



MOUNT ATHOS CENTER

**ABSTRACTS OF
PROSPECTIVE SPEAKERS
FOR THE **SECOND**
SCIENTIFIC WORKSHOP
OF THE
MOUNT ATHOS CENTER**

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**Mount Athos and the Excommunication of King Stefan Dušan
(Patriarch Callistus's Anathema)**

Some initial observations based on Athonite archival documents

In earlier historical writings, it is generally accepted that the decree issued by the *endemousa*, or permanent, synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate – what we know as the Anathema of Callistus – led to the excommunication of King Dušan, Patriarch Joannicius and the higher clergy of the throne of Peç. Callistus made this decision during his first term as patriarch between June 1350 and the summer of 1354, essentially by April 1353. Relations between the two churches, the thrones of Constantinople and Peç, were schismatic. Researching this highly important event is difficult because of the dearth of primary sources. The Ecumenical Patriarchate's decree excommunicating King Dušan has not survived, modern Byzantine historians make no mention of this event, and the patriarchal document detailing the final reunification of the two churches in 1375 no longer exists either. What has survived is the document of reconciliation between Despot Uglješa and the Patriarchate in March 1368 and the Patriarchate's synodal decree regarding the ecclesiastical union with Uglješa's region in May 1371. Some traces of this event are also to be found in a small and inadequate number of Serbian sources, the most important of which is the second collection of writings post Archbishop Daniel. We aim to highlight, to the extent possible, the significance of the Mount Athos archival documents regarding Patriarch Callistus's anathema in general, and the impact of Dušan's excommunication on the Athonite community, which in October 1345 had recognized him as its sovereign. We also intend to briefly outline the aftermath of this ecclesiastical penalty after Dušan's death in December 1355 and until it was lifted in 1375.

The anathema of Callistus is more closely linked with the problem of Dušan's title and the nature of his reign, in other words with the stance taken by Constantinople's state and church authorities towards his proclamation and crowning as king of Serbia and Romania. We ask ourselves, what was Mount Athos's relationship with the opposing sides in the civil war, and with Dušan and his title, especially from the moment when his excommunication became public knowledge? The Athonite community would also have been notified, and all the monasteries would have been put in a difficult position with regard to King Dušan since they belonged under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The fact that there are no documents from Dušan to the Athonite monasteries after June 1352 provides a safe *terminus post quem* for the otherwise unknown precise date of the excommunication. This absence of documents also allows us to assume that there ceased to be any communion between the holy monasteries and Dušan and that he was no longer remembered in their religious services. Dušan's realm outside of Mount Athos was subsequently ruled by his wife, Queen Jelena, and then by Despot Uglješa, in his independent state with Serres as the seat. Their relations with Mount Athos and the Ecumenical Patriarchate were overshadowed by this ecclesiastical dispute. We know of an attempt to bridge the rift in 1363, when Patriarch Callistus visited Queen Jelena's court in Serres, where he died under mysterious circumstances, this occurrence serving as an obstacle to the unification of the two churches that time. The return of Uglješa's region under the jurisdiction of Constantinople began in 1368

and was completed by May 1371. The death of Despot Uglješa at the Evros River in the autumn of 1371 marked the decline of the Serbian influence on Mount Athos.

The schism between Constantinople and Peç continued to exist and was also felt on the Holy Mountain, where priests ordained by excommunicated bishops were not welcome for communion. The era of Serbian supremacy at Karyes, the *serboprotoi* era, as the act of the *protos* Gerasimos dated January 1375 calls it, left its mark on Mount Athos and first and foremost on certain property disputes. It is from Athos that the *geron* Isaiah the Chilandarian began his mission to end the schism and have the excommunication revoked, which finally happened on 3 October 1375, right on the day commemorating Saint Dionysius the Aeropagite, when representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate read a prayer of forgiveness over King Dušan's tomb in Prizren. King Dušan is remembered fondly on the Holy Mountain: on the Athonite Protaton's diptychs dating from the late 14th century, he is referred to as 'our departed king Stefan'.

The mediaeval archives of Mount Athos published in the series *Archives de l'Athos*:

The third volume of documents from the Vatopedi Monastery and its previously unpublished documents.

