

Saint Irenaeos

**On the 22nd of August,
the holy Church commemorates
the holy Martyrs IRENAEOS,
OR, and OROPSIS,
who were slain by the sword.²⁹**

Irenaeos, the blessed martyr, the first of three sacred witnesses for Christ, was a deacon of the Church. Since he boldly proclaimed Christ as true God, he was arrested by the unbelieving and made to stand before the ruler. The holy Or and Oropsis, who were also Christians, were presented along with Saint Irenaeos. They all confessed the Faith of Christ. The three men of God were cast into the flames, wherein a dew descended from heaven and extinguished the fire. The contestants emerged unharmed. The three martyrs were then cast to wild beasts. Again, they sustained not the slightest injury. Following this, they were suspended from wooden posts and pitilessly scraped with instruments. Finally, the three blessed martyrs were beheaded and received from Christ the crowns of the contest.

**On the 22nd of August,
the holy Church commemorates
the Synaxis of our most holy Lady
THEOTOKOS Prousiotissa.³⁰**

Prousiotissa, our Lady of Prousa (Prusa), is the subject of our narration today. The present account surrounding her icon was recorded when Hellas was humbled under the Ottoman yoke. In the region of Litza and Agrapha, we find the mountain called by the ancient Greeks Orthrys. It is the first to receive the sun's rays before any mountaintop in Greece. Presently, the mountain is known as Velouchi or Delouchi. The highest mountain in the range

²⁹ See note under notice for Saint Irenaeos, Bishop of Sirmium, commemorated by the holy Church on the 23rd of August, discussing the identity of today's saint with the hieromartyr of Sirmium.

³⁰ For a fuller history see *History of the Most Holy Prousiotissa*, Ἱστορικὸ Παναγίας Προυσιώτισσας, trans. by Prof. Paul Chrysikos, introduction by Archimandrite Chrysostom, Superior of Proussos (GR: Published by the Sacred Monastery of Proussos, 1992). The handwritten codex of Kyril Kastanophyllis, housed in the venerable Monastery of Pyrsos or Prousos, is a record of the history of the icon and the monastery that grew around it.

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³² Prousos Monastery (38°44
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is Oetis, which covers the space between Pindos and Parnassas. At the foot of Velouchi and to the east, we find Fthiotis; to the west is Karpenesi³¹ and also the seat of the metropolis of Litza and Agrapha; to the south it faces Thermopylae; and to the north, there lie the mountains of Agrapha and Thessaly, as well as Pindos, Metsovon, and Olympos. Our interest is turned southwest of Velouchi, comprising of other mountains (Andro, Haliki, Korakas, Malaos, Oksia) which are so difficult to traverse that it defies the imagination. We can see on the right side of these mountains the beginning of the tributaries of the river Achelous. At this location, among these mountains, and at the steepest position, is the home of the sacred Monastery of the Theotokos Prousiotissa.³² It was in this practically untraversable terrain that the icon found a nest in the rocks of a fearsome and untrodden cavern.

The church in the cavern, dedicated to the Dormition of the Theotokos, is adorned with a polyeleos (chandelier of oil lamps), iconostasion, candelabras, and frescoes. Among the relics is the holy skull of New-martyr Clement, Bishop of Ankyra, as well as a piece of the true Cross of our Lord. At the left of the cavern, one may look down into the deepest recess of the cavern to see the Chapel of Prousiotissa. The chapel possesses an iconostasion and the miraculous icon of the Theotokos. Why and how did the sacred icon come to this remote mountain retreat? It traveled to Greece from the splendid city of Prousa (Prusa)³³ during the period of Iconoclasm when the iconoclast Emperor Theophilus reigned (829-842). Today the icon has three oil lamps suspended before the image of the Virgin and Child. One of the fathers of the monastery is assigned daily to remain in the chapel.

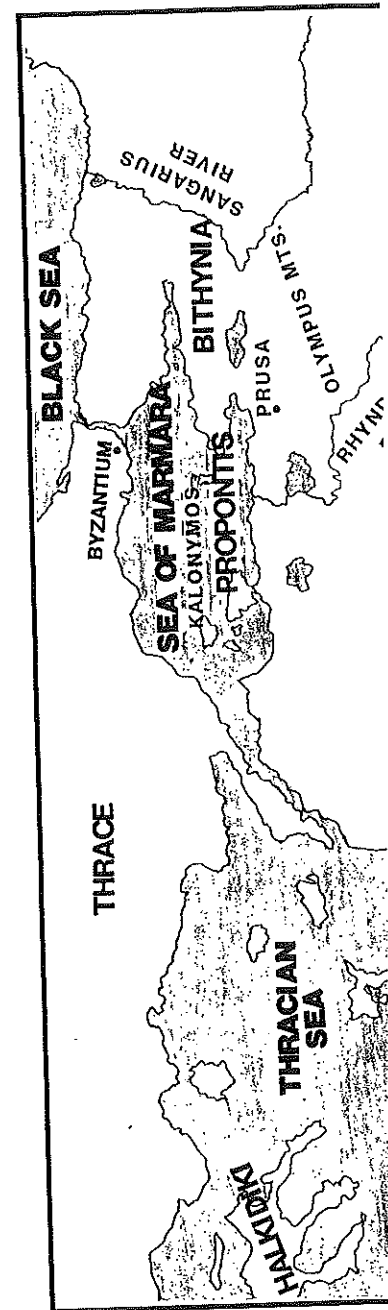
³¹ Karpenesi of Karpenissi, of the Evrytania prefecture, is northeast of Prousos.

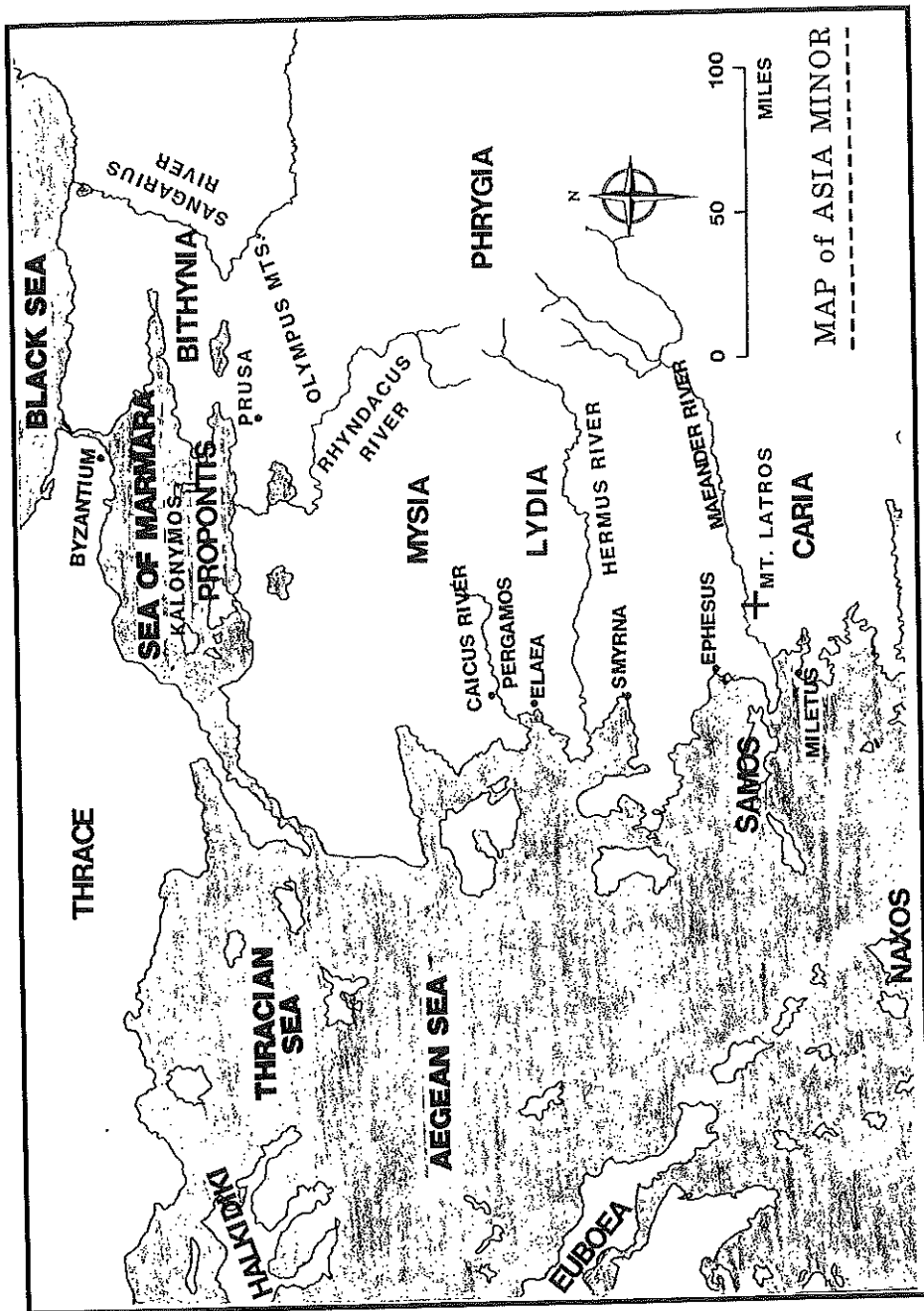
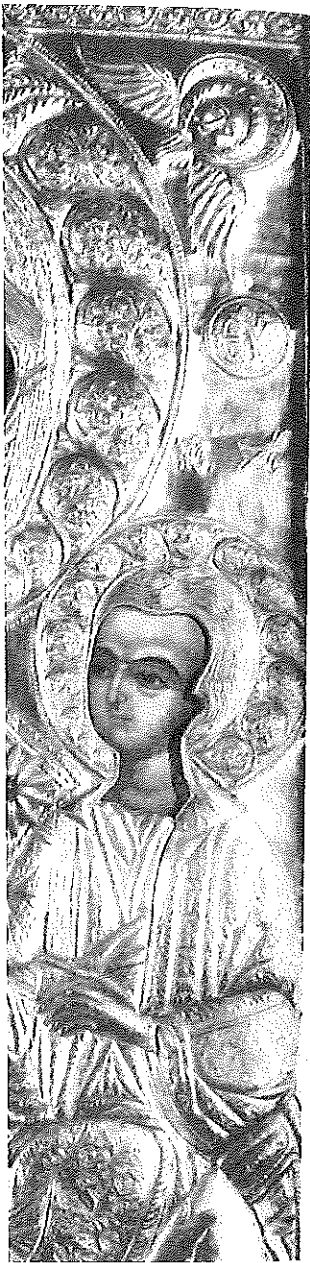
³² Prousos Monastery (38°44'52.59" N 21°39'24.94") is one of the few monasteries saved in Evrytania. The town of Prousos, at an altitude of 812 meters, is part of the Evrytania prefecture in the region of Sterea Hellas. The Prousos Gorge, near the village of Prousos, through which the river Karpenissiotis flows, is breathtaking.

³³ We see that the Theotokos fled from one mountain to another. Bursa, formerly Prusa in northwestern Turkey, is along the northern foothills of lofty Ulu Dag (the ancient Mysian Olympos). This famous city prospered during the time of Justinian (527-565), who built there both a palace and imperial baths. The city first fell to the Seljuq Turks at the end of the 11th C.; but, beginning with the First Crusade in 1096, it changed hands several times. After the crusader sack of Constantinople in 1204, it served as a center of Byzantine resistance. The Ottomans took it in the 1320s and made it their first great capital; but Timur (Tamerlane) sacked the city in 1402. When the Ottomans recovered their territory, they relocated their capital, first to Edirne (1413) and later to Constantinople (1458). Bursa, nevertheless, expanded and prospered under Ottoman rule, as she was especially known as a center of the silk trade. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2004 Deluxe Edition CD-ROM, s.v. "Bursa."



Icon of Panagia Prousiotissa





Prusa and Western Asia Minor

It is generally believed, but not certain, that the Prousiotissa Icon is the work of the Evangelist Luke. If so, it is one that was executed after her dormition. Whether or not it is the work of the apostle, it is a wonderworking icon. She benefits those who come to her in faith, so that demons are dispelled, the blind see, the cripple walk, barren women bear live children, and many more miraculous happenings take place as we shall see. Let us first narrate what we know about the icon and why her monastery in Greece is called Pysos or Prousos or Proussos. Indeed, the monastery is known by both these appellations, but the name Prousiotissa seems to prevail.

The Prousiotissa Icon During the Iconoclast Controversy

As we said, during the reign of Theophilus, an impious imperial decree was issued. It ordered the destruction by fire of the icons. Those Orthodox Christians found venerating the icons were liable to torture and exile. Iconoclasts, in the meantime, were installed in public offices; whereas the Orthodox were deprived of their high posts and banished. The year was 829, when the Theotokos icon was still abiding at Prousa and making miracles. Her most revered church was spared, up to that point, from the iconoclasts.³⁴ When the imperial command arrived in Prousa, one devout Orthodox man, the young son of a nobleman at court, was moved by divine zeal. Since he daily witnessed at Prousa the wonderworkings of the Theotokos icon, he was resolved to disobey Theophilus' order to destroy any sacred image. He managed to take the Theotokos icon and flee in the direction of Greece, which at that moment in time was not being harassed by the iconoclasts.

