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### J. D. Carlyle's Journal of Mount Athos (1801)

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## J. D. CARLYLE'S JOURNAL OF MOUNT ATHOS (1801)

*In a recent publication of mine concerning the Athonias School at Vatopaidi in Mount Athos,\* I had the opportunity to present an extract from the unpublished journal of Joseph Dacre Carlyle. I am now presenting the whole manuscript by permission of the British Museum to which it belongs. The manuscript causes no difficulties from the palaeographical point of view, except an illegible word on p. 43. What I consequently had to do was to adapt the punctuation to modern requirements, to give the full length to certain shortened forms that had been made necessary by the kind of the journal, and to use intermediate titles in order to make the reading easier.*

*The publication of the manuscript will be followed by the relative commentary.*

\* \* \*

Seek a port in the island of Lemnos. We arrived at a little bay, about an hour from the village of Carpatha, at 8 o'clock of morning of the 31st.

31st. After breakfasting on board our vessel we sallied forth to stretch our legs amongst the rocks. Every step we took exhibited some proof of a volcanic appearance, either scoria or lava. In many of the interstices between the almost upright - thrown strata, we found spar formed generally near a dropping of water. Is not this against Dr. Hutton? The whole of the island of Lemnos affords in my opinion a proof against the very great antiquity of the world. Its appearance wherever the rocks are seen is most clearly volcanic. The legends with regard to vulcan etc. show that it was absolutely volcanic within the reach of tradition. Nay I think Pliny says some volcano still existed at the time he wrote? And yet at present except to the eye of a person looking for such

\* «*Nea Hestia*», Christmas issue, 1963, p. 85.



phenomina Lemnos does not exhibit more appearances of fire on its general surface than other countries. In some of the crevices of the rock we found a substance which I take for asbestos. Our sailors collected during our stay a quantity of wild mustard just sprouting, which Matthew boiled, and we both thought it preferable to most dishes of sprouts we had ever tasted.

At 9 o'clock at night we are again told by our captain that he means to make an attempt for sailing as the wind was fair. We accordingly set off. We scarce, however, got clear of the bay before the wind, tho' still in our favour, increased so considerably as to occasion us no small alarm. It rose every moment. Our little bark was tossed about in a way I could not have conceived possible for it to have sustained. Nor could it, except it had been furnished with side skreens to shelter it from the waves. The mariners showed the greatest signs of perturbation and I confess that I myself entertained the most serious apprehensions for the vessel. I certainly never before was out in a wind of such violence, and when I considered the diminutive size of our boat and the length of way we had to seek, I own I thought the chances were much against our ever reaching the shore in safety. The mode too in which these sacoleves are rigged, each of them having an immense sail fixed to the mast swinging by a fulcrum, one end of which seems out of all proportions with the other, did not tend to make my feelings more calm, as I expected every moment to see the mast itself go by the board.

For eight hours we continued in this situation, at the end of at that time we arrived off the promontory of Mt. Athos, but as there is no harbour on this part of the coast and as the wind now almost blew a tempest, we were obliged to direct our course up the gulph. We now, however, took in our great sail and had merely the little jib to carry us forward, my apprehensions therefore for the safety of the mast were considerably lessened. Still, however, our situation was most uncomfortable - on an unknown and rocky coast - subject from its position to continual squalls, the sea running mountains high and the wind rising every moment in our small caique, what could we reasonably expect but destruction? And without the intervention of a merciful God we had been destroyed. I believe every one on board expected it. But after four hours more



being buffeted by the waves and every moment expecting to be swallowed up by them, we at length (9,30) got into the harbour of Batopaide. Had we arrived at this place after the most delightful voyage it must have struck us with its beauty, what then must it have done now? How much contrast have raised it in our thoughts?

#### B A T O P A I D E

Batopaide is one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, monastery in Greece; it is situated upon a hill that immediately overlooks the sea. The ground between and beyond it is laid out in a way that taste itself would have dictated. The side of every swell is planted with the olive, and the top of every one, grass or corn. Behind the monastery the mountains rise very abruptly, but covered with wood and broken into several vallies thro' which a number of clear streams hurry on to the sea. The building itself is as old as the time of Theodosius, having been erected by him in consequence of having his son Arcadius preserved under a bramble bush on the coast, when the ship in which he was embarked in order to come from Rome, where he had been visiting his brother Honorius, to Constantinople was assaulted by a tempest in the neighbourhood of Athos. Arcadius petitioned the Virgin to preserve him from the storm and soom after disappeared; his courtiers thought he had fallen overboard, and gave him up for lost, but upon landing on the peninsula of Athos found him safe and asleep under a bramble. Hence the monastery acquired its name, compounded of batos, a bramble, and paidos, a child.

The structure of the convent is more that of a castle, that of a religious edifice; it possesses little elegance, but it has all the grandeur of strenght and antiquity. It is not wonderful that such a building, in such a situation and after such a voyage, appeared like a magic scene, raised by the wand of an enchanter. We soon got on shore and proceeded to the convent, where we were received and accommodated with every demonstration of kindness. The afternoon was spent in taking a cursory view of the situation of the monastery and in the evening we were visited by the second egoumenos, the secretary and a young man who was spending some time here for the sake of study, who we found was a native



of Stagira and son to the superintendant of the silver mines there. All the three would have been looked upon as well informed men in any part of the world and we were much obliged to them for their assistance in our researches during the whole of our stay.

April 2d. As we had appointed to begin our investigations in the morning, we were waited upon by our friends the 2d egoumenos, the secretary and the Stagirite. Pro forma we went in the first place to examine the church, pictures etc. In the church we met with the first egoumenos or abbot, who ever afterwards during one stay behaved with much civility. The church is like all other Greek ones, where this garish nation are allowed to display their natural taste, as gaudy as colours can make it. In the treasury they shewed us a jasper cup which appeared very beautiful - the gift of Manuel Cantacuzene. Many other rich presents were shewn us, vestements, cups, crosses etc., the donations of other emperors. In the nave of the church were several thrones, which had been occupied by different notables, and the walls were covered with pictures, each of which had its little wonderful history belonging to it, either that it had been presented by some pious prince at the sack of Constantinople, or that it had been preserved by some zealous princess, when the heterodox party had sworn its destruction. More of them, however, were undoubtedly of great antiquity and at least exhibited specimens of the state of the arts in the decline of the Greek empire. Many of the portraits, however, are pictures only in the face, all the rest of the person being in silver or gold releivo and often executed with considerable elegance. So near was the Greek church at that time to image worship! I mean literally so for at present, what is the difference between the representation of the form by the chizzel or the brush? Our conductors did not attempt to introduce us to their collection of relicts.

After examining the church we requested to be shewn the library. Our request was at first civilly endeavoured to be eluded, the egoumenos assuring us that it contained nothing but ecclesiastical authors. But upon reiterating our request we were at length introduced into a most miserably damp and dark hole, where we found the books heaped up one upon another, in the utmost disorder, a prey to months, dirt and vermin of every kind. The attempt to get an account of what this scene of confusion

contained, seemed almost hopeless, but we were resolved. So we began partly to set about our undertaking. After a couple of hours toil, the monks who assisted us shewed such symptoms of weariness, that we were obliged to desist for the day. We, however, had got thro nearly a third of our labour and we retired to take our walk amongst the sweet woods, that surrounded the convent without disapointment.

In the evening we were introduced to the venerable Patriarch Procopio, who has now exiled from the throne of Constantinople for upwards of 15 years and has chosen Batopaide his place of residence. His appartment was small and mean, but he appeared to be treated by the monks with every mark of respect, which (as he is too old and infirm to expect a recall to his dignity) must have proceeded only from real regard. Indeed he seemed a well informed and perfectly well bred man, a little more inquisitive after mundane news than I wished to have witnessed in an exiled Patriarch of upwards of 70, who was to pass his few remaining years in the retirement of Mount Athos.

April 3d. As much of the morning was dedicated to investigate the library, as our friends could spare from the necessary duties of the holy week. After our investigations we went to see the ceremonies and in the gallery I was recognized by an old monk, who remembered to have seen me at St. Saba. He had been driven from that convent by the constant depredations of the Arabs, but he regretted having left it and wished, if possible, to return. Amongst 12 or 14 companions a poor monk was somebody, but in a community of 300 he left only like an insignificant stranger.

From the church we adjoined to stroll amongst the neighbouring hills. We climbed the one opposite to the convent, in order to look at what had once been an academy. Such a compleat picture of desolation I never saw before. The divinity college at St. Andrews even in vacation time is a place of bustle and business compared to the school at Batopaide. Its only inhabitant that we found was a solitary cock, for within the precincts of the holy mountain a female mate would not be permitted. The academy is built round a court in the same manner as the monasteries, and we counted 170 chambers in the different stories. We went into several, but they are fast mouldering into dust. Each of these



appartments consists only of one small chamber about twelve feet square, with a cupboard in the corner. They are just in the situation in which they were left by their former occupants and many scraps of grammar etc. are still to be seen on the walls. I always find a curiosity to examine these ebullitions of thought, which generally shew the subjects which occupy the mind of the author of them, better than what he says or even than how he looks.

