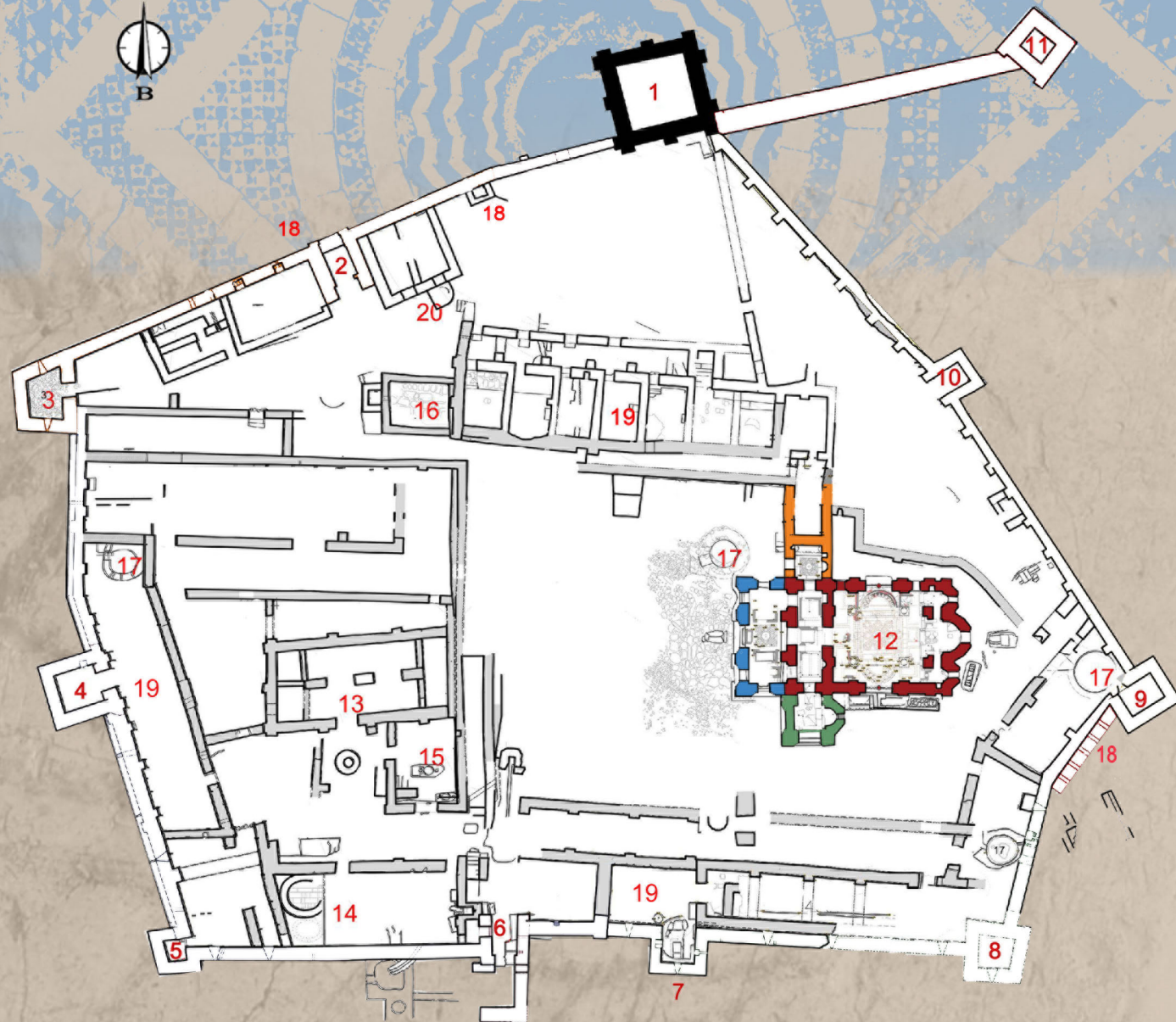


GROUND PLAN OF THE MONASTERY OF ZYGOS

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1-11: TOWERS | 16: WINE PRESS |
| 12: KATHOLIKON | 17: LIME KILN |
| 13: REFECTORY | 18: LATRINES |
| 14: OVENS | 19: CELLS |
| 15: OLIVE PRESS | 20: SMITHERY |

CONSTRUCTION PHASES OF THE KATHOLIKON

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1st PHASE | 3rd PHASE |
| 2nd PHASE | 4th PHASE |



Με την υποστήριξη:



Halkidiki
Tourism
Organization

Hellenic Ministry of Culture
Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalcidice
and Mount Athos

MONASTERY OF ZYGOS



The monastery of Zygos is located southeast of the village of Ouranoupoli, next to the current boundaries of Mount Athos. It is one of the oldest and largest monasteries on Mount Athos, which was abandoned in the 12th century and gradually collapsed. The systematic excavation of the monastery's ruins, and at the same time its restoration, began in 1984.