The Prousiotissa Icon Disappears

The young man found his way as far as the seaport of Kallipolis, on a narrow peninsula where the Dardanelles opens into the Sea of Marmara.³⁵ Although it is not known to us or to the young man why the following occurred, yet he lost the icon. Who can describe his disappointment and despair? Who can count the tears he shed from the depths of his aching heart. He repined and lamented, uttering, "Alas! Alas! Wretched me! My Lady the Theotokos has abandoned me! On account of my sins, she has taken away her icon. It must needs be that she wishes to protect her icon from damage. But I will not go back to Prousa. I cannot bear to watch the heretics destroy the sacred icons of my church." Hence, the young man departed from Kallipolis. He repaired to New Patras, which today is called Hypati.³⁶ Since he was a man of means, he built the Church of Hagia Sophia, a smaller replica of the one in

³⁴ The church, later, was locked up by the Turks when Prousa was conquered by the Turkish Sultan Orhan.

³⁵ Kallipolis or Gallipoli (Turkish Gelibolu), in European Turkey, is 126 miles (203 kilometers) west-southwest of Constantinople.

³⁶ Nea Patras (Hypati) near Lamia.

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The Prousiotissa Icon Reappears in Greece

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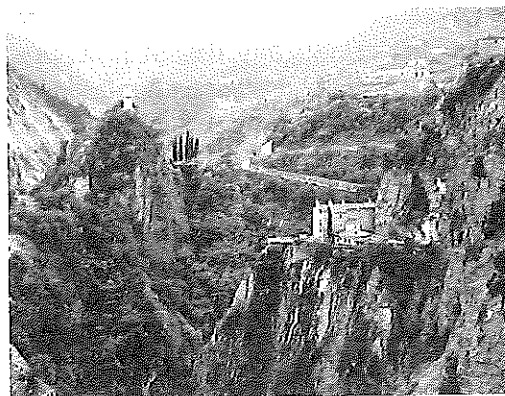
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Constantinople. This was his consolation in his self-imposed exile. We know of these events since it was left to us in the handwritten record of the historian Papa Jonas, the first Kapsokalyvite. But this is not the end of the exploits of the young man from Prousa.

The Prousiotissa Icon Reappears in Greece

Now, during those times, the present-day site of the sacred Prousiotissa Monastery had no pathway. The route to Aitolia (Aetolia, Etolia), which commenced in the neighboring village of Hagios Demetrios (present-day



Prousiotissa Monastery

Kastania),³⁷ went across the mountain of Haliki. In the ninth century there were no villages in this area, save for a few little habitations for shepherds to the east and west called Platani and Perdikada. These spots were hardly habitable for animals, much less human beings. Nevertheless, since the iconoclasts persecuted the Orthodox, many of the faithful fled to the mountains to hide. There was one shepherd boy who used to tend his father's flock of goats. One night, as he rested in that area which later became the monastery's cemetery, he heard from the cavern the soft chanting of sweet hymns. He was stirred from his slumber and wished to discover where the voices were emanating from in that desolate wilderness. He then observed a radiant ray of light and a brilliant column that came from the cavern and soared into the sky. It was only by divine dispensation that God allowed the boy to imagine he beheld a rainbow, lest the youth should lose his wits from fear. But as he composed himself, he thought inwardly, "But it has not rained. The sky is clear." Filled with trepidation, he hastened to his father and described the spectacle. The father did not believe him, and remarked, "Thou art afraid of thine own shadow. It is nothing, so cease fearing." But the youth persisted, saying, "Nay, truly I did see a beam of light." The father, thereupon, accompanied the lad to the spot. Only then was he persuaded of the truth of the situation. But the father became frightened and fled with the boy. At daylight he returned with other people, who observed the same supernatural light.

Plucking up courage, they moved forward. What a great mystery was then unfolded! They beheld the holy icon in a corner of that dark cavern. It

³⁷ The village of Kastania or Kastanea (38°22'08.84"N 21°25'45.23"E) is east of Prousos of the Evrytania prefecture in the region of Sterea Hellas.

was shining forth rays of light like lightning. They kneeled and prayed, rejoicing in their hearts at discovering such a treasure. They either went or sent for tools with which they opened the cave that the icon might dwell in their midst. In that hideaway, they lit oil lamps and burned incense before the sacred image, which they venerated with deep reverence. No one knew how the monastery came to be in such a secluded location. One only need bring to mind how God transported the Prophet Abba Koum from Jerusalem to Babylon, where Daniel was in the lions' den. As a result of the vision of the fiery column reaching the heavens, the monastery that developed was called Pysros,³⁸ the Greek word signifying beacon or torch.

The Nobleman from Prousa is Reunited with the Prousiotissa Icon

Not after many days, the event spread from mouth to mouth and hither and thither. It was not very long before the young nobleman from Prousa learned of the particulars of the discovery, as well as of the account of the vision of abundant light forming a fiery column that pierced the sky. Upon receiving the intelligence, it took him two days to reach the cavern. The moment he set his eyes upon the august icon, he recognized it as the Prousiotissa Icon. Who can describe his joy at being reunited with the sacred image from home? His elation caused him to kiss it ardently. He was of a mind to take the icon with him and return to Hypati or New Patras. He gave gifts to the shepherds who made the finding. But these particular shepherds, like the shepherds at our Lord's nativity, were grieved to let go of the joy of such a treasure. They bore a grudge against the noblemen, who said to them, "My brethren, do not protest against me. You have no right to it. First of all, the icon is mine. I have given you gifts as finders' fees. If I should wish to build a church, this location would be far too remote and desolate. I think you will agree that it is hardly a suitable site for pilgrims to gather." Speaking thus, he took the icon and left the sorrowing shepherds.

The nobleman reached the hilltop of the road, where there now remains only the ruins of a chapel to the Theotokos. Since he and those in his party felt quite tired, he placed the icon in the chapel. He then sat down to take

³⁸ The history of Pysros is also found in the Chapel of the Holy Icon in a codex, known as the second history (1518), when Martyrios was the hegumen. There is also a patriarchal sigillum in the Monastery of Myrtia, where the name Pysros is mentioned. Other monasteries in the area of Pysros, such as Kataphygio, Hagia Paraskeve (near the homeland of New Hieromartyr Kosmas), Saint John the Baptist at Trevekista (the ascetical hermitage of Martyrs Iakovos, Hierodeacon Iakovos, and Monk Dionysios), Saint George of Photeino, Holy Apostles, and others, all under the Bishop of Arta, are now almost all in ruins. However, Prousos has survived. In a book, entitled *Anthonieta [Intelligible Flowers]*, found in the Athonite Monastery of Xeropotamos, mention is made of the Prousos Monastery of our Lady in the province of Litza.

his ease with the others. A realization that the icon was theirs, shepherds, accusing them in his party toward the shepherd. It was then that the nobleman saying: "O young man, go find me, and it will be for the better. It is better for thee to find peasants and shepherds, than heresiarchs. If thou wilt, abide with me, and it will be for the better." He acted promptly, by settling in the houses. As for the young man, with only one of his men following him, he went back to the monastery. He perceived that it was the will of God. He, thereupon, constructed a manservant, found rest for himself, and that a certain Hieromonk, named Prousiotissa, below the village of Hagios Prousiotissa, manservant. The nobleman received the name of Timotheos. He built a *kellion* (a hermitage) for himself and rest. We are told that Father Prousiotissa, in a pleasing manner, until the Lord took wing into the heavens. The church, the one that Father Prousiotissa is not visible.

Early Miracles of the Prousiotissa Icon

It would not be pious of all Christians, the Theotokos, venerated, and not a few of wonderworking deeds have been reported. Other written reports attempted to take captive Meletios. Indeed, in another report, the monastery church was not notified in time so as to take flight. When they were informed

³⁹ Aitolikon (Etolikon) municipality, Aitolioakarnania (Aetoloakarnania).

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his ease with the others. After they all napped, the nobleman awoke to the realization that the icon went missing again. He immediately thought of the shepherds, accusing them in his heart of snatching it. As he moved along with his party toward the shepherds, they reached a narrow pass near the river. It was then that the nobleman heard a voice from on high, addressing him and saying: "O young man, go forth and find what is good; but do not tire thyself. It is better for thee to find rest among these narrow and wild defiles, with peasants and shepherds, than to dwell in the city with political-minded heresiarchs. If thou wilt, abide here with me. Go to the place where thou didst find me, and it will be for thine own good." Now no one else heard this voice. He acted promptly, by setting free his servants and sending them to their own houses. As for the young man from Prousa, he forsook the things of the world. With only one of his menservants, who voluntarily stayed with him and followed him, he went back to Pysos where he found the holy icon. He perceived that it was the will of the Theotokos that he should abide there as well. He, thereupon, constructed a chapel within the cavern. He, as well as his manservant, found rest for their souls in that place. Holy tradition informs us that a certain Hieromonk, named Raphael, from one of the little monasteries below the village of Hagios Demetrios, tonsured both the nobleman and his manservant. The nobleman received the name of Dionysios. The manservant received the name of Timothy. A later tradition says that Father Dionysios built a *kellion* (a hermitage) just opposite the monastery, where he found quiet and rest. We are told that Father Dionysios spent the rest of his days in a God-pleasing manner, until the Lord granted him everlasting rest. Hence, his soul took wing into the heavens. His disciple, Father Timothy, buried him inside the church, the one that Father Dionysios had built. However, today, his tomb is not visible.

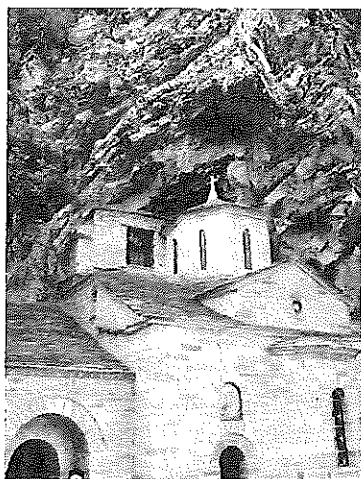
Early Miracles of the Prousiotissa Icon

It would not be pious to omit the miracles performed by the Mistress of all Christians, the Theotokos. Many of these wonders have been documented, and not a few of them took place in recent times. Some of the wonderworking deeds have been silenced on account of negligence in reporting them. Other written reports were destroyed by the Albanians when they attempted to take captive Mesolonghi (Messolonghi) and Aitolikon.³⁹

1. Indeed, in another instance, due to the carelessness of the candle-lighter, the monastery church caught fire. The fathers of the monastery were not notified in time so as to be able to save anything, not even the holy icon. When they were informed of what was taking place, the flames already

³⁹ Aitolikon (Etolikon) municipality belongs to the Mesolonghi province of the Aitoloakarnania (Aetoloakarnania, Etoloakarnania) prefecture.

encircled the church. It was not possible to run inside and take anything. The fathers just stood there, weeping and lamenting mostly for the irretrievable loss of the icon and the library. The church was burned right down to the rocks. Not a stick of wood or a book survived the conflagration. But see the miracle! When the fire was finally quenched, they beheld the Prousiotissa Icon standing upright upon the chapel's altar, which was untouched by the flames. For this divine rescue they gave glory to God and our Lady the Theotokos, who saved her icon untouched by any damage. One may see, even to this day, the walls blackened by the smoke that filled the holy cavern. Since that singular happening, the sanctuary has been restored twice: in 1587 and, again, in 1754 by the Monk Pelagios. But hearken now to another miracle.



Cavern and Church

and hope in the Theotokos, they retired to their cells to sleep. In the morning—O Mistress, thy wonders abound!—they observed the same boulder had fallen, as it was unavoidable, but not as necessity would have dictated. The laws of nature were overcome. The boulder certainly fell but not as nature intended. It, rather, collapsed to the right side of the Church without touching the sacred temple in the least. The fathers, elated at this divine intervention, gave glory to God and the immaculate Theotokos. The boulder, which now lay to the side of the cavern, remains there to this day. Its monolithic presence gives tacit testimony that heralds the miracle for all who pass by. Let us continue with another wonderful narration.