My talk presents the progress made in the publication programme for the *Archives de l'Athos* series (Paris 1946 –). The 22 volumes already published will be joined within 2018 by the third and final volume of documents from the Vatopedi Monastery (dating from 1377 to 1500). This is an exceptionally rich volume with critical publications of 99 Greek and two Latin documents, as well as the abstracts of 38 Ottoman and seven Slavic documents. Most (54) of the documents were previously unpublished. This publication marks an impressive increase in the available archival material, given the paucity of documents from this period in the other Athonite archives. The significance of this material can best be understood by mentioning that the Lavra Monastery archive, which is the largest archive after that of Vatopedi, possesses only 30 Greek documents from this period. The Vatopedi Monastery also has a most remarkable Ottoman archive with documents spanning the entire 15th century. Thirty-one of these documents are written in Turkish, four in Greek and three in Arabic and were previously almost entirely unknown. Thanks to this especially copious amount of material, we are able to study a number of little-known topics and especially the history of Mount Athos and eastern Macedonia in the late 14th century and during the 15th century, the late Byzantine period and early Ottoman period. Finally, I will also talk about other documents whose publication is in progress, namely the second volume of documents from Chilandar Monastery (dating from 1320 to 1335), which is in its final stage of publication, and the volume of documents from Zographou Monastery that is currently being prepared.

The work of Serbian scientists in the publication of Serbian documents from the archives of Hilandar Monastery / Η συμβολή Σέρβων επιστημόνων στην έκδοση σερβικών εγγράφων από το αρχείο της Ιεράς Μονής Χιλανδαρίου.

The Serbian documents from the Archives of the Hilandar Monastery for the period from the founding of the monastery in 1198 until the fall of the Serbian Despotate to the Ottomans in 1459, are planned to be published in two volumes. The initiative for this endeavour came from the Hilandar Monastery, primarily from its panosilogiotatos hegumen Metodije.

The first volume will contain all documents pertaining to the Nemanjić dynasty, from the founding of Hilandar in 1198 until the Battle of the Maritsa (September 1371), i.e. until the death of Emperor Dušan's son, Emperor Uroš (December 1371), whereby the dynasty became extinct. The second volume will contain all other documents, i.e. charters issued by the Lazarević dynasty, the lords of certain regions (the Branković, Dragaš and Mrnjavčević families), and Serbian archbishops and patriarchs, as well as the decisions of the assembly of the Hilandar brethren.

In the first volume we are offering: I. A brief overview of all the most important collections of Serbian medieval documents published in Belgrade so far. II. Certain observations on diplomatic characteristics (or particularities) of the charters that are being published, wherein we paid special attention to the trustworthiness of the transcripts, otherwise a much disputed issue in our science. III. Publication of the transcribed texts of documents, along with their translation into modern Serbian and commentaries. IV. Publication of three documents of which two have been ascribed to Emperor Dušan and one to Emperor Uroš, compiled at the end of the 15th and in the 16th century, which were supposed to assist the Hilandar monks in proving, primarily before the Turkish authorities, certain rights denied to the monastery. V. Registers in the Greek, Russian and English languages, and VI. The General Register.

The main result of our many years of studying the Serbian and Greek charters is a conclusion that the transcripts of the Serbian documents, whose originals have been lost, are credible documents. Their trustworthiness has been frequently questioned and they have been considered forgeries, primarily because the Serbian transcripts made in Hilandar, as opposed to the Greek language transcripts, were not certified by the *protos* of Mt. Athos or the bishop of Hierissos and Mt. Athos. There is no doubt that the reason for that was the lack of knowledge of the Serbian language into which the documents were rendered. We have shown that the data in the transcripts was updated, meaning that a village given as a gift to Hilandar with the lost original was entered in the transcript, or that a description was given of the boundaries of the metoch existing at the time the transcript was made. We should add that in the transcripts done after 1346, the title of patriarch was used instead of that of archbishop, who was the head of the Serbian church at the time the original document was issued.

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The newest archive of Iviron Monastery. Methodological problems in classifying and cataloguing an Athonite archive.

