



## Summary :

The Comnenian Monastery of Christ Philanthropos was built by Eirene Doukaina, emperor Alexios I Komnenos' wife, at the end of the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century. It was a male monastery next to the female monastery of Theotokos Kecharitomene, with which it was founded together. In the foundation of the monastery took part in all probability Alexios I, who was buried there. Some information concerning the monastery we deduce from the extant typikon of Theotokos Kecharitomene. The Palaeologan Convent of Christ Philanthropos was founded before 1307 by Eirene Choumnaina as a female monastery. It is still unclear if it was a restoration, a reestablishment or a completely different foundation in another place. Some archaeological remains in the area of Mangana have been connected without any certainty with the Palaeologan monastery, whereas it is speculated that the Comnenian monastery lay near the monastery of Christ Pantepoptes.

## Date

Comnenian monastery: end of 11th – beginning of 12th c. / Palaeologan monastery: before 1307

## Geographical Location

Constantinople

## Topographical Location

Comnenian monastery: Deuterion, near Pantokrator monastery (?) / Palaeologan monastery: area of Mangana (?)

## 1. The Comnenian foundation

### 1.1. Foundation and patron

The male monastery of Christ Philanthropos was founded at the end of the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century. Its foundation is attributed to empress [Eirene Doukaina](#), with the participation of her husband [Alexios I Komnenos](#) in all probability. The simultaneous establishment of Eirene's other foundation, Panagia Kecharitomene (it was a female monastery), and the proximity between these two monasteries –separated by a wall – had led to the conclusion that they were part of a common imperial donation. The **typikon** of the monastery of Christ Philanthropos has not survived, in contrast to the typikon of Panagia Kecharitomene where certain details concerning the male monastery are included: the [water supply](#) of both monasteries was common· the monastery of Christ Philanthropos encompassed a garden among other things· the monastic typikon was made in three copies, such as the typikon of Kecharitomene, of which one was kept in the archive of [Hagia Sophia](#), one in the monastery itself and the third one was given to the abbot to use.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence for the monastery of Christ Philanthropos is scanty, especially if we take into consideration that it was an imperial foundation. The date of monastery's erection can be only partly assigned: the monastery's abbot Sophronios is mentioned in 1107<sup>2</sup> and it is conjectured that the erection of the monastery began after 1095 and queen mother [Anna Dalassene's](#) retirement from the political life to the monastery of Christ Pantepoptes that she had founded. It is considered as almost certain that together with the female monastery of empress Eirene Doukaina, [...] whose first typikon is dated to the period 1108-1111. Much later, at the beginning of the 13th century, historian [Niketas Choniates](#) points out that emperor Alexios I Komnenos, whom he records as the founder of the monastery of Christ Philanthropos, was buried in there.<sup>3</sup> An abbot of the monastery at the end of 12th century was a friend of metropolitan Eustathios of Thessaloniki, a fact that reveals, together with abbot's appointment by the emperor, the significance of the monastery in Constantinople.

### 1.2. Location

Based on the evidence deduced from the typikon of the neighboring monastery of Panagia Kecharitomene, the location of these two monastic complexes can be roughly determined. The foundation of Eirene Doukaina lay on the same street as the church of Saint Anna at Deuterion, while it bordered the female monastery of Saint Nicholas, a fact that confirms that both monasteries of the imperial couple lay in [Constantinople's](#) Tenth [Region](#), to the north of the church of [Holy Apostles](#). It lay probably near Anna Dalassene's



monastery of [Christ Pantepoptes](#), in that part of [Constantinople](#) where Komnenoi built their most important foundations, among which [Christ Pantokrator](#) complex.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.3. Dedication of the monastic church

The members of Komnenos dynasty most of the times dedicated their foundations to Christ or to Theotokos, manifesting the special bond of the emperor with Christ, the heavenly king, and the empress with Theotokos. Characteristic examples are Christ Pantepoptes of Anna Dalassene, Christ Philanthropos and Panagia Kecharitomene of Eirene Doukaina, Christ Euergetes of John Komnenos (elder son of [sebastokrator](#) Isaak and nephew of Alexios I) and certainly the big complex of Christ Pantokrator of Alexios' son, emperor John II Komnenos and empress Eirene-Piroska. As far as the epithet «Philanthropos» is concerned, it refers to the special emphasis laid on philanthropy with regard to Alexios I's imperial ideology. The frequency with which [Anna Komnene](#) employs the designation of charitable (philanthropos) in order to describe her father's character and works in Alexiad is characteristic.

