

## Memories of the Space

I am fascinated by the visuals of the spaces and landscapes I inhabit. So fittingly, some of my most vivid memories of my time at the Mt. Menoikeion monastery can be recalled through the images that I took of the spaces we occupied throughout our seminar, whether in the monastery or in the other places we visited nearby in Greece. The images featured here allow me to reflect on the incredible time I spent with my fellow seminar participants, the nuns at the monastery, and the experiences we shared.

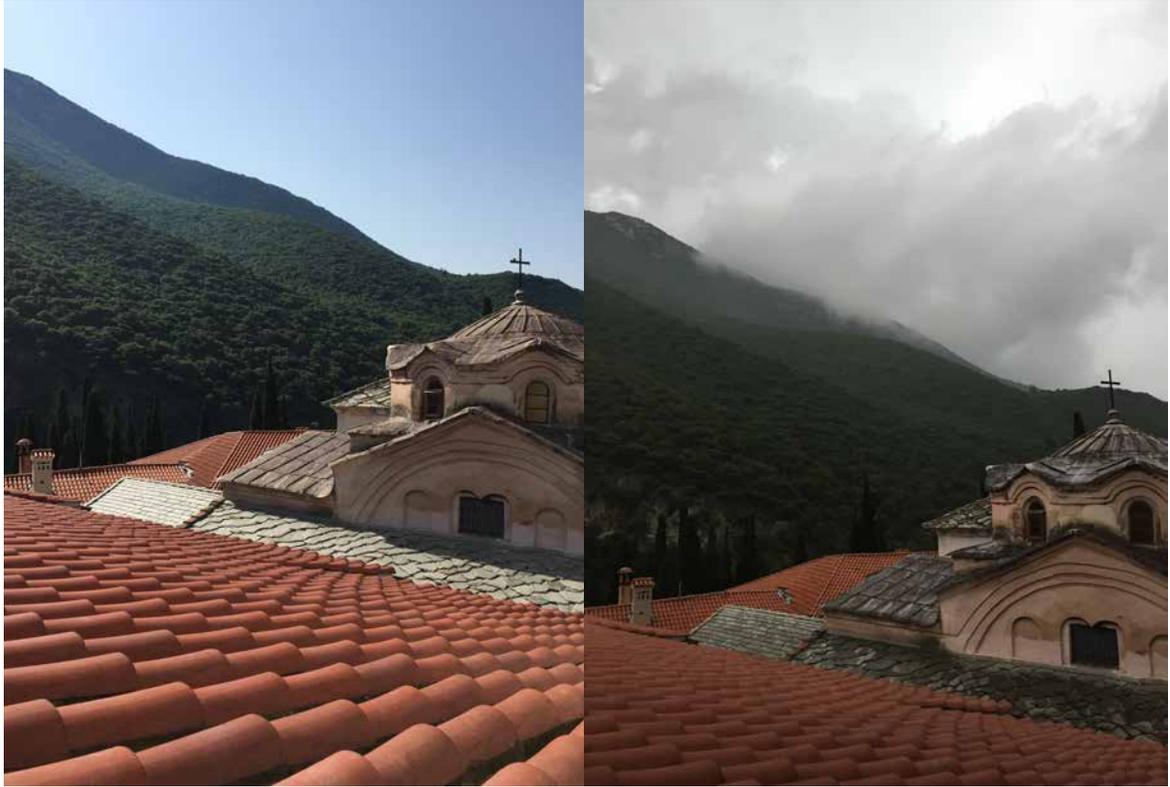




This is one of iconic images of the monastery, featured on travel and promotional material. It's one of the first images I was tempted to capture as we entered the monastery through the main gates. I can recall the stoned steps we had to walk down on to enter the main quarters of the monastery, where we slept, ate, had our seminar sessions, and the church where the services were held. [Left]