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The contribution of Athonite monasteries to education in 19th century Thassos under Egyptian rule

In the early 19th century, Thassos experienced unprecedented and major political changes. Its cession to Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali in 1813 and his amicable attitude towards the favours conferred upon him by the Thassians in his early years were an un hoped-for gift from God, which resulted in Thassos becoming an oasis of freedom and safety for a subjugated and degraded people. This political situation shaped an enviable state of self-governance both at community level and at the level of a 'federal' institutional authority in which all the local communities on Thassos were represented (governor of the island and general assembly).

One of the most definitive aspects that the political bodies of Thassos strove to take advantage of in order to ensure the island's spiritual growth during the last hundred years of Ottoman rule was the lasting and interdependent relationships they had developed with the Athonite monasteries. The island's proximity to Mount Athos, the plentiful fields and olive groves that the islanders gifted to the monasteries as a gesture of reverence and gratitude for the sanctifying grace bestowed on them by the fathers of the Athonite state, and the monasteries' efforts to procure essential goods produced on the island (namely oil, olives, wine and wax) were the main reasons why close economic and commercial ties were formed in addition to creative intellectual relationships that also had a direct impact on education. The close spiritual and economic ties that were formed with Mount Athos through the monastery dependencies often led Thassians to turn to the monasteries for financial and spiritual aid when they needed to build, run or maintain their schools, or when public utility projects were needed.

This paper intends to explore the manner in which the above historical, social and political developments determined the type and scope of actions that the Athonite monasteries engaged in to support Thassian cultural initiatives during the 19th century.

The Athonite monasteries' social and spiritual solidarity, one of the primary objectives of monastic life, has been recorded in dozens of monastic or secular documents. The primary and secondary sources scientifically underpinning our paper were found in the course of thorough personal research conducted in the archives of Athonite monasteries (Xeropotamou, Vatopedi, Philotheou, Karakallou and Stavronikita). Important unpublished documents were discovered, which, together with the information contained in Greek and other literature, highlight the decisive role that Athonite monasteries played in creating solid educational foundations on the island.

The research method we adopted to evaluate the historical documents is dialectic-hermeneutic. We believe that the three-part scheme 'state of mind, understanding and discourse', together with the ongoing interaction and dialectic relationship between 'part' and 'whole', leads to a sounder understanding of the texts. It also enables us to more safely put these texts in the context of the general climate of the period, to explore the conditions that led to them being drawn up and to make safer assessments of their information. In fact, knowing that a region's educational system is directly connected to that region's economic, political and social environment, we tried to understand, analyse and interpret all our historical

sources using comparative extra-educational (i.e. macrosocial) and intra-educational (microsocial) elements.

Being mostly qualitative, our historical-educational research was based on a critical and qualitative analysis of the documentation. The process entailed the following steps: collection, classification, understanding, synthesis, interpretation and assessment. The documentation studied contained both primary sources, which were created during the period being studied, and secondary sources, which are analyses of events based on primary sources. Whenever the need arose to examine and encode quantitative data, we used Microsoft Excel's statistical programmes.

'How do book bindings journey on Athos?' Production and circulation of traditional and alternative post-Byzantine book bindings on Mount Athos in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The motivation for the proposed paper came from an observation I made many years ago about Athonite book bindings, namely that they follow a 'journey' on Mount Athos (and sometimes beyond). The question then arose as to how (and why) they journey within the Athonite community.

The following triple semantic function needs to be ascribed to the verb 'to journey' (with subdivisions for each category): 'a journey' in the sense of the technical impact entailed (type of binding and related characteristics, such as decorative motifs, and so on) in binding manuscripts located in different Athonite libraries, in the sense of transporting the already bound manuscript from the place where it was bound to its place of use (and the possible subsequent transfers within Mount Athos) and, lastly, in the sense of engaging in the bookbinding practice from place to place, without the manuscript being transported, but rather through the movement of the bookbinder from one place to another.

Naturally, at least from a theoretical perspective, the circulation of bound books is understandable given the frequent and systematic contact between the Athonite monks and monasteries. Similar observations have obviously also been made regarding other aspects of life on Athos. However, in the case of book bindings, on the one hand it is technically difficult to ascertain the phenomenon in an objective manner, and on the other hand it is interwoven with the history of manuscripts and their development in the Athonite monastic state during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Generally speaking, the running of a bibliographic workshop is comparable to the parallel running, in this sphere too, of the corresponding bookbinding workshop.

