

CHAPTER 4 AKROTIRI AND THE MONASTERIES

The northern coast of Suda Bay rises sharply from the water. At the top of the ascent is the abrupt edge of the plateau which forms the greater part of the peninsula of Akrotiri. On this edge are the three villages Korakies, Aroni and Sternes, the houses being just visible from Suda. The natural way to visit the peninsula is to start from Canea and go by the new road which is to connect these villages. When I was there it had reached Aroni. I was then at Suda, and so took a boat across the bay and landed on the north side [of the bay] at Tsiphti Monastiri, a ruined church by a tiny harbour just below the village of Aroni. A rough path leads up to the village and the edge of the plateau. The ground is at first flat, but gradually sinks to a long valley running east and west. The north side of this valley is formed by the hills which run along the northern coast of the peninsula. They get higher towards the east and culminate in the conspicuous conical hill called Vigla, the Look-out Point. Below and in front of Vigla seen thus from the south appears the long, almost horizontal, line of the ridge or terrace described by Trevor-Battye, p. 42. His photograph of the mountains shows this ridge very well.

The village of Aroni [Sternes?] presents nothing remarkable, but a few yards to the east on the right-hand side of the new road there is a gateway into a field with an inscription on the lintel. It is a lame elegiac couplet of no great age, and runs:

*Ω Σπυρίδων σοφέ καί Χριστοίο μέσγιστ' ιεράρχα,
ημάς λύτρωσαι της κακής Βελίαρ.¹¹*

O Spyridon the wise, and most holy hierarch of Christ, save us from the spite of Belial.



Photo of tomb from Internet

The path from Aroni to the Tsangarolo Monastery of the Holy Trinity goes by Calgado, near to which is a small monastery of St John the Merciful. There are a few Venetian traces in the buildings, and in the court an arched tomb of the same period.

The church forms the back of the courtyard. It is a dependency of Tsangarolo and is now used only as a farm. I found one monk there looking after the olives which were being made into oil. The month was December 1918. The name I heard as Calgado is marked on the map Calangado.²

The country from this point as far as the northern hills is an open moor covered with an abundance of thyme and such plants. On this account bees in their hives are brought there from the mainland to take advantage of the aromatic flowers.³ I passed a train of mules (I think in the month of June) loaded with beehives tied in cloths on the road from Canea to Alikianou, all bound for Akrotiri. We passed them as quickly as possible, for one mule had succeeded in jolting its load loose and the bees were thoroughly aroused and escaping in swarms. The more they got out the more the mule kicked and the more restive the other mules became, and the less

¹ *Μέσγιστ'* is illiterate for *μέγιστε*, and *Βελίαρ* for *Βελιάλ*.

willing were the muleteers to make any attempt to re-adjust their load. I do not know how they got on for the four or five hours they had yet to go.

I walked from the N side of Suda harbour, lunched at Agia Triada and slept at Gouverneto. The next day I walked back to Suda.

Monastery of Tsangarolo [Μονή Αγίας Τριάδας των Μουρτάρων ή Τζαγκαρόλων]⁴



IMG_0214, 13 April 2009

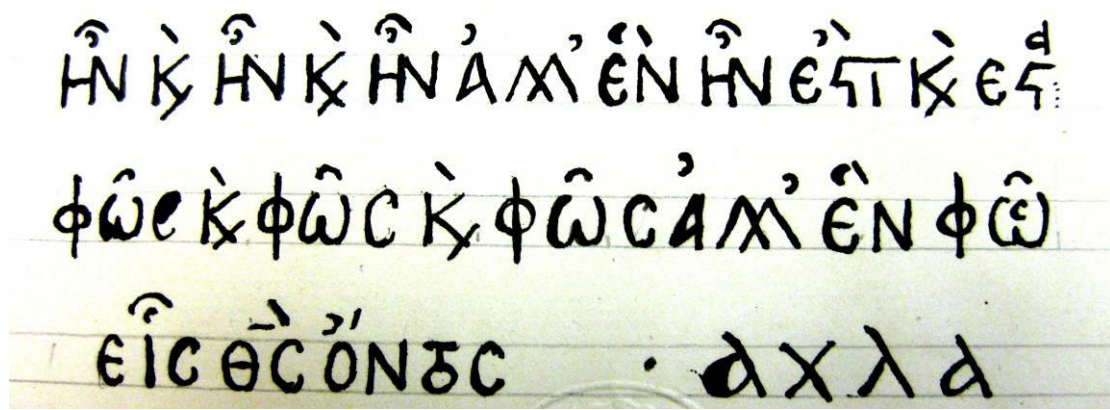
The monastery of Agia Triada (Holy Trinity), called Tsangarolo from the name of the founders, lies amongst olive groves at the very foot of the northern range of hills. It is probably the most imposing monastery in Crete, laid out in a fine spacious style, with an imposing portal over which is a high belfry. The approach is directly to the front by a long walled road with cypresses on each side. But the cypresses are not at all fine specimens, and they must have been replanted since Pashley's visit, who speaks of the lofty cypresses he saw here (Vol. I, p. 20).

