

CHAPTER 11

AGIA GALINI TO PREVELI

To the west of the flat beach of Dibaki¹ the hills again come down to the sea, and between them the valley which drains the Amari valley, the Platypotamos, debouches. At its mouth, near the site of the ancient Sulia, is the new settlement of Agia Galini, formed by people who have come down in recent years from Melabes [elsewhere Melambes]. The Mesara plain and the Amari valley both need a port. Matala is too small. The Minoan port to the north of it is now of no use.² Boats can land either at Kokkinos Pyrgos on the Dibaki beach or at Agia Galini. Neither of these is more than an open roadstead, and sometimes one is used, sometimes the other according to the weather.

The official name of the little village is Agia Galini, *Αγία Γαλήνη*, but popularly, Xanthoudidis told me, it is called Agios Galinios.³ A native of the mother village, Melambes, whom I met at Hersonnese where he was acting as local justice of the peace, told me the legendary story of the name.

9/XII/17. The Empress Eudocia (Athenais), the wife of Theodosios II, had a quarrel with Pulcheria and was banished to the *αγίους τόπους* (the Holy Land). A storm arose and she landed at the site of Agia Galini and founded a convent of nuns dedicated to the Virgin. When this was done the storm ceased and so the place got its name. The Empress then left for the Holy Land.⁴

A little way to the east of the village and on the west side of the river near its mouth lies the cemetery. It is close to the brink of the precipitous bank of the river-bed and the path goes between it and the edge of the cliff. In this cemetery there is a seemingly old church with rudimentary double transepts. It is, I think, described by Gerola.⁵ Also somewhere near the mouth of the river are the supposed ruins of the Empress's convent, and with them an ancient church, but this is, I think, distinct from the old church in the cemetery.

From Agia Galini to Preveli there are two roads. One goes by way of Melambes and then turns towards the sea, passes through Sakhtouria and near Kerame [Κεραμέζ] and so to the two Preveli monasteries. The other, which is longer though easier going, lies further inland, passing to the north of the Siderota mountain [Σιδερώτας] and through the village of Ardaktos [Αρδακτος/Αρδαχτος].⁶ This road then goes on to Spili, or near Spili, and descends to Preveli through the gorge called the Noisy Gorge, the *Kourtaliotiko Pharangi*, which I describe below.⁷ But if we take the southern route by the sea from Agia Galini to Preveli we pass first through Melambes and then, about three hours from Agia Galini, pass by the little church of St Stephen with its inscriptions.

Road from Preveli to Spili 8 April 1918

The road is pretty. First it goes from the valley of Yannioú and Mýrthios⁸ (which runs parallel with the sea and is separated from it by the hill behind Preveli) up into the Kourtaliótiko or Kroutaliótiko Pharangi and then passes through Phratí, the village at the top of the two Preveli gorges on the sharp ridge which separates them. The eastern gorge has no path. The view of these gorges from below is given by Pashley. Thence it passes through the Koxaré valley to Spíli under its conspicuous cliff, to the north of which the path winds and then descends by Yerakári to the Amari valley running down opposite Méronas. The Kourtaliótiko Pharangi is so called because of the noise

the wind makes in it. The first time I passed down it this was so loud that I thought that rocks were falling.



IMG_0370 View down Kourtaliotikos Gorge from below Frati, looking south towards Preveli, 23 April 2009; note passing raven

Melambes

An easy day's excursion from Agia Galini is to ride up to the village of Melambes, which lies on the northern slopes of the mountain called Vouvala. There is not much to see there, but it was the home of the famous Four Martyrs of Melambes. These saints are of the number of the perhaps-to-be-called the Recent Martyrs.⁹ These are men who were put to death for their religion by the Turks, for the most part apparently in the later years of the Turkish domination. They have been canonised and their stories and special offices are collected in the *Modern Martyrology of the Greek Church*, a book which forms, as it were, a modern supplement, a bringing up to date of the older offices and of the lives of the earlier saints contained in the Synaxarion. As to the circumstances of their death, it must be remembered that in Turkey the profession of Christianity, whatever disabilities it may have brought with it, has never been a legal offence: what is punished, and that with death, is denying Islam. Very much, in fact, as in Frankish Cyprus, Saracen captives were left alone though encouraged to be baptised. But if after baptism they escaped and went back to Islam then, if caught, they were burned without mercy. Thus it appears that very many at least of these Recent Martyrs were men who had been Christians in secret and had either been found out or had judged the time ripe to declare their true faith, and had made a premature declaration of their true faith. And this occurred not infrequently in the later years of the Turkish rule. There were Crypto-Christians in abundance: the

Lino-Vamvakoi – Cotton-Linens – of Cyprus, the *Stavriotai* in Pontus and, in Crete, the *Kourmoulides*, so called from the most famous family amongst them.

And this seems to have been the case with the four Valatakis [= Vlatakis?] brothers, Angelis, Georgios, Emmanouel [= Manouil] and Nikolaos. Some time in the 1820s (I have seen the date 1824 on an *eikon*), the people in Crete thought that their freedom was in sight and that the Turks were beaten. The crypto-Christians threw off the mask, the Turks recovered and executed them as renegades.¹⁰ Another informant told me that they were recognised as Christians because, when all the Turks flocked into Retimo for safety, taking refuge behind the walls from the danger of living with the Christians in open villages, then these four brothers remained behind in the village with the Christians.

