

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 537 à 539

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Monasteries of Daphni, Hosios Lukas and Nea Moni

Location : Attica, Phocide and Island of Chio

State Party : Greece

Date : 13 October, 1989

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural properties be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I and IV.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Rather than individually presenting several undisputed masterpieces of Byzantine art, Greece, which possesses an incomparable heritage in this respect, chose to submit a single, coherent proposal including three different monasteries. Though geographically distant from each other- Daphni is located in Attica, 11 km from Athens; Hosios Lukas is in Phocide, 67 km from the capital and Nea Moni Chiou is in the middle of the island of Chio and is closer to Smyrna than to Athens- the three properties belong to the same typological series and share the same aesthetic characteristics. The churches are built on a cross-in-square plan with a large dome supported by squinches defining an octagonal space. In the 11th and 12th centuries they were decorated with superb marble and mosaic works very characteristic of the "second golden age of Byzantine art". The mosaics cover the vaults according to a very strict iconographical plan; their similarities have frequently been pointed out.

1. The Monastery of Daphni

Located on the ancient sacred road from Athens to Elusis, the monastery of Daphni replaced a temple dedicated to Apollo Daphneios which had been destroyed in 396 A.D. In the 5th century a basilica was built adjoining a wall that had been restored and completed under the reign of Justinian (527-565). It formed a square enceinte, 97m on a side; a large part of the north wall, originally 8m high, subsists. This first monastery, discovered through a series of archaeological vestiges, was abandoned during the Slav invasions in the 7th and 8th centuries. It was not until 1100, when the Byzantine empire was at its apogee, under Alexis the First Comnene, that it rose out of its ruins. The church was built at that time.

It had a narthex to which an two-storey exonarthex was added a short time later. Other monastic buildings such as the refectory, cells and a well were built during the same building campaign and the church was sumptuously decorated with mosaics portraying the Dormition of the Virgin Mary (also the subject of decor in the first bay after the narthex). In 1205 the monastery was sacked by Frankish crusaders. In 1207 the Duke of Athens Otho de la Roche gave it to the Cistercians of the Abbey of Bellevaux. They built a cloister and remodeled the exonarthex and the enceinte wall but without altering the mosaics (only the Pantocrator of the dome was somewhat damaged). Daphni was returned to Orthodox monks after Athens was taken by the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II in 1458. Deconsacrated in 1821 after a long period of deterioration, the monastery has been undergoing restoration work since 1888.

2. The Monastery of Hosios Lukas

Thirty-seven kilometers from Delphi on the western slope of the Helicon not far from the acropolis of ancient Stiris, a hermit named Luke the Stiriote made his home in 946 among the ruins of a temple dedicated to Demeter. The holy man died in 953. A work on his life mentions a primitive church dedicated to St. Barbara. In the latter half of the 10th century, construction on another church for pilgrims was begun.

The topography of the vast polygonal enclosure of the monastery, which extends haphazardly on an east-west axis, still bears traces of successive additions and testifies to the enduring success of the cult to St. Luke of Phocide. To the north-east, the present church of Theotokos is none other than the ancient Haghia Varvara built in 946-955. The big 11th-century church of Hosios Lukas stands over the 10th-century crypt of the second church. It is built onto the southern wall of the narthex of the Theotocos and has a passageway to its exonarthex. This forms an exceptionally interesting block of interlinking storied buildings. The ensemble is completed by the extensively restored refectory, a parallel construction located lower down on the south side.

Experts disagree as to the date of the earliest buildings: Chatzidakis says 1011, Stikas, 1042. Hosios Lukas makes an indelible impression on visitors. The immense central volume of the dome, nine meters in diameter, which rests on a drum pierced with sixteen windows, is supported on three sides by groin-vaulted bays. The bema and the apse define the cross-in-square plan of the church, which is one of the most perfect creations of Byzantine architecture. The church is filled with iconographic treasures of a magnitude and a coherence rarely equalled. Its complex, compartmentalized plan is unified into a harmonious, luxurious whole by the rich decor of mosaics, frescoes and marble slabs, which are echoed in the beautiful medallions in the pavement.

3. Nea Moni of Chios

The construction of the third monastery is fully documented as it was linked to a major event in Byzantine history. Constantine the Gladiator, a nobleman living in exile, was told by two monks of Chio, Nicetas and John, that he would become emperor. When Constantine Monomachos married the twice-widowed, 64-year old Emperess Zoe in 1042, thus becoming Basileus, he remembered the prediction. In 1045 he founded the monastery, choosing as its site a valley on Chio on the slopes of Mount Aetos and bestowing it with possessions and privileges.