This noble foundation has, like all monasteries, fallen on comparatively evil days. Its idiorhythmic⁵ constitution is probably a trace of its earlier splendour. The finely planned façade, the court with its orange trees, the stately if rather baroque west front of the church are all impressive, and the whole gives an appearance of having been planned at one time and carried out according to one idea, which is not at all common in Greek monasteries. It has not in fact the rather slipshod put-together-by-chance look which they generally have, a look not of course without its homely charm. Tsangarolo is a glimpse of the more civilised ordered world of Italian building. The only blot on its dignified decay is the ugly red roof on the eastern side of the court, all of which has a rather rebuilt appearance.

The entrance is in the middle of the west front of the monastery. The gate is at the top of a flight of steps, which rise above an arch, and thus the way in immediately faces the west front of the church. This arrangement and the high belfry over the gate make an impressive façade. Along the wall of this front to the north of the steps is a range of nineteen mangers, which suggests the scale of life and entertainment in the old days. There is also a horse-block.⁶

I found fifteen monks there; in Pashley's day there were ten only, but he was told that before the Greek revolution there had been forty, and besides these, ten more at the various dependent houses, *metokhia*. Also my fifteen possibly included lay brethren, whereas Pashley says expressly that his ten were all Fathers, *πατέρες*, that is ordained monks, *ιερομόναχοι*.

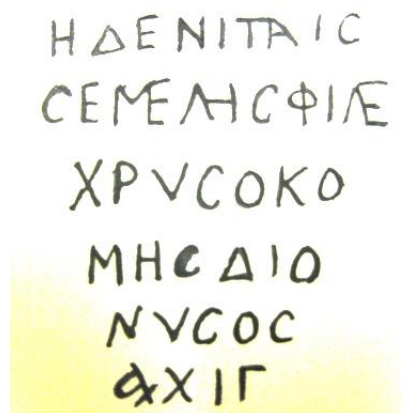
Over the gate is the following inscription of the year 1631 in honour of the Trinity (21 XII 1918):⁷



It may be rendered:

“Was, was, and was; but One was, is, and shall be:
Light, light, and light; but one Light, one God truly: 1631”

At either end of the west front of the monastery is a door with an arched top and an inscription. The southern one has on the keystone:



the first line being an error for ἦνιδε, so that the meaning is: “Behold friend, the son of Semele, gold-haired Dionysos, 1613.”⁸ The northern one has τοῦ ἐλέους σου Κε πλήρης ἡ γῆ, “The earth is full of thy mercy, o Lord!” with an eagle in the keystone.

The northern door now leads to an oil mill, but I think the inscription shows that the south room was originally a cellar for wine and the north one a granary.

The inscriptions outside the monastery are completed by those on an arched doorway on the south side, near the south-west corner of the building.⁹ Round the curve of the arch are two inscriptions, the outer one in Greek accented capitals, and the inner one in Latin, also in capitals. The Greek is: “ω θάνατε θάνατε θάνατε των μόχθων τέρας [πέρας] και σωτηρίας λιμήν” [o death death death, the end of toil and the haven of salvation] and the Latin words are a translation of it: “O mors o mors o mors erumnarum portus et meta salutis”.

Above the arch is a defaced coat of arms, which possibly once bore a skull and crossbones, and below it is the inscription:

TAC .. ΠΤΡΑ Ο ΘΑΝ..... ΕΛΛΑΙΣ Ε.....

The first part may be restored as “τα σ[κλή]πτρα ο θάν[ατος]”, and the whole taken to be some moral reflexion about death and sceptres.¹⁰ Whatever the present use of the room may be, it would seem from the tenor of the inscriptions that it was intended to be an ossuary,¹¹ and it is in fact underneath the mortuary chapel of the monastery which is inside the court at this same south-east corner. Of this chapel Pashley (vol. I, p. 18) gives a drawing, and on p. 22 a description.

In the vineyard to the south of the monastery is a large winepress, and over the spout the usual cross with the letters IC XC NI KA [Jesus Christ conquers] and the date 1820.¹²

We now come to the inscriptions on the west front of the church. On the cornice are the Greek capital letters ΒΓΥΘΠ, which Pashley (vol. I, p. 21) suggests stand for “Βάθος γνώσεως, ύψιστος Θεός, τρισυπόστατος Παντοκράτωρ”, “Depth of Wisdom, God most high, in three Persons Almighty”.

