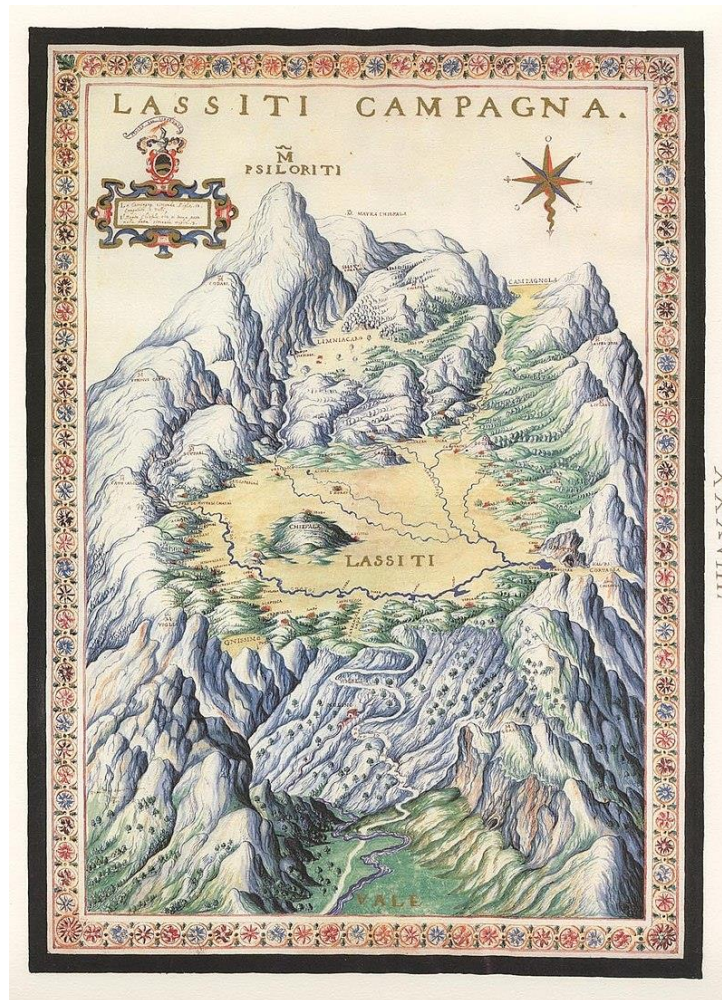


CHAPTER 24

LASITHI¹



Francesco Basilicata, *Cretae Regnum* (1618) (Wikimedia Commons)²

The mountain plain of Lasithi in the middle [to the north-west] of the mountain mass of Dicte is entirely surrounded by mountains and only approached by passes or cols where this mountain rim from point to point dips somewhat. The plain has therefore no outlet for the water and is drained only by an underground passage which swallows up the water. This opens at the edge of the plain where the road from Lyttos enters the plain. Two consequences result. When the water is not properly carried off, the plain is flooded to the greater detriment or even destruction of the crops, and also the villages are all on the rising ground at the edges of the plain or, in the case of Agios Konstantinos, the monastery of Kroustallenia and Agios Georgios, on knolls rising out of the lower ground.³ Water lies very close to the surface in Lasithi and is raised for irrigation: this I noticed in full swing in August 1917. Various systems are in use. The most primitive is the crane, *γεράνι* [shadoof]. A forked post is set in the ground and in the fork a long beam is pivoted. A stone is tied to the short end as a counterpoise, and to the long end the bucket which dips into the well. The device is worked by hand. All the water in the Malles gardens is raised in this way.⁴ Next comes a very roughly carpentered wooden derrick, made of almost unhewn branches, supporting a pump which is worked by the wind. The windmill part has eight sails. This is now the commonest device in Lasithi. The most up-to-date affair is a pump

with an iron derrick: the sails are of the same native handiwork. No doubt by now the modern iron sails, or rather circular fans, are in use. The crane too is used for lifting out the earth when the well is being dug.

[added later] The Venetians forbade anyone to live in Lasithi because it was a centre for rebellions – the penalty was the loss of hand or foot – so Xanthoudidis told me. ?authority.⁵

Of the villages at the foot of the mountains round the edges of the plain, the two most notable and the largest are Psykhro on the south and Tzermiado on the north side. Of Psykhro, famous for the Minoan cave excavated by Hogarth in [1899], I need not say much. Archaeology lies outside the plan of this book.⁶ I would only record of Psykhro that when I visited it in 1904 (?) with Currelly there was a danger of poliomyelitis and I found the village “bound” against the danger. That is to say, a cotton thread or bundle of threads was tied from house to house so as to entirely encircle the village. The result of this would be that the plague could not cross the magic thread. The thread so used was afterwards to be cut up and used as wick for church candles. Somewhere else in Crete I have seen a thread like this coated with wax, ready to be burned as a taper, tied round the walls of the church. And in Cyprus when I was first there in 1908 or so I saw in many churches quite thick bundles of thread passing round the inside of the churches from column to column. The object was always the same, to avert disease. Again in 1931 I found a church in Florina in Macedonia with a taper bound outside it all the way round. This I was assured was no more than a simple votive offering.



Next to Psykhro to the west lies Plati where the BSA dug in 1914. How the site was found I have already told in my account of Venetian bells in Crete, and a report of it is in BSA.⁷ It was here I first found a very interesting plant. The excavated site lies a few minutes' walk below the village and by the side of the path in a dry well I found for the first time a plant said to be confined to Crete, the climbing aristolochia, *Aristolochia microstoma*. It was all over the dry-stone wall on the left of the path and I had at first taken it for *smilax*: the leaves are not unlike, but the sight of the flower with its U-shaped corolla and with a yellow mouth told me at once that it was an aristolochia. Almost immediately it so happened that a French botanist visited us and he identified the plant with great interest. After seeing it here I at once met with it in many parts of Crete. It prefers to ramble up bushes or over heaps of dry stones. It is abundant all over the Lasithi mountains, especially on the hill above Viano. I have found it too between Agia Varvara and Agios Thomas, and again in west Crete. It flowers in June. The seed vessel, which when ripe splits into segments and resembles a hanging basket, is one of the most beautiful things it is possible to imagine. Seeds brought to England grew and I had the plant regularly flowering for five or six years in Wales. Then it disappeared. Once it set a fruit which did not, however, ripen.⁸