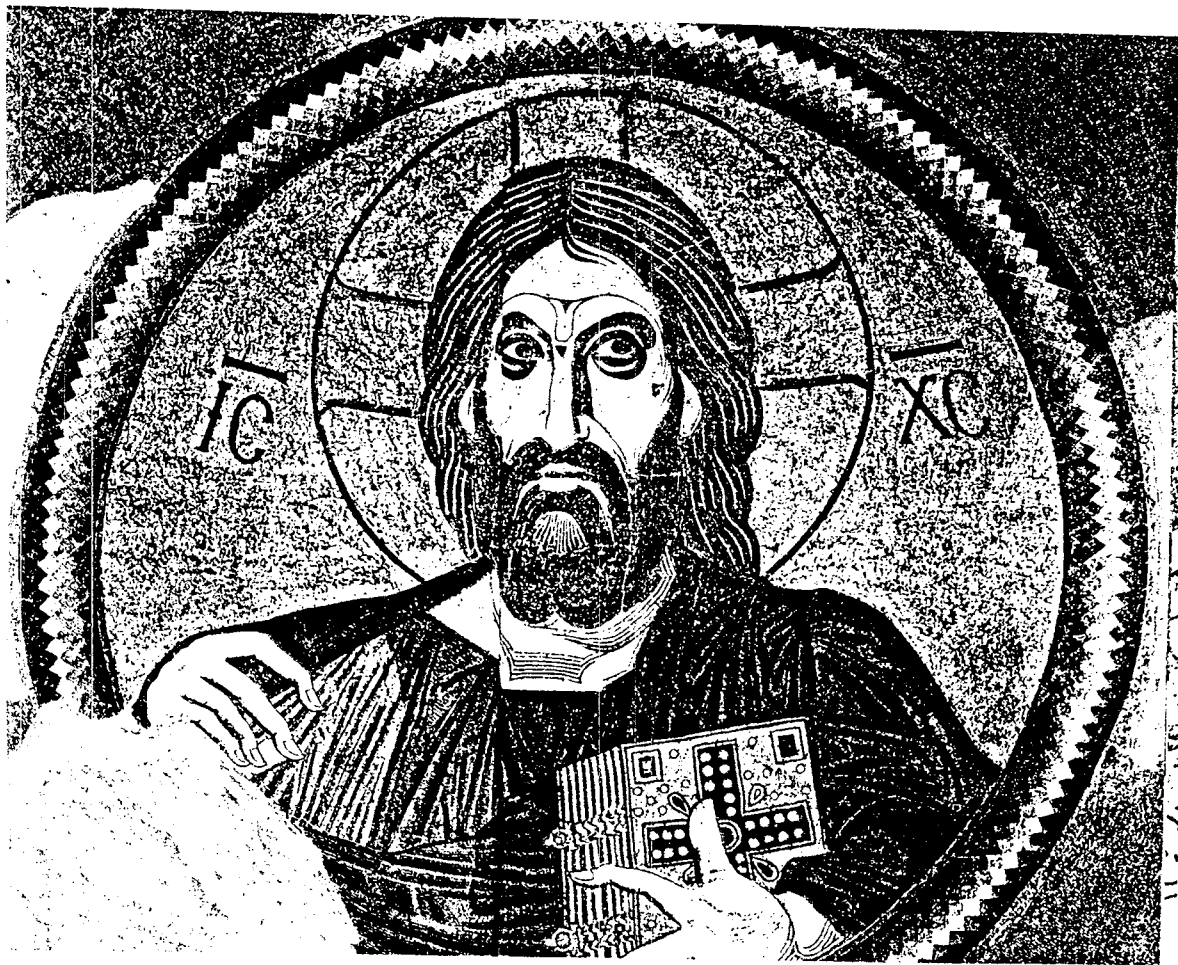
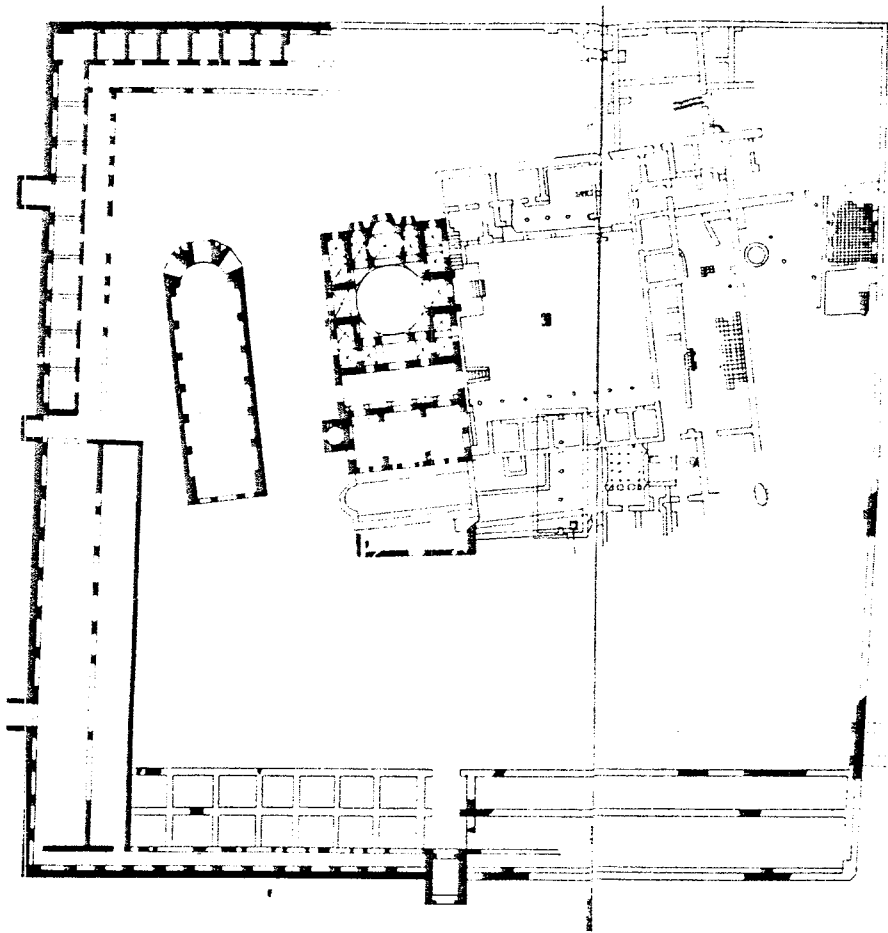
The main church or Katholikon is of a more simple style than the first two described above. The dome, approximately 7 meters in diameter, has no lateral bays but is placed between a triconch sanctuary and a narthex preceded by an exonarthex with lateral absides.