Over the west door is engraved in accented capitals:

ΕΙC ΘC ΕΝ ΤΡΙΣΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΤΡΙΑ ΕΝ¹³

Then on either side of the door are the inscriptions of the founders. They are cut on blocks let in as part of the original design of the front. The one on the south side is in Latin capitals, and the one on the north in the usual Greek accented capitals with contractions. Both are to the same effect, that the two brothers Jeremy and Lawrence of the noble family of Tsangarolo founded the monastery at their own expense, both being priests and celibates. Jeremy started the work and departed this life. Then Lawrence completed what his brother had left undone and in the year 1634 raised from the foundations this very beautiful church.

I give the Latin text and then the Greek, first from the close copy I made in a notebook (20 December 1918) and then a transcription:

PRECLARO A SINU ZANCAROLE ~~PRO~~ PRO SAPIE CRETĪ, HIEREMIAS SAPIEN-
 SAPIENTISSIMUS ET LAURENTIUS SOLERTISSIMOUS GERMANI, AMBO
 SACRIFICI ET INIVGES, MAGNA CUM IMPENSA ET ACRIMONIA TALIA
 GESSFRUNT ILLE ENIM SUFFICIENTER INCEPTIS LABOREM IMPENDIT
 EVVMQUE CONFECIT HONESTE HC VERO PROPAGATOR ILLIUS VOTI
 SUPPLEVIT RELIQUUM ET HOC PERPULCHRUM FUNDITUS TEMPLUM
 INSTAURAVIT.

PRECLARO A SINU ZANCAROLE PRO
 SAPIE CRETĪ, HIEREMIAS SAPIENTISSI
 MUS ET LAURENTIUS SOLERTISSIMUS
 GERMANI, AMBO SACRIFICI ET INI
 VGES, MAGNA CUM IMPENSA ET A
 CRIMONIA TALIA GESSERUNT ILLE
 ENIM SUFFICIENTER INCEPTIS LA
 BOREM IMPENDIT EVMQUE CON
 FECIT HONESTE HIC VERO PROPAGA
 TOR ILLIUS VOTI SUPPLEVIT RELI
 QUUM ET HOC PERPULCHRUM FU
 NDITUS TEMPLUM INSTAURAVIT¹⁴

The one on the north side runs:

ΟΙ ΕΞ ΕΥΓΕΝΩΝ ΦΥΝΤΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΤΖΑΝΚΑΡΟΛΩ
 ΦΥΛΗΣ ΙΕΡΕΜΙΑΣ Ο ΣΟΦΩΤΑΤΟΣ ΛΑΥΡΕΝΤΙΟΣ ΤΕ Ο Θ
 ΑΜΑΣΙΟΣ ΟΙ ΑΥΤΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ ΑΜΦΩ ΘΥΤΑΙ ΚΑΙ ΑΖΥΓΕΣ ΧΕΙΡΙ Π
 ΟΜΗΚΑΙ ΔΑΠΑΝΗ ΤΑ ΔΕ ΕΔΟΙΜΑΝΤΟ ΟΜΓΡΩΝ ΡΘΝΙΚΑ
 ΝΩΣ ΑΨΑΜΕΝΟΣ Ο ΣΙΩΣ ΑΦΝ ΠΝΩΣ ΕΝ ΟΔΕ ΤΟΝ
 ΑΥΤΟΝ ΕΚΟΙΝΩΣ ΚΟΠΟΝ ΕΧΩΝ ΤΟΝ ΛΕΙΠΤΕΣ ΕΞΕΠΕΡ
 ΑΝΕ, Κ ΤΟΝ ΠΕΡΙΚΑΜΗΤΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΜΑΘΟΝ ΕΚΘΕΜΕΛΙΟΝ
 ΑΝΗΓΕΙΡΕ ΑΧΛΔ

Οι εξ ευγενών φύντες της των Τζανκαρόλων
 φυλής Ιερεμίας ο σοφώτατος Λαυρέντιός τε ο θ
 ασμάσιος οι αυτάδελφοι άμφω θύται και άζυγες χειρί π

ολλή και δαπάνη τάδε εδοίμαντο· ο μεν γαρ τούργου ικα
 νώς απάμενος οσίως αφύπνωσεν· ο δε τον
 αυτόν εκοίνω σκοπόν εχων τουλειπές εξεπέρ
 ανε, και τον περικαλλή τούτον ναόν εκ θεμελίον
 ανήγειρε αγλδ [= 1634]¹⁵

The church therefore dates to the time of the founders.¹⁶ But a good deal of alteration was done on the façade in the 1850s by the monk Parthenios. The upper part of it is now formed by a big terrace [on the upper storey above the west end of the church], from which one enters two little chapels, which are placed underneath the two western domes of the church. The northern of these two chapels has over the door an inscription to the effect that it was built by Parthenios in May 1854:

