



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM PANTOKRATOR TO SKETE OF BOGORODITSA

Distance: 4 or 5 km

Journey time: 1½ – 2 hrs

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There are two routes from *Pantokrator* to the small Russian *Skete of Bogoroditsa*.

The most direct route mostly follows the attractive historic footpath from *Pantokrator* to *Vatopedi*, initially with views back to the monastery and along the coast, with *Mount Athos* in the background. Near the top of the first ridge, a side path connects to the footpath from the *Skete of Profitis Ilias* to *Bogoroditsa*, joining the second route.

The second route, about 1km longer, initially follows the main road to *Karyes*, with views back to the Monastery and the sea. It then takes a forest track that winds its way up the side of a beautiful valley before joining the historic footpath from the *Skete of Profitis Ilias* to *Bogoroditsa* which climbs through woods with occasional views back to the other side of the valley and *Profitis Ilias*.

Returning or continuing from *Bogoroditsa* to *Pantokrator* via the large and handsome *Skete of Profitis Ilias* makes an attractive, though rather longer, alternative route (see separate descriptions for *Bogoroditsa to Profitis Ilias* and *Profitis Ilias to Pantokrator*).

Note: All distances given (in metres) should be taken as approximate. The route described is liable to unpredictable change: for example, forestry work, road or track construction and plant growth may alter the route, or its appearance. Signposts may disappear or new ones appear. The Friends of Mount Athos strives to keep this description correct and up to date but cannot take responsibility for its accuracy.

Abbreviations: L = Left; R = Right; KSO = Keep straight on;
FP = Footpath; K = *Kalderimi* (stone-paved FP or track)

Description of Routes:

Walk (m) And then . . .

- 0 Leave ***Pantokrator Monastery*** by main gate (facing the kiosk). Turn immediately R and R again following *K* road.
- 40 Ignore L turn (down to harbour); KSO on level *kalderimi* road.

- 70 Fork R off *K* onto non-*K* road just after building on R.
- 100 Ignore road joining from back R. KSO, now on main road, initially with monastery behind and soon with remains of aqueduct on R. Road makes a long curve to L until the monastery is on L.
- 270 Ignore road joining from back R, signed *Vatopedi*. Ignore track down to L.
- 200 Where FP, signed *Vatopedi*, climbs steeply up bank to R, the two routes diverge.

For more direct route via FP to *Vatopedi*:

- Turn R off road, climbing steeply up bank onto rocky FP, continuing uphill across open hillside.
- 350 FP reaches trees, continuing uphill. Stretches of *K* appear.
- 700 Ignore faint track to R (leading to road). FP continues through trees, climbing initially but later flattens out.
- 600 Pass remains of circular building (possible cell) beside FP on R.
Note: May be difficult to spot.
- 600 At junction with FP joining from back L, turn hard L onto FP, uphill (straight on continues to *Vatopedi*).
- 350 FP emerges at rocky track, roughly at crest of ridge. Cross track to pick up FP on further side, now descending
- 300 FP descends to join another FP from below L. This is the FP from the ***Skete of Profitis Ilias* to *Bogoroditsa*** and is where the two routes recombine.

Bear R and Continue at 'Combined Route' below.

For longer route via FP from *Skete of Profitis Ilias*:

- Ignore path steeply up R, KSO on main road, ignoring any further tracks to L.
- 200 At fork, bear R, uphill still on main road. (L descends to ***Pantokrator Arsanas*** and cultivated land.)
- 900 Road descends and bears L to cross river. At bend, fork R onto track which climbs R side of valley.
- 1050 FP from the ***Skete of Profitis Ilias*** joins track coming up bank from L. KSO
Note: FP joining from L may be difficult to spot.
- 55 Turn R off track onto FP, uphill, signed *Bogoroditsa*. This soon becomes fine *K*.

- 650 Pass rocky viewpoint back across valley to **Skete of Profitis Ilias**.
- 800 After FP begins to level out, arrive at a junction with another FP joining from above R. This other FP connects with the FP between **Vatopedi** and **Pantokrator**, offering the most direct route back to **Pantokrator**.
Here the two routes recombine.

Combined Route:

- At junction, KSO as FP curves L passing remains of water system/mill with **Skete** visible to L.
- 200 FP ends at track. Turn L onto track, downhill towards **Skete**.
(R along track leads to the main Vatopedi – Karyes road.)
- 90 Arrive at the gate of **Skete of Bogoroditsa**.

This description has been produced by **The Friends of Mount Athos**, a charitable organisation which, among other activities, works with monasteries to keep this, and certain other footpaths on the Holy Mountain, open. Copies of this and similar descriptions are available, free, from the Friends website, www.athosfriends.org and in a number of places on or associated with the Holy Mountain.