This principle, enforced by practical reasons (the necessary technical equipment, availability of the proper materials, the weight and volume of the manuscript) was relevant in Byzantium and the mediaeval West, particularly where monastic bibliographic centres were concerned. However, in the post-Byzantine period, and especially on Mount Athos, things were different. Although this principle continued to apply, it underwent major expansions and even greater changes, expressed in the three categories mentioned previously. They concerned the change in form and content and the circulation and sale of the book, and had a significant impact on book binding practice. Naturally, some manuscripts that reached (or had previously reached) Athos were already bound, but these are fewer in number. Nevertheless, local book binding activities continued to flourish.

It is these changes and expansions that the proposed paper is attempting to record. The production and circulation of book bindings on Mount Athos in the 16th and 17th centuries will be studied in a previously unexplored manner.

My approach is based on the morphological aspect of the bindings as well as on the use of the content of the manuscripts that the bindings encase. Use is made of textual elements and also primarily of technical evidence, which is found on the bindings and points to the tools bookbinders must have had at their disposal and the results they were aiming towards. The paper deals with the construction and circulation of traditional bindings (that is, Byzantine bindings), and of what I term 'alternative' bindings, which have heretofore passed essentially unnoticed, as has their role and impact. This activity took place in organised bookbinding workshops (which were basically run in the big Athonite monasteries) and elsewhere, which is also studied in this paper.

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**The undocumented manuscripts in the library of the Pantocratoros Monastery on
Mount Athos.**

Preface to a supplementary catalogue of the Monastery's manuscripts.

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**Cataloguing codices 328-400 and earlier (15th- and 16th-century) documents from
Iviron Monastery. Two parallel programmes.**

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The Monk Patapios Kafsokalyvitis

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A choir of Athonite hymnographers.

Recording hymnographic production on Mount Athos.

The writing of hymns in our Church is a liturgical art in which worship, creed and morality coexist and fit together. Mount Athos has for centuries been counted among the sacred places where our ecclesiastical poetry was cultivated and enriched. In twelve centuries of monastic life, there is no shortage of Athonite fathers who paid tribute to and elevated ecclesiastical poetry and music through their contributions. They left their indelible mark on hymnography by applying themselves to the writing of hymns or putting them to music. The Athonite fathers who devoted themselves to hymn writing are remarkable and great in number. Most of the Athonite hymnographers, each according to the measure of their gift, are known for the ease with which they use the Byzantine and Ancient Greek language (as is evident from their hymns), the abundance and density of meanings they create, the rhythmicity of their hymns, their expressiveness, their vivid and competent poetic skills, their elegant poetic discourse, their inventiveness, their conciseness and the manner in which they convey the ascetic spirit, monastic morality and theological perspective of Mount Athos. As is only natural, the Athonite hymnographers created their compositions in accordance with the services indicated in the Athonite *Typikon*.

Some of them are exceptionally eloquent hymnographers who have produced exquisite works of art, works requiring metrical skill, in imitation of earlier hymn writers. Others have composed a great number of hymns, of which those published or included in the *Menaia* liturgical books (especially those by Saint Nicodemus the Hagiorite and the monk Gerasimos Mikragiannanitis) are chanted throughout the Orthodox world, in all the Orthodox churches and monasteries where services are held. Furthermore, there are a large number of manuscripts containing services, supplicatory canons, salutatory *oikoi* (stanzas), alternate services and other hymns, all waiting patiently in the well-stocked Athonite libraries for someone to publish them. Other Athonites, such as Bartholomew Koutloumousianos, corrected, restored or completed our liturgical books.

