



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM VATOPEDI TO PANTOKRATOR VIA KOLITSOU

Distance – [9] km. Journey time [2½ – 3] hours

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WARNING: *This description is still under development – the directions and distances have not been independently validated and distances in square brackets are very approximate.*

*Note also that the footpath between Vatopedi and Kolitsou contains a **very steep descent** of about 2 metres that the less agile may find very difficult.*

This alternative to the more usual route to *Pantokrator* avoids the need to climb almost to the top of the ridge and may be closer to the usual historic route, although little is now *kalderimi*. After an initial climb up the main road, a historic path traverses the hill to reach the coast north of *Kolitsou* (or *Kultsum*). After descending to the shore below *Kolitsou*, a track roughly follows the coast all the way 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 Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

- 0 Turn L out of **Vatopedi Monastery** entrance along paved road.
- 50 At fork with covered well on L, bear L along walled K (signed *Karyes*).
- 100 Where wall turns L, turn L following K (signed *Karyes*).
- 150 At junction, KSO up road.
- 100 At junction, bear L along road. Ignore track to R.
- 70 At major T-junction at top of small rise, bear R, uphill on main

road (not straight on/L, downhill).

- 300 Arrive at crossroads where main road bends L uphill and level track straight on/R is signed *Karyes* and *Pantokrator*. Ignore track ahead/R which leads to the FP to ***Karyes*** and ***Pantokrator*** by the higher route. Continue on main road, uphill.
- 700 Shortly before the main road bends sharply to the R, at the far end of the wall of a bridge, turn L off road to descend steep bank onto small FP below, marked with orange tape.
Caution: Difficult to spot. Difficult descent.
- The FP soon enters woodland. In places it meets or crosses other paths which are no longer in use
- 900 FP arrives at steep drop of about 2m, caused by earth movement. **Take great care.** This is followed by another rocky but less difficult descent before the path begins to climb.
- 90 Reach dramatic cliff-top viewpoint ahead over rocks to the sea. FP turns R and makes zig-zag descent before flattening out through trees.
- 200 FP emerges from trees to end at track. Turn R along track with sea on L.
- 220 At fork, bear R (L goes to *kellion*). After passing *kellion* on L, with ***Kolitsou*** tower now visible on ridge ahead, track starts to climb and curves R, inland.
- 700 At junction with larger track/road, turn L, downhill. (Ahead/R, uphill, leads to the main *Vatopedi – Karyes* road.)
Note: To visit the ***Kolitsou*** tower, turn L about 30m before reaching this junction. Then retrace steps.
- 250 After passing *kellion* on L, turn hard L onto track opposite abandoned *kellion* on R. Track passes below *kellion* and then above a *kellion* with small bell tower.
Note: Remaining on the road leads to the ***Kellion of Agios Georgios*** and the grave of ***Elder Dionysios*** at ***Kolitsou***.
- 300 Track from *kellion* joins through gate from back R. KSO on track.
- 150 At fork, bear R along track which narrows and descends towards shore.
- 1000 Track ends at open level grassy area. KSO across grassy area towards beach.
- 60 With sea ahead, and small building to L, turn R along beach.
- 60 At partially ruined buildings (boathouses, etc), turn R between

buildings to pick up FP going inland.

- 30 At junction of FPs just above buildings, turn L onto FP which climbs steeply, soon through trees. (The FP straight on leads in about 1200m up to the **Kellion of Agios Georgios** at **Kolitsou**.)
- 150 FP climbs bank to emerge at start of level grassy track. Turn L along track which roughly follows the coastline, passing quarry after about 2000m.
- [2500] Track passes through pole gate to join road descending from back R. Turn L along the road. (To the R this road eventually joins the main *Vatopedi – Karyes* road at a white pole gate.)
- [1500] Road joins larger road at T-junction, with **Pantokrator** ahead. Turn L onto major road which curves round to R towards Monastery, passing aqueduct on L.
- 270 At fork in road bear R, following direction indicated by arrow.
- 100 Road joins *K* road from back R. KSO/L along *K*, ignoring *K* tracks up to L and to R down to harbour.
- 110 Pass kiosk to arrive at **Pantokrator Monastery** entrance.

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.