[Vidiani and Kroustallenia Monasteries]⁹

There are two monasteries in Lasithi. On the north side, between the point where the path from Xyda reaches the plain and the village of Tzermiado, lies the little

monastery of **Vidiani**, just above the edge of the plain with the steeply rising barren hillside immediately behind it. I have been there twice, in 1914 when the School dug at Plati and again in April 1918. The monastery occupies the mouth of a ravine running down into the south side of the plain, and the path from the Khonos, the swallow-hole, to Tzermiado passes in front of it.¹⁰



IMG_5164 Chapel of Moni Vidianis with cypresses

The buildings are on three sides of a court, being on both sides of and across the little ravine. The court is thus open to the plain and across this open side is the biggish church screened from the plain by a row of cypresses. There are trees too in the court, unfortunately disfigured by ugly in comparison red tiles. The buildings look all new and I saw on a cell and on the belfry of the church a nineteenth-century date. It is a stavropegiac monastery. I know nothing of its age or traditions. In 1918 there was no one there, and I did not ask when I was there in 1914.¹¹

The second Lasithi monastery is that of **Panagia Kroustallenia**. It lies on a knoll over the river in the eastern part of the plain between the villages of Marmaketo to the north and Agios Konstantinos to the south. The site is of very great beauty. The path to the monastery lies through an avenue of ancient mulberry trees and so leads up to the monastery, which stands among the really magnificent prickly oaks which clothe its slopes.¹² Only some red tiled roofs detract from the perfection of this place. There are only a few monks, and the buildings are old and more like a farm than a monastery. The church was built, a monk told me, in 1866 or thereabouts on the site of an earlier smaller church. In it are preserved four *eikons* of the Death of the Virgin, to which the monastery is dedicated. All of them show the impious doubting Jew with his hands cut off by the angel. The only inscription I have been able to see is on the belfry of the church. The middle part of each line is illegible. The month is therefore uncertain, but *οκτωβρίου* contains the same number of letters as have to be supplied in the line above. The date is probably as I have transcribed it, but the third figure might be an I, and the last 6, 4 or 0. It runs: [Greek original not included here]. That is: "This building was made when Anthimos priest and monk was abbot, October 28th, 1866."¹³



Chapel of Panagia Kroustallenia monastery



IMG_5153 The chapel door

The view from the monastery is beautiful – all round the mountains, and in front the plain – here not so cultivated as lower down, but grassy. As one looks from the monastery hill across the intervening ground towards the village of Agios Konstantinos on its little separate hill, the winding stream among the green grass, the little rocks and fine slim trees all resemble nothing so much as the landscape in some picture of Perugino or an early Raphael.

3 August 1917

I was told yesterday by muleteer (? Yanni) that at first they tried to build the monastery of Panagia Kroustallenia at the foot of the rocky knoll upon which it stands, but every night what had been built in the day was miraculously destroyed. At last they took the hint and built where it now is at the top of the knoll. There is a similar story told of the monastery of Panagia Chouzouviotissa at Amorgos, which is in the front of a cave some way up the cliff.

[Routes in and out of Lasithi]

There are, so far as I know, seven ways out of the Lasithi plain and I shall describe them one by one.¹⁴

1. The western way is the usual approach from **Candia**. From Candia one must go to **Kastelli Pediada**, a large but not interesting village at the foot of the Lasithi mountains. In the village there are a few remains of the castle: a high piece of wall and the foundations of towers. But no plan can be made out and it looks as if the village had been built on the site of the castle and the ruins used as a quarry so that it has practically all disappeared. The same thing seems to have happened at Panormo, whose old name was Kastelli.¹⁵

From Kastelli the path goes up by Xida, on the slopes below the site of Lyttos, and then through Kastamonitsa.¹⁶ Just before reaching Kastamonitsa on the left is a church and burying ground in an enclosure. Over the west door of the church are five earthenware plates let in to the masonry in the usual form of a cross, and round the door a moulding of two rows of sunk triangles.



IMG_8186 The church at Kastamonitsa



IMG_8156 Remains of Roman aqueduct, 5 May 2015

Not far from this point the ruins of a great aqueduct of masonry of small stones crosses the road: it is probably of Venetian date, bringing water down from Lasithi.¹⁷

The path ascends the slope of the mountain, among brushwood. Here there are bushes of *Styrax* which grows also on the shore below Rogdia near the Venetian fort there called Palaiokastro. On the left is the valley of Avdou, and the path passes by the point where the Lasithi river, swallowed up in the plain, reappears. In Athos 1931 a gendarme officer from Avdhou told me that the river which runs down from Avdhou and debouches under the iron bridge is the Aposelemis, called after the Arab general Abu Selim who built over it a small stone bridge (I don't think now preserved, but have no note on this point). It flows down to Avdou and so to the sea where it debouches under the iron bridge made for the main road an hour west of Chersonnesos, just at the point where the path to Avdou leaves the sea-road leading eastward from Candia [see route no. 2 below].



(left) IMG_8161 *Styrax* growing next to the path leading up to Lasithi from the west



(right) IMG_8164 The new Aposelemis reservoir near Avdou seen from the same path, 5 May 2015



(left) IMG_8178 Jackie casts a stone on to the anathema heap at Tou Tsouli to mnima (at the col); the zigzag path towards Lasithi climbs the valley on the left¹⁸
 (right) IMG_5175 View towards Lasithi after passing col

Then the road reaches the col and the plain of Lasithi comes in sight. This col is called the Tomb of Tsouli [του Τσουόλη το Μνήμα]. This is the story as I learned it in 1918 from the abbot of Toplou.

A certain Turk was very bad and the priests in Lasithi made his image of wax and melted it. In consequence, as he was returning to Candia his horse shied near Kastelli Pediados and threw him and he died. He was buried at Candia and the place on the ridge was set aside as a memorial of him.