εικοδομήθη δι' εξόδων του πανοσιστατου κ' Παρθενίου εν έτει 1854 μαϊ 5¹⁷

and over the door of the southern one is the same name and the date July 7th, 1854: "ΠΡΘ . ΙΕΡΜΧ . 1854 ΙΟΥΛΙΟΥ 7".¹⁸ Two years after this, in 1856, the same monk Parthenios built the flight of steps which leads up outside the north side of the church and gives access to the terrace.¹⁹ The tablet has this inscription:

δι' ιδίων εξόδων του κτίτορος των άνωθεν παρεκκλησιών Παρθενίου
 ιερομονάχου εν έτει 1856 μαϊου κ²⁰

It appears therefore that the whole upper part of the façade with its terrace and chapels and probably also the western domes over these chapels are all the work of Parthenios. As Pashley remarks, the church was probably not yet finished when the Turks took Canea in 1644 [1645], though the founder had got far enough up the façade to insert his inscription. Pashley implies that when he saw it was still unfinished, and he was there in 1834; it therefore appears that what Parthenios did was to complete the work left unfinished owing to the Turkish conquest by the original builder Lawrence Tsangarolo.

Two more inscriptions complete all those which I noticed inside the monastery. One is in the cloister outside the guestroom over the lavabo niche, and is the palindrome commonly found in such a position:

ΝΙΨΟΝ ΑΝΟΜΗΜΑΤΑ ΜΗ ΜΟΝΑΝ ΟΨΙΝ

"Wash thy sins not thy face only"²¹

The other is over the door in the south-west corner of the court:

αι αι όντως λη μετά λαιμόν άπανθ' ομότιμα

I do not understand it.²²

Pashley, in a note on p. 22, gives two more taken from the Psalms and the Book of Maccabees, but omits to say where they were cut, and it is this which as a rule gives these inscriptions whatever interest they may possess.

Gouverneto, 20th December 1918²³

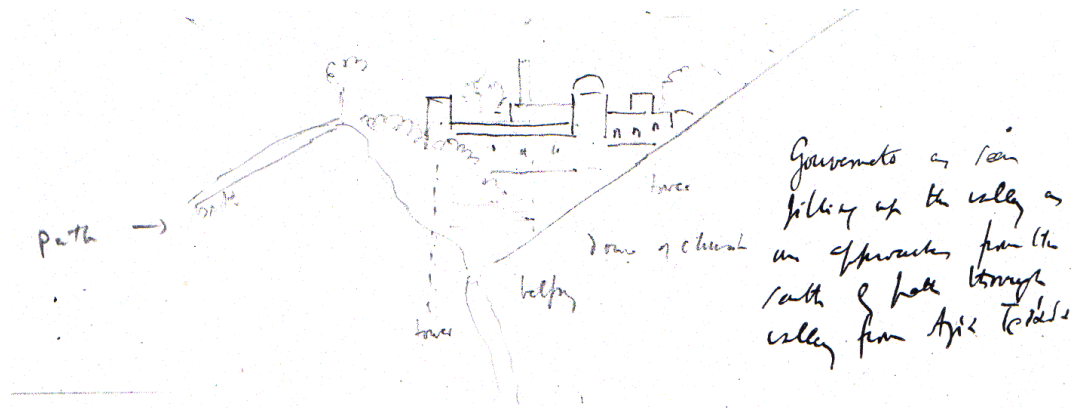


IMG_0227, 13 April 2009

The road from Agia Triada to Gouverneto goes ten minutes west to the farm of Koumares, which belongs to Gouverneto. It is from the details of the building clearly of Venetian date, but much spoiled and rebuilt. Here the path turns to the north and approaches the mountains, entering a narrow winding valley among the hills.

[This paragraph taken mostly from a fuller version headed 'Flowers', but with a few amendments.] Here I found the variety of sage with a narrow crinkled leaf and big flower with a fine red calix. It is a west Crete plant and here the common sage is not abundant as in east Crete; in fact round Suda and on Akrotiri I don't see it at all. The crinkled leaf sage I found first at Askyphou and on the slopes down from it to the north; then at Meronas; a little above Suda towards Malaxa and on the road to Izzeddin, and I think in other places in west Crete, but never in central or east Crete.

The valley gradually widens as it rises to a small, level, cultivated space in the middle of which is Gouverneto. The sketch was taken at the first view of the building. Twenty yards beyond the monastery is the highest point of the valley forming a col looking out north over the sea, which is reached by another valley running down north. So the monastery lies in a pass between the sea to the north and the plain of Akrotiri, and just south of the highest point of the pass.