3. To the right of the church, there is also a terrifying cliff. The seeming abyss finally ends in a deep pit that abuts the monastery. If one should

2. Above the dome of this church there was a boulder glued fast to the cavern, as though it were one with it. This boulder was overlaid with a thick ivy, indigenous to that area. One time, however, the ivy withered and left the boulder undressed of her foliage. Afterward, when an earthquake jolted the boulder, causing it to loosen, it was ready to fall down upon the church and demolish it. The fathers had neither the means nor the ways to remedy the pending danger. They resorted to chanting a Supplicatory Canon to the most holy Virgin and Panagia⁴⁰ to aid them in the inevitable damage. After their service, which they conducted with faith

have the misfortune of fall certainly perish. Just glanced back in fright. On one occasion a wife was near the cliff with expanded outwardly, the woman was accidentally pushed over the edge. Both the priest's wife and her child were thrown down that vast and deadly chasm. Everyone was grieved and horrified. One of the priest-monks, together with the kinfolk of the mother and child, made haste to collect the remains and bury them as they meet. When they finally reached the pit at the bottom of the cavern, an unexpected spectacle was revealed: Theotokos! The woman and child! Neither mother nor child survived the fall. They, of course, could not survive such a fall!" She replied to utter, 'My Panagia Prousiotissa! Theotokos guarded and protected all gave glory to our Lady in the grace of Prousiotissa! Now I have previously heard of our Lady's such a wonderworking, so they were startled and found the truth. Indeed, the magnitude of this wonderworking, by eyewitnesses wonderworking.

4. The monastery have water brought inside the cavern set as his goal, therefore, to His plan was to collect a river made to pass outside the cavern during the summer months, he installed a pipe only as needed. In order to The hired workers needed the location had only hard rock days, as the craftsmen had

⁴⁰ A favorite Greek appellation of the Mother of God, Panagia, literally means "All-holy one."

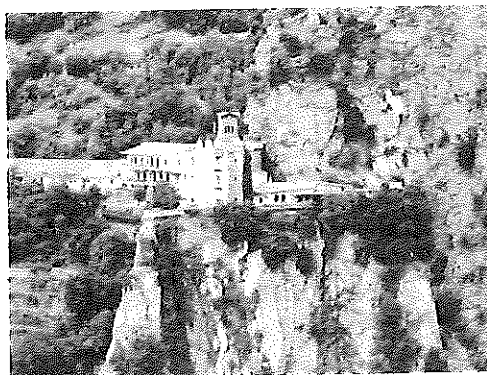
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have the misfortune of falling into this expanse of air, such a one should certainly perish. Just glancing down the vertiginous height, one would draw back in fright. On one occasion, the feast day of the monastery, the priest's wife was near the cliff with their infant in her arms. As the crowd grew and expanded outwardly, the woman was accidentally pushed over the edge. Both the priest's wife and her child were thrown down into that vast and deadly chasm. Everyone was grieved and horrified. One of the priest-monks, together with the kinfolk of the mother and child, made haste to collect their remains and bury them as was meet. When they finally reached the pit at the bottom of the cliff,

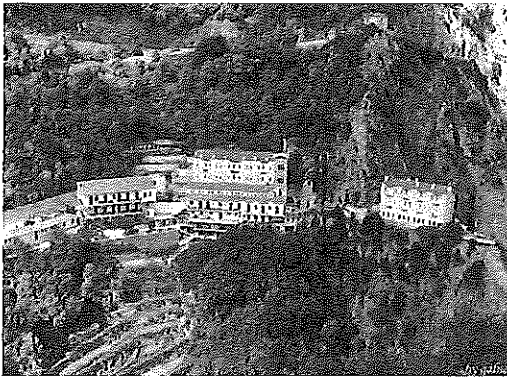


Prousiotissa Monastery

an unexpected spectacle was before them. O how we give thanks to thee, O Theotokos! The woman was sitting upon a rock and suckling her infant. Neither mother nor child sustained the slightest injury. They took her back to the monastery. They, of course, questioned her, excitedly, "How didst thou survive such a fall?" She replied, "Just as I was pushed over, I was only able to utter, 'My Panagia Prousiotissa, help me!' As you can see, our Lady the Theotokos guarded and protected both me and my little one." The people then all gave glory to our Lady the Theotokos, exclaiming together, "Great is the grace of Prousiotissa! Now have we seen with our own eyes what we had previously heard of our Lady!" The faithful were jubilant upon witnessing such a wonderworking, so that even those who attended who were not religious were startled and found themselves trembling before the day's happenings. Indeed, the magnitude of this miracle is still proclaimed, to the day of this writing, by eyewitnesses. Let us proceed and give heed to another wonderworking.

4. The monastery zealot, Papa Pelagios Kapsokalyvites, desired to have water brought inside the monastery so as to better serve the brothers. He set as his goal, therefore, to construct a cistern in front of the Church narthex. His plan was to collect a modest amount of water therein that would then be made to pass outside the door. Since precipitation decreased during the summer months, he installed a faucet on the tank that water might be drawn only as needed. In order to facilitate the work, he employed skilled craftsmen. The hired workers needed to apply all their skill and strength, since that location had only hard rock beneath them and no soft earth. On one of those days, as the craftsmen had breakfast by the work site, one of them began

talking to another and complaining, "My hands are aching from striking the rock." The foreman, Mastronatos from Albania, was also present. In the



Present-day Monastery of Prousiotissa

meantime, one of their lads, a helper, recounted what he saw in a dream. "A Woman," he explained, "came to me and bade me strike to the right of where we are digging. She told me that water would gush forth abundantly, so that we might no longer trouble ourselves." His fellow workers laughed at the suggestion. They sported with him, "Thou wilt see many things in thy sleep, boy, only to be undone when thou art awakened!" This and similar nonsense did they hurl at him. The lad, embarrassed by their relentless teasing, left the breakfast table early and began digging where the Woman had indicated—to the right. Almost immediately, sweet fresh water sprung forth. Behold the wonder! It flows to this very day. All the men witnessed the miracle and gave glory to God and the Lady Theotokos. Now they perceived the true identity of "the Woman" who visited the boy. Hence, the inside fountain was installed from which the fresh water continues to flow. It is especially salubrious for those who suffer from fever and who partake with piety. This wonderworking spring manifested itself on Thursday, the 29th day of the month of July, in the year 1764, at nine o'clock in the morning.

5. During that same period, there was a rich man's young son who was possessed by demons. Hailing from Mesolonghi, the young man was brought by his kindred to Panagia in order for him to find a cure and to remain at the monastery as a monk. The odious demon, who was particularly malevolent, compelled the young man to utter strange things so distant that no one comprehended him. The case being such, the father judged that it was prudent to take counsel in this matter with the very learned Anastasios Gordios. As it happened, another young man, named Demetrios, a friend of the father of the demonized, was dispatched alone to visit this theological teacher. Gordios quoted a passage from the Gospel that applied to the matter at hand: "This kind goeth not out except by prayer and fasting [Mt. 17:21]." As Demetrios was approaching the monastery, the demonized man hastened from his cell. The vile demon spoke through his victim, saying to the fathers: "The fellow whom you sent to make inquiries concerning my case is come. He is by the river even now. So go and ask him what that worthless man told him to do in regard to me." An hour later Demetrios arrived, to the wonder of the fathers. He

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The possessed man him a little bread and gave h else until he lost all bodily c reasoning, they charged hi faith unhesitating. Concurr- behalf. In but a little while man was delivered from the shown to be a sensible and man did not wish to keep monk. Instead, he wished t evening, he packed his clo in the morning. During tha his heart. Instead of going the everlasting one beyond sojourn came as it did. I working.

6. Klephts⁴¹ (or in t kouros, kidnaped a man n: hideaway. They began to piasters or florins from hin of old against the Christi: beseech you, my brothers infidel, against whom you have been baptized in the s of Jesus Christ and the Pa you claim. If you have rec seems that such an inforr captive, but these Klephts; declared, "Here in the mo: the ransom of eight hundr

⁴¹ Klephts (Gk. for "thieve sojourned in the rugged Greel Although the word means "th that era. The Klephts were ge reprisals from Ottoman offi settlements. They tried to live with poor or adventurous pe bands of Klephts took part in Ottomans.

reported what the teacher Gordios recited. They followed his salient instructions or, much rather, the prescription given by Christ in the Gospel.

The possessed man was made to keep a fast. Every three days they fed him a little bread and gave him some water. The young man partook of nothing else until he lost all bodily comeliness. When the sufferer regained some little reasoning, they charged him to offer prayer to God and the Theotokos with faith unhesitating. Concurrently, they also prayed as much as they could in his behalf. In but a little while, with the grace of the Theotokos, the demonized man was delivered from the demon that troubled him. The young man was now shown to be a sensible and thoughtful person. Later however, the same young man did not wish to keep the vow that he had made—that is, to become a monk. Instead, he wished to return to his homeland and take a wife. Thus, one evening, he packed his clothes and readied two mules to leave the monastery in the morning. During that same night he was stricken with a mighty pain in his heart. Instead of going to his homeland here, he delivered up his soul for the everlasting one beyond. Only the Lord knows why the end of his earthly sojourn came as it did. Let us now continue to recount another wonder-working.

6. Klephts⁴¹ (or in this case, highway robbers), lurking in parts of Apokouros, kidnaped a man named John. They took him to their out-of-the-way hideaway. They began to tyrannize their captive in order to extort either piasters or florins from him. They comported themselves even as the idolaters of old against the Christians. John implored their sensibilities, saying, "I beseech you, my brothers, it is enough that we endure the impious and the infidel, against whom you ought to protect us, since you are Christians who have been baptized in the same Orthodox font with me. I beg you, for the love of Jesus Christ and the Panagia, for I do not have the piasters and wealth that you claim. If you have received intelligence other than what I am claiming, it seems that such an informant spoke in enmity toward me." So spoke the captive, but these Klephts gave no consequence to his pleas. Much rather, they declared, "Here in the mountains, we know not Christ and Panagia. So pay us the ransom of eight hundred piasters that thou mightest escape with thy life.

⁴¹ Klephts (Gk. for "thieves") were bandits and martial-like mountaineers who sojourned in the rugged Greek mountains and back country under the Ottoman Empire. Although the word means "thieves," yet it had a positive connotation for the Greeks of that era. The Klephts were generally men who were fleeing vendettas, taxes, debts, or reprisals from Ottoman officials. They were known to raid travelers and isolated settlements. They tried to live in isolation and seek freedom. Their ranks often swelled with poor or adventurous peasants, societal outcasts, and escaped criminals. Many bands of Klephts took part in some form in the Greek War of Independence against the Ottomans.

For be assured, O prisoner, that we have given an oath not to release thee without receiving money." The captive, again, thought to importune them and pleaded, "I do have one horse. If you will take it, the price it would fetch would pay most of the eight hundred. The remaining hundred I shall owe you, only let me go now, if you please."

But these Klephts were like wild animals. They did not even respond to his proposal. The chief thief only gave the order to take John and bind him, with his hands behind his back, to a nearby fir tree. During that night, since John could not sleep in that position, he kept supplicating Panagia Prousiotissa to rescue him. Close to dawn, when he slumbered a little out of grief and exhaustion, he beheld a Woman who said to him, "Rise up, man, why art thou slouching?" He awakened and noticed that his hands were freed from their fetters. He also observed that some of the Klephts were gone and that the rest were fast asleep. He fled quickly from that place. The following day, he reached the elder, Papa Pelagios, and related to him how the Lady Theotokos delivered him out of the hands of those wild Klephts. Within three days, guards⁴² slew each of those bandits. Consequently, they lost this life and the

⁴² Armatoloi [also called Armatoles (pl.) in English] were Greek Orthodox irregular soldiers, or militia, commissioned by the Ottomans to enforce the sultan's authority within an administrative district called an Armatoliki [pl. Armatolikia]. The latter were created in areas of Greece that had high levels of brigandage, or in regions that were difficult for Ottoman authorities to govern due to the inaccessible terrain, such as the Agrapha mountains of Thessaly, where the first Armatoliki was established in the mid-1400s. An Armatoliki was usually commanded by a *kapetanio*s, often a former Klepht captain who had been hired by the governing Ottoman Pasha to combat, or at least contain, brigand groups in the region. In most cases, the captain would have gained a level of notoriety as a Klepht in order to force the Ottomans to give him the amnesty and privilege that came with an Armatoliki. Therefore, it was not surprising that Armatolos units were organized in very much the same way as the Klephts (Klephtes), with a captain assisted by a lieutenant called a Protopalikaro, who was usually a kinsman, and the remaining force made up of Armatoloi. Over time, the roles of the Armatoloi and Klephts became blurred, with both reversing their roles and allegiances as the situation demanded, all the while maintaining the delicate status-quo with the Ottoman authorities. Many captains ran their Armatoliki like a personal fiefdom, exacting a heavy toll of extortion and violence on the local peasantry. During the Greek War of Independence, the Armatoloi, along with the Klephts, formed the nucleus of the Greek fighting forces, and played a prominent part throughout its duration. During the 18th C., there were around seventeen Armatolikia. Ten of them were located in Thessaly and the eastern regions of Sterea Hellas; four were in Epiros, Akarnania, and Aitolia; and three were in Macedonia. Marksmanship was the proverbial hallmark that defined the Palikaria. They were also capable in the art of ambushing and mobility. The Palikaria were resilient toward thirst, hunger, and even

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The "Print" of Panagia Pr

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1821. See online *Wikipedia*, s.v

⁴³ Mikro Chorio or Paleo Mikro
(Megalo Horio), belongs to the

⁴⁴ Probably Kerasia (Kerassia)
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next one on account of their lack of compassion. But let us proceed to another wonderworking.