But when I went to Lasithi for the first time with Currelly in 1904 or so, Kostis Khronakis, our servant, told me a different version. Tsoulis used to go over into Lasithi by the path from Xida and insult women, especially by making them dance before him showing their breasts (a familiar charge against Turks). After one of these visits the lover, brother, or husband of one of the women lay in wait for him at the col, killed him, cut off his head which he put into the mule's saddlebag who carried it back to Candia, and threw the body into a cleft in the rock on the right of the path as one leaves Lasithi. Here everyone throws a stone on it. I saw the heap in 1904, but it was since that time much decreased, if not altogether dispersed, when the road was remade a few years ago. The cleft is fairly plain and the place quite definite. It is regarded as an unlucky or uncanny spot. It should be added that this remaking of the road has made the journey much easier: especially on the outer slope the old road was extremely rocky and steep.¹⁹

On the col, just before reaching the *Mnima*, among the boulders the wild daphne, *khamoulia* (*Daphne Oleoides*), grows with greater abundance than I have seen anywhere else. It is in bushes a couple of feet across and the air is scented with it. This beautiful plant is characteristic of the mountains of east Crete, though not often so luxuriant as at the *Mnima* east [south] of Ida.²⁰ I have, I think, seen it at Gerakari, but further west never. I would not be sure about Ida, but I have never seen it near Kamares or near Anogia or near Axo, and I am safe in saying that west of Dicte it must be rare. On the hills to the south of Mesara, which I have crossed at several points, I have never seen it. In the old days the young shoots were used by the women to make a green, or perhaps yellow, dye. In March the clusters of yellowish purple flowers appear. These are succeeded by small vermilion-coloured transparent-looking berries. From these I raised a number of seedlings in England, but by 1928 or so all were dead but one, which seems likely to survive.

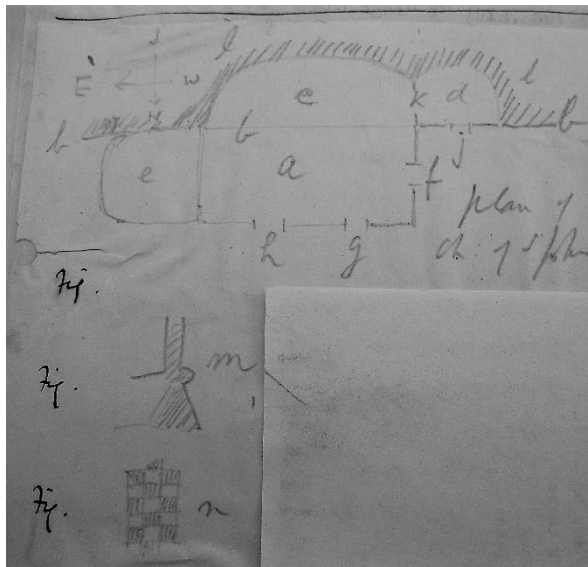
From the Mnima tou Tsouli a slight descent brings one down into the plain of Lasithi. Where the path debouches on the plain on the right is the cone-shaped

swallow-hole into which the Lasithi river disappears, and on the proper working of which depends the prosperity of the plain.



IMG_5188 The swallow-hole (chonos) of Lasithi

On the outer slopes of Lasithi, about half an hour's walk along a rough path southwards from the tomb of Tsoulis are two interesting little churches in a narrow ravine in the side of the mountain.²¹ The place must be about halfway between the tomb of Tsoulis and the village of Avdou. On the north side of the ravine is the church of St John the Divine. This is built up against a sheer piece of cliff about three times as high as the church so that the north wall of the church is formed by the natural rock. Below the church the ground slopes steeply, with several walnut trees on the slope. At the west end of the church and opening into it is a cistern of fresh water from a spring. The building has in its details, whatever be its date, reminiscences at all events of Venetian architecture. The dedication is probably due to the fact that its relation to the rock half in a cave is like that of the church of the apocalypse in Patmos half way up the hill from the landing place to the monastery. This practice of making the building dedicated resemble a prototype is widely spread. An excellent example is the church at Tortosa in Syria, the first church built in honour of the Virgin. It was built by [...] and because it was to the Virgin was made like the church at Bethlehem.²² A sketch-plan is given below.



IMG_5212 chapel of St John (west door)

- A Church
 - B Line of cliff
 - C Back of church consisting of shallow cave
 - D Cistern filled by drip from stalactites²³
 - E Larger cistern with window and steps leading up to window from outside
 - [F main (west) door]²⁴
 - G Window
 - H Door [north]
 - J Window into cistern D, which is also divided from C by low wall K
 - K Low wall between cave part of church and cistern D
 - L Rock
 - M Profile of outer wall of church with moulding and batter²⁵
 - N Moulding on door F of small sunk chequers
- Behind (i.e. east of E) is beginning of a house built up against the wall.

On the other side of the ravine is the other church, or rather dedicated cave. This cave has an open mouth and at the back of it is a passage which leads into a dark inner cave dedicated to St Photeini.²⁶

The little shrine – I forget whether it is an altar or just a shelf for a picture – is arranged between two columnar stalactites. In the cave is also a stalactite which drips water into a large jar. The two wonders of this Hagiasma are that the jar is always full but never overflows, and that if the two hands are held one above the other with the palms uppermost to catch the water it is the lower palm which is wetted by the drip and not the upper.

Between the two churches is a little cottage where the monk lives who looks after the place. I went there in the early summer of 1914 when the school was excavating at Plati. My companion was Mr R. M. Heath, who was to fall within a year in a battle in Flanders.



Stalactites in cave of Agia Foteini

I was there again in 1918, but the place was then deserted. The monk had, in the meantime, died. On this second visit I found the outer cave used as a sheepfold, and as I had no candle I could not visit the inner cave with the eikon. The path from the Mnima to the churches passes along the mountainside, and a little above it is a natural arch or hole in the rock. A shepherd boy there told me that it was made by St Photeini herself as she passed along the mountain. From all this region there is a fine view over the valley of Avdou.

2. The next way to Lasithi is **by Avdou**. The path leaves the Candia-Chersonnesos road near the iron bridge an hour or so west of Chersonnesos.²⁷ After Avdou the fertile valley narrows into a precipitous gorge and then widens out into a sort of amphitheatre. Up the far side of this the Lasithi road winds up in zigzags. There is also a new mule-road, but this is hardly used at all as the gradient is much less steep than can easily be managed, and the actual length of the road is by so much excessive. Its making, too good for mules and not good enough for wheels, seems to have been a sheer waste of money. On the ridge which forms the col are some twenty-five [stone] windmills. After this the road descends a short way and enters the Lasithi plain a little to the west of Tzermiado.



