, fig. 6, plates 6-1, 8-1). For a discussion of the porch-like *exonarthexes*, which convincingly argues that they are not foreign to the Middle Byzantine church architecture, see Ousterhout, “The Byzantine Church at Enez” (fully cited in note 20), pp. 273-276.
and the ‘topographical’ configuration were repeated: the two lateral chapels have their own narthexes, which are aligned with the exonarthex and can be entered from it (compare Figs. 29c and 63). An additional narthex was more needed at Vatopedi than at the Lavra, since the two chapels could not be entered from the inner narthex due to the presence of the founders’ tomb at its south end and the stairs closing off the north end. The builders at the Lavra did not have to deal with such a situation since the chapels were built earlier and the tomb of the founder, St. Athanasius, was accommodated not in the narthex, but in the north chapel. The same was the case at Ivereon too, explaining perhaps why the exonarthex was built there later and why it is relatively small and not open: the two chapels there can be entered from the inner narthex and they do not have their own narthexes that could have connected to the exonarthex (see Fig. 39).

Apart from these utilitarian and architectural concerns, did the exonarthex accommodate some particular functions, which perhaps formed a part of or were related to the church ritual? I would say yes and that this happened only after this spatial provision became available and suggested such functional solutions. This is perhaps why we hear of exonarthexes and their functions only in sources of the 12th-century and later dates. On Mount Athos, such a development is best exemplified by the case of the Great Lavra, where this extra space was offered already at the 11th century. On the other hand, at Vatopedi, the mere size of its outer narthex, larger than the inner narthex,43 and the construction predating the addition of chapels suggest that the advantages of this augmentation – not only and primarily as the shelter for communications with the church building, but also as the venue for certain functions – were recognized early on. Perhaps this resulted from lessons learned from the Lavra’s katholikon, i.e. with the experience of certain acts being accommodated in the outer narthex. A similar situation was at Zygou, where the exonarthex did not have any relevance in connecting side chapels, the

43 The same difference in size in favor of the exonarthex can be observed at the Nea Monē, too (see Fig. 391).
role already fulfilled by the inner narthex. It only may have substituted the latter in enabling north and south access into the church, previously blocked by the construction of two chapels. However, its size suggests that it was assigned some other purposes too. The term ‘litē’ applied to Vatopedi’s exonarthex in modern times bears reference to a use of the space for certain liturgical services and acts, revealing that this part of the church was included in the ritual. Was that the case from the very inception of the structure?

The supplication service of the Litē, which also involves a procession, is a part of the All-Night Vigil (αγρυπνία), which became a regular part of the Byzantine liturgical rite only with the Neo-Sabbaitic Reform at the 14th century. However, the processions with litanies around the church were not unknown before that. It has been proposed that an exonarthex may have been added in order to accommodate these processions, which became one of characteristic features of the Evergetine liturgical practice. But how would it happen that an outside procession was moved into an indoor area? I would offer two possible incentives that might have been behind this shift. First, it seems that at the beginning of a procession the congregation would assemble in the church, more likely in its narthex or porch, since there was no need of the naos and sanctuary, in order to form the train of people. Some initial prayers may have been said there too. Also, the congregation would have arrived at the same place at the end of the procession, saying there the final prayers, which probably constituted the culmination of the service, before

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44 On the assignment of the name of the processional service of the Litē to this hall at Vatopedi, see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.
46 Cf. Chapter 3, notes 58 and 60, for the practice at the Stoudios Monastery (9th century).
48 (4) Stoudios, # 31 (BMFD, p. 112).
proceeding into the *naos*. It is not inconceivable that on some occasions – such as minor feasts or certain time restrictions or, more likely, bad weather conditions – this whole action may have been shortened and accommodated within the porch/exonarthex/narthex, whichever was available and spacious enough. The second incentive is related to what was done during such festal processions. They commonly entailed making stops and saying prayers at important points in the monastery, including chapels, shrines, founder’s tomb, even economic and agricultural facilities, as well as making commemorative intercessions for the deceased brethren at the cemetery. Since some of the most revered of such places in the Athonite monasteries – the two lateral chapels and the founder’s tomb (located either in one of these chapels or in the narthex) – were directly attached to the *exonarthex*, the *exonarthex* seems to present the best venue for a condensed celebration of the *Litē* service. This may have gradually developed into a standard practice, making a second narthex necessity, as it seemingly was in the monasteries that followed the Evergetine monastic model.

This process shows the induction of an outdoor ritual into the church building, i.e. into the *exonarthex*, as a transient space between the exterior and interior. However, there are more instances of the opposite, the migration of certain liturgical acts from the inner narthex to the outer narthex. That can be inferred from the *typika* of Kecharitōmenē and St. Mamas, where the latter largely borrows from the former. The documents not only mention the existence of *exonarthexes*, but clearly direct which of daily liturgical services, otherwise commonly celebrated in the narthex, were to be performed in the room set farther away from the nave and

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49 *Ibid*; see also a discussion of this passage from the *typikon* of the Stoudion in Chapter 3, including note 61 there.
50 At the Lavra of St. Sabbas in Judean Desert, the tomb of the saintly founder is located in the courtyard, in front of the *katholikon* (see Fig. 15, tomb marked with number 10).
51 Even the *exonarthex* itself contained tombs of the founder’s family members or other important people, as it was the case at the monasteries of Kecharitōmenē and Kosmosóteira, requiring prayers to be said on their behalf on certain occasions (see below). Burials have been recorded at the *exonarthex* of Zygou, too (Chapter 1).
52 See above, notes 13 and 14.
53 *Cf.* note 14 above and *BMFD*, pp. 975-977, and charts on pp. 663, 990.
closer to the church entrance. The rule of the Kecharitōmenē monastery is more striking in this respect, probably due to its being the regulatory act of a female community, which likely did not have a strong predecessor community to be modeled after. Moreover, it may have devised certain specific accommodations that were deemed more suitable for a female community. Thus, the chanting of Hours was to be accomplished in the exonarthex or, alternatively, in dormitories, with the decision left to the discretion of the superior.\(^{54}\) On the other hand, some other instructions are comparable to the Athonite practice that survives until today and might reflect approaches that were common for monasteries of the time, regardless the gender of their communities. For example, the performance of Compline at Kecharitōmenē was assigned to the exonarthex.\(^{55}\) Similarly, Compline and the ritual of mutual forgiveness immediately following it are also staged in the exonarthex at certain Athonite monasteries.\(^{56}\) This spatial preference may have risen from the situation of the outer narthex being closer to the refectory than the inner narthex, as well as the brevity of the service and its penitential character, which may have contributed to the choice of the space of lesser sacredness as the venue. The ritual enactment of the Washing of Feet may have also been relegated to the exonarthex, as witnessed by the presence of the appropriate iconography.\(^{57}\) Low masonry benches could have been used by seated monks, awaiting their feet to be washed. Benches, now mostly relocated to the Post-Byzantine open porticoes farther west, with an abbot’s throne set in the center of the east side, were also seemingly meant to accommodate large numbers of monks gathered for some important meetings of the brotherhood, spiritual counsel offered by their superior, or some other similar non-liturgical event that concerned the entire community.

\(^{54}\) (27) Kēcharitomene, # 33, 35 (BMFD, pp. 687, 688).

\(^{55}\) (27) Kēcharitomene, # 36 (BMFD, p. 688); cf. also Chapter 3, note 89.

\(^{56}\) See Chapter 3, notes 90, 99-101, for the practice at Vatopedi. The mutual forgiveness was evidently a part of the Evergetine daily ritual, but the venue was not specified (cf. Chapter 3, notes 95, 96).

\(^{57}\) See above, note 33.
Notably, funeral services are administered in the exonarthex of the Athonite katholika and this likely was the case from the very beginning, as it was in the monasteries of Kecharitōmenē, St. Mamas, and Hēliou Bomōn, according to their typika. Perhaps related to this, there are records of the regular weekly commemorations (on Friday evening, i.e. the eve of Saturday), meant for all deceased, being chanted in the exonarthex. The individual memorial services on the third, ninth, and fortieth days upon a monk’s departure were, however, conducted in the narthex. This is yet another instance that indicates the gradation of the two narthexes, with the actions of lesser significance being relegated to the outer one. In addition to these, there might have been some practical concerns that led to the use of the exonarthex for general commemorations, such as the presence of notables’ tombs in this part of the church and a desire to reduce any potential sound conflict between the celebration of Vespers in the naos and commemorations that had to be said at the same time.

Another important purpose allocated to the exonarthex on Mount Athos was apparently that of a corridor connecting the katholikon with the rest of the monastery, i.e. providing a sheltered communication between certain parts of the monastic compound and the main church. This was the situation at Vatopedi and the Great Lavra, whose exonarthexes used to extend in front of the side chapels or through their narthexes, spanning the entire widths of the church complexes from the north to south ends. With the addition of covered passageways, the exonarthexes connected to the north and south monastery ranges (see Figs. 18, 109). At the Lavra, in the Post-Byzantine period, the connections were most likely established through open

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58 See Chapter 3, notes 211-214.
59 (32) Mamas, # 39 (BMFD, p. 1020), and (33) Heliou Bomon, # 39 (BMFD, p. 1077; copies from the previous, only adding “or at the graves” as an alternative venue).
60 Cf. also Chapter 3.
61 E.g. at Zygou, Kecharitōmenē, and Kosmosōteira (see below). See also Chapter 3, notes 242-244.
62 For the concerns about not missing the commemoration of the deceased during the evening services, see Chapter 3 (with relevant references in notes 236-240, 244).
63 See Chapter 1.
ground levels of two bell towers, located on both sides of the church (see Fig. 32c). This sort of communication has been preserved in Vatopedi, only moved farther west, to an additional arcaded porch and, via a long flight of stairs, connecting the katholikon with the north range’s upper levels (Figs. 49, 108). The connection with the upper floors is not accidental – this is the area where the hēgoumeneion, the abbot’s quarters that also include offices of the monastery administration, is located. The medieval hēgoumeneion of the Lavra – which incorporated St. Athanasius’s original cell, whose construction preceded the monastery’s establishment – was situated at exactly the same spot (Fig. 17, number 3). Thus, it overlooked the large open yard formed between the katholikon and trapeza, and enabled the abbot to oversee monks and their activities that took place between the two most important components of the coenobitic monastery, while also making him constantly available to the community in administering to the needs of its members. Maintaining a direct communication with the hēgoumeneion would also explain the existence of the north extension at Zygou, which undoubtedly established a passageway leading directly to the katēchoumena, another space reserved for the abbot.

The communication corridors did not run only to the hēgoumeneion; they connected the main church also to the entrance gate, dormitories, and other parts of the monastic complex, often depending upon and adapting to the complex’s form, size, and internal organization. Thus,

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64 Cf. Ploutarchos L. Theocharides, “Recent Research into Athonite Monastic Architecture, Tenth-Sixteenth Centuries,” in Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism (see List of Abbreviations): 205-221, fig. 16.1.

65 For the location of the hēgoumeneion, see ibid., p. 211, fig. 16.1, and Ploutarchos L. Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” in Georges Galavaris (ed.), Athos, la Sainte Montagne: Tradition et renouveau dans l’art, Αθωνικά Σύμμεικτα 10 (Αθήνα: Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών – Ινστιτούτο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 2007): 97-128, pp. 99-100, figs. 1, 2; a survey report on this cluster of buildings, see idem, “Το παλιό ηγουμενείο-σκευοφυλάκιο της Μεγίστης Λαύρας. Ιστορία, έρευνα και πρόταση αποκατάστασης”, H Δεκάτη 2 (2005-2006): 76-87. On the position and role of Athanasius as abbot in the monastic organization and life of the Lavra, see Kallistos Ware, “St. Athanasios the Athonite: Traditionalist or Innovator?” in Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism: 3-16, pp. 9-12. For an idea that the hēgoumeneion was conveniently located at the potential meeting point of two distinct functional and spatial subdivisions of the monastery, the area of the “working” monks between the main gate and refectory, and the area of “intellectual” monks grouped around the katholikon, see Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” pp. 110-111.

66 For the elongated annex appended to the north end of the inner narthex at Zygou, see Chapter 1. On the abbot’s use of the katēchoumena, see Chapter 5.
the proximity of south ranges at both the Great Lavra and Vatopedi suggests that their exonarthexes extended and provided covered connections on that side as well. In some cases, the exonarthex did not necessarily form a linear hallway, but its form and organization did conform to main internal communication paths within the monastic complex. At Ivērōn, the position of the original entrance gate of the monastery (see Fig. 36) may have influenced the provision of an additional door at the exonarthex’s north end. It even may have been used as the primary entrance to the church for those arriving from the monastery gate.67 Furthermore, the later glazed porch envelops that side and features a door – even larger and more pronounced than the one on the west side – that enables direct and straight-line communication between the gate and the exonarthex (see Figs. 36, 39, 40). Similarly, a porch was appended to the south of the katholikon of Xenophōntos in the 14th century, most likely in response to the location of the monastery’s entrance gate (Fig. 119).68 In that manner, an alternative entrance to the church from the south, provided either through its inner or outer narthex, was sheltered and architecturally emphasized. Perhaps this was the reason why the side chapel had to be moved further to the east, instead of being built adjacent to the narthex, as had become customary for Athonite katholika. This portico most likely extended farther to the west, enveloping the church’s west end and connecting the church to the refectory, providing a sheltered communication with the second most significant facility in the monastery, as the present “diabatikon” (lit. the “transition room”) does.

67 Such a function may have accounted for or, at least, was enhanced by the dedication of the north lateral chapel to the Holy Archangels (Taxiarchs), whose iconographic representations often guard church entrances (e.g. the main door between the narthex and naos at Hilandar – see Fig. 493 and Τούτος, Φοιτητής, Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Ὄρους [see List of Abbreviation], pp. 186-189, nos. 173, 174).
68 See Chapter 1. This situation is similar to that in the Hagia Sophia of Monemvasia, where the configuration of the site and the main access being available from the south seemingly led to the construction of a large open portico along the church’s south façade (see Figs. 419, 420).
Similar architectural treatments can be found in some monastic churches outside Mount Athos, as well. In the church at Yılanca Bayır, the *exonarthex* extends in front of lateral annexes (*Fig. 251*), which cannot be entered from it, suggesting that this narrow portico of alternating columns and piers served more or less as a north-south covered corridor.\(^69\) The open *exonarthex* of the Panagia church of Hosios Loukas provides a connection between the monastery’s north wing and the Katholikon at a critical point where the relics of St. Luke were enshrined (see *Figs. 340, 341, 343*). This suggests that this particular porch played a role in the accommodation of pilgrims and certain ritual processions. The 14\(^{\text{th}}\)-century *exonarthex* at the Monastery of St. John Prodromos near Serres has a large fresco of St. John (in two layers) above the north door,\(^70\) indicating a possible connection to the refectory, which was located in the monastery wing directly across of this door, before the construction of the present bell tower at this position. The wall-painted icon of the monastery’s patron saint put an iconographic emphasis on this door, which may have been originally sheltered by a canopy and which was undoubtedly established to serve as one of the most important communication paths in the monastery – only the main western entrance door was of a higher regard.

Therefore, the *exonarthex* assumed the role of a connection, a ‘joint’ between the *katholikon* and the rest of the monastery complex. This function was most likely taken over from the narthex proper, which was prevented from accomplishing this purpose because of its smaller size, certain functions that were not compatible with circulation, or the blocking of the side entrances due to the addition of chapels. The resulting situation rendered the church proper free of annexes and left it freestanding in the courtyard, enabling circumventing processions on

\(^{69}\) *Cf. Chapter 2.*

some major feasts to be conducted unobstructed. This logic was maintained in the subsequent centuries, when additional porches/corridors were established, as those at the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Iviron. The Post-Byzantine diabatikon at Xenophontos is of a similar spirit, as well as the architectural solutions applied at Dionysiou and Simonopetra. They went even further, merging directly into monastery ranges, due to limited space.

At the end, a few concluding remarks on the exonarthex can be made. The Middle Byzantine cases suggest that this feature seemingly appears exclusively in monastic churches; alternatively, only cathedral churches would get this additional provision, perhaps instigated by some demands of a similar nature. The secondary narthex appeared to be an augmented venue for a dislocation, separation, and extension of certain functions from the narthex proper. It formed another level of ‘buffering’ between the church and the outer world, only less sacred, accommodating confessions, funerals, and burials, whereas the inner narthex retained most of the communal liturgical rites and offices. Exonarthexes are often fashioned and primarily function as entrance porches (e.g. Great Lavra and Vatopedi), with their position and orientation conforming to the internal organization of the monastic complex, i.e. corresponding to the location of the monastery gate, refectory, and other major components of the compound. Both the form (resembling ancient porticos) and the intention to establish an entrance (and connecting) space – which jointly serves the main church and the chapels and, thus, functions as a sort of

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71 See Chapter 1, for Xenophontos, and Peter Burridge, “The Architectural Development of the Athonite Monastery,” in Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism: 171-188, figs. 14.5 and 14.7, for the other two monasteries.

72 Cf. Nicholl, “A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of Typika: The Case of the Narthex,” pp. 294-295, 297, 305, for an analysis of the functional differentiation between the narthex and the exonarthex and some sort of gradation in importance related to the symbolical meaning (primarily based on the information from the Kecharitomenē typikon), and pp. 300-302, for possible functions of surviving Middle Byzantine exonarthexes, especially when they feature open designs.
communication hub – bear some resemblance to the church atrium. But is the *exonarthex* indeed a substitute for the atrium appended to urban churches, such as St. George of Mangana and the Nea of the period, as well as the Hagia Sophia and Stoudion of the previous periods, but still present and influential at the time? Many reasons for the existence of the atrium had probably been lost by the Middle Byzantine period, rendering it only a formal element with an aura of antiquity and ceremoniality. The *exonarthex* or a porch is perhaps another answer to some similar and still relevant demands, hence the retaining of certain vestiges of the ancient atrium and elements of its form, and the occasional placement of the holy water font therein. However, other important functions that were assigned to this part of the church in the Middle Byzantine monastic practice indicate a creative response to real needs that goes beyond a mere transformation of the atrium, structure that once used to occupy the same position in the church and fulfill similar functional and symbolic purposes.

**b) Subsidiary (Lateral) Chapels**

The presence of subsidiary chapels, flanking the north and south ends of the narthex, is one of characteristic features of the Athonite *katholika*. Paired chapels, appended at both ends, can be found already in the Middle Byzantine period, at the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, Ivērōn, Zygou, and Melissourgeiou (see *Figs. 25, 49, 39, 122, 182*, respectively). They were all constructed within short periods of time after the completion of the church cores: about ten years or less at the Great Lavra, some 20-50 years at Ivērōn and Vatopedi, and a few decades at Zygou, and in one

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74 See below.

75 This does not exhaust the discussion of the issue and further examination is definitely needed (*cf.* also Nicholl, *op. cit.*, p. 302). The examination must include a wider range of relevant material, which goes beyond the limits of the present study.

76 See Chapter 1.
instance – at Melissourgeiou – even integrally built with the rest of the church.\textsuperscript{77} This means that these \textit{katholika} acquired lateral twin \textit{parekklēsia} by the mid-11\textsuperscript{th} century and that by this time they had become regarded as a standard feature, as the plan of Melissourgeiou indicates. The smaller churches of Xenophōntos and St. Demetrius have one chapel each, annexed to the south and north respectively, but they are of much later dates (18\textsuperscript{th} and the end of 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, respectively).\textsuperscript{78} The rest of Athos’s Middle Byzantine churches, which are also smaller in size, lack chapels at these positions. The plan/structure of the \textit{parekklēsia} can take various forms: from diminutive, squarish, and minimally equipped chambers, of the same size as the width of the church narthexes (Zygou and Melissourgeiou) – similar to those at the \textit{katēchoumena} of Vatopedi and Ivērōn – to full-fledged churches of cross-in-square plan (Great Lavra, Vatopedi, Ivērōn). In the present study, I mostly disregard the form of chapels, due to the lack of consistency in their planning and design, but rather examine their functions, organization, reasons for the inclusion and location near the narthex, and spatial relationship to it and other parts of the \textit{katholikon}.\textsuperscript{79}

Before dealing with these issues, it is worth underscoring two major characteristics of the lateral chapels: their location in the narthex area and their inclusion in the church complex from early on. In fact, any ground-level chapel of our Athonite \textit{katholika} is always appended to the west end, to the narthex, unlike the majority of other Middle Byzantine cases, where chapels can be located at any point of the main church’s flanks – most often at the east end – in both compact

\textsuperscript{77} For the dates of construction, see \textit{Chapter 1}, notes 74, 75 (Great Lavra), 115, 116 (Ivērōn), 140, 141 (Vatopedi), 236 (Zygou), 293 (Melissourgeiou).

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Chapter 1}, note 220 and the section on St. Demetrius.

and satellite arrangements (e.g. Lips, Skripou, Cappadocia’s cave churches, Chora, etc.).

Notable exceptions are Çanlı Kilise near Çeltek and some other Cappadocian churches, where the chapel (usually only one) appended to the narthex invariably serves as a burial chamber.

Additional and closer parallels, this time conceived under the Athonite monastic and architectural influence, are to be found in some of the 11th- and 12th-century churches of the ancient Rus’ and, somewhat consistently, in the 13th-century katholika of several Serbian monasteries. Returning to the Holy Mountain, the construction of the lateral parekklēsia within the first half of the 11th century and shortly after the completion of the main church indicates that some functions essential to the community were assigned to these structures almost from the very foundation of a monastery. The prompted inclusion of chapels and their position at the west end suggest the existence of clear planning and organizational concerns, which had become part of the overall design. They either developed with the assembling of the katholikon compound of the Great Lavra – once again showcasing its paramount influence as an architectural model for the rest of the peninsula – or otherwise may have been already employed somewhere else.

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81 For Çanlı Kilise, see *Chapter 2, Excursus* (with bibliography), and for some examples in Cappadocia, see Lyn Rodley, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia* (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), figs. 6 (Şahinefendi Monastery), 9 (Karanlık Kilise), 15 (Direkli Kilise), 21 (Açık Saray No. 3), and 42b (Tokalı Kilise, lower church). The burial chambers of these all do not exhibit any liturgical furnishing and it would probably be more correct not to consider them chapels.

82 For some examples of the early Rus’, see *Chapter 2, Excursus*. A number of Serbian monastic churches of the 13th-14th centuries have twin chapels flanking the north and south sides of their narthexes. May it suffice to mention only the katholika of Žiča, Sopočani, and Gradac monasteries, which show exactly the same planning principles, i.e. the chapels’ immediate communication with the narthex (see Kopah, „Свети Сава и програма рашког храма” [cited in note 14], Gordana Babić, *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines: Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques* (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1969), pp. 50-54, figs. 22, 23, 27, and Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans* [see *List of Abbreviations*], pp. 499-503, figs. 565, 570; see also note 14 above). In some of these cases, the later-added exonarthex provides a common entrance hall for the main church and chapels. This is yet another point of similarity – organizational, but not architectural – that reveals the Athonite lineage. However, the Serbian counterparts are rarely used for burials (see below for this function of the Athonite lateral chapels) and their iconographic programs suggest that they were rather manifestations of particular saints’ cults.
perhaps in monastic houses of Bithynia, and then introduced to Mount Athos by St. Athanasius. Wherever the origin is to be traced, the uniform presence of additional chapels in all large katholika almost from their very inception witnesses to a particular need to have such provisions included in the main church compound and in the liturgical pattern of the Athonite monastic community. Prior to turning to the reasons that determined the location of the lateral chapels, their organization, and relationship to the narthex, it is useful to examine their functions.

First and foremost, the subsidiary chapels – most obviously those at the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and Iviron, which are as large as Athos’s smaller katholika (three chapels feature cross-in-square plans and four of them even have narthexes of their own) and fully liturgically equipped with free-standing altar tables, prothesis facilities, and sanctuary barriers – were proper churches and undoubtedly served as alternative venues for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy; hence the term parekklesion (lit. “alternative, secondary church”). In the view of the multiplication of subsidiary chapels in Middle Byzantine churches, Thomas F. Mathews has argued for the rise of a privatization of liturgy in certain cases, which could be lay, as well as monastic.83 The textual evidence he has brought up indeed confirms that there were instances of private celebration of the Divine Liturgy.84 On Mount Athos, this could have been the case with small chapels or prayer rooms in the katēchoumena, but the facilities provided on the ground floor level, so large and readily accessible to the community, were most likely meant for services of corporate nature.85 Occasions for the communal celebration of the Divine Liturgy were

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84 The written evidence focuses on chapels in residences of bishops and private houses of lay people, without examining any situation in the monastic environment. Similar concerns have also been raised in Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 79.
85 An apparent exception is the use of one of the two chapels at the Great Lavra, possibly the one dedicated to the Forty Martyrs, for confessions (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3). This case is also pointed to in Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 79, n. 13. The ground-level chapels may have been intended for private prayers too (cf. Dirk Krausmüller, “Private vs. Communal: Niketas Stethatos’s Hypotyposis for Stoudios and Patterns of Worship in Eleventh-Century Monasteries,” in Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis: 309-28, p. 324), but unlike those
provided by feasts honoring the patron saint of the chapel, but celebrations were also prescribed for certain week days on behalf of the deceased founders buried therein and the departed in general. These uses are clearly associated with the funerary and commemorative functions of subsidiary chapels, which are discussed below. However, in addition to these, there must have been other days and situations that recommended or even necessitated the use of chapels for certain congregational offices. This happened when separate liturgical acts had to be performed at the same time, such as the commemorations on the behalf of the deceased while the daily office was going on in the main church. Also, large monasteries – the Great Lavra had as much as seven hundred monks in the middle of the 11th century – could use the chapels for the parallel celebrations of the Divine Liturgy, with significant parts of the brotherhood being accommodated and relieving the main church. In addition to this, there are records that some communities, such as the Great Lavra and Ivěrōn, included two or more linguistically distinct groups, which required separate and simultaneous celebrations in their native tongues. It has been proposed that other churches within or outside the enceintes served ethnic minority groups, but it is likewise possible that chapels appended to the very katholikon, with the location that suggested a greater degree of inclusiveness and bestowed greater honor, were

located in the over-narthex, reserved for eminent individuals, they were probably open to all, which may have prayed there in smaller groups.