The first explicit reference to the existence of the monastery of Zygos is made in 996 AD, when it was already one of the most important institutions of Mount Athos. In the 11th century the monastery flourished, but by 1199 it had already been deserted and ceded to the then re-established monastery of Chilandar by the emperor Alexios III Angelos as a *metochi* (i.e. a property, a house or a church that belongs to a monastery and is located outside from its main area). In 1206, after the dissolution of the Byzantine Empire by the Latins (1204), a Frankish knight with his soldiers settled in the monastery and set out by plundering Mount Athos; in 1211, with the intervention of the Pope of Rome, he was expelled from the area; the ruins of the Monastery are known today as "Frankokastro". In the second half of the 15th century the estate was given to the monastery of Vatopedi as a *metochi*. It was expropriated by the Greek State in 1924 and given to refugees from Propontis, who settled here after the Greek-Turkish War (1922).



Fragments of frescoes from the exonarthex of the katholikon (second half of the 11th century)



Part of the western wall

The walls of the monastery's enclosure are reinforced with eleven towers and cover an area of 5,500 m². Its building complex consists of the old core (the western one), which was doubled with an extension to the east. The *katholikon* (i.e. the central church of the monastery) began to be built in the first half of the 11th century. The main church with the *narthex* was built first, then the northern chapel including a founder's tomb was added, then the *exonarthex*, and later the southern chapel with another founder's tomb was added. Several tombs were found around the *katholikon*.



Double opening in the northern wall of the katholikon



Frescoes from the exonarthex (second half of the 11th century)

The walls of the *katholikon* are preserved at a height of 2-4 m. The interior of the temple was decorated with frescoes. A representation of the Annunciation, adorned crosses, parts of the representation of the Baptism and the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste were preserved in the *exonarthex*. A full-length frontal representation of a hierarch, probably of Saint Nicholas, was revealed in the niche of the *prothesis* of the southern chapel.

The floor of the northern chapel is preserved in excellent condition and is adorned with one of the best *opus sectile* marble floors on Mount Athos, a work of the first half of the 11th century. The marble floor of the *narthex*, also of exceptional quality, dates to the second half of the same century, and it is fragmentarily preserved. Substrates and pieces of the marble floors were found in several parts of the church.



Northern chapel with the founder's tomb (first half of the 11th century)



Marble floor of the exonarthex of the katholikon (second half of the 11th century)

The monks' dormitories were housed in the wings along the south, north and west sides of the enclosure. The *magkipeion* (bakery) was found in the south wing of the monastery; the wine press was revealed in the north wing; and the smithery a little further north. All these workshops indicate the autarky and autonomy of the monastic community.

During the 16th-17th centuries, when the *katholikon* was partially ruined, an oil mill complex was installed in the *exonarthex* and in a building on the south side of the courtyard, next to the refectory.

Numerous finds from the daily life of the monks and the activities of the monastery were revealed in the excavations.



Glazed plates and a candle (second half of the 12th century)

The archaeological site is now open to the public, while research, restoration and promotion of the monastery's ruins goes on. It is an interesting site, which enables visitors, men and women, to realize the organization of a Mount Athos monastery.



MONASTERY OF ZYGOS OURANOUPOLIS CHALCIDICE Information:

Address: Municipality of Aristotelis, Local Community of Ouranoupolis, 63075 Chalcidice

Website: www.culture.gr

Phone +30 2377071585

Days and Opening Hours: Information at +30 2310285163, and at: www.culture.gr

Tickets:

2 €: November 1-March 31

4 € (adults) and 2 € (reduced): April 1-October 31

Ways of access: Up to the center of the village by intercity bus (KTEL).

From the center of the village to the archaeological site (2 km) by taxi, by car or on foot.

Facilities: WC, WC for the disabled. There is no café.

Special difficulties: There is no access for the disabled inside the archaeological site. Difficult access for wheelchairs. Senior, and younger children should be cautious.

Nearby points of interest: Tower of Ouranoupoli (2 km), Hierissos: Ancient Akanthos Cemetery (17 km), Stageira: Ottoman Bath (37 km)