(left) IMG_5199 Ruined windmills at Seli Ambelou (northern entrance to Lasithi)
 (right) IMG_5095 Remains of toothed wheel and “lantern” in ruined windmill as described by Dawkins (near Kardamoutsa Monastery: see ch. 27)

These windmills are of the most old-fashioned kind with no modern improvements at all. All have flat roofs, and the plan is like a horseshoe, square at one end where the door is, and round at the other, and from this end protrudes the shaft of the fans. There are ten sails, made of canvas and triangular. On the shaft are set ten radial spars connected at the ends by cords, and the sails have one side along the spar, one along the cord and the third, the hypotenuse of the triangle, lies free. There is no means of shifting the direction of the shaft and therefore the mills only work with one wind, the north. Later types of mills, now commoner in Crete, have a roof like a cap which can be shifted to suit the wind. Inside the mechanism is of wood. On the shaft of the sails is a big wheel, *ρόδα*, and round its rim are fixed wooden teeth parallel with the shaft. These work into sockets cut in a barrel-shaped cylinder of wood which is mounted on the vertical spindle on the upper millstone. These holes make this cylinder, shown in the figure, look like a lantern with its windows, and it is therefore called the lantern, *το φανάρι*. The hopper is called *η κοφινίδα*, the basket, and the spout out of which the grain dribbles is the *κουτσουνάρα*, the regular word for a spout.



The “Lantern”, with openings to take the teeth of the big wheel.

3.²⁸ East of this again is the path **from Neapolis, by way of Vryses and Potami, Ποτάμοι.**²⁹ Vryses is a village overlooking the valley of Neapolis from the south. Close to the road, a few minutes after passing the village is the monastery of Arkhistratigos, that is of St Michael as Leader of the heavenly host.³⁰ The gate is at the south end of the narrow irregular court, the length of which runs parallel with the road. At the north, that is at the far end of the court, lies the church which has been buttressed up to prevent its falling. The monastery is pretty and rustic, but without any special interest. Below it is cultivated land with a fine view over the Neapolis valley. Above it is the open side of the mountain with a good scattering of prickly oaks.³¹ There are only five or six monks. The door of the church is at the end of the court and so on the south side.



IMG_5136 Moni Kremaston



IMG_5137 The inscription

Over the door is an inscription with a cross between the two halves of it. It runs: “This church of the Leader of the Host was built by Metrophanes the beloved monk.” In Greek: οὗτος ο του ταξιάρχου ναός υπό Μητροφάνης [sic] μοναχού του αγαπητού οικοδόμητ[ο]. The original I give from my sketch taken in April 1918 in Fig. 1.

Above the inscription is the date 1593: in facsimile as in Fig. 2.

+ Υ Ο Ο Ο Υ Α Ξ Ι Α Χ Ο Ν Α Θ Υ Ρ Η
 Μ Ε Φ Ο Φ Α Σ Μ Ε Α Ρ Η Ξ Θ Κ Ο Δ Ο Μ Η Τ ̄ ̄ ̄ ̄
 ρ φ γ ρ

(left) Fig. 1. Facsimile of inscription on Church of monastery of Arkhistratigos
 (right) Fig. 2. Date of the inscription

There is an inscription on the front part of the altar slab, but the letters are a good deal clogged, and as the slab has been anointed with chrism, *ἅγιον μύρον*, there is a scruple about cleaning it. I copied it, but could in fact only make out the date 1626.³²

4. From the **eastern** side of the Lasithi plain there is a bad road into the higher plain of **Katharo**, and then down through woods to **Kritsa**. One leaves the Lasithi plain quite close to the monastery of Panagia Kroustallenia.

Katharo³³ is like Lasithi but less level and better drained. Being higher, too, the surrounding mountains are not so impressive. It is here that the Lasithi river has its source. It flows from this upper plain down to the level of Lasithi through a gorge

called Khavgas, which the people derive from *Chaos*, a chaos of tumbled rocks: “Ο Χαβγάς αφού είναι χάος το λέμε Χαβγά”.³⁴

In Katharo Miss Bate excavated fossil remains of various animals no longer found in Crete or even in the Mediterranean: ?elephants etc.³⁵ The path goes by a hamlet inhabited in the season by the Lasithi people who come up here to till the fields. It is notable as being the only place in Crete where I saw the old-fashioned wooden locks which used to be common everywhere in the islands. These, called here κλειδωνιές, are, I think, of the type fastened to the outside of the door. In common with all these locks they have a bolt held in place by falling pins which are lifted by a wooden key and the bolt thus left free to slide to and fro. But, though I saw them nowhere else in Crete, they are remembered. At Palaikastro the old *anagnostis* (church reader), Pigaidolakis, was able to make me a little model of one of them. Only in Thera and in Amorgos have I seen them in common use, and in Thera in the year [...] the carpenters were making them; and Thera is in some ways not an old-fashioned island.

In the plain of Katharo in the middle of a ploughed field I saw a clump of the branched pink tulip with a yellow centre which is found, though not commonly, in the mountainous parts of Crete.³⁶ Elsewhere I have seen it on the steep slopes called Thriphti above Kavousi on the way to Roukaka,³⁷ whence bulbs found their way to Seager’s garden at Bashinamo; in the gorge leading down to Myrthios I saw a single plant; I saw a bunch of them in a vase near Vamos in Apokoronas; and they must grow near Malaxa on the slopes to the south of Suda Bay, for the village children there give them away in bunches to visitors. At Vamos I heard them called *agriokrina*, wild lilies, and *manousakia*. *Manousos*, however, is the name of the polyanthus narcissus, but in any case these names of flowers that have no obvious use are very vague and unprecise.

After the plain of Katharo the path passes through a wood, largely of fine holly oaks. In the shade of the trees were wild peonies and the yellow arum which I know elsewhere near Magasa. And after this there comes the descent to Kritsa, said to be the biggest village in Crete.³⁸

[Addendum by Pendlebury] About half-way down, at the spot called *στην Πλάκα Αρόλιθο*, a smaller path branches off to the left and descends quickly to a gorge, passing an ancient well known as the Kitten’s Cistern. Traces of banking exist hereabouts, no doubt that of the Minoan road. After $\frac{3}{4}$ hour the path swings left and, keeping to the slopes of Mt Aloïda, reaches Tapis.³⁹

5.⁴⁰ From **Katharo** there is also a path to **Kalamafka**,⁴¹ a pretty, well-watered village lying high up on the path from the Gulf of Mirabello round the southern outer slopes of the Lasithi mountains to **Viano**. I have passed this way.