86 For some examples of both uses, see Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 79-80.
87 For this instance, see Chapter 3, note 239.
88 See note 17 above.
89 Διονυσία Παπαχρυσάνθου, Ο αθωνικός μοναχισμός: Αρχές και οργάνωση (Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό ύδρυμα Εθνικής τραπέζης, 1992), pp. 226-232, 267 (with n. 67); see also following note.
90 A dwelling compound outside the Lavra, which included a chapel dedicated to St. John the Theologian, was given to Georgians (Παπαχρυσάνθου, op. cit., pp. 229-230, with references in notes 221, 222, and 225; Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period” [cited in note 65], p. 113); this specific accommodation may have likely been provided in response to economic and political status of this group of Georgians, who hailed from highest echelons of the aristocracy, well tied to the Byzantine court, and had donated generously to the Lavra. Monks of other nationalities presumably remained within the Lavra’s enceinte. On the other hand, Greek monks living in Ivěrōn, who were craftsmen and workers, were assigned with the small church of St. John the Baptist in the monastery’s courtyard to serve their liturgical needs (Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period,” p. 111, with references).
deemed more suitable. Some of them—although neither of the two at Ivērōn—possess their own narthexes, which may have been used for separate celebrations of the Hours and other offices allocated to the narthex, and this fact supports the above hypothesis. However, the lack of any written, epigraphic, or artistic evidence, as well as the use of one chapel in the Lavra for confessions makes the possibility that the lateral parekklēsia were meant for linguistic minorities not very likely. Yet, I would not dismiss it.

There was another set of customs that potentially impacted and certainly benefited from the establishment of additional liturgical spaces. Several Post-Byzantine records point to an incentive to have the Divine Liturgy celebrated in each of monastery’s several churches and chapels at least once a week by rotating daily liturgical celebrations between the chapels. This practice continues on Mount Athos into the present and the particular chapel is chosen according to the symbolism and dedication traditionally ascribed to each weekday: Sunday is the day of Christ’s Resurrection and the Divine Liturgy is performed in the main congregational church (katholikon); Monday is associated with the angels and other bodiless powers, hence the selection of a chapel dedicated to the Holy Archangels as the venue; Tuesday with St. John the Forerunner and a chapel built in his honor is used; the betrayal of Judas is commemorated on Wednesday; Thursday is dedicated to the Holy Apostles and St. Nicholas; Christ’s Passion and the Death on Cross are evoked on Friday and the community might turn to a chapel dedicated to the Holy Cross or the one that houses a relic of it; Saturday is associated with the Theotokos (hence the reading of the Akathistos Hymn on the eve of Saturday) and, more commonly, with all martyrs, saints, and deceased Christians, which gives the opportunity to the congregation to

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91 See note 85 above.
move to the cemetery church and celebrate the Divine Liturgy there. Therefore, the main church was reserved only for the most festive congregational celebrations on Sundays and great feasts. Besides this symbolism, practical concerns regarding the size of the assembled congregation may have guided such use: on weekdays, when the number of monks present was lower due to their dispersal around the monastery and even outside of it, following their monastic assignments (chores), monks could take part in corporate offices and prayers in the nearest available countryside chapel, whereas on Sundays and major feasts, most of them were free of manual work and obliged to join the rest in the communal gathering in the main and largest church. In such a situation, monks who were present in the monastery on weekdays could go to one of smaller churches instead of the katholikon, whose use would incur greater expenses in lighting and heating. Nonetheless, the weekly rotation pattern includes all chapels within the monastery’s enceinte, some of which were located within dormitories, so this cannot be the sole reason for the appending additional liturgical spaces directly to the main church. What else, then, was involved in their establishment?

According to Gordana Babić, who made the pioneering and most substantial contribution to the study of the functions and decorative programs of subsidiary chapels in the Byzantine world, their functions can essentially be reduced to funerary, commemorative (on behalf of the founders, lay and monastic alike), and honoring saints. All of these have been attested on

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93 This symbolism is maintained throughout the Orthodox world (cf. Аверкије Таушев / Григорије Светогорац, Благословено царство оца и сина и светога духа: Тумачење Свете Литургије и свих богослужења Православне Цркве (Београд: Православна мисионарска школа при Храму светог Александра Невског, 2007), p. 86; Јоанис Фундулис, Литургика I: Увод у свето богослужење (Крагујевац: Епархијски управни одбор Епархије жичке, 2004), p. 62), but the custom of rotating venues for the liturgical celebration is kept in Athonite and other monasteries, where the availability of parekklesia allows for such practice.
95 Babić, Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines (cited in note 82).
96 The attachment of multiple chapels dedicated to various saints, in exchange for their intercession with God on behalf of the donors and the monastic community, is elaborated in Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 80-84.
Mount Athos. However, while still being relevant in the study of the functions and iconographic programs of the subsidiary liturgical spaces, Babić’s work deals very little with their architectural form and places almost no importance on their position in relation to the main church. This means that no distinction is made between structures appended to the narthex or elsewhere, most notably to the sanctuary, in which case the additional rooms often served as prothesis and diakonikon, and cannot be considered chapels in the true sense of the word. Thus, the potential connection between the position of a chapel relative to the main church and its character/function are mostly left unexamined. I believe that, on Mount Athos, the funerary and commemorative purposes were precisely what influenced the chapels’ placement adjacent to the narthex.

As it has been shown, the narthex was the part of the church where burials were allowed and commemorations of the deceased said. The chapels, especially those that were meant solely for burials and commemorations – as those at Zygou appear to be – function as natural extensions to the narthex.

Vasileios Marinis sees the funerary and commemorative aspects as manifestations of the same mentality (ibid., pp. 84-86).

See Chapter 1, Chapter 3, and, more elaborately, below.

Cf. Slobodan Ćurčić, “Review of G. Babić, Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines: Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques,” The Art Bulletin 43 (1973): 448–451, p. 450, for the same concerns. This has been rectified by idem, “Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches” (as cited in note 80). In regard to the function of subsidiary chapels, V. Marinis – while acknowledging that the essence of Babić’s study still stands – offers a more nuanced assessment relative to surviving chapels in Constantinople (Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 78-87). However, none of those chapels has a position equivalent or similar to the Athonite chapels flanking the narthex, so their functions cannot be compared exactly. Some cases relevant to the present study have been examined by Ida Sinkevič, “Middle Byzantine Narthexes with Adjacent Chapels,” BSC 19 (1993): 12, and eadem, “Western Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches: Meaning and Significance,” Starinar 52 (2002): 79-91.

See Chapter 1, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4.

For these and other Athonite cases of burials in chapels flanking the narthex, see below. Similar architectural and functional extensions of the narthex can be found in chapels and subsidiary spaces formed on the expense of the naos and integrated in the overall design of the church – e.g. Nerezi, St. Demetrius at Varassova, and St. Nicholas at Aulis (see Sinkevič, “Western Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches: Meaning and Significance,” pp. 80-81, with references). Less frequent is the integration of chapels into the very narthex (ibid., pp. 81-82), although these are even more indicative of the spatial and functional association of chapels with the narthex. All of these cases seem to exhibit a later development of the functional model set by chapels flanking the narthex as architecturally
dislocation of some of the narthex’s functions and furnishings, and leave it unobstructed for other purposes, such as daily services. One can imagine that, during the first few decades upon the monastery’s foundation, the relatively small narthex became somewhat tight for the fast-growing brotherhood. In such a situation, the commemoration offices were transferred to the chapels and could take place in the same time as other celebrations in the narthex without interrupting them. The distance from the main liturgical space – required for a burial – is thus maintained, while a degree of sacredness and special liturgical care, as well as a privileged status is given to the burial place by the establishment of a chapel. In 14th-century Byzantium, certain commemorative functions were reassumed again by the narthex, therefore rendering the chapels in this respect unnecessary, although funerary chapels and annexes continue to be built.

The best known Athonite example of the use of a subsidiary chapel for a burial is the Great Lavra’s north chapel, where the founder, St. Athanasius, was entombed (Fig. 31). Similarly and undoubtedly following this precedent, the north chapel of Iveron’s katholikon also initially housed the founder’s tomb. At Zygou, chapels at the both ends contain burials. These two are much more modest in both size and architectural treatment than the ones at the two other monasteries, but exhibit the same functional logic. The south chapel features an absidiole and a diminutive prothesis niche, indicating the liturgical use of the space (see Fig. 135). The north chapel lacks such distinct provisions; it only has an apse-like niche in its east

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101 Cf. above and note 87.
102 Cf. also Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 84, n. 45.
103 Curčić, “Review of G. Babić, Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines: Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques,” p. 449. This, perhaps, attests to a general, though not complete abandonment of chapels for burials in the Late Byzantine period. Instead, exonarthexes and ambulatories were favored.
104 See Chapter 1.
105 See Chapter 1, note 115.
wall and another small recess to the left (Fig. 134), which in the view of both its size and position hardly could accommodate the prosthesis rite. Nevertheless, this chamber may have been set up for the burial of the monastery’s ktētōr, or some other important person. This is suggested by the lavish floor pavement with a quincunx pattern, comparable to the presence of a similar design in front of the tomb of St. Symeon at Hilandar.\footnote{For this patterned piece of pavement, which is smaller and simpler, see Слободан Ненадовић, “Архитектура Хиландара: Цркве и параклиси,” Хиландарски зборник 3 (1974): 85-208, pp. 134, 137, fig. 46 (upper right corner, the naos’s southwest bay). See also Chapter 4 (The Emphasized Central Bay), for the use and significance of a quincunx design in floor pavements.}

Moreover, being appended to the narthex’s north end, the chapel seems to repeat the situation set earlier at the Lavra and Iviron.

Burials in subsidiary chapels, however, were not a novelty in Byzantium, although the chapels’ position was not uniform.\footnote{See Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 85-86, for examples and respective references. Of these examples, the translation of remains of St. Theodore the Stoudite and his brother Joseph, bishop of Thessaloniki, in 844 and their placement in the tomb of their uncle, Plato the Stoudite, in a chapel situated east of the main church at the Stoudion might be of importance as a possible precedent for the Athonite practice, despite the chapel’s very different location in relation to the katholikon (see also Vasileios Marinis and Robert Ousterhout, “Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9th – 15th Centuries),” in Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein (eds.), Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2015): 153-172, p. 161, n. 59).} In the case of Mount Athos, the funerary chapel is strictly attached to the narthex, most likely in keeping with the latter’s use for burials. That is why the placement of Athanasius’s tomb in the northwest corner bay of the chapel’s naos seems somewhat odd, especially in light of the fact that the chapel had a narthex. The reasons, perhaps, may lie in the likely possibility that Athanasius was considered a saint at the time of his death and such a position for his tomb was seen as more elevated.\footnote{“As with burials in the narthex, it is often difficult to discern whether the person was buried in the chapel because he or she was a patron or eminent member of the community, or because the individual was recognized as a saint at the time of death. In the latter case the chapel provided an appropriate architectural setting that facilitated the flow of pilgrims and petitioners, who could venerate the tomb without having to enter the naos and potentially interrupt services there.” (Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 86) See also Marinis, Ousterhout, “‘Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them’: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9th – 15th Centuries),” p. 162, for a convincing postulation that burials in chapels may have been viewed by the Byzantines as privileged, but not necessarily reserved for individuals of saintly status.} Another possibility, which would not be in opposition with the previous one, is that the northwest corner may have been favored...
and selected by Athanasius himself during his lifetime for either his private prayer or for hearing confessions of his monks, or both.\textsuperscript{109} Also, the north chapel – apart from the narthex – is the place closest to Athanasius’s \textit{katēchoumena} cell.\textsuperscript{110} Burials of monks inside or close to their cells and personal chapels, as places that have witnessed their individual \textit{askēseis}, are not uncommon in the Byzantine monasticism.\textsuperscript{111}

Athanasius’s use of one of the side chapels at the Great Lavra – almost undoubtedly the one to the north, dedicated to the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia – for hearing confessions is well documented.\textsuperscript{112} Being adjacent to the narthex and thus functioning as its extension, this chapel seems a natural choice.\textsuperscript{113} Moreover, it provided a greater degree of isolation and privacy than the narthex. However, apart from this case, no other instance of such use of a side chapel has been recorded either on Mount Athos or elsewhere. Nonetheless, the proximity of side chapels and their communication with the main church, as well as the privacy they secured made them an excellent venue for this sacrament. Therefore, I would not dismiss the possibility that chapels in other katholika were used, at least alternatively, in the same manner. And the importance of the fact that this custom was practiced by Athanasius, whose monastery was the role model for all other early Athonite communities, does not need to be underscored. In the Great Lavra, this practice may have continued, as I suggest in Chapter 3, after Athanasius’s death, being

\textsuperscript{109} For Athanasius’s hearing confessions of his monks in one of the two side chapels, see Chapter 1, Chapter 3, and below.
\textsuperscript{110} See Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{111} The most celebrated example is located in the Enkleistra of St. Neophytos the Recluse; see Cyril Mango and Ernest J. W. Hawkins, “The Hermitage of St. Neophyto and Its Wall Paintings,” \textit{DOP} 20 (1966): 119-206, pp. 132, 172, 197-198, figs. 105 and D (plan). There is also a passage in Neophyto’s \textit{typikon} providing directions for his burial and treatment of his tomb: [45] Neophyto, # 24 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 1369). Another example is the original burial of St. Luke of Steiris (died in 953), which was under the floor of his cell (Marinis, Ousterhout, “Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them”: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9\textsuperscript{th} – 15\textsuperscript{th} Centuries),” p. 169).
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Vita Prima} of St. Athanasius, # 85: “in one of the chapels” («\textit{ enim τον ευκτηρίων}», Jacques Noret (ed.), \textit{Vitae duae antiques Sancti Athanasii Athonitae} (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), p. 40, line 11). \textit{Vita Secunda}, # 27, specifies the chapel of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia as the venue (\textit{ibid.}, p. 155, lines 8, 9). See also Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{113} On the narthex as the place for hearing confessions, see Chapter 3.
reinforced and heightened by the presence of the tomb of the saint, as if he was hearing
confessions himself.

In view of all these functions, it might appear that the saints’ cults, i.e. the establishment
of the chapel in memory of a saint, were of lesser or no importance in the formation of subsidiary
chapels. However, housing the burial and commemorations in a chapel dedicated to a particular
saint may have been inspired by the same mentality that also led to the establishment of ‘regular’
subsidiary chapels,\textsuperscript{114} i.e. in expectation of the dedicatee’s intercession with Christ, now on
behalf of the person buried in the chapel. According to Vasilēios Marinis, “the multiplication of
chapels should be understood in the context of the need of a community or an individual to
summon many protectors in this life, and as many advocates for the hour of judgment as
possible.”\textsuperscript{115} Moreover, the storing and exhibiting of holy relics in chapels, sometimes dedicated
to the saint whose relics are housed there, was quite common in Byzantium.\textsuperscript{116} Such a use was
likely present on Mount Athos too, although there is no direct written record of this. And even if
any relics were housed in the chapel, its architecture certainly was not influenced by the fact,
similarly to other cases in Byzantium.\textsuperscript{117} However, it should be noted that the double access in
the two chapels at the Lavra and Ivrēn from outside and the main church’s narthex – which is
not present at Vatopedi (where chapels are entered only through their own narthexes), as well as
Zygou and Melissourgeiou (where chapels are entered solely through the narthex) – provides
means for the circulation characteristic for pilgrimage structures, but I possess no information for
these chapels being used in such a manner. Judging from the dedications of the Athonite

\textsuperscript{114} As has been suggested by Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, pp. 84-85.


\textsuperscript{116} See Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, p. 86, and Marinis, Ousterhout, “‘Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them’: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9\textsuperscript{th} – 15\textsuperscript{th} Centuries),” pp. 158-159, 163-164, for cases recorded in written sources.

\textsuperscript{117} See Marinis, Ousterhout, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 169-172.
chapels, it seems that they were constructed to honor saints greatly esteemed by and highly popular with the wide ranks of population (St. Nicholas, Holy Archangels, St. Demetrius, and Forty Martyrs) and, therefore, their dedications do not necessarily come from the presence of these saints’ relics there. Nonetheless, the location of the chapels adjacent to the main church, the center of the community’s religious life and corporate worship, likely may have recommended them as the repositories. Also, practical considerations, such as safekeeping, limited access, and retrieving or displaying relics for veneration in the main church only on special occasions, may have contributed to the decision to use the lateral chapels, regardless of their dedications. Due to Mount Athos’s secluded way of life, pilgrims from the outside were very unlikely to venture there in medieval times, but relics could have been brought out for veneration to the members of the community and guests from other Athonite houses on certain festive occasions, as it has been done in modern times.

Now, it is time to examine a few architectural and organizational peculiarities of our chapels. Although I do not intend to deal here with their plans and forms, it is worth mentioning that very often they emulate on a smaller scale and in a simplified manner the plan and form of the main church. This basically means that cross-in-square and triconch plans are most often

118 The opposite, however, may have been the case in the chapel of the Five Martyrs of Sebasteia in the katēchoumena at the Great Lavra, where the skull of St. Eustratius, one of these five saints (see Chapter 5, note 132). Also, a reliquary made around the middle of the 12th century for the blood and myron of St. Demetrius presently kept in Vatopedi’s skeuphylakion (see The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Tradition, History, Art (Mount Athos: Monastery of Vatopaidi, 1998), Vol. 2, pp. 470-475, figs. 413-419) may have been produced for and have originally been housed in the eponymous subsidiary chapel (on this chapel, see Chapter 1). The uniform dedication of the south chapels at the Lavra, Vatopedi, and Ivērōn to St. Nicholas was apparently driven by other reasons.

119 Cf. Marinis, Ousterhout, “‘Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them’: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9th – 15th Centuries),” pp. 157, 159, 166-167.

120 The same practice was recorded in several instances during the Byzantine times, as well (see ibid., pp. 159-160, for a summary of the ritual bringing out and veneration of a relic of the True Cross on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the veneration of the chains of Apostle Peter in a chapel dedicated to him and located in the vicinity of Hagia Sophia, and other cases, with references).

121 For extensive discussions of this issue, including Athonite examples, see Μαμαλόουκος, «Ζητήματα σχεδιασμού στη Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική», and idem, «Η προσέγγιση της διαδικασίας του σχεδιασμού στη Βυζαντινή..."
employed and always surmounted centrally by a dome. On the functional level, this opens the question whether they were intended to serve as reduced substitutes for their models, at least for certain purposes and on specific occasions. As it has been shown above, this is a likely possibility, but there is no evidence that a particular symbolic meaning, expressed in architectural form, was indeed applied. Two planning and organizational aspects – how a chapel connects to the main church and whether the chapel possesses its own narthex – might prove of the greatest importance in shedding more light on this and other issues pertaining to the chapels’ functions and role in the church complex.

The two parekklesia at the Great Lavra flank the narthex directly and communicate with it through doors that are placed axially in regard to both the narthex and the chapels’ naoi (Figs. 25, 29c, 30). These passageways seem to have been a preferred means of communication with the main church, despite the existence of an additional pair of doors opening from the main naos’s western corner bays into the chapels’ sanctuaries. The mere fact that these connections are established with chapels’ restricted areas, as well as the doors being significantly smaller than the doors connecting to the narthex and lacking their ornamental treatment (Figs. 25, 26), point to the former’s subsidiary status. They were intended for the use by the sacristan, servers, and deacons, as confirmed by the evidence in the monastery’s typikon. Another level of communication was established upon the construction of the exonarthex, which undoubtedly had doors opening into the chapels’ narthexes. The well known Barskii’s drawing of the katholikon’s ground plan with schematic representation of an ongoing service in the church (Fig. 24) indicates what appear as major pathways inside the church. Interestingly, two out of three routes coming into the church from outside pass through the exonarthex and side chapels, and

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122 See Chapter 3, note 34, and Chapter 4, note 166.
enter the main church’s naos exactly through the two subsidiary doors, bypassing the narthex. Does this information indeed record real entrance paths of the brotherhood at the time and, if so, was the situation the same in the medieval times? Comparing this with the way monks at Vatopedi enter their church today before the commencement of a service, venerating some revered icons and relics exhibited in the exonarthex (proskēnitaria icons and a cross with the painted Crucifixion, Figs. 87, 102), the north chapel’s narthex (icon of Panagia hē Esphagmenē), the north corridor (icon of Panagia hē Antiphōnētria, Fig. 69), the narthex (proskēnitaria icons and the relics of the founders, Fig. 70), and the naos (proskēnitaria icons), one can suggest that the paths in Barskii’s drawing may have been devised by monks following a similar series of venerations of special icons and relics kept in the chapels. I believe that such a practice was developed gradually, upon the acquirement and installation of certain religious objects in the parekklēsia, and that it was not present at the beginning. It is even possible that the two doors connecting directly to the main church’s naos may have been opened at some later date in order to facilitate communication influenced by a specific display pattern.

Although of different plan, the two side chapels at Ivērōn maintain the same relationship with the main church: they are appended directly to the narthex’s north and south ends and communicate with it through doors opening into the chapels’ naoi (Fig. 39). However, there are no additional doors that would connect with the main church’s naos and such a solution would have been possible only in the south chapel, which stretches long enough due east. Both parekklēsia lack narthexes of their own, but do have doors at their west ends, opening to the areas that are now part of the exonarthex installations. The very exonarthex has doors at its

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123 My own observations. For the locations of the icons of Panagia hē Esphagmenē and Panagia hē Antiphōnētria, and the casket with founders’ relics, see Γαβριήλ Νικολάου Πεντζίκης, Άγιον Όρος (Αθήνα: Explorer, 2003), Vol. 2, pp. 364-365.
124 See Chapter 1.
north and south ends, so the communication with these areas and with the chapels was enabled. The church ensembles at Zygou and Melissourgeiou also fall into this pattern, with their diminutive lateral chapels leaning on or extending from the narthex and communicating with it (Figs. 122, 182). However, these are the only doors they have, which indicates their tight functional association with the main church, i.e. with the narthex. Also, as discussed above, the size and the furnishing of these chapels support the thesis that they could not have been used for large corporate gatherings and services.

The situation at Vatopedi is just the opposite of the last two cases. It is not only that the chapels are much larger and fully liturgically equipped, but they do not maintain direct communication with the narthex or other parts of the main church (Figs. 49, 63). The parekklēsia are not even spatially aligned with the narthex. They have narthexes of their own, the only way in which to enter the chapels. The two narthexes are somewhat aligned with the main church’s exonarthex and communicate with it. As it has been postulated in Chapter 1, this arrangement seems to have resulted from two facts: the construction of the exonarthex preceding that of the chapels and the potential side access to the inner narthex being blocked by the founders’ burial at the south and the staircase at the north end. Perhaps, that is why the chapels acquired narthexes, as a way to establish a connection between the former’s west entrances and the main church. This was at least the case with the north chapel’s narthex, which apparently was not built simultaneously with the chapel. The other narthex was constructed integrally with its chapel and, together with the open exonarthex, may have functioned as a long communication corridor between the katholikon and the rest of the monastery complex.\textsuperscript{125} On the other hand, the presence of a narthex serving the chapel has precedents at the Great Lavra, where both chapels possess narthexes. Unlike these two chapels, which have doors opening to the exterior both to

\textsuperscript{125} See above, discussions of the exonarthex.
the side and to the front, the chapels’ *naoi* at Vatopedi can be entered only from the west.\textsuperscript{126} The lack of direct communication between the *parekklēsia* and the main church reduces the possibility that one of them may have been used for hearing confessions, as the north chapel at the Lavra was.\textsuperscript{127} Unless, confessions were also heard outside Matins, during which the abbot was supposed to administer this sacrament; and Matins were normally celebrated inside the main church.\textsuperscript{128}

The inclusion of individual narthexes accompanying lateral chapels at Vatopedi was seemingly guided by the need to establish certain means of communication with the main body of the church building, as well as with the rest of the monastery. At the Great Lavra, however, they were part of chapels designed independently of communication concerns, i.e. they were not necessary since the chapels were connected directly to the main church. This inevitably raises the question whether the narthexes served the chapels in the same manner the main narthex functioned in the ritual conducted in the main church. If we accept the thesis that the *parekklēsia* were occasionally the setting for acts of corporate worship,\textsuperscript{129} then their narthexes may have assumed, at least in the beginning, a role similar to the one performed by their larger counterpart. This means that certain shorter daily offices, particularly those that take place immediately before or after the Divine Liturgy and other services that are performed in the *naos*, could have been accommodated in these narthexes. However, the size of both the chapel and its narthex suggests that in those situations probably only a part of the brotherhood attended.

\textsuperscript{126} This, however, might have not been the case at the beginning. If the two smaller narthexes at Vatopedi indeed were employed as connecting corridors (see the section on the *exonarthex* above), they had to have openings on both sides.

\textsuperscript{127} See above.

\textsuperscript{128} According to the Rule of the Stoudios Monastery, the abbot had to hear confessions during the celebrations of Matins (see Chapter 3, notes 193, 194). The same practice was recorded in the Evergetis Monastery, as well (*ibid.*, note 196).