A large and very ugly church is now being built to them at Retimo on the site of the old wall, which was destroyed at the end of Turkish times.¹¹ It is tempting to think that they were executed on top of the wall, just as the British hanged a number of Turks on the walls of Candia at the time of the first intervention in 1898. But this I do not know. I saw at Retimo a sketch for an *eikon* of the martyrs in the shop of a painter who had also a parchment outline of the picture with the outlines perforated so that it could be transferred by pouncing onto a panel and the necessity for drawing be saved. It showed the four youths in a row in haloes and conventional robes, the only touch of realism being their shaven faces and small moustaches. The date was 1824. (4 September 1917: The painter had got the outline I saw from someone else. I asked to see it [= the original] and he had it at once to hand. Below was an inscription with their date 1824.) These *eikons* of Recent Martyrs show a curious vacillation between realistic representations of the actual modern dress and the conventional dress of saints. Thus, these martyrs wear the usual modern moustaches, but in other respects follow the convention. St George the Younger, a New Martyr of Yannina, wears sometimes a *fustanella* [kilt] and fez, with his halo, sometimes inclines to the standard traditional type of St George in what is supposed to be the dress of a Roman soldier, with corslet etc.

Their feast is on October 28th. At Toplou I saw the book, *The New Full Compendium*, Candia, 1917, which contains the service in their honour. I quote the verse as showing the style which is dull and thin [quotation not reproduced here].

I am told they were put to death in 1823, but the *eikon* gives the date as 1824. I do not know the manner of their death nor the reason. The service talks of tortures and resistance, but this may be no more than conventional rhetoric.

[on a separate slip] **2.iii.18** Xanthoudides showed me the *akolouthia* [service] of the 4 martyrs of Melabes printed in 1888 in Retimo. It contains as the lesson their life, and they were all originally crypto-Christians who declared themselves openly in 1821. In 1824 when the insurrection was over they were executed by the Turks as renegades at the town gate of Retimo.ⁱ

Agios Stephanos near Agia Galini. 6 June 1918

Three hours from Agia Galini on the direct path to Preveli – the path near the sea and not inland by Adhraktos which is the easier though the longer road – three hours from Agia Galini on the left of the road amongst the ruins of houses is the little church of St

ⁱ The execution of *three* [4] men is mentioned also by Pashley I 107, who says that they were members of the Kourmoulis clan, who had been crypto-Christians but had openly espoused Christianity in the Revolution; though this may be a misunderstanding of the term Kourmoulis used generically to mean crypto-Christian.

Stephen. Looking east from the church the hill called "Tou Phoka to Selli" forms the skyline and is not far off. The church lies just to the west of the stream in a valley which forms the boundary between the lands of Melabes and those of Sakhtouria.

Inside the church on the north wall is an inscription painted in black on plain plaster which has been left uncovered in the middle of a later layer of plaster. No traces of frescoes.

1720
 ΑΝΓΧΣΤΩ - 10
 ΔΗΘΚΑΙΗΘΕΙ ΚΑΙ
 ΤΩ ΜΕΤΟΧΕΙ ΠΑΤΡΑΤΧΔ
 [Λ]ΧΤΧΘΧ: ΦΕΟΦΦΗΧ
 (ΕΩΣ ΧΑΛΚΙΟΠΧΛΧ
 ΤΕΚΗΘΝ ΑΝΤΧΣ

i.e. 1720 Αυγούστου 10. Ανακαινίσθη και το μετόχι παρά του δού[λ]ου του Θεού Γεωργίου [ειερ]έως Χαλκιόπουλου [και των] τέκνων αυτού.