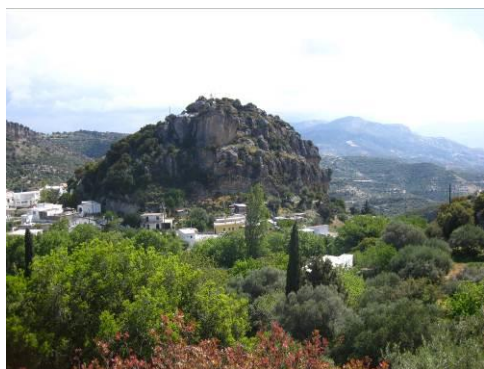
6. From **Katharo**, too, there is a path south of that to Kalamafka which leads over the edge of the Katharo basin through the sparse pinewoods down to **Malles** and then by way of **Anatoli** to **Hierapetra**.

After crossing the ridge, the path descends and about five hours from Lasithi reaches the village of Malles. Until the ridge is reached the trees are for the most part holly oak, but shortly after the descent begins these give way to the scattered pines which clothe all the southern outer slopes of the Lasithi mountains. These trees have

suffered much from indiscriminate cutting and from forest fires, but everywhere young seedlings are growing up, and if they only get fair play in a few years the forest will be fairly thick again. The peasants constantly cut these trees, leaving a stump of a foot or more. The reason for this seemingly wasteful practice is that the rising resin sinks back into the stump, which is thus thoroughly impregnated and, when split, makes excellent wood for kindling. Such splinters are sold for the purpose in Athens, and I have seen somewhere that in parts of Asia Minor, where oil is scarce, they were used in the days before petroleum as the sole illuminant in houses.

Passing Malles in half an hour we reach the monastery of Xakousti.⁴² This was only founded in 1877 by the uncle of the abbot whom I found there. This abbot was brought there as a little boy and began as a servant. The buildings are of no special interest. They stand on a rocky platform surrounded by the remains of pinewood, and form two sides of a square with the church in the middle. Near Malles, too, and visible from the village, is the church of St Pandeimon, with a *panagyri* on July 28th o.s.⁴³ It is an old church and the priest at the time I was there, the great uncle of my informant, Yannis Plevrakis, the little son of the *demarch* [mayor], had built accommodation for visitors and was running the feast. It has a reputation for cures, especially of madness. The priest, Papa Manoli, is well known for his skill in exorcizing the demon from mad people – *διαβάζει τους δαιμονισμένους*.⁴⁴

The next village is Anatoli. All these slopes are broken by great boulders and jagged peaks of rocks and these give a strange and fantastic profile to the hills, especially as seen from Hierapetra. These rocks too are all about at Kalamafka.



IMG_5481 Kalamafka



IMG_5485 Lakerdas tower, Anatoli⁴⁵

At the southern edge of the village of Anatoli is a high square tower, in appearance much like the tower of Xopateras at Hodigitria, with small windows and two or three storeys high. It is very conspicuous from the path below the village, and seems to stand in a small walled enclosure. In any case the steep side away from the village is protected by a wall. The building is quite plain. It is entered from the court by a door which opens into the first floor, for greater safety. It is called the Tower of Lakerdas, who tradition records was a hero in the insurrection of 1866 and was associated with Korakas of the Mesaria.⁴⁶ He survived till 1892 and his widow was, when I was there, perhaps still alive. A street in Hierapetra is named after him and the villagers say that his deeds are celebrated in a song, but the man who told me this knew only a line or two of it. No such song is in Jannaris' collection, but this does not count for much as nearly all Jannaris' material is from his own part of Crete, the west. It is said that the tower was been originally higher, and that the upper part was destroyed as being dangerous to neighbouring houses. This may or may not be true: it is often said that a building was once higher than it now is.⁴⁷

The road descends, passes through the village of Kalogeri and so reaches the sea. It then goes along the edge of the flat coastal plain to Hierapetra.

7. The seventh way out of Lasithi is from the **south** side: a path ascends from **Kaminaki**, crosses the hills and goes down to **Embaros** and so to **Viano**. I have never been all along this route, only from Embaros to Viano and an hour or so up the hill from Kaminaki.

Of all these routes the most frequented are those from Candia by Xida and the Mnima [1], by Avdou and so down to Tzermiado [2], and the path from Neapolis [3], the capital of the *demos* of Lasithi, up by Potamoi. With Hierapetra, Kritsa and Viano there is less communication and the roads are far worse.

[The rest of this typed material consists of Pendlebury's addenda to Dawkins' seven ways out of Lasithi:

8. Pass from Mikro [**Mesa**] **Lasithaki** to N of Mt Aloída via Tapis [**Tapes**] and then joining Kritsa road 1 mile east of **Kritsa**. Or you can turn left just before this and get into the Lakonia plain [Ἐξω Λακκώνια].

I did this route going from Pachyammos to Psykhro in March 1928. It is the most beautiful of the routes. At Tapis there were forests of almonds, both bitter and sweet, in blossom. At the top of the col above Tapis you get a magnificent view back over east Crete.

Pachyammos to Tapis	4 ¾ hr	}
Tapis to top of pass	1 ¼ hr	} very fast walking
Top of pass to Psykhro	3 ¼ hr	}

9. From the small upland plain of **Limnakaros**, with its church of Agion Pnevma two routes descend to Lasithi, one to **Agios Georgios**⁴⁸ and one to **Kaminaki**. These paths would give somewhat quicker access from Viano via the plain of Erganos [Embaros?] than the regular route described above.

10. From Plati a steep but well-graded ascent up the valley to the west leads to the saddle of Selli between the two heights of Aphenidis and Sarakinos. Thence it descends to **Mathia** and **Geraki** in about 2 ½ hours from Plati. On the summit of Aphenidis, whence a magnificent view of the country between Dicte and Ida is obtained, I heard the following song:

Εἰς τὸ βουνό ψηλά ἐκεῖ
 ἔχει [εἶν'] ἐκκλησιά ἐρημική.
 Δεν ἔχει ψάλτη οὔτε παπά,
 τὸ σήμαντρό της δεν χτυπά.
 Ἐνα καντήλι θαμπερό
 ἔχει στολίδι μοναχό
 τὸ ἐκκλησάκι τὸ φτωχό.⁴⁹

[High up on the mountain there / is a deserted chapel. / It has no cantor or priest, / its *simandron* [iron or wooden substitute for a bell] doesn't strike. / A dim icon lamp / is the sole adornment / of the poor little chapel.]