\textsuperscript{129} See above.
The pairs of chapels at the Great Lavra and Vatopedi, featuring cross-in-square plans and having their own narthexes, are strikingly different in architecture from the similar pair at Iviron. The *katholika* of these three monasteries are conversely almost identical in plan and form, especially Iviron and Vatopedi. Did, then, some shift in the meaning and function of lateral chapels and their narthexes take place during the process of the chapels’ addition? The positive answer is suggested by the dates of chapels: the three featuring cross-in-square plans and narthexes, i.e. the two at the Lavra and the north one at Vatopedi were built probably before 1001 or by 1020, at latest, and in the first half of the 11th century, respectively; the single-naved *parekklesia* without narthexes at Iviron were added between 1005 and 1028 (the north one) and after 1029 (the south one); the south chapel at Vatopedi, appearing somewhat transitional with its single-naved triconch and relatively spacious narthex, dates to the second half of the 11th century. It seems that gradually, but within only a few decades, smaller and simpler chapels and a single and common narthex were deemed sufficient in servicing segments of the liturgical ritual of the main church as a whole. In this respect, the architectural solutions at the Lavra and Vatopedi appear somewhat rudimentary, as if they were the result of an effort to have three independent churches conjoined together. Such a situation is comparable to the one that can be observed in the church of Panagia tou Skripou. It has long narthex, which according to Amy Papalexandrou and in compliance with the building’s organization into three separate churches, functioned as the narthex or entrance vestibule for all and each of them. The early date of this

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130 See *Chapter 1* for the dating of each.
131 See *Chapter 2, Excursus*.
132 *Cf.* Amy Papalexandrou, “The Church of the Virgin of Skripou: Architecture, Sculpture and Inscriptions in Ninth-Century Byzantium,” PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 1998), pp. 84, 86, 248, and fig. 110. Dr Papalexandrou opens the possibility that even the doors at the north and south ends of the narthex may have originally been understood as primary entrances for side chapels (*ibid.*, pp. 86, 248). However, the interior of the narthex is continuous, with no subdivision into bays that would have corresponded to the tripartite structure of the *naos* and that would have given a physical articulation to the narthex’s supposed function as a triple vestibule. Therefore, I believe that the narthex, covered with a continual barrel vault from north to south, if it indeed was
church complies with the thesis that subsidiary chapels in monasteries were more independent and architecturally more complex at the beginning.

When speaking of the lateral chapels’ architecture, one should also underline the lack of their integration into the overall design. Integrated plans were not uncommon in Byzantine church architecture of the time, so this trait common for Athonite katholika, and the solution at the Great Lavra in particular, has been viewed as yet another expression of a conservative character of their architecture. However, such an architectural constellation might have rather been the product of the sequential formation of the church building due to successive building efforts, as needs, visions, and financial resources grew. Some degree of ‘conservativeness’ can perhaps be attributed to the abbot-founder’s insisting on certain organizational and architectural solutions he might have had experience with, as well as to the availability of skilled architects and masons, or lack thereof. Anyhow, the general impression is that the existence of particular facilities and their fulfillment of functional demands set before them were of greater importance than their architectural form. In the case of lateral chapels, this resulted in a certain level of autonomy both in function and architecture.

c) Burials in Lateral Chapels and Exonarthex

Judging from the evidence, it appears that burials in lateral chapels and, occasionally, exonarthexes were more common on Mount Athos than those in narthexes. As evidenced from the katholika of the Great Lavra, Ivērōn, Vatopedi, Zygou, and Melissourgeiou, the use of

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134 For an examination of narthex burials on Mount Athos, see Chapter 4.
subsidiary chapels and annexes for burials was common for Mount Athos and its earliest
coenobitic houses. Only in a few cases it was decided to have the relics of founders, by then
regarded as personages of saintly status, transferred to the narthex. This and possible reasons for
choosing such burial solutions are discussed in Chapter 4. Therefore, I make here only some
additional remarks on the aspects pertaining to the funerary character of the lateral chapels and
the exonarthex, and to specific arrangements attested in Athonite cases.

The location of tombs in subsidiary chapels, especially if the latter were not intended for
Eucharistic celebrations and, therefore, not fully consecrated, was a way to circumvent the
legislation against the interments within the church building. Yet, due to the chapels’ spatial
association with the church proper, burials located inside them were considered privileged.
Moreover, the chapels’ para-ecclesiastic status secured regular or occasional celebrations of
commemoration offices on behalf of those buried therein. This was particularly important
when the entombed persons were regarded as saints at the time of their death, as it seems to
have been the case with St. Athanasius the Athonite. However, as shown in Chapter 4, a
subsidiary chapel appears to have been viewed as a less privileged setting for a tomb than the
narthex and the founders of Athonite monasteries likely decided to be interred in the lateral
chapels, most probably out of humility. Nonetheless, all chapels chosen to serve funerary
purposes flank the narthexes and directly communicate with them in all cases except for

135 Burials, all individual, are to be found in the north chapels of the Lavra, Ivērōn, and Melissourgeiou, the south
chapels’ narthex at Vatopedi, and both chapels at Zygou (see appropriate sections in Chapter 1).
Libos in Constantinople,” DOP 63 (2009): 147-166, pp. 152-153. Many Cappadocian cave churches, as well as the
built Çanlı Kilise, include burial chambers adjacent to their narthexes, but lack features characteristic to liturgical
spaces (see note 81 above).
137 On commemorative prayers said outside the main church and potentially in the presence of tombs, see Chapter
3.
138 See Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, pp. 85-86, for a representative selection of cases and respective references.
One of these examples is the collective burial of Theodore the Stoudite, Joseph of Thessaloniki, and Plato the
Stoudite in a chapel situated east of the main church at Stoudion (see note 107 above).
Vatopedi, indicating a desire to secure the closest possible relationship with the narthex in the situation which disfavored tombs being located in it. This appears to have been a way for burials to remain associated with the narthex, its meaning, and the ritual actions that take place there, while refraining from being located in the very room.

On the other hand, it is also possible that the selection of a lateral chapel over the narthex was made purely for practical reasons, at least in the case of the Great Lavra. There, the lateral chapels were constructed prior to the death of Athanasius in ca. 1001 and he was buried in the nave of the north chapel, in the northwest corner bay (*Fig. 31*). The presence of connecting doors between the chapels and the narthex precluded a potential placement of his tomb at the narthex’s north and south ends. For some reason, perhaps due to the existence of large windows, the accommodation of the burial may have been impossible along the narthex’s west wall as well. The closest areas available for burials were then the chapels and the *exonarthex*. The chapels may have been deemed more appropriate for several reasons: they were located at the narthex’s north and south ends, the traditional locations for tombs; they were directly connected to the narthex, offering direct access to those entering the church and a place set apart for veneration; they were fully liturgically equipped, securing an adequate sacred setting for the relics of a holy man and enabling liturgical celebrations in their proximity; and, finally, either one of the chapels could be reinterpreted as a large-scale tomb or reliquary. Moreover, the north

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139 On this chapel and Athanasius’s burial inside, see Chapter 1, and above. It seems that Athanasius did not make any plans or requests regarding his burial, most likely due to his sudden death. The north chapel was built prior to this and does not appear to have been planned specifically to receive his tomb, which sits rather awkwardly in the chapel nave’s northwest bay and exceeds the size of the bay. Therefore, the decision to bury Athanasius’s body in the north chapel was almost certainly made by his community.

140 The two chapels’ narthexes were also potential locations, but their small sizes, especially at the flanks (judging from the surviving floor pavements, the original narthexes were narrower than the present ones – see Chapter 1), would have prevented the placement of a tomb. Moreover, their possible role as communication corridors (see above, the discussion of the *exonarthex*) would have rendered any burial inside those spaces impractical and likely inappropriate.
chapel may have been chosen due to its potential connection with Athanasius during his lifetime.\footnote{See above, where the probability that Athanasius used to hear confessions in this chapel is examined.}

All these considerations attest to the involvement of careful and complex thinking, with both symbolic and practical conclusions in arriving at this initial solution, which would become characteristic to Mount Athos. The next chronological instance was the burial of John the Iberian at Ivērōn in 1005 or later, also in the north chapel but in the southwest corner, within a small cubiculum (see \textit{Fig. 39}); the chapel seems to have been built specifically in order to accommodate his tomb.\footnote{See Chapter 1, note 15 and, more extensively, Chapter 4.} This solution undoubtedly emulated the example set at the Lavra, due to the esteem Athonites had for Athanasius and the prestige of his monastery, and likely with the intention to establish or reinforce the same reverence for the founder of Ivērōn and a similarly respected status for his community. If the tomb in the north chapel at Zygou belonged to the founder, as has been suggested,\footnote{See above.} as well as the one at the same location at Melissourgeiou, then these two also followed suit, perhaps not with the same goals in mind, but simply because the accommodation of the founder’s tomb in a chapel at the north flank of the narthex may have become a norm or came to be regarded prestigious on Mount Athos by then.

This opens issues regarding the differences between using a pre-existing chapel for funerary purposes, as it happened initially, and having one built specially to house a burial, as in the later cases. Did the two scenarios cause any differences in architecture, organization, and function of these chapels? It is hard to formulate a definitive answer, since only a few burial chapels survive. From this limited pool of evidence, it appears that the intentionally built chapels – those at Ivērōn, Melissourgeiou, and the north one at Zygou – were treated more modestly. This is especially the case with the latter two, which have the form of mere prayer
annexes rather than full-fledged liturgical spaces. At Zygou, the burial room likely doubled as a substructure for a connection corridor between the narthex’s upper floor and the north range of the monastic complex. On the other hand, it is possible that Zygou’s south chapel was built prior to and unrelated to the tomb it houses. This is evidenced by the latter’s somewhat awkward placement in the chapel’s south wall, which was likely a recess with a large window in the original design (see Figs. 135, 147), as well as by the presence of such liturgical elements as a proper altar apse, a prothesis niche, and possibly a dome.¹⁴⁴

Similarly, the south chapel at Vatopedi may have been built prior to the insertion of a tomb, located in the south wall of the chapel’s narthex (see Figs. 49, 513).¹⁴⁵ However, the proposed dates of the chapel and the tomb suggest the possibility of the former being built in conjunction with the burial. Simultaneous with the chapel’s construction or not, the tomb is located in the chapel’s narthex, unlike in other cases. That may have been due to a modest size and a triconch plan of the chapel itself, both of which preclude a burial in the chapel’s naos. On the other hand, the south chapel’s narthex communicates directly with the main church’s exonarthex and the tomb may have been purposefully placed there in order to be visually exposed to and readily accessible from the main church’s entrance area in the same manner as the burials at the Lavra, Ivrēn, and Zygou were. If such reasoning was indeed present in the planning of the south chapel at Vatopedi, it confirms the importance of the funerary space’s communication (at least visual) with the main church’s narthex zone, in this case the exonarthex. Moreover, the choice of the south chapel instead of its northern counterpart may have been driven by the lack of a narthex in the north chapel, as well as the existence of a communication corridor between the exonarthex’s north door and the north range of the monastery, where the

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter 1.
¹⁴⁵ For this tomb, see Chapter 1, note 203 and Chapter 4.
hēgoumenarion may have been located.\textsuperscript{146} And the chapel’s naos, another potential setting, is not in direct contact with the main church’s narthex.

The case with Vatopedi’s south parekklēsion seems to combine two burial traditions regarding the tomb’s location: inside a subsidiary chapel and in the narthex. Both were privileges of founders, members of their families, and close associates, confirming the local tradition that attributes the tomb to a ktētōr.\textsuperscript{147} In the view of the fact that the three original founders of the monastery were buried in the narthex of the main church\textsuperscript{148} and that the tomb in question was placed in a side chapel, i.e. a step farther away from the main church, it can be assumed that the person entombed in the south chapel was a later benefactor, a close relative of the founders, or an abbot. Perhaps the dedication of the chapel to St. Nicholas, possibly connected to one of the three founders, who was named Nicholas, can shed light on the identity of the person or personages buried there. In a conceivable scenario, one or more members of Nicholas’s family may have continued the patronage initiated by the esteemed relative, perhaps even following in his footsteps by becoming monks in the monastery, and thus deserved to be buried in the katholikon, but not in the same place where the three founders were laid to rest. Or, one or more of early abbots of the community, who could have also been related to the founders, may have been honored with the burial inside the church, but again not in the founders’ tomb, which may have been respected for the lack of extra space, as well as out of humility. However, an attribution of the south chapel’s tomb to the initial burial of one of the three founders, whose relics could have been later moved to the narthex, is also possible.\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{146} See above (the examination of the exonarthex as a communication space).
\textsuperscript{147} Θεοχάρης Ν. Παζαράς, «Ο τάφος των κτητόρων στο καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου», Βυζαντινά 17 (1994): 407-440, p. 415 (with references). See also Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{148} See Chapter 1 and Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{149} See Chapter 4 and note 244 there.
Returning to the form and position of lateral chapels, it is worth dedicating more attention to those at Zygou and Melissourgeiou. The two at Zygou were appended to the core church at a later date, in two separate building campaigns (Fig. 123). Nonetheless, they were of similar square plans and of approximately the same size, which corresponded to the width of the narthex. In that way, they appear as if extending from and being integral to the narthex. This integrity is achieved even better at Melissourgeiou (Fig. 182), where the two flanking chapels were built simultaneously with the rest of the church. These cases seem to show two successive phases in what appears to be a gradual integration of subsidiary and funerary chapels into the narthex. They were still separate rooms, connected to the narthex only by doors. Perhaps a step further in the development can be observed in cases where there are no walls between the narthex and its funerary extensions, the solution applied in the katholikon of Hosios Meletios Monastery (see Fig. 344). The church was constructed ca. 1100 and its narthex was enlarged soon after with an additional row of bays to the west, terminating in two extensions to the north and south, which go beyond the width of the church but remain fully open to the narthex. The south extension seems to have been envisaged, together with another bay to the east, as enveloping the entrance into a chapel that flanks the church. The north extension, however, is a chapel-like space that was designed to house the tomb of the saintly founder, Blessed Meletios, who died ca. 1105.\textsuperscript{150} A greater degree of integration, in my view, is to be found in the south church of the Pantokratōr Monastery, Constantinople (Fig. 293). There, the narthex’s two extreme bays of the total of five bays initially housed tombs, located in arcosolia in their west

\textsuperscript{150} Marinis, Ousterhout, “‘Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them’: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9\textsuperscript{th} – 15\textsuperscript{th} Centuries),” pp. 164-165. These two authors consider the enlargement as being primarily driven by the effort to establish an architectural framing for the tomb of the founder.
walls; the tombs were later removed and the arched niches were transformed into doors.\textsuperscript{151} The two bays were apparently not only designed to match the side aisles that originally flanked the church’s \textit{naos},\textsuperscript{152} but also to house burials of prominent figures, possibly including Empress Irene, wife of John II Komnēnos, the monastery’s founder.\textsuperscript{153} Considering the date of this monument (1118-1134) and later developments in accommodating burials in Byzantine churches, this case can be viewed as an intermediary step towards a full incorporation of funerary spaces into the narthex.

Finally, a few words should be said on burials in the \textit{exonarthex}. They occur only at Zygou – one under the floor pavement\textsuperscript{154} and another set under the south window of the inner narthex (\textit{Figs. 129, 143}) – so no general rule pertaining to Mount Athos in this regard can be established. However, comparisons with a few relevant cases outside the peninsula may prove useful in getting a possible explanation for the placement of tombs in Zygou’s \textit{exonarthex}.

Celebrated provisions concerning interments in \textit{exonarthexes} were made in the \textit{typika} of the Kecharitōmenē Monastery (1110-1116) and Kosmosōteira Monastery (1152). The Kecharitōmenē document permitted burials in the \textit{exonarthex} to the foundress’s female relatives, should they express desire to be buried in the monastery, but on the condition they take monastic vows.\textsuperscript{155} Kosmosōteira’s \textit{typikon} granted burials in the \textit{exonarthex} to certain close associates of


\textsuperscript{152} For evidence on the existence of additional aisles and reconstructed plans, see Ousterhout, “Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople” (cited in note 10), pp. 245-246, figs. 9, 10, and Marinis, \textit{Architecture and Ritual}, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{153} As suggested by Megaw, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 343, for the southernmost bay. Irene died in 1134 and is known to have been buried in the monastery (\textit{BMFD}, pp. 725, 775, n. 23). See also Robert Ousterhout, “Byzantine Funerary Architecture of the Twelfth Century,” in О. Е. Этингроф (ed.), \textit{Древнерусское искусство: Русь и страны византийского мира, XII век} (Санкт-Петербург: Дмитрий Буланин, 2002): 9-17, p. 9, who suggests that the narthex may have been intended as the setting for the burials of the imperial couple before the construction of the Herōon.

\textsuperscript{154} Ioakeim Ath. Papangelos, \textit{Das Athos-Kloster Zygos} (Thessaloniki: [M. Triantafyllou], 2005), p. 22.

\textsuperscript{155} (27) Kecharitomene, # 76 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 704).
the founder, Isaac Komnēnos, who arranged for his own tomb to be in the narthex.\textsuperscript{156} The Empress Irene Doukaina Komnēnē did not provide any instruction regarding her own burial at Kecharitōmenē, but it is safe to assume that it, too, was accommodated within the narthex. Therefore, in both cases the \textit{exonarthex} is used as the site of privileged burials, but of a lower level.\textsuperscript{157} I would suggest that the two burials in the \textit{exonarthex} of Zygou belong to the same category.\textsuperscript{158} Since Athonite monasteries were not private or family foundations, at least not in the Middle Byzantine period, these interments can also be attributed to either some notable abbots or later benefactors.\textsuperscript{159}

\textbf{d) \textit{Sēmantra} and Their Location}

The existence of a bell (κώδων) is mentioned in the rule of St. Athanasius for the Great Lavra and it seems it was associated with the refectory.\textsuperscript{160} And that is the only reference to bells employed in summoning monks in monastic foundation documents.\textsuperscript{161} However, records of another device used for signal sounding, the \textit{sēmantron} (σήμαντρον), are much more numerous,

\textsuperscript{156} (29) Kosmosoteira, # 107 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 844), and # 89, 90 (\textit{ibid.}, pp. 838-839), respectively.
\textsuperscript{157} Both documents also regulate burials of nuns and monks of the respective communities, which are assigned to an external convent ([27] Kechariotomene, # 70, in \textit{BMFD}, p. 699) or a cemetery outside the church ([29] Kosmosoteira, # 54, in \textit{ibid.}, p. 823).
\textsuperscript{158} Interestingly, the \textit{katholikon} of Zygou features three more tombs, placed in line along its south façade (Fig. 122). This was perhaps the third level of privileged burials in this monastery.
\textsuperscript{159} In support of the latter possibility, the situation created in the late 14\textsuperscript{th} century in the narthex of Hilandar should be called to attention. In exchange for their financial contributions to the monastery, some Serbian noblemen were granted burials for themselves and members of their families. Some of them were buried in the \textit{lītē} of the \textit{katholikon} (for a brief survey, see Danica Popović, “Funerals and Tombs in the Middle Ages,” in Gojko Subotić (ed.), \textit{Hilandar Monastery} (Belgrade: The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1998): 205-214, pp. 211-214). Strictly speaking this was the narthex of the church, but since the founder’s tomb was situated in the southwest bay of the \textit{naos} (see Драган Војводић, „Хиландарски гроб светог Симеона Српског и његов сликани програм“, \textit{Хиландарски зборник} 11 (2004): 27-61, and Jelena Bogdanović, “The Original Tomb of St. Simeon and Its Significance for the Architectural History of Hilandar Monastery,” \textit{Хиландарски зборник} 12 (2008): 35-56), interments in the narthex were certainly considered less privileged and thus permissible.
\textsuperscript{160} (11) Ath. Rule, # [21] (\textit{BMFD}, p. 225). This was probably a small bell, similar to those housed today in the porches of Athonite refectories and are rung daily to signal the meal-time.
\textsuperscript{161} A bell mentioned in (27) Kechariotomene, # 29 (\textit{BMFD}, p. 685), was located at the monastery gate and was used by visitors to call the gatekeeper nun.
witnessing to a preference given to it over bells in the monastic environment. The sēmantron is a gong in the form of a long board or bar, made of either wood or metal, struck by a monk with a hammer in order to produce a signaling sound (Fig. 514). The signals announced the time for either a church service or another communal gathering. Evidence from the rule of the Great Lavra testifies to the use of a wooden sēmantron to wake up brethren and summon them for the Midnight Office on Easter Sunday, as well as to signal the imminent beginning of church services. The sēmantron was also struck when the community needed to be assembled for a common meal in the refectory following the Divine Liturgy. The typikon of Stoudion records the use of the sēmantron on some other occasions, as well. Similar instructions are also found in other typika of the period or later. This brief overview shows that giving signals was essential in regulating the daily rhythm of communal activities, concerning both prayer and eating, in a coenobitic monastery. Striking a sēmantron is still the main way to call monks for a service in Athonite monasteries today; the bells are rung only on Sundays and major feast days.

162 A brief overview of Byzantine attitudes towards using bells in the ecclesiastic context can be found in ODB, Vol. 1, p. 279.
164 (11) Ath. Rule, # [1] (BMFD, p. 221). This is based on (4) Stoudios, AB # 2 (BMFD, p. 98); version A # [2] is more specific, indicating that a portable sēmantron was used.
165 (11) Ath. Rule, # [17] (BMFD, p. 224). This is based on (4) Stoudios, AB # 18 (BMFD, p. 107), where Vespers and Compline are specified as the church services. In addition to this, (4) Stoudios, AB # 31 (BMFD, p. 112), mentions the striking of the sēmantron for the commencement of the “Office of Lamplighting” on the feast of the Annunciation.
166 (11) Ath. Rule, # [8] (BMFD, p. 223); this follows (4) Stoudios, AB # 27 (BMFD, pp. 108-109; see also # 29, p. 109).
167 See (4) Stoudios, AB # 26, 33 (BMFD, pp. 108, 112-113); signaling, possibly with a sēmantron, is also mentioned in B # 14, AB # 36 (BMFD, pp. 106, 113).
168 E.g. (2) Pantelleria (probably late 8th century), # [1], [15] (BMFD, pp. 62, 64); (4) Stoudios, as cited in previous notes; (22) Evergetis, # 4, 6, 9 (BMFD, pp. 474, 475-476, 478); (27) Kecharitomene, # 35, 38, 39 (BMFD, pp. 688-689); and (28) Pantokrator, # [1], [9], [11] (BMFD, pp. 739, 743-744, 745), to call to attention only the most relevant typika. For other instances, consult BMFD, General Index, p. 1993 (under “sēmantron”). On additional note, the use of sēmantra in Byzantium has been documented since the 4th century (ODB, Vol. 3, p. 1868).
Wooden sēmantra may have been portable in some cases, but those made of iron and bronze, as well as those large wooden ones were probably too big and too heavy to be carried. They had to be fixed, but remain exposed open to the most of the monastery so that they could be heard. This is why bell towers with large openings often serve the purpose in Athonite monasteries today (Figs. 515, 516). However, the oldest bell towers – those at Vatopedi and Koutloumousiou – date only to the 15th century. Where were sēmantra fixed in the Middle Byzantine period? Regarding the occasions in which they were to be sounded – either for corporate church services or common meals in the refectory – hanging large sēmantra somewhere between the church and the refectory would be the natural solution. Open porches and narthexes are ideal. The so-called ‘refectory sēmantra’ were most likely fixed in porches of refectories, as is a large wooden one at the Great Lavra (Fig. 517). The presence of such distinction suggests that there must have been also ‘regular’ sēmantra, those of the katholikon, and references suggest that there were more than one such sēmantron in a community, each used depending on the situation or occasion. No original evidence regarding the housing of the church sēmantra exists, but it is safe to assume that they were hung in the narthex area, most likely inside the exonarthex or within an open porch at the church entrance.

The evidence of such accommodation from still-active monasteries of Mount Athos and elsewhere strongly support this hypothesis. I turn to a few characteristic examples here. In the long porch in front of the katholikon of Vatopedi, an iron sēmantron hangs within one of the arched openings (Fig. 518). Similarly, the exonarthex at Hilandar is the location for a long iron

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169 See BMFD, General Index, p. 1993 (under “semantron”), for the indication of references in monastic typika to ‘big’, ‘great’, ‘large’, and ‘heavy’ sēmantra, as well as those made of bronze and iron.


171 See, for example, (22) Evergetis, # 9, and (29) Kosmosoteira, # 21 (BMFD, pp. 478, 810, respectively).

172 E.g. (27) Kecharitomene, # 35, 38 (BMFD, p. 688).
semantron (Fig. 519), which has remained there despite the closing off of the exonarthex by glazing (probably in conjunction with the execution of its fresco decoration in 1803). Portable wooden semantra (talanta), when not in use, are also housed in this room, most likely out of convenience, since the ecclesiarch starts every round of sounding one of them at the main entrance, strikes the plank as he walks around the church, and finishes again at the entrance (see Fig. 514). At the Great Lavra, an iron semantron is suspended from an iron rod in the phialē (Fig. 520). This location was undoubtedly chosen due to the canopy’s position immediately in front of the church, with which it closely communicates, and because the porch of the church has been closed by glazing. Two more semantra, both made of wood and large-sized, are situated in a porch that extends over the entire front of the refectory (see Fig. 517). At Dionysiou, there are two locations: the porch connecting the katholikon with the refectory, where a small iron semantron used to announce meals is placed (Fig. 512); and a set of tiered arcaded balconies, which constitute something like a belfry-cum-clock installation, where two more iron semantra, in addition to two large wooden ones and a bell, are housed and reserved for church services (Fig. 515). At two of the Meteōra monasteries, the Great Meteōron and St. Stephen’s, wooden and sets of three iron semantra (Figs. 521, 522) are located inside elongated porticos that flank the church, in both cases on the north side, which lead to the refectory and the rest of the monastic complex.173 The 19th-century porch of the katholikon of St. John Prodromos Monastery near Serres also houses a pair of wooden and iron semantra, fixed in the two extreme openings

173 The original katholikon of the Great Meteōron dates to 1387 (Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας, Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική στην Ελλάδα (Αθήνα: Μέλισσα, 2001), pp. 208, 247). The naos still survives, incorporated in the present church as its sanctuary. The rest of the church, including the south portico, was built in 1545 (ibid., p. 247).
of the west façade (Fig. 523). Charalabmos Bouras has suggested that the *exonarthex* at Nea Monē was originally open and that one of its purposes was the housing of a *sēmantron*.174

I believe that all these examples vividly illustrate the use of the *exonarthex* or other open structures in the entrance zone of the *katholikon* for keeping one or more *sēmantra*, sufficiently supporting the hypothesis that it was just the same in the Middle Byzantine period. In some cases, *sēmantra* have migrated to newer, front porches and to other locations within monastery courtyards, such as bell towers, probably due to transformation of *exonarthexes* into enclosed rooms. A lack of space to accommodate an open porch at the church’s west façade may have been another reason, as apparently was the case at Dionysiou, whose *katholikon* is fully concealed at its west side by other buildings of the monastic complex. At Hilandar, however, the *sēmantron* remained inside even after the glazing of the *exonarthex*’s openings, attesting to the persistence of the tradition.

e) **Phialē**

*Phialē* is the common designation for the freestanding structure in the form of a baldachin or ciborium – i.e. a dome supported by pillars in a circular arrangement – enclosing a bowl-like stone water basin, from which the whole structure borrows its name.175 The *phialē* is the customary venue for both the Great and Lesser Blessings of the Waters.176 Therefore, the term *hagiasma* (“[container of] holy water”) is also frequently used in the Athonite parlance for this structure. The form of a ciborium and the presence of a domical covering provide an appropriate

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175 See Chapter 4, note 183 for various terms applied to the water basin.
176 See Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.
setting for the ritual taking place within the space and underline the action’s sacred aspect.  

