



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 – 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.
- 100 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 with road, bear L uphill on 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, signed *Kolitsou* and *Pantokrator*.
- 700 Shortly before the main road bends sharply to the R, the FP begins below the second wall on the L of the road. Either before or after this wall (where a culvert goes under the road), descend steep bank onto small FP below and bear R.
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.
Note: Any ropes (or wires) across the path are to deter animals. Any associated notice means “Do not remove rope”.
- 200 FP emerges from trees to end at track. Turn R along track along top of olive grove 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. Ignore track back to L (to *kellion*).
- 650 Pass track to L which leads to the ***Kolitsou Tower***.
Note: To visit the Tower, turn L here and then retrace steps.
- 30 At junction with larger track/road, turn L, downhill. (Ahead/R, uphill, leads to the main *Vatopedi – Karyes* road.)
- 100 At junction, bear L, downhill. Ignore track ahead to *kellion*.
- 150 Just after passing a *kellion* on L, turn **hard L** immediately opposite a *kellion* on R (being restored in 2014) onto FP which passes just below the *kellion* on the L.
Caution: This turning may be difficult to identify.
- FP then passes above another *kellion* with small bell tower, below on R.
- Alternatively:** Remain on road to visit the ***Kellion of Agios Georgios*** and the grave of ***Elder Dionysios*** at ***Kolitsou***. To continue to ***Pantokrator***, take FP just inside the gate of this *kellion* which descends for 1200m to the shore at † below.

- 300 Track from *kellion* with bell tower joins under a covered shelter from back R. KSO/L on track.
- 150 Track ends. KSO on FP which descends towards shore and may be overgrown in places.
- 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 (signed *Pantokrator*) 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 and chain to join road descending from back R. Turn L along the road. (To the R this road eventually joins the main *Vatopedi – Karyes* road.)
- [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.