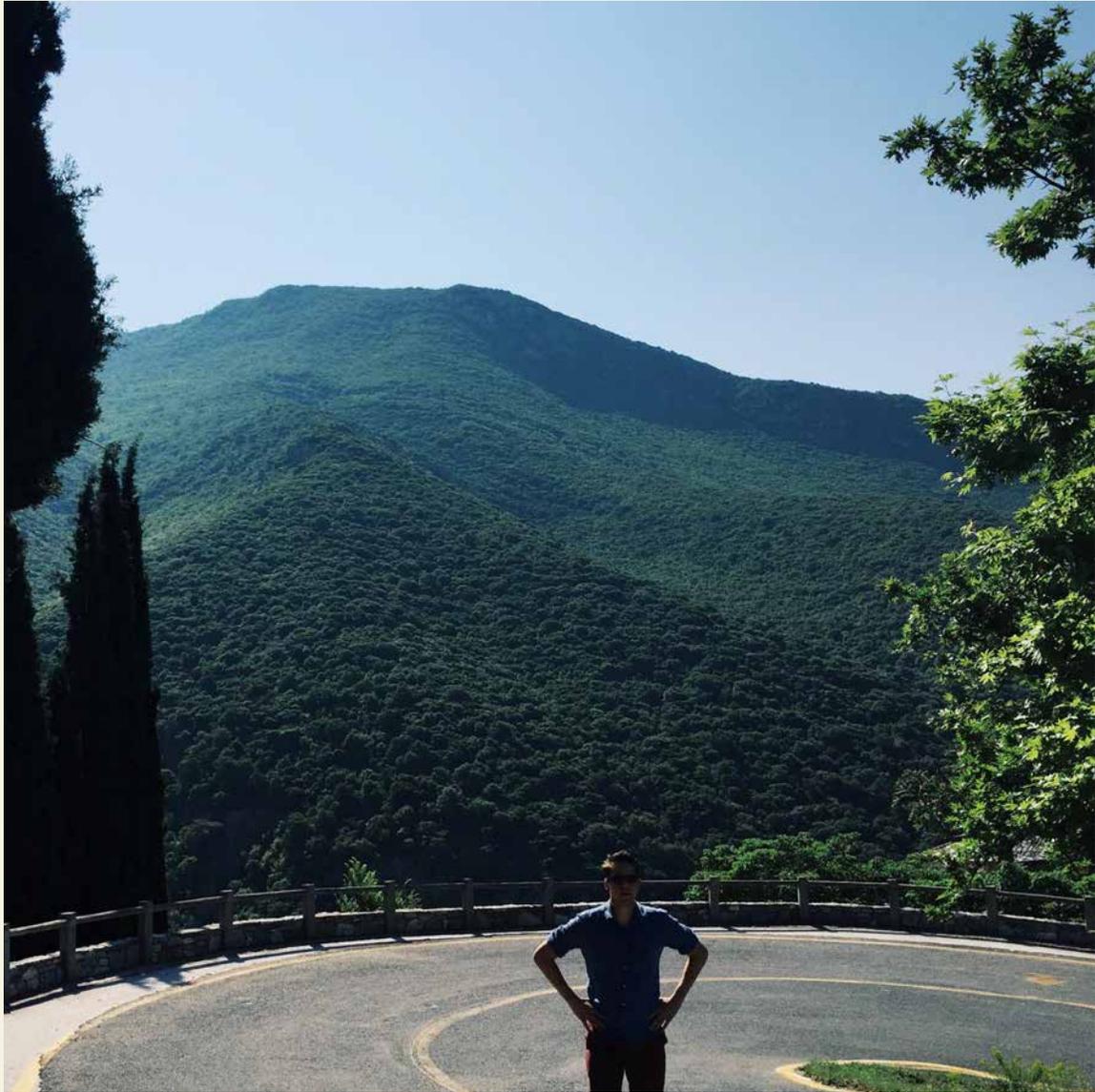
This walkway led to our main meeting area (to the left) and then to living quarter of the nuns. It was a good area to linger in and run into the nuns who were going on with their daily routines. The sound of running water from a small fountain filled the space with constant rhythm. [Right]





In my journal notes from the monastery, I acknowledge how awe struck I was by the room in which we (the females) were given to sleep in. As soon as I entered the room, I noticed how much attention was given to detail and order in the monastery. Our beds were laid out in a pattern according to the make up of our group. The emphasis on detail and order was prominent throughout the monastery – from the maintenance of the infrastructure to the monastic way of life led by the nuns. The nuns' commitment to detail and order inspired me to reflect on my own ways of life.

Another important feature of our room was the scenic view that was accessible to us through the room windows and balcony. The pictures above were taken on different days of the week, showing the contrast in the weather we experienced. I remember performing my daily prayers (the five daily prayers I perform as a Muslim) in the balcony, while the clouds hovered above the mountain before the thunder and rain came in soon.



**This is from the hike we took from the monastery to a nearby village to visit a church. The village is now deserted as well as the church but a local got us access to the inside of the church. As the local host explained the history of the church and village, we realized how complex the history of this region is. This particular area of Greece has experienced and been transformed by the many people and empires that have inhabited the region. Its history is very much present and active today.**

An Ottoman inscription on a pillar in a church in Thessaloniki. [Right]



View of the city from above. [Below]





This is the monastery during a foggy night. The image captures the mystical experience I had at the monastery. The conversations and interactions I had with the nuns forced me to reflect deep into my spiritual self. I have also learned a great deal from my peers, both undergraduates and graduates, whose company was so immensely enjoyable during the seminar.