

Supporting documentation for the St. Nicholas Preservation Project



Project Title:

Preservation of St Nicholas Church of Katafygion

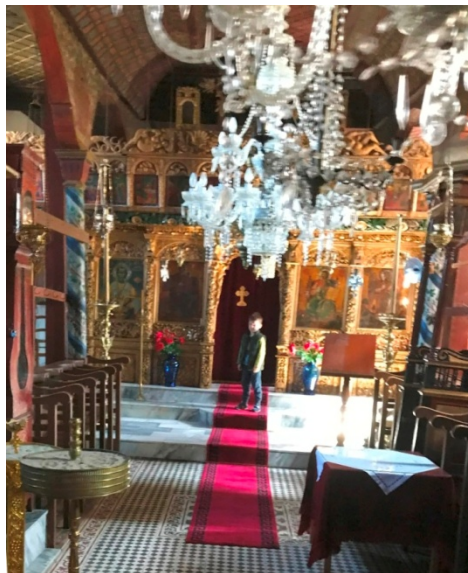


Historical data: Katafygion, the highest village in the Pieria Mountains of Macedonia (1.450 m), Central Greece, boasts a history spanning over five centuries. Renowned for its rich natural beauty, including rare flora, abundant water sources, and breathtaking landscapes, the village has been home to illustrious figures such as **Metropolitan Ioannis Zizioulas** and **Alexis Zorbas**, famously portrayed in ***Zorba the Greek***.

The village endured devastation during WWII when Nazi forces burned it entirely in December 1943. Remarkably, they attempted to destroy the ancient St. Nicholas Church three times, but it miraculously withstood the flames, a testament to its resilience and spiritual significance. Today, this historic landmark urgently requires restoration to preserve its heritage.



Metropolitan Ioannis Zizioulas



St Nicholas Church - Interior



Zorba the Greek (Alexis Zorbas)

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Zizioulas
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Zorbas

Project Summary: The primary objective of this project is to commence the preservation and restoration of St. Nicholas Church, a structure of profound religious, cultural, artistic, and historical significance.

Why are we asking you to contribute:

In 2022, the Hellenic Ministry of Culture designated the Church of St. Nicholas as "a protected monument of Greek Heritage," recognizing its immense historical and cultural value. However, the church faces an urgent need for restoration due to cumulative damage caused by extreme weather conditions at its high-altitude location (1450m), repeated earthquakes, smoke damage inflicted by Nazi forces in 1943, and years of neglect. The restoration process must be meticulously carried out following strict guidelines based on scientific studies and subject to approval by the Special Committee of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. Safeguarding this monument is critical to preserving a significant piece of Greek heritage for future generations.



St. Nicholas Church aerial view



St Nicholas Church – Exterior evening view



St Nicholas Church - Templon Interior



Templon - wooden carving detail

This project will address the urgent need for restoration of the Church of St. Nicholas through the coordinated efforts of the Church Council, appointed by the Holy Metropolis of Serbia and Kozani. Comprised of experts in various scientific disciplines, the Council will oversee the development of critical scientific studies, including the Architectural Study, Electro-mechanical Study, Static-Anti-Seismic Study, and Maintenance Study, which focuses on preserving the church's artistic and historical elements, such as icons, frescoes, and wood carvings.