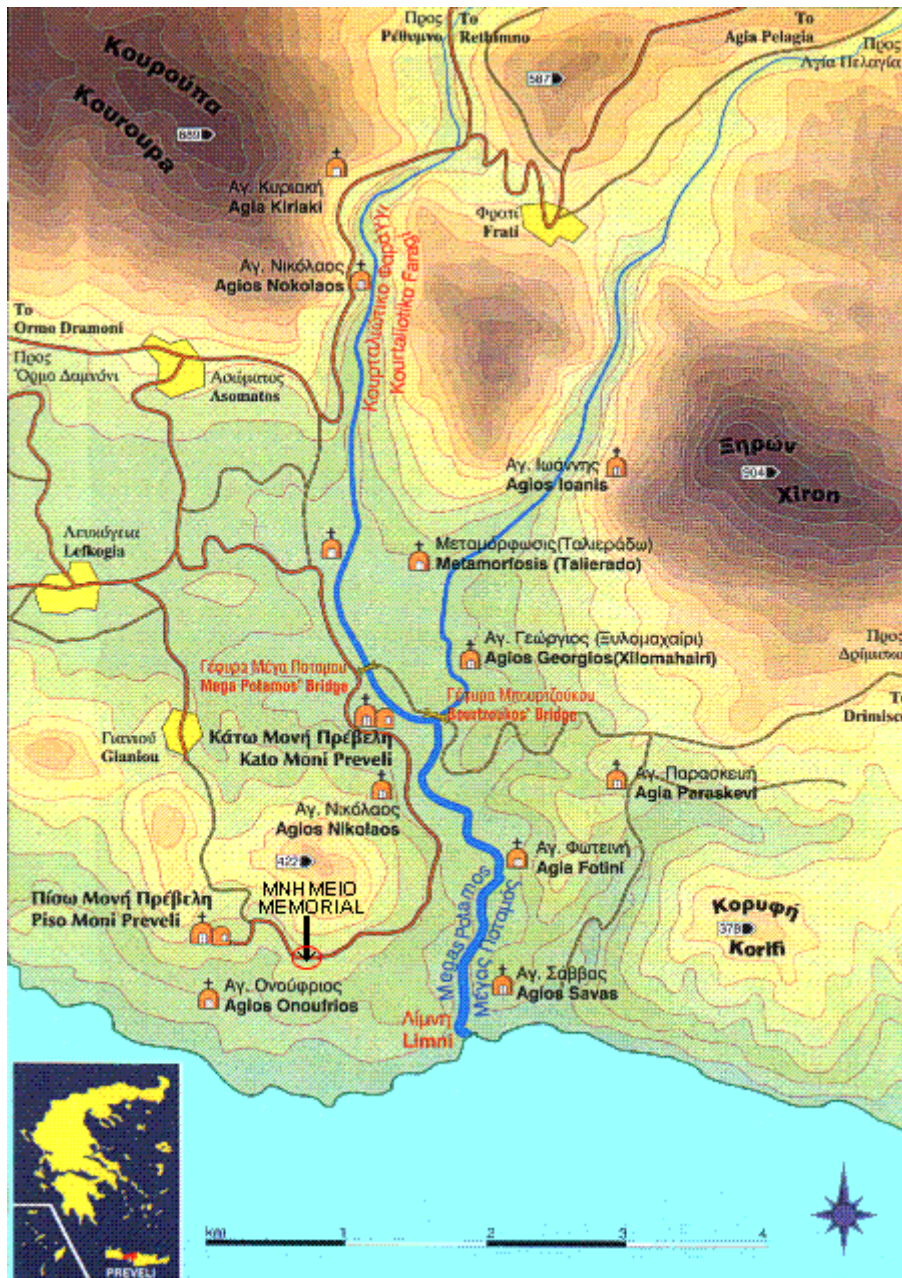
[1720 August 10. The *metochi* too was renovated by the servant of God Georgios Chalkiopoulos the priest and his children.]

The screen is carved. On the north side of the screen a double eikon of St Vlasios and the Virgin and Child, and on the south side a similar double eikon of Christ Enthroned and St Stephen as a deacon. This is inscribed in capitals with accents:

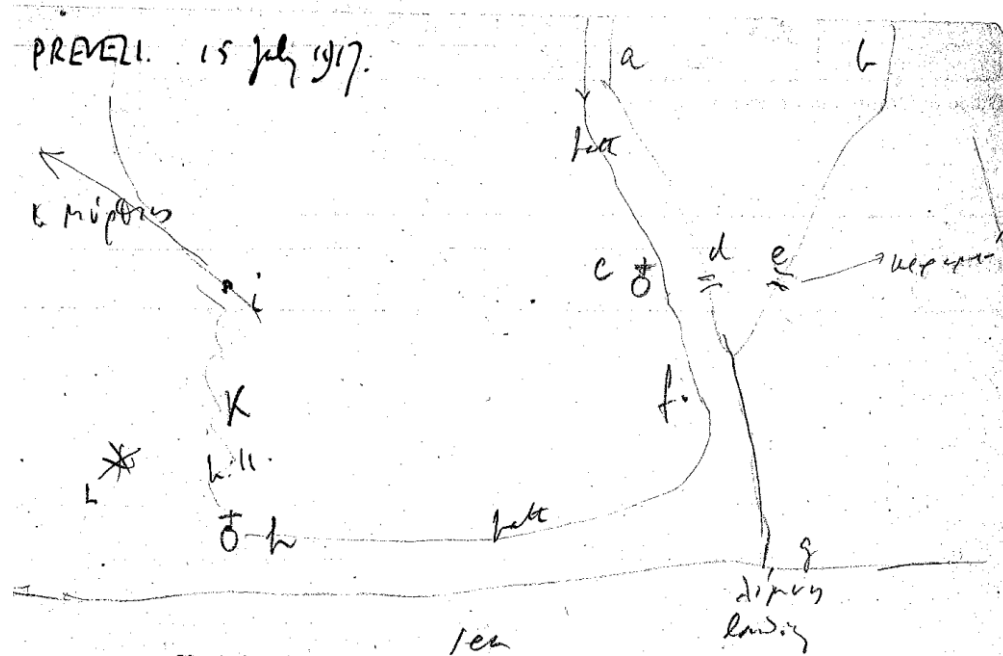
in capitals with accents:-- δέχας τῶν δάδων
 σου δέσποτο παντοκράτορ ἱερέω τῶ
 χαλκιώπῳ καὶ τῶ υἱῷ αὐτῷ Γερκσίμῳ
 ἱερόμονῳ καὶ τῇ συνόδῳ ἐκτῶν.
 ὁ ταπεινὸς κωστακίης ὁ μαλίσσερὸς
 τίμωτο γρέφειν ἀχπη 1688

[Prayer of thy servants, o Lord Pantokrator, Ioannes Chalkiopoulos the priest and his son the hieromonk Gerasimos and their companions. The humble Konstantinos Melissourgos painted the icons. 1688]

Clearly a church of the Chalkiopoulos family, founded 1688, restored 1720. With termination cf. Ξανθουδίδης.



