



International Association of Byzantine Studies

1 June 2025,

The International Association of Byzantine Studies has been informed of a decision by a court of the Arab Republic of Egypt that risks, now or in the future, altering the way of life of the monks and the status of the Monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai.

This news has deeply unsettled international public opinion, particularly within the academic community in numerous countries.

As President of the International Association of Byzantine Studies on behalf of Bureau and all its national committees, I write to express my deep concern regarding the recent decision.

The Monastery of Saint Catherine, beyond being a living testimony to the religious and spiritual tradition of the last two millennia, embodied by the presence of its monks, is a heritage site of universal significance. It is renowned for its Byzantine and post-Byzantine monuments, for its rich library containing unique manuscripts of Eastern Christian traditions written in Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Georgian, etc., and for its very important artistic artefacts spanning the centuries of the monastery's history.

At the same time, the history of the monastery is inextricably intertwined with the history of Egypt, whose richness is reflected in the country's enduring diversity of cultures and religions, both past and present.

Aware of all this, the International Association of Byzantine Studies appeals to the authorities of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to the President and the competent Ministers, for a response that not only reassures international public and academic opinion, but also ensures and guarantees the continued existence and future of the monastery and its monks, without any alteration to their way of life which has been preserved for 1500 years.

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