



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM KARYES TO KONSTAMONITOU

Distance: 10.2 km Journey Time: 4 – 4½ hours

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Warning: *In a number of places (indicated below) the route may be difficult to follow. The route from the ridge to Konstamonitou has been severely damaged by winter rains and in one place has collapsed.*

Since the initial section of the historic route from *Karyes* to the ridge is now the main vehicular road to *Vatopedi*, the route here described follows the *Karyes-to-Vatopedi* footpath before climbing briefly to the point where the *Vatopedi* vehicular road and the ridge path diverge. Then the route follows the ridge, partly along minor roads and tracks and partly following the historic *Way of the Bey* which remains *kalderimi* in places. The last part of the route involves a steep descent from the ridge at 550m to *Konstamonitou* Monastery at around 200m altitude. Much of this route is through forest, but there are some excellent views to *Konstamonitou* and the west coast. Where necessary or helpful, the route is marked with orange tape and/or waymark arrows.

Note: All distances given (in metres) should be taken as approximate. The numbers shown in the form **1** are Waypoints to be found in associated **GPS tracking**. 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)

Transliterations: ΧΕΡΑ = *Chera*; ΚΩΝΣΤΑΜΟΝΙΤΟΥ = *Konstamonitou*;
ΒΑΤΟΠΑΔΙΟΥ = *Vatopedi*; ΚΑΡΥΕΣ = *Karyes*;
ΕΣΦΙΓΜΕΝΟΥ = *Esphigmenou*; ΧΙΛΑΝΔΑΡΙΟΥ =
Hilandar; ΖΩΓΡΑΦΟΥ = *Zographou*;
ΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ = *Pantokrator*

Description of Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

1 From the *Karyes* square where the buses arrive, face down main street towards *Protaton*. At the end of the square, before the street begins, immediately before fountain (on R side of street), turn R, uphill on K, signed WC and *Vatopedi*.

20

2 Pass WC on L. KSO uphill.

- 90 **3** Ignore FP (*Kalderimi*) up L. KSO on *K*.
- 300 **4** Cross *Daphni-Karyes* road. KSO on track, signed *Vatopedi* & other monasteries, with ***Skete of St Andrew*** on R.
- 400 **5** Ignore gated track R to Kellion. KSO on concrete, now uphill.
- 280 **6** Ignore broad concrete track R (signed to *Kellion Pateritsa*). KSO/L, uphill.
- 180 **7** At junction with large painted metal cross (ahead, L), turn hard L uphill.
- 30 **8** At junction, turn R onto FP (*K*) uphill, signed *Vatopedi* (remains of fountain in wall to L of FP).
- 100 **9** FP joins track coming from back L. KSO/R on track.
- 100 **10** Ignore track up to L (signed *I K Marouda*). KSO on track (now *K* in places).
- 250 **11** At junction, fork L, signed to *Vatopedi* and various kellia.
- 400 **12** At fork in tracks, turn R, downhill.
- Note:** L, uphill leads to the main road to *Vatopedi*.
- 200 **13** At fork, where main track bends R, downhill, and lesser track bears L, uphill, take narrow FP ahead, between the tracks, signed *Vatopedi*, initially towards white building.
- Note:** The beginning of this section of path may become seasonally overgrown, but it becomes *K*.
- 900 **14** FP crosses road. Turn L along road (signed *Hilandar*, *Esphigmenou* and *Konstamonitou*), uphill (FP straight on leads eventually to ***Vatopedi***).
- 900 **15** Arrive at cross-roads with main *Karyes – Vatopedi* road, with large wooden cross (***Stavros Makrygenous***). Turn R along road, now following the ridge.
- 80 **16** Fork L onto track which climbs to L.

25

17 Turn L off track up low bank to pick up FP signed *Hilandar*, *Esphigmenou* and *Konstamonitou* (watch for orange tape and waymarks). FP soon curves L following contour of the hill, ignoring any paths up to R.

Caution: From WPs **17** to **23** *this route is little used and in places becomes indistinct and rapidly overgrown. Take great care and watch for orange tape and waymarks.*

400

18 Reach and pass to L of stone pillar. Ignore track up to R before pillar. FP enters wood and begins to descend. At fork, KSO/R, ignoring track to L which descends more steeply.

300

19 Pass fountain (dry) on R and cross stream (and wire rope if across path). Bear L on level to pass below and to L of massive ancient chestnut tree.

Note: Hollow interior of tree contains a small makeshift chapel.

200

20 After a gentle climb FP Emerges from trees. KSO across level scrubby area on narrow FP which may be overgrown.

Caution: *It is essential to emerge from trees at the right point to pick up onward path which may be indistinct.*

60

21 At outcrop with view of sea ahead, bear R to follow FP back into woods and begin gradual descent on obvious path.

400

22 Towards bottom of slope, FP becomes less distinct. Bear L, downhill, following waymarks and orange tape, past distinctive 8-trunked tree to emerge from woods. Bear R to cross open area along narrow FP which becomes indistinct overgrown track which descends towards building.

Caution: *The final section through the wood is not obvious. The open area can become very overgrown when it is important to keep R, not descend too steeply and watch for building to come into view.*

250

23 With building (the cell of *Agios Dimitrios*) immediately ahead, turn R onto larger track on level.

40

24 Another track joins from back L. KSO.

Note: This track leads to a fountain with running water to the R of the building.

250

25 Track joins road from back R.

KSO/L, downhill, along road, ignoring possible paths or tracks to L. Road levels out along crest of ridge.

- 1200 **26** At junction, ignore forest track to R. This is the route to **Vatopedi** (signed) from **Dochiarou**. KSO along road with telecommunications mast visible on hill ahead.
- 90 **27** Just after passing large stone plinth with cross inlay on L, KSO/R along ridge path (signed *Konstamonitou*, *Esphigmenou* and *Hilandar*), soon uphill.
- Note:** Continuing on the road, bearing L, downhill is the route to **Dochiarou** (signed).
- 200 **28** At T junction, bear L, signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiarou*. (To R, signed *Esphigmenou*, *Hilandar* and *Zographou*, is continuation of ridge FP.) FP climbs steadily before levelling out, traversing hill (on R).
- 560 **50** Emerge at road at outside of concreted sharp bend. KSO/L downhill on road, signed *Konstamonitou* (uphill leads to telecommunications mast.)
- 75 **51** Where road bends L, before it passes stone marker on R, KSO/R signed *Konstamonitou*, on rocky FP downhill (*Altitude 535m*).
- Caution: FP has been severely damaged by storm water.**
- 400 **52** FP descends to remains of severely water-damaged and overgrown former track. Turn L onto track, downhill, with hillside on L.
- 430 **53** Track joins another overgrown track from back R. Turn L along track (signed), downhill. Monastery soon comes into view below in valley to R.
- Caution: After 70 metres, a major landslip **54** has carried the track away. Cross uphill of the landslip with care.**
- 170 **55** Turn hard R onto FP signed *Konstamonitou*, downhill.
- 380 **56** FP joins overgrown track at bend. KSO/L downhill along track (*Karyes* signed back up FP).
- Note:** This junction is not obvious and may not be noticed.
- 110 **57** Track joins road at outside of hairpin bend. Turn R down road (signed *Konstamonitou*).
- 60 **58** Road reaches open area and bends L. Turn R here on broad track which zig-zags downhill. Then track flattens out and passes to R of building to ...

59 ... Arrive at gate of *Konstamonitou Monastery*.

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.