



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM VATOPEDI TO PANTOKRATOR VIA KOLITSOU

Distance – 9.9 km. Journey time 3½ hours

© The Friends of Mount Athos, 2007 – 2018. All rights reserved. – Version 1.1

*Note that the footpath between Vatopedi and Kolitsou contains two **very steep descents** of about 3 metres that the less agile may find very difficult (you can use secure knotted ropes).*

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 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: ΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ = *Pantokrator*; ΒΑΤΟΠΑΙΔΙΟΥ
= *Vatopedi*; ΚΟΛΙΤΣΟΥ = *Kolitsou*; ΚΑΡΥΕΣ = *Karyes*

Description of Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

- 1** Turn L out of **Vatopedi Monastery** entrance along paved road.
- 100 **2** At fork with covered well on L, bear L along walled *K* (signed *Karyes*).
- 100 **3** Where wall turns L, turn L following *K* (signed *Karyes*).
- 150 **4** At junction with road, bear L uphill on road.

150

5 At junction, bear L along road. Ignore track to R.

50

6 At major T-junction at top of small rise, bear R, uphill on main road (not straight on/L, downhill).

300

7 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

30 Shortly before the main road bends sharply to the R, the FP begins below the second wall on the L of the road, signed *Kolitsou* and *Pantokrator*. 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

Approximately 850m after leaving the road, FP arrives at steep drop of about 3m, caused by earth movement. **Take great care using secure knotted rope.** This is followed about 40m later by another steep drop of about 3. **Take great care using secure knotted rope.**

1000

28 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".

220

26 FP emerges from trees to end at track. Turn R along track along top of olive grove with sea on L.

220

9A 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 **9** back to L (to *kellion*) and descending track to L **10A**.

470

10 Pass track to L which leads to the **Kolitsou Tower** (after 200m).

Note: To visit the Tower, turn L here and then retrace steps.

- 40 **11** At junction with larger track/road, turn L, downhill.
(Ahead/R, uphill, leads to the main *Vatopedi – Karyes* road.)
- 60 **11A** At junction, bear L, downhill. Ignore track ahead to *kellion*.
- 180 **12** Just after passing a *kellion* on L, turn **hard L** immediately opposite a *kellion* on R (being restored in 2018) 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*** (500 m to the outer gate **31** of *Kellion*) and the grave of ***Elder Dionysios*** at ***Kolitsou***. To continue to ***Pantokrator***, take FP just inside the gate of this *kellion* which descends for 1050m to the shore at ‡ below (follow the track contained in the gpx file).
- 270 **13** Track from *kellion* with bell tower joins under a covered shelter from back R. KSO/L on track.
- Track ends. KSO on FP which descends towards shore and may be overgrown in places.
- 1150 **15** FP ends at open level grassy area. KSO on faded track across grassy area towards beach.
- 60 **16** With sea ahead, and small building to L, turn R along beach.
- 60 **17** At partially ruined buildings (boathouses, etc), turn R between buildings to pick up FP going inland.
- ‡ 30 **18** 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***.)
- 100 **19** FP climbs bank to emerge at start of level grassy track. Turn L along track which roughly follows the coastline.
- 800 **20A** At fork KSO/R uphill. Pass quarry after about 1000m.

- 1500 **20** Track joins road descending from back R. Turn L along the road. (To the R this road eventually joins the main *Vatopedi* – *Karyes* road.)
- Pass big water reservoir on L after 1550m. KSO on road.
- 1880 **21** Road joins larger road at T-junction, with ***Pantokrator*** ahead. Turn hard L onto major road which curves round to R towards Monastery, passing aqueduct on L.
- 270 **22** At fork in road bear R, following direction indicated by arrow.
- 100 **23** Road joins *K* road from back R. KSO/L along *K*, ignoring *K* tracks up to L and to R down to harbour.
- 110 **25** 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.