

**THE AGORA – INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH NHRF
SEMINARS 2025-2026**



SATURDAY, JANUARY 17

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Foundation

**The Garden of the Virgin Mary: Mount Athos between
the Byzantines and the Ottomans**

Nicholas (Nikolaos) Livanos is a historian specializing in the history of Orthodox monasticism, with a particular focus on the monastic community of Mount Athos.

This talk examines how Mount Athos navigated the transition from late Byzantine to early Ottoman rule, highlighting the institutional and social adaptations that reshaped monastic life.

After outlining the political backdrop, it focuses on the rise of idiorrhithmy and the ways it reconfigured communal organization. The weakening and eventual disappearance of the institution of the Protos, together with the emergence of the Epistasia system, are discussed as developments that signal a shift toward a more decentralized and adaptable administrative system for the Holy Mount.

Finally, we turn to the legends that appear in writing in the early sixteenth century, interpreting them as complementary reflections of how Athonite monks made sense of their altered world. Rather than overshadowing institutional change, they illuminate the broader strategies through which Athos reimagined its practices and identity between Byzantine and Ottoman authority.

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**SATURDAYS AT 9:00 PST | 12:00
EST | 19:00 (Athens/Cairo)**