After seeing the figure of a wild boar rudely traced upon the walls of our cottage at Evjelar and that of a ship upon those on Beiram, it required no words to tell us that the owner of the first was a hunter and of the last a fisherman. The scraps from the Koran and the Testament, which I found scribbled in an appartment a tone of the mosques at Constantinople and the chaunts out of a litany, which decorated our konak at Yenichehr observed as plainly that the one belonged to an imam and the other to a priest. The figure of a stag, which, I remember, is scratched upon the walls of the dungeon at Naworth Castle, leaves one little room to doubt of the occupation of the unfortunate sculptor that, his body was imprisoned, his thought was free to rove upon their accustomed speculations of deer stealing. What shall we say then of the filth and folly that disgrace so many walls and windows in England, more than in any other country? Are we more silly and more debauched than the rest of the world? I hope not, but such that own a greater proportion of these characters are generally travelling about.

We were informed that it is now more than 40 years, since any schoolmaster has presided at the academy. Surely it is no small disgrace to the respective convents, that they do not endeavour to restore this seminary to its original importance. What a difference might it not make throughout the whole of the Greek Church?

At our return we stepped into the cemetery of the convent, but it by no means affected me with so many melancholy ideas as the deserted academy. The bones and skulls indeed presented an image of death, which could not but strike with awe. But an event however solemn that cannot be avoided, can never produce those sentiment of regret, which arise upon witnessing the effects of negligence or misconduct.

4th. This morning we finished our labours in the library. But on account of the Holy Week and the several relaxation from business which that time produced, found it impossible to procure mules to forward us to Charies till the 6th.

5th. We passed this day in rambling among the sweet woods, with which the monastery is encompassed. Nothing can be more romantic than the aquaducts, that convey water to the convent. They run along the sides of the hills and over the vallies, thro glades and under rocks, in all the beauty of regular irregularity, and seem rather to be calculated for the ornament of a pleasure ground, than for the supply of a monastery. The termination of one of them, which we traced, was at a quiet little cascade, that appeared never to have been visited before by human steps. In the evening we were entertained or disturbed by the noisy mirth of a large company of Albanian pilgrims, who came to pass the holy week in the mountain. They sung, danced and drank and in the interludes of their amusement fired their guns continually over the windows. What a strange pictures did these fellows exhibit? Most of them were robbers and the greatest part of their songs recounted the thievish exploits which they had accomplished. Their appearance was more ferocious than anything I had ever before seen. The triumph, which lighted up their countenances upon every discharge of their muskets, shewed but too plainly with what little compunction they could be guilty of the most dreadful deeds, and yet these fellows entered the church with the most humble and penitent looks. Nay, I thought, I saw a tear start from the eye of one of them upon seeing the picture of our Lord. They are no doubt very savage, but might they not be still more so, were the little civilization withdrawn, which they derive from the existence of the monasteries?

6th. In the morning we were gratified with the sight of near 500 of our Albanian friends dining in the refectory and court of the convent. The former is a large room in the shape of a cross furnished with 24 marble tables, each of which is capable of accomodating 7 or 8 persons. The fare was plentiful, but not very elegant. It consisted of a mess of thick potage and another of salt fish, a loaf of bread and a jug of wine. The convent at Batopaide is I believe upon the largest scale of any in the peninsula. They knead weekly



600 okes of flour into bread and their annual consumption of wine is upwards of 2000 caricoes each consisting of 90 okes. Only half of this they make themselves, the remainder they are obliged to purchase. At their Chiliai they have flocks of 5.000 goats and 3.000 sheep, which furnish the convent with cheese. The number of members resident in the monastery are about 250, and those employed out of it amount to about as many.

After seeing the dinner of the pilgrims and bidding adieu to our good friends at Batopaide, we set off for Charies, to which place it was necessary to go, in order to exhibit our credentials to the aga and the four deputies who govern the peninsula. These deputies are chosen in votation out of the different monasteries. In order to have the representation of the interests of the several communities more perfectly maintained, the 20 convents are divided into the classes; 5 of the largest size, 5 of the 2d, 5 of the 3d and 5 of the 4th. Each of these classes by a cycle sends one deputy every year. They reside at Charies and transact all business in common. The aga is a little more than a cypher.

At eleven o'clock we set forward from Batopaide. Our road lay thro' the woods that cloath the lower part of the mountain and every where presented to us a charming and varied prospect. Sometimes we found ourselves on the brink of an immense precipice half way up the mountain, at others we were embosomed in a deep glen and secluded from the sight of everything but trees and rocks that immediately surrounded us. This valley opened upon the sea and the next was shut up by an abrupt winding, that seemed to carry it back again into the mountains. 2.45 we arrived at Charies and immediately proceeded to the monastery of Koutlemous, which lies a little beyond it.

#### CHARIES

Charies is more singular for its constitution than its site appearance. No female of any kind can enter within its precincts, and nor has it any inhabitants almost except upon Saturdays. The business that is carried on in it, is either transacted by caloiers, whose general residence is in the adjoining convents, or by persons who leave their families to attend the weekly market and then return. I could not positively learn whether the female sex is

excluded from the holy mountain by any absolute statute or only prevented coming thither by a long continued custom ; whichever of them it is, owing to this exclusion, is most rigorously enforced, and at this moment sincerely believe not only that they are no women on the peninsula, but that there is not a mare, cow, sheep, hen, she ass, she mule or even a cat to be found in it. Some of the monks informed us that if a female of any kind was to set foot on the holy mountain, she would die in less than three days. And our friend the secretary at Batopaide, a man of sense and very considerable literature, assured us that the birds might lay eggs within its presincts, yet they could never hatch them into chickens. Placidia, the daughter of Theodosius, who founded Batopaide, had a great desire to see the convent which had been built by her father, and actually attempted to go into the church, but was stopped by a voice from heaven, which obliged her to desist. A gallery was however built for her in order to gratify her curiosity from thence...

The situation of Charies, I said, was almost as unique as its construction. It is built round a beautiful circular valley and the houses are placed one above the other, with little order or regularity and little connection with each other, so that apparently the houses have been built first and the streets picked out afterwards amongst them. At the bottom of the hollow is one of the sweetest little meadows, that is possible to be conceived, kept watered by a perennial stream. Above it rise the houses, each burrowed in its own grove and every grove peopled with nightingales. On the right side of this paradise rises the monastery of Koutlemousi. The edges of the punch bowl are formed by a circle of perpendicular rocks, and run almost entirely round.

#### K O U T L O U M O U S I

We were received into a very neat and most delightfully situated appartment belonging to one of the monks. Where we had not long been before, we were told, it was proper to wait upon the aga and deputies. We did so accordingly and received a very civil reception by the odd conclave, consisting four old Greek monks and a young Turkish pasha, and once more returned to our convent.



7th. We began our investigation in the morning and after examining the church and relicts (which we desired to see as specimens of ancient workmanship, all of them being mounted in gold or silver) proceeded to the library. We found it in much better order than that at Batopaide and were furnished with something like a catalogue. This, however, was by no means perfect, and upon the whole, rather impeded than farthered our examinations, as the places of the books were not marked and as the MSS. and printed copies were mingled together without any distinction. The room, however, was dry and the books were in a tolerable preservation. A young man of Constantinople, who spoke Italian and whom we found at the convent, had been in some degree useful to us as an interpreter. He had attended us in the library and called upon us afterwards. He admired, an omnium gatherum knife belonging to Mr. Hunt, and at the moment Mr. Hunt's back was turned he fairly stole it. The business, however, was too barefaced and we obliged him to return. This is a young man breeding up for a dragoman!

During our dinner we were visited by an exiled archbishop (of Zea) and the egoumenos. The former was anxious after news and seemed very ignorant. I took him for a Brussa shopkeeper. The latter was, I think, upon the whole the most polished and best informed man we had seen on the peninsula. He seemed as well acquainted with modern manners as ancient literature; he had travelled in various parts and we only wondered how such a person could find society amongst the monks of Koutlemousi. The convent consists of about 60 religious.

#### PANTOCRATOROS

After our snack, which was not very excellent, as the monastery could supply us with nothing but salt fish, we set off for Pantocratoros. Our road was wild but beautiful, consisting, as almost every part of the peninsula does, of a succession of hills and vallies, all covered with wood and all without inhabitants, except now and then you meet a wandering caloier, and here and there you see a keli percked in the midst of its green oasis of cultivation. Pantocratoros is situated upon a precipice, which overlooks the sea, and after the bustle (for every word is relative) of

Charies, appeared a perfect seclusion. We were received by the venerable egoumenos with every attention, and if it were wise to trust to physionomy (which I own I do), I should not hesitate to say that the president of Pantocratoros was one of the most amiable men in existence—at least we found him so to us—for everything he could procure was at our disposal: his wine of the interiori nota\*. We were shewn to sleep in an apartment, like one of the excellent old oak wainscotted rooms, which one now and then meets with in a country gentleman's house in England.

8th. In the morning we examined the library, which was contained in the church and kept with tolerable care. The books were not very valuable, so we could scarce blame our friend the egoumenos for not having them classed with greater care. Just as we had finished our investigation we were almost alarmed by the +...+ of a large company of pilgrims from the Balkan, a distance of 14 days journey. They seemed to pay their devotions and attend to the mass with much solemnity, and yet they did not understand one word of the language in which it was performed. We found that they gave to the convent upon an average of 50 paras a piece. The convent of Pantocratoros consists of about 40 persons at present and seems in that stationary situation, which such a quiet good kind of man as is at the head of it, will generally produce. And in the present state of the holy mountain this is all that can be hoped for.

