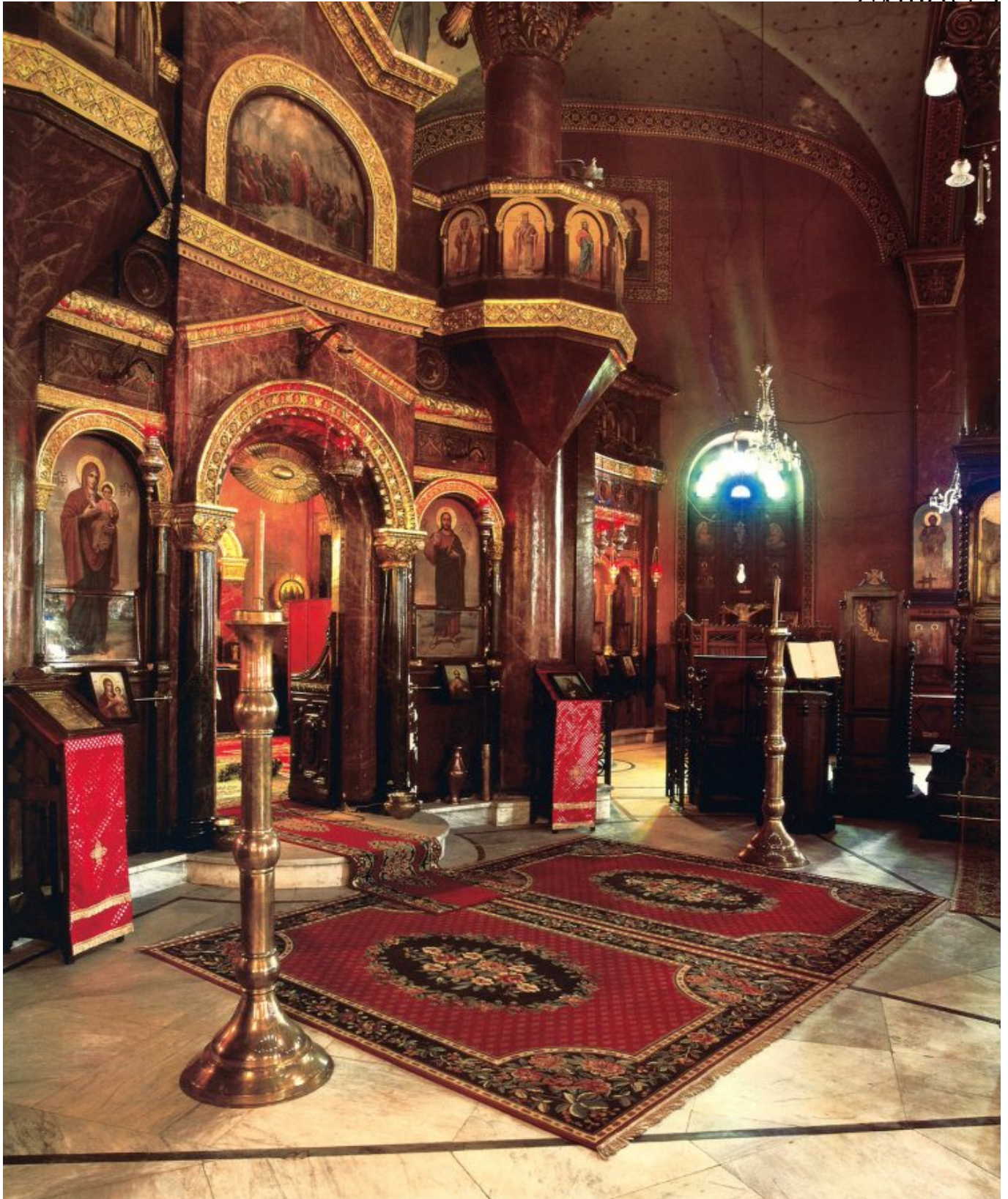


The [Greek](#) Orthodox Church of St. George was constructed over the northern tower of the former river gate of the [Babylon](#) fortress. The Arab [historian](#) Ibn Duqmaq (1349-1407) assigned the church to the Melkites and mentioned its association with a convent. According to al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) there was a Nilometer near the convent. In the late fifteenth century, the Metropolitan of Smyrna [Daniel](#) stated that the church was under the control of the Monophysite Copts, but apparently they did not occupy the church for any length of time, since it was restored under the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria, Joachim (1487-1567). In 1672 Johann [Wansleben](#) reported that the Nunnery of St. George was inhabited by [Greek](#) Orthodox nuns. [Muslim](#) mobs plundered the church in the course of the anarchic year 1882. After the devastating fire of August 4, 1903, the church was rebuilt, and on November 1, 1909 consecrated by Photius, the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria.

A flight of steps leads up to the church's entrance, which lies to the north. The present Church of St. George is a circular building or rotunda with a concentric inner colonnade, which supports an elevated cupola. The [altar](#) is located on its eastern side; icons of the Holy Virgin, Pentecost, and Christ adorn the iconostasis. It is not known how closely—or even if—the modern floor plan corresponds to the original design. It is traditionally believed that St. George was held prisoner next to the main church and martyred there. The little Sleeping Mary [Greek](#) Orthodox Church lies in the Greek Orthodox cemetery, which is to the north of the Church of St. George. Through the sanctuary to the left is a small cave and well where the Holy Family is believed to have stayed on their journey back to Jerusalem.



Exterior view looking east to ~west of the [Greek](#) Orthodox Church of St. George, which ~was constructed on top of a Roman tower.



The [Greek](#) Orthodox Church of St. George: [iconostasis](#) with icons of Christ and the Holy Virgin.



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CAIRO) | 4