

Damage to Athonite monasteries after nearly two years of earthquakes



Damage to arches and vaults, domes and cupolas, chimneys and masonry are among the problems recorded in inspections carried out at Mt. Athos monasteries following a long series of earthquakes.

More than 1,800 earthquakes were recorded in the area since the beginning of 2024, with the strongest reaching 5.3 on the Richter scale in June. According to scientists and organizations that conducted inspections, the situation is not dangerous and “no alarm was raised,” reports emakedonia.gr.

One key factor in the structures’ resilience was their construction. Although some buildings were erected many centuries ago, they possess their own anti-seismic technology that made them resistant even to earthquakes much larger than recent ones, such as a 7+ magnitude earthquake in 1905.

The most vulnerable structures are mainly the churches because they have vaults, domes and tympana, which are sensitive to seismic activity. Damage was relatively localized, mainly in higher parts of structures such as domes and chimneys.



Damage at Dochariou Monastery. Photo: Ministry of Culture

Between 3,000 and 4,000 structurally independent buildings across the monastic complexes require examination.

Inspections conducted thus far have found the following cases of damage:

1. The Great Lavra: Cracks in plaster on masonry in the guesthouse

Holy Cell of St. Eustathios-Mylopotamos: Cracks in plaster on masonry in the church

2. Vatopedi Monastery: Collapse of chimney sections and cracks in the old church of St. Andrew and in the corridor of the offices

Holy Skete of St. Demetrios: Cracks and collapse of plaster on masonry

3. Iveron Monastery: Worsening of older static problems in the exonarthex and narthex of the katholikon. Cracks in plaster on masonry in corridors

Representation in Karyes: Serious damage to the church (in dome, arches, spherical triangles, pillars), which constitute worsening of previous damage, light damage to interior masonry in the rest of the building, possible widening of previous cracks in the stone masonry of the rest of the building

4. Hilandar Monastery: Heavy damage to chimneys at the monastery. Light damage to the katholikon and to masonry of wings.

Holy Cell of St. Tryphon: Serious damage to the church (cracks in dome, tympanum, arches, pillars)

Holy Cell of St. Paisios: Serious damage to the church (cracks in dome, tympanum, arches, pillars)

5. Dionysiou Monastery: Light to moderate damage in the refectory and katholikon. Serious damage to chimneys and to wooden balconies on the north facade

Holy Church of St. Artemios-Monoxylitis: Serious damage to the church (cracks in dome, tympanum, arches, pillars)



Damage at Xenophontos Monastery, St. Euphemia Chapel. Photo: Ministry of Culture

6. Koutloumousiou Monastery: Worsening of older static problems in the lite of the katholikon. Serious damage to two chapels on the upper level of the north wing (cracks in dome, tympanum, arches)

Holy Cell of the Honorable Forerunner-Dionysios of Fourná: Cracks in plaster on masonry and collapse of chimneys

7. Pantokrator Monastery: Collapses and other damage to chimneys. Cracking in stone masonry of the tower in various locations

Holy Cell of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Karyes: Extensive cracks in load-bearing stone masonry, mainly in the eastern part of the building, throughout its height. Immediate preparation of a geotechnical study and static study for restoration of damage to the structural system is recommended.

Holy Skete of Prophet Elijah: Cracks in plaster on masonry in the church and building complex

8. Xeropotamou Monastery: Cracks in plaster on masonry in the katholikon and

building complex

9. Zographou Monastery: Heavy damage to chimneys

Cemetery church: Serious damage to the church (cracks in dome, tympanum, arches, pillars)

Holy Cell of St. George: Serious damage to the entire complex (church, auxiliary buildings, surrounding area)

10. Dochariou Monastery: Cracking in vaults, arches and stone masonry

11. Simonopetra Monastery: Cracking in vaults and arches, in areas above doors and between openings. Damage to chimneys. Cracking in stone masonry. Damage to slate roof coverings.

Holy Cell of St. George “Kalatha” in Karyes: Cracks in plaster on masonry and collapse of chimneys

12. St. Paul Monastery: Heavy damage to chimneys at the monastery. Possible light damage to the katholikon

Holy Hermitage at Zarkadi: Heavy damage with collapse of the southeast corner of the hermitage, cracks in masonry

13. Stavronikita Monastery: Cracks in plaster on masonry and collapse of a chimney

14. Xenophontos Monastery: Cracking in tympana of domes. Detachment of plaster. Worsening of previous cracking.

15. Gregoriou Monastery

Representation of Holy Monastery of St. Gregory in Karyes: Moderate damage to the church in dome, arch, light damage to plaster on masonry

Holy Cell of St. Philotheos in Karyes: Serious damage to the northeast corner of the cell

16. New Esphigmenou Monastery:

Representation of New Esphigmenou in Karyes: Cracks in plaster on masonry

Old representation in Karyes: Collapse of chimney and damage to roof

Holy Cell of St. Tryphon: Cracks and collapse of plaster on masonry and damage to

roof

17. St. Panteleimon Monastery: Cracking in tympana of domes and stone masonry. Collapses of chimneys, detachment of plaster

18. Konstamonitou Monastery: Heavy damage to chimneys, serious damage to partition walls and plaster

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