Despite all this, information about the hymnographic production of the Athonite monks, especially in later years (from the 16th to the 20th century), remains a desideratum in the sphere of literary post-Byzantine production since it has yet to be seriously studied and researched. Other than a very brief article, 'Η Ὑμνογραφία ἐν ἀγίῳ Ὄρει' (Athens, 1966), by the monk Gerasimos Mikragiannanitis, a more extensive study by P. Paschos titled 'Ὑμνογραφία καὶ ὑμνογράφοι στὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος' (Thessaloniki, 1997), and a recent book by this author, *Ἀθωνικά Ὑμναγολογικά Μελετήματα* (Thessaloniki, 2014), there is not much available literature on Athonite hymn writing. This paper also plays a part in filling this gap. It adds to a branch of the earlier scientific research conducted on Athonite hymnological production from the Byzantine period to later years and our times (late 20th c.), when a number of Athonites devoted themselves to the art of poetic hymnography. The paper presents comprehensive biographical accounts of all the Athonite hymnographers, enriched with new and often unknown information. It further provides a preliminary presentation of the soon-to-be-completed catalogue of all their identified works to date, both published and unpublished –

works that are highly useful from a scientific perspective and for Orthodox churches' religious rites.

This study, which is currently in progress, aspires to highlight the Athonite hymn writers' enormous contribution to the growth of our ecclesiastical hymnography (particularly during the difficult periods of the Turkish Occupation and Neomartyrs) and to make its own small contribution to the description of eminent Athonite figures and to the study of Athonite spirituality over the centuries.

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The destroyed Byzantine monasteries on Mount Athos: history, architecture and sculpted decoration

In this paper we present the results of the research we conducted over many years on the destroyed Byzantine monasteries on Mount Athos. More than 200 smaller monasteries and *monydria* were built on the Holy Mountain from the late 10th up to and including the 11th century. These buildings were gradually deserted, abandoned or absorbed by bigger, dominant monasteries that exist to this day. As part of our research, we recorded the sites of the destroyed post-Byzantine *monydria* and attempted to identify them based on information contained in our sources and on their 'limitations'. We also reproduced and sketched their architectural remains (catholica, towers and walls) and recorded the sculptures found therein. Based on the above data, we have formed a large corpus on the Athonite *monydria*, with an analytical description of each *monydrion*, which provides valuable material on the history, life and art of the monastic state during the Byzantine period.

Monumental painting in the 19th century on Mount Athos: The frescoes of the Aghioi Anargyroi, Koimesis tis Theotokou and Aghia Evphemia chapels in Xenophontos Monastery

Nineteenth-century monumental painting on Mount Athos is of particular artistic and ideological interest. The theological explorations that occurred in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (the Hesychastic Renaissance, also known as the Kollyvades Movement; Saint Nicodemus the Hagiorite) and later historical events (Greek War of Independence, foundation of the Kingdom of Greece, the Tanzimat) also had an impact on how ecclesiastical art evolved on Athos.

Two major artistic trends marked this century. The first sprang from the artistic principles introduced by Dionysius of Fourni. The key vehicles of Dionysius's spirit are the two big art workshops on Athos, namely the Karpenissi and Galatista painters, as well as other individual painters whose contribution should not be ignored. These workshops and painters formed a unique, local, Athos-centred artistic language with recognisable features that stem from post-Byzantine artistic tradition, enriched with baroque and rococo elements. Because of the far-reaching spiritual influence of Mount Athos, this trend also spread to other Balkan regions, and especially to Rhodope and its environs. The second trend emerged around the mid 19th century and is represented by the workshop of the company of Joasaphian painters. This trend was strongly influenced by the Nazarene art movement and developed distinctive Athonite artistic features. Interestingly, it spread widely throughout the Orthodox world: it was not only confined to the Balkans and Russia, but was even accepted by the clerical and literary circles of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the other three senior patriarchates in the Middle East.

In recent years, the painting of this period has been researched by a number of art historians and studies have already been published on the period's Athonite art.

This paper forms part of the broader research conducted on monumental painting on Mount Athos during the 19th century (artistic trends and aesthetic preferences). It presents the unpublished frescoes from the Aghioi Anargyroi (Holy Unmercenaries) and Koimesis tis Theotokou (Dormition) chapels and from the narthex of the Aghia Evphemia (Saint Evphemia) chapel in Xenophontos Monastery. The frescoes are the work of painters from Galatista, as we can tell from the inscription (Aghioi Anargyroi chapel) and from the technique used (Koimesis tis Theotokou chapel and narthex of the Aghia Evphemia chapel). The iconographic programme of these small churches is of artistic and iconological interest because it reflects the artistic trends and ideological explorations of the first half of the 19th century on Athos. Furthermore, the fact that the monks of Xenophontos Monastery chose this particular workshop to paint the frescoes in the new wing's chapels reflects the aesthetic preferences of the learned monks who lived at the monastery at the time. It also reflects the spiritual tradition that developed in the monastery after it was converted into a coenobium (monastic community) around 1784, under the leadership of the priest-monk Paisios of Kafsokalyvia.