We met at Pantocratoros with a caloier whom we had seen at Lemnos, and who had intended setting off for Athos, at the same time we did, but who had been obliged to put back on account of the violent tempest which we had struggled with. He said that every person at Lemnos gave us up for lost. The egoumenos and the monks had seen our little vessel and thought it almost impossible for him to weather the storm. «Nor would it have been possible, added the old man, had you not been in the vicinity of the holy mountain, but its sanctity preserved you». These testimonies at least shewed that the dangers we had encountered were not imaginary.

\* He had lived in the monastery for near 60 years having entered it when he was only 8; for some years he had been employed in its external concerns; but for the last 30 he had never quitted its walls.



## S T A U R O N I C E T A

At 11 o'clock we proceeded in a boat to Stauroniceta. The row was most romantic, most part of the way we went by steep rocks cloathed with brush wood and crowned with timber beneath. One of the highest was pointed out to us as a place where a saint was burried under an iron cross and still, as our informants assured us, at night fire was emitted from the tomb. We arrived in  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour at Stauroniceta. Our approach to it was very striking. The sea smooth as a mirror, the convent situated upon a green knoll of the mountain surrounded with wood, like a forehead under a thick head of hair, the craggs below perfectly perpendicular and Athos beyond all with his rocks and snows.

We were received at Stauroniceta with every compliment, shewn into a pleasant apartment and attended by the monks to the library and everything else we wished to see, with the greatest civility. The library is not very excellent, but the situation of the convent is most delightful. We were shewn a little kiosk, which had once been inhabited by an exiled patriarch, and a sweeter he could not have chosen for his retreat. It looked upon a grove of orange and lemon trees, which was skirted on one side by rocks and on the other bounded by the sea. This grove was absolutely a cage of nightingales. We walked thro' the orange grove and ascended upon a terrace beyond it, which communicated along the rocks with the monastery of Pantocratoros. Nothing on earth could be more beautiful. The sweeping view of the sea, the richness of the little nook beneath, in which the garden is placed, is beyond conception.

A lively monk, who attended us (upon our admiring the luxuriancy of trees and herbs, which is indeed most extraordinary) told us the following anecdote: several monks from different convents in the holy mountain were one day assembled at the palace of a vaivode of Wallachia. Each boasted of the different products for which the monastery they belonged to was famous, one talked of the learning, another of the wine. There happened to be a monk from Stauroniceta who had nothing to vaunt of, except the leeks of his society, but these he declared were many of them of 500 drams in weight. The vaivode doubted. The monk immediately dispatched a courier to his convent to procure some

of the largest leeks in the garden. They were sent, produced, and received with the greatest admiration by the vaivode. The monks said they were indeed tolerably good, considering they were produced without water, but what would they be if that element were in their power. The vaivode declared that should not be wanting, and immediately furnished money to run the grand aquaduct which now waters the convent. Such was the story we heard, how true I cannot say, but the aquaduct certainly exists and I believe the leeks are of that size. The society at Stauroiniceta amounts to about 40.

After finishing our investigation here we proceeded to Iberon. Our row (for here too we went by water) was very similar to the one between Pantocratoros and Stauroiniceta. Rocks crowned with wood and Athos above. The oars they use here are of a singular construction, or rather they are placed in a singular manner, at least two of them which have their fulcrum on little stages formed by a knee projecting a foot and half from the boat's side. This must give power but certainly takes away from steadiness.

#### I B E R O N

In about an hour we arrived at the magnificent monastery of Iberon and ascended from the arrival to the convent. Its situation is not very different from those of Pantocratoros and Stauroiniceta. On a rising ground between the two sides of a vale, but its vale is wider and its plain of course more extended. We were received with much civility by the ruling members of the convent and accomodated with every convenience we could wish for. In the evening we walked round the convent and paid our respects to the exiled patriarch Gregorio, who has resided at Iberon for upwards of two years, ever since his exile from Constantinople. His manners were pleasing and he seemed tolerably well informed. Nor was he afraid of asking a question with which he was not acquainted for fear of betraying his ignorance. With him we found a Maltese doctor, who had lately become a caloier at Iberon. He served as our interpreter, but as he was learning Greek and forgetting Italian he made but sorry work of it. Nor was his Holiness himself, when he attempted speaking ancient Greek, very intelligible. When our own dragoman was not present, we thought the conversation was



best carried on by our speldering out their modern Greek and their speldering at our ancient. The patriarch requested us to dine with him the next day and we withdrew. We supped along with some of the monks.

9th. Early in the morning we were introduced into the library. The room appropriated for it is dry, but by no means large enough for the number of books. There are three cases with glass doors for the reception of the printed books, which are kept in tolerable order. But the poor MSS. are heaped up upon the top of the presses without any shelter from the dust and vermin. While we were in the middle of our investigations we received a message that the patriarch's dinner was ready. We were obliged therefore to bid adieu to the library and attend his Holiness. Our company consisted of a couple exiled archbishops (one of whom we had seen before at Koutloumoussi), the egoumenos and several of the monks of the convent, our Maltese interpreter and our acquaintance the thief from Constantinople. We sat down to table a little before 9 o'clock. The dinner consisted of, I believe, 30 different dishes in the Turkish style, and the wines we had were various. The best, however, in my opinion, were of the grapes of the mountain. One in particular pleased our palate very much; it was somewhat bitterish but of an agreeable flavour and a most beautiful rose colour. We were seated on each side of the patriarch and had each of us an archbishop on the other side. Their Graces, however, I observed, were seldom indulged with a taste of any of the choicer wines; indeed an archbishop is not considered quite in the same light at Athos as at Bishop Thorp or Lambeth. Upon our asking who one of them was, we were informed by a monk, after a shrug of semi-contempt, that he was only an archbishop who lived in their convent. After sucking up grease and swilling in wine from 9 o'clock in the morning till  $\frac{1}{2}$  past ten, we retired from table and soon after took our leave. We took a little turn for an hour in order to digest our early dinner and then returned to the library, whither we were accompanied by our friend the Maltese doctor, who (whatever his history might have been I own a little suspicious) was of as great use to us as he could. The rest of the monks did not appear oversolicitous to lend us any assistance, indeed they did not seem too capable of doing so. We did not find one who could bear any



comparison in point of literature with our friends at Batopaide. In the evening we had a quiet supper by ourselves and retired to our excellent feather beds, the only one I have slept in since I left England.

10th. As we were prepared to go to the library a hermit of the name of Methodius was introduced to us by the doctor. He seemed lively and good humoured and attended us in our investigations amongst the MSS. In the middle of these the doctor whispered that we had not yet seen the hermit's beard. As this was mentioned as a curiosity we requested to examine it, upon which Methodius unrolled from his neck a bag in which this extraordinary beard was contained and displayed it before us. The hermit was at least as tall as I am and it absolutely reached, when he was standing up, some inches below his feet. He gave us also the history of its origin. He had formerly, he told us, been possessed of a most melodious voice, but this he was deprived of some years ago whilst in Russia from a violent cold. He prayed to the Virgin to restore his voice. She did not, however, think proper to grant his prayer, but as a mark of her approbation she shed a blessing on his beard, for from that moment it began to grow to its present luxuriance.

We dined with the monks who, as this was a feast day, sat in common; on other days each eats by himself. Our dinner was infinitely preferable to that at the patriarch's, tho they are not allowed to have any flesh at the table; but the fish was excellent and not spoilt with grease. The principal topic of conversation turned upon the beard of Methodius, who himself was present. One of the company observed that there was another hermit on the mountain who had likewise a most remarkable beard. I saw a look of jealousy darting from the eye of Methodius, and he could not help exclaiming with visible emotion that the other's beard was not so long as his, he thanked the Virgin, by many an inch. Such is poor human nature. The man who had renounced the world, who had voluntarily imposed upon himself the severest abstinence and penances, who passed his time in prayer and contemplating, who could give up riches and honours and pleasures and family and friends without a sigh, could not bear with a degree of patience to hear any mention made of the beard of another man! After



dinner we finished the little that remained to examine in the library and then took our leave of Iberon. This convent consists of about 250 monks and were informed that their annual expenditure amounted to near 6.000 £ sterling.

#### PHILOTHEOU

Our ride to Philotheou lay thro a succession of wooded glens, with occasional peeps of the sea. At about half an hour's distance we passed a very deep little dell, which divided the properties of the two convents, its sides were scooped into terraces of vineyards. It was threaded by a roaring torrent surrounded with gardens. An ivy-covered mill was perched on a rock. Half way down at its mouth rose the old tower of Milou Potamou (a cell belonging to the monastery of Laura) and beyond all was the sea. Another half hour thro a similar country brought us to the monastery of Philotheou. It is situated on a green shelf on the mountain encompassed with woods, and at about a couple of miles distance from the sea. The small plain in which it stands is always verdant, as different little rills are conducted thro it to water the vineyards and gardens that lie below. We had a delightful apartment that commanded a prospect of all these beauties and of the sea beyond them, and we eat our lentils soup, all the monastery could efford, without murmuring.

11th. After looking thro the church we proceeded to the library, which we found in a wretched state, and the monks who attended us apparently more ignorant than any we had yet seen. They were, however, well meaning and civil. Their number amounts to about 55.