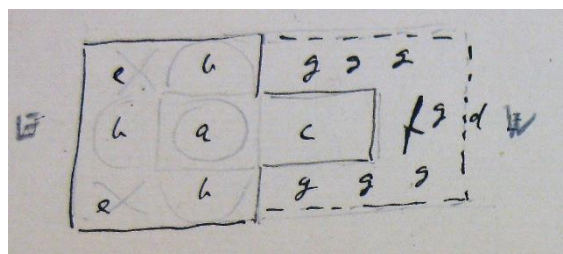


“Gouverneto as seen filling up the valley as one approaches from the south by path through valley from Agia Triada”

The monastery of St John the Hermit, called Gouverneto, is much more rustic in appearance and in every other way than Tsangarolo, which is the most civilised monastery in Crete. It is quite countrified and shows hardly more traces of the greater world than do such places as Hodigitria or even Koudouma. The roofs are mostly flat, but a few have local tiles, and there are unfortunately some of the ugly pinkish red French tiles.²⁴ It is a square building, mostly of one storey only, with low towers at the corners. Of these, the one at the south-west has been almost destroyed and the south-east one a good deal disguised. Each tower has corbelled hatches for defence against enemies and there is a similar hatch over the main entrance. After Toplou it seems to me the best example in Crete of a fortified monastery, a place which could stand at all events some sort of siege. Like Agia Triada [Tsangarolo], the building was interrupted by the Turkish conquest. It was also burned by them somewhere about 1821.

The constitution is coenobitic, like most of the poorer and more primitive monasteries. To lead the more comfortable idiorrhythmic life monks must have some money of their own, and such monks, I think, do not go to these little places, they prefer the larger, better equipped monasteries.

The earliest date to be found is on the lintel of the main entrance. The words are on the scroll. They are: *Στενή η πύλη και τεθλιμένη²⁵ η οδός η αγάγουσα²⁶ εις την ζωήν* – Narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth unto life; and below them is a cross with the usual initials IC XC and the date ΑΦΛΖ, 1537.²⁷ Above the scroll is a niche with a new (1883) eikon of the Virgin orans as *η Κυρία των Αγγέλων* [the Mistress of the Angels].



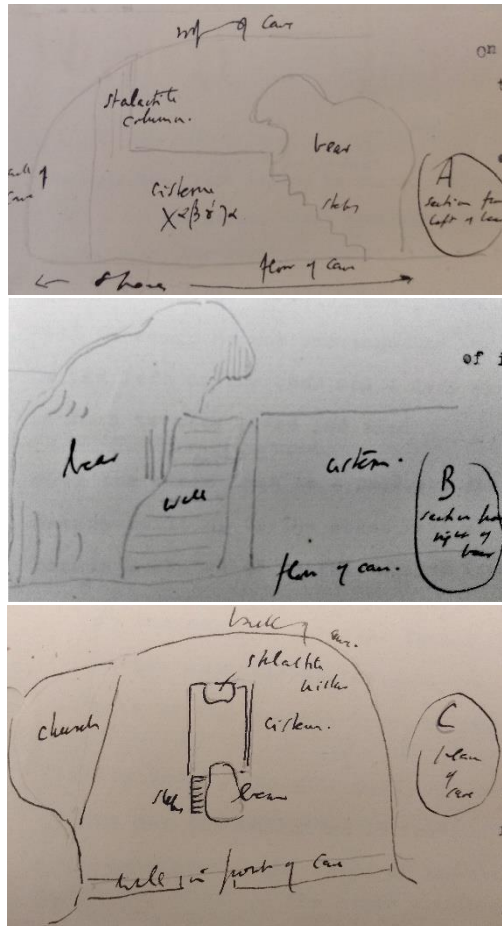
- a. Dome
- b. Apses (Athos plan)
- c. [Level vault?]
- d. Belfry
- e. Little pyramidal roofs
- f. Terrace
- g. Newer part of church

In the middle of the little court is the church, very much like a smaller version of the Tsangarolo church: the same terrace over the west part, the same spherical dome, and the same plan with two side apses, like the monastic churches on Athos. The lower part of the west front is florid Venetian work, but at this point the builders were

interrupted by the Turkish conquest. All the eastern part of the church is on a smaller scale than the western, and the upper part of the west front and the belfry above it seem to be of the nineteenth century. How much of the later parts of the church were built after the conquest, and how much was only built after the destruction at the beginning of the nineteenth century I could not clearly make out. The spaces at the NE and SE corners of the church between the apses are covered with odd little pyramidal roofs.

From Gouverneto I went on to the sanctuary of St John the Eremite, called the Katholikon. The monks say this was the first site of their monastery, but they were much disturbed by pirates and, in obedience to a vision of the Virgin, left the site and came up the hill and built Gouverneto. Gouverneto, it may be noted, is not visible from the sea.