<http://www.preveli.org/files/moni/map.htm>

Preveli¹²

Sketch plan of the Preveli monasteries

- A Kourtaliotiko Pharangi with path down it
- B Gorge with no path. Pashley has a good view of these gorges and the mountain between them from below taken from near the monastery by the river [Kato Preveli]
- C The monastery by the river (St John Prodromos)
- D E Bridges built by monastery with long inscriptions not easy to read from position. The one on the east bridge records ανεκαινίσθη ... ΑΩΝΒ ([renovated] ... 1852)
- F Spring with a ladle chained and marked Εἰς το μοναστήρι του Πρέβελι 1846
- G Mouth of the river where there is a landing place on an inlet of the sea whence called Limni but I have not been there and only guess about the inlet; it may be a lagoon formed by the river
- H The lower big monastery (St John Theologos) where I stayed; Preveli par excellence [Piso Preveli]
- I The village of Yannioú
- K Path over ridge up from Preveli and down to Yannioú
- L High conspicuous [mountain?] [...] from [...] (Κόρακας) below Ποδάκινο

The situation of the Preveli monasteries is shown on the sketch. Parallel with the coast is a long range of mountains, to the north of which is the valley containing Spili, Koxare and Agios Vasilis. This range is cut through by the Megapotasmos river flowing through the gorge called the *Kourtaliotiko Pharangi*. Where this river issues from the hills is another valley parallel with the sea containing the villages of

Myrthios, Mariou and Lefkogia. This valley is cut off from the sea by the low range of hills on which is the seaward of the two monasteries [Piso Moni Preveli].¹³

The plan shows that the river has a tributary near the mouth joining it on the east side.¹⁴ This also flows through a gorge, but so far as I know there is no path through it.¹⁵ Pashley has a good view of these two gorges and the mountain between them, taken from near the upper monastery. Just above where the two streams join, each is crossed by a bridge built by the monasteries. The path from Sakhtouria and Kerame passes over these two bridges and then comes immediately to the upper monastery.¹⁶ Each bridge bears a long inscription which, from its position, is not easy to read. The one on the east bridge records that it was restored in the year 1852.¹⁷

At the mouth of the river there is a landing place. The place is called Limni, the Lake, and there may therefore be some sort of lagoon formed by the river meeting the beach, but I have not been there.¹⁸

As the path from Sakhtouria leads to the upper monastery by the two bridges, so the other approach through the gorge leads to the same point and may now be described.¹⁹ The third approach to the upper monastery is the same road from Myrthios through the valley. It is also usual to reach the lower monastery by a direct path over the hill from the north through the village of Yanniou.

Preveli upper monastery of the Prodromos [Kato Preveli!]. Written midday 8 April 1918 at Spili

The upper monastery of Preveli is very pretty. It has not the wild ascetic look of the monastery over the sea on its bare slopes, but the crowded flat-roofed buildings on the sloping ground amongst trees have a rustic air as of a farm. The church is very big for the little court, so that the buildings cluster closely round it and the court is like a broad passage. It is mostly covered by trellised vines supported by masonry columns. There is a back entrance at the eastern end descending by steps into the court, but the main entrance is by a very small arched door at the north-west corner of the court. This is approached by a sloped paved path at the bottom of which is a space with a large plane tree and the fountain. This is underneath the buildings on the right as one goes up to the door at the back of a domed space which opens at the front with a large arch. It is of the nineteenth century, the date being given by an inscription above the water-spouts. The building above the fountain, and so not part of the court, is I think the guestroom and is probably or even certainly newer than the court and built over the fountain in this way for lack of space.

There are numerous chimneys in the monastery of this form.