7. Heidi, a woman from Mikro Chorio (Micro Horio),⁴³ had lost most of her eyesight. During the day, she could discern a little light. At night, she could see nothing. If she went outside of her house, she needed someone to guide her. One day, on the 18th of November, in the year 1786, she happened to be on the small family farm situated near Kerasia.⁴⁴ It was nearly eight o'clock in the evening. Heidi could barely see the people next to her. A young boy took her by the hand in order to lead her to her lodging. On the way she kept stumbling over rocks, so that many times she fell face forward. Finally she cried and sighed so deeply, even as the blind man in the Gospel, that even the boy was affected by her plight and began to weep. They then sat down together and rested. The blind woman, with a plaintive voice, prayed aloud, "My Lady and Mistress Theotokos, Queen of the earth and of the heavens, I beseech thee to grant me the light of my eyes. If thou wilt vouchsafe me my eyesight, I promise to go and venerate thy holy icon, the Prousiotissa." Behold the wonder! Straightway, just as she finished her entreaty, she turned to the lad and said, "I shall no longer require thy services, my child, to lead me back down to my lodging, because now I see very well." She then reached her lodging without any assistance, giving glory and praise to God and the all-immaculate Theotokos.

The "Print" of Panagia Prousiotissa

8. We now need to remind the readers of the location mentioned earlier, where the blessed Prousiote nobleman (later Father Dionysios of Prousiotissa) heard the voice of the Theotokos. Being a real zealot of Orthodoxy, he discovered a print of the Panagia, not made by hands (*acheiropoieton*) drawn on a deeply rooted rock. The site is located between two untrodden mountain peaks, where a river flows. It is to the right of the road in a rather lofty place spoken of by many. The site has been acknowledged by

⁴²(...continued)

the painful difficulties in their encounters with the Klephts. For the Ottomans, it became progressively more difficult for them to distinguish the Armatoloi from the Klephts. Both groups began to establish relations with one another under a common ethnic cause. This collaboration was also based on mutual sentiments against foreign conquerors. Since both groups were armed and possessed military experience, they helped Greeks become better warriors than the Turks before the advent of the Greek Revolution of 1821. See online *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Armatoloi."

⁴³ Mikro Chorio or Paleo Mikro Horio, now a mountain resort, west of Mega Chorio (Megalo Horio), belongs to the Potamia municipality of the Evrytania prefecture.

⁴⁴ Probably Kerasia (Kerassia) of the Panetolikon municipality of the Trichonida province that belongs to the Etoloakarnania prefecture in West Greece.

both Christians and heterodox. Even the atheists recognize that it was not made by hand. The evidence is their own eyes. It does not have the attributes of a painting with colors. But rather, it is like a drawing with shades similar to the natural colorations of the rock. The design is similar to another icon of the Theotokos that is named Kykkos, which is found on the island of Cyprus. Encircling the rock icon are other similar designs that resemble the orders of the celestial host. Christians, passing by this place where the images appeared miraculously, have the custom of making a prostration to the ground with profound reverence. The place is known as "The Print [Τύπωμα] of Prousiotissa." It is called thus, despite the fact that the icon has the form of the Kykkos Icon.⁴⁵ However, let us recount some of the wonderworkings performed through the "Print" in the name of Prousiotissa.

9. On one occasion some Albanians, together with a group of Christians, were passing by the "Print." As soon as the company was before the "Print," the Christians venerated the icon, as was their custom, and called upon the name of the Theotokos. Meanwhile, one of the Hagarenes among the Albanians, a fellow named Malios and surnamed Koudas (having come from the Albanian village of Koudousis), was an enemy of the Faith of the Christians. He was offended at seeing the Orthodox revere the "Print." Out of his mouth there poured forth a deluge of insults and blasphemies against the Theotokos. Divine judgment was swift. After spewing forth all his disrespect upon what is sacred, a rock dislodged. It was the size of a chestnut. It slammed into the head of the Muslim, suddenly dispatching his foul soul. Those present, who witnessed him pelted and felled, were aghast. The friends of that dead blasphemer were likewise stricken with terror. The Christians continued to praise the Lady Theotokos. Even now they proclaim this miracle, which was also witnessed to by the aforementioned Demetrios. And now an even greater wonderworking awaits your attention.

10. At about the same time, a Jew was on his way to Agrinion.⁴⁶ At length, he passed by the "Print." As he did so, he was gripped by fear when he heard a voice crying out, "God-slayer! God-slayer!" Together with that fearful cry, he beheld rocks falling about him and threatening to bury him. Filled with intense terror, he said to himself, "Since I am deemed such a person, I should decide now in favor of Baptism and repentance." Only by this declaration was he delivered from imminent peril. When he arrived in

⁴⁵ The Kykkos Icon has the design of the Axion Estin Icon, whereas the Prousiotissa Icon is of the Odegitria type.

⁴⁶ Agrinion or Agrinio (38°37'35.72"N 21°24'45.95"E) of the Trichonida province, belongs to the Etoloakarnania prefecture. It is thirty-nine meters from the town of Messolonghi.

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More Early Miracles of

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Agrinion, he made for Myrtia⁴⁷ where he was baptized. Following his divine illumination, he repaired to the Holy Mountain of Athos. It was there that he was tonsured a monk, receiving the name of Joseph. "We ourselves saw this man," notes the chronicler, "and he confessed the wonderworking which caused him to be baptized." Give heed, now, to another wonderworking of Prousiotissa.

More Early Miracles of Panagia Prousiotissa

11. Prousiotissa has also been appealed to at sea. A certain sea captain met with tempestuous weather. The ship then shoaled her water. It was in danger of being broken up as it was caught on the sandbar. Both crew and passengers were in peril of losing their lives. The air was pierced with their cries and laments, bewailing their misfortune. One of the passengers, named Nicholas, hailed from Mesolonghi.⁴⁸ He ran to the captain and said, "Unless thou shouldest beseech the Lady Theotokos Prousiotissa, of whom I know, we shall also perish." The captain hearkened. Following his immediate appeal for help from the Lady Theotokos, the ship was loosed from the sandbank and began to float while the sea grew completely calm. When they beheld this extraordinary phenomenon, they glorified God and the Panagia. In thanksgiving, they commissioned the fashioning of a gold jewel in the shape of a ship. By reason of their gratitude for her wonderworking, the votive was dedicated to Prousiotissa.

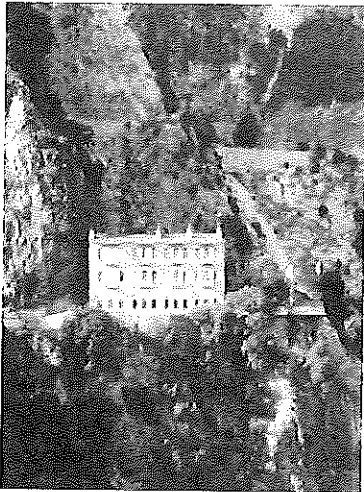
12. A married couple from Karpenesi, in distress over the children born to them that died, would not resort to diabolical means. They were God-fearing Christians who refused to dabble in sorcery. They deposited all their hope in our Lady Theotokos Prousiotissa. They said, "Let our Lady do with us as she determines. We shall be satisfied even if we should die without heirs and children, rather than take part in the council of the devils." But the Lady Theotokos blessed those Christians according to their faith. She put an end to their sorrow. Thereafter, the children born to them did not die. They survived. Every year, they went to visit and give thanks to the all-immaculate Theotokos, making known publicly the wonderworking they were vouchsafed.

13. A woman, named Chrysapho, hailed from Karpenesi. She, together with others, went on a pilgrimage to Prousos. The group from Karpenesi wished to venerate the icon of the Theotokos. Chrysapho also took her little child, named Demetrios. [Later, this same lad grew up to teach in the

⁴⁷ The village of Myrtia (38°35'15.71"N 21°37'02.31"E), of Thermon municipality and Trichonida province, belongs to Etoloakarnania. It is near Trichonida Lake. Loutra Myrtias is also known as "Red Wreath" on account of the red rock that overlooks the lake. Myrtia is fifty-five kilometers from Mesolonghi.

⁴⁸ Mesolonghi or Messolonghi (38°45'11.88"N 21°41'22.15"E) of the Etoloakarnania prefecture in the region of West Greece.

Greek School at Karpenesi, where he was known as Papa Demetris.] As Chrysapho passed by the "Print" of the Theotokos, where the road begins to



Prousiotissa Monastery

ascend and there is a precipice to the right, the donkey bearing Demetrios fell. The lad and the donkey slid over the precipice, reaching the riverbank below. The elevation is of such a dizzying height that one cannot fathom it just by looking at it. The mother, Chrysapho, and the other pilgrims mourned and lamented. They turned about and started the descent to the bank of the river. They hoped to find some remains of the child. When they reached the river—O thy paradoxical wonders, Lady!—they discovered that the child and the donkey survived. Demetrios was sitting at the edge of the river and playing. Everyone marvelled at the

wonderworking and gave glory to the all-pure Lady.

14. In Karpenesi, the priest, Father Demetrios, was also *oikonomos*. He had a daughter, named Katherine, who, unfortunately, lost the light of her eyes. The cause of blindness is not known to the writer. Her father, perceiving her plight, told her to venerate the icon of our Lady Theotokos Prousiotissa. He encouraged her to have faith while entreating for a cure. Verily, Katherine approached with tears in her eyes. As soon as she kissed the sacred image—O thy speedy help, most pure lady!—she instantly received her eyesight. She was totally healed, so that she returned joyfully to her home. She sang hymns and praises to the quick and unmercenary physician and Lady.

15. Near to Karpenesi is the village of Mouzilo (Mouzeelo).⁴⁹ The priest serving there was Father George. Now it happened that he left his village in order to go abroad. In the year 1787, he took ship on his return home. Stormy weather and roiling seas caused the poor man to fall overboard. He only managed to cry aloud, "O Lady Prousiotissa, save me the wretched one!" He then started gasping and sinking under the waves. But O thy wonders, Lady! Help was forthcoming in the most unexpected manner! He found himself miraculously hauled out of the waters and on the ship's deck. He knew not how it came about. He was plucked from the sea and placed on the deck. Wishing to show his gratitude for this speedy deliverance from the briny deep,

⁴⁹ The village of Mouzilo (38°51'42.97"N 21°47'05.27"E) northeast of Mega Chorio belongs to the Potamia municipality of the Evrytania Prefecture. Mouzilo is eleven kilometers north of the prefectural capital Karpenesi.

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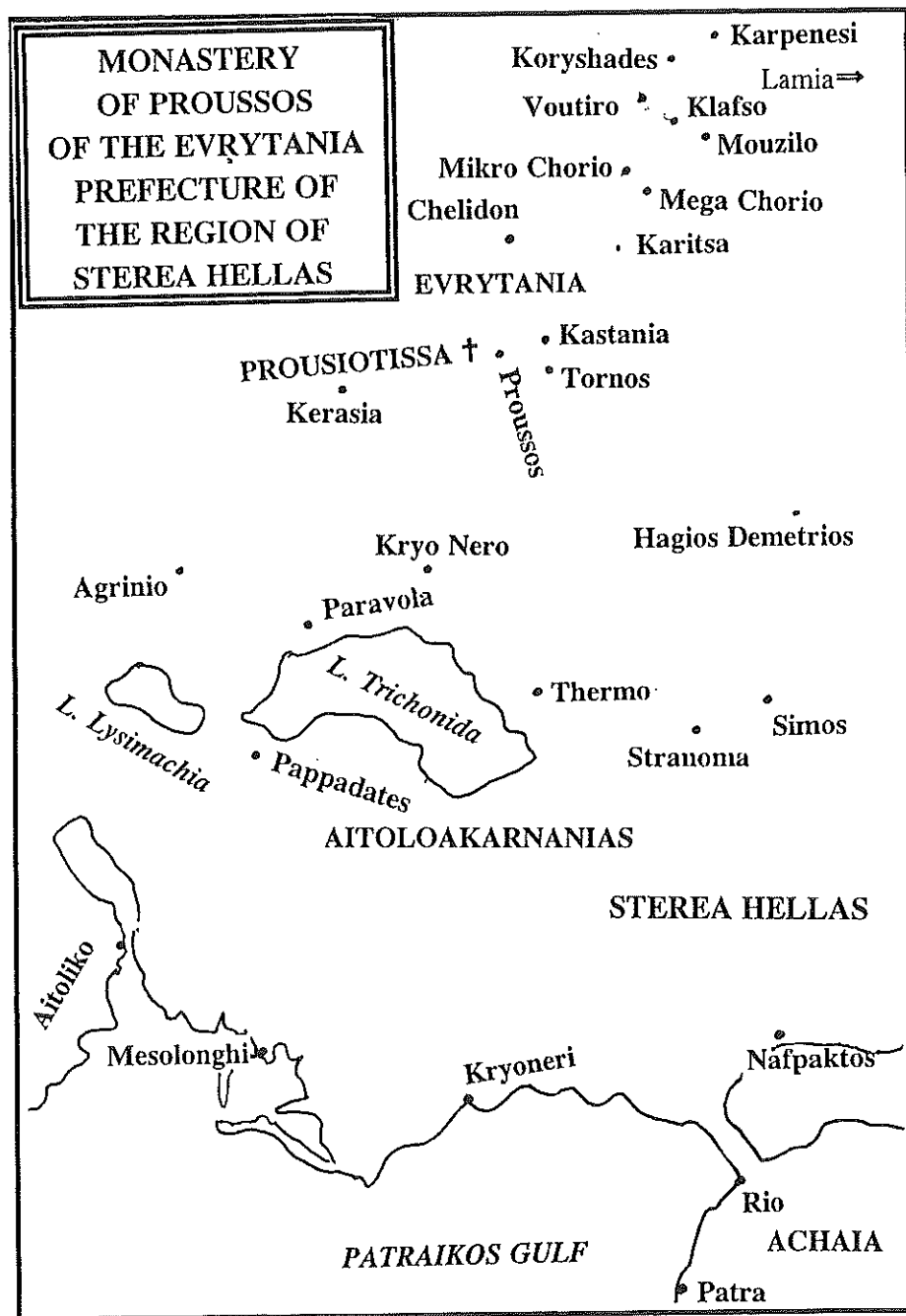
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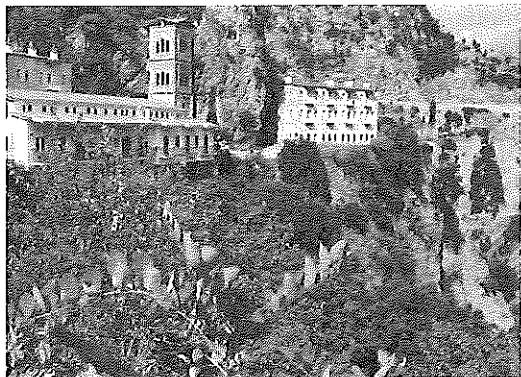
E) northeast of Mega Chorio prefecture. Mouzilo is eleven