Phialē is always located in the monastery courtyard, usually in front of the katholikon or slightly on the side, but always in the church’s entrance zone or, more accurately, in the area between the church and the refectory. Therefore, technically speaking, it is not part of the compound of directly connected structures that form an extended narthex area. However, the close spatial proximity to the narthex and functional association with it determined the inclusion of this facility into the present study.

Phialai are most commonly positioned between the katholikon’s west façade and the refectory, located farther to the west. This can be observed at the Great Lavra, Ivērōn, and Vatopedi (see Figs. 16, 36, 45). Similarly, the spacious stone-paved courtyard between the church, refectory, and main gate at Zygou (Fig. 120) very likely may have been the site of a phialē. It is tempting to see the regular circular substructure located close to the exonarthex’s northwest corner as the foundation of one, but it has been identified as a lime-kiln. In the Kellion of St. Procopius, a large segment of a sizable monolithic bowl lies discarded in the yard west of the church’s entrance (Fig. 524). The form suggests that this was a holy water font and – if it has not been moved far from its original location – that it was set within a phialē in front of the church, again in keeping with the Athonite tradition. Barskii saw a source of running

178 The same situation is at Koutloumousiou, Philotheou, Esphigmenou (the phialē recorded on Vasilii Grigorovich-Barskii’s drawing of 1744 – see Barskii, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы [see List of Abbreviations], plate between pages 220-221; the present one is located to the south of the church), and the modern complex of St. Panteleēmon’s. At Hilandar, the present phialē, constructed in 1784 and frescoed in 1847 (Слободан Ненадовић, Осам векова Хиландара: Грађење и грађевине (Београд: Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе, 1997), p. 200), is located north of the katholikon, just off the side door leading directly into the inner narthex, and on the way to the main gate (see below for such positions). However, the original phialē may have occupied a position between the church’s west front and the refectory (see Slobodan Ćurčić, “The Exonarthex of Hilandar: The Question of Its Function and Patronage,” in Војислав Корах (ed.), Осам векова Хиландара: Историја, духовни живот, књижевност, уметност и архитектура (Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности, 2000): 477-487, pp. 479-480, fig. 12).
179 Papangelos, Das Athos-Kloster Zygos (cited in note 154), fig. 9 (No. 13).
180 I saw it during my visit in 2008.
water in a porch preceding the two narthexes of the old katholikon of Philotheou, the building that was still in place during his visit in 1744.\footnote{Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, p. 120.} However, his drawing of the monastery (Fig. 8) does not show any porch, but a pyramidal roof of a square structure can be seen between the church’s west front and the monastery range farther to the west. This open structure in the courtyard may in fact have been the “porch” with a water fountain that he mentions and it may have served as the hagiasma. Barskii’s drawing of Xenophōntos (Fig. 115) shows a similar four-sided canopy protecting a wellhead located just off the south entrance into the narthex (see Fig. 112), which in fact may have provided the main access into the katholikon.\footnote{See Chapter 1, and above, the section on exonarthex.} This canopy may have doubled as a phialē, as well. Thus, it would be located on the major communication axis between the monastery gate and the katholikon, a situation also observed in few other Athonite foundations.\footnote{According to Barskii’s renderings of Χεροπόταμου and Ζώγραφου (Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, plates between pp. 306-307 and 250-251, respectively), their phialai were similarly situated on the way between the church and the main monastery gate, east and north of the main churches (the present Zōgraphou phialē most likely occupies the same position – see below, note 196). On Χεροπόταμου’s original layout, see Theocharides, “Recent Research into Athonite Monastic Architecture, Tenth-Sixteenth Centuries” (fully cited in note 64 above), fig. 16.3, and Theocharides, “Architectural Organization of the Athonite Monasteries during the Byzantine Period” (cited in note 65), pp. 104-105, fig. 5.} Also, the association with a source of natural or running water was not uncommon and may have dictated the phialē’s location at Xenophōntos and a few other Athonite monasteries.\footnote{Similarly, Docheiariou’s phialē was formed next to a well of natural water, the situation that dictated the location north of the church, with the protecting structure built against the north range of dormitories. For this structure and a discussion of the issue, see below.} Concerning other monuments that are the subject of the present study – Prōtaton, Ravdouchou, Kalamitsiōn, St. Demetrius, Voroskopou, and Melissourgeiou – no information is available as to whether they had outdoor phialai or where they may have been situated in relation to churches.

Now, I turn to the extant examples of phialai, their dates, and forms.
The phialē of the Great Lavra (see Figs. 20, 21, 25, 520, 525), despite dating to 1635 or slightly earlier, almost certainly was constructed in the place of the original one of 1060, following its form and using some or all of its building elements. It is designed as an octagonal baldachin, with a dome supported by eight columns, protecting a large monolithic circular basin in the center (Figs. 520, 526). In the middle of the basin, there is an elaborate water-spouting conduit (strobilion) made of bronze and decorated with various animals arranged in three tiers (Figs. 527, 528). The conduit dates to the Middle Byzantine period, most likely standing in its original place, as part of the 1060 installation. This equipment testifies to the phailē having been envisaged as a fountain, with constantly running water (see Fig. 529). Six intercolumniations of the canopy are closed by decoratively carved marble parapet slabs in such a manner that the remaining two without closures are situated on the opposite sides of each other, suggesting a processional movement through the structure or, at least, enabling unimpeded circulation of large number of attendants, as when being sprinkled with the holy water and taking sips of it. Conveniently, one of the openings faces the katholikon’s main entrance, to which it connects via a short covered passageway, and the other directs to the refectory’s entrance (see Figs. 25, 20, 21, 525), allowing for a sequence of movements – from the liturgical service in the church, through the blessing and consumption of the holy water at the phialē, to the communal meal in the refectory – to progress in a more-or-less straight line. It seems quite likely that the

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185 Its frescoes date to 1635 (Gabriel Millet, J. Pargoire et Louis David Petit, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l’Athos: Première partie (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1904), # 391, p. 129), but the very structure could have been (re)built earlier, even in the 16th century, to which the canopy’s Ottoman capitals can be attributed, following a strong earthquake that took place in 1585 (cf. Laskarina Bouras, “Some Observations on the Grand Lavra Phiale at Mount Athos and its Bronze Strobilion,” AXAE 8 (1975-1976): 85-96, pp. 88, 94).

186 See references in Chapter 1, note 77. The presence of running water (see below) and the accompanying water supply system would not allow for a major moving of the facility, if at all.


188 Ibid., p. 93. Only the eagle on the top seems to have been added later, but certainly prior to 1744, perhaps as part of the 1635 restoration (ibid., pp. 93-94).
present parapet slabs of the Lavra’s phialē (Figs. 530 to 532), three of which can be dated according to their stylistic features to the 11th century, belonged to the original protective canopy of a very similar form and even took the role identical to the one they have today.\(^{189}\)

The core of Vatopedi’s phialē, which consists of a dome raised on eight slender pillars, protecting a marble font (Figs. 49, 66, 533), very likely dates to the mid-14th century. It was initially a freestanding structure, erected at a short distance of the exonarthex’s southwest corner and in front of the south chapel. Upon the construction of the present long, open porch at the end of the 17th century, the phialē became attached to the katholikon compound (Figs. 49, 67). The final form was acquired in a partial rebuilding in 1810.\(^{190}\) The layout takes a somewhat elaborate and rich scheme, achieved by a simple but effective addition of another circle of sixteen colonnettes around the original core and by the barrel-vaulted ambulatory formed in between (Figs. 533 to 535). This emerged from the restructuring of the previous outer shell that consisted of columns arranged on a square plan, parapet slabs, and pitched roof, as drawn by Barskii in 1744 (Fig. 536). This additional enclosure most likely provided the effective means to integrate architecturally the phialē with the church’s porch. The result – a double-shelled pavilion – is unusual, but is still in keeping with the basic concept of an open, domed canopy. The parapet slabs close all but two openings of the outer circle, which are situated at the opposite ends: at the east, in order to provide access from the porch, and at the west, where it opens to the courtyard.

The same was apparently the case with the structure Barskii saw. It should be noted that

\(^{189}\) Ibid., pp. 95-96. One of the other slabs has been compared to the 9th century sculptural material from Skripou (see ibid., p. 88, n. 17).

\(^{190}\) Ibid., p. 95. Sotiris Voyadjis, “The Initial Phase of the Katholikon of the Greatest Lavra Monastery, Mount Athos through Evidence of Its Phiale,” in Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Sofia, 22-27 August 2011, Volume III: Abstracts of Free Communications, Edited by Iliya Iliev, with the assistance of Elena Kostova and Vladimir Angelov (Sofia: Bulgarian Historical Heritage Foundation, 2011): p. 113, has argued that the parapet slabs were originally mounted in the sanctuary barriers of the monastery’s main church and a chapel, as well as in the katholikon’s 11th-century porch (exonarthex).

\(^{191}\) See Chapter 1, with appropriate references in note 142 there.
Barskii’s drawing depicts a large and shallow circular font, very similar to the one at the Lavra. The present font, smaller and square in shape, most likely replaced the original in the 1810 rebuilding.

The *phialē* of Ivērōn, located half-way between the *katholikon* and refectory, and slightly off the line of axis between the two due south, is in the form of a marble baldachin on ten columns, capped with a regular spherical dome (*Figs. 36, 40, 41, 537 to 539*). All but two intercolumniations, situated at the north and south ends, are closed by fretwork stone parapets. Interestingly, the two entrances feature marble door frames with sculpted drawn-away curtains (see *Figs. 538, 539*), a decorative feature that may reflect some ancient custom of hanging curtains in the openings.\(^192\) The entire structure dates to 1863;\(^193\) but another one, apparently of very similar form and located at the same place, or nearby, was seen and described by Barskii in 1744.\(^194\) He mentions ten supporting pillars (the same number as in the present structure), a lead-clad roof, and a marble water basin, “sculpted as a rose”, with a water spout in the middle.\(^195\)

With all these, the structure was not much different from the present *phialē*. This evidence once again testifies to a strong attachment to inherited facilities and a respect for older forms and solutions that has been observed on Mount Athos. Therefore, one can argue with great certainty that the present form of Ivērōn’s *phialē* can be traced to its medieval predecessor, even though not all of its elements and materials are original.

\(^{192}\) A similar stone frame, now missing, also existed in the *phialē* of the Great Lavra, as recorded in Barskii’s drawing of it (see *Fig. 529*). The hanging of real curtains was probably decorative and appeared on festive occasions. For similar instances, see *Figs. 458, 461, 462, 466, 468*.


\(^{195}\) According to Mylonas, the water basin has been preserved, leaning against the wall of the laundry, south of the refectory (Μπάρσκι, *Ta ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος*, p. 332, n. 475).
The corpus of these three cases and their Post-Byzantine interventions, even if expanded with similar octagonal or circular phialai that stood in Zōgraphou and Esphigmenou in 1744 (Figs. 540, 541), do not provide sufficient information to establish any standard regarding the form of Athonite phialai during medieval times. However, all other known examples from outside Mount Athos dating to the Middle Byzantine period seem to follow exactly the same pattern, both in form and location. In the monastic church of St. George at Mangana, Constantinople (1042-1055), in the center of an atrium-like courtyard extending to the west, archaeological excavations have revealed remains of a large and elaborate octagonal structure, which undoubtedly was the protective canopy for a quatrefoil water basin (Fig. 542). The edifice was seen in 1403 by the Spanish ambassador Ruy González de Clavijo, who described it as a canopy in the form of a dome set on eight columns, with “a bathing font” underneath. Another account of the same structure is contained in the “Anonymous Description of Constantinople” by a Russian pilgrim, dated to 1389-1391. It adds a few more details on the phialē’s appearance, such as that the font was in the form of a stone cup on a column, the roof was lead-clad, and between the columns of the canopy there were stone bars, decorated with

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196 See Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, plates between pages 250-251, 220-221, respectively. The undulated eaves of Zōgraphou’s phialē suggest that it may have dated back to the Byzantine times. The present structure appears to occupy exactly the same location (cf. Πλούταρχος Θεοχαρίδης, Νικόλαος Μερτζιμέκης, Ιωάννης Ταβλάκης, «Ανασκαφική έρευνα στη μονή Ζωγράφου και στοιχεία για την αναπαράσταση του παλιού περιβόλου της», Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και στη Θράκη 22 (2008, published in 2011): 443-452, fig. 5, plans 2, 3).
198 Cyril Mango, The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972, p. 219. The appearance of a bathing tub may have been due to a large size of the font.
sculpted representations of Evangelists and Apostles. A similar “fountain raised to a small height on a column” and enclosed with “a roof raised on eight columns” stood in the courtyard of the Evergetis monastery in the early 13th century, the dome covered with lead plaques on its outer surface and painted on the inner (Fig. 543). The Serbian monastery of Studenica, founded in ca. 1186 and organized after the Evergetis monastic model, also had an outdoor phialē. It was located at a short distance of the katholikon’s west façade, south of the main portal, as the archaeological remains witness (Figs. 544, 545). Again, the installation featured an arrangement of eight marble columns, raised on an eight-sided platform and supporting a protective covering for a marble cup-shaped font in the middle of the platform (Fig. 545b). It has been proposed that the phialē was constructed during the abbacy of St. Sava the Serbian (1206/7-1216 or 1217), who moved to Studenica from Hilandar. This would explain its apparent emulation of Athonite models, both in form and location. However, the presence of such facility, as well as its form and location, may have combined two lines of influence, the Evergetine and Athonite, which in fact both stem from the same Stoudite monastic tradition.

Upon the addition of a spacious exonarthex to the church sometime between 1232 and 1234, the

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200 Ibid., pp. 138-140 (English), 139 (Russian); also pp. 366-368 (repeated text with analysis and commentaries). The stone bars between the columns may refer to either closures fashioned as fretworks, similar to the parapets of the phialē at Iviron (see above), or bas-relief panels (as proposed by George Majeska – ibid., p. 368).

201 These fresco paintings were the subject of an ekphrasis, translated and examined by Paul Magdalino (with an additional note by Lyn Rodley), “The Evergetis Fountain in the Early Thirteenth Century: An ekphrasis of the Paintings in the cupola,” in Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis: 432-447, particularly pp. 442-443 (for the passage describing the structure in Greek and English), 436-437 (for a hypothetical reconstruction based on the Great Lavra’s phialē). The existence of an outdoor phialē in this monastery is also mentioned in its Synaxarion (Robert H. Jordan (ed. and trans.), The Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, the Institute of Byzantine Studies, the Queen’s University of Belfast, 2000-2007), Vol. 1, p. 414).


203 Kandić, op. cit., p. 66. For the dates of Sava’s abbacy and his role in Studenica during that time, see Dimitri Obolensky, Six Byzantine Portraits (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 136-143.

204 The phialē’s position south of the main portal calls to mind the same position of the phialē at Vatopedi, the monastery where St. Sava spent his formative monastic years (in the 1190s).
phialē ended up being an indoor structure.\textsuperscript{205} As such, it provided a model for many similar solutions in later monastic foundations in Serbia, where the holy water fonts were located in narthexes or exonarthexes.

A few outdoor examples accompanying non-monastic churches are also known. First and foremost, a large marble fountain with streaming water was situated in the middle of the Hagia Sophia’s atrium in 563.\textsuperscript{206} The Nea Ekklēsia (dedicated in 880) had two lavish fountains in its western atrium.\textsuperscript{207} A circular phialē with eight columns (dating to the 5th century,\textsuperscript{208} refigured in the 15th century\textsuperscript{209}) stood in front of the basilica of St. Demetrius in Thessaloniki up to the early 20th century (Fig. 546). In Bogoliubovo, Russia, in front of a palatial church, constructed as the part of a suburban residence of Andrei Bogoliubskii, grand prince of Vladimir (1157-1174), there are remains of a canopy, which had eight columns, and of a cup-like font in the middle, dated to the 12th century, possibly 1165 (Fig. 547).\textsuperscript{210} The last two examples, as well as Studenica testify that the phialē was not exclusive to the capital, although it may have been the major source of both the concept and form of the phialē during the Middle Byzantine period.

In the light of this considerable amount of evidence, it seems safe to say that an outdoor phialē was a standard feature of an Athonite monastery complex from the very beginning and that most often featured the form of eight-columned ciborium.\textsuperscript{211}

\textsuperscript{205} See Милка Чанак-Медић, Ђурђе Бушковић, Архитектура Немањиног доба, I: Цркве у Топлици и долинама Ибра и Мораве (Београд: Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе СР Србије; Археолошки институт, 1986), pp. 92-94.

\textsuperscript{206} Mango, The Art of the Byzantine Empire, p. 85 (Paul Silentiarius’s ekphrastic poem dedicated to Hagia Sophia, lines 590-616).

\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., pp. 194-195 (from Vita Basilii, # 85); see also Marinis, Architecture and Ritual, p. 96, notes 126, 127.

\textsuperscript{208} ODB, Vol. 3, p. 1648.


\textsuperscript{211} It should be noted that there were also a few four-sided phialai, as suggested in the renderings of Xēropotamou and Philotheou by Barskii (Барский, Второе посещение Святой Афонской горы, plates between pp. 306-307 and 118-119, respectively). The latter of the two is the structure in front of the katholikon, slightly to the south of the...
The location of the phialē outside the church instead of being set inside the narthex, as was also common, 212 deserves some attention. It seems that the supply of running water was an essential segment of the facility and a reason to have it installed outside the church. In addition to the above cases, there are a few more of them recorded in written sources. Outside the Eleousa church of the Constantinopolitan Pantokrator Monastery, there were apparently two phialai and their streaming water was available to the lay attendants for quenching their thirst. 213 Although not explicitly mentioned, one or both of these were most likely used for the rite of the Blessing of the Waters. This and other similar solutions open the question: did the phialē always include the supply of running water and was that one of the reasons to have the facility installed outside the church? I would say that this was not a sufficient enough reason, but the system of water supply certainly could have affected the location of the holy water font, perhaps when there existed no other way to channel natural water. This may have been the case with the phialē of the Kecharitōmenē Monastery, necessitating its location in the inner narthex although the church had an outer narthex too. 214 Comparably, the phialē of Docheiariou, Mount Athos, is built not between the katholikon and the refectory, as usual, but in conjunction with the Hagiasma tōn Archangelōn (“Holy Water of the Archangels”), a well of natural spring water, which is situated north of the church (Fig. 548). An inscription in the phialē records that the spring miraculously appeared in 1300, spouting forth in order to cure local monks who had entrance door (see Figs. 7, 8), exactly at the place occupied today by another phialē of a more recent date. The well of drinking water at Xenophōntos had a similar protecting canopy (Fig. 115), which may have also been used as the setting for the Great Blessing of the Waters, since no other structure resembling a phialē is to be discerned in the 1744 drawing. All three cases may have dated to the Post-Byzantine period, reflecting the decline in resources and unavailability of skilled artists. However, it is also possible that such canopies – almost entirely masonry-built, requiring less-skilled labor and cheaper materials, and therefore easier to produce in the monastic environment of a poorer economic abilities – may have been occasionally used for phialai in the Byzantine times, as well.

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212 See Chapter 4.
214 See Chapter 3, note 164, and note 21 above.
become ill from drinking contaminated water channeled from the hills above the monastery. The present structure – whose core has the form of an eight-sided ciborium (Fig. 549) – dates to 1765, when the facility was fully renovated. In this context, cisterns at other places may likewise have been coupled with or doubled as phialai, as suggested by the structure in the form of a four-sided canopy over the well at Xenophōntos and a similar one constructed in 1682 on top of a cistern at Hilandar, south of the katholikon. Placing a cistern under an open, paved yard would enable and facilitate its maintenance and repairs, while the association of a phialē with the cistern would ensure constant inflow of water needed for the ritual blessing.

Moving from these technical aspects of the phialē’s location in the courtyard to those of functional, symbolic, and historical nature, one should be reminded that in church architecture of earlier centuries, a fountain was a common asset of church atria. It was used for preparatory ritual ablutions before entering the church. Some important early churches, like the Hagia Sophia and, even more relevant for the monastic usage, the Stoudion, continued to use phialai in their atria during the Middle Byzantine period, now solely for the rite of the Blessing of the Waters. In this, they may have provided functional, organizational, and architectural examples

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216 Ibid.
217 Ibid.
218 For this structure, see Αναστάσιος Κ. Ορλάνδος, Μοναστηριακή αρχιτεκτονική (Αθήνα: Ευξεμηνή, 1958), p. 114, figs. 126, 127, and Ηπαδόπουλη, Οικλικές Χιλιάδες: Τέχνη και γλώσσα (cited in note 178), pp. 361-363, figs. 439-441. A canopy similarly positioned in relation to the main church, only of an eight-sided form, can be observed at Vatopedi. Were these, perhaps, the venues for less solemn monthly blessings of the waters (for this rite, see Chapter 3)?
for monastic churches of the time. Moreover, the use of the atrium and the fountain with running water there did not result from a mere convenience of the preexisting facility’s presence, since there was an incentive imminent to the ritual to go outside and to evoke benediction upon the entire nature through the blessing of natural waters.\(^\text{221}\) In that sense, even setting the *phialē* in the *exonarthex*, as it was the case in the 12\(^{th}\)-century Parthenon, the *katholikon* of Nea Monē, and many other churches of the Late Byzantine period,\(^\text{222}\) and staging the ritual there may have still been perceived as if performed outside the church. Is this yet another instance that relates the *exonarthex*, especially when structured as a porch, to the ancient atrium? Regardless of the answer, there is certainly a tendency in the Late Byzantium, particularly outside Mount Athos, to house the holy water font inside the narthex or *exonarthex*.\(^\text{223}\) Practical concerns, such as limited space in the yard, inconvenient local climate, and lack of resources, may have influenced this shift.\(^\text{224}\) However, the migration of the holy water font to the narthex area was acceptable only due to the symbolic dimension ascribed to this part of the church, that of the earthly realm.\(^\text{225}\) Therefore, the procession of the congregation from the *naos* to the *exonarthex* for the Blessing of the Waters was still understood symbolically as the movement from the church to a source of natural water somewhere outside the monastery.

\(^\text{221}\) See *Chapter 3*, note 166, and *Православная Энциклопедия*, Vol. 9, pp. 140, 142, 143.
\(^\text{222}\) For these cases, see *Chapter 4*.
\(^\text{223}\) As a reminder, a similar process happened at Studenica – originally an outdoor structure soon enclosed by the *exonarthex* built around it – without the *phialē* even being moved (see above). For many other examples of holy water fonts situated in the narthexes and *exonarthexes* of Serbian late medieval monastic churches, see Kandić, *op. cit.* (fully cited in note 202), esp. pp. 66-76.
\(^\text{224}\) See also *Chapter 4*.
\(^\text{225}\) See *Chapter 3*.  

448
f) **The ‘Aggregated Narthex Area’**

The existence of certain types of subsidiary buildings is the only way of distinguishing a monastic from non-monastic church. Many, if not all of these subsidiaries are in Athonite monasteries appended to the main core precisely at the areas adjacent to the narthex. The reason lies in the fact that the most of these structures functionally stemmed from the narthex. The *exonarthex* developed even structurally from its inner counterpart. The lateral chapels, on the other hand, only borrowed some of the narthex’s usual ‘prerogatives’, most notably burials. But this was essential in their close association to the west part of the church. The holy water font completely left the narthex and moved into a freestanding canopy outside of it. Or, more likely, a secondary font was introduced to the narthex while the primary one was always located in the courtyard, in front of the church. And, finally, for lack of bells and belfries, the *sēmantron* was placed in the open *exonarthex*, exposed to the monastery and the ears of brethren. This is why all these structures and features form something that can be termed as the ‘aggregated narthex area’. I would not call it a ‘composite narthex’ because, despite obvious affinities between the spaces, often resulting from the presence of shared and overlapping functions between the narthex and the extended areas, this conglomerate was never perceived by its users as a unified whole.

Yet, the structures and their elements that have been examined above were all added to the core church within only few decades upon its completion, suggesting that from the very initial phases of the conception and construction of a coenobitic *katholikon* there was an idea, or rather a need for such a complex narthex area. However, despite the possibility that previous monastic experience of founders with similar challenges and solutions may have influenced the building of aggregated narthex areas, such complex narthex systems were never executed.

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integrally with the church core and narthex proper. The additional elements appear to be piled up as necessity dictated and resources allowed, but always in a manner that followed some sort of preexisting idea of how the structures should be assembled and work within the whole. A certain level of standardization was involved, undoubtedly resulting from monastic experience, and may have been related to the monastic organization, liturgical life, and devotions. And this, Athonite monasteries shared with other communities that stem from the Stoudite and Evergetine traditions, as witnessed by their typika and scarce archaeological evidence. It seems that they had the most, if not all of the constituent elements of the Athonite narthex area: narthex, katēchoumena, exonarthex, and outdoor or indoor phialē, which seem to have been architectural reflections of common coenobitic values and customs. However, there were specific and occasionally idiosyncratic architectural and functional solutions, such as the burial of the founder in the lateral chapel, which were the products of certain local specificities, and which can only be traced today through these few surviving architectural evidences.
Conclusions
This dissertation has offered a study of Middle Byzantine narthexes, their architecture, function, and meaning, as implemented in the 10th-11th-century katholika of Mount Athos. The architecture has been investigated through a detailed presentation of the form of surviving narthexes, their upper floors, and adjacent structures, and through a comparison with contemporary solutions applied in monastic churches in other parts of Byzantium, primarily in relevant centers of monasticism and architectural production: Constantinople, Bithynia, Cappadocia, Greece, and ancient Rus’. The narthex and appended rooms have also been examined in regard to their known and proposed functions and meanings. The information on the use has been extracted from written sources, mostly monastic typika, but also from the architecture itself, interior organization and decoration of the rooms, and the manner in which these spaces have been used in an uninterrupted tradition that continues today. These helped to establish how the narthex was perceived and understood by its original creators and users, which in fact may have determined its functions. By interweaving these three key interdependent aspects of form, function, and meaning, it has been possible to develop a more complete account of the narthex, one of the major constituent parts of the Byzantine church.