#### CARACALLA

At 11,30 we set off for Caracalla. The road perhaps was as beautiful as the one we had travelled the day before. We had the same woods, dells and the sea beyond. But how little are we qualified for enjoyment! These sweet scenes were no longer new and no longer striking. In three quarters of an hour we arrived at Caracalla. It is situated in the corner of a little valley that opens upon the sea, and like all the other convents we had seen is surrounded with gardens. We were received with the same civility

we had uniformly met with. Shewn the church and then at our request conducted to the library. It was not in a much better state than that at Philotheou. Nor were its owners much more scientific. They informed us that their convent took its name of Caracalla from the Roman emperor, who was so called and who had been one of their benefactors. I did not see the picture of this worthy personage in the church as a saint. Nor did we think it worth while to acquaint them with his character, or tell them that he had lived several centuries before the establishment of christianity. I could not smiling within myself to think what an odd fate Bassianus had in being made so long after his death the enemy of Fingal and the founder of a Greek monastery in Mount Athos.

After a vegetable meal we took boat for Laura. The row was delightful. The shore all the way skirted with rocks, whose brows were crowned with wood. The hills rose above in different ranges lapping over each other. The bare and snow-sprinkled top of Athos surmounted the whole. Every here and there the rocks opened to display a sweet glen that soon lost itself in the mountains. Sometimes the sides of the hills were entirely covered with trees and sometimes they were decorated with patches of cultivation. In the middle of one of these glens arose the old picturesque tower of Morithnou. It had formerly been a convent or a cell, but is now entirely deserted and is of no farther use than to add another feature to a picture that, even without it, would have been one of the most charming in existence. «Bosom'd high in tufted trees» as it is and seated in such a solitude it seems the very castle, where the sleeping beauty of wood had retired to to enjoy her repose.

#### ST. LAURA

Thro' a constant succession of these scenes we arrived, just as the sun was setting, at the arsenal of the monastery of St. Laura and immediately proceeded to the convent. The gate was not shut, as we had given notice of our approach some time before by firing a pistol. We were admitted therefore into the monastery and after some time shewn into a very middling room, worse certainly than any we had yet occupied on the mountain. We could not help expressing our feelings and at length were accommodated with a better, and furnished with a very tolerable supper and good beds.



12th. Early in the morning we were waited upon by the egoumenos, who appeared fat and ignorant, but as far as he understood our wishes, willing to promote them. After breakfast we sallied forth, go thro the church etc. as usual, and then proceed to the library. It consists of two rooms, an outer and an inner one, and the books are kept in tolerable order, but like all the other (except the attempt at Koutlemous) is destitute of a catalogue. In the inner room we found a venerable figure, whom they stiled didascalos, employed in studying a very large book which lay before him. We approached and found that the subject of his lucubrations was a history of the early synods, and the part of it he was examining, an account of some of those held in Syria, the relation of which were given in Arabic and Latin. To see a monk of Athos reading either of these languages was not a little surprizing, but to find our versed in both gave us hopes of having discovered a treasure of learning. We approached and asked him a few questions, but alas the charm dissolved upon the touch and we found that all our didascalos knew of these two tongues was a very slender acquaintance with the roman alphabet. Why will vanity risk such exposures of tis own weakness? The MSS. in the library at Laura were by no means so numerous or so important as we had expected, but we were given to understand that some of the most valuable of them had been disposed of in a time of need to the Venetians, and that they now constituted a considerable part of the library of St. Mark.

We had wished if it had been tolerably practicable to have ascended Athos from St. Laura, but upon inquiring found that the attempt would be very difficult. Once a year the whole convent celebrated a solemn mass in small chapel upon the top of the mountains, but they represent the ascent as a most arduous undertaking, the greatest part of it being to be performed by creeping upon hands and knees. But what appears arduous to a Greek monk is often upon trial neither dangerous nor difficult. And had the object to be attained been of much consequence and our time, that perhaps we did not give it credit for the charms it really possessed. And to say the truth the stupidity of its members made us look upon every belonging to it thro so disagreeable a medium, that its hills seemed deprived of their foliage and its vallies of their verdure.

After a short dinner we set off for St. Anna. Our road was cut out of the mountain and would round it at different heights. Sometimes we were nearly halfway up and appeared to be ascending to the top, soon after we descended and approached towards the sea. The whole of the way was alpine in the extreme. After travelling about an hour, the road divided, one branch going to Kapso Kalivi and the other to St. Anna. Both of these places are rather the centers or district of hermitages than convents being in fact churches to which the surrounding hermits resort on Sundays, in order to perform their devotions in common and to have some little society with each other. We heard of many of them, whose lives were in the highest degree exemplary and whose acquirements in literature were in the highest degree eminent. I confess however that those whom we saw did not appear to us to deserve these encomiums, for the most part they seemed only more gross and ignorant than the other monks. I even could not help suspecting that some of them had only embraced the ascetical life, in order to be freed from the controuling eye of a superior and to be left at liberty to wander where their own inclination prompted them to go. It is proper, however, to say that we had not the pleasure of meeting with any of those persons of whose character we heard so much.

## S T. A N N A

In about two hours after we left Laura we arrived at the other end of the peninsula, and began to shape our course towards the N.W. towards home. A little after we arrived in sight of the church of St. Anna, situated in a hollow of the rocks and surrounded with tremendous precipices on every side. An hour more brought us to the brink of the descent which led to the convent. Here we were obliged to dismount and proceed on foot down a very steep but very excellent road that conducted us to our requieterium. It must have been made with much difficulty and (if labour have been paid for) at a great expence. It is in fact rather a staircase than a road. The scenery around is most magnificent : rocks rising up pyramidal and unconnected, in the same manner as they do in Dovedale in some parts and about Matlock. But Matlock and Dovedale are a child's toy in comparison of the precipices which



encompass St. Anna. After half an hour's almost perpendicular descending we arrived at the convent. As we came along, we passed many of the hermitages which consider St. Anna as their centre. Nothing can be finer than the situation of many of them. A little plain or garden in front, tremendous crags behind, beyond the luxuriant valley that reaches to the shore, and then the sea, at the time we saw it, glowing with the purple of a setting sun.

St. Anna itself is a cell under St. Laura and is inhabited by a few caloiers from thence, who take care of the vineyards and gardens belonging to the monastery. It seems the very couch of quiet. Everything around it is calm and composed, and almost the only place in the peninsula where we were not pestered about news was in the cells of St. Anna. We had a decent little room to sleep in and, as good accommodations as the convent could procure, furnished with every demonstration of eagerness to oblige. Could we demand more?

We spent the short time between sunset and night in walking around the gardens and visiting one or two of the hermitages adjoining to the church. It is impossible for horticulture to do more than is done by the caloiers here; indeed they have every inducement to make their labour and every advantage to make their labour succeed. They are placed in a semicircular valley that catches and retains every beam of the sun; they are sheltered from the blasts that descend from Athos, and the cascade that gushes from a rock in the neighbourhood of the convent, and after watering the garden, then is conducted by troughs and channels to every other spot in the vale, furnishes a constant source of fertility and verdure.

13th. After looking over the few books in possession of the caloiers at St. Anna's, we set for Agio Paulou by a road cut out of the side of the mountain. Three quarters of an hour brought us to glen that seemed to pierce to the very heart of Athos. Down it rushed a torrent, now not very considerable, but at times no doubt a most furious stream as was evident from the immense fragments of rock, which had once been hurried along by it from the mountain and almost choked its course. I never saw any instance that shewed the power of water in so striking a manner. This stream indeed is a little preternatural. It was discovered by

the Virgin to St. Athanasius, who on account of the barren appearance of the holy mountain had determined to desert it. The Virgin met him as he was leaving his cell. She bid him return and promised a sufficient supply of water to render the country fruitful. The Saint at first was deaf to her commands, fancying her to be an evil spirit who wished to tempt him to go astray ; but upon turning his eyes upwards he saw the present torrent issueing from a cleft near the top of Athos. It has ever since born his name and continued to spread that abundance which was promised to the Saint. This torrent at a little distance has a most remarkable appearance ; its descent seems so very perpendicular that it absolutely gives one the idea that it would tumble off from its bed and vanish.

#### A G I O U P A U L O U

In another quarter of an hour we arrived at the monastery of Agiou Paulou. It is situated on a bold rock and is now enlarging at the expence of the emperor of Russia, who in account of its being dedicated to his patron saint has taken it under his protection and promised to furnish money to rebuild it. Upon the strength of this promise the monks have commenced a building that would make Agiou Paulou one of the largest convents on Mount Athos if it were compleated. But I fear they have already begun to find that it is easier to promise than to perform. I could not pity them. Had they laid out the sum they actually did receive in rendering their old mansion more commodious they would have acted wisely, but the vanity of exalting their monastery was not to be resisted. Their library consisted entirely, except a solitary Psalterion, of Bulgaric MSS., for formerly this convent as well as seven others, was destined for religious of that nation, and had the offices of the church performed in that tongue. For several centuries, however, they have adopted a Greek liturgy and no longer consider themselves as belonging to the Bulgarians. Their number consists of 35.