11. From Gerondomouri (“the monks’ meeting place”)⁵⁰ a track leads along the north side of Aphenidis and, passing the spot called *στυλίου Χάρου* [*Χάρου?*] *Πηγάδια*, reaches Kastamonitsa.

12.⁵¹ Another much used path is that which leads up from Krasi and Kera, passing the monastery of *Agia Kardiotissa*⁵² and reaching a saddle with ruined windmills⁵³ lying between *Agiou Georgiou Papoura* and *Karphi* and *Koprana*. It then descends to *Lagou* or *Tzermiado*.

13. A broad but exceedingly bad track leads out from *Tzermiado* to the small barren plain of *Nesimo* [*Nisimos*]⁵⁴ whence it curves round the north side of *Mt Selenas*⁵⁵ across the barren waterless slopes known as *Omalos* to *Vrakhasi* and *Neapoli*.

This route descends into the plain into the plain near *Mesa Lasithi*, which is the direction taken by the new car road. From near the top of the pass, however, a branch leads directly to *Marmaketa* [*Marmaketo*].⁵⁶

3a. From *Potamous* there also exists a path – now largely fallen into disuse, for muleteers at any rate – which climbs the valley to the west and reaches a saddle below the summit of *Selena* called *Zarmas* [*Zάρωμα*] (a junction) with a number of ruined windmills.⁵⁷ Thence it descends to *Tzermiado*, passing close to the church of the *Timios Stavros* which lies conspicuously above the village.⁵⁸ The mortar of this church is said to have been mixed with milk – the gift of a grateful shepherd.]

XXIV

from Khatzigaki: The Churches of Crete, p.162

A road leads from Lasithi by Potamies and so to the sea. Somewhere
Somewhere hereabouts is the old monastery of Panagia Kardiotissa
Of this there is a legend that after the taking of Cospoli the
The Virgin could endure it no longer and left the temple of her
church and came and lived here in the wilderness. The icon was
found by the shepherds of the place and priests and monks set it
in a church. A monastery was built and the icon set in it. But the
the Virgin would not stay in the church and went back to the
rock where she had been found by the shepherds. The monks brought
her back and that she might not escape tied her with a chain
to a column two metres long which she had herself brought from
Cospoli. The column is of a spotted marble not found in
Crete and the chain is still on it. Then the Virgin broke the chain
and went no one knows where. On the rock where she was first
found there is an imprint of her picture. This shows that
Kardiotissa is not a local name but refers to her heartfelt sorrow
for the woes of men. This is Khatzigaki's explanation of the
name.

I have somewhere a note on this icon tied to a pillar and
I am now sure it refers to some church near Lasithi and that I
got it from AJWace, but now, § XI 54, I can't find it

Peter Mackridge's notes

¹ We spent a couple of days on the Lasithi plateau in October 2012, staying at the well-appointed Argoulas apartments; we had already visited Lasithi in April 2004. The chief crop cultivated there is apparently potatoes. However, we were struck by the enormous quantity of fruit lying unpicked on the ground: this suggests that the trees produce so much that the inhabitants don't need to harvest all of it, and possibly that they have not organized themselves to export it. There are supposed to be about 10,000 windmills scattered across the plain. These have an iron frame and eight triangular white canvas sails, but when we were there not a single mill was working (maybe it wasn't the season?). I copy here part of Dawkins' article "Excavations at Plati in Lasithi, Crete", *Annual of the British School at Athens* 20 (1913/14), pp. 2-3:

The general configuration of the Lasithi plain is well known from Spratt's description and Mr. Hogarth's report of his excavation of the Psykhró cave.¹ Immediately to the north of the double peak of Dikte are two elevated plains shut in on all sides by the northern spurs of the mountain. The basin to the east is known as Katharó, that to the west is the plain of Lasithi. Katharó is smaller, higher, and not so level as Lasithi; as far as I am aware no ancient remains have been found in it. The elevation is so considerable that the climate is too severe for continuous habitation, and it contains only a group of little houses and dairies used by the inhabitants of Kritsá who come up in the summer for ploughing and harvesting and to graze their flocks. It is drained by a river which escapes through a deep and narrow gorge on the western side and so enters the lower and larger plain of Lasithi.² The chief difference between the two plains depends on the fact that Katharó is drained by a river with an open channel, and that in consequence water never stands in it, and the ground is broken up by the unevennesses caused by the natural flow of the surface water, whilst Lasithi is entirely surrounded by hills, its only outlet being an underground channel through which the river escapes at the western, or as the natives always say, the lower end of the plain, near the foot of the pass from Lyttos. At this point the river which, after descending through the gorge from Katharó, winds along the northern side of the plain, disappears into a funnel-shaped

¹ *Travels and Researches in Crete*, i, pp. 100 *sqq*; *B.S.A.* vi, pp. 94 *sqq*.

² The Katharó plain has been described by Miss Bate, in the *Geological Magazine*, Decade V, vol. ii, pp. 199 *sqq*.

pit close below an overhanging wall of rock. This *katavothra*¹ is, at least at present, not sufficiently large to drain the plain rapidly and in consequence of this the winter and spring rains gather in the plain and turn it for a time into a lake, the waters of which only slowly subside, sometimes so tardily that the crops are entirely spoiled. This disaster occurs only rarely, but the fact that the water regularly stands for some time in the basin makes it drop its suspended earth instead of carrying it off as an unimpeded mountain torrent would do, and this in the course of ages has filled the basin with a flat expanse of alluvial soil, now several metres deep, up to the level of the drainage hole, and by now considerably above it.

With such a natural formation the villages of Lasithi must necessarily have always been where they are now, out of the reach of the floods on the skirts of the ring of hills which surround the plain, the only building in which is the little church of Hagios Georgios. Lasithi is larger and the villages more numerous than appears at first sight, for one of the foot-hills stretches out so far and rises so high at the end as almost to divide the plain into two parts. This is the promontory crowned with a little chapel, which runs out from the south to the east of Psykhró, and it conceals an eastern region, the upper part of Lasithi, which contains several villages, Mesa (Inner) Lasithi, Hagios Constantinos, and some other smaller places. These are only connected with the main or lower part of Lasithi by a narrow waist of plain, made still narrower by the stony knoll on which stands the Monastery of Panagía Krystallénia. The river flows by the foot of the monastery hill. The height of the promontory which separates it from the western part of the plain effectively conceals this eastern region, the very existence of which would hardly be suspected by the traveller approaching Lasithi in the usual way from Candia and Lyttos.

