

A Special Relationship? Gender on Medieval Mount Athos

The Third Workshop for the ERC Starting Grant “Mount Athos in Medieval Eastern Mediterranean Society: Contextualizing the History of a Monastic Republic (ca. 850-1550)”

September 27th-29th, 2023, Oxford

Description

As is well-known, Mount Athos is today an exclusively male monastic preserve governed by the so-called *abaton* (“untroudden”) rule, which prohibits the access of both women and female animals to the peninsula. Nonetheless, throughout history women were connected with the Holy Mountain in manifold ways, in dynamics of patronage, spiritual advice and familial ties. The aim of this workshop is not only to uncover this largely neglected aspect of Athos’ history during the medieval period, but also to explore other forms of gender, such as that of masculinity (including eunuchs).

Wednesday, September 27th

2:00-2:30 p.m. Welcome, Opening Remarks

2:30-4:30 p.m. Session 1: The Virgin and Mount Athos

Mary Cunningham

“Gregory Palamas and the Hesychastic Virgin Mary: Female Sanctity from a Male Monastic Perspective”

Tinatin Chronz

“Rejoice, Opener of the Gates of Paradise! Liturgical Veneration of the Keeper of the Gate (*Portaitisa*) in Iviron on Mount Athos”

Georgi Parpulov

“The Virgin’s Garden”

4:30-5:00 p.m. Coffee/tea break

5:00-6:30 p.m. Session 2: Women and Liturgical Commemoration

Kirill Maksimovič

“Liturgical Commemoration of Women at the Serbian Athonite Monastery of Hilandar (13th–15th centuries): a Prosopographic Approach”

Emanuela Mindrila

“The Commemoration of Women in the Liturgical tradition of Vatopedi Monastery: Remarks on Ms. Vatopedi 1945”

6:30 p.m. Reception and then Dinner for Conference Participants

Thursday, September 28th

9:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m. Session 3: Female Patronage

Taisiya Leber

“The Role of Women in the Patronage of Mount Athos and Athonites from a Transottoman Perspective”

Alice Isabella Sullivan

“New Forms of Athonite Patronage: The Impact of Royal Women from Moldavia and Wallachia in the Late Middle Ages”

Lilyana Yordanova

“Depicting Women on Mount Athos (13th–16th c.)”

11:00-11:30 a.m. Coffee/tea break

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Session 4: The *abaton* in the 11th and 12th Centuries

Zachary Chitwood

“Both Athonite and Antiochene?: The *abaton* in the Writings of Nikon of the Black Mountain”

Rosemary Morris

“The *Diegesis Merike* Revisited”

1:00-2:00 p.m. Catered Lunch for Conference Participants

2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Session 5: Gendered Space

Ekaterini Mitsiou

“Double Monasteries, *abaton* and the Gendered Space of Athos”

Leonora Neville

“Masculinity, Ethics, and Power on Mount Athos”

3:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Coffee Break

4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Session 6: Legal and Technical Aspects

Olivier Delouis

“*Une loi impitoyable* between Economics and Morality: The *abaton* in Bithynia, Mount Athos and Elsewhere, and Its Reception through the Ages”

Anastasios Nikopoulos

“The Institution of the Ban on the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos as a Legal Component of its Status”

Alexander Watzinger

“How to Digitally Map Sex and Gender in Research Projects - Pitfalls and Solutions”

6:00 p.m. Dinner for Conference Participants

Friday, September 29th

10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Session 7: Women and the Outside World

Deacon-monk Theodosios of Vatopedi
“A Positive *abaton* and the Contribution of Athonite Monks to Women”

Mihailo Popovic

“Serbian Noblewomen and the Clergy in the Middle Ages: A Comparison between Mara Branković and Jelena Anžuska regarding Athonite Monks and Franciscan Friars”

Vanessa R. de Obaldía

“Women in the Life of Simonopetra Monastery: The Multifaceted Nature of a Special Relationship”

12:00-12:30 p.m. Concluding Remarks and Discussion

12:30-1:30 p.m. Catered Lunch for Conference Participants



Mount Athos in Medieval
Eastern Mediterranean Society



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