The architectural evidence from the surviving Middle Byzantine churches on Mount Athos speaks of an almost uniform approach to the church planning and design. Apart from a few churches with basilican plans, which can be associated with idiorrhythmic monasticism, all others feature the cross-in-square plan, occasionally with lateral conches, and a separate simple narthex on the west side. The cross-in-square type of naos seems to have proved appropriate for coenobitic communities, which embraced it and used it predominantly for their katholika. The narthexes, which are always integrally built with the naos, do not vary significantly with regard to the dimensions, architectural articulation, and number and nature of openings both to the
exterior and to the *naos*. Essentially an oblong, three-bayed hall, the narthex commonly has an upper storey, usually referred to as *katêchoumena*, which visually communicates with the *naos*. Within only a few decades of the completion of these churches, they were appended with a second, outer narthex (*exonarthex*) in front of the older one, and with two chapels flanking the inner narthex’s north and south sides. The *phialē*, a canopied holy water font in the monastery’s yard, although not physically connected with the narthex, is closely related to it by both the function and location in the church’s entrance zone.

The preceding chapters of this thesis, thanks to their juxtaposition of the evidence provided by the architecture, archaeology, and art of the surviving churches, by certain liturgical, organizational, hagiographical, legal, and other texts, and in light of continuing traditions of ritual practice, have helped to explain the form, function, and meaning of the narthex, as an integral part of the monastic *katholikon*, and its adjoining structures. I present here the conclusions that have been reached, organized as they pertain to the segments of the Athonite narthex area or to some specific issues.

**Form, Features, and Spatial Organization of the Narthex**

The narthexes of Athonite *katholika* are uniformly designed as an oblong room, internally subdivided into three bays in a row. Three vaults of the bays are separated by two arches, which continue into pilasters in few cases. The pilasters may have contributed to strengthening the walls of those narthexes that had upper floors, since they only appear in two-storied narthexes (Ivērōn, Vatopedi, and St. Procopius). However, there are also examples of narthexes that had
upper floors but do not feature pilasters (Great Lavra, Zygou). The tripartite articulation of the interior does not seem to have any symbolic meaning. Structural reasoning can also be excluded or was of minimal importance, since the position of dividing (supporting) arches does not coincide with the position of similar features in the naos. In this, Athonite narthexes differ from their Constantinopolitan coevals, for example. This design solution was probably the result of a specific building tradition or workshop employed on Mount Athos. The interior layout seems to be more a matter of visual/architectural organization, which corresponds to the tripartite organization of the nave, but has its own internal logic, often directed by a desire to have the middle of the three bays – which apparently had a special role in the narthex – or even all three of them given a square plan.

Despite this structural disassociation from the naos, the narthex’s width is always the same as that of the naos, most likely resulting from the integral planning and execution of the two parts of the church, as well as the external composition of the entire building. The three oldest and largest katholika feature narthexes almost identical in size, which witnesses to a long previous experience with the organization and use of the narthex on the part of those who conceived the space. The narthex’s length ranges between 2.5 and slightly more than 3 times its width/depth. The former value appears in smaller churches, suggesting that their narthexes were designed relatively wider in order not to diminish their functionality at the expense of the 1/3 ratio of larger churches and of any potential symbolism lying behind it.

The middle bay of most Athonite narthexes is of a square plan and covered by some sort of spherical vaulting, most commonly a sail-vault, whereas the other two bays – whether oblong or square – are typically covered by groin-vaults. The central vault’s paintings are comparable to those of a dome in the naos and can be interpreted as the narthex’s own heavenly zone. The
section of the floor pavement found in the middle bay is more decorative, often featuring a variant of the quincunx interlace design, known as *penteomphalon*. All these bear witness to the special treatment and emphasis given to this part of the narthex, which directly precedes the main door leading into the *naos*. In Constantinople, instead, the three bays are usually the same size and oblong in plan, with the central bay assuming a square shape and receiving a domical vaulting only on the upper-floor level.

Three doorways connect the narthex with the *naos* in the *katholika* of Vatopedi, Ivērōn, Xenophōntos, and likely the Great Lavra, but not in other, generally smaller churches. Such a planning solution is common for Middle Byzantine churches outside Athos, particularly those in Constantinople. This might appear as a formal treatment, but it can in fact be justified by certain actions that are part of the church ritual. Between the doors, there are wall paintings or panel icons framed into wooden *proskynētaria*, offering images of Christ and the Mother of God for veneration. They functioned as the focus of devotion for those attending a service in the narthex. Together with the doors, the holy images give the wall between the narthex and the *naos* a form similar to the *templon*, and it indeed may have been perceived as a secondary barrier between the two rooms of the sacred space, where the one behind the wall was holier than the other. A few churches feature semicircular or oblong niches set in the east wall between the doors or fully taking the place of the two side doors. The niches are commonly found in smaller narthexes and may have provided extra room for certain fixtures and pieces of furnishing, such as the holy water font, bookshelves, and icons.

The narthex is characterized by numerous doors and openings to the exterior. The main entrance door in the west façade is flanked by two large openings, which – due to their rising from the floor level up – resemble doorways and, in monuments outside Athos, have often been
interpreted as such. However, there is evidence that these apertures were blocked by windows sitting on top of parapet slabs. In addition to the front door, all larger narthexes, except the one at Vatopedi, have additional doors on the north and south sides, which enable entries from three directions. Walls pierced by openings give the narthex a porch-like appearance, which may have resulted from the need to secure a minimal protection for the entrance to the naos, whose completion was given priority, while the narthex could wait until the next building season or a new influx of resources to be finished. Also, the form could have been inherited from entrance porticoes and atria, which had a great importance in accommodating practical and symbolical dimensions of entries into churches of the earlier centuries.

It is noteworthy that narthexes are equipped with minimal permanent furnishings or lack them completely. This can be explained by the likelihood that, just as today, portable objects – such as a table, a book stand, water bowl, and candelabra – were brought in and set up as certain office or rite required. In this way, the space would remain flexible and suitable for the many diverse uses assigned to the narthex. Nonetheless, it is possible that a holy water font was permanently housed in the narthex. None of these has been preserved in situ in any of our Athonite cases, but a few pieces made of stone have survived and – analogously with some mainly Late Byzantine examples – may have been fixed inside wall niches. Burials are also accommodated in the narthex, located in an arcosolium in the south wall. This occurs only in few cases, most notably at Vatopedi, and is in keeping with general Byzantine practice regarding burials in churches. However, tombs of founders and prominent abbots are more commonly found in subsidiary chapels attached to the narthex.

Lighting devices – hanging lamps and standing candleholders – are an important part of the narthex’s furnishing. Much of the original setting of light sources seems to have been
preserved in the current arrangement of devices: one or three lamps are suspended from the apexes of the bay vaults, one lamp lights the patron’s icon above the main door leading into the naos, a lamp hangs in front of each of the two proskynētaria icons, a lamp or candle for the reader is lit during a service in the narthex, when candles on standing candelabra are also lit in front of icons. Written sources and modern practice provide evidence for the employment of different lighting regimens for practical and liturgical/festal purposes. The latter was more elaborate, as a greater number of devices or all of them were lit, and in some cases it involved the use of more ornate pieces, made of precious materials.

**Functions and Meaning (Perception) of the Narthex**

The narthex has the position of a buffer zone between the church and rest of the monastery, i.e. the outer world, functioning as a zone of transition, a liminal space between the outer, profane world and the sacred area of the church’s primary liturgical space, the naos (“the holy”) with the sanctuary (“the holy of the holies”). Thus, the liminality may be taken as the narthex’s main characteristic. It is manifested both physically and spiritually, underscoring the passage from this world to the transcendental realm of the Heavens, symbolically and mystically present in the naos. The narthex, then, often assumes the role of the Earth. This spatial and symbolic constellation gave a somewhat ambiguous status to the narthex and rooms above and around it, leading to their perception as spaces that are both part of the church and also outside of it. One or the other of these opposite meanings could be called upon as the particular usage of the space required.
The liminal aspect of the narthex is fully emphasized by the services and rites designated to be performed there. These were staged in there precisely because their meaning or effect embodied some manifestation of spatial, temporal, or ontological externality (‘earthliness’) in relation to what took place in the *naos*. The rites and services on their part are reflected in the organization of the narthex, its furnishings, and the iconographic program of wall paintings. However, it should not be omitted that the plan and architectural form of the narthex, gradually defined already during the Late Antique and Early Byzantine periods, also affected the way services and ritual actions were conducted within the narthex’s space. This interaction between the form and function in the Middle Byzantine period and within the monastic context gave the narthex a distinct and important place in the church planning of the period.

Minor daily services, such as the Hours, could be performed privately, in one’s monastic cell. However, within the coenobitic context, with its emphasis on the life in community, these prayer offices were celebrated communally. Due to their penitential nature and since they did not require the use of the altar table and sanctuary, it was decided to perform some of them in the narthex of the congregational church building. Those services that were usually staged in the narthex stood at the beginning or at the end of the sequence of offices celebrated in the *naos*. In the same vein, the narthex was used as a gathering space before or after some communal activities, particularly those that were part of church ritual, such as church offices and processions. Also, the brethren gathered in the narthex to discuss matters of common interest or to listen to spiritual instructions given by the abbot. From the annual festal calendar, the Great Blessing of the Waters on Epiphany and the enactment of the Washing of Feet on Great Thursday notably take place in the narthex.
The narthex is also the site of some initiation or transition rites: the first part of monastic tonsuring, confessions, and funerals. Such a use is again due to the narthex’s position between the outer world and the sacred space of the church. Some prayer services that needed to be said simultaneously with an ongoing office in the main church, such as the commemorations for the deceased, were dislocated to the narthex, exonarthex, or one of the two lateral chapels. The presence of burials in these rooms was most likely what recommended them as appropriate venues.

**Relationship between Form and Function: Some Particular Solutions Developed on Mount Athos**

It is apparent that a plethora of various functions and their spatial requirements had to be accommodated within one and the same space. That, perhaps, led to the lack of permanent liturgical fixtures in the narthex, in an effort to make it as neutral as possible: the simple and open space, with the addition of a few moveable pieces of furniture when necessary, could easily accommodate all those functions. Nonetheless, Athonite narthexes feature some specific architectural elements and permanent furnishings that were conditioned by the narthex’s functions. Certain of these features, such as the domically vaulted middle bay, have proven to be idiosyncratic to Mount Athos, reflecting local needs, requirements, and symbolical dimensions.

The narthex’s emphasized middle bay, by assuming the form of a baldachin and receiving special decorative treatment, provides a marking of and symbolic protection for both the central point of the room and the area located immediately before the main entrance into the *naos*. The
exact purpose of such a setting cannot be positively established, but certain comparative
evidence points to this spot being reserved for the ceremonial arrival, vesting, and ritual entrance
of a royal or ecclesiastical authority. Additionally, the baldachin shape may have stood as a
mark of the church’s or monastery’s status as a foundation established and/or protected by the
emperor. In this and other functions, the domed bay may have been a permanent, architectural
version of portable ciborium that may have been installed at the same spot when some specific
occasion required its presence. Both the form and meaning of this architectural feature
seemingly emulate the same or similar settings in the entrance areas of some important churches
(e.g. Hagia Sophia, Nea Ekklēsia, Pantokratōr Monastery) and secular buildings (Chalkē Gate
and Senate House) of Constantinople, where the emperor was ceremoniously greeted and
received. The presence of such an architectural setting may have been recognized as the fitting
framing for some liturgical services and rites accommodated in the narthex: readings from sacred
books during the daily celebrations of the Hours, blessing of the waters, and funerals.

The three-door arrangement of the narthex’s east wall is another characteristic feature.
However, it is not only found on Mount Athos. Although this organizational solution might be a
relic from Early Byzantine basilicas, it may have gained a functional justification within the
specific ceremonial and liturgical practice, as otherwise cross-in-square churches, much smaller
than basilicas, would not require more than one entranceway into the naos. The middle of the
three doors, known as the Royal Doors or Royal Gate, was reserved in large and venerable
churches of Constantinople for ceremonial imperial entries and the other two (or more) were
used by commoners. This custom seems to have led to similar usage and arrangements in
smaller churches, where the central door retains the same name, regardless whether these
buildings were frequented by the emperor and his retinue, or not. Even nowadays, entering
through the main door, although not banned, tends to be employed on certain solemn occasions, which gives an additional symbolical (temporal and even eschatological) dimension to the spatial act of stepping into the naos and traversing a boundary between the profane and sacred. However, the lack of additional two doors in many smaller Athonite katholika suggests that this was not a uniform practice, as their spatial limitations and, in some cases, the presence of niches could not permit the opening of extra doorways.

The images of Christ and the Theotokos displayed between the doors resemble the templon setting in the nave and they may have had a similar devotional purpose, serving the attendants of services in the narthex. Moreover, just as the iconostasis functions as a symbolical and real barrier between the naos and the sanctuary, placing the sacred behind a barrier, the setting of the narthex’s east wall similarly marks and encloses the sacred space of the church proper that starts behind the wall. This gradation of the holiness of different spaces was theologically formulated in some Late Byzantine liturgical treatises.

When it comes to the concave niches present in few narthexes, it is harder to establish what their purpose was. Again, they are found only in smaller churches, where there was some lack in space. The evidence from Late Byzantine Athonite katholika and churches outside the peninsula, i.e. the wall paintings of the Baptism of Christ and small marble basins set within niches confirm the likelihood that at least some of them framed a vessel and an iconographic setting for the Great Blessing of the Waters. The late date of the evidence suggests that this may have been a later development and applied in cases where an exterior water font could not be provided. Otherwise, holy water fonts, whether portable or permanently fixed in the narthex, were only secondary to the one housed in the open kiosk outside the church.¹ The indoor fonts

¹ See below.
were most likely used for holding the previously blessed water and, incidentally, for the very rite of the water blessing.

**Katēchoumena: Their Form, Organization, Function(s), and Reasons for the Location above the Narthex**

The presence of an upper floor above the narthex, known as the *katēchoumena*, is very common on Mount Athos. However, only a few of *katēchoumena* actually survive (fully at Ivērōn, Vatopedi, and partially at St. Procopius) and the function of only one – that at the Great Lavra – has been mentioned in contemporary sources. This situation somewhat limits our understanding of the form and purpose of the over-narthex room. Nevertheless, the available information goes hand in hand with what is known from other similar accommodations elsewhere in Byzantium and the Byzantine commonwealth, at least as far as the function is concerned.

Although only two *katēchoumena* are entirely preserved, their almost identical form suggests that there might have been either a common model or the same approach in the organization and design of the over-narthex. The *katēchoumena* are functionally independent of the narthex, as there is no communication between the two. Instead, access is provided exclusively from outside the church building, in some cases directly from the upper level of a dormitory or another monastery building, via a bridge of sorts. On the other hand, the structure and tripartite organization follow the layout of the ground floor, with three close-to-equal bays, each square in plan, and the arches between the bays positioned exactly above similar arches on the lower level. This arrangement differs from the solution employed in Constantinopolitan and
other narthexes, which have the structure of one or both of their floors aligned with the structure of the naos. It seems to me that this disparity may result from different design approaches – related to different purposes of the galleries – and, possibly, different building workshops/traditions.

The structural independence of the narthex and its second storey is also manifested in the exterior, where this part of the church demonstrates the lack of a desire to make it visually integrated into the overall building, again unlike the designs of churches in the capital. This is further accentuated with the north and south bays of the kathēchoumena crowned by domes. This characteristic twin dome motif appears in the Middle Byzantine period only on Mount Athos and in the church of Panagia tōn Chalkeōn in Thessaloniki and has been regarded as an Athonite architectural feature. Although it is quite possible that this motif originated or got prominence on Athos and then was emulated in Thessaloniki, this is presently impossible to prove. It also remains unclear what was the exact reason for the presence of the pair of domes. One or both of them may have been involved in the definition of liturgical spaces, i.e. subsidiary chapels, as is the case at Vatopedi. But they may also have served as an external, compositional feature. I think that they were both. And the precedent may have been again established in the katholikon of the Great Lavra, although the vaulting there may have instead included blind domes, which were translated into more lavish and more visually effective domes on drums at Ivērōn and Vatopedi.

The kathēchoumena maintain visual communication with the naos, through an internal trilobe window (tribēlon) situated in the middle bay’s east wall. This is the only contact with the rest of the church. This and the external access suggest that the over-narthex rooms enjoyed an isolated status, but provided the occupant with the ability to follow the events staged in the
church’s nave. Indeed, the *katēchoumena* at the Great Lavra consisted of a cell of the founder, St. Athanasius, a depository of documents, and a chapel. All these point to the over-narthex being used as a kind of ascetic abode, which enabled the founder-abbot to withdraw from the community, perhaps only temporarily, and still to follow common liturgies in the main church. At the same time, the community would be aware of his presence, which could be manifested by the abbot’s occasional appearances in the gallery opening, whether they were expected or spontaneous. Such an accommodation of a secluded monastic within the very church building was permissible perhaps because a saintly person was viewed as deserving to reside within a sacred space and may have been an emulation of some Biblical examples of the dwelling within the holy. And both the main church building of the community and an elevated place inside of it were considered a befitting facility. The spatial exclusivity of the upper floor may have had its origin in the imperial use of the gallery in the capital’s pre-eminent churches. However, only the narthex’s symbolical dimension of a space between the profane and sacred may have initially recommended the over-narthex as the suitable location in the monastic context, lessening the potential criticism of a monk living inside the church.

*Exonarthex, Lateral Chapels, and Phialē: Purposes and Relationship with the Narthex*

The *exonarthex*, lateral chapels, and *phialē*, with their location and functions, act as the narthex’s extensions. And their addition to the church core within a short period upon the latter’s completion suggest that they were needed from early on, perhaps envisaged by the community to be added even before they were built. Why could not the narthex alone fulfill the purposes of
these annexes? In smaller communities, it probably did, as they never acquired the additions. The large \textit{katholika}, however, those of the Great Lavra, Ivērōn, Vatopedi, and Zygou, not only required additional space for their larger brotherhoods and could afford to have some of the narthex’s functions separated from the others and relegated to subsidiary structures, but also had to accommodate some particular demands, such as burials outside the church’s main core, including the narthex. Again, organizational and architectural solutions were often established at the Great Lavra and then repeated by the other monasteries.

All Middle Byzantine Athonite \textit{exonarthexes} were built by the mid-11\textsuperscript{th} century, thus predating most of the other similar structures that have survived in other parts of Byzantium, which predominantly date to the 12\textsuperscript{th} century and later. Written sources that mention secondary narthexes and porches in monasteries of Constantinople also date to the 12\textsuperscript{th} century. Such a situation suggests that the construction of \textit{exonarthexes} in the monastic context may have actually started on Mount Athos. Alternatively, the practice of appending an extra narthex may have been brought to the peninsula from another monastic center with large coenobitic communities, perhaps Bithynia. And the way these structures were used may have influenced the subsequent appearance of similar architectural provisions in Constantinopolitan monastic churches.

Regardless of this issue of the origin of the Middle Byzantine \textit{exonarthex}, its form and the specific organizational solutions in Athonite \textit{katholika} show two patterns or sets of reasons that led to its addition. In one, the structure was apparently constructed to cover the area between the church and two side chapels and to protect this space from the elements (Great Lavra). The other pattern indicates that the room was designed as an additional narthex or entrance area and built independently of the two lateral chapels (Ivērōn) or even preceded their
construction (Vatopedi and Zygou). The exonarthex’s design as a porch in both cases underlines its secondary status in regard to the inner narthex, initially assuming only the role of a shelter for the church’s main entrance and, perhaps, a room for the overflow of monks in rapidly growing communities. Later on, the presence of this extra room instigated its takeover of some of the narthex’s functions, primarily those that were associated with the exonarthex’s position farther away from the sanctuary and closer to (or at) the entrance point, which was additionally accentuated with decorative floor pavements at Vatopedi and Zygou. Apart from accommodating potential ceremonial entries, the exonarthex in some cases superseded the narthex as the venue for the hearing of confessions, for the Blessing of the Waters, and for the ritual washing of feet on Great Thursday. The exonarthex’s position between the church space and the rest of the monastery most likely was the reason for it being the setting for the daily Compline service, accompanied by the abbot’s blessings before the brethren dispersed to their cells for the night rest, as well as for funerals.²

More importantly, the exonarthex replaces the narthex in acting as a communication hub, receiving the incomers from the west, north, and south, and directing them to the main church and lateral chapels.³ As such, the exonarthex serves as a smaller and enclosed version of the church atrium. This is perhaps why it takes in the Litē, a supplication service that entailed a procession to the major shrines of a monastery, which on Mount Athos include the katholikon, subsidiary chapels, and the founder’s tomb, all accessible from the outer narthex. Large openings in the exonarthex and its position at the church’s entrance also made it a convenient place for housing of the sēmantra and their sounding, which marked liturgical time in the monastery.

² Also, burials are found in the exonarthex at Zygou.
³ Similarly, the upper floors of the fully preserved exonarthexes, those of Vatopedi and İvērōn, were apparently intended only to provide the access to the katēchoumena, situated above the inner narthex.
For all the above, I would say that the outer narthex initially appeared as a substitute for the narthex in the purely utilitarian domain, sheltering the church’s main entrance and funneling major communication paths in the monastery into the katholikon. But then, the exonarthex’s position one level away from the liturgical center, making it less sacred than the inner narthex, and the exonarthex’s larger size and open form offered it better suited for certain functions previously accommodated in the narthex.

Subsidiary chapels, appended at both the north and south ends of the narthex, can be found in the katholika of the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, Iviron, Zygou, and Melissourgeiou. The other Athonite churches of the period, which are also smaller in size, lack such chapels. Nevertheless, paired parekklēsia flanking the narthex can be considered a characteristic feature of Hagiorite architecture, as similar solutions continue to appear regularly through the Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine periods. The location in the narthex zone is particularly significant, indicating the purpose of these additional liturgical spaces. In the three largest katholika, the chapels assume the form of small, fully equipped churches – a couple of them even with narthexes of their own – and must have functioned as additional venues for Eucharistic celebrations, which were not private, but congregational. The congregation in question may have been formed by members of the brotherhood too numerous to be accommodated in the main church or by local monks who spoke a language different from the majority of the community: a group of Georgians at the Great Lavra, for example. Also, the smaller venues may have been more practical than the main church for weekday celebrations of the Liturgy, when many of the monks were out of the monastery on their assignments and attended services at the closest available chapel.
The northern of the two parekklēsia at the Great Lavra, Ivērōn, and Zygou houses the tomb of the monastic founder. And the funerary purpose was most likely what indeed decided the construction of the chapels and their appending to the narthex, the space customarily reserved for burials in churches. The placement of the grave farther away from the main liturgical space, in a room adjacent to but not in the narthex, shows that the founders sought a more humble treatment for their interment: strictly speaking, they were buried outside the main church, including its narthex. This funerary solution was somewhat common for Mount Athos; the only exception was Vatopedi. The example was set by the Great Lavra, with the placement of the tomb of Athanasius the Athonite in the north chapel, perhaps in relation to his association with it, as the place where he used to hear the confessions of his disciples and, perhaps, performed some personal devotions. Also, it is possible that – in addition to these reasons – the chapel was chosen because there was no adequate place in the narthex. On the other hand, the chapel setting may have been perceived by the monastic community as more appropriate for the burial of their spiritual father, who was considered a man of saintly status even during his life. However, the translation of the relics of Ivērōn’s founders from the north chapel (and other places) to the narthex witnesses that the latter was considered a more elevated setting than the former.

Anyhow, the presence of the founder’s tomb in the parekklēsion and its separation from the rest of the katholikon made it a convenient venue for commemoration services, which needed to be conducted at the same time as some other church offices. The same reasons could have led to the chapels being used for confessions.

The form of these lateral chapels and the way that they are connected to the main church suggest that they were first treated as semi-independent churches. Later examples, those at Ivērōn, Zygou, and Melissourgeiou, are smaller and simpler in form. However, a full
architectural integration into the overall design, similar to some Middle Byzantine churches outside Mount Athos, such as the Theotokos of Lips and the Katholikon at the Monastery of Hosios Loukas, was never achieved and probably not even pursued. This situation provides witness to a somewhat conservative approach to planning, which can be attributed to several factors: a) the different purpose of subsidiary chapels; b) the sequential construction of the church building; c) the abbot-founder’s insisting on certain organizational and architectural solutions he might have had experience with; and d) the lack of skilled architects and masons.

The phialê, a free-standing, domical, and usually eight-columned canopy enclosing a bowl-like stone water basin in the monastery yard, serves as the customary venue for the Great Blessing of the Waters on Epiphany. It is commonly located in front of the katholikon, between its entrance zone and the refectory. The association with a source of running or accumulated water appears to be one of the key reasons for such a choice of location. Furthermore, it reflects a wish to bestow a blessing on the whole of nature by saying prayers outside the church building and through the sanctification of waters somewhere outdoors. When there were some spatial or climatic constraints, the holy water font could be set in the narthex or exonarthex. These venues were acceptable thanks to the narthex’s being understood as the ‘outer world’ within the church building. The domical covering of the outdoor phialê creates a sacred setting for the ritual action taking place underneath, while the openness of the baldachin-like structure underlines the setting’s exterior location. The models for the location and form of Athonite phialai, as well as their ritual use, may have been provided by some venerable Constantinopolitan churches, such as the Hagia Sophia and the Stoudion.
Transmission and Innovation in Planning and Design

The narthexes of Athonite churches appear to be not much different from those of their contemporaries. As the part of the church that provided space for less strict and not so firmly structured offices, one would expect a greater flexibility in the form and organization of the narthex, leading to more varied layouts.\(^4\) And that apparently was the case in the Early Christian times. However, the layouts of Middle Byzantine narthexes appear almost rigidly uniform, especially when accompanying the cross-in-square *naoi* of monastic churches. This might reflect the effort to establish a more defined and strictly structured scheme for monastic daily ritual.