Preveli [Piso Preveli]

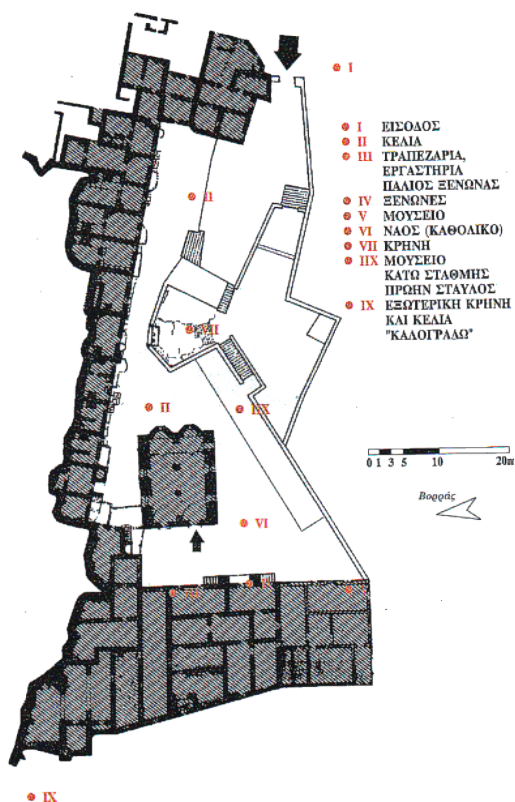
The Preveli church is of the middle of the 19th century and was redone up in the 20th. The oldest parts of the *moni* are the *kellia* which are the range south of the church. But anyhow the place dates only from Turkish times.

The church is double with a good screen and interesting *eikons*, two being dated to 1843 and inscribed δέχου πενιχράν την δέησιν μου κόρη Νικοδήμου επισκόπου Λάμπη (a diocese in Crete).²⁰ [O maiden, accept the meagre prayer of Nikodimos bishop of Lampe]

A plaque over the west door of the church records that it was built in 1836 when Neilos I was abbot and restored in 1911 under Neilos II.²¹



IMG_0369 Piso Preveli monastery (tou Theologou), showing chimneys like the ones at Kato Preveli mentioned and illustrated by Dawkins



Plan of Piso Preveli (<http://www.preveli.org/files/moni/sxedio.htm>)

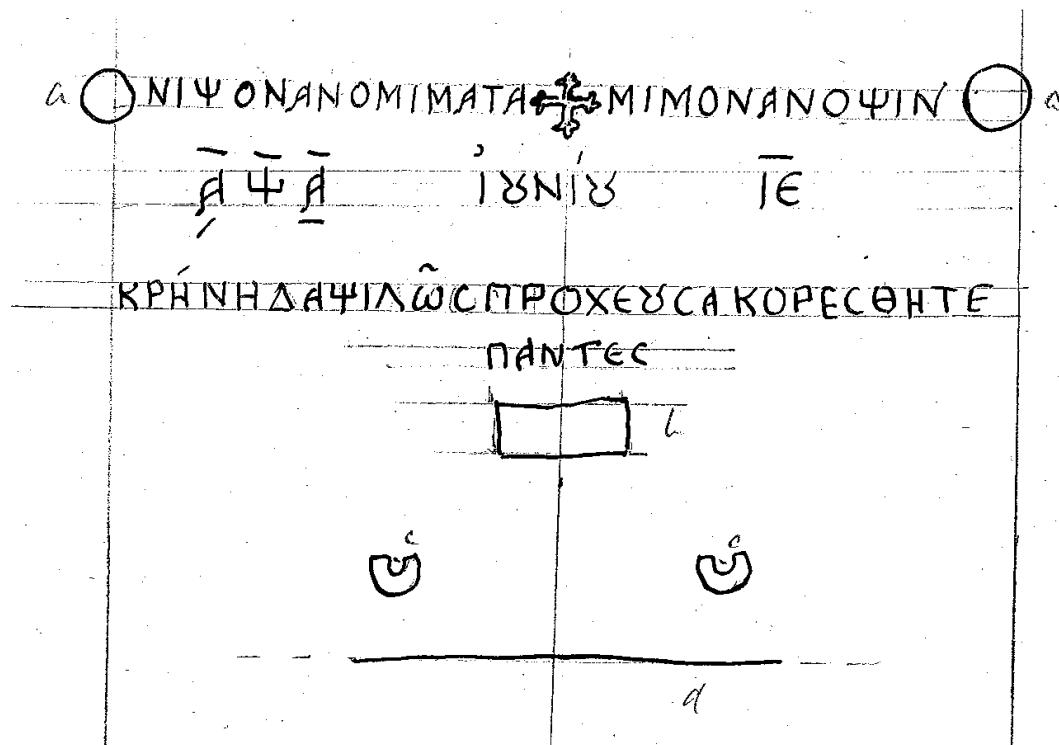
Preveli 17 July 1917

Fountain

As one enters before going up the steps to the court, the fountain is on the right, two spouts and a trough at the foot of a wall behind which there is the water chamber. Above the wall is the part of the court to the east of the church.

On the upper part of the wall is an illegible inscription and a cross in a circle with IC XC NI KA in tiny pebbles set in the plaster; similar work in the *apothekes* [storerooms] at the north-west corner of the *moni*.

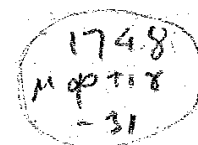
Below this inscription is the stone front of the fountain which has between the top and the spouts the following inscriptions:



- A A rosettes
- B opening
- C C spouts
- D trough

Preveli 6 June 1918

The north-west corner of the monastery is occupied by a granary and storehouses and below them a bakery. There is a door too here leading out to a spring and over this outer gate a IC NK cross and to the left of it the date March 31 1748 done in pebbles on the plaster thus.