RELIGIOUS paper icons in the Athonite archives

Researchers only began to show an interest in religious paper icons in the last few decades. Material from private and monastic collections became known in research and has been shown at highly successful periodic exhibitions accompanied by scientific catalogues. The two-volume book by Dori Papastratou, titled *Χάρτινες Εικόνες. Ορθόδοξα Θρησκευτικά Χαρακτικά 1665-1899* and published in Athens in 1986, remains a work of unsurpassed research in this field.

It is clear from all the above that conditions are ripe for researchers to tackle the new and largely unknown artistic genre of religious paper icons. The research involves woodcuts, copper-plate engravings and lithographs, mentioned in the order in which they emerged, and contributes to an understanding of painting in the late post-Byzantine period and more recent years (18th to 20th c.), through the study of iconography and the activities of copper-plate engravers and printers of paper icons. Paper icons were created as prints and were preliminary versions or 'tools' that painters used.

Our knowledge of paper icons and the conditions under which they were produced in the monastic state of Athos has been substantially enriched by the archival material kept safe in the Athonite libraries. The material consists of ledgers with the monasteries' annual budgets, correspondence between monks and monasteries, and personal records. We can therefore determine with precision the founding dates and scope of the Athonite engraving workshops, the names of their members (who supplied engravings of monasteries and sketes) and the price of each work of art.

From our research, begun in 1998, we have concluded that: a) there is an inequality in the surviving material in terms of preservation and distribution, b) the Vatopedi Monastery produced 500,000 paper icons from 1834 to 1905, followed by the Xeropotamou Monastery with 67,020 (1816-1914), Simonos Petras Monastery with 17,000 (1849-1902), Konstamonitou Monastery with 4,750 (1845-1858) and Aghiou Pavlou Monastery with 3,200 paper icons (1830-1862). We believe that the wide circulation of paper icons is linked to Athos's far-reaching spiritual influence, the large number of believers that flocked to its monasteries from far and wide, and to the monks' frequent visits to Orthodox communities outside Athos.

This research is still in progress, its aim being to study all the monasteries, sketes and cells on Athos so that a complete picture can be formed.

The influence of Athonite architecture on the formation of the Russian-Byzantine style in the early XX century. The Moscow Diocesan House.

The Russian-Byzantine style has become one of the expressions of the architecture of historicism in Russia, which spread in the European architecture of the mid XIX – early XX century. This phenomenon develops within the pan-European rise of interest in the national architecture, but in Russia it has been especially related with Byzantine because of the continuity of Russian architecture from Byzantine one. Russian-Byzantine style emerged in the Russian architecture 1830-ies, and began to develop thanks to the first discoveries of Byzantine monuments and to the support of the Russian imperial power, because this style embodied the idea of Orthodoxy and monarchy of continuity from Byzantine to Russia.

The influence of Greek architecture, in particular the oldest of the Athonite monasteries as Great Lavra of St. Athanasius, Vatopedi and Hilandar, led to the appearance throughout the former Russian Empire many splendid churches and monasteries. The Byzantine style became the leading in Russia and the clearest examples of buildings in this style are the New Athos monastery of St. Simon Cananite in Abkhazia, St. Ioann monastery and the Greek Church of St. Dimitry of Thessaloniki in Saint-Petersburg, Pokrov monastery in Khotkovo near the Trinity-Sergius Lavra, the church of the Vatopedi icon of the Mother of God in Moscow, Valaam Transfiguration monastery and many others.

In this style in Russia was also built public buildings with inside chapels, including hospitals, shelters and educational institutions. These objects characterized by the use of unplastered facades of red brick. The combination of Byzantine, Old-Russian and orders motifs in this technique became a particularly characteristic of architecture of diocesan educational institutions across Russia, which created so-called "diocesan style" in this period. One of such examples is the Moscow Diocesan house, now the building of our St. Tikhon's Orthodox University.