The path to the Katholikon leads north from Gouverneto. It at once crosses the col and then descends the valley which leads down to the sea. We first pass on the right a rock shelter dedicated to the Virgin and therefore called in general Panagia.²⁸ It is an open cave with a flat roof and flat floor, but is so curious that it merits a special description. Its general arrangement will be plain from my sketch plans. At the back there is said to be an opening into another cave, but of this I saw nothing.



The front of the cave is shut off by a wall and the left part of it is walled off and fitted up as a church of the Panagia, but the greater part of it is left open behind the front wall, which does not go up to the roof. In the middle there is a large oblong built cistern filled by the dripping from the roof, built up between a stalactite pillar at the back and a mass of rock at the front end. One can get up to the lip of the cistern by steps built up against the side of this mass of rock which is called the *arkouda* and is supposed to be a bear which came here to drink and was turned into stone by the Panagia. It is very much the shape of a large animal reared up to drink and has a mouth in which they say teeth may be felt, but I could not feel them. In front of the cave there are some ruined buildings and remains of a garden. No one now lives there.

Pashley was here (Vol. I, p. 24) and says it was called the Cave of the Bear and from it the mountains had the name of the Mountains of the Bear. He wondered "that no legend was attached to this natural object". At

Magasa we shall see a bear helping a negro, *αράπης*, to guard a treasure [ch. 30].

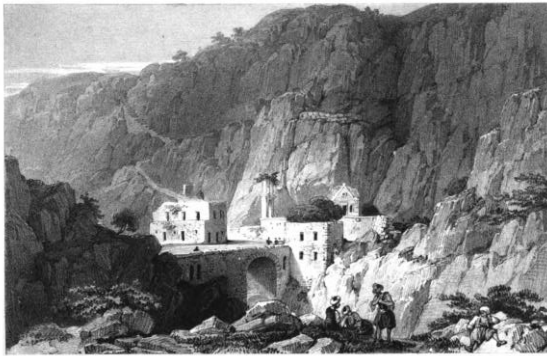
A little below Panagia the path, about ½ an hour from Gouverneto, begins to zigzag and then descends by steps, (about 140: Pashley) into a narrow gorge, where some way above the sea is the Katholikon, the sanctuary of St John the Eremite. Level ground has been made by throwing a big arch across the gorge; all the rest is crag. As one descends the steps to the arch or bridge, to the left is the rock and a deep cave in it where the eremite is said to have lived and died.²⁹

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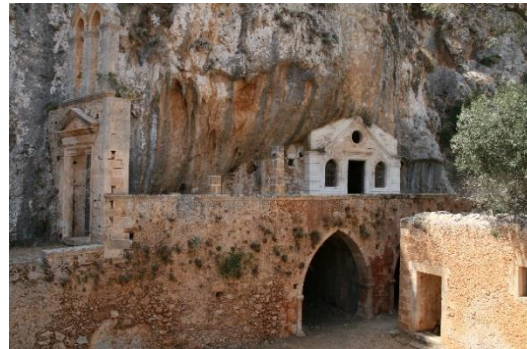
Below the cave the steps continue and lead to a rock-cut church with a late Venetian façade built up to the sheer face of the cliff. Behind this façade a church of barrel-vaulted form has been hewn out in the rock and dedicated to the eremite. In front of the church are several now ruined buildings on the space at the edge of the flat formed by the top of the arch. Here the people assemble at the *panagyri*. Here too was the original site of the monastery which afterwards removed to Gouverneto.

Pashley, Vol. I, opposite p. 27, has an excellent drawing of the site. In his day the buildings in front of the church, now ruined, were well preserved. The façade of the church which I have just described is on the right of the other buildings. The path leading to the sanctuary would be in his foreground.

Inside the cave on the left of the path and quite near the entrance there is, on the left [right], a cistern and on the right [left, now covered] a hollow containing a mass of human bones. They are supposed to be the bones of hermits killed by the Turks. Pashley went to the end of the cave and gives a picture of the stalactites, which he says do not compare with those of the famous grotto on Antiparos. He says that both Pococke and Sonnini³⁰ very much exaggerate the depth of the cave. I went no further in than to see the cistern and the bones. Pashley found it about 470 feet deep and near the end an altar. I was told that deep in the cave there was an eikon and the bed in which the hermit died hollowed in the rock.³¹ The types of eikons are often interesting, and in the church of Kambi on the hills south of Suda I saw an eikon of this St John the Hermit. It showed the hermit standing in a V-shaped valley with the sea in the background. I think there is another similar eikon at Gouverneto.