he brought two gifts to the monastery in the form of two oxen. Thereafter, he continued to proclaim with ardor the strange wonderworking.



16. The following miracle occurred on the 18th day of the month of August, in the year 1788. It took place before a Muslim, irreverent to Orthodox piety, so that all might comprehend our Lady's magnanimity and greatness. It was also a divine message to the impious not to trouble or disturb her divine habitation in the mountains. It was a witness to them to conduct themselves in fear and reverence, and to preserve her abode. Now the authorities dispatched a Muslim, named Mahmout Gardikes, to the lookout post by the monastery. He lodged across from the cemetery. Since it was the middle of the summer, and it was very hot, he and another man from his retinue took their bedding outside. During the night, they both were stirred from their sleep. They witnessed an extraordinary sight. A fiery column, beginning from the dome of the main church, reached into the heavens. They were so frightened that even up to this day, they proclaim the wonderworking to all.

17. A Christian man from Zetouni (Lamia),⁵⁰ named Demos, had a daughter. Her name was Helen, and she suffered from epilepsy.⁵¹ Demos



Prousiotissa Monastery

heard of the miracles wrought by Prousiotissa, so he was resolved to bring his daughter to the monastery. A few days later, the Panagia healed the infirm girl. Demos, meanwhile, in thanksgiving, was intending to bring two horses to the coming feast of the Theotokos. He planned to donate one horse to the monastery, and ride home on the other. Nevertheless, on the way to the monastery, he changed his mind about giving one of the animals to the monastery. He decided to keep both for himself. His audacity and ingratitude cost him. Afterward, when he wished to depart the monastery, he went to saddle the horses. They were both tethered near the precipice. He mounted the promised horse, and immediately went over the precipice. Hearken to the miracle. The horse was smashed below. But Demos, by the mercy and grace of the Theotokos, was unhurt. He ascended back to the monastery, offering heartfelt thanks to the Theotokos who spared him from death. Both he and the others glorified God and the all-immaculate Theotokos.

⁵⁰ Zetouni or Zitouni (38°54'14.49"N 22°25'46.01"E) of the Lamia municipality, belongs to the Fthiotida province and prefecture of the same name of Sterea Hellas.

⁵¹ The Greek text has "moonstruck by a demon."

18. In the year 179 her infant who was convul her child's condition, yet sl to the holy icon." Zachar before our Lady Prousiotis arms, went to her knees be healed and freed from any

19. Circa 1795, a high place. However, the

20. In the year 17 from Sohoria fell into the crowd that had gathered. S the infant child in her tight both mother and child for

21. Another insta complicity, fell from the s and his horse. This Christi injuries.

22. The following gypsy. Since he hailed fro Prousiotissa. He fervently thee that thou mightest ble grace is great toward those answered. He fathered a monastery. "He," notes th of August, in the year 180

23. There was a paralysis in both her har therefore, was brought b compassionate Lady heal t she became sensible and p

24. Another woma day Helithona), had lost h filled with faith, besought the fruit of her prayer whe

⁵² The present-day village of S west of Simos, of the Pylini Etoloakarnania prefecture. Nafpaktos, and ninety-eight k

⁵³ The Greek text adds that th

⁵⁴ One *orgia* [ὄργυριά] is equ

18. In the year 1790, Zacharo, from the village of Stranoma,⁵² brought her infant who was convulsing from epileptic fits. Although she grieved over her child's condition, yet she followed the advice of relatives: "Bring the child to the holy icon." Zacharo did as they recommended, bringing the infant before our Lady Prousiotissa. With great faith, Zacharo, with her infant in her arms, went to her knees before the Mother of God. The child was immediately healed and freed from any symptoms.⁵³

19. Circa 1795, a monastery worker was pushed by the devil from a high place. However, the Lady Theotokos protected him from every danger.

20. In the year 1799, during a feast day of the Theotokos, a woman from Sohoria fell into the gorge. She and her infant were pushed by the large crowd that had gathered. She fell from the precipice—over fifty *orgias*⁵⁴ with the infant child in her tight embrace. The most holy Mother of God protected both mother and child from every danger.

21. Another instance involves a horse. The animal, by demonic complicity, fell from the same precipice as that of the aforementioned Demos and his horse. This Christian's horse, nevertheless, survived the fall with no injuries.

22. The following wonderworking took place for a childless Turkish gypsy. Since he hailed from Aitoliko, he heard tell of the many miracles of Prousiotissa. He fervently prayed to her, saying, "Lady Theotokos, I beseech thee that thou mightest bless me to father a child. For I have heard that thy grace is great toward those who call upon thy name!" The man's prayer was answered. He fathered a son, for which gift he donated a horse to the monastery. "He," notes the chronicler, "declared the miracle to us on the 22nd of August, in the year 1803." Now pay heed to the following wonderworking.

23. There was a woman from Karpenesi who was suffering from paralysis in both her hands and feet. She also lost her reasoning. She, therefore, was brought by her kinfolk to Prousiotissa. Not only did our compassionate Lady heal the paralytic but also restored her reasoning so that she became sensible and prudent.

24. Another woman, named Helen, who hailed from Lastovo (present-day Helithona), had lost her wits. Her appearance excited pity. Her mother, filled with faith, besought the assistance of Panagia Prousiotissa. She received the fruit of her prayer when her daughter recovered in that same hour.

⁵² The present-day village of Stranoma (38°32'30"N 21°45'60"E), a spa at 600 meters, west of Simos, of the Pylini municipality in the Nafaktia province, belongs to the Etoloakarnania prefecture. It is forty-four kilometers southeast of the town of Nafaktos, and ninety-eight kilometers from the town of Mesolonghi.

⁵³ The Greek text adds that the child was freed of the demon.

⁵⁴ One *orgia* [ὄργυρία] is equal to the length of outstretched arms.

3th day of the month of Muslim, irreverent to dy's magnanimity and not to trouble or disturb ess to them to conduct her abode. Now the ardikes, to the lookout retery. Since it was the another man from his they both were stirred sight. A fiery column, into the heavens. They im the wonderworking

o named Demos, had a om epilepsy.⁵¹ Demos he miracles wrought by ssa, so he was resolved is daughter to the mon- A few days later, the healed the infirm girl. meanwhile, in thanks- was intending to bring s to the coming feast of tokos. He planned to ae horse to the monas- ride home on the other. less, on the way to the of the animals to the udacity and ingratitude monastery, he went to cipice. He mounted the cipice. Harken to the by the mercy and grace he monastery, offering a death. Both he and the s.

f the Lamia municipality, e name of Sterea Hellas.

25. A man named George from Papadates (Pappadates)⁵⁵ of Xeromeros was afflicted with paralysis in both his hands and his feet. The year was 1807 when he was brought to the monastery. He prostrated himself before the icon and prayed with all his heart. The Theotokos hearkened to his entreaty, so that he returned home fully cured of his infirmities.

26. "Listen to this wonderworking which took place at the 'Print,'" writes the chronicler, "which we witnessed with our own eyes." The date was the 27th day of the month of February, in the year 1808. The chief of the gendarmery of the province of Sovolakos⁵⁶ was passing through the village of Karitsa.⁵⁷ He engaged a few Karitsiotes to help him traverse the river. The group reached the "Print" of the Theotokos. While the Albanians trod onward, the Christians lagged behind in order to pay their respects.

Now one of the Albanians, a shameless fellow named Dauout, remained behind to watch the Christians. When he observed them revering the image of the Theotokos, he jeered at them and said, "Look at this! The Rhomaioi pay homage even to the rocks!" The Christians then passed through, but the Albanian tarried deliberately. He intended to dishonor the place of the "Print" by urinating on the spot. The Theotokos, nevertheless, would not tolerate such an effrontery. She sent forth an invisible man from out of heaven. He stood behind the Albanian and struck him with his fists and cast him down to the ground. After he trampled under his feet that impudent fellow and



Icon of Prousiotissa

scourged him, he began dragging Dauout toward the river. The Albanian, believing a real man had taken him from behind, attempted to unsheathe his sword. When that failed, he took hold of his rifle in order to slay his attacker. But the invisible man, after giving him a thrashing and dragging him down to river, departed. Now the comrades of that blasphemer heard the rifle shot.

while, that brazen blasphemy in his convalescence, he came to his way into the church. He prostrated himself before the icon. He addressed our Lady and said, "O Mother of God, I have erred!" He then left a hands his leave. Now this miracle even the impious who r "Concurrent with this even grammar, at the monaster enough about this wonderv

27. The following March, in the year 1810. E of Aitolia, lost his mind—t two brothers escorted him to the monastery for a healing. At a point where the road d from Haliki and faces the tery, they stopped and Emmanuel asked his b: "Where are you taking me?" answered, "To Panagia, t thee well. Thou, as well, c to beseech her for a cure tl mightest become thy forme So Emmanuel halted and t pray. However, the devil, t not bear the entreaty. In hi he contrived to do. As Emn as if someone tripped him u off the precipice. He lande report here that the drop co heights, this spectacular sig brothers, weeping, offered and keep safe Manuel!" V where the road leads to the ends. They were still weep their brother when—lo, the water. He was unharmed, brothers embraced in their, still proclaim the miracle,'

⁵⁵ The small town of Papadates (38°31'40.63"N 21°27'08.54"E) of the Arakynthos municipality, belongs to the Messolonghi province.

⁵⁶ Sovolakos of Evrytania.

⁵⁷ Karitsa (38°48'14.33"N 21°43'25.76"E) of Evrytania, lies southwest of Mega Chorio.

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while, that brazen blasphemer took to his bed for a few days. During his convalescence, he came to realize his error. He rose up from the bed, plodding his way into the church. He was full of trepidation as he went before the sacred icon. He addressed our Lady, saying to her, "Pardon me, O holy one, I have erred!" He then left a handsome monetary donation at the monastery and took his leave. Now this miracle was acknowledged not only by the Christians but even the impious who related what took place to their coreligionists. "Concurrent with this event, there happened to be a learned man, a teacher of grammar, at the monastery. He also recorded these events. Well, that is enough about this wonderworking."

27. The following event took place on the 11th day of the month of March, in the year 1810. Emmanuel, a Christian man from one of the villages of Aitolia, lost his mind—the cause of which only God knows. Emmanuel's two brothers escorted him to the monastery for a healing. At that point where the road descends from Haliki and faces the monastery, they stopped and prayed. Emmanuel asked his brothers, "Where are you taking me?" They answered, "To Panagia, to make thee well. Thou, as well, oughtest to beseech her for a cure that thou mightest become thy former self."