#### D I O N Y S I O U

The road between Agiou Paulou and Dionysiou appeared to us too steep to go on mules, tho it is travelled over by these animals. So we determined to proceed thither on foot. The walk was a little



fatiguing, but did not last longer than half an hour. The whole way was cut out of the rock and overhung with wood, but we are too much used to romantic scenes now, to take notice of anything but what is very remarkable indeed. Dionysiou stands upon an immense precipice at the opening of a glen. Its situation is solemn but neither so convenient nor so beautiful as many of the others. It is most remarkable at present for being the residence of Mr. Frankopoli, to whom we had letters. This gentleman is a native of Epirus ; he went early to Constantinople and entered into the service of Russia as «Dragoman». He continued in this line till a year ago, when he determined to retire to Mt. Athos and give up the world. He accordingly put his resolution in execution and has now actually commenced caloier and taken the vows. I wish he may not repent, but I could not help seeing he still thought a good deal of the news and scandle of Pera and was happy to find persons who could carry back a report to their world there, that Dionysiou was not so uncomfortable a place as they had apprehended. Brother Yanaki (for that is his name now) seemed a very sensible man ; gave us more information with respect to the real state of the holy mountain, than we had received from any one else. His influence is great in the convent. It procured for us a cock to be killed, which, as we had not tasted meat for some days, we thought most luxurious fare.

14th. In the morning we looked on the church and then proceeded to the library which was over it. The books were kept in two chests and thus preserved from the depredations of moths and vermin. After finishing our investigations we attended Mr. Frankopoli to his apartment. In a little time dinner was announced and our party was increased by the addition of the archbishop of Belgrade - a venerable and most respected character in account of his age - who had lived in the monastery for upwards of 15 years. The old man eat and drank heartily and was lively and good humoured. After dinner we adjoined to his little apartment to take our coffee. It was furnished with different pictures of the passion of our Saviour. Some of them (as their execution was not the best in the world) we did not perfectly comprehend. As we were conversing on the subject the venerable archbishop said in a voice and manner I shall never forget, with his eyes raised up to

heaven and a tear of transport trembling in each : «We may not perfectly comprehend these things now, but in the other world we shall know them all». We sat in this pleasant society for near an hour and then were obliged to think of proceeding on our journey. Frankopoli attended us to the boat and the archbishop would gladly have done so, till we were almost obliged to thrust him back into the convent. The convent of Dionysiou is in the first class of the convents in the representation, but I fancy is considerably inferior to the other four in point of wealth and numbers. The present body amounts to about 200.

## G R E G O R I O U

In half an hour we arrived at Gregoriou and were received in a manner which we had not been in any other viz. by having a mass said, as it is to pilgrims in general. We attended the ceremony without making objection and after it was over requested to be shewn their library etc. It was soon examined and we then withdrew into a room that had been prepared for us, in order to take some refreshment. Our company consisted of the superior, a few of the other monks and Father Joachim, the caloier with the long beard, the mention of whom had excited such sentiments of jealousy in the breast of our friend the hermit at Batopaide. Joachim is now 84 years of age and seems as perfect in all his senses as ever he was. He told us that he was a native of Acarnania - from the town of Catochi-, that he has been a caloier for upwards of 52 years, but that previous to that time he had travelled much and had visited the greatest part of the coasts of the Mediterranean and Euxine seas. For the last 44 years he has neither tasted meat of any kind, nor milk nor eggs. His general diet is herbs and fish and when in the smallest degree out of order (which he has only been two or three times in his life and then very slightly) he leaves off fish. He drinks a little wine three days in the week. He informed us that he remembered 24 patriarchs on the three different thrones of Constantinople, Alexandria and Jerusalem, and upon being asked their names immediately recounted them without the smallest hesitation. Those of Constantinople amounted to 14 ; those of Alexandria to 4 ; and those of Jerusalem to 6, including our most respected friend Anthemos, whose character,



as it deserves to be, is universally known throughout every part of the Empire. I own I admired the venerable Joachim fifty times as much as the hermit Methodius. I am obliged, however, to confess the truth that his beard was not so long by six or seven inches, but that (as all the monks in the convent desired me to remark) it was infinitely more bushy. He gave no miraculous account of its growth, for which I own I liked him not the worse, but simply said it had grown (as I apprehend every philosopher must confess if he tells the truth respecting his beard) he did not know how.

The society of Gregoriou consists of about 50 religious employed within and without the walls of the convent. It is situated in a quiet bay - something in the manner of Dionysiou - but every feature about it is more tame and the whole together more agreeable.

#### S I M O P E T R A

We set off for Simopetra by sea and  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour brought us to its arsenal. The convent from the shore appeared infinitely more romantic than anything we had yet seen in the peninsula. It is perched upon an insulated rock and seems rather an elongation of that rock than any building erected upon its surface. The road to the convent is an almost perpendicular climb, which took us up an hour of pretty good walking to accomplish. Its horizontal distance from the sea appears very small, although its absolute height cannot but be considerable. Upon arriving at the convent we found the superior absent at Charies on account of a new levy, which had been laid upon the mountain with the pretence of furnishing timber for shipping, a demand which the Porte knew could not be complied with otherwise than by paying a sum of money to procure the wood elsewhere. We were received, however, with every attention by the other monks and as we found the egoumenos had the key of the library along with him we dispatched a messenger to him at Charies to request it.

The sun set a little after we got to Simopetra and the evening began to close in, but never shall I forget the solemn scene that then exhibited itself from the gallery which run round the convent. You are absolutely placed upon an immense pillar of rock, on either side is a deep gully covered with wood and threaded with

torrents. In front we view the sea, into which you think you could drop a pebble; behind arise a sweep of mountains rocky and ragged and above all peeps up Athos. When this scene was softened by the glooms of evening and gilded by moonlight, when not a sound met the ear but the songs of the nightingale, the murmuring of the torrents below and the faint roar of the distant waves, it is not easy to imagine a situation more imposing. When I retire from the world it shall be to Simopetra. Our room was comfortable here and we passed a night more out of the haunts of men than, I fancy, I shall ever do again.

15th. In the morning we found that the key of the library had been sent by the superior with a very civil message, importing how sorry he was that he could not wait upon us etc. etc. The superior has only been in this situation for a short time. He was appointed to it by the present Patriarch in order to regulate the affairs of the convent, which under the administration of the two former egoumeni had got very much into disorder. The number of monks was reduced to 4 or 5. The debt of the monastery augmented to nearly 60,000 piasters, the greatest part of which - we were informed by the monks - had been converted by the last egoumenos to his own use. A complaint was laid before the Patriarch. The egoumenos' accounts were examined and found deficient. He was deposed and the present superior, who is reputed as a man of talents and information, sent for out of Transylvania to put the convent into a better state. He accepted the office of superior with much reluctance, but they told us that his exertions had already produced an excellent effect. The library did not take up much time to look over and as soon as we had finished it, we set off for Xeropotamou.

#### X E R O P O T A M O U

In an hour and a half we arrived at its arsenal, and while we were waiting for the mules we had sent for to convey us to the convent, we discovered upon a step the remains of a Greek inscription. We could not learn with any certainty, either at the arsenal or in the monastery, how it came there, but from its present humiliated state we could scarce conceive that any person had been at the pains to transport it from a distance. Our mules carried us



to the convent, where we met with as friendly a reception as we could wait for. Xeropotamou is amongst the largest of the second rank of convents containing at present about 70 members. Its garden, court and church and all its buildings are kept neater and in better repair than those of any monastery we had seen. Inserted in the walls we found several pieces of marble, sculpture of heads and figures, that seemed to be ancient and of not inelegant workmanship. The monks informed us that they had been brought from Constantinople about 50 years ago by their then egoumenos, perhaps the same person, might have conveyed the inscription we met with at the arsenal and some less literary successor had converted it to its present use.

We made use the remaining part of the daylight in examining the library, which we likewise found in a better state than that of any other monastery. The books were kept in a dry and good apartment and perfectly secured from dust and vermin. Amongst the MSS. too we saw several classical authors, both in Greek and Latin and most of the fathers and theological writers in the best editions. Upon returning to our room we were waited upon by the superior, apparently an excellent old man and the counterpart of our friend at Pantocratoros. He was civil without being pressing. He was not very literary, but his natural good sense taught him how to hit the happy medium, in which real politeness consists, in neither saying or doing too little or too much. At Xeropotamou we found the first roses we had seen this year.

16th. After finishing the little that remained to be examined in the library, we were preparing to go down to the arsenal in order to embark on board a boat to be conveyed by water to the next convent of Russicon, when we were alarmed by the account that four caiques full of pyrates had landed in the morning at Gregoriou and threatened an attack upon the monastery. Our informants were pilgrims (or as they are called here *προσκυνηται*) who intended going to Gregoriou, but having luckily received intelligence of the situation of the convent had immediately turned back. This news was sufficiently disagreeable and was not rendered less, so by the evident fright which we saw had taken possession of the minds of the pilgrims. The pyrates were only a 7 or 8 miles distance and we thought it by no means improbable that they

might have received information (for I doubt several of the caloiers are but too well acquainted with those banditti) of our being in the neighbourhood. To have made such a capture would have been a noble prize, and tho our friends at the convent endeavoured to dissipate our alarm, by assuring us that those pyrates very seldom committed murder, that they were generally satisfied with robbing and stripping the persons who fell into their power and scarce ever used them worse than to cut off a leg or an arm, yet I cannot say that we fell perfectly at our ease. We felt, however, I hope sincerely grateful that we had so far escaped out of the clutches of these barbarians. Had we been one day later we should in all probability have fallen into their hands.