The fairly rustic architectural design is carried over into in the more primitive style of the mosaics which have a slightly Oriental flavor. Far from the somewhat abstract humanism of the decor at Daphni and Hosios Lukas, the typical characters portrayed at Nea Moni offer the stimulating counterpoint of more naive art, a folk transcription of the great models of Constantinople.

ICOMOS recommends that the convents of Daphni, Hosios Lukas and Nea Moni of Chio be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I and IV.

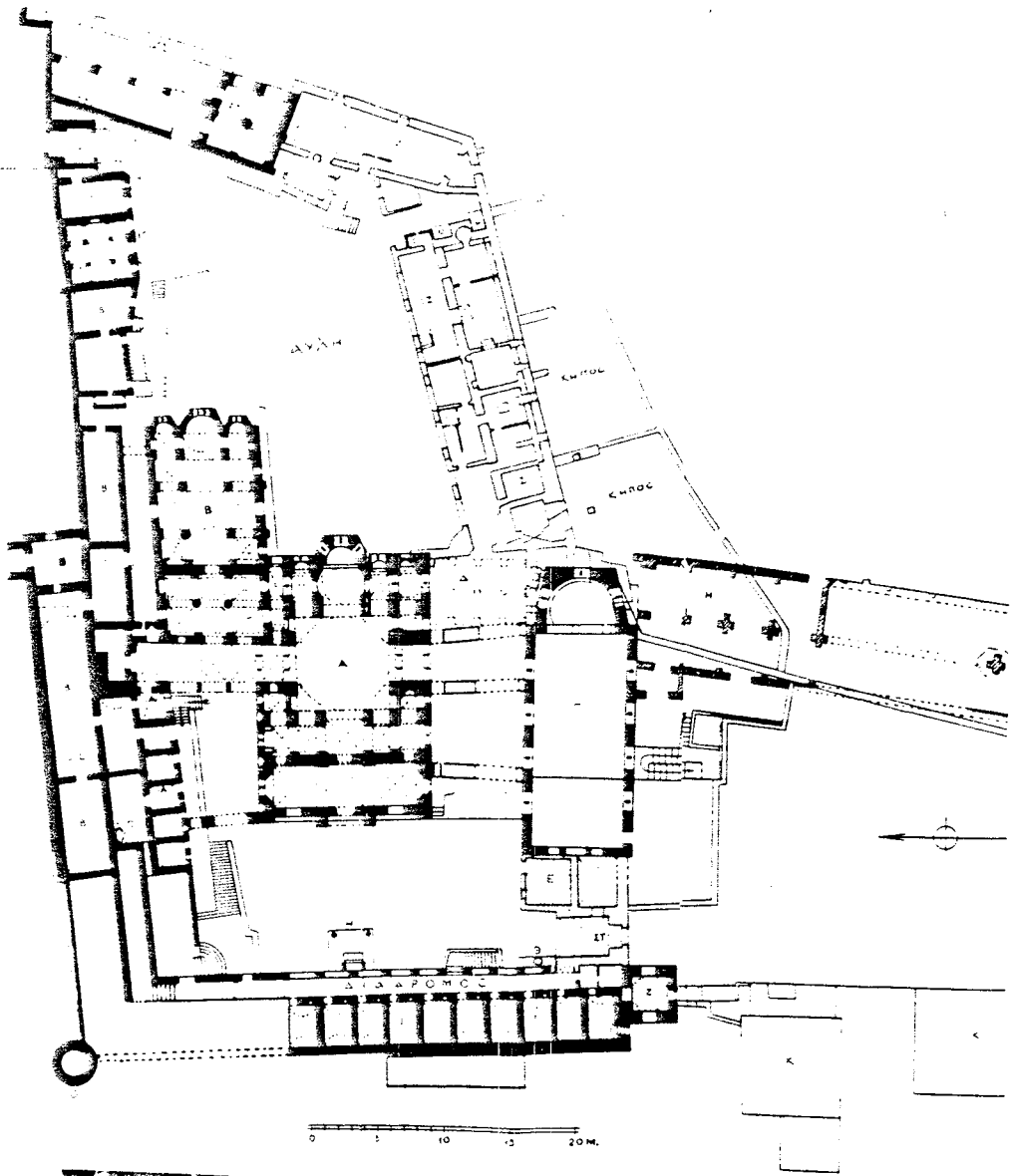
Criterion I. The monasteries at Daphni, Hosios Loukas and Nea Moni represent, with their admirable mosaics on a gold background, unique artistic achievements. On this basis each one of these indisputable masterpieces of Byzantine art could have been included on the World Heritage List on its own merits.