² This is a notional view from the north. The “grotta” on the right of the picture is next to the spot where the water from the gathered rivers disappears into the *chonos* (swallow-hole), which is situated in the NW corner of the plateau. The zigzag path in the foreground is the one that ascends to Gonies and Avdou. This old path has been replaced by a road, whereas the wonderful path that ascends the western face of the Lasithi plateau is still untouched by progress. We walked up and down this western path (Dawkins’ route no. 1 below) on 5 May 2015, having parked the car at Kastamonitsa. The water from Lasithi reappears at Avdou and pours into the River Aposelemis. When we were there were signs of the construction of an artificial tunnel which would convey the water more “efficiently” to the low land below, thus superseding an extraordinary natural phenomenon. The web page <https://www.neakriti.gr/article/kriti/lasithi/1523895/stin-kriti-i-megaluteri-siragga-tis-europis/>, dated 14 Oct. 2018, claims that the tunnel, which is now in its final stages of construction, will be “the largest tunnel in Europe”. Its purpose is to supply the

Aposelemis reservoir, which will in its turn supply water to Herakleio, Agios Nikolaos and other places to the north of Lasithi.

³ These places are all in the south-east corner of the plateau.

⁴ Dawkins probably means not Malles (between Lasithi and Ierapetra) but Malia on the north coast (see ch. 25).

⁵ Lasithi was forcibly evacuated by the Venetians in the 1280s or 1290s because of revolutionary activities there, and for two centuries after that it was forbidden for anyone to live and cultivate the land there, or even pasture their animals there.

⁶ The Psychro cave, which is conventionally (but probably erroneously) identified as the Dictaeon Cave (the birthplace of Zeus), was discovered by local people in 1883 and first excavated by Iosif Hatzidakis. See D. G. Hogarth, "The Dictaeon Cave", *Annual of the British School at Athens* 6 (1900), pp. 94-116.

⁷ "[...] a woman had had a dream that by digging in a certain place a church bell would be found. The villagers accordingly dug a hole in the place indicated, and found not a bell but an early piece of wall and some fragments of obsidian": Dawkins, "Excavations at Plati in Lasithi, Crete", p. 1. The excavation led by Dawkins took place in 1913, not 1914.

⁸ Dawkins ("The semantics of Greek names of plants", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 56 (1936), p. 4) says the word *phlomos* (ancient 'mullein') is now used also for 'spurge' and for *Aristolochia microstoma*, and that all of these are used by fishermen for poisoning water so as to stun the fish. By Wales he means the garden of his house, Plas Dulas at Llanddulas near Abergele, close to the north coast. It was here that he grew a large number of Greek plants and kept his valuable collection of paintings of Crete by Edward Lear. When Jackie and I visited the house and garden in August 2010, they were derelict and in a very poor condition; the house was being prepared for demolition by a developer who planned to build fifteen holiday cottages. As of May 2018, plans for demolition had been approved but the actual process had still not begun; instead, the buildings have been left to decay.

⁹ We visited these on 18 Oct. 2012.

¹⁰ The *chonos*, situated at the western end of the Lasithi plateau, is the hole where the water from the plateau flows underground, emerging in the plain below as the Aposelemis river (see endnote ii above). Similar swallow-holes in other parts of Greece are called *καταβόθρα*.

¹¹ There are two rows of cypresses now. When we visited, there was said to one monk, named Timotheos, whom we didn't meet. Some building work was under way to the north of the church. I couldn't read the inscription on the belfry.

¹² The monastery was completely deserted when we visited it, and the buildings (some of them probably dating from after Dawkins was there) were rather run-down. There were still mulberry trees and prickly oaks in and around the monastery, but the mulberry trees didn't look ancient.

¹³ By enlarging a photo of the inscription taken with a digital camera, one can see that the date is actually 28 September 1865. The inscription has no doubt been cleaned up since Dawkins' day. Higher up the belfry than the main inscription there is another 1865, while over the chapel door there is another inscription referring to Anthimos and dated 1862. In the 19th century the monastery was a centre of insurgent activity and for that reason was destroyed on two occasions by the Ottomans or their Egyptian allies: once in 1823 and again in 1867.

¹⁴ Dawkins' descriptions of these routes aren't always very clear because he sometimes describes the way out of the Lasithi plateau and sometimes the way into it. At all events, he describes the routes in clockwise order, starting from the west.

¹⁵ We stayed the night at Kastelli Pediadas on 13 May 2011. It's a historic traffic hub, like Perama and Agia Varvara. It's not beautiful, but it's livelier than Thrapsano. We didn't see the remains of the castle. Kastelli Pediadas was first mentioned 1583 by the Venetian Pietro Castrolifaca (1583), who called it Pediada Proprio. The 1671 Ottoman census calls it Nefs Pediye [Pediada Proper]. Thus it seems that Turkish Nefs (as perhaps in Nefs Amari: see ch. 10) was used as the equivalent of Italian Proprio.

¹⁶ Xydas is the old name for the settlement now known as Lyttos, which is properly the name of the nearby ancient site. This western approach to Lasithi (Ancient Lyttos – Toichos – Fleges – Volites – Tsouli Mnima – Chortasa – Chonos – Kato Metochi – Agios Charalambos – Plati – Psychro) may well have been the Minoan way from Lyttos to the so-called Diktaean Cave. It is marked as the E4 path on the Anavasi atlas 87 A-B1. The name Volites is the Standard Modern Greek word βόλιτες, which was originally a nautical term meaning 'tacking' – a picturesque way of describing the zigzag path. The cave immediately above Psychro is the site identified by Hogarth in 1900 as the Dictaean Cave. Dawkins excavated a Minoan site next to the nearby village of Pláti.

¹⁷ According to maps of Lasithi, this aqueduct, marked with the place-name Toichos, dates from the 2nd century AD.

¹⁸ The memorial in the photo, erected in 2008, records that Tsoulis was killed in 1817. We noticed that the pile of stones had increased in size between our two visits (Oct. 2012 and May 2015). On one of these occasions we witnessed a tourist guide encouraging her party to cast stones on the pile.

¹⁹ What Dawkins calls the road is a mule track, as opposed to what he would call a carriage road.

²⁰ For the Mnima tou Digeni [Tomb of Digenis] see ch. 15-16.