## RUSSICON

As they were so near us, we determined, however, to accelerate our departure and of course gave up all thoughts of proceeding to Russicon by water. Mules were not immediately to be procured. So we set off on foot and in 1/2 an hour arrived at the convent that exhibited a miserable appearance of poverty and decay. The monastery was formerly situated higher up in the mountain, but having contracted a debt of 50.000 pounds, not one farthing of which they could pay, they packed up their relics and bad adieu to the convent. The present building had been nothing more than a kili to the former one. In such a place we could not expect to find a library. The few books they had, were thrown together in a corner of the church. The whole number of the society now amounts to no more than 15 and these all wretchedly poor and ignorant.

## XENOPHON

From Russicon we proceeded, still on foot, to Xenophon, thro' glens and woods, but by no means so romantic as many that we had passed towards the bottom of the penisula. We found the monastery repairing or rather rebuilding on a scite, a little farther removed from the sea; as they said their present situation was unhealthy. But I cannot think a few yards could make much difference in the salubrity of the air, and I own I suspect that their real motives for the new constitution was to have the convent



built on a grander scale. After looking over their little library, (which consisted of two rooms, the library and the cell of a deceased monk who had been a physician, whose principal medical books consists of 3 volumes of our Buchan translated from French into Italian) we adjourned to eat our onions and cheese amongst them. The superior told us that their members consisted of about 50, and that, contrary to the custom of every other monastic institution on the mountain, they had a common table and common purse. He added they followed the same rule as the monks of St. Sabba near Jerusalem.

#### DOCHEIAREIO

At 2 o'clock we set off for Docheiareio. Our walk that of the whole day lay along the side of the mountain and the views only differed by shades of discrepancies, easy enough to observe but difficult to remember and not worth being described. We arrived at Docheiareio in about half an hour and found it monastery of considerably more importance than either of those we had lately visited. Its members amount to 70 and the convent and buildings appeared in very good repair. Their library, however, was much in the same state as the others. The superior pressed us to stay with them the evening, but as we wished to accelerate our progress as much as possible — to say the truth in some degree stimulated onward by ideas of the pyrates — we declined his offer and requested him to procure us mules to convey us to Casta Monitu.

This little monastery is situated in land, so that we immediately changed the direction we had followed for the former part of the day and struck off into the country. Our route lay thro some of the sweetest glens and woods we had yet witnessed. Indeed the late warm days had added not a little to their charms. Every tree was now bursting into leaf and the young buds exhibited such variety of tints as no autumn ever displayed. I have often remarked the same effect in some degree in England, but the suddenness of vegetation here shews it to much more advantage. Not a shrub but was diversified with a thousand different shades, and the general appearance of the forest was enchanting, for it was decorated not only by the foliage of the trees but by their flowers. Amongst these the charming concheopeia shone the pride of every

grove. The nightingales seemed as much pleased with the scene, as we were, and during the whole of our ride seemed to vie with each other from every bush.

C O S T A M O N I T U

In about an hour we arrived at the monastery situated in the most compleat seclusion we had yet witnessed. It was perched on a small green knoll and surrounded in every side by forests, except in front, where the knoll sloped down to a mountain torrent, that itself was half hidden among the overshadowing bushes. As we approached the monastery we heard the monks performing the evening service. Their voices perhaps to the ears of a conisseur would not have appeared accurately tuned, but as we heard them thro the stillness of the evening and mingled only with the song of the nightingale and the murmurs of the torrent, they seemed perfectly melodious and excited every sentiment they wished to raise. The look of the monastery accorded with our ideas. It was covered with moss and overgrown with ivy and the porter who received us at the gate appeared to have a little to do with the world. Never did solitude seem invested with such charms, as the scenery around us had. I began to prefer the calm retirement before me even to the romantic rock of Simopetra, and I do not know how I should have torn myself away from such a retreat. But all my enthusiasm was dissipated in a moment by the reception we met with from the gruff old superior and his ignorant monks. They told us they had nothing to give us and nothing to shew us. And the room they introduced us into did not deny these assurances. It was dark and wretched and the beds they possessed consisted merely of a couple of old rugs.

The superior told us that we need not expect anything better, as the convent had been deserted till a couple of years ago, when he had been appointed its head, and at present it did not consist of more than 5 or 6 persons. The church was in a wretched plight, and the few books they possessed in it of little value. A MS. containing a couple of the plays of Eschylos the old egoumenos (from Matthew's bad management in offering the money coram omnibus) would not part with. Such a reaction did not induce us to pass the night even in the glade of Casta Monitu and we



determined, if possible, late as it was, to depart for Zographou. We at length induced the man, who conducted the mules that had brought us from Docheiareion, to proceed on with us to that monastery.

Our ride was among the same sweet glens, covered with the same beautiful foliage and blossoms, that we had passed thro in approaching Casta Monitu. The shades of evening made their tints less discriminate but more soft. Just as the sun set we were alarmed by the report of a gun. Our conductor informed us that it proceeded only from some pyrate boats, who meant it as a signal to some of their friends in the neighbouring coasts. The intelligence was not of the most agreeable nature, as we were wandering without any guard thro unknown glens in the gloom oft he evening, but Zographou was at no great distance, and about half an hour after sunset to our great satisfaction we arrived at that monastery upon knocking a little at the gate, and producing one letter etc. were admitted within its walls and shewn to a very comfortable apartment.

#### Z O G R A P H O U

Zographou is a Bulgarian convent having been founded like Ayio Paulo and some others for monks of that nation. The liturgy is still performed in the Bulgarian language and that tongue is still the prevalent one in the convent. The monks, however, all understand Greek, tho many of the caloiers seem to have a very slender acquaintance with it. The situation of Zographou is still more like that of Casta Monitu, than of any other convent on the mountain. It is removed from the view of the sea, and is surmounted with wood, but possesses neither the secluded appearance nor the real quiet of that sweet spot. It is indeed upon a much larger scale, consisting of nearly 100 religious ; and at present is filled with as large a quantity of labourers, who are busied in rebuilding the church.

17th. The library at Zographou took little time to examine, as it contained no MSS. but what were in the Bulgarian tongue. Of these, however, we turned over at least 300, many of them beautifully written. Most of them, we were informed, consisted of liturgies and books of offices ; MSS. liturgies are now no longer

used, their church used printed copies published in Russia having been (on account of convenience) substituted in their room. The printed liturgies, however, are by no means so intelligible, being mixed with a large proportion of Slavonic terms wholly foreign to the Bulgaric idiom, which to this day continues the same in its vernacular dialect as it was 700 years ago, when these books of offices were first established. If this can be true — and I was repeatedly assured of it by different members of the convent — it is a curious and, I think, an almost singular fact in philology, that a barbarous nation under all its varieties of history, as an independent state and as subject to different powers, should still have preserved its language for centuries unchanged and unadulterated.

The new church which is constructing at Zographou, and of which they seemed not a little proud, exhibits a woeful example of the present state of the arts in Greece. They told us with an exultation, that their church cost above 40.000 piastres and would be several feet larger than that at Batopaide, and I have no doubt it will be painted as bright as brushes can make it. This seems to satisfy them every wish, for as to simplicity in the structure or elegance in the furnishing of their churches, they seem to be as ignorant as the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego. The present church at Zographou is built with a kind of portico, fronting the gate along the side, consisting of five arches all of different heights and breadths. The bases of the columns that support it and the columns thence are exactly like candles in England, stuck into a clod of clay for a rejoicing night and if a similar clod were fixed upon the top of the candle, you would have a compleat representation of the order of the architecture in the pillars of Zographou, both with regard to their base, shaft and capital, except that the sizes of the candles here are various, for while some of them are moulded, some are no more than 16 in the pound and some only farthing ones. Zographou ought to have been the last place where the arts were neglected — it owes its name and its celebrity to a picture, a famous portrait of St. George, painted by himself, having removed of its own accord from a monastery in the Holy Land to this convent, and placed itself in the church belonging to it. I own, however, I have seen better pictures.



At Zographou we heard some anecdotes respecting the superior of Casta Monitu, the only person in the precincts of the holy mountain, who had treated us with incivility. And we found that such behaviour was not very foreign to his general conduct. He had been in some degree acquainted with the present Patriarch of Constantinople previous to His Holiness exaltation. The Patriarch wished to do something to serve his old friend and appointed him to preside over Casta Monitu. The convent had for some time been almost deserted, but the new appointed and the Patriarch's remonstrances induced 15 monks to accompany the superior to his monastery. He has now been there about a year and a half; ten out the fifteen have quitted the place in disgust, and the remainder are in doubt, whether to follow their example or lay the whole of the matter before the patriarch. The principal thing objected to the egoumenos is the badness of his temper. I own, I could not but feel some degree of pleasure in finding, that the only person we had taken any dislike to on the holy mountain was not in the odor of good fame with the rest of his brethren.

#### CHILIANTARI

A little before noon we took leave of Zographou in order to proceed to Chiliantari. We had now to cross over the peninsula; and the road was much of the same kind, as that we had lately passed in coming from Docheiareiou, but it did not strike us with being so romantic. In an hour and half we arrived at Chiliantari. We had heard from Mr. Frankopoli that its situation was very beautiful and it did not disappoint the expectations we had formed. The grounds about it are more level and seemingly more rich, than those in the vicinity of any other convent and most of them laid out in corn. The hills around are admirably cloathed with wood and the gardens of the monastery fertile and flourishing beyond all conception. The buildings belonging to it are all in admirable repair and the general appearance exhibited marks of greater order and attention, than we had witnessed in any other society.

