

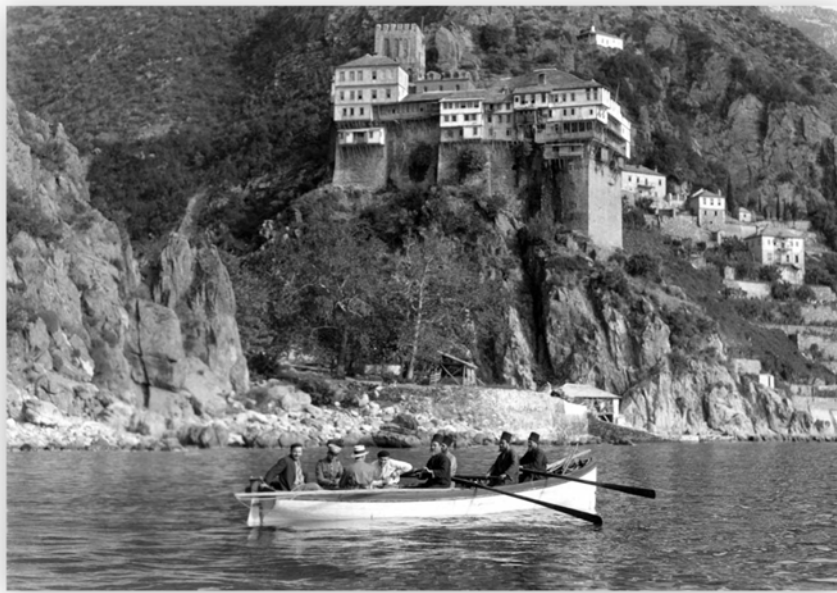


THE MOUNT ATHOS FOUNDATION OF AMERICA, INC.
NEWSLETTER 9 – DECEMBER, 2024



Merry Christmas from the President and the Board of the Mount Athos Foundation of America!

MAFA EXHIBITIONS



Dionysiou Monastery. Vladimir Perfilieff with a party of laymen and monks rowing to the monastery, which looms impressively in the distance. ©Department of Art and Archeology, Princeton University.

In 2024 MAFA's exhibition program in collaboration with the Mount Athos Center in Thessaloniki, Greece, truly hit its stride. This program is critical to one of MAFA's central missions: fostering knowledge and understanding of the monastic communities of the Holy Mountain. This year's success is thanks to Anastasia Merkel, who joined MAFA's Board at the end of last year to become our new Exhibits Coordinator. Under Anna's guidance, our Traveling Exhibits Program took off as the **Ark of Orthodoxy** Exhibit opened at the **St.**

Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Williamsburg, Virginia in April. Its opening coincided with the Metropolis of New Jersey's Clergy-Laity Congress (<https://www.goarch.org/-/metropolis-of-nj-clergy-laity-assembly>). Archbishop Elpidophoros, who opened the exhibit's first showing at the Maliotis Center at Hellenic College/Holy Cross, was pleasantly surprised to see it again when arriving at the Congress. South Floridians will have an opportunity to view it in 2026, at a **South Florida venue to be announced**, coinciding with five Greek festivals in that region.

MAFA's second exhibition, **Mount Athos & Meteora 1929: Princeton's Hidden Treasure** opened at the Maliotis Center at Hellenic College/Holy Cross on Friday, September 27th. Plans are in the works to bring this exhibit hopefully to **Chicago**; watch for MAFA's exhibition announcements on the MAFA's website at: <https://www.mountathosfoundation.org/exhibition/news/>. To host a showing in your locale, contact Anastasia at: exhibits@mountathosfoundation.org.

A special thank-you to Bob Allison, our President Emeritus, for preparing this Newsletter.

MAFA GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Direct Grants to Monasteries. MAFA made approximately \$200,000 in grants in 2024 directly to various monasteries, sketes, and cells to support their operations and various needs!

Princeton Research Project. In April MAFA’s Board of Directors approved an application from Maria Alessia Rossi of Princeton University for funding to support a one-month research project on the graphic art and architectural collections at Princeton related to Mount Athos. MAFA is one of several institutions supporting the project. Participating scholars convened at Princeton in July.

Hagion Oros through the Eyes of European Artists. MAFA issued a second scholarship to Nicoleta Tzani supplementing her first in 2023 to support her study of modern artistic perceptions of the Holy Mountain. The results of her research were presented at the 28th Modern Greek Studies Association at Princeton University in October and are to be expanded into a book on the subject.

Axion Estin Cell 2024 Restoration Grant. 2024 saw the demolition of the Cell’s old North Wing, whose earthquake damage proved to be beyond repair, and a start on the new building seen below rising in its place. MAFA’S 2024 grant in cooperation with the Friends of Mount Athos (<https://www.athosfriends.org/>), combined with the Fathers’ own resources, enabled them to acquire the doors and windows for their new building. MAFA’s support for this historic Cell is ongoing, and major expenses remain – one of the largest being for the traditional stone roof. Donations are warmly appreciated by the Axion Estin fathers.



Above left: The old North Wing (left edge of photo) before demolition.

Above right: Aerial view of the new building under construction following demolition of the old North Wing.

Left: Artist’s conception of the completed new building.

MAFA ENDOWMENTS

General Endowment Account (GEA): In 2024, with an initial deposit of \$100,000, MAFA inaugurated the GEA, a small but significant first step toward our goal of individual endowments for MAFA’s various missions.