View of Prousiotissa Monastery

So Emmanuel halted and began to pray. However, the devil, the hater-of-good, who bore malice and envy, could not bear the entreaty. In his desire to slay the infirm Emmanuel, this is what he contrived to do. As Emmanuel was making prostrations and praying, it was as if someone tripped him up from behind. Emmanuel fell headlong and rolled off the precipice. He landed below by the monastery water mill. We should report here that the drop covered no less than many hundreds of feet. From the heights, this spectacular sight is actually too frightful to gaze down upon. His brothers, weeping, offered up supplication: "O Panagia Theotokos, preserve and keep safe Manuel!" When the brothers descended from the other side, where the road leads to the monastery, they hastened to the mill where the rock ends. They were still weeping in anticipation of finding the broken body of their brother when—lo, the miracle!—they beheld Emmanuel sitting near the water. He was unharmed, perfectly safe, and of a sound mind. The three brothers embraced in their joy, glorifying the Lady Theotokos. "They, in fact, still proclaim the miracle," notes the chronicler.

28. In the year 1810, the governor of Ioannina,⁵⁸ dispatched a certain major. His name was Hasan Tomaritzas. He had under his command many soldiers. They were in pursuit of bandits in parts of Sterea Hellas and Aitolia. They passed by the coasts of Aitolia. They reached that neighborhood where the monastery shepherds tended their flocks. Now the major had learned, or he wanted to appear that he knew something so as to extort money, that the fathers of the monastery were in the habit of supplying food to the Klephts, even those that Tomaritzas was pursuing. The major, thereupon, wrote a threatening letter to the hegumen, commanding him as follows: "Thou art to send me the monk who furnishes provisions to the Klephts. There is no doubt that this is taking place. He will be executed by a firing squad, so as to make him an example to the others. At the same time, I shall come to your monastery and burn it to the ground, demolishing it from its foundations. I will also put you all to torture until you expire."

Hegumen Nikodemos and the brotherhood were frightened upon receiving the savage and cruel judgment of Tomaritzas. Since they waited upon no help from any other source, they stood with tear-filled eyes before the icon of the Lady Theotokos. With much compunction, they began chanting the Supplicatory Canon. Behold now the wondrous miracles of our Lady and Virgin-Mother for those who call upon her holy name with faith! Straightway, the cowardly bully Tomaritzas was seized with a burning fever. A wicked spirit began choking him to such a degree that his comrades-in-arms cried out in their own language, "Allah, Allah, this sacred place does not give place!" Without further adieu, they released twelve rams which they confiscated for their own consumption from the flocks of the monastery. They no longer harassed the fathers. Indeed, much rather, they preferred never again to draw nigh to the monastery. In this manner did the Theotokos put to flight those "wolves" who were threatening her flock.

29. In that same year, 1810, Major Hasan Tomaritzas went to Lastovo. He arrested a woman on the pretext that she was hiding the Klephts. After undergoing many chastisements, she was then tied to a tree by them. Wishing to usher in a painful death for her, the major ordered his soldiers to fire their rifles at her. He said that he would commence the shooting. Meanwhile, the woman prayed to the Lady Theotokos. She begged our Lady, saying, "O Mistress Prousiotissa, deliver me, the wretched one!" With the aid of Panagia, none of the shots from the rifles hit their mark. Only one bullet grazed the Christian woman's hand slightly that she might remember the incident. Those impious brutes, seeing this supernatural phenomenon, let her go free.

⁵⁸ Ioannina (39°40'07.48"N 20°51'26.27"E) of Epiros.

30. On the 1st day Bishop Joseph of Andrc debilitated, so that he could not help him. The 1 February, two fathers fr phanes, arrived at the epi respects. The purpose of was to furnish him with a monastery. The account miracles. Bishop Joseph : icon that was printed th Prousiotissa. Our Lady ne but also restored his heal the power and aid of the r genuine gratitude, the bis along a letter, instructing icon." Bishop Joseph al Within his letter to the m the Theotokos. This han archives.

During the War o of refuge for various h Lambros Katsonis.

31. In the yea cholera appeared and spr Agrinion. Within a sho many contracted the dise died. The inhabitants did any benefit forthcomin science, so they invited of Prousos to visit their area. With profound f warm tears, they welco wonderworking icon. Tl count immediately dimi ceased. The pious city of of this miracle that saved on the 12th of October.

⁵⁹ Androussa of Messini prc

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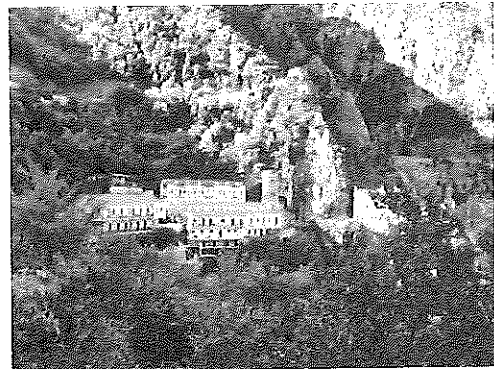
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30. On the 1st day of the month of January, in the year 1819, the pious Bishop Joseph of Androussa⁵⁹ fell ill. His nervous system was seriously debilitated, so that he could not leave his bed. Physicians called into the case could not help him. The bishop, consequently, expected to die. On the 8th of February, two fathers from Prousiotissa Monastery, Anthimos and Theophanes, arrived at the episcopal residence—as it was the custom to pay their respects. The purpose of their tour of those parts and for visiting the bishop was to furnish him with a copy of the narrative describing the history of their monastery. The account also recorded data and facts from innumerable miracles. Bishop Joseph read the narration. He looked tenderly at the sacred icon that was printed therein. With reverence, he invoked the name of Prousiotissa. Our Lady not only delivered him from his malady and low spirits but also restored his health entirely in but a few days. This all came about by the power and aid of the most-glorified and most-blessed Prousiotissa. Out of genuine gratitude, the bishop gifted a silver oil lamp to the monastery. He sent along a letter, instructing the fathers "to suspend the oil lamp before the sacred icon." Bishop Joseph also sent a donation yearly of twenty-five piasters. Within his letter to the monastery, he describes the benefit he received from the Theotokos. This handwritten episcopal epistle is still in the monastery archives.

During the War of Independence, Prousiotissa Monastery was a place of refuge for various heroes: George Karaiskakis, Markos Botsaris, and Lambros Katsonis.

31. In the year 1854, cholera appeared and spread into Agrinion. Within a short spell, many contracted the disease and died. The inhabitants did not see any benefit forthcoming from science, so they invited the icon of Prousos to visit their afflicted area. With profound faith and warm tears, they welcomed the wonderworking icon. The death count immediately diminished substantially. In just three days, the deaths ceased. The pious city of Agrinion, in gratitude to Prousiotissa and in memory of this miracle that saved their city from extinction, hold a celebration yearly, on the 12th of October.



Prousiotissa complex today

⁵⁹ Androussa of Messini province in the region of the Peloponnesos.

32. In December of 1869, flooding caused serious damage. Approximately twenty meters above the monastery there is a ravine. During the winter months there flows only a little amount of water. During the summer, it is entirely dry. But this December, a flash flood caused a two-story limestone building of the monastery to be turned over and taken away. At that terrifying moment there was inside one brother, Father Damaskenos, together with five monastery workers. With the help and overshadowing of the Panagia, not one of them sustained the slightest injury. As for the sudden great volume of water, it lasted only for a short duration: twenty-four hours.

33. In October of 1918, the entire region of Akarnania⁶⁰ was struck by a deadly flu. Especially hard hit was Agrinion and Mesolonghi. The Agriniotes were first to invite Prousiotissa to visit their city. The monastery hegumen, Archimandrite Constantine Papademetriou, received a blessing to proceed from Metropolitan Ambrose. The abbot first sent a telegram to Agrinion, notifying them of his arrival with the icon on the 24th of October. When the monastery synodia reached the mountain of Panaitoliko (Arapokephala), which was three hours from Prousos, about three thousand Agriniotes walked ten hours to welcome the sacred image. As the synodia processed through Agrinion, many others joined the procession. The company arrived in Agrinion on the 25th of October. The whole city went out to greet the Theotokos. The following day, the 26th of October, when the holy Church commemorates Saint Demetrios, Church services were conducted in all the temples of Agrinion until the end of the month. All the Orthodox went to venerate the holy icon with faith and reverence. It should be reported here that prior to the arrival of Prousiotissa in Agrinion, the death toll was between twenty-five and thirty flu victims daily. As of the 26th of October, the death count diminished. After three days, the mortuary roll halted altogether. Since that time, and every year thereafter, the Agriniotes have assigned the 26th of October as a day of celebration in remembrance of the wonderworking.

34. What then happened to the inhabitants of Mesolonghi, who also had contracted the illness? Close to the final days of the month of October, approximately thirty people were perishing daily from the flu. When the icon came to them, they welcomed Prousiotissa wholeheartedly. It was raining heavily that day. The fainthearted among them grumbled, saying that many more would die the following day—even as many as one hundred. Their fearful surmising, however, was proven false. That same evening the faithful chanted a Supplicatory Canon to Panagia. During that whole night such a powerful wind swept through Mesolonghi that most of the tree branches were

⁶⁰ Ancient Akarnania belongs to the Etoloakarnania prefecture, bordered by Epiros and Etoloakarnania.

broken. By the 2nd of Nov for a few more days until

The leaders of M wonderworking that they lamp. They ordered an e lights. The costly object her feast day. A committe presentation: the lawyer Stavropoulos, and the r hands they suspended t everlasting esteem and re has an inscription, reco working.

“We have presen especially those most evic just the result of fortui Panagia’s intercession th deeds, offend her holy n name Orthodox, while c magnanimity to overloc implore her to empower t chronicler for this set of r the more recent wonderv

More Recent Miracles

35. In the summ Evrytania and Fthiotis. T agricultural product. All exterminate the insects substances to control the with fervent faith and p Germanos Stathogiannis synodia took the holy ic locusts. Their processic Mouzilo, Hagios Andre

⁶¹ The village of Klafsi (31 Chorio in the Potamia mun

⁶² This could be either Hag

⁶³ Mega Chorio (38°49’38. Evrytania prefecture.

broken. By the 2nd of November, no one died of the flu. The icon lodged there for a few more days until all the natives venerated the icon with gratitude.

The leaders of Mesolonghi and many others were so impressed by the wonderworking that they were resolved to commission a commemorative lamp. They ordered an exquisitely fashioned silver hanging lamp with seven lights. The costly object would be presented to the Theotokos' monastery on her feast day. A committee of three Mesolonghites were appointed to make the presentation: the lawyer Constantine Papademetriou; Mayor Constantine Stavropoulos, and the merchant Aristides Papatheodorou. With their own hands they suspended the lamp before the sacred Prousiotissa Icon in everlasting esteem and remembrance of the prodigious miracle. The lamp also has an inscription, recording the day, year, and location of the wonderworking.

"We have presented only a few of the many miracles of Prousiotissa, especially those most evident and incontestable. Let no one imagine they were just the result of fortuitous and coincidental circumstances. We beg the Panagia's intercession that she not neglect us sinners who, with our wicked deeds, offend her holy name. We beg her not to abandon us who are only in name Orthodox, while our deeds are similar to idolaters. We beseech her magnanimity to overlook our iniquities like an affectionate mother. We implore her to empower us against visible and invisible enemies." So ends our chronicler for this set of miracles. However, it would not be pious to pass over the more recent wonderworkings during the twentieth century.

More Recent Miracles

35. In the summer of 1927, swarms of locusts fell on the region of Evrytania and Fthiotis. The results were catastrophic: the destruction of every agricultural product. All attempts with agricultural chemicals (insecticides) to exterminate the insects proved in vain. The farmers, losing hope in toxic substances to control the pests that infested their plants, brought their appeal, with fervent faith and piety, before Prousiotissa. They besought Hegumen Germanos Stathogiannis to visit their villages with the icon. The monastery synodia took the holy icon, making a tour of those places devastated by the locusts. Their procession wended its way through the towns of Klafsi,⁶¹ Mouzilo, Hagios Andreas,⁶² Mega Chorio,⁶³ Mikro Chorio, Kapsi, Makra-

⁶¹ The village of Klafsi (38°52'11.49"N 21°45'47.82"E), north-northeast of Mega Chorio in the Potamia municipality, belongs to the Evrytania prefecture.

⁶² This could be either Hagios Andreas of Karpenesi or Mesolonghi.

⁶³ Mega Chorio (38°49'38.43"N 21°44'30.15"E) of the Potamia municipality of the Evrytania prefecture.

komi,⁶⁴ and others. In all those locations where the holy icon visited, the office of divine Liturgy was conducted with entreaties of compunction. The inhabitants, as well, fasted and prayed. Then an extraordinary phenomenon took place. Swarms of locusts rushed into the creeks and rivers where they drowned. All those who saw this wonderworking gave glory to the all-immaculate Virgin. The piles of dead insects reminded the faithful of the Savior's miracle when an entire herd of swine rushed down the cliff into the sea, and died in the waters.⁶⁵

36. The following miracle was witnessed by many. It took place before the holy Prousiotissa Icon on the 24th of August, in the year 1928, at six o'clock in the evening of Friday. A possessed thirty-eight-year-old maiden, Katherine Niphoropoulos, from the village of Riolo Achaia (Patras),⁶⁶ had been suffering from demonic possession for eight years. She could not save herself, though she went to one physician after another and made pilgrimages to many monasteries. Upon arriving at the Prousos Monastery, her kindred requested that the priest, Papa Kyril, read the exorcisms before the Prousiotissa Icon. As he proceeded Miss Niphoropoulos cried out with a mighty voice, but was unaware of what she was saying, "O Virgin, I swear, I am going." She repeated this over and over again. Katherine, meanwhile, was lying down on the stairs while the priest continued the service. At one point her head slipped from the step. She opened her mouth from time to time. Her eyes appeared cloudy and perplexed. Her arms were outstretched as though crucified. Katherine then turned her gaze toward the holy icons. Her breath was halted. She appeared ready to die. She then closed her eyes as if she were dead.