Pashley I 26



IMG_0235 Gouverneto in 2009 (photo Dimitris Tsougarakis)



IMG_0238 Dittany growing in the same spot, 13 April 2009

The whole site is very grand. There is some wood in the gorge, but the effect is due to the narrowness and rocky desolation of the site. The herb dittany grows on the rocks on the face of which the steps are cut leading down to the cave and church. It is mentioned, too, by Pashley, p. 26, who gives classical references and to Meursius, *Creta*, II, 11. Trevor-Battye, too, quotes this observation of Pashley's, but makes the curious error of confusing the

Cretan dittany, which is a kind of basil, *Origanum [dictamnus]*, with the totally different plant, *Dictamnus fraxinella*, Moses in the Burning Bush. Neither here nor anywhere else where I have seen it did dittany seem to be a common plant: being collected for trade, it is probably growing rarer and rarer. [(In another hand) Now grown for trade purposes at Arkhanes – MP (or HP?).]³²

And now for the story of this St John the Eremite. In the library of the monastery of St Elias called Roustika [see ch. 8] there are two copies of the service composed in his honour. It was composed by George Velimas (Γεώργιος Βελημάς) and printed at Venice in 1787 at the expense of Ioasaph Gavalas (Ιωάσαφ Γαβαλάς), the abbot of Gouverneto (Γδερνέτο). The title of the books is: *Ακολουθία του οσίου πατρός ημών Ιωάννου του ερημίτου του συνασκήσαντος εν τη νήσω Κρήτης μετά τινων άλλων συνασκητών αυτού εννεήκοντα εννέα* [Service of our Saint John the Hermit who lived the ascetic life in the island of Crete with ninety-nine other ascetes].

This is the account it gives of the saint. He came originally from Egypt with thirty-six followers. In Cyprus he collected thirty-nine more and in Adalia another twenty-four. With these ninety-nine he came to the island of Gavdo off the south coast of Crete – his companions were ninety-nine and not a hundred because the hundredth and their leader was Christ. The ninety-nine crossed over to Crete and by a mistake left John alone in Gavdo. He then followed them to Crete, crossing over the sea miraculously by using his gown as a boat and his staff as a mast and part of his gown as a sail. The book, p. 39, describes the wonderful voyage which he made with faith in the name of the Lord [Greek text not reproduced].

When he came to Crete he went to Akrotiri and lived in the cave at Katholikon, where he became so doubled up by penances and mortifications that a shepherd took him for a beast and shot him. His companions, who did not come with him to Akrotiri but had remained at Azoyirea (Αζογυρέα) on the south coast, all died, according to their prayer, at the same moment. To this the Gouverneto monks added that he used to go on all fours and therefore the shepherd took him for an animal and shot him. The man then tracked the wounded saint to the cave by the blood and found the cave lit up by a miraculous light. He entered and was forgiven by the saint who then died. The blood is said to be still visible inside the cave. The Roustika book says that the cave on Akrotiri was made a church and this corresponds with the story of the monks that their monastery was first at Katholikon, where their patron lived and died.

The memory of the ninety-nine companions is still preserved at Azoyirea (Αζόγυρες), the place called in the book Azoyirea [Αζογυρές]. It is on the hillside a little to the east of Palaiokhora. I have seen it from a distance but never been there. A boy of Kandanos, Stelios Apostolakis, who was taking me to see some of the frescoed churches there, told me about the cult there. Quite close to the village there is a church and a cave of the Holy Fathers (των Αγίων Πατέρων), in which they lived the ascetic life (ασκητεύαυε). A bed cut out in the rock is shown in the cave and there is a widely visited annual festival in their honour. He did not know their number but seemed to think they were about five and twenty. Nor could he give me any idea what their eikon was like. He further told me that these Fathers once sat beneath a plane tree which is still to be seen near the spring at the village of Kandanos, and that in consequence of this the tree never loses its leaves. I saw it: it is certainly a good size but does not look very old, nor does it seem to differ from any other plane tree. Nor could I learn if it really is evergreen. I mention elsewhere [below] plane trees in Crete credited with being evergreen, and see too Theophrastos.

Nov. 11th 1920 Oxford. Miss Manou tells me that the St John who has the cave in Akrotiri cures fever and is therefore called ριγολόγος.³³ Inside his cave is what is taken for a carved serpent.

Evergreen plane trees

Sonnini, I, p. 382

Pococke II, part I, p. 263

Kandanos qv

Mournies qv

Spratt, II, pp. [40-42], discusses evergreen plane tree said to exist by the ancients (Pliny) on the banks of the Lethe [Lethaeus].³⁴

Spratt was taken to two at Lutraki near Khania, like ordinary planes except as having a thicker leaf.

Spratt heard of another near a monastery near Khania and at Meres [Moirs], a village below Gortyn. A peasant from Vourvolete [Βουρβουλίτης, also near Gortyn] told him that two grew near that village.

Peter Mackridge's notes

¹ *Βελίαρ* is correct (though *Βελίαλ* is an alternative form): see II Corinthians 6.15.