A general similarity in form was most likely a consequence of the application of the same or similar prescriptions yielded by Stoudite monasticism and its liturgical ritual, explaining the wide currency of the three-bayed narthex type. This type may have been first used and its advantages recognized in the initial monastery of St. Theodore the Stoudite’s community (Sakkoudion) or, more likely, the monastic region where it was situated (Bithynia).

Unfortunately, nothing of this monastery’s physical structures survives and we do not possess information on the appearance of its main church. However, it is possible that it did not differ from other Bithynian churches. Almost all churches from the region dated to the Middle Byzantine period, the most notable and best preserved being the Fatih Camii in Tirilye, feature the cross-in-square type with a narrow narthex of an oblong plan, three doors connecting it with the *naos*, and other architectural elements that are shared with Athonite and Constantinopolitan Middle Byzantine churches. I believe that such a church layout was deemed suitable to the

monastic liturgical rule practiced in Stoudite communities, embraced by them and disseminated widely,\(^5\) despite the mother community’s moving from Sakkoudion to Stoudion, where the monks had to use the 5th-century basilica and adapt their liturgical ritual to the existing architectural setting. However, even there, unlike the naos and sanctuary, the narthex (or, rather, a portico enclosed at some point after its original construction), with its form of an oblong hall connected with the nave through three doorways, is fully comparable to narthexes of other Middle Byzantine churches and was undoubtedly used in the same way.

The more preferable cross-in-square church was embraced by St. Athanasius the Athonite and brought to Mount Athos together with other elements of the Stoudite monastic organization. However, although likely utilizing all architectural elements he had become familiar with in his original monastic institution, at Mount Kyminas, also located in Bithynia,\(^6\) Athanasius’s approach was creative, conforming to available resources and local needs. This can be deduced from the somewhat rough and inexpert execution of the katholikon at the Great Lavra, as well as his several readjustments of the church design during the construction, the best known being the addition of the two lateral conches to the naos, in order to better accommodate choirs of chan ters. The same approach is visible in the setting out of his monastic quarters, consisting of a chapel, a library, and his cell, in the over-narthex area and the establishment of subsidiary chapels attached to the narthex, one of which was used by him to hear confessions and eventually housed his tomb. All these functional and architectural solutions provided precedents that were emulated within a short time period in at least two other Hagiorite monastic houses, Ivrőn and Vatopedi, becoming characteristic features of Athonite church architecture.

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\(^{5}\) For a similar opinion, see Marinis, Architecture and Ritual (see List of Abbreviations), p. 51.

\(^{6}\) Cyril Mango was also tempted to imagine the Great Lavra modeled on this monastery, but he saw the link between the two communities as the explanation for the occurrence of what he perceived as oriental features in the architecture of the Lavra’s katholikon (Mango, Byzantine Architecture [see List of Abbreviations], pp. 231-235).
The association of the cross-in-square church and the three-bayed narthex with Stoudite coenobitic monasticism is further witnessed by the architecture of Kievan Rus’. The first and most influential coenobitic monastery, the Kiev Caves (Kiev Pechersk) Lavra, was established in the middle of the 11th century by Anthony, a Russian monk who spent most of his monastic life on Mount Athos. He was undoubtedly not only familiar with the architecture of the newest Athonite *katholika*, but may have had a good experience of its usage and suitability to the needs of a coenobitic community. Moreover, the *typikon* of Alexios the Stoudite, the patriarch of Constantinople (1025-1043), written for his monastery in Constantinople, was adopted as the rule of the Kiev Caves Lavra. These double Stoudite monastic roots are also detectable in architecture of early Russian monastic churches: the cross-in-square structure is generally comparable to Constantinopolitan churches of the 11th and 12th centuries, but the regular presence of the over-narthex and its use by an ascetic monk, with sporadic appearances of the twin dome motif (e.g. Antoniev Monastyr’ and Yuryev Monastyr’), as well as the occasional attachment of chapels flanking the narthex (first appeared in the *katholikon* of the Kiev Caves Lavra), seem to be influenced by Mount Athos.

Similarly, the architecture of the early Athonite coenobitic *katholika* was likely impacted by developments in two centers, Bithynia and Constantinople. For example, the interior proportions of narthexes belonging to larger and older churches (Great Lavra, Ivērōn, Vatopedi, St. Demetrius, and Zygou) are closer to those of few Bithynian churches, suggesting that such a plan may have been devised in Bithynia. It is possible that the narthex used by the community where St. Athanasius became monk and spent a few years provided the model for his establishment. Also, he may have likewise adopted from Bithynian monasteries the rather enclosed *katēchoumena*, unless he devised such an accommodation himself, in the same manner
as he decided to add lateral conches in the naos. The same can be said about the two parekklēsia flanking the narthex, i.e. that the concept was either brought from Bithynia or developed on Athos, as none of the surviving churches in Constantinople exhibit similarly attached chapels. Anyhow, the founders of Vatopedi and Ivērōn then embraced these architectural and functional solutions as convenient and applied them when they built katholika for their own foundations.

On the other hand, the Athonite churches (and narthexes), particularly those of Vatopedi and Ivērōn, look more sophisticated than the known Bithynian ones and, due to the imperial patronage on Athos, I believe that architectural influences were coming from the capital, as well. In these two churches, the planning completely emulates the layout developed at the Great Lavra, but the execution is very different and was carried out by a skilled workshop, possibly brought from an urban center, either Constantinople or Thessaloniki. The impact of the capital and, surprisingly, imperial architecture is also traceable in the domically vaulted middle bay in the narthex and the accommodation of a person of distinction in the gallery. Therefore, I see the influences from Bithynian monasteries primarily in terms of organization – transmitted by founders through an ‘architectural or spatial memory’, i.e. the experience of liturgical settings in their previous monastic houses, which were reproduced out of reverence (for spiritual father and home institution) or, more probably, because it was deemed suitable for the same (or similar) monastic organization and liturgical ritual – whereas the Constantinopolitan influences are reflected in architectural design and building techniques. Organization, spatial relationships, and meaning of certain rooms and structures were perhaps of greater importance than the actual form. However, the forms were often associated with a specific room and its function, and –

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7 That does not exclude the possibility that the form of Constantinopolitan narthexes was likewise influenced by Bithynian traditions. I would say that it was. The transfer of ideas and forms, similar to the case of Athos, likely went through monastic links and dissemination of monastic traditions. However, the advanced building workshops and architectural traditions, as well as specific needs of imperial ritual and patronage, influenced the development of certain architectural elements and organizational solutions in churches of the capital.
through the ‘memory of space’ – the forms (i.e. physical expressions) migrated together with functions, meanings, and importance given to specific architectural elements and structures.

Besides the likely emulation of the architecture of ancestral monasteries and certain influential churches, the Athonite narthexes and adjacent structures exhibit some innovations that indicate adjustments to local or new needs, testifying to the inventiveness of the creators of these spaces. As mentioned above, the inner structure of the narthex and its upper storey is, unlike the situation in their Constantinopolitan coevals, independent of the naos’s structure. Also, Athanasius the Athonite may have introduced the lateral chapels and some architectural solutions in the katēchoumena, which were subsequently transmitted to other monastic houses on Mount Athos. However, some of the later monasteries show their own responses to requirements that had risen within their particular situations. At Vatopedi, for example, the exonarthex was added first and then the lateral chapels, which connect to the church through this second narthex. The sloping terrain at Zygou was utilized to secure a direct same-level access to the over-narthex. Moreover, if the katēchoumena at the Great Lavra was covered with domical vaults from the very beginning, then the appearance of twin domes at Ivērōn and Vatopedi must be considered a creative transformation of the form set by the venerable predecessor, or was an altogether new invention. This was, anyhow, a powerful architectural image that was replicated even outside Mount Athos (Panagia tōn Chalkeōn) and continued its life as part of some Late Byzantine narthexes on Athos and elsewhere.
Conclusion

This study has yielded the picture of the narthex as a preparatory space, a buffer zone between the church – the realm of the Divinity – and the rest of the monastery, its ‘secular’ area (e.g. refectory, dormitories, etc.). All various uses of the narthex were apparently determined by this liminal location and the meanings associated with it. As the narthex is architecturally incorporated in the church building – which was often interpreted by Byzantines as a microcosm, an image of the Universe (macrocosm), where the domed naos is likened to the Heavens and the sanctuary becomes the Heaven beyond the Heavens – the space of the narthex received the symbolic dimension of the Earth. Therefore, it acted as an enclosed setting for the portions of church ritual that belonged to the earthly sphere or were administered to those still dwelling therein. In this role, the Middle Byzantine narthex apparently assumed many of the functions of the Early Byzantine atrium, such as the gathering of attendants, processions, events connected to the phialē, transition from the outer world to the membership in the Church or in a monastic community. As such and probably as an already developed architectural feature, including the presence of an upper floor, the narthex was likely borrowed from the urban ecclesiastic architecture – as early monastic churches of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria apparently did not have narthexes – and transferred to the monastic churches of large coenobitic communities. It only assumed additional or adjusted functions as the monastic context dictated.

In my opinion, if the Athonite narthex is considered alone, it cannot be viewed as a distinct type, separate from other Middle Byzantine narthexes. It exhibits generally the same layout and major features; even the existence of the katēchoumena is not exceptional. There are

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only some particular variances in structure and form, but the functions and meaning do not
depart from what seems to have been established within Stoudite monasticism. Any functional
and architectural variances between Athonite and Constantinopolitan narthexes were likely
influenced by differences in monastic traditions, with Mount Athos looking at Bithynia and other
centers more than at Constantinople and its urban and imperial monasteries. Also, the
employment of particular design solutions, architectural elements, and features may have
resulted from the involvement of local building workshops and, perhaps, from the lack of skilled
builders, which is especially evident in the case of the Great Lavra. However, when even
architects and masons from an advanced workshop were most likely commissioned, as at Ivēron
and Vatopedi, the form was ultimately governed by the functional and design model set by the
parent monastic community, in this case the Great Lavra.

When we take into consideration the presence of additional spaces and structures
appended to the narthex in the katholika on Mount Athos, we come to the most striking
characteristic that sets apart the Athonite cases from almost all other surviving Middle Byzantine
monastic churches. These subsidiaries take over some of the narthex’s functions or assume some
specific meaning which stems from their position in the narthex zone. Therefore, they all form
something that can be termed as an ‘aggregated narthex area’. The exonarthex almost replaced
the narthex in its roles of an entrance space and many functions commonly accommodated in the
narthex were allocated to the outer narthex for various reasons, but mostly because they were
considered somewhat less sacred than those that got to remain in the inner narthex, closer to the
prime liturgical spaces of the naos and sanctuary. Thus, the inner narthex retained parts of the
daily and annual liturgical scheme that needed to be celebrated communally and staged away
from the naos, but not outside the church, whereas the former can be described as the venue for
occasional and individual acts of purification or transition (e.g. confession, funeral, burials), and for certain ‘profane’ events, such as monastery councils. The two subsidiary chapels were initially attached to the narthex’s flanks as additional liturgical spaces, but eventually received some of the narthex’s functions, primarily funerary and commemorative, due to their position next to and communication with the narthex. Only the *katēchoumena* were functionally and spatially detached from the narthex, but the accommodation of a monastic cell there, on top of the narthex, was possible only thanks to the narthex’s liminal position between the sacred and the profane. For the same reasons, the *phialē* – which generally remained physically separated from the narthex, but was located in the church’s entrance zone – could receive a subsidiary version or, in some cases, a full replacement fixed in the narthex.

At the end, what could be said about the narthex in a monastic church: was it a necessity for a monastic community and its liturgical scheme? This question that seems to have often been lingering behind the examinations undertaken in this dissertation can finally be answered. The narthex was the space that received the majority of communal non-Eucharistic offices and rituals. And the architectural response to them was often very dynamic and creative, something that we rarely see in the other parts of the church, as they housed the segments of the ritual that had been defined by the Middle Byzantine period. The post-Iconoclasm monasticism, particularly in its coenobitic version, seems to have found its expression in prayers, offices, and rites that supplemented the Divine Liturgy. As these were seen as fluctuating between the sacred space of the church building and the outer world monks lived in, the narthex – which was conveniently located at the threshold – offered itself as the venue. Therefore, I think that the narthex was indeed a prerequisite part of the liturgical space for a coenobitic community. And its importance was further enhanced on Mount Athos by the agglomeration of other structures of
related functions in the narthex zone, forming a complex architectural, functional, and organizational arrangement.

If I am allowed to make an assessment of this dissertation, I would say that it brings all elements of this aggregated narthex area to full light by providing their detailed descriptions, by setting them against other comparable monuments, and by analyzing them in relation to how they were used. Moreover, as the general study of Byzantine narthexes is still to be written, this dissertation greatly contributes to the understanding of the form, organization, functions, and meaning of this major part of the church building and spaces associated with it.
## Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abaton</td>
<td>banned or controlled presence of individual of the opposite sex on the monastic premises</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agrypnia</td>
<td>All-Night Vigil; it comprises several services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akathistos Hymn</td>
<td>anonymous hymn (6th or 7th century) of twenty-four stanzas dedicated to the Virgin Mary and sung either on the Saturday of the fifth week of Great Lent (Slavonic tradition) or on the first five Fridays of Lent (Greek tradition) while the congregation stands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analogion</td>
<td>lectern or icon stand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apodeipnon</td>
<td>Compline; an office conducted after the supper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bēma</td>
<td>sanctuary; in tripartite sanctuary spaces, this term is usually applied to the central part, where the altar table is located</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-in-square</td>
<td>type of church in which the nave of a square plan, subdivided into nine bays, has a vaulting that forms a cross; the central bay is typically covered by a dome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diaklysamos</td>
<td>lit. “rinsing of the mouth”; taking of a piece of blessed bread with a little wine either following the communion or when the congregation restraints from having a proper meal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diakonikon</td>
<td>room flanking the sanctuary, commonly to the south; it serves as the place for vesting of the clergy and storing liturgical vessels and vestments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exonarthex</td>
<td>outer narthex, an additional room in front of the primary narthex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hesperinos</td>
<td>Vespers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hesychastērion</td>
<td>solitary monastic cell; a room or a set of rooms intended for a secluded life of a solitary monk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td><em>Hōra prōtē</em> (First Hour), <em>Hōra tritē</em> (Third Hour), <em>Hōra hektē</em> (Sixth Hour), and <em>Hōra enatē</em> (Ninth Hour); the first three are commonly celebrated between Matins and Divine Liturgy, whereas Ninth Hour precedes Vespers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idiorrhythmia</td>
<td>type of monastic life in which monks live and pray alone or in groups of just a few individuals, meeting with other monks only for communal services (Divine Liturgy) on Sundays or festival days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katēchoumena (pl.)</td>
<td>lit. “the place(s) for catechumens”; term commonly applied to refer to the rooms accommodated above the narthex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katholikon (pl. katholika)</td>
<td>main, congregational church of a coenobitic monastery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kellion</td>
<td>lit. cell; on Mount Athos, a smaller, monastic community, comprising of a few monks and dependant on one of the larger, self-governing monasteries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Koinobion</td>
<td>coenobium (Lat.), community of monks that live, work, and pray together</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ktētōr</td>
<td>person who provides the funds for construction or reconstruction of a church or monastery, for furnishing them with wall paintings, icons, books, liturgical items, and other; can also refer to a monastic who started a community; founder or donor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lavra</td>
<td>originally, a cluster of separate monastic cells, inhabited by monks who conduct semi-eremitical lives and come together for communal prayer service in a church located in the center of the cluster; later, a monastery that is organized in this way, but not necessarily employing the physical setting of separate dwelling facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Litē (pl. litai)</td>
<td>a supplication service, that includes a procession to significant parts of the monastic compound; also used to refer to the part of the church where this service takes place, which is on Mount Athos either the exonarthex (in older, Middle Byzantine katholika) or a large narthex (constructed in the Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine periods)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesonyktikon</td>
<td>Midnight Office; on Mount Athos, the term can also be applied to the narthex, as the place where the Midnight Office takes place</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monydrion</td>
<td>small monastery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naos</td>
<td>space in the church reserved for attending congregation; nave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narthex</td>
<td>the entrance room of a church</td>
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</table>
**Opus sectile**

decorative floor pavement technique that employs inlaid stone pieces of various forms and colors

**Orthros**

Matins

**Over-narthex**

upper storey of the narthex; area (rooms) above the narthex

**Phialē**

lit. “bowl, font”, i.e. holy water font; on Mount Athos, it is also applied to a baldachin-shaped structure that protects the font, which is located in the monastery yard, usually in front of the katholikon

**Parabēmata (pl.)**

rooms adjacent to the bēma, i.e. sanctuary of a church; normally, these are the prothēsis and diakonikon

**Parekklesion (pl. parekklesia)**

secondary or subsidiary church; chapel

**Pentabēlon**

arcade consisting of five apertures and four columns

**Proskynētarion (pl. proskynētaria)**

lavish frame or a stand, usually made in carved stone or wood, in which an icon (either panel painting, fresco, or mosaic) of a special devotional importance is set and exposed for veneration; medieval examples are most often attached to a wall or pier, whereas Post-Byzantine ones can also be free-standing; common locations are on the flanks of the templon and on the narthex’s east wall

**Prothēsis**

service preceding the Divine Liturgy in which the Eucharistic bread and wine are prepared

**Quincunx**

(in stone pavements) geometric pattern consisting of five interlaced circles arranged in a cross

**Sabbaite (Jerusalem) Typikon**

liturgical rule devised in the Lavra of St. Sabbas the Sanctified in the Judean Desert by combining Palestinian monastic practices and liturgical customs of Jerusalem; later, some of its elements or the entire rule were adopted by monasteries in Constantinople, Mount Athos, and other parts of Byzantium

**Skētē**

monastic community organized in a similar way as lavra; in Athonite parlance, a smaller monastery that may have been independent in past, but today functions as a dependency of one of twenty self-governing monasteries

**Skeuophylakion**

sacristy; room for safekeeping liturgical vessels, vestments, books, documents, and other items of great value
**Stasidion (pl. stasidia)** fixed folding chair in church, similar to a pew, which can either be used for seating or provide support when standing; they are commonly found along walls

**Stoudite Typikon** liturgical rule practiced in the Stoudios Monastery in Constantinople, which was embraced by the majority of coenobitic communities during the Middle Byzantine period

**Templon** sanctuary screen, iconostasis

**Tribēlon** tri-lobe opening consisting of three arched apertures, which are separated by two columns or mullions

**Trisagion** the “thrice-holy” hymn (“Holy is God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal”); an intercessory prayer beginning with this hymn

**Typikon (pl. typika)** charter, rule; can refer to either a foundation charter (*ktētorikon typikon*) or a set of liturgical instructions or prescriptions (*leitourgikon typikon*)

**Typika** (Slavonic *Izobrazitelnaya*) an office celebrated between Sixth and Ninth Hours on days when there is no Divine Liturgy, i.e. on certain days during Great Lent
(Some works listed here are not cited in the study; they provide relevant further reading.)

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ILLUSTRATIONS
Chapter 1
Fig. 1 – Prōtaton Church from southwest (photo: I. Pantazēs, 2012)

Fig. 2 – Prōtaton Church from northeast (photo: M. Stanković, 2012)
Fig. 3 – Prōtaton Church, ground plan (P. Mylonas, 1975)

Fig. 4 – Prōtaton Church, longitudinal section facing north (P. Mylonas, 1975)
Fig. 5 – Prōtaton Church, south elevation (P. Mylonas, 1975)

Fig. 6 – Prōtaton Church, south façade (A. H. S. Megaw)
Fig. 7 – Philotheou Monastery, drawing by Vasilii Grigorovich-Barskii (1744)

Fig. 8 – Philotheou, *katholikon*, drawing by V. Grigorovich-Barskii (detail of Fig. 7)
Fig. 9 – Philotheou, a) reconstructed ground plan of the ancient katholikon (P. Mylonas, based on the drawing by V. Grigorovich-Barskii) and b) this reconstruction minimally corrected in the narthex area (author)

Fig. 10 – Kelli of Ravdouchou, plan of the present complex (P. Mylonas)
Fig. 11 – Ravdouchou, present upper and lower floor plans (b, c) and longitudinal section of the original building facing north (a) by P. Mylonas
Fig. 12 – Ravdouchou, reconstructed north façade and ground plan (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 13 – Kalamitsjön, katholikon (S. Mamaloukos):
a – ground plan of the remains,
b – hypothetical reconstruction, ground plan,
c – hypothetical reconstruction, longitudinal section,
d – hypothetical reconstruction, north elevation
Fig. 14 – Mount Latros, Stylos Monastery, ground plan of the complex (Th. Wiegand)

Fig. 15 – Mar Saba, ground plan of the structures surrounding the courtyard (1 – main church)
Fig. 16 – Great Lavra Monastery, ground plan of the monastic complex (P. Mylonas):
A – katholikon, B – phialē, Γ – trapeza, Δ – main gate, E – pyrgos (tower)

Fig. 17 – Great Lavra, ground plan of the monastic complex in the Middle Byzantine period (P. Theocharidēs): bold line – enclosure as in the 960s, 1 – katholikon, 2 – site of belfry (1060?), 3 – old hēgoumeneion, 4 – remnants of the kellion of St. Athanasius (predating the foundation of the monastery), 5 – the “Tzimiskēs” Tower, 6 – tower of a putative extension of the early 11th century
Fig. 18 – Great Lavra, reconstructed ground plan of the monastic complex as in ca. 1810 (P. Theocharidès)

Fig. 19 – Great Lavra, katholikon from northeast (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 20 – Great Lavra, *katholikon* with *phialē* viewed from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 21 – Great Lavra, *katholikon* with *phialē* viewed from southwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 22 – Great Lavra, phases in the formation of the *katholikon* (P. Mylonas):

a – the initial form *ca*. 963,
b – the removal of the diaphragms,
c – the addition of *choroi* (side conches),
d – the form *ca*. 1002

Fig. 23 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, interior of the south conch from northwest
Fig. 24 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, drawing of the ground plan with an ongoing liturgical service (V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744)
Fig. 25 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, longitudinal section facing south and ground plan (S. Voyadjis)
Fig. 26 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, transversal section through the *litē* and chapels’ narthexes facing east (S. Voyadjis)

Fig. 27 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, plan of the floor pavement (P. Mylonas)

Fig. 27A – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, floor pavement of the original narthex (P. Mylonas)

Fig. 28 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, central part of the narthex’s floor (photo: D. Liakos)

538
Fig. 29 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, ideal reconstructions of four characteristic phases in the evolution of the complex (P. Mylonas): a – initial plan *ca*. 963, b – addition of *choroi* *ca*. 1002, c – form acquired by the end of the 11th century and recorded in the 1520s, d – situation as of 1744 (when Barskii visited it)
Fig. 30 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, hypothetical and schematic reconstruction of the original narthex, ground plan (author, based on Fig. 27)

Fig. 31 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, *parekklesion* of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia, tomb of St. Athanasius of Athos from southeast (photo: F. Dölger, 1941)
Fig. 32 – Great Lavra, depictions of the *katholikon*: a – on a wall painting in the *katholikon* (1535), b – on a wall painting in the refectory (after 1527), c – on an etching (1810)

Fig. 33 – Great Lavra, ideal reconstruction of the *katholikon*’s west elevation as of the 1520s (P. Mylonas), with a detail of Fig. 32b
Fig. 34 – Great Lavra, *katholikon* from north (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 35 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, hypothetical and schematic reconstruction of the *katēchoumena*, ground plan (author)
Fig. 36 – Iviron Monastery, ground plan of the monastic complex (P. Mylonas):
A – katholikon, B – phialē, Γ – trapeza (refectory), Δ – main gate, Δα – original gateway, E – pyrgos (tower)
Fig. 37 – Ivērōn, the roofs and domes of the *katholikon* viewed from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 38 – Ivērōn, *katholikon* from north (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 39 – Ivērōn, *katholikon*, longitudinal section facing north (P. Mylonas) and ground floor plan, with the initial structure dark-shaded (P. Mylonas)
Fig. 40 – Ivērōn, katholikon with phialē viewed from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 41 – Ivērōn, katholikon with phialē from southwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 42 – Ivērōn, *katholikon*, plans of the narthex and *exonarthex* (P. Mylonas)

**a** – ground level

**b** – *katēchoumeneion*
Fig. 43 – Ivērōn, *katholikon*, domes of the *katēchoumeneion* from southeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 44 – Ivērōn, *katholikon* from northwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 45 – Vatopedi Monastery, ground plan of the monastic complex (P. Mylonas):

Fig. 46 – Vatopedi, aerial view of the *katholikon* and refectory with other surrounding structures from west
Fig. 47 – Vatopedi, katholikon and the rest of the monastery from northeast

Fig. 48 – Vatopedi, katholikon from south (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 49 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, plans of the lower and upper levels, with construction phases (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 50 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, isometric section looking northeast (S. Mamaloukos)

Fig. 51 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, isometric sections looking southwest (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 52 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, longitudinal section facing south (S. Mamaloukos)

Fig. 53 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, transversal section through the first narthex (*mesonyktikon*) and *parekklēsia* facing east (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 54 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, transversal section through the second narthex (*litē*) and narthexes of the *parekklēsia* facing east (S. Mamaloukos)

Fig. 55 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, transversal section through the porch facing east (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 56 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the initial form (end of the 10th cent.), plans of the lower and upper levels (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 57 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the initial form (end of the 10th cent.), longitudinal section facing north and south elevation (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 58 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the initial form (end of the 10th cent.), west elevation (S. Mamaloukos)