To the same date apparently belong the refectory and kitchen and the other rooms to the south of this and below the new guesthouse, that is to say the whole west end of the court.

In the granary are several other inscriptions done in pebbles on the plaster. Two big pictures of ships and the date 1793 (my notes are not quite clear but it is nearly certainly in the granary) and three IX NK crosses with these letterings:

a) $\begin{array}{c} \text{XC MN} \\ \hline \text{M} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{IC} \\ \hline \text{M} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \hline \text{K} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{9} \\ \hline \text{I} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{Γ} \\ \hline \text{O} \end{array}$ (last letter for ω)
 b) $\begin{array}{c} \text{XC Θ N} \\ \hline \text{M} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{IC} \\ \hline \text{M} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \hline \text{K} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{9} \\ \hline \text{H} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{Γ} \\ \hline \text{O} \end{array}$
 c) $\begin{array}{c} \text{XC M Θ} \\ \hline \text{M} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{IC} \\ \hline \text{M} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \hline \text{K} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{9} \\ \hline \text{H} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{Γ} \\ \hline \text{O} \end{array}$

These give the formula (MΘN)
 XC (ΘN) ΣΤΗΓΟ (= σταυρός)
 (M N)

whatever its meaning.

History of Preveli 17 July 1917

The old blind monk Meletios told me (he is from Kerame, but has been to Athos and I think other places. ?Jerusalem).

The archives of the monastery have been lost. A monk called Ioakeim in 1821 took them to Cerigo and handed them over to the Moatzides family for safe keeping and they are lost.²² As to its founding in Turkish times, there were three brothers of the village of Preveliana:²³ one became the founder, one became a pirate (*κουρσάρης*), and I forget what the third one did.

The tradition is that a Christian of Preveliana in Mesara killed a Turk. He fled and, saying that he had killed a Christian, threw himself on the mercy of the janissaries at Labini [Lambini] near Spili. The monk called these janissaries Albanides, which he said meant *pallikaria* [brave warriors].²⁴ The janissaries sent him to Preveli to keep their sheep and suggested that he should buy the land, which he did for 300 piastres. The man became a monk and gradually other monks joined him and the monastery was founded. Later on, in 1796, an abbot, Ephraim, who came from Ardakhtos, got the patriarch to make it a *stavropegion* [a monastery owing canonical allegiance to the Patriarch of Constantinople]. It is a Koinovion [cenobitic monastery].²⁵

The monastery inland at the junction of the rivers was built later to be near the fields. It is dedicated to St John Prodromos ['the Forerunner'] and the monastery over the sea to St John Theologos. The monastery *tou Prodromou* was burnt by the Turks in 1866; the monastery over the sea escaped.²⁶

The man of Preveliana had his 300 *grosia* [piastres] concealed in a heap of stones called *tou Listi o Trokhalos*, which lies on the road from Melambes just below the village of Kria Vrisi.²⁷ Perhaps he hid it there when he fled from Preveliana to Labini. This is a heap of stones piled over the body of a brigand, to which everyone who passes adds a stone with a curse, and stones are even now said to be added to it. Cf. *to Riaki tou anathematou* at Toplou.²⁸

Folklore

Noted at Preveli, 7 April 1918, having come there from Myrthios

My host at Myrthios, Panagiotis Hatzidakis, the *demodidaskalos* and brother of the professor,²⁹ told me that 5 nails were prepared for the crucifixion of Christ and that a thief stole the fifth nail, which was intended for his heart. Christ therefore blessed the thief and that is why thieves are so often successful. Yet I have heard the saying *Ο Θεός αγαπά τον κλέφτη, αλλ' αγαπά και περισσότερο τον νοικοκύρη* [God loves the thief, but he loves the householder even more].

At Preveli, 15 July 1917, I was told (by the deacon who believed it) that when twigs of *Smilax* or plane – these are the two plants most used for the purpose – are cut for making baskets, it must be done when there is no moon (or when the moon is small), otherwise the baskets will rot. Yannis of Palaikastro told me that wood for timber must be cut not only when the moon is small, but when it is waning, otherwise the wood will get full of worms (*λαθρακιά*). Yannis did not believe it.³⁰

At Toplou I saw a monk making baskets, and so at Preveli and, as light work, it is considered suitable for monks. In a book at Toplou there is a story of a hermit of the Thebaid going into town to sell the baskets he had made, so it is clearly a very old tradition that monks should make baskets. At Preveli the deacon used to sit in the morning in the shade of the west end of the church and plait baskets. The old blind monk Meletios [or Methodius?] used to come out to sit in the shade and say to the deacon: “Τι κάνεις, διάκε;” “Πλέκω καλάθια.” “Καλύτερα να πλέκεις καλάθια παρά να πλέκεις σκάνδαλα.” [“What are you doing, deacon?” “Weaving baskets.” “Better to weave baskets than weave scandals.”] This was rather a stock joke and I heard it two successive mornings. The old man was an uncle of the deacon and the policeman at Selli, Theodorakis, was his brother.

March 1918

In Crete people believe that hares change their sex. There is a saying: *Καιρός λαγού, καιρός λαγουδίνας* [Time of the jack [hare], time of the jill]. I noted this somewhere near Agia Varvara or between it and Dibaki.