After being shewn to a very pleasant and commodious apartment, we were waited upon by the Superior — an old man of no prepossessing appearance — with a blue handkerchief tied under

his chin. He seemed colder at first than any of the other egoumeni we had met with upon the mountain, but after a little conversation he began to open out and we found him tho not pretending to any great literary acquirements, the most intelligent person we had seen. His questions were pointed and connected with the subject and his answers concise but clear and satisfactory. In a short time our dinner was brought, consisting of eggs and fish stewed with onions and about a table spoonful of oil, by which means they kept good and fresh for several days. They are eaten cold and are the general dish to rely upon throughout the whole of the mountain. After dinner we resolved to visit the convent of Sphigmeno and the ruined cell of Agio Basilios in order to have nothing left to examine in the circuit of the holy mountain, except what was contained with in the walls of Chilianteri alone.

#### SPHIGMENO

This distance between Chilianteri and Sphigmeno is rather more than half an hour. The whole of the way thro groves of oaks and sycamores, interspersed the most with flowing shrubs with clear streams meandering thro the middle of them, and of meadows and cornfields skirted with hanging woods and overshadowed by mountains. I need not say therefore that it was picturesque, but there was one spot which I shall not forget, where all of these pastures were united with an old tower and peep of the sea in the background. Sphigmeno is situated close upon the shore, but its accompaniments are not very striking. The rocks around it are low and the wood poor. The convent itself exhibits every appearance of poverty. Its members amount to about 30.

Their library is suitable to the rest of the structure, wretchedly furnished and wretchedly kept in a room open to the court. We found some books whose leaves were clasped together by nests of hornets. The monks, however, were civil and obliging, and exhibited their church and offered us their wine and oranges with the greatest good humour. We were attended in our excursion from Chilianteri by a monk of Corfu, who spoke a little Italian and who shewed himself a furious enemy of the papal power, ripped up all the old scandle treasured up by the Greek Church to vilify the Latin one, described the horrors of the famous mass



and represented the Pope in as horrible a light as the maddest presbyterian preacher could have done half a century ago. Our man Matthew does not happen to concern himself much with points of polemical divinity, but he professes himself to be a Catholic and makes the sign of the cross from left to right. He could no longer bear to hear the chief of his religion laid on so thick and at length began to retort by reprobating the simoniacal transcriptions of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The monk waxed still more wrath and, I thought, we should have had a battle between the dragoman and the ecclesiastic upon the respective merit of the Patriarch and the Pope, however, we calmed the contending parties by dispatching Matthew to superintend the preparation of supper, and by proceeding along with the Corfuote to examine the convent of St. Basil.

Sphigmeno was decaying, but St. Basil was decayed. It is built on a rock immediately hanging over the sea. It was burnt down some years ago and is now only partially repaired, being in fact little more than a chili under to Chilianari; it is inhabited by two or three caloiers belonging to that convent, who take care of the vineyards adjoining and mass is said in its church by priests from thence who go over for that purpose. The few books we found were all Bulgaric, in which tongue church service is still performed at Agio Basilios. The evening was now closing in, and we hastened back to Chilianari; thro a succession of the same scenes we had passed in going to Sphigmeno. We arrived at our convent in about half an hour.

## COMMENTARY

Joseph Dacre Carlyle (1759 - 1804) is not an irrelevant person : he belongs to that category of scholars, who were born by the Renaissance after the disclosure of the ancient Hellenic world. They rush from the West into Greece, a country where time had covered the traces of a bright past, and try in various ways, either by digging up the earth, or by breaking up old buildings, or by pillaging the libraries, to reveal the secret of a uniquely admirable civilization this land kept to itself'.

His line was Arabology and in this capacity he lectured at Cambridge since 1795. In 1799, however, when Thomas Elgin leaves for Constantinople as an extraordinary envoy, Carlyle, then a vicar, travelled with him as chaplain «with the special duties of a learned referee». Elgin will make afterwards in the «Memorandum», drawn up by his secretary W. R. Hamilton according to the notes of Elgin himself and Hunt —about the latter we shall speak later— the following comments concerning Carlyle :

«The late Dr. Carlyle, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, had accompanied Lord Elgin to Turkey in the hope of discovering any hidden treasures of Grecian or Arabic literature. Accordingly Lord Elgin obtained for him access to some deposits of MSS. in the Seraglio, and in company with another gentleman of the Embassy, amply qualified also for the research, he examined many collections in Constantinople and in the neighbouring islands; more than thirty monasteries in Mount Athos; and various other religious establishments throughout Greece and the Islands of the Archipelago. From these they brought home a great many MSS. which to them appeared valuable; as well as a particular catalogue and

1. Bibliography in fact does not include a relative complete work. See on this subject H. Omont's *Missions archéologiques françaises en Orient aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, part 2, Paris 1902, as well as J. Ghennadios's book *Lord Elgin and pillagers of antiquities*

*in Greece and particularly in Athens before him, 1440 - 1837*, Athens, 1930.

2. Biographical data concerning Carlyle, from which the sentence in inverted commas is quoted, are borrowed from *Dictionary of National Biography*.



description of such as they were obliged to leave behind them<sup>1</sup>.

Carlyle's interest has, however, another more direct purpose: he aims at collecting Hellenic and Syrian manuscripts in view of his intention to prepare a new edition of the New Testament.

This travel ended and he returned to England in September 1801. His health, having always been poor, was irreparably damaged by the hardships of so exhaustive a travel like this and soon afterwards, in April 1804, he died.

The year following his death was edited by his sister a collection entitled: «Poems suggested chiefly by scenes in Asia-Minor, Syria, and Greece, with prefaces, extracted from the author's journal. Embellished with two views of the source of the Scamander, and the Aqueduct over the Simois. By the late J.D. Carlyle, Chancellor of Carlisle, vicar of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, and Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Durham.», London, 1805.

As a foreword to these poems two extracts from his Journal—a part of page 35 and of page 39 of my publication—were used.

Since then the unpublished manuscript was kept in possession of the Carlyle family up to 1866, when Carlyle's daughter Ellen Maclean offered it to the British Museum along with other manuscripts of her father. The detailed description of these manuscripts on the catalogue of the Museum is as follows:

«1. Journal of Joseph Dacre Carlyle, B.D., professor of Arabic at Cambridge, while at Mount Athos cataloguing the monastic libraries; 31 Mar.-17 Apr. [1801]. Cf. Add. MS. 27,234. f.1.

2. Catalogue of the library of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, taken at Constantinople by Professor Carlyle and Philip Hunt, LLD; Jan. 1801. Turkish, Greek, etc. f. 89.

3. Fragments of diaries of Professor Carlyle at Constantinople, etc.; 29 Dec. 1799, 1 Jan., 9, 28 Sept. 1800. Partly autograph f. 106.

4. Catalogue of the library of Mohammed Raghîb Pasha at Constantinople. See Fluegel's edition of Haji Khalfa's «Bibliographical Dictionary», vol. VII, p. 304, Ital. f. 131.

Paper octavo, Presented by Mrs. Ellen Maclean, daughter of

1. *Memorandum on the subject of* 2nd edition, London 1815, pp. 36 -  
*the Earl of Elgin's pursuits in Greece,* 37.

Professor Carlyle».

This note accompanied Ellen Maclean's offer :

«Mr. Carlyle's Journal of Mount Athos during the three [weeks] he and Mr. Hunt spent there, whilst making catalogues of all the 22 Libraries in the Monasteries on the Holy Mountain.

Sent by Mrs. Maclean for Mr. Bond and Mr. Winter Jones to look over and decide whether it would be an interesting companion to the Catalogues already given by her to the British Museum. If they think it would not, Mr. Bond and Mr. Winter Jones will be so kind as return the Journal to Mrs. Maclean.

Ellen Maclean»

Indeed within the same year she offered the list described on the catalogue of the British Museum as : «Addit. 27,234 : Lists of MSS. in the libraries of the monasteries of Mount Athos, taken by Dr. Hunt and Professor Carlyle, in 1801. Paper octavo. Presented by Mrs. E. Maclean».

S. Lambros saw this paper in the British Museum and took down relative notes—which constitute number 73 of his unpublished papers—, of ten pages that appeared in volume 16 (1922) pp. 421-426 of «Neos Ellinomnimon». Lambros enumerates the manuscripts of each monastery according to Carlyle's notes and gives number 4300 as their total<sup>1</sup>.

Carlyle did not travel to Mount Athos alone ; this is concluded from the aforementioned facts. His companion was Philip Hunt, the vicar of the British Embassy in Constantinople. Hunt is a well-known person since he connected his name closely with the pillaging of Hellenic antiquities by Elgin<sup>2</sup>.

The diary kept by Hunt on his travel with Carlyle to Mount Athos was included in Robert Walpole's *Memoirs*<sup>3</sup>, which comprised another testimony concerning this travel : the letters sent

1. As regards bibliography of the catalogues of manuscripts see M. Manoussakas's *Manuscripts and documents of Mount Athos*, Athens 1958 (reprint with additions from the *Major Hellenic Encyclopaedia*).

2. On the principal role played by Hunt in Elgin's mission, see Ghennadios's work as above, in various pages.

3. *Memoirs relating to European and Asiatic Turkey, and other countries of the East. Edited from manuscript journals by Robert Walpole, M.A.*, London 1817. The relative chapter is entitled : *Mount Athos, An account of the monastic institutions and the libraries on the holy mountain ; from the papers of Dr. Hunt.*



by Carlyle during his travel to Lord Bishop of Dunham<sup>1</sup>, whose chaplain he was.