## 2. The Palaeologan monastery

### 1.2. The patrons

Founder of this second Palaeologan monastery was Eirene Choumnaina, wife of [despotes](#) John Palaiologos, son of [Andronikos II Palaiologos](#). After John's death, in 1307, she retired in her foundation receiving the monastic name Eulogia, until her death in 1355. It is reported that her father, Nikephoros Choumnos, also retired in a certain monastery dedicated to Christ Philanthropos, where he met his death in 1327 under the monastic name Nathaniel; this monastery was founded by his wife and it was a male one, but it seems that there was some sort of relation between these two homonymous monasteries, although no certainty exists concerning their topographical proximity.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.2. Archaeological remains and identification

[Russian travelers](#) at Constantinople in the 14th and 15th centuries mention a church of Christ Philanthropos in the area of Mangana. It seems that the monastery housed the relic of Saint Abercios and lay near a fountain of holy water, where Christians gathered for all kinds of healing. The church was also related to a miraculous icon of Christ. The tradition of healings in the church survived until the 19th century.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1921 and 1923, while the French army camped at Topkapi, excavations in the region brought to light remains identified with three monuments of the Mangana quarter: [Saint George](#), Theotokos of Odegon and Christ Philanthropos. With the latter one some substructures and an underground cistern were related, mainly based on its proximity with a small holy-water spring. If the identification is correct, then it is probably the Palaeologan church, judging by the brick plastic decoration on the exterior surfaces. However, the remains are not enough for the reconstruction of the monument's ground plan.<sup>7</sup>

## 3. Relation between the two monasteries of different periods

The *typikon* of Eirene Choumnaina for the monastery of Christ Philanthropos is only fragmentary preserved. The remaining fragment is essentially a reprise of the same part from the foundation document of Eirene Doukaina for Theotokos Kecharitomene.<sup>8</sup> However the influence of the older *typikon* over the later one is not enough to prove the relation between the homonymous monasteries of these two different periods. Even more obscure remains the relation of the male Palaeologan monastery of Christ Philanthropos either to the older one or to the contemporary female one. The surviving remains do not allow us to draw any conclusions regarding this matter. The relation between the foundations of the Comnenian and the Palaeologan period remain essentially unclear; based on the existing evidence R. Janin concludes that these were two different monasteries in two different quarters of Constantinople.<sup>9</sup>

1. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin 1: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat oecuménique*, t.III: *Les églises et les monastères*



(Paris <sup>2</sup>1969), p. 525. Jordan, R., «27. Kecharitomene: Typikon of Empress Irene Doukaina Komnene for the Convent of the Mother of God Kecharitomene in Constantinople», in Thomas, J. and Constantinides Hero, A. (ed.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 35, Washington DC 2000), p. 649.

2. Jordan, R., «27. Kecharitomene: Typikon of Empress Irene Doukaina Komnene for the Convent of the Mother of God Kecharitomene in Constantinople», in Thomas, J. and Constantinides Hero, A. (ed.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 35, Washington DC 2000), p. 649. Cf. Lambros, Sp., *Catalogue of the greek manuscripts on Mount Athos* vol. I (Cambridge 1895), p. 176.

3. Van Dieten, J.A. (ed.), *Nicetae Choniatae Historia* (CFHB 11, Berlin-New York 1975), p. 19.

4. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin 1: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat oecuménique*, t.III: *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris <sup>2</sup>1969), pp. 526-7.

5. Talbot, A.-M. «47. Philanthropos: Typikon of Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina for the Convent of Christ Philanthropos in Constantinople», in Thomas, J. and Constantinides Hero, A. (ed.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 35, Washington DC 2000), p. 1383.

6. Majeska, G., *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1984), pp. 371–74.

7. Müller-Wiener, W., *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbul: Byzantion, Konstantinupolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn d. 17. Jh.* (Tübingen 1977), p. 109. Mathews, T.F., *The Byzantine churches of Istanbul. A photographic survey* (University Park, Pa., 1976), p. 200.