Papa Kyril and the pilgrims who were standing by thought that she had expired. But a quarter of an hour had not passed when the maiden regained consciousness. She began to weep, but she assured them that she had been delivered from the demons. She then rested for a time, spending the night with the family of Messieurs Kagtsakli and Chr. Kouzeli, since she happened to come to the monastery with them. Apart from her kindred and acquaintances, there were other pilgrims who testified to all that transpired. The following day, the 25th of August, Katherine partook of holy Communion. She also communed the following day. When she departed the aforementioned hosts for

⁶⁴ Makrakomi, an ancient city of Fthiotida of Sterea Hellas.

⁶⁵ Mt. 8:32; Mk. 5:13; Lk. 8:33.

⁶⁶ This is Riolos (38°03'26.72"N 21°27'52.72"E) of the Larisso municipality of the Patra province, belonging to the Achaia prefecture in West Greece. It is southeast of Metochi.

Agrinion, she went through she departed the monastery Kyril, Father Constantine Miss Katherine Niphoropoulos she might better dedicate dowry to the monastery from demonic possession *Roumeliotis*,⁶⁹ together with

37. Now about the in the year 1928, pilgrim Among the faithful was a leading a mule. The mule reached the enclosure church, it was then the mule, as if it went mad, to leap over the precipice spite the attempts of the to pull back on the reins, it rolled down the pice. All present felt so the destruction of the creature. Although the mule fell for hours, still the hegumen wanted things. The hegumen led the mule grazing. They loosened. The women in the The men removed their monastery. The mistress her shouted aloud, "Great working, as well, was present

38. The following month of August, in the year

⁶⁷ Kryonerion or Kyroneri (water, just west of Kato Vas)
⁶⁸ The village of Tornos (38° is situated east-southeast of of Karpenesi.

⁶⁹ The article was published in
⁷⁰ The article, written by *Roumeliotis*.

y icon visited, the office of compunction. The extraordinary phenomenon and rivers where they gave glory to the allided the faithful of the down the cliff into the

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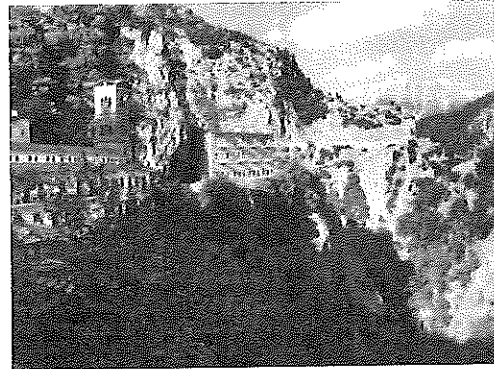
At one point her head time to time. Her eyes outstretched as though holy icons. Her breath d her eyes as if she were

g by thought that she had en the maiden regained them that she had been spending the night with , since she happened to dred and acquaintances, nspired. The following Communion. She also forementioned hosts for

Agrinion, she went through Kryonerion⁶⁷ for her home village of Riolo. Before she departed the monastery, she had a photograph taken, together with Papa Kyril, Father Constantine Lampropoulos from Tornos,⁶⁸ and many others. Miss Katherine Niphoropoulos vowed that she would remain unmarried that she might better dedicate herself to Panagia Prousiotissa. She also offered her dowry to the monastery in earnest of her promise. The miracle of her release from demonic possession was published in the newspaper, known as *Roumeliotis*,⁶⁹ together with the photograph.

37. Now about the same time, on the 14th day of the month of August, in the year 1928, pilgrims were coming to the monastery from Karpenesi.

Among the faithful was a woman leading a mule. The moment she reached the enclosure of the church, it was then that the mule, as if it went mad, rushed to leap over the precipice. Despite the attempts of the woman to pull back on the animal's reins, it rolled down the precipice. All present felt sorry for the destruction of the creature.



Prousiotissa Monastery

Although the mule fell forty meters, still the hegumen was confident that Panagia could accomplish many things. The hegumen led the pilgrims down a single pathway. They discovered the mule grazing. They observed that not even the creature's mount was loosened. The women in the party began to cry and make the sign of the Cross. The men removed their hats and directed their gazes reverently to the monastery. The mistress of the animal took her mule, while everyone about her shouted aloud, "Great is the name of the Theotokos!" This wonderworking, as well, was printed in *Roumeliotis*.⁷⁰

38. The following wonderworking took place on the 22nd day of the month of August, in the year 1940. The office of Vespers was just concluding,

⁶⁷ Kryonerion or Kyroneri (38°21'N 21°36'E) of Aitolia and Akarnania. It is on the water, just west of Kato Vasiliki.

⁶⁸ The village of Tornos (38°44'18.35"N 21°40'29.25"E), at an altitude of 850 meters, is situated east-southeast of Prousos of Evrytania. It is thirty-nine kilometers northeast of Karpenesi.

⁶⁹ The article was published on September 15, 1928, in *Roumeliotis*, Issue Number 159.

⁷⁰ The article, written by George Paul, was published on September 8, 1928, in *Roumeliotis*.

arisso municipality of the t Greece. It is southeast of

when a man, from Paloukova of Nafpaktos,⁷¹ named Constantine Raptis, who was possessed by demons, broke the chain which fettered him. He tore down the door of the cell in which he was staying at the monastery. He began to push his way through the crowd, cursing everything divine and uttering threats. Most of his talk was incoherent. His unhappy and aged mother, together with the policemen, were hastening to apprehend him. Tens of worshippers attempted to catch him, but he could not be subdued. Finally, the sheer number of pilgrims were able, all together, to corner him and take hold of him. He was escorted back to his cell. Even though the door was smashed, he chose to escape through the window. He did not realize that his window overlooked flagstone below in the monastery enclosure. Falling from that height of twenty meters onto the rock pavement, everyone assumed that he was dead. Many of the pilgrims began shedding tears. The mother of Constantine, nearly out of her mind from anguish, made haste to light a candle and kneel before the one who is full of grace, that is, the Virgin Theotokos. There was much shuffling going on in the crowd to discover if Constantine had died. His mother also went out to him, ready to mourn if need be. Much rather, she could hear him shouting for her and saying, "Mamaka, I am well!"

Although he had fallen from no small height, landing on flagstone paving, yet no one—not even the physicians among the pilgrims—could find even the slightest bruise. All were astonished to see the former possessed man now taking his mother by the hand and saying serenely, "Let us go, mamaka, and venerate the Panagia." All the bystanders, filled with emotion, watched Constantine and his mother. Tears filled their eyes as they observed him walking naturally and conversing courteously with everyone. He then said that he needed to retire to his cell and rest. Constantine and his mother tarried another two days at the monastery. They then departed for Paloukova. Constantine had been completely healed and was sound of mind. This wonderworking was also printed in *Roumeliotis*.⁷²

39. This next wonderworking also took place during the Second World War. On the 22nd of December, in the year 1942, Italians raided the town of Prousos. Three thousand of them came that Tuesday. Some of them entered into the home of Constantine Daravalis, the rural postman. The Italians seized his wife Mary and his daughter Athena. As the soldiers marched mother and daughter to Karpenesi, Athena managed to escape. Mary, a woman of fifty-nine, wept and besought her captors with these words: "Take pity on me!

⁷¹ The town of Nafpaktos (38°23'37.36"N 21°49'58.91"E) belongs to the municipality and province of the same name of the Etoloakarnania prefecture. It is forty-nine kilometers west of the prefectural capital Mesolonghi.

⁷² The article, written by Spyro Stergiou, was published on September 7, 1940, in *Roumeliotis*, Issue Number 763.

Surely you must have mot were in vain. Instead of i midst of her feelings of decided to put an end to h as the column was approa Karaiskakis, which is c monastery, where the slo one is seized by vertigo, s her move. It was three o noon when Mary leaped Perhaps in her desperat escape the ill-treatment of plunged into that great exp "O my Panagia Prousi Instead of finding her as posed, broken up at the t pice, she was being propf ble hand of divine provid had spouted from the mic meters down from the ro:

Mary was presur of the river below. The happened to their victim mountain, there is a spot l as scouts, were watching the Torniotis, named Atha human, in the midst of th the ravine. He dispatched clinging to the laurel bush the exhausted woman. M members. She kept glc wonderworking touched was talked of for a long t

40. On the 14th da office of Vespers, the mo He disclosed to Metropoli Evrytania, who was then tion, the following: "This when the devil causes a t dislodged from the wall o front courtyard, adjacent

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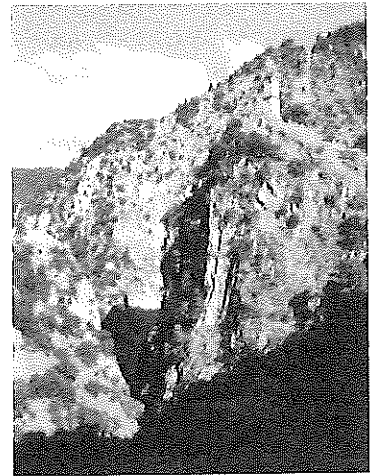
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Surely you must have mothers and sisters awaiting your return!" But her words were in vain. Instead of releasing her, they subjected her to beatings. In the midst of her feelings of hopelessness, she decided to put an end to her martyrdom. Just as the column was approaching the Tower of Karaiskakis, which is directly above the monastery, where the slope is so abrupt that one is seized by vertigo, she decided to make her move. It was three o'clock in the afternoon (when Mary leaped off the precipice. Perhaps in her desperation she wished to escape the ill-treatment of the Italians? As she plunged into that great expanse, she cried out, "O my Panagia Prousiotissa, save me!" Instead of finding her as they naturally supposed, broken up at the bottom of the precipice, she was being propped up by the invisible hand of divine providence. Mary was standing on top of a laurel bush. It had spouted from the middle of the rock. It was approximately two hundred meters down from the road.



Tower of Karaiskakis

Mary was presumed to be shattered to pieces and dead in the waters of the river below. The Italians did not even bother to look and see what happened to their victim. Now east of the monastery, at the top of the mountain, there is a spot known as Dendroulia. Certain persons from Tornos, as scouts, were watching the three battalions of Italian soldiers depart. One of the Tornioties, named Athanasios Alampaounis, then noticed a black object, but human, in the midst of the chasm. He perceived that someone had fallen into the ravine. He dispatched his son John to reconnoiter the spot and see who was clinging to the laurel bush. John rushed and by means of a rope, he pulled up the exhausted woman. Mary was weeping but was entirely sound in all her members. She kept glorifying the name of Panagia Prousiotissa. This wonderworking touched all with deep emotion who witnessed her rescue. It was talked of for a long time afterward.

40. On the 14th day of the month of August, in the year 1946, after the office of Vespers, the monk, Father Gregory (Rentifis), had received a vision. He disclosed to Metropolitan Christopher (Alexandropoulos) of Nafpaktos and Evrytania, who was then present in the monastery for the Feast of the Dormition, the following: "This very night, O *sevasmiotate* (most reverend), fear not when the devil causes a tumult!" Indeed, at about midnight, a large boulder dislodged from the wall of rock. It plunged through the air and crashed into the front courtyard, adjacent to the cell of the Monk Gregory. Upon contact it

made a terrible sound. Although the boulder was shattered into a thousand pieces and debris was scattered hither and thither, yet the cell where Father Gregory was fast asleep remained untouched. As for the other monks and pilgrims, as it was to be expected, they were roused by the frightful noise. When they beheld that no one was harmed, they gave glory to the all-immaculate Theotokos.

Manifold and variegated are the miracles of Panagia Prousiotissa, but space does not permit to report a great number. But as a piece of interest and history, we should like to read, in part, the epistle of Metropolitan Christopher of Nafpaktos and Evrytania. He describes what took place in the absence of the icon from the monastery circa 1948 to 1950. Although the metropolitan does not mention it in his letter, yet the reader should be aware that on the 16th day of the month of August, in the year 1944, the Nazis set fire to the monastery, burning most of it. Who can adequately describe the horrible consequences of that conflagration? Many heirlooms, vessels, manuscripts, and books perished in the flames. The precious icon of Panagia, however, had been hidden in another place. Following the Second World War, Greece was embroiled in a Civil War with the Communists. The neighborhood was depopulated to the point that no one lived there anymore.