Paximadia

Two rocky islets that lie out in the Bay of Dibaki. One of them rises to a peak of more than a thousand feet and is visible not only from all the shore of the bay but from all the western half of the Mesara. The ancient name of the islets is Letoa. They are now called, like many other such islets, *Ta Paximadia*, The Biscuits. They belong to the government, and like other such islands off Crete – Standia, Agios Theodoros, Elasa, Kouphonisi and Gaidaronisi³¹ – are rented for winter grazing. The grass grows with the [autumn?] rain, and small cattle are brought over from the mainland and remain there all the winter. In the winter of, I think, 1917-18, this led to a grim event.

On each island a single shepherd had been placed. They could only communicate with one another by signals, and the same with the mainland. Except for an occasional visit of a boat with supplies they were each condemned to spend the winter in complete solitude. This winter, too, the man on the smaller island was

known to be out of health. What happened, I was told by the monks at Preveli. As the winter went on the man on the big island did not see his mate for some time and began to grow uneasy. At last he swam the strait and found the sick man dead in a cave which faced north and so was not visible from the other island. The survivor made signals and people came over in boats from Sphakia, but the body was by this time too far gone to be moved for burial, so he still lies on the island where he died. Later on I met the surviving shepherd at Komitades. I asked him why he did not swim over as soon as his fellow ceased to signal to him. He said that he thought that he must have been taken off in the boat which came from time to time to bring them food. No doubt he was in fact uneasy in his mind and at last resolved to cross and find the truth. From the Admiralty chart, the strait between the two seems to be about /// yards.³²

[The following cutting from the *Oxford Mail*, 15 November 1944, was found in the file in Dawkins' archive relating to Preveli Monastery]

Over 500 Allied Troops Saved By Crete Abbot

THE Cretan priest who saved more than 500 British and Dominion troops from falling into German hands after the evacuation of the island, and saw them to safety in Egypt, has died in Cairo from the privations he underwent hiding in the mountains after the Germans had put a price on his head.

He was the Abbot Aganthangelos Lagovardos, head of the monastery of Preveli on the south coast of Crete, who in 1942 had been awarded the Order of the British Empire for his great services to the Allied cause. He died from a heart attack while attending a service commemorating the liberation of Athens.

When the last Allied ship left Crete in May, 1941, there were still a large number of troops left behind chiefly Australians and New Zealanders, and some British. Between 500 and 600 of these men were fed, hidden and sheltered by Abbot Lagovardos, who organised a complete underground service for helping them.

Link-Up on Burma Front

TROOPS of the Fifth Indian Division advancing on Kalemio from the west have linked up with East African Forces attacking from the north, said Lord Louis Mountbatten's communique quoted by Reuter, to-day.

The main body of the Fifth Indian Division has cleared resistance east of the stockades on the road from Tiddim, eight miles west of Kalemio.

The East African attack down the Kabaw and Kale valleys is meeting strong resistance six miles north of Kalemio.

After the capture of Mawlaik, on the Chindwin, East African troops have made further advances.

In northern Burma Chinese troops north-east of Bhamo made only slight advances.

HIDDEN MORE THAN YEAR

For more than a year they were fed from the monastery and hidden in the homes of his friends, despite the fact that the Germans were carrying on an intense search for the last survivors of the Allied forces.

Eventually the Abbot got a message through to the British Command in Egypt asking that they might be evacuated.

After the relief expedition from Egypt had made contact with the Abbot 78 men were taken aboard. Later a further 200 who had been hidden in the area were brought to the embarkation point by runners and safely taken to Egypt.

Unfortunately, the secret of the rescue of the troops reached the Germans, and they placed a price on Abbot Lagovardos' head. Warned in time by a peasant, he took to the hills before the German force arrived at the monastery.

The monks of Preveli were taken to prison, and the monastery was sacked, but the organisation the Abbot had built up enabled British officers to rescue almost all the remaining British and Dominion troops on the island, who had suffered incredible hardships because of the rigours of the climate and their inadequate clothing.



Inscriptions on western bridge: IMG_0362 (left of arch)



IMG_0363 (right of arch; dated 1850)



IMG_0364 Inscription on eastern bridge (on left side of parapet, on road side; dated 1852)



IMG_0368 Limni seen from the west, 23 April 2009. In summer what used to be an idyllic beach is defaced by loungers and parasols (but see worse below...)



<http://www.tovima.gr/science/article/?aid=352441> (*To Vima*, 05/09/2010): Limni before and after a catastrophic fire

Peter Mackridge's notes

¹ The flatness of the land around Tymbaki encouraged the Germans to construct an airfield there in 1942. "The village of Tymbaki was evacuated and destroyed, and men and boys from the surrounding villages were forced into labour gangs to level and prepare the ground": Artemis Cooper, *Patrick Leigh Fermor* (London 2012), p. 144. The area is still used as a military airfield.

² This is the Minoan port of Kommos. See ch. 22.

³ Gerola II 226, 228 calls it Agios Galinis.

⁴ Dawkins retells this story in "Folk-memory in Crete", pp. 20-21.