Fig. 59 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the initial form (end of the 10th cent.), isometric view from southeast (M. Kambanēs)
Fig. 60 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form *ca*. beginning of the 11th century, plans of the lower and upper levels (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 61 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form *ca.* beginning of the 11th century, west elevations (S. Mamaloukos)

Fig. 62 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form *ca.* beginning of the 11th century, north elevation (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 63 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form as of *ca*. mid-11th century, ground plan and south elevation (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 64 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form as of *ca.* mid-11th century, west elevation (S. Mamaloukos)

Fig. 65 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, ideal reconstruction of the form as of *ca.* mid-11th century, isometric view from southwest (M. Kambanēs)
Fig. 66 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, phialē from northwest (photo: author, 2006)

Fig. 67 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, porch with the clock tower and phialē (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 68 – Vatopedi, katholikon, first narthex (mesonyktikon), plans of the ground and upper floors (details of drawings by S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 69 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the *mesonyktikon* looking north (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 70 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the *mesonyktikon* looking south (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 71 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the south bay of the *mesonyktikon* looking south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 72 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *mesonyktikon*, vault of the central bay (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 73 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, entrance portal of the *mesonyktikon* from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 74 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, north window of the *mesonyktikon* from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 75 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, lintel of the portal of the *mesonyktikon* (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 76 – Vatopedi, katholikon, arcosolium in the mesonyktikon’s south wall (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 77 – Vatopedi, katholikon, floor of the mesonyktikon from north (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 78 – Vatopedi, *katholikon, mesonyktikon*, fresco of Christ (second decade of the 14th cent.) on the southeast pilaster (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 79 – Vatopedi, *katholikon, tribelon* viewed from the *naos* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 80 – Vatopedi, *katholikon, tribelon* viewed from the *katêchoumena* (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 81 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *katēchoumeneion*, door viewed from east (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 82 – Vatopedi, *katēchoumena*, interior of the north chapel from SE (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 83 – Vatopedi, *katēchoumena*, interior of the south chapel from SE (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 84 – Vatopedi, *katēchoumena*, interior of the south chapel from SW (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 85 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, the east wall of the *litê*’s upper floor, once the west façade of the initial church, the central and south blind arches (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 86 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, first and second narthexes, plans of the ground and upper floors (details of drawings by S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 87 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the *litē* from northwest (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 88 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, interior of the *litē* from southwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 89 – Vatopedi, katholikon, the pentabēlon of the litē from northwest (photo: author, 2006)
Fig. 90 – Vatopedi, katholikon, entrance portal of the litē with bronze-plated doors (dated to 1426) from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 91 – Vatopedi, katholikon, lintel of the litē’s portal from west (photo: author, 2006)
Fig. 92 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, bronze plaques of the Annunciation (dated to 1426) of the entrance portal of the *litē* (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 93 – Vatopedi, *lità*, “alcove” and north door (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 94 – Vatopedi, *lità*, east door in the “alcove” (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 95 – Vatopedi, *lità*, west wall of the “alcove” (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 96 – Vatopedi, *lità*, the centerpiece of the floor (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 97 – (left) Vatopedi, *katholikon*, inside the porch looking northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 98 – (below) Vatopedi, *katholikon*, abbot’s throne and part of bench in the porch (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 99 – Vatopedi, litě, the mosaic of Deësis above the east door (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 100 – Vatopedi, litě, east door with the Annunciation mosaics (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 101 – Vatopedi, litē, north section of the east wall’s decoration (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 102 – Vatopedi, litē, south section of the east wall’s decoration (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 103 – Vatopedi, *litē*, upper registers of the east wall’s decoration (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 104 – Vatopedi, *litē*, west wall arcade, southernmost spandrels with Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zachariah, painted 1311/12 (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 105 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, the upper floor arcade of the once west façade of the *exonarthex*, *ca.* beginning of the 11th century (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 106 – Vatopedi, *katholikon* from south (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 107 – Vatopedi, old and new bell towers from E (author, 2006)

Fig. 108 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, inside the porch from S (author, 2008)

Fig. 109 – Vatopedi, plan of the monastery (P. Theocharidēs):
1 – *katholikon*,
2 – *trapeza*,
3 – belfry of 1427,
4 – Panagia Tower,
5 – Metamorphosis Tower,
6 – church of the Holy Anargyroi,
7 – present entrance complex,
8 – older entrance
Fig. 110 – Xenophōntos, plan of the monastery’s oldest core (P. Theocharidēs)

Fig. 111 – Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon, longitudinal section facing north and ground plan (P. Mylonas)
Fig. 112 – Xenophontos, Old Katholikon from south (2011)

Fig. 113 – Xenophontos, Old Katholikon from north (2006)
Fig. 114 – Xenophontos, monastery from south, drawing by V. Grigorovich-Barskii (1744)

Fig. 114A – Xenophontos, Old Katholikon from south (detail of Fig. 114)
Fig. 115 – Xenophōntos, Old Katholikon, interior of the litē looking northeast (photo: P. Mylonas, 1962)
Fig. 116 – Xenophōntos, Old *Katholikon*, ground plan of the floor pavement (P. Mylonas)

Fig. 117 – Xenophōntos, Old *Katholikon*, ground plan (P. Theocharidēs) with a hypothetical reconstruction of the original narthex delineated in red (author)
Fig. 118 – Xenophōntos, plan of the monastery as enlarged in 1078(?) (P. Theocharidēs):
1 – katholikon, 2 – possible location of the trapeza, 3 – water mill

Fig. 119 – Xenophōntos, plan of the monastery in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century (P. Theocharidēs):
1 – katholikon, 2 – trapeza, 3 – water mill, 4 – chapel of St. Demetrius and portico, 5 – boat house
Fig. 120 – Frangokastro (Zygou Monastery), plan of the excavated parts (as of Oct 2003):
1 – *katholikon*, 2 – refectory, 3 – main gate, 4 – main tower

Fig. 121 – Frangokastro (Zygou), the site from south
Fig. 122 – Zygou, *katholikon*, ground plan of excavated parts (as of February 2003)

Fig. 123 – Zygou, *katholikon*, ground plan with building phases (A. Kapandriti):
- **ca. 1000,**
- **first half of the 11th century,**
- **mid-11th century,**
- **last phase**
Fig. 124 – Zygou, *katholikon*, ground plan of the inner narthex (detail of Fig. 122; amended by author, in red)

Fig. 125 – Zygou, *katholikon*, inside the inner narthex looking southeast (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 126 – Zygou, *katholikon*, inside the inner narthex looking south (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 127 – Zygou, *katholikon*, restored marble west portal of the inner narthex (with the restored *naos* portal and *templon* screen in depth), from west (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 128 – Zygou, inner narthex’s north window from W (author, 2010)

Fig. 129 – Zygou, inner narthex’s south window from W (author, 2010)

Fig. 130 – Zygou, inner narthex, south niche from NW (author, 2010)

Fig. 131 – Zygou, inner narthex, north niche from W (author, 2010)
Fig. 132 – Zygou, *katholikon*, inner narthex, floor pavement of the south half, from north (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 133 – Zygou, *katholikon*, interior of the north chapel from south (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 134 – Zygou, *katholikon*, interior of the north chapel looking northeast (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 135 – Zygou, *katholikon*, ground plan of the narthexes and chapels (detail of Fig. 122; amended by author, in red)

Fig. 136 – Zygou, *katholikon*, remains of the *exonarthex*’s west façade (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 137 – Zygou, katholikon, north half of the exonarthex’s west façade (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 138 – Zygou, katholikon, south half of the exonarthex’s west façade (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 139 – Zygou, exonarthex’s west façade, parapet slab of the north opening in situ (photo: author, 2010) and a reconstruction of the opening’s closure (T. Xanthopoulou)

Fig. 140 – Zygou, katholikon, remains of the exonarthex’s north façade (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 141 – Zygou, katholikon, exonarthex through its north door (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 142 – Zygou, *katholikon*, northeast corner of the *exonarthex* and remains of the floor from southwest (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 143 – Zygou, *katholikon*, southeast corner of the *exonarthex* from northwest (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 144 – Zygou, *exonarthex*, quincunx design of the floor’s central section, from north

Fig. 145 – Zygou, *exonarthex*, remains of frescoes of the Annunciation on the east pilasters

Fig. 146 – Zygou, *exonarthex*, reconstruction of the fresco of Archangel Gabriel from the Annunciation composition (T. Xanthopoulou)
Fig. 147 – Zygou, *katholikon*, view into the south chapel from southwest (photo: author, 2010)

Fig. 148 – Zygou, *katholikon*, remains of the south chapel’s west façade (photo: author, 2010)
Fig. 149 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, ground plan of the complex:
1 – kyriakon (main church), 2 – refectory (with kitchen and belfry), 3 – dormitory

Fig. 150 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, aerial view of the complex from southwest
Fig. 151 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon, ground plan (detail of Fig. 149)

Fig. 152 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon, longitudinal section facing north (P. Androudēs)
Fig. 153 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, *kyriakon*, south elevation (P. Androudēs)

Fig. 154 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, *kyriakon*, ideal reconstruction of the original mid-11th-century form, ground plan and longitudinal section facing north (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 155 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, *kyriakon*, lintel of the door to the *naos* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 156 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, *kyriakon*, detail of the niche in the narthex’s east wall (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 157 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, kyriakon, narthex from southwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 158 – Skete of St. Demetrius, kyriakon, narthex part from south (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 159 – Skete of St. Demetrius, kyriakon, naos part from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 160 – Skete of St. Demetrius, kyriakon, window in the naos’s west wall (author, 2008)
Fig. 161 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, engraving (second half of the 18th c.)

Fig. 162 – Skētē of St. Demetrius, remains immediately south of the kyriakon, from southwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 163 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, plans of the complex’s upper (A) and lower (B) levels (S. Mamaloukos)

Fig. 164 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church: plans – upper floor (a), ground floor (b), roofs (c); longitudinal sections – along the main axis, facing south (d), through the south aisle, facing south (e), along the main axis, facing north (f); transversal sections – through the narthex, facing east (g), in front of the west façade, facing east (h), through the *naos’s* west bays, facing west (i) (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 165 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church from southeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 166 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church from south (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 167 – Kellion of St. Procopius, church from northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 168 – Kellion of St. Procopius, church, northeast corner of the narthex from northeast (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 169 – Kellion of St. Procopius, church, chapel’s apse protruding into the naos, from northeast (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 170 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, interior of the narthex from north (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 171 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, interior of the narthex from southeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 172 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, vaults of the narthex’s central and north bays from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 173 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, window and niche in the narthex’s north bay, from west (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 174 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, entrance to the chapel, from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 175 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church’s entrance, from west (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 176 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, west and south façades (S. Mamaloukos)

Fig. 177 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, church, ideal reconstruction of the original, mid-11th-century form (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 178 – Voroskopou, church of St. Symeon, longitudinal section facing north and ground plan of the remains (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 179 – Voroskopou, church of St. Symeon, ideal reconstruction, longitudinal section facing north and ground plan (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 180 – Vorokopou, church of St. Symeon, southeast corner of the narthex

Fig. 181 – Melissourgeiou, church of St. Nicholas, ground plan of the remains (S. Mamaloukos after I. Papangelos)
Fig. 182 – Melissourgeiou, church of St. Nicholas, ground plan and longitudinal section of an ideal reconstruction (I. Papangelos – S. Mamaloukos)
Chapter 2
Fig. 183 – Istanbul, Fenari İsa Camii (Monastery of Lips), from east (photo: author, 2005)

Fig. 184 – Fenari İsa Camii (Monastery of Lips), from southwest (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 185 – Fenari İsa Camii (Monastery of Lips), after partial restoration, from northwest

Fig. 186 – Monastery of Lips, *katholikon*, ground plan (E. Mamboury)
Fig. 187 – Monastery of Lips, *katholikon*, North (Theotokos) Church, ground plan (A. H. S. Megaw)
Fig. 188 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, ground plan of the narthex (A. H. S. Megaw, detail of Fig. 187)

Fig. 189 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, ground plan of the narthex (E. Mamboury, detail of Fig. 186)
Fig. 190 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, interior of the narthex looking north (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1935)
Fig. 191 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, lower cornice

Fig. 192 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, interior of the stairwell tower looking south (photo: Th. Macridy, ca. 1929)

Fig. 193 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, cross section through the stairwell tower looking north (detail of a drawing by A. H. S. Megaw)
Fig. 194 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, longitudinal section through the north aisle looking north (E. Mamboury)

Fig. 195 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, ideal reconstruction of the narthex’s upper floor, ground plan (detail of a drawing by E. Mamboury)
Fig. 196 – Fenari İsa Camii (Monastery of Lips), before restoration, from northwest (photo: Byzantine Institute, ca. 1960)
Fig. 197 – Fenari İsa Camii (Monastery of Lips), before restoration, from northwest (photo: Th. Macridy, *ca.* 1929)

Fig. 198 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, drawing of what remains of the original north façade (A. H. S. Megaw)
Fig. 199 – Monastery of Lips, Theotokos Church, ideal reconstruction of the original form (A. H. S. Megaw)
Fig. 200 – Istanbul, Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church) before restoration, from northwest (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1935)

Fig. 201 – Istanbul, Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church) after restoration, from northwest (photo: J. Bogdanović, 2005)
Fig. 202 – Myrelaion Church, reconstructed ground plan (C. L. Striker)

Fig. 203 – Myrelaion Church, narthex, inverted plan of the vaulting (C. L. Striker)
Fig. 204 – Myrelaion Church, narthex, transversal section facing north (C. L. Striker)

Fig. 205 – Myrelaion Church, narthex, longitudinal section facing east (C. L. Striker)
Fig. 206 – Myrelaion Church, ideal reconstruction, perspective cut-off (C. L. Striker)
Fig. 207 – Myrelaion Church, ideal reconstruction, perspective from southwest (C. Bozkurt)
Fig. 208 – Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church), the narthex segment of the north façade, from northwest (photo: author, 2013)

Fig. 209 – Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church), narthex, vaults of the middle and north bays, from south (photo: author, 2013)

Fig. 210 – Bodrum Camii (Myrelaion Church), narthex, vault of the north bay (photo: author, 2013)
Fig. 211 – Istanbul, Eski İmaret Camii, from southeast (photo: J. Bogdanović, 2005)

Fig. 212 – Istanbul, Eski İmaret Camii, ground plan with a reconstruction of the original form of the exonarthex (R. Ousterhout, after J. Ebersolt and A. Thiers)
Fig. 213 – Eski İmaret Camii, narthex, interior looking north (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 214 – Eski İmaret Camii, narthex, interior wall cornice (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 215 – Eski İmaret Camii, narthex, interior of the south end, upper parts (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 216 – Eski İmaret Camii, narthex, interior of the north end, from southwest (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 217 – Eski İmaret Camii, south door between the narthex and exonarthex, viewed from the latter (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 218 – Eski İmaret Camii, lintel of the central portal between the narthex and exonarthex, viewed from the latter (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 219 – Eski İmaret Camii, longitudinal section facing south (A. Van Millingen)

Fig. 220 – Eski İmaret Camii, *katêchoumena*, entrance to the south chamber from west (photo: L. Theis, 1989)

Fig. 221 – Eski İmaret Camii, interior of the over-narthex, from northwest (photo: A. K. Porter)
Fig. 222 – Eski İmaret Camii, view of the naos through the tribelon of the gallery (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1937)

Fig. 223 – Eski İmaret Camii, interior of the naos, from east (photographed in 2009)

Fig. 224 – Eski İmaret Camii, katēchoumena viewed from the naos (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 225 – Eski İmaret Camii, from north (photo: N. Asutay-Effenberger, A. Effenberger)

Fig. 226 – Eski İmaret Camii, from northwest (photographed in 2007)
Fig. 227 – Eski İmaret Camii, narthex’s south façade, from southeast (photo: J. Bogdanović, 2005)
Fig. 228 – Istanbul, Vefa Kilise Camii (Molla Gürani Camii), from northwest (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 229 – Istanbul, Vefa Kilise Camii, from northeast (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 230 – Istanbul, Vefa Kilise Camii, exonarthex from southwest (photo: author, 2005)
Fig. 231 – Vefa Kilise Camii, ground plan and longitudinal section facing north (A. Van Millingen)

Fig. 232 – Vefa Kilise Camii, narthex, interior looking north (photo: L. Theis, 1993)
Fig. 233 – Vefa Kilise Camii, narthex, interior looking south (photo: T. F. Mathews)
Fig. 234 – Vefa Kilise Camii, narthex’s west façade, from northwest (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 235 – Vefa Kilise Camii, transversal section through the exonarthex facing east (Ch. Taxier; Royal Institute of British Architects)
Fig. 236 – Vefa Kilise Camii, north annex, from northwest (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 237 – Vefa Kilise Camii, door connecting north annex with exonarthex, from southwest (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 238 – Tırilye (previously Zeytinbağı), Fatih Camii from northwest
Fig. 239 – Tîrîlye, Fatih Camii, ground plan (R. Ousterhout, after M. S. Pekak)

Fig. 240 – Tîrîlye, Fatih Camii, longitudinal section facing south (M. S. Pekak)

Fig. 241 – Tîrîlye, Fatih Camii, isometric cut-off (R. Ousterhout, after M. S. Pekak)
Fig. 242 – Tirilye, Fatih Camii, interior of the narthex looking northeast (photo: E. Seymenler, 2012)

Fig. 243 – Tirilye, Fatih Camii, interior of the narthex looking east (photo: M. Cambaz, 2012)
Fig. 244 – Tirilye, Fatih Camii from west, within the modern entrance porch (photo: M. Cambaz, 2012)

Fig. 245 – Tirilye, Fatih Camii, row of columns in the courtyard from southeast (photo: C. Mango and I. Ševčenko)
Fig. 246 – Tirilye, Fatih Camii, ground plan published by F. W. Hasluck in 1906/7

Fig. 247 – Tirilye, Fatih Camii, reconstructed ground plan (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 248 – Pelekētē Monastery (near Tirilye), reconstructed ground plan (author, based on C. Mango and I. Ševčenko)

Fig. 249 – Kurşunlu, Megas Agros Monastery (?), katholikon, reconstructed ground plan (author, based on C. Mango and I. Ševčenko)
Fig. 250 – İznik (Nicaea), church north of the city, ground plan (S. Eyice, drawn by H. Togay)

Fig. 251 – Yılanca Bayır (Diliskelesi, Gebze), *katholikon* of the Monastery of Nikētiatai (?) (S. Ćurčić, after A. M. Mansel)
Fig. 252 – Çeltikdere (near Seben), remains of church from north

Fig. 253 – Çeltikdere (near Seben), remains of church from west
Fig. 254 – Çeltikdere, church, ground plan of the remains (Y. Ötüken and R. Ousterhout, after S. Eyice) and reconstructed ground plan (Y. Ötüken and R. Ousterhout)

Fig. 255 – Çeltikdere, church, inside the narthex looking south (photo: Y. Ötüken and R. Ousterhout)
Fig. 256 – Pendik, church, reconstructed ground plan (M. Kappas, after C. Soyhan)

Fig. 257 – Thessaloniki, Panagia tōn Chalekeōn from south (photo: author, 2006)
Fig. 258 – Thessaloniki, Panagia tōn Chalekeōn, ground and upper level plans (S. Ćurčić)
Fig. 259 – Panagia tòn Chalekeôn, longitudinal section facing south (D. Evangelidès) and transversal section through the narthex facing east (S. Ćurčić, after D. Evangelidès)

Fig. 260 – Panagia tòn Chalekeôn, narthex, drawing of frescoes of the east half of the barrel-vault (D. Evangelidès)
Fig. 261 – (left) Panagia tōn Chalekeōn, from southwest (photo: S. Ćurčić)

Fig. 262 – (below) Panagia tōn Chalekeōn, upper part of the narthex’s west façade (photo: author, 2006)
Fig. 263 – Olynthos, remains of a Byzantine church (St. Nisholas?) from west (1938)

Fig. 264 – Olynthos, Byzantine church (St. Nicholas?), ground plan of the remains and reconstructed ground plan (P. Vocotopoulos)
[Chapter 2:] *Excursus*
Fig. 265 – Servia, remains of the “Basilica of the Catechumens”, ground plan

Fig. 266 – Servia, remains of the “Basilica of the Catechumens” from south
Fig. 267 – Mikrē Prespa, Hagios Achilleios, ground plan

Fig. 268 – Nesebār (Mesēmbria), Old Metropolis, ground plan (S. Ćurčić)
Fig. 269 – Nesebâr (Mesêmbria), ruins of the Old Metropolis from southwest (lithograph by Deroy after C. Sayger and A. Desarnod, 1829)

Fig. 270 – Nesebâr (Mesêmbria), Old Metropolis, remains from west (photographed in 2014)
Fig. 271 – Basilicas of the Old Metropolis of Verroia (A) and the Metropolis of Kalambaka (B), ground plans rendered in the same scale (S. Ćurčić)

Fig. 272 – Kalambaka, Metropolis from southwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 273 – Serres, Hagioi Theodōroi, ground plan (N. Moutsopoulos)

Fig. 274 – Serres, Hagioi Theodōroi from southwest
Fig. 275 – Amorium, “Lower City Church”, ground plan (E. A. Ivison)

Fig. 276 – Vize, Hagia Sophia from northwest (photo: F. A. Bauer, H. A. Klein, 2003)
Fig. 277 – Vize, Hagia Sophia, plans of the ground and gallery floors (drawings: R. Rosenbauer)

Fig. 278 – Vize, Hagia Sophia, longitudinal section looking south and transversal section looking west (drawings: R. Rosenbauer)
Fig. 279 – Vize, Hagia Sophia, west elevation (drawing: R. Rosenbauer and R. Casagrande)

Fig. 280 – Vize, Hagia Sophia, interior of the nave looking west (photo: from the internet)
Fig. 281 – Ohrid, Cathedral of St. Sophia, ground plan (V. Korač, M. Šuput)

Fig. 282 – Ohrid, Cathedral of St. Sophia from northeast (photo: author, 2016)
Fig. 283 – Ohrid, Cathedral of St. Sophia, narthex’s south façade (photo: author, 2016)

Fig. 284 – Orchomenos, Church of the Panagia in Skripou, ground plan (A. Papalexandrou)
Fig. 285 – Church of the Panagia in Skripou, longitudinal section looking north (A. Papalexandrou)

Fig. 286 – Church of the Panagia in Skripou, section through the narthex looking east (A. Papalexandrou)
Fig. 287 – Church of the Panagia in Skripou, reconstruction of the original appearance, south elevation (A. Papalexandrou)

Fig. 288 – Church of the Panagia in Skripou from northwest (photographed in 1991)
Fig. 289 – Istanbul, Hirami Ahmet Paşa Camii (St. John en tō Troullō) from southwest (photo: T. F. Mathews)

Fig. 290 – Istanbul, Hirami Ahmet Paşa Camii (St. John en tō Troullō), interior of the narthex looking north (photo: T. F. Mathews)

Fig. 291 – Istanbul, St. John en tō Troullō, reconstructed ground plan (V. Marinis)
Fig. 292 – Istanbul, Zeyrek Camii (Pantokrator Monastery) from east, distant view (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 293 – Pantokrator Monastery, ground plan of the three churches (R. Ousterhout)

Fig. 294 – Pantokrator Monastery, longitudinal sections of the north, middle, and south churches facing north (M. Restle)
Fig. 295 – Pantokrator Monastery, south church, narthex looking north (photo: T. F. Mathews)
Fig. 296 – Pantokrator Monastery, north church, gallery looking north (photo: Dumbarton Oaks, ICFA)

Fig. 297 – Pantokrator Monastery, south church, naos looking west (photo: R. Ousterhout)
Fig. 298 – Pantokrator Monastery, north church, naos looking west (photo: Byzantine Institute)
Fig. 299 – Pantokrator Monastery, south church, hypothetical reconstruction of the original west façade (J. Ebersolt, A. Thiers)

Fig. 300 – Panokrator Monastery, three churches, domes from southwest (photo: R. Ousterhout)
Fig. 301 – Pantokratōr Monastery, interior of the *exonarthex*, openings to the narthex of the south church from southwest (photo: R. Ousterhout)

Fig. 302 – Pantokratōr Monastery, interior of the *exonarthex* looking north (photo: N. Artamonoff, late 1930s)
Fig. 303 – Çanlı Kilise near Çeltek as in 1907 from southwest (photo: G. L. Bell)

Fig. 304 – Çanlı Kilise as in 1907 from west (photo: G. L. Bell)
Fig. 305 – Çanlı Kilise, ground plan published in 1907 (H. Rott)

Fig. 306 – Çanlı Kilise, ground plan of the present remains (R. Ousterhout)

Fig. 307 – Çanlı Kilise, reconstructed longitudinal section facing south (R. Ousterhout)

Fig. 308 – Çanlı Kilise, reconstruction of the south façade (R. Ousterhout)
Fig. 309 – Çanlı Kilise, west elevation of the present remains (R. Ousterhout)

Fig. 310 – Çanlı Kilise, section through the narthex and north annex facing east (R. Ousterhout)
Fig. 311 – Çanlı Kilise, interior of the narthex looking north (photo: M. Ballance, 1956)

Fig. 312 – Çanlı Kilise, interior of the narthex looking south (photo: R. Ousterhout)

Fig. 313 – Çanlı Kilise, upper part of the naos’s west wall from east (photo: R. Ousterhout)
Fig. 314 – Belisırma, Karagedik Kilise as in 1907 from northeast (photo: G. L. Bell)

Fig. 315 – Karagedik Kilise, ground plan of the remains (P. Androudis)

Fig. 316 – Karagedik Kilise, ground plan as recorded by W. M. Ramsay and G. L. Bell (1907)
Fig. 317 – Karagedik Kilise, reconstructed plans of the upper and lower levels (P. Androudis)

Fig. 318 – Karagedik Kilise, remnants of a chamber above the northwest bay of the naos (photo: P. Androudis, 2004)

