

Prothyron

A prothyron is an open [porch](#) supported by two columns in front of the outer doors of a church or other building. It is thus a diminutive propylaeum or a portico reduced to a single bay (see “porch,” above). The roof, which is fixed to the building wall, may be a small dome or a saddleback, and the columns are connected to each other and the wall by architraves or arches. The prothyron is generally raised at least one step from the ground.

The prothyron was often used in classical times (Vitruvius 6.7) but was more commonly used in [Byzantine](#) churches. Examples in Egypt are rare and occur almost solely along the coast, especially in the vicinity of Alexandria. The Great [Basilica](#) at Abu Mina has prothyra placed inside (Schläger, 1965, ill. 1), but these lead to side rooms and chapels that can only be entered from the church. The prothyron also found its way into [Islamic](#) architecture and occurs repeatedly, in particular in the [buildings](#) of the sixteenth-century Turkish architect Mi'mar Sinan (Egli, 1976). In modern Coptic architecture the [porch](#) corresponds to it.

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