⁵ Is this Gerola's S. Maria, II pp. 226 and 228 (fig. 233 & 234)?

⁶ This road seems to follow more or less the same course as the modern road.

⁷ Where he has typed "Kourtaliótiko or Kroutaliótiko Pharangi" Dawkins has added "better" in hand under the first (and in fact more authentic) alternative. Dawkins notes that according to G.N. Hatzidakis ("Γλωσσικαί παρατηρήσεις", *Αθηνά* 29 (1917), p. 191), κουρταλώ in Crete means 'I clap my hands'; therefore a more accurate translation in English might be Clapping Gorge.

⁸ He means that the valley runs from Yannioú (which I have corrected from Yannoú throughout) to Myrthios, not that the road runs through Myrthios.

⁹ In Greek those Christians who were martyred for their faith during the Ottoman period are known as Νεομάρτυρες (Neomartyrs).

¹⁰ They were martyred at Rethymno on 28 Oct. 1824.

¹¹ This is the big church in the Πλατεία Τεσσάρων Μαρτύρων on the main east-west road in the middle of Rethymno, at the top of the present-day Οδός Εθνικής Αντιστάσεως.

¹² The popular names of the two monasteries are potentially confusing: the inland one in the valley is called Kato [Lower] Preveli, while the one on a height overlooking the sea is called Piso [Back] Preveli, because the road from the north goes past Kato, then back a little to the north to reach Piso. It was from Preveli that the first large-scale evacuations of Allied troops from Crete took place in the summer of 1941: see newspaper article reproduced at end of chapter. For the history of the two monasteries see Psilakis II 385ff.

¹³ This is the monastery that is currently in use.

¹⁴ The river runs below Spili.

¹⁵ There seems to be no path there now either.

¹⁶ Kato Moni Preveli, which was abandoned in the early 1970s (Psilakis II 416) and remained derelict, at least until recently.

¹⁷ The western bridge has two old inscriptions and the eastern bridge one, all easily visible: see photos at end of this document.

¹⁸ See photos at end of this document.

¹⁹ This has been described above.

²⁰ Nikodimos was Bishop of Lampe 1831-45. The bishopric of Lampe has its seat at Argyroupoli.

²¹ Neilos Moschovitis was abbot from 1823 to 1862. He rebuilt the present chapel after the previous one was demolished in 1835. It was he that had the two bridges built over the Megas Potamos and its tributary, the Bourtzoukos: see <http://www.preveli.org/files/moni/gr10.htm>.

²² Cerigo is the island of Cythera (Kythira). Dawkins' story is borne out by the following: "In a note kept at the monastery it is said that 'during the Revolution of

1821 the archive and the manuscripts of the monastery were transferred to Cythera, from whence they have yet to be returned'. A search by Michalis Papadakis in 1958 yielded no results" (<http://www.preveli.org/files/moni/gr30.htm>). I wonder why the archive was entrusted to this particular family. Perhaps they were related to the Moatsos family of Crete, who sought refuge in Kythira when the Turks invaded Crete. The surname is Venetian (Moazzo).

²³ Preveliana is near Megali Vrysi, which is near Agia Varvara. The name is said to derive from the Prevelis family, who were among the first to settle in the area.

²⁴ According to Vasilis Orfanos, *Λέξεις τουρκικής προέλευσης στο κρητικό ιδίωμα* (Herakleion 2014), *αλπάνης* or *αλμπάντης* (< T *nalband*), which literally means 'farrier', can also be used to denote a cack-handed surgeon (a 'butcher').

²⁵ See ch. 14, endnote 5.

²⁶ According to the monastery's official website, the monastery (presumably Piso Preveli, the one by the sea) was looted and damaged by the Germans in late August 1941: <http://www.preveli.org/files/moni/gr10.htm>.

²⁷ The story of "The brigand's cairn" near Krya Vrysi is told in <https://rethemnosnews.gr/2013/07/χωρια-του-νομου-μασ-δημοσ-αγιου-βασιλε-7/>.

²⁸ The story goes that in 1821 a janissary commander named Bayram Kasap ['the butcher'] killed the abbot of Toplou, and he was killed in retaliation. His corpse ended up in a nearby torrent-bed, where the monks piled stones on it by way of a curse. Cf. also "Tsouli's tomb" described in ch. 24.

²⁹ For more on Professor G. N. Hatzidakis see ch. 12.

³⁰ Dawkins repeated this information in his pamphlet of corrigenda to his book *The Monks of Athos* (see Michael Allan, *Byzantine Talks: letters of Norman Douglas to Richard MacGillivray Dawkins and a single letter from Dawkins to Douglas* (Graz 2012), p. 101, n. 2).

³¹ Standia, off the north coast near Herakleion, is normally known today (locally) as Ντία or (officially) as Δία. Agios Theodoros is off the north coast near Platanias. Koufonisi is off the south coast, south of Ziros. Gaidaronisi (now officially named Chrysi) is off the south coast near Ierapetra. Elasa is off the north-east corner of Crete, near Vai.

³² Dawkins failed to note the figure. I don't know the precise distance between the islets, but they are very close to each other.