8. Talbot, A.-M. «47. Philanthropos: Typikon of Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina for the Convent of Christ Philanthropos in Constantinople», in Thomas, J. and Constantinides Hero, A. (ed.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 35, Washington DC 2000), p. 1384.

9. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin 1: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat oecuménique*, t.III: *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris <sup>2</sup>1969), pp. 525-7. Cf. Janin, R., «Les monastères du Christ Philanthrope à Constantinople», *Études Byzantines* 4 (1946), pp. 135–62.

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	<b>Mathews T.F.</b> , <i>The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul. A Photographic Survey</i> , University Park – London 1976
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	<b>Janin R.</b> , <i>La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin 3. Les églises et les monastères</i> , Paris 1953
	<b>Majeska G.P.</b> , <i>Russian Travellers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries</i> , Washington DC 1984
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	<b>Mullet M. – Smythe, D. (eds)</b> , <i>Alexios I Komnenos. Papers of the second Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium, 14-16 April 1989</i> , Belfast 1996



	<b>Stanković V.</b> , <i>Komnini u Carigradu (1057-1185). Evolucija jedne vladarske porodice</i> , Beograd 2006
	<b>Janin R.</b> , "Les monastères du Christ Philanthrope à Constantinople", <i>Études Byzantines</i> , 4, 1946, 135–162

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	Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: 47. Philanthropos: Typikon of Irene Choumnaina Palaiologina for the Convent of Christ Philanthropos in Consta <a href="http://www.doaks.org/publications/doaks_online_publications/typikaPDF/typ060.pdf">http://www.doaks.org/publications/doaks_online_publications/typikaPDF/typ060.pdf</a>

## Glossary :

	<b>despotes</b> Title introduced in the 12th century. In administrative hierarchy, the office of despotes was under the emperor and the co-emperor. From the 14 <sup>th</sup> century onwards, the title was given to the governors of the Byzantine Peloponnese.
	<b>sebastokrator</b> Honorary title of the Byzantine court. The office was established in 1081 by Alexios I Komnenos for his elder brother Isaac, equivalent to the one of regent
	<b>typikon</b> Foundation document of a monastery compiling the rules regarding its administrative organization and liturgic rituals, as well as the comportment inside a cenobitic monastery. The monastic typika could also include the biography (vita) of the monastery founder along with a catalogue of the movable or immovable property of the monastery. They constitute an important source for the study of the monastic life, while at the same time they shed light on many aspects of the Byzantine society. The liturgical typika were calendars with instructions for each day's services, liturgical books with rules arranging the celebration rituals.

## Sources

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## Quotations

### Alexios I Komnenos' burial at the monastery of Christ Philanthropos

Νυκτὸς δ' ἐπιούσης ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξιος τοῦ ζῆν ἀπενήνεκται, ἄρξας ἐνιαυτοῦς ἑπτὰ καὶ τριάκοντα καὶ ἡμισυ μηνὸς σὺν τοῖς τέσσαρσι. κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἕω εὐθὺς μεταστέλλεται ἡ μήτηρ τὸν Ἰωάννην εἰς τὴν τοῦ πατρικοῦ σικήνους ἐξιέναι πομπαίαν προόδον, αὐτίκα μάλᾳ ἀρθησομένου τε καὶ ἀχθησομένου εἰς ἣν ἐκεῖνος ἐδειμάτο Χριστῷ τῷ Φιλανθρώπῳ μονήν.

J. A. van Dieten (ed.), *Nicetae Choniatae Historia* (CFHB 11, Berlin-New York 1975), p. 19.

### Russian travelers mention the (Palaeologan) monastery of Christ Philanthropos

a. Behind Mangana, nearby, to the east, overlooking the sea is a church [where] the holy Savior himself appeared on the wall. This Savior heals many sick. The body of St. Abercius reposes in this church [...] (Russian Anonymus)

b. The Convent of Christ the Merciful is near St. Sophia. In it there is holy water below the church, and innumerable sick and lepers receive healing by burying their feet in the sand [there] (Zosima).

Majeska, G., *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 372.