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Karyes, Mount Athos



The town of Karyes is the administrative center for the monastic republic of Mount Athos. The town is located in the middle of the peninsula at an elevation of a little over 1,000 feet (370 meters). The town is the seat of the governing body of Mount Athos and of the protos (primate) of the monastic community.

Karyes has been the administrative center for the monastic communities of Athos since the tenth century. Settlement of disputes among the monasteries is accomplished in Karyes. The monks assemble usually on the feast day of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, August 15, in the Protaton church in Karyes.

The town is located in a forest of walnut and hazel trees adjacent to the Koutloumousiou Monastery in the middle of the Athos peninsula. Traditionally, Karyes is said to have been established originally by Constantine the Great and later destroyed by Julian the Apostate. When Karyes was founded in the tenth century, the settlement consisted mainly of smaller, older monasteries and buildings that were residences for the representatives of the distant monasteries.

The population of the town includes, in addition to the monks, various laymen, all

male, who trade in forest products and ecclesiastical objects.

There are numerous buildings in the town, mainly owned by the twenty monasteries. These buildings are generally small and have two stories. The Skete of St. Andrew, which was founded with the help of the Russian Czars, is near the town.

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