Fig. 319 – Karagedik Kilise as in 1907 from southeast (photo: G. L. Bell)
Fig. 320 – Güzelyurt, Kilise Camii (St. Gregory) from southeast (photo: Ph. Norton, 2015)

Fig. 321 – Güzelyurt, Kilise Camii, interior of the narthex looking south (photo: T. Neesam, 2007)
Fig. 322 – Güzelyurt, Kilise Camii, interior of the *naos* looking southwest (photo: R. Gómez, 2008)

Fig. 323 – Athens, St. Catherine (originally dedicated to Sts. Theodores), reconstructed ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 324 – Athens, Hagioi Theodōroi from northwest

Fig. 325 – Athens, Hagioi Theodōroi, ground plan (A. Alexandratou)
Fig. 326 – Athens, Panagia Kapnikarea from southwest (an old photograph)

Fig. 327 – Athens, Panagia Kapnikarea, roofs from southwest
Fig. 328 – Athens, Panagia Kapnikarea, ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (V. Dēmos)

Fig. 329 – Athens, Panagia Kapnikarea, exonarthex, section facing east and western elevation (V. Dēmos)
Fig. 330 – Athens, St. John the Theologian in Plaka, longitudinal section facing south, ground plan, and north elevation (A. Paraskevopoulos)
Fig. 331 – Athens, Panagia hē Gorgoepēkoos from southwest

Fig. 332 – Athens, Panagia hē Gorgoepēkoos, ground plan (V. Korać, M. Šuput)
Fig. 333 – Gaurolimē, Panagia Panaxiōtissa from northwest (photo: V. Korać, M. Šuput)

Fig. 334 – Gaurolimē, Panagia Panaxiōtissa, ground plan (V. Korać, M. Šuput)

Fig. 335 – Korōpi (Attica), Church of Transfiguration from southwest (photo: Melissa Publishing House, Athens)
Fig. 336 – Gatsounē (Peloponnese), Church of Theotokos ἡ Καθολική from southwest (photo: Ch. Bouras, L. Boura)

Fig. 337 – Gatsounē, Church of Theotokos ἡ Καθολική, ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (Ch. Bouras, L. Boura; redrawn after R. Traquair)
Fig. 338 – Chōnikas (Argolis), Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos, ground plan, longitudinal section facing south, combined transversal section through the naos and narthex facing east, and north elevation (A. Struck)
Fig. 339 – St. Nicholas τῆς Rodias, near Arta, ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (A. Orlandos)

Fig. 340 – Monastery of Hosios Loukas, two main churches, Katholikon (south) and Church of Panagia (north), ground plan (R. Schultz and H. Barnsley)
Fig. 341 – Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Church of Panagia, longitudinal section facing south (R. Schultz and H. Barnsley)

Fig. 342 – Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Church of Panagia, interior of the narthex looking northeast (photo: H. A. Rosbach, 2009)

Fig. 343 – Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Church of Panagia, exonarthex from west (2011)
Fig. 344 – Hosios Meletios, *katholikon*, ground plan (A. Orlandos, modified by R. Ousterhout)

Fig. 345 – Hosios Meletios, *exonarthex* and narthex of the *katholikon* from southwest (2012)
Fig. 346 – Sagmata Monastery, *katholikon*, ground plan, longitudinal section facing south, and south elevation (S. Voyadjis)
Fig. 347 – Varnakova Monastery, *katholikon*, ground plan (Ch. Bouras)

Fig. 348 – Areia, Hagia Monē, *katholikon*, ground plan, sections, and north elevation (A. Struck)
Fig. 349 – Chernigov, Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Sobor from west (photo: N. Shestakova, 2013)

Fig. 350 – Chernigov, Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Sobor, plans of the ground and gallery levels, and longitudinal section facing south (A. Komech)
Fig. 351 – Chernigov, Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Sobor, reconstruction of the west elevation (Yu. S. Aseev)

Fig. 352 – Chernigov, Spaso-Preobrazhenski Sobor, interior of the narthex looking southeast
Fig. 353 – Chernigov, tribēlon of the west gallery from southwest
Fig. 354 – Kiev Caves Lavra, Uspenskii Sobor, ground plan (later additions hatched)

Fig. 355 – Kiev Caves Lavra, Uspenskii Sobor, reconstruction of the north elevation with the north chapel as double-storied (N. V. Kholostenko)
Fig. 356 – Kiev Caves Lavra, Uspenskii Sobor, reconstruction of the west elevation (Yu. Aseev and V. Kharlamov)

Fig. 357 – Kiev Caves Lavra, Uspenskii Sobor, reconstruction of the north elevation, variant with the north chapel as single-storied and a vestibule sheltering the main church’s west entrance (N. G. Logvin)
Fig. 358 – Kiev, Vydubitskii Monastyr’, Church of Archangel Michael from southwest (photo: N. Babenko, 2015)

Fig. 359 – Kiev, Vydubitskii Monastyr’, Church of Archangel Michael, ground plan of the present building
Fig. 360 – Kiev, Vyubitskii Monastyr’, Church of Archangel Michael, axonometric cut-off (A. Komech)

Fig. 361 – Kiev, Vyubitskii Monastyr’, Church of Archangel Michael, reconstruction of the original appearance from northwest (Yu. S. Aseev)
Fig. 362 – Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo from southwest (2013)

Fig. 363 – Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo, ground plans of the present and original church (A. Komech)
Fig. 364 – Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo, interior of the narthex looking southwest

Fig. 365 – Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo, interior of the chapel looking north

Fig. 366 – Kiev, Savior Church at Berestovo, reconstruction viewed from southwest (Yu. Aseev and V. Kharlamov)
Fig. 367 – Eletskii Monastyr’ (Chernigov), *katholikon* of the Dormition from southwest (2004)

Fig. 368 – Eletskii Monastyr’, *katholikon* of the Dormition, ground plan

Fig. 369 – Eletskii Monastyr’, *katholikon* of the Dormition, reconstruction of the west elevation (P. Rappoport)
Fig. 370 – Chernigov, Church of Sts. Boris and Gleb from northwest (2014)

Fig. 371 – Chernigov, Church of Sts. Boris and Gleb, ground plan and longitudinal section facing north
Fig. 372 – Kiev, Church of Sts. Cyril and Athanasius of Alexandria, ground plan and reconstruction of the original form, axonometric cut-off

Fig. 373 – Kiev, Church of Sts. Cyril and Athanasius, reconstruction from northwest (Yu. S. Aseev)
Fig. 374 – Kiev, Church of Sts. Cyril and Athanasius, interior of the gallery from northwest

Fig. 375 – Novgorod, Church of the Annunciation at Gorodishche and Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor (St. Nicholas of Yaroslav’s Court), ground plans (A. Komech, after M. K. Karger)
Fig. 376 – Novgorod, Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor from southeast (2014)

Fig. 377 – Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor, west gallery from east (photo: R. A. Bobkov)

Fig. 378 – Nikolo-Dvorishchenskii Sobor, remains of spiral stairs in the south bay of the narthex, viewed from north (photo: R. A. Bobkov)
Fig. 379 – Novgorod, Antoniev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of the Birth of Theotokos from southwest (2012)

Fig. 380 – Novgorod, Antoniev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of the Birth of Theotokos, ground plan of the original church (A. Komech)

Fig. 381 – Novgorod, Yuryev Monastyr’, *katholikon* of St. George, ground plan (A. Komech)
Fig. 382 – Yuryev Monastyr’, katholikon of St. George from west (photo: D. Jarvis, 2009)

Fig. 383 – Yuryev Monastyr’, katholikon of St. George, view of the gallery from the naos

Fig. 384 – Yuryev Monastyr’, katholikon of St. George, interior of the gallery from northwest
Fig. 385 – Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrasinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church from northwest (photo: L. Szeder, 2006)

Fig. 386 – Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrasinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, plans of the ground and gallery levels (V. V. Rakitskii)
Fig. 387 – Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, longitudinal section facing south (V. V. Rakitskii)

Fig. 388 – Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, reconstructions of the west and south elevations (V. V. Rakitskii)
Fig. 389 – Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, interior of the south chapel in the katêchoumena looking east (photo: V. Sarabianov)

Fig. 390 – Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, interior of the south chapel in the katêchoumena (Ivan Trutnev, 1866)

Fig. 390A – Polotsk, Spaso-Evfrosinievskii Monastyr’, Transfiguration Church, interior of the south chapel in the katêchoumena looking east (photograph published in journal Русский паломник, No. 26, in 1910)
Fig. 391 – Nea Monē (Chios), *katholikon*, ground plan (S. Voyadjis, after Ch. Bouras) and longitudinal section facing south (S. Voyadjis)
Fig. 392 – Nea Monē (Chios), *katholikon*, north elevation (S. Voyadjis)

Fig. 393 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, reconstruction of the narthex’s west façade as it appeared before the *exonarthex* was added (S. Voyadjis)

Fig. 394 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, reconstruction of the original west façade of the *exonarthex* (Ch. Bouras)
Fig. 395 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, domes from west (photo: N. Vatopoulos, 2010)
Fig. 396 – Nea Monē, *katholikon, exonarthen’s* south conch, from west (2011)

Fig. 397 – Nea Monē, *katholikon, exonarthex* and narthex from southeast
Fig. 398 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, interior of the narthex looking north (photo K. Manōlēs)

Fig. 399 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, interior of the narthex looking south (photo K. Manōlēs)

Fig. 400 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, blind dome of the narthex viewed from below
Fig. 401 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, interior of the *exonarthex* looking southeast

Fig. 402 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, centerpiece of the *exonarthex*’s floor pavement from west (photo: M. Delu, 2014)
Fig. 403 – Hosios Loukas Monastery, Katholikon from southwest (2009)

Fig. 404 – Hosios Loukas, Katholikon with the exonarthex (demolished), from southwest
Fig. 405 – Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, axonometric cut-off

Fig. 406 – Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, west gallery seen from the naos (photo: J. Housen, 2009)
Fig. 407 – Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, interior of the narthex looking north (2009)
Fig. 408 – Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, narthex, mosaics of the north bay, from south (2014)

Fig. 409 – Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, narthex, mosaics of the south bay, from north (photo: H. A. Rosbach, 2009)

Fig. 410 – Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, narthex, mosaics of the central bay’s vault (2014)
Fig. 411 – Athens, Panagia Sōtēra tou Lykodēmou, west façade from southwest

Fig. 412 – Athens, Panagia Sōtēra tou Lykodēmou, from south
Fig. 413 – Athens, Panagia Sōtēra tou Lykodēmou, reconstructed original layout: longitudinal section facing north, plan of the gallery, ground plan (Ch. Bouras)
Fig. 414 – Daphni Monastery, aerial view of the *katholikon* from northwest

Fig. 415 – Daphni Monastery, *katholikon*, ground plan
Fig. 416 – Daphni Monastery, *katholikon*, west part of the *naos* viewed from east
Fig. 417 – Daphni Monastery, *katholikon*, west part of the *naos* looking south, with mosaic of St. Eustratios in the top part of the conch (photo: R. Hamann-Mac Lean, 1953)

Fig. 418 – Daphni Monastery, *katholikon*, narthex looking south (photo: R. Hamann-Mac Lean, 1953)
Fig. 419 – Monemvasia, Hagia Sophia from northwest (2012)

Fig. 420 – Monemvasia, Hagia Sophia, longitudinal section facing south and ground plan (E. Stikas)
Fig. 421 – Christianoi, Church of the Transfiguration, ground plan, longitudinal section facing north, and transversal section through the narthex facing east, with reconstructed engaged arches (S. Voyadjis)
Fig. 422 – Christianoi, Church of the Transfiguration, perspective cut-off (E. Stikas)

Fig. 423 – Christianoi, Church of the Transfiguration from south
Chapter 4
Fig. 424 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on a drawing by P. Mylonas)

Fig. 425 – Iviron, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 39)
Fig. 426 – Vatopedi, katholikon, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on a drawing by S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 427 – Zygou, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 122)

Fig. 428 – St. Demetrius, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 151)
Fig. 429 – Xenophōntos, *katholikon*, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 117)

Fig. 430 – St. Procopius, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 177)
Fig. 431 – Voroskopou, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 179)

Fig. 432 – Melissourgiou, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 182)
Fig. 433 – Ravdouchou, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 12)

Fig. 434 – Kalamitsiōn, church, ground plan with the width of the narthex used as the module (author, based on Fig. 13b)
Fig. 435 – Plans of floor pavements of few monastic churches (P. Mylonas):
1-Great Lavra, 2-Ivērōn, 3-Nea Monē (Chios),
4-Vatopedi, 5-Hilandar, 6-Xenophōntos
Fig. 436 – Vatopedi, katholikon, plan of the floor pavement (S. Mamaloukos)
Fig. 437 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, plan of the floor pavement (P. Mylonas)
Fig. 438 – Constantinople, Pantokratōr Monastery, South Church, plan of the floor pavement (A. H. Megaw)
Fig. 439 – Hilandar, *katholikon*, nave, deacon reading from the Gospels on the feast of the Transfiguration, 2015 (photo: Milutin Hilandarac)

Fig. 440 – Hilandar, *katholikon*, nave, reader reading from the Epistles (*Apostolos*) on the feast of the Transfiguration, 2015 (photo: Milutin Hilandarac)
Fig. 441 – Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Katholikon, narthex, mosaic in the lunette above the entrance to the *naos* (photo: H. A. Rosbach, 2009)

Fig. 442 – Nicaea, Dormition Church, interior of the narthex looking south

Fig. 443 – Nicaea, Dormition Church, narthex, mosaics in the vault of the central bay
Fig. 444 – Hilandar, narthex, frescoes of the central east vault and wall above the central entrance to the *naos* (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 445 – Nea Monē, *katholikon*, reconstructed ground plan of the narthex and *exonarthex* (Ch. Bouras)

Fig. 446 – Veljusa Monastery, *katholikon*, reconstructed ground plan (P. Miljković-Pepek)
Fig. 447 – Veljusa Monastery, *katholikon*, reconstructed south elevation (P. Miljković-Pepek)

Fig. 448 – Aynali Kilise Monastery, blind dome in the narthex (photo: D. Osseman, 2011)
Fig. 449 – Midye, rock-cut church complex, ground plan (M. Dupin, 1969)

Fig. 450 – Midye, rock-cut church complex, interior of the narthex looking northeast (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)
Fig. 451 – Kutaisi, Bagrati Cathedral, western portico looking south (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 452 – Kutaisi, Bagrati Cathedral, blind dome of the southern portico
Fig. 453 – Manglisi, Sioni Cathedral, vault of the south porch (2010)

Fig. 454 – Nikortsminda, church, south vestibule’s blind dome (photo: author, 2009)
Fig. 455 – Nikortsminda, church, decoration above the south entrance (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 456 – Nikortsminda, church, fresco decoration of the dome (photo: I. Margalitadze, 2007)
Fig. 457 – *Chronicle of John Skylitzes, “Madrid Skylitzes”* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 33r, illumination depicting Emperor Theophilos (then still the co-emperor to his father Michael II) and the Patriarch leading a procession with the True Cross and the garment of Theotokos during Thomas the Slav’s siege; they arrive to what is probably the Church of the Theotokos in Blachernai.

Fig. 458 – *Madrid Skylitzes* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 41v, illumination depicting the usurper Euphêmios being killed in front of a church in Syracuse by two brothers whose sister was abducted by him.
Fig. 459 – *Madrid Skylitzes* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 43r bottom, illumination depicting Emperor Theophilos’s weekly ride to the Blachernai church.

Fig. 460 – *Madrid Skylitzes* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 114v top, illumination depicting Emperor Leo VI the Wise showing precious liturgical vessels in the Hagia Sophia to the Arab ambassadors from Tarsus and Melitēnē.

Fig. 461 – *Madrid Skylitzes* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 125r bottom, illumination depicting the wedding of Constantine VII and Helen.
Fig. 462 – Florence, Museum of Bargello, Empress Ariadne (?) standing under a canopy, part of ivory diptych (ca. 500)

Fig. 463 – Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Empress Ariadne (?) seated under a canopy, part of ivory diptych (ca. 500) (photo: A. Praefcke)
Fig. 464 – *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Par. Gr. 510), fol. 143v, illumination of King David being rebuked by Prophet Nathan

Fig. 465 – *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Par. Gr. 510), fol. 239r, illumination of Gregory before Emperor Theodosius I
Fig. 466 – *Homilies of John Chrysostom* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Coislin 79), fol. 2bis-r, illumination of monk Sabas reading to Emperor Nikēphoros
Fig. 467 – Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 34r, illumination depicting Emperor Michael II negotiating with the men of Thomas the Slav

Fig. 468 – Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 46r bottom, illumination depicting the widow bringing up her complaints to Emperor Theophilos
Fig. 469 – Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Gr. Vitr. 26-2), fol. 115v top, illumination depicting Emperor Leo VI finding a letter while attending a service in the Hagia Sophia and praying inside the μετατόριον in the gallery.

Fig. 470 – Ravenna, San Vitale, mosaic panel of Empress Theodora with her retinue.
Fig. 471 – *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Mount Athos, St. Panteleēmōn’s, Cod. 6), fol. 100r, illumination depicting the death of Patriarch Athanasius

Fig. 472 – *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Jerusalem, Library of the Greek Patriarchate, Cod. Taphou 14), fol. 113r, illumination depicting the death of Basil the Great
Fig. 473 – *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Grec 543), fol. 130v, illumination depicting the death of Basil the Great and Gregory’s oration.

Fig. 474 – *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzen* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Grec 543), fol. 260v, illumination depicting the death of Patriarch Athanasius and Gregory’s oration.
Fig. 475 – Hilandar, *katholikon, exonarthex*, reading of the Gospels over the body of the newly reposed *hēgoumenos* Moses (March 22, 2010)

Fig. 476 – Hilandar, *katholikon, naos*, funeral service to the *hēgoumenos* Moses (March 22, 2010; photo: S. Žutić)
Fig. 477 – Constantinople, Basilica of St. John of Stoudios, ground plan (S. Ćurčić)

Fig. 478 – Constantinople, Basilica of St. John of Stoudios, west wall of the nave viewed from east (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1936)
Fig. 479 – Constantinople, Hagia Sophia, three central entrances in the nave’s west wall (photo: author, 2009)

Fig. 480 – Constantinople, Hagia Sophia, interior of the narthex looking southeast, with three central doors and three another to the south (photo: C. Gilliland, 2014)
Fig. 481 – Hilandar, *katholikon*, interior of the narthex looking northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 482 – Hilandar, *katholikon*, interior of the narthex looking southeast (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 483 – Constantinople, Chora Monastery, *katholikon* (Kariye Camii), interior of the inner narthex looking north, with two doors opening into the *naos* and two mosaic icons of Apostles Peter and Paul flanking the larger door at the far right (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1937)
Fig. 484 – Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus (Mt. Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine, MS gr. 418), fol. 269r, illumination depicting a group of monks praying inside a church

Fig. 485 – Stavronikēta, katholikon, east wall of the narthex, with the niche for the holy water font on the right
Fig. 486 – Hilandar, katholikon, narthex, lower north part of the east wall (photo author, 2008)

Fig. 487 – Mt. Menikeion (near Serres), Monastery of St. John Prodromos, katholikon, niche with a holy water font embedded in the east wall of the inner narthex, close to the southeast corner (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 488 – Vatopedi, Middle Byzantine marble *phialē*

Fig. 489 – Pantokratoros, Middle Byzantine marble *phialē* (photo: P. Androudis)
Fig. 490 – Hilandar, katholikon, phialē in the exonarthex from northwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 491 – Hilandar, katholikon, phialē in the exonarthex from north (photo: M. Kovačević)

Fig. 492 – Hilandar, katholikon, phialē in the exonarthex, drawing with measurements (O. Kandić, after S. Nenadović)
Fig. 493 – Hilandar, katholikon, litê, furnishing of the central east bay, including all lighting devices characteristic for Athonite narthexes (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 494 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, narthex, tomb of the founders, transversal section and axonometric rendering of the original form (P. Theocharidēs)
Chapter 5
Fig. 495 – Êleia (Peloponnese), Vlacherna Monastery, *katholikon*, ground plan and longitudinal section facing south (R. Traquair)

Fig. 496 – Êleia (Peloponnese), Vlacherna Monastery, *katholikon* from northwest (photo: M. Kavvouras, 2011)
Fig. 497 – Lake Bafa, Kahve Asar Adasi, church, longitudinal section facing north and ground plan (Th. Wiegand)

Fig. 498 – Lake Bafa, Kahve Asar Adasi, church, remains of stairs leading to the over-narthex viewed from northeast (photo: Th. Wiegand)
Fig. 499 – Kellion of St. Procopius, church, upper floor, interior of the room south of the chapel, large arched niche (walled-up opening?) in the south wall viewed from northwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 500 – Constantinople, Chora Monastery, *katholikon* (Kariye Camii), plan of the upper level, with the library flanking the *naos* to the north (A. Van Millingen)

Fig. 501 – Constantinople, Chora Monastery, *katholikon* (Kariye Camii), transversal section facing east (R. Ousterhout)
Fig. 502 – Mt. Menoikeion (near Serres), Monastery of St. John Prodromos, *katholikon*, plan of the *katēchoumena*, situated above the *exonarthex* (P. Xydas)

Fig. 503 – Mt. Menoikeion (near Serres), Monastery of St. John Prodromos, *katholikon*, interior of the *katēchoumena’s* south chamber looking west (photo: N. Bakirtzis)
Fig. 504 – Monastery of St. Paul, Egypt, library (photo: Byzantine Institute, 1930-31)
Chapter 6
Fig. 505 – Enez (Ainos), church, ground plan (T. Blatner, after S. Eyice)

Fig. 506 – Enez (Ainos), church viewed from west (photo: R. Ousterhout, 1982)
Fig. 507 – Constantinople, Stoudios Basilica (İmrahor Camii), entrance portico from west (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1935)

Fig. 508 – Constantinople, Stoudios Basilica (İmrahor Camii), inside the entrance portico looking northwest (photo: N. Artamonoff, 1936)
Fig. 509 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, *exonarthex*, Washing of Feet, wall painting in the center of the north wall’s topmost register (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 510 – Great Lavra, *katholikon*, interior of glazed porch looking northeast

Fig. 511 – Ivrőn, *katholikon*, glazed porch, interior looking north (photo: A. Dekanski, 2015)
Fig. 512 – Dionysiou, portico in front of the refectory from west (photo: V. Protopapas, 2011)

Fig. 513 – Vatopedi, *katholikon*, Chapel of St. Nicholas, tomb in the south wall of the narthex (photo: Th. Pazaras)
Fig. 514 – Grēgoriōu, monk walks out the *katholikon* while striking a *sēmantron* (photo: R. Byron, 1926)

Fig. 515 – Dionysiou, belfry viewed from west (photo: R. Byron, 1926)

Fig. 516 – Koutloumousiōu, drawing of the monastery, detail (V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744)
Fig. 517 – Great Lavra, south half of the refectory porch from northeast (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 518 – Vatopedi, katholikon, portico, iron sēmantron hung in one of openings (2011)
Fig. 519 – Hilandar, *katholikon*, *sēmantra* in the northwest corner of the *exonarthex* (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 520 – Great Lavra, *phialē*, iron *sēmantron* hung in the southeast intercolumniation (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 521 – Meteora, Great Meteoron, *katholikon*, *sēmantra* in the portico
Fig. 522 – Meteora, St. Stephan’s Monastery, *katholikon*, iron *sēmantra* in the portico (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 523 – Mt. Menoikeion (near Serres), Monastery of St. John Prodromos, *katholikon*, portico with two *sēmantra* in end openings, viewed from northwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 524 – *Kellion* of St. Procopius, stone bowl lying west of the church (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 525 – Great Lavra, *phialē* from northwest (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 526 – Great Lavra, stone basin inside the phialē viewed from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 527 – Great Lavra, strobilion in the phialē as in 2008 (photo: author)
Fig. 528 – Great Lavra, strobilion in the phialē as in 1926 (photo: R. Byron)
Fig. 529 – Great Lavra, *phialē* (drawing by V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744)

Fig. 530 – Great Lavra, *phialē*, parapet slabs of the northeast and north intercolumniations, viewed from northeast (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 531 – Great Lavra, *phialē*, parapet slabs of the south intercolumniation, viewed from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 532 – Great Lavra, *phialē*, parapet slabs of the southeast and south intercolumniations, inner sides viewed from northeast (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 533 – Vatopedi, *phialē* from west (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 534 – Vatopedi, *phialē*, vaults viewed from west (photo: author, 2006)
Fig. 535 – Vatopedi, phialē, section facing north and ground plan (P. Mylonas)
Fig. 536 – Vatopedi, drawing of the phialē as in 1744 (V. Grigorovich-Barskii)

Fig. 537 – Ivērōn, yard between the katholikon and refectory from north (photo: author, 2008)
Fig. 538 – Ivērōn, phialē viewed from north (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 539 – Ivērōn, phialē viewed from south (photo: author, 2008)

Fig. 540 – Zōgraphou, phialē and katholikon, detail of a drawing (V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744)

Fig. 541 – Esphigmenou, phialē and katholikon, detail of a drawing (V. Grigorovich-Barskii, 1744)
Fig. 542 – Constantinople, St. George at Mangana, ground plan of remains (C. Mango, after E. Mamboury)

Fig. 543 – Constantinople, Evergetis Monastery, reconstruction of the phialē: 1) aspect, 2) ground plan (L. Rodley)
Fig. 544 – Studenica Monastery, *katholikon*, remains of a *phialē* in the *exonarthex* from northwest (photo: author, 2016)

Fig. 545 – Studenica Monastery, *phialē*: a) elevation and ground plan of remains (M. Čanak-Medić), b) reconstructed elevation (M. Radan-Jovin)
Fig. 546 – Thessaloniki, Basilica of St. Demetrius, *phialē* after the 1917 fire

Fig. 547 – Bogoliubovo, *phialē* (N. N. Voronin): a) remains, b) reconstructed elevation
Fig. 548 – Docheiariou, *phialē* and its surroundings (*katholikon* to the right) viewed from west (photo: A. Dekanski, 2014)

Fig. 549 – Docheiariou, *phialē*, section facing north and ground plan (P. Mylonas)