The Moscow Diocesan house (1901-1903, architect Peter Vinogradov) with the Chapel of St. Prince Vladimir and the Assembly hall is an architectural monument of Russian-Byzantine style, as well as the memorial monument of Russian Church history of the early XX century. The main purpose of the building was creating of educational spiritual center during a terrible pre-revolutionary period in Russia. In 1917-1918 here it was held the meetings of the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, which adopted a decision on the restoration of the Patriarchate and the election of the Holy Patriarch Tikhon as well as many other decisions, which reconciled and united the Russian society in the face of severe adversities. Many members of the Council suffered for the faith and were canonized.

During the years of Soviet power the building was rebuilt beyond recognition and changed its functional purpose. A huge effort was made obtaining and reconstructing of this building for St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, which restores the aim of its original draft. Reconstruction of the Moscow Diocesan house was dedicated to commemoration of the 1000th anniversary of St.

Prince Vladimir's repose, in 2015. On 26 July, His Holiness Kirill Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the great consecration of the building. Paintings in the main Chapel of St. Prince Vladimir and the second Chapel of St. Patriarch Tikhon and all New Martyrs, members of the Local Council of 1917-1918, were made by teachers and students of the Faculty of Church Arts of St. Tikhon's University.

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The Athonite traditional empirical method of cultivating chestnut (*Castanea sativa* Mill.) coppices and its impact on soil fertility

Concern for the natural environment is evident throughout the history of the Athonite monastic state. A monk's key purpose is to safeguard the land, and the Athonites have always shown particular consideration for the land under their protection. As Saint Silouan the Athonite said, 'The Spirit of God teaches compassion for all of creation, so that we do not cut a single leaf from a tree needlessly'.

Woodcutting and the use of forestry products require particular care and attention. Many monasteries met their needs by exploiting their forests and especially their chestnut forests, which form a significant part of the peninsula's natural vegetation.

Encouraged by the monk Evlogios Kourilas (1880-1961) of the Megistis Lavras Monastery, the chestnut forests were reduced to chestnut coppices. The monks' woodland management and care of the chestnut coppices evolved into a special method which, albeit practical, reflects scientific views of forest cultivation.

The difficulties of chestnut coppice management lie in the choice of rotation cycle, standard cover, and felling period and method. The frequency with which coppices are cleared, the growth space given to coppice shoots and the even distribution of trees that have reached full height in a coupe can all affect soil fertility and thus site and coupe productivity.

This research was conducted on the Mount Athos peninsula in order to study the impact of felling cycles on soil fertility. Data was obtained from 15 sample surfaces found in 10-, 20- and 40-year-old chestnut coppice coupes. The data was analysed in order to study the relationship between soil parameters and management method. The results showed that in some cases there is a significant correlation between coupe age and soil parameters. There is generally a higher concentration of organic matter and nutrients in the soil of 10- and 40-year-old coupes than in 20-year-old coupes. In order to ensure that Mount Athos's chestnut forests continue to be managed with the monks' empirical method, it is vital that the rotation cycle of 20-22 years be increased, since maintaining this practice may soon lead to the degradation of soil resources.

Key words: Mount Athos, chestnut coppices, empirical method of cultivation and management, organic matter, nutrients.

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The energy problem on Mount Athos. Necessities and Challenges.

The rise in the number of buildings, inhabitants and visitors on Mount Athos over the last few decades was accompanied by a corresponding rise in the monasteries' energy needs. Since Mount Athos is not connected to the Greek power grid, its needs are met using oil-powered generators. The consequences of this practice are sound and air pollution and high expenditure on the part of the monasteries.

This problem caused the Holy Athonite Community some concern. Therefore, at the start of the previous decade, in line with technological developments and the slowly emerging legislative framework, the solution of renewable energy sources was chosen. Over a five-year period, the first studies were finalised for the installation of photovoltaic fields, which will partially meet the monasteries' energy needs.

This presentation aims to highlight the ever increasing energy needs of the monasteries and the reasons that led to the choice of renewable energy sources. This will be followed by an analysis of the institutional framework governing their use on Mount Athos and, lastly, of the process that led to the approval of the first studies by the board of the Centre for the Preservation of Athonite Heritage.