² The fortified monastery of Άγιος Ιωάννης Ελεήμων (16th-17th century) has now been restored, though it is normally locked and deserted. Its olive-oil press has also been restored. The monastery stands on the edge of the village of Pazinos on the east side of the road to the airport. The old name Γκαλαγκάδος (Galagados) was changed to Παζινός in 1957 (and subsequently Παζινός). Antonia, the local café lady, told us on 25/4/13 that people moved to Galagados from Stavros (on the north coast of the peninsula) to escape from pirate attacks.

³ There were still hives in abundance there on 4/4/2009.

⁴ Psilakis II 225. We visited 13/4/2009 & again Oct. 2009. Lovely approach road lined with cypresses. The surrounding olive groves have now been largely replaced by vines. Huge new metal wine vats outside SW corner; also a modern wine press. The monastery's organic products (wine and olive oil) now widely sold. Ongoing restoration of buildings around courtyard.

⁵ Greek Orthodox monasteries are divided into cenobitic and idiorrhythmic. Cenobitic monasteries are those where the monks own the monastery in common and share the same facilities (except their cells), whereas in idiorrhythmic ones each monk lives independently.

⁶ Still there in 2013.

⁷ Psilakis II 227.

⁸ Psilakis II 227 reads (wrongly) ΘΑΔΕΝΠΙΑΙΣ.

⁹ None of the following inscriptions are in Psilakis, I think.

¹⁰ I read ΤΑ ΣΚΗΠΤΡΑ. Presumably the original import of this phrase is related to the sentiments expressed in the poem "Death the leveller" by John Shirley (1596–1666): "Death lays his icy hand on kings: / Sceptre and Crown must tumble down."

¹¹ It is indeed the ossuary; skulls are kept in glass cases. Manousos Liontakis (since ordained as Father Symeon) showed us into it on 13 April 2009.

- ¹² The vineyard is still there.
- ¹³ Psilakis II 227.
- ¹⁴ Psilakis II 227-8; Pashley I 21; for both cf. Alexiou 1999: 176-7.
- ¹⁵ Psilakis II 228 (copy and transcription).
- ¹⁶ The church is devoid of frescoes, except that there is a modern Pantokrator in the tall dome.
- ¹⁷ Psilakis II 242.
- ¹⁸ Checked by PM; not Psilakis.
- ¹⁹ Not accessible to the public in April 2009.
- ²⁰ Psilakis II 242.
- ²¹ Not Psilakis.
- ²² This is indeed what the inscription says: Psilakis II 227 has δη. Possibly the meaning is: “Alas! alas! everything is indeed equivalent after the throat” (i.e. all food is the same [i.e. only fit to be expelled] once one has swallowed it). Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, Λόγος ΛΓ', Πρὸς Ἀρειανούς, καὶ εἰς ἑαυτόν, Ζ': “Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπαινοῦμέν τι τῶν μετὰ τὸν λαίμον ὁμοτίμων, μᾶλλον δὲ, ἀτίμων ὁμοίως καὶ ἀποβλήτων”
- ²³ Μονή Γδερνέτου: Psilakis II 193ff.; otherwise known as Η Κυρία των Αγγέλων [The Mistress of the Angels] – the name of the icon mentioned below by Dawkins. We visited on 13 April 2009 and in Oct. 2009.
- ²⁴ These are still there!
- ²⁵ Dawkins' reading is accurate. Psilakis II 220 emends to the grammatically correct *τεθλιμμένη*.
- ²⁶ Psilakis, correctly, reads *απάγουσα*.
- ²⁷ Correct; not recorded by Psilakis.
- ²⁸ Ναός της Αρκουδίτισσας (Our Lady of the Bear): Psilakis II 204.
- ²⁹ Edward Lear (many of whose drawings of Crete Dawkins later bought) drew the Katholikon in 1864: see <http://edwardlearandcrete.weebly.com/>.
- ³⁰ Richard Pococke, *Voyage in the East and other countries*, vol. 2 (London 1745); C. S. Sonnini, *Voyage en Grèce et en Turquie, fait par ordre de Louis XVI, et avec l'autorisation de la cour Ottomane* (Paris, an IX [1801]), 2 vols + 1 vol. of illustrations.
- ³¹ We didn't reach the far end of the cave, but some cavers showed us a photo they'd taken of the icon there.
- ³² Dittany is still grown commercially in Crete. See also ch. 15.
- ³³ The Greek word denotes someone who concerns himself with fevers. There are similar legends attached to different churches dedicated to St John.
- ³⁴ This is the most famous evergreen plane in Crete, the one at Gortyn mentioned by Pliny, Theophrastus and Spratt: Europa is said to have given birth to Minos and his brothers under an evergreen plane there. The evergreen plane growing there today is most probably a scion of the one that grew there in antiquity and gave rise to this legend. Dawkins doesn't seem to mention evergreen planes at Mournies elsewhere in his material. Apparently about 50 evergreen planes have been identified in Crete.