The last of these letters, written in Salonica on 27th April 1801, gives an account of the travel. He states in it that his stay in Mount Athos lasted more than three weeks, and its closing paragraph is as follows: «I think I may venture to say I did not omit examining *one MS.*, which I had an opportunity of looking at on Mount Athos». The total number of manuscripts he gives is 13.000 approximately, and he adds that «Unless there may be a few ecclesiastical authors deposited in some private hands, I do not conceive that there are any existing on the mountain which we did not inspect. From the specimens of monastic libraries which I had before examined, I did not entertain much hopes of finding any of the grand desiderata in profane literature. And to confess the truth, my Lord, I have not been disappointed. For except one copy of the Iliad, and another of the Odyssey; a few of the edited plays of the different tragedians; a copy of Pindar and Hesiod; the orations of Demosthenes and Æschines; parts of Aristotle; copies of Philo and Josephus, we did not meet with any thing during the whole of our researches, that could be called classical. We found, however, a number of very valuable MSS. of the New Testament though certainly none so old, by some centuries, as either the Alexandrian codex or the MS. of Beza; indeed I think I have myself procured some MSS. of the N.T., from monasteries in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, as old as any I saw in the libraries of Mount Athos. We met with only two copies of parts of the LXXII.; and not one MS. of any consequence, in either Syriac or Hebrew. There were several very beautiful MSS. of the different Greek fathers; and a prodigious quantity of polemical divinity. The rest of the shelves were filled with lives of the saints, *Synaxaria*, *Theotocaria*, *Liturgies*, *Menaia*, &c., &c., all relating to the peculiar doctrines or offices of the Greek church»<sup>2</sup>.

The number of 13.000 manuscripts mentioned by Hunt however, is very distant from that of about 4.300 appearing on the British Museum catalogue according to Lambros's note.

Besides that most evident inaccuracy, Carlyle in this very

1. p. 152 and forth.

2. p. 196.

letter of his does not hesitate to state that he had drawn up a very detailed catalogue of the whole of the contents of these celebrated repositories. Lambros, however, who had quite a thorough knowledge of Mount Athos manuscripts, writes e.g. about Vatopethi that the papers are mentioned very briefly. Nor could it be otherwise, since a simple contrast between the time available to the two clergymen and the number of manuscripts (i.e. the total of 4,300) shows that it was humanly impossible for them to work in a different way.

Carlyle's Diary is in itself an important evidence in spite of these doubtful pieces of information, whose only aim was to extol his work to his superiors in rank, and in spite of the methods he used to provide himself with manuscripts<sup>2</sup> at all costs—methods not differing this time too from the usual means of bribing the monks as Carlyle himself admits. The Diary, notwithstanding the reservations one would have as regards the disposition in which it was written, keeps its value as a token of an age concerning persons and things of the immediate interest of the neohellenic culture.

1. It is quite characteristic of the case that Hunt too makes an equally explicit statement in his account of his travel to Mount Athos. Here is the relative passage (as above, p. 220):

«We had now made a complete investigation of all the libraries in the monasteries of the peninsula, and taken catalogues of all the manuscripts they contain; each of which we had ourselves individually examined. The state in which we found these tattered and mouldy volumes (cum blattis et tincis pugnantes) often without beginnings or endings, rendered the task very tedious; and our patience was put to a very severe trial by not once discovering an unedited fragment of any classical author. But the reflection that we were employed on an object which had long been a desideratum in the theological and lite-

rary world, enabled us to struggle against the difficulties we met, and to overcome the prejudices, the jealousy, and the ignorance which often tempted the librarians of the different convents to thwart our views; and we endeavoured to complete our work as accurately as our means and abilities would admit.»

2. Carlyle in a letter to the Lord Bishop of Dunham, dated from British Palace, Pera, in February 29th of 1801, (Walpole, *Memoirs*, p. 176) wrote: «I have likewise examined the libraries (if such they may be called) contained in the convents of the Princes Islands, as well of those in Constantinople, and have been able (and I assure your Lordship, I have not stolen even one) to obtain twenty-nine Greek MSS. containing the Gospels or Epistles. We have only gotten the MSS. on profane literature.»



## NOTES

*The number after the comma denotes the line*

- p. 33, 23. *Dr. Hutton.* The person concerned is the geologist James Hutton (1726 - 1797), who published his «Theory of the Earth» in 1795 and is the originator of modern theory of formation of the earth's crust and uniformitarian theory of geology.
- p. 34, 5. *Matthew.* He is the interpreter who accompanied the two travellers during their touring. See also p. 61 and 66.
- p. 36, 35 - 37. *Into a most... kind.* Hunt (p. 202 as above) gives the following account of the conditions: «A room where the old tattered volumes were thrown together in the greater confusion, mostly without beginning or end, warm-eaten, damaged by mice, and mouldy by damp».
- p. 37, 9. *Patriarch Procopio.* Procopios, former Archbishop of Smyrna, headed the Church of Constantinople from 1785 to 1789, when he was banished to Mount Athos. M. Ghedeon (*Patriarchal Tables*, Constantinople, s.d., p. 669) states as place of exile Lavras Monastery.
- p. 37, 23. *St. Saba.* Carlyle wrote about his visit to Saint Savas Monastery in his letter to the Bishop of Durham sent from Constantinople on 23.7.1800 (Walpole, *Memoirs*, p. 183 as above).
- p. 37, 33. *The school of Batopaide.* Hunt (Walpole, *Memoirs*, p. 200, as above) gives information concerning Eugenios Voulgaris as well as his activities after his teaching at Mount Athos. As regards the school he assures that the students increased from 70 to 200. (See my relative article in «Nea Hestia», p. 94 as above).
- p. 39, 16. *They sang.* Hunt (Walpole, *Memoirs*, p. 201, as above) remarks the following: «My companion, Mr. Carlyle, who wished much to know the subject of their songs, found they were very similar to the old border songs in England, describing either the petty wars of neighbouring Agas, or the successful opposition on the part of the Albanians to Pashas sent from the Turkish court».
- p. 40, 2. *Caricoes.* This is the Italian word *cárico* (Hunt spells it with only *s* in plural) meaning cargo.
- p. 40, 4. *Chiliai.* This is the island Alonissos, in Northern Sporades, also called Chiliodromia or Liadromia.
- p. 42, 19. *An exiled archbishop (of Zea).* The Archbishop of Jia and Thermia is Sofronios, who was removed from office in 1796 and was succeeded to it by Nicodoros Roussos from Andros.
- p. 45, 28. *The exiled patriarch Gregorio.* Patriarch Gregory V headed

- the Constantinople Church from May 1, 1797 to December 19, 1798, when he was banished to Mount Athos.
- p. 46, 14. *A couple of exiled archbishops.* One of the two Archbishops was that of Jia, about whom see above, note on p. 42, 19.
- p. 46, 18. *The dinner consisted of... 30 different dishes.* Hunt (Walpole, *Memoirs* p. 208, as above) gives the following account of the dinner: «We found his table furnished in a style quite ex-conventual, with lamp sausages, hams and French wines. His dispensing power seems to remain although he is dethroned».
- p. 49, 11 - 12. *Bassianus... Fingal.* The Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (211 - 217), commonly called Caracalla, was born with the name Septimius Bassianus. Fingal is the legendary hero of Ireland, who lived in the third century A.D. and was father of Ossian. The two names, Bassianus and Fingal, are connected by Carlyle by reason of the campaign of Bassianus's father Septimius Severus to Britain, where he took his two sons with him.
- p. 49, 22. *Morithno.* This is the old and abandoned Monastery established in the tenth century by the Orthodox Italian monks from Amalfi and merged with Great Lavras Monastery in the twelfth century. Morfonou is a perversion of the name Amalfini.
- p. 49, 25. *«Bosom'd high in tufted trees».* Line 78 from John Milton's poem «L'Allegro».
- p. 51, 36. *Dovedale... Matlock.* Dovedale : Valley in district of Derbyshire well-known for its wooded limestone gorge with caves and shallow holes. Matlock : Urban district in the West Derbyshire lying in a deep narrow valley cut in the mountain limestone.
- p. 54, 8. *Frankopoli.* Hunt remarks (p. 21, as above) that Frankopoli had served as chief interpreter to the Prussian Legation at Constantinople, which he had actually been. John Frankopoli was known as a scholar, too ; he had translated Ovid's «Metamorphoses», but this translation was not published.
- p. 54, 30. *Archbishop of Belgrade.* Archbishop of Belgrade (Verati) was, at the time, Joasaph I, for the second time (1765 - 1801) (his first term had been from 1752 - 1760).
- p. 55, 37. *Anthemios.* Anthemios of Jerusalem (1758 - 1808) is the author of «Paternal teaching» (1798) which was refuted by Coray in his «Fraternal teaching» (1798).
- p. 60, 4. *Buchan.* He is William Buchan (1729 - 1805) author of the popular «Domestic Medicine» (1769).
- p. 65, 12. *Agio Basilios.* This monastery had of old merged with that of Chilandarion. The following note is found on the list of manuscripts (Lambros, as above) : «No MSS. of any kind».



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*Alkis Anghelou*