MAFA’s planning envisions several endowment funds, for which we offer naming privileges to major donors who will help us achieve our endowment goals. These funds include:

| Mount Athos Foundation of America Endowments Plan | | |
|---|--|---|
| Endowment Fund | Purpose & Goal | Endowment Needed* |
| Mount Athos Emergency Fund | ability to spend up to \$100,000 every 2 years on emergency needs and smaller amounts annually | \$1,000,000 |
| Mount Athos Architectural & Ecological Conservation Fund | ability to spend \$50,000/year for restoration and repair of buildings and grounds including footpaths | \$1,000,000 |
| Mount Athos Artifacts Conservation & Preservation Fund | ability to spend \$25,000/year for conservation of relics, works of art, manuscripts and archival documents | \$500,000 |
| 2 MAFA Scholarship Funds | ability to pay out \$1,000/year for each of 2 travel scholarships to students or scholars in the United States for study on Mount Athos or study of Athos-related subjects elsewhere | \$40,000 (\$20,000 for each scholarship) |
| Total | | \$2,540,000 |

*The figures in column 3 are based on an assumption of a 5% annual return on capital.

MAFA also offers a legacy-giving program beneficial to both donors and our MAFA endowments. Legacy giving has already had a big impact on our ability to achieve our missions. MAFA’s first legacy gift was the \$100,000 with which we opened the GEA mentioned above. We invite you to take advantage of one of these options by visiting our website at:

<https://www.mountathosfoundation.org/legacy-giving/>

LOST MONASTERIES OF MOUNT ATHOS



MAFA undertook in 2024 its first scholarly publication project. The archives of Mount Athos and its rugged terrain as well hold the evidence for numerous monasteries that did not survive to the present. Authored by Prof. Paschalis Androudis, the book presents the topography, architectural remains and marble sculptures from the abandoned middle Byzantine monasteries of Mount Athos (10th and 11th centuries) together with their histories. It will be richly illustrated by architectural diagrams and drawings and

photographs, many by the author himself. As a detailed catalog of the lost monasteries, it will be a valuable research tool complementing the modern publications of the Athonite Byzantine-era archives, especially *Archives de l’Athos*.

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION TO ROGER McHANEY

Roger McHaney, one of the small group of directors who originally started MAFA back in 2016, has been its treasurer ever since. MAFA owes much of its success to his steady presence and generous gifts of time and expertise. Roger is stepping down from his duties as MAFA’s Treasurer effective January 1, to address his increasing workload as American Membership Secretary-Treasurer for [The Friends of Mount Athos](#). MAFA is thankful for his outstanding service as MAFA’s Treasurer, and that he will be remaining as an active member of our Board of Directors.

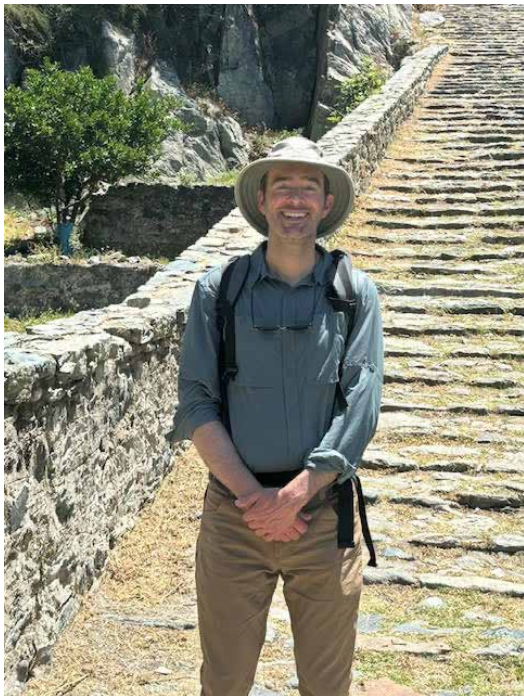
GIVING

If you would like to support the **Axion Estin Restoration** or another MAFA appeal, or help us grow our Mount Athos Emergency Aid Fund, our Architectural & Ecological Conservation Fund, or another of the funds described above, please visit our Giving page –

<https://www.mountathosfoundation.org/donate/> – and click on that “DONATE” button, or help us find donors who themselves would be interested in contributing to one of these endowed funds. For our **Legacy Giving Guide**, please visit

<https://www.mountathosfoundation.org/legacy-giving/>

A TRIBUTE TO WYCHE P.A.



Wade Kolb on the steps to Dionysiou Monastery during the 2024 FoMA path-clearing pilgrimage.

MAFA Board Member **Wade Kolb**, of **Wyche P.A.**, a law firm based in Greenville, SC, participated in FoMA’s 2024 path-clearing pilgrimage this past May. He writes of this experience in Wyche’s alumni magazine, also describing the major role played by Wyche in getting MAFA established. Wyche (and Wade) continue to contribute generously, providing for our legal and consultative needs. We reproduce below an excerpt from Wade’s account describing the effort that his Wyche colleagues put into getting MAFA established. view the full article here:

<https://wyche.com/journeying-to-byzantium/>

In true Wyche spirit, my colleagues gave much of their time without reservation. Sometimes their zeal even exceeded my own. I still remember, with regret, having to leave two colleagues on a conference call with Bob Allison in order to take a call with a billable client. Our efforts reached a milestone in April 2018, when the IRS at last approved our 501(c)(3) application. ... Wyche colleagues have also continued to “pitch in” as I have served on MAFA’s board as its unofficial legal counsel. I can always find guidance from various corners of the firm for my questions, whether they concern the legal landscape of grantmaking, nonprofit governance, or MOUs with collaborators in Greece; and our corporate paralegals, have kept up with the (seemingly constant) regular filings. I have even had the opportunity to work with our Lex Mundi firm in Greece, Zepos & Yannopoulos.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to everyone at Wyche, P.A.!