

# Vatopedi

Thursday, 28 December 2006

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The

Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi on the Mount Athos was built during the second half of the 10th century, by three monks, Athanasius, Nicholas, and Antonius from Adrianople, who were the pupils of Athanasius the Athonite. A legendary tradition says that its construction was ordered in the 4th century by Eastern Roman Emperor Arcadius to honour the miraculous salvation by the Virgin Mary of his son from a shipwreck. The child is said to have been found in a brier bush -- hence vatos

- ἄνθος, ἄνθος "brier" and παιδί

- ἄνθος, ἄνθος "child".

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About

100 monks live in the monastery

today, where extensive construction projects are underway to restore the larger buildings. The monastery is open to public.

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Treasures held within the monastery

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Monastery of Vatopedi holds a belt held by believers to be the actual belt of the Theotokos, which she wore on earth and gave to Thomas the Apostle after her death and during her transition to heaven. The silver and jewel-encrusted reliquary containing the skull of St.

John Chrysostom is kept in the Monastery

and is credited by Eastern Orthodox

Christians with miraculous healings. The monastery

also contains the Iaspis, a chalice fashioned of a single piece of the precious stone jasper, and numerous icons.

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Vatopedi's

library preserves a medieval royal charter, the 13th-century Vatopedi

Charter of Ivan Asen II of Bulgaria dedicated

to the monastery. It was

discovered in the monastery's

archives in 1929.

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Miracle-working icons within the monastery

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There are four icons of the Mother of God considered to be miracle-working: Elaiovrytissa, Ktetorissa (Vimatarissa), Esphagmeni, and Paramythia.

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Panagia Pantanassa (Most-Holy Queen of All) is a miraculous icon depicting the Theotokos enthroned and holding her son.

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The holy and miracle-working icon of the Virgin Mary was brought to the Vatopedi monastery by the blessed elder Joseph (who is still alive) from Nea Skete. The first record of the icon's miraculous powers is from the witness of Elder Joseph. One day a young man from Cyprus went to visit and entered into the church. At that point, the elder witnessed a glowing light radiating from the face of the Theotokos and an invisible power pushed the young man down to the ground. When the young man had recovered from his fall, he began to repent and weep and confessed that he did not believe and was a participant in the black arts. He changed his life and became an Orthodox Christian.

This icon is also known for working many miracles, especially healing people with cancer. There are many recent records of people who have been healed from cancer after participating in the Supplicatory Canon to the Pantanassa at the monastery.

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Panagia  
Paramythia, the Vatopedi  
Mother of Consolation,

or Comfort is  
an 8th century miraculous icon of  
the Virgin Mary.

Near  
the monastery, the son of Emperor  
Theodosius the Great fell off a ship and into the sea. By miraculous  
intercession of the Mother of God, he was  
carried safely to shore unharmed and found sleeping in a bush, not far from the  
Vatopedi monastery. This is the  
event that defined the name of the monastery  
(Vato + paidi,  
derived from "Batos paidion", the bush  
of the child).

The  
tradition tells us that the original expression on the faces of the figures and  
the position of the bodies of Christ and the Blessed Virgin changed when the  
following strange miracle occurred, January 21, 807:

Pirates had secretly landed on the shore of the monastery and were hiding, waiting for the  
gates to open in the morning in order to launch an attack on the monastery of Vatopedi. The Abbot, who had remained  
behind after  
the end of Matins in order to continue his prayer, heard these words from the  
icon of the Blessed Virgin:

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"Do  
not open the gates of the Monastery  
today, but go up on the walls and drive away the pirates."

As  
he turned to look, he saw the Theotokos turned towards her right shoulder and  
looking at him, while the Holy child was  
stretching out His hand to cover the mouth of His mother saying,

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"No,  
Mother, do not watch over this sinful flock, let them fall under the swore of  
the pirates and be punished as they  
deserve."

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But  
the Blessed Virgin, taking Her Son's hand in Hers and turning Her head a little  
to free her mouth, repeating the same words.

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The

icon is a wall-painting and is on the right choir of the chapel named after it.Â Â In memory of this miraculous event a perpetual lamp burns in front of the wonderworking icon. Every day a Canon of Supplication is chanted in honour of the icon and on Fridays the Divine Liturgy is celebrated.

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