Criterion IV. These three monasteries are outstanding examples of a type of construction characteristic of the middle period of Byzantine religious architecture. Nea Moni illustrates the most simple expression: an octagonal church with no added spaces. Hosios Lukas and Daphni are more complex. They have a central octagonal space surrounded by a series of bays that form a square. This more elaborate structure defines a hierarchy of volumes and functions and enables the implementation of an extensive iconographic and decorative plan. It is typical of other churches, like Christianou near Kyparissia, Panaghia Lilodimou in Athens or Haghia Sophia in Monemvasie. The two examples included in the proposal are, along with Saint Theodorus of Mistra (included on the World Heritage List in 1989), the most representative by virtue of the perfection of their architecture, the beauty of their mosaics and paintings and their more satisfactory state of conservation.

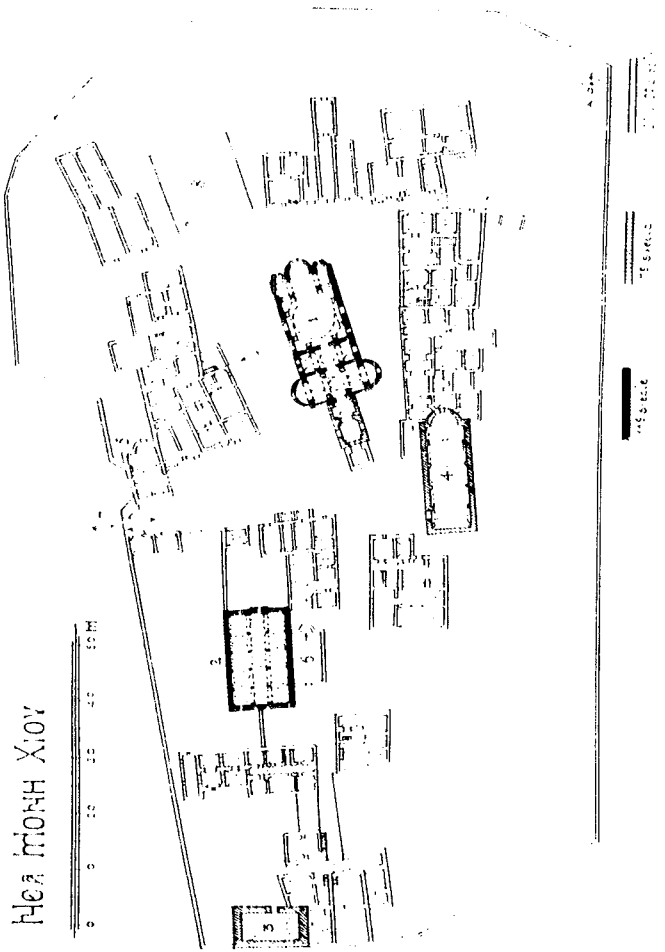


1. Plan de Daphni / Plan of Daphni

2. Mosaïque du Pantocrator / Mosaic of the Pantocrator



1. Plan de Hosios Loukas / Plan of Hosios Loukas
 2. Mosaïque: saint-Jean Chrysostome / Mosaic: St. John Chrysostom



1. Plan de la Nea Moni / Plan of the Nea Moni.
2. Mosaïque: Adam et Eve / Mosaic: Adam and Eve