



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM VATOPEDI TO KONSTAMONITOU VIA CHERA

Distance: 7.6 km Journey Time: 3 hours

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This journey is the easier and shorter of two routes from *Vatopedi* to *Konstamonitou* (the other following the route towards *Dochiarou* as far as the ridge to join the route from *Karyes*). Initially it climbs steep and rocky paths on the way towards *Zographou*, first through the olive groves above *Vatopedi* and then the wooded hillside, to the crest of the ridge at *Chera* ('The Hand'). At *Chera*, it joins the historic ridge path, the *Way of the Bey* (towards *Karyes*), from which there are fine views down to the East. Finally, a path descends very steeply, with good scenery and a view of *Konstamonitou* towards the end.

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: ΒΑΤΟΠΑΙΔΙΟΥ = *Vatopedi*; ΖΩΓΡΑΦΟΥ = *Zographou*;
ΧΕΡΑ = *Chera*; ΧΙΛΑΝΔΑΡΙΟΥ = *Hilandar*; ΕΣΦΙΓΜΕΝΟΥ = *Esphigmenou*;
ΚΑΡΥΕΣ = *Karyes*; ΚΩΝΣΤΑΜΟΝΙΤΟΥ = *Konstamonitou*

Description of Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

- 1** On leaving the gate of *Vatopedi Monastery* bear R to pass kiosk on L. KSO down paved road past workshops, etc, ignoring paved road to R (which is the route to the *Arsenas*). Descend steeply on broad paved path to the shore, ignoring routes to L (which lead to garage and cultivated areas).
150
- 2** On reaching the shore, turn L along track beside sea (signed *Esphigmenou*, *Hilandar* and *Zographou*). (R leads to the *Arsanas*).
200
- 3** Cross stream using footbridge if necessary.
30
- 4** Follow the track where it turns L, inland (signed *Zographou*).

- 200 **5** At junction of tracks, take track on R and turn immediately L onto small FP (signed *Zographou*) steeply uphill through olive grove. FP joins and then leaves local track – KSO always uphill towards top of olive grove. Views appear back L to man-made reservoir and **Vatopedi**.
- 550 **6** At top of olive grove, pass through gap in wall and continue on more distinct FP through trees.
- 700 **7** Cross water course with fountain (dry) ahead. Bear R on FP leaving fountain on L.
- 100 **8** Cross forest road with water tank on R and KSO on FP, signed. Ignore track which soon appears on L parallel to FP.
- 200 **9** Cross forest road and KSO, uphill (signed). FP is steep and rocky in places, with remains of *K*. Follow signs or waymarks uphill, ignoring any lesser paths to L or R.
- 2000 **32** FP flattens out and enters woodland to join ridge FP coming from back L (and signed *Karyes*). Turn hard L to follow the ridge FP towards **Karyes**.
- (Approximate time to this point: 1¾ hours.)*
- Note:** If time allows it is recommended to KSO to visit **Chera 33**, in order to see the monument in view 40m ahead. Beyond **Chera**, the FP to the L leads to **Zographou** while bearing R is the ridge path towards **Hilandar** and **Esphigmenou**. Then return to Waypoint **32** and continue towards **Karyes**.
- 120 **31** Pass large covered well (disused) on L. KSO, climbing gently on FP with good stretches of *K*.
- 1400 **30** Shortly after FP crosses from west to east side of ridge, with views down towards **Vatopedi**, FP to **Konstamonitou** leaves ridge to R through gap in stone wall (signed). Turn R, downhill, starting a steep descent.
- 360 **10** Cross stream-bed. FP now runs on the L side of the stream or in the stream-bed itself.
- 300 **11** FP ends at overgrown clearing. KSO to pick up disused and water-eroded track. KSO on track (signed *Konstamonitou* on L after 10m, close to stone water trough).
- Note:** Water trough and sign are easy to miss due to vegetation growth.

- 460 **12** Turn R off track down very steep bank onto descending FP (signed).
- 250 **13** At fork, bear R (waymarked).
- 150 **14** At junction, turn L, downhill. There are soon occasional views of ***Konstamonitou*** across valley.
- Note:** R at junction leads in 100m to a spring with running water.
- 250 **15** Cross stream-beds.
- 30 **16** Climb bank to reach open area at a curve in a track which comes uphill from the R and continues uphill beyond the open area. At the foot of the hillside to the L of the open area/track, take FP, signed ***Konstamonitou***, which ascends hillside. Do NOT follow broad track below hillside.
- Note:** The FP from ***Zographou*** joins via the track to the R.
- 320 **17** Follow Monastery wall to arrive at ***Konstamonitou Monastery*** entrance.

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