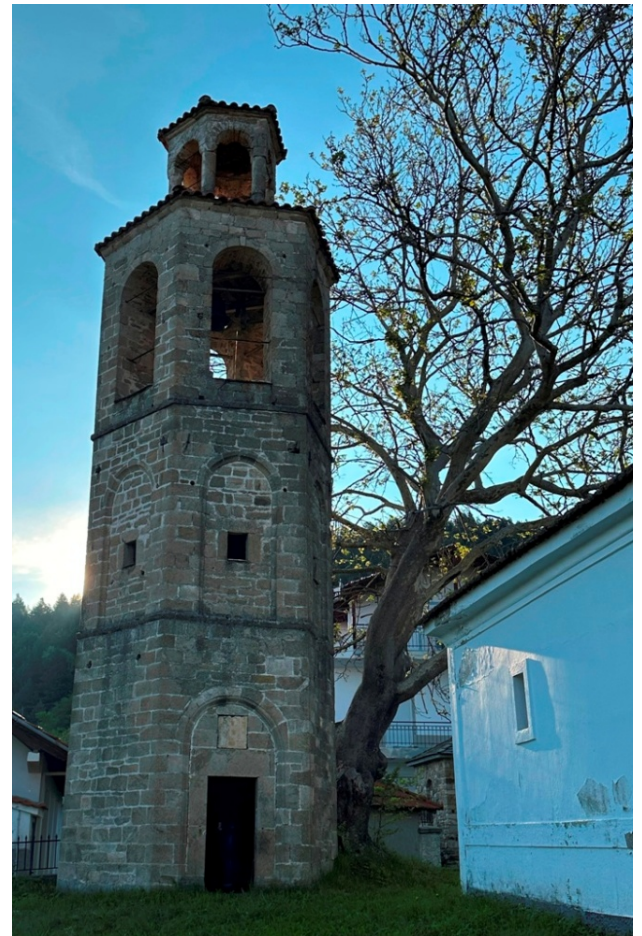
The project's primary goal is to secure funding to cover the costs of these comprehensive studies, ensuring a methodical and effective restoration process that safeguards the church's heritage for generations to come.



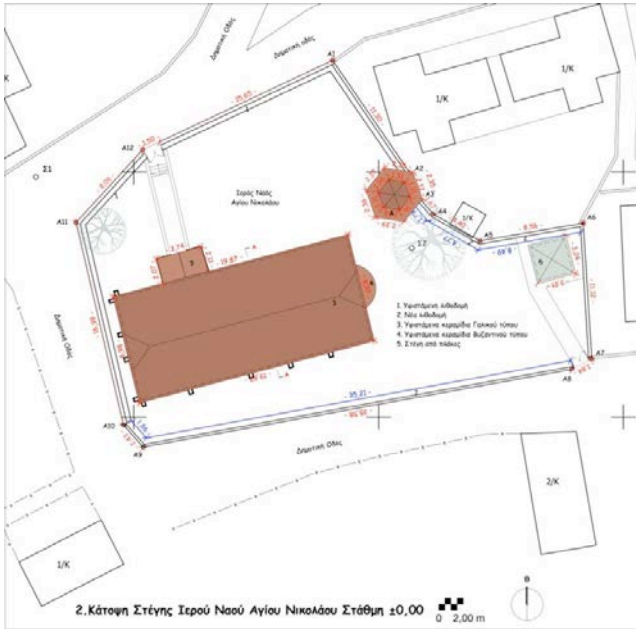
St. Nicholas – fresco over the north entry

Long-Term Impact

The St. Nicholas Church of Katafygion, recognized by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture as a unique Byzantine art monument, carries immense historical, artistic, and cultural significance. As the sole authentic heritage directly passed down from the local community's ancestors, and a survivor of the Nazi destruction in 1943, it serves as a vital link to the community's rich past, including its connection to the iconic figure Alexis Zorbas, famously known from *Zorba the Greek*. The restoration of this extraordinary monument is crucial to preserving its legacy and ensuring its long-term impact on cultural heritage and communal identity.



St. Nicholas church – bell tower



St. Nicholas Topographical plan

The restoration work of this monument must adhere to strict predetermined protocols. We are requesting your assistance in covering the expenses required to complete the restoration studies.

Important note: Contributions to this project made via GlobalGiving qualify for tax exemption.

Commemoration of Donors

All donors will have their names inscribed on a commemorative plaque within the church. Donors contributing more than €2,000 (or equivalent in \$ or £) will be honored in the Book of Major Donors of the Church—“in eternal remembrance.”

August 2025