²¹ Dawkins is describing a path from Tsoulis' Tomb to the churches – a path that he later describes as being "along the mountainside". (When he writes "a rough path southwards" he means eastwards.) We have never attempted to follow this route. The churches he describes here (which we visited on 19 Oct. 12) are on the second route. Both of the churches are at the top of a ravine, at the end of a rough road, 7 km from Avdou. There are signs to the cave church of Agia Foteini, but not to the adjacent (and architecturally much more interesting) chapel of St John. The church was locked when we visited. We didn't see a monk (or anyone else) nearby.

²² The Cathedral of Our Lady of Tortosa was built by Crusaders in 1123.

²³ The cistern was dry when we visited in October 2012.

²⁴ Dawkins omitted this information in error.

²⁵ Dawkins uses this term to refer to the typically Venetian method of strengthening a wall by making it slope outwards at its base.

²⁶ We were unable to get far enough inside the cave to see what Dawkins describes. The photograph is taken from the Internet.

²⁷ The bridge crosses (or crossed) the River Aposelemis. This traditional route via Avdou is the way from the north shown on Basilicata's illustration reproduced at the beginning of this chapter.

²⁸ Cf. ch. 25.

²⁹ Exo and Mesa Potamoi; this is the route of the modern road into Lasithi from the NE.

³⁰ Ιερά Μονή Ταξιαρχών Μιχαήλ και Γαβριήλ, also known as Μονή Κρεμαστών [Moni Kremaston], next to the road between Neapoli and Vryses. We visited on 17 Oct. 2012. There are now nuns there, rather than monks.

³¹ There are still plenty of prickly oaks around the monastery.

³² Gerola too (IV 520) publishes a facsimile of the inscription over the door. He also publishes the inscription on the altar, which records building work undertaken by the ordained monk Nikiforos Anifandis in 1622.

³³ We visited the Katharo plateau on 18 April 2013; the main village is Αβδελιακό, where the café owner Yannis Siganos showed us some of the pygmy elephant and hippopotamus remains he's found.

³⁴ There is another Χαυγός above Plaka (Elounda). Spanakis says the name derives from χάινω and means 'chasm, ravine'.

³⁵ Dorothea Bate discovered remains of pigmy hippopotamus at a height of 4000 feet on the Katharo plateau in 1904: see D.M.A. Bate, "Four and a half months in Crete in search of Pleistocene mammalian remains", *Geological Magazine* (Decade 5), 2 (5) (1905), pp. 193–202. Cf. also D.M.A. Bate, "On elephant remains from Crete, with description of *Elephas creticus* sp.n.", *Proceedings of the Zoological Society London* (1907), pp. 238–250, about fossil remains of two species of pigmy elephants that she identified during the same trip, not on Katharo but "near Cape Maleka in the west of the island" and at Karoumes Bay, not far from Palaikastro. No doubt Dawkins encountered her when she visited the excavations at Palaikastro. On learning of her death Dawkins remarks in a letter to Leigh Fermor: "a slightly uncouth but extremely agreeable scotchwoman; I liked her extremely and she was mad on her bones" (9 Jan. 1952).

³⁶ *Tulipa cretica* [JW].

³⁷ On Thrifti (Thrypti) see ch. 28.

³⁸ No. 6 is another route to and from Lasithi via Katharo.

³⁹ Mount Aloida is also known as Τζίβη & Όρος Καθαρό (1663 m.). Οι Τάπεζ (fem.) is NE of Kritsa, SW of Αμυγδαλοί, which is on the Vryses-Lasithi road.

⁴⁰ Routes 5 and 6 are not strictly speaking ways in and out of Lasithi but ways in and out of Katharo.

⁴¹ Kalamafka is beyond Malles.

⁴² On the road towards Anatoli; see also ch. 26.

⁴³ The feast day of St Pandleimon is actually 27 July. By "o.s." Dawkins means "old style", i.e. the Julian calendar in use in Greece until it was replaced by the Gregorian calendar in 1923.

⁴⁴ Literally, 'he reads the possessed', i.e. he reads a passage from the Gospels over the recumbent body of the patient.

⁴⁵ In Gerola's phot of the tower, published in Curuni and Donati, *Creta Veneziana*, pp. 407–408, the tower appears to be taller than in our photo. This may be because it has lost a storey since then, or it may be an illusion caused by the fact that other buildings have been put up next to it.

⁴⁶ Kapetan Michalis Korakas from Pombia, 1797–1882.

⁴⁷ The tower apparently dates from Venetian times. Gerola describes it (III 306), but he gives no information about its history. We visited Anatoli 20 April 2013, and we were shown round by Manolis Bilanakis. The tower is in the SE corner of the village. It's dilapidated and closed. A bust of Lakerdas was unveiled there in 2009, with an

inscription saying he died in 1890. The tower is probably the one seen from a distance by Pashley (I 272). There is still an οδός Λακέρδα in Ieraptera, just as in Dawkins' time. Anatoli is the birthplace of Christophoros Charalamabakis, Professor of Linguistics at Athens University since 2000. He is, to my knowledge, the third professor of linguistics at Athens University to have been born into a modest family in a Cretan village; the other two were Georgios Hatzidakis (see ch. 12) and Georgios Kourmoulis (born in Selliá, the next village to Hatzidakis' birthplace of Myrthios; professor from 1949 onwards).

⁴⁸ This is now part of the E4 hiking route.

⁴⁹ This poem, by the Athenian Angelos Vlachos (1838-1920), was presumably learned at school by Pendlebury's informant. It is indicative of the changes in Cretan culture that had occurred between the time of Dawkins and the time of Pendlebury.

⁵⁰ The village is now called Agios Charalambos.

⁵¹ This is the northern approach, Dawkins' no. 2.

⁵² Kardiotissa Monastery, which we haven't visited, is at Kera (Anavasi atlas 81 C3). See RMD's note on Chatzigakis at end of this chapter. Despite the monastery's historical and architectural importance, Dawkins doesn't seem to have visited it either.

⁵³ These are at Seli Ambelou on the modern road to Lasithi from the north; see our photo 5199 above.

⁵⁴ Nisimos is to the north of Tzermiado.

⁵⁵ Mount Σελένα is NE of Lasithi.

⁵⁶ This seems to be an addition to Dawkins' description of route 3 above.

⁵⁷ One mill is marked on the Anavasi atlas.

⁵⁸ A path from the summit of Mt Selena via Zaroma to Timios Stavros is marked on the Anavasi atlas.