41. "Difficult days came," comments Metropolitan Christopher, "and all of Panagia's children had to leave their lovely villages. They, like ruined refugees, rushed to find security and peace elsewhere. What took place for four years is well known. Some did their brotherly duty, others proved cruel. During the drama and tragedy of those years, Prousiotissa Theotokos, like the affectionate Mother that she is, not wishing to separate herself from her suffering children, also abandoned, for the first time, the site which had been her abode for more than one thousand years. She went to be close to the persecuted and the refugees...."

"As of 1948, there was no one left in the monastery.... Evrytania and mountainous Nafpaktia were entirely deserted. There was not a soul in Prousos. The personnel of the monastery had accompanied Panagia. Thus, the burnt monastery remained deserted and without the miraculous icon. In 1949, the army commenced operations. The Ninth Division passed through Evrytania. Some of the soldiers and their officers went through Prousos and toward the monastery. Since these Greek soldiers were Macedonians, they could only look at the remains of the burnt structures and surmise that it had once been a sacred precinct. They entered into the church to offer prayer. The iconostasion with its old icons gave evidence that this ruined place was once a sacred jewel. The soldiers entered the dark chapel in the cavern. To the left of the iconostasion, though the Beautiful Gate was closed, they were amazed to see a small lamp lit and an old Nun kneeling. They thought to themselves,

'How is it possible for th could she find food? How questioned her. She ansy children, I have lived her and bread. It suffices me officers, dizzy and exha much consequence to wh

"The men contir mentioned the monastery talking about it until the inquiries with those who : that there used to be a mo named Prousiotissa. 'F 'Prousiotissa has been wi Nafpaktos.' The Macedo the Nun?' So the Mace Nafpaktos and, with the call upon the metropolitan to pay the visit. When t transpired. I told them th Nafpaktos, in the chapel t told them that no one live a nun there. I then recom have seen and heard, my went to the Chapel of S moment they entered the beheld bore a striking re and knelt with contrite hastened back to the met from the beginning, whi them, 'And now, all thes Indeed, the Nun whom tl the Theotokos of the Pr Theotokos Prousiotissa : consolation and protectr

42. The followir after the burning of the letter of Theodosios Kot

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'How is it possible for the old Nun to live alone in this deserted ruin? Where could she find food? How does she supply oil for the lamp?' They, therefore, questioned her. She answered modestly and sweetly, but as if in pain, 'My children, I have lived here alone for two years. In my life I do not require food and bread. It suffices me that the oil lamp is lit.' The soldiers and two of the officers, dizzy and exhausted from marching, left in a hurry without giving much consequence to what they saw and heard.

"The men continued on their way to Nafpaktos. Having rested, they mentioned the monastery and the paradoxical speech of the Nun. They kept talking about it until they said to themselves, 'Why should we not make inquiries with those who are from these parts?' So they did and quickly learned that there used to be a monastery and a wonderworking icon of the Theotokos, named Prousiotissa. 'For two years now,' remarked those who knew, 'Prousiotissa has been with the Evrytania refugees around Parakampylia⁷³ and Nafpaktos.' The Macedonian soldiers then asked, 'What about the words of the Nun?' So the Macedonian soldiers and their two officers passed by Nafpaktos and, with the permission of their commander, were given leave to call upon the metropolitan. Only two officers and three soldiers were permitted to pay the visit. When they came to visit me, they told me everything that transpired. I told them that the miraculous icon found refuge two years ago in Nafpaktos, in the chapel of the metropolis, dedicated to Saint Dionysios. I also told them that no one lived at the monastery and that, furthermore, it never had a nun there. I then recommended that they visit the chapel, saying, 'What you have seen and heard, my sons, you shall soon understand.' The soldiers then went to the Chapel of Saint Dionysios in order to venerate the icon. The moment they entered the chapel, they were stricken with terror. The Nun they beheld bore a striking resemblance with Prousiotissa. They each lit a candle and knelt with contrite hearts before the icon. High with emotion, they hastened back to the metropolis to inform me. I had anticipated this response from the beginning, which is why I sent them to the chapel. I then said to them, 'And now, all these things you have seen and heard attest to a miracle.' Indeed, the Nun whom they discovered at the monastery was none other than the Theotokos of the Prousiotissa Icon. Hence for some twelve years, the Theotokos Prousiotissa shared our pain and every trial of our nation as our consolation and protectress."

42. The following is another miracle that took place during the war, after the burning of the monastery. The eyewitness account is given in the letter of Theodosios Kotses. He writes: "I was born in 1937 at the village of

⁷³ Parakampylia or Parakabilia of the Trichonida province, belongs to the Etoloakarnania prefecture. It is east of Proussos, and northeast of Karpenesi.

Biara Karpenesi which, I am informed, no longer exists. In 1941, my six brothers and I went to Karavomylo.⁷⁴ In 1945, my mother died. The grief of becoming an orphan at eight was doubled when I succumbed to paralysis. I do not know the etiology. I can only describe the degree of my affliction. I could not hold a handkerchief in my hand. I crawled like a snake on the ground in order to move about. On one occasion, when my kinfolk were laboring in the fields of our property, they took me along. They left me in the shade of a tree. However, because I was dirty, the flies were eating me. I should mention that my father had taken me from one doctor to another. But nothing came from these medical appointments. My father at one point took refuge in empiric methods and then popular medicine. But there was not the least improvement to be seen in my condition. Consequently, I remained paralyzed for two and one-half to three years.

"Then, one summer, my father sent us to my brother John Kotses, who is still living today in Karpenesi. At that time Karpenesi was plagued with swarms of locusts. It is no exaggeration that there must have been millions of these insects. They descended upon the sown crops and the trees. They ravaged everything, so that the destruction was total. It was about that time that they brought the icon of Panagia from Prousos. They performed the Liturgy. They conducted processions and entreaties. They then bore the icon to the church; I mean the first church at the left of the city entrance, coming from Lamia.⁷⁵ The name of the church slips my memory. Quite a large multitude gathered—among whom were certainly all those suffering from infirmity. They kept vigil all that night. I was carried there, as well, by my grandmother and my cousin Efthymios (Thymios) Kotses. Since we were to spend the night, they spread out some blankets for me. I was situated near the holy icon with the crowd of faithful. Now during the night, I was awakened. I rose up and stood upright. I found that I was able to walk as before. No trace of the paralysis or palsied limbs remained. It was as if I had never been ill. Since that night, I have enjoyed good health. Great, indeed, is her grace!

"I do not wish to tire you with a lengthy account. But it is necessary that I lay before thee an event which took place a few years ago. Since I am a hunter, I went hunting by Hagios Seraphim at Kamena Vourla.⁷⁶ My pointer

⁷⁴ The port of Karavomylo (38°53'19.33"N 22°42'13.29"E) of the Echines municipality of the Fthiotida province and prefectures belongs to the region of Sterea Hellas.

⁷⁵ Lamia (38°54'14.49"N 22°25'46.01"E), an ancient city, belongs to the Fthiotida province of Sterea Hellas. Its seaport is Falara. It is also known as Zitouni and Zetouni from the Byzantine era.

⁷⁶ Kamena Vourla (38°46'38.37"N 22°47'12.33"E), a present-day spa area at the foot of Knimida Mountain on the Maliakos Gulf, is in the Lokrida province, belonging to the (continued...)

ran for the bogs, so I starve me no heed. After one I patience. I became angry of Panagia Prousiotissa. V havior? But then I saw fr ground. I rushed to see wl paralyzed, even as I was beseeching Panagia to pa carried him to the veteri cannot explain what has : less, after three days, the

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Fthiotida prefecture.

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ran for the bogs, so I started shouting at him to come back. But the dog gave me no heed. After one hour, I noticed he still had not returned. I lost my patience. I became angry and flew into such a passion that I insulted the name of Panagia Prousiotissa. What possible excuse can I give for my unseemly behavior? But then I saw from a distance that my dog suddenly collapsed to the ground. I rushed to see what happened. I soon discovered that the creature was paralyzed, even as I was as a boy. I immediately perceived my error. I kept beseeching Panagia to pardon me. I scooped up the pointer into my arms and carried him to the veterinarian. The doctor was candid with me, saying, 'I cannot explain what has seized the dog. I cannot help the animal.' Nevertheless, after three days, the dog became well.

"And so, holy hegumen, this is what I felt I needed to confess in reference to my circumstances. But after all I have said and done, permit me to give a piece of advice to the faithful who come to Her Grace in order to venerate her: If something good should come to any one of them, they ought never to insult or denounce her! However, if they as suppliant see that nothing happens in regard to their petition, they ought to be patient. She certainly knows the appropriate time to intervene...."

43. Another wonderworking, which took place in the early 1950s, is recorded in the following letter. "My name is Kimon Delegiannes. Some forty years ago, when I was about four or five years of age, I was paralyzed for one year. My parents took me to many physicians without any result. It was my blessed grandmother, now deceased, who actually pleaded with my parents to take me to Panagia Prousiotissa. After they fasted and prayed for fifteen days, we went to Panagia. The hegumen of the monastery took me. He performed the service for Efehelion and then anointed my body from the oil lamp of Panagia. Since we were to spend the night, we were given an upper cell in the monastery. After a little time of tarrying in our cells, we understood that the lower cells of the monastery had caught fire. My parents, as well as my aunt, were watching the scene from the window. I, still paralyzed, was on the floor. It was then that the miracle took place! I rose up on my own from the floor and walked over to the window. My parents were stunned. They could hardly believe their eyes, but they praised Panagia. The following morning, the hegumen took me again before the icon of Panagia. The following day, after attending the divine Liturgy and giving thanks to Panagia, we returned to our village. I was completely cured. In fact, I walked most of the way instead of being carried on my mother's back, which was often how I was transported

⁷⁶(...continued)
 Fthiotida prefecture.

when paralyzed. Since that time, I have often visited Panagia. I continue to thank her for granting me my health."

44. In yet another wonderworking, hear what took place in 1983. "My name is Tagana Mayoula... Four years ago, I was operated on. With regard to the stitches to my intestine, two of them came out, creating a serious complication. The resulting two wounds became infected, so that pus was running continually despite all the antibiotics that were prescribed. But it was only our Panagia Pousiotissa who proved to be our patroness.

"Now it was August when my family and I, who reside in Mesolonghi, came to the monastery. We desired to venerate the icon of the Theotokos and beseech her maternal help. We supplicated her with much reverence and compunction. We venerated the wonderworking icon of the Theotokos, that we might fulfill our obligation to her and ask for her further assistance in healing me completely from my illness and its subsequent complications. I possessed great faith in our Lady. We partook of holy water. For the infected areas on my abdomen, I took holy oil and anointed myself thrice by making the sign of the Cross. I prayed with all my heart that she would cure me. Behold the miracle that took place! The first wound closed on the 20th of August, in the year 1983. The second wound closed on the 23rd of August. The stitches fell away of themselves without any pain. Then both wounds healed nicely and neatly. Only the surgical scars remained that I might remember the great miracle. I do pay homage with profound faith, respect, and piety to the wonderworking icon of the Theotokos. I thank our Lady for so many of her wonderworkings."



Tower of Karaiskakis

heart condition. Her name is Helen Daskalaki. The year was 1950. She writes: "I fell gravely ill on account of heart disease. So serious was my condition that everything seemed to flicker before me. I really did not think there was any hope of my survival. Concurrently, a female acquaintance of mine came and said to me, 'Make a vow, my child, to Panagia Prousiotissa and she shall make

It should be noted here that after the Civil War in Greece, a movement to rebuild the monastery was initiated by Hegumen Germanos. He continued at this labor for ten years. Following his tenure, which came to an end in 1970, the succeeding hegumen of the monastery was Athonite Father Gregory from Docheiariou.

45. The next wonderworking involves a woman with a

thee well. I cannot describe point, hope for my life and night continually, I monastery and venerated Spyridon of Nea Elvetia one was addressed to G a horse driver, since either monastery. Father Spyridon The letter was to be given Gregory observed my precaution, he took a role of Father Spyridon was God, I reached Her Grace homage, an inexplicable electric current came promised that I would see I encountered resistance reasons. The rule was however, Bishop Chris saying to those who were within if you are afraid many costly votive gifts vened, giving instructions allowed to stay the night reading our prayers before

"Now about our

I turned and remarked I are anxious to find out I sure that we are praying dark-skinned and tall. made three prostrations: 'Come close to us. We marble. We are not be sacristan (*neokoros*). S motioned to keep silent observed that she entered

⁷⁷ Nea Elvetia, a city quarter

⁷⁸ Trekking, hiking on foot One well known walking Nostimo, Mikro Chorio, I Chelidon, and Proussos.

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thee well. I cannot describe how she has wrought so many wonders!' At that point, hope for my life awakened in me. I began to beseech Her Grace, day and night continually, for seven years, that she might help me come to her monastery and venerate her. In the year 1957, the parish priest, Father Spyridon of Nea Elvetia⁷⁷ offered to help me. He gave me two letters, of which one was addressed to Gregory Pexas who resided in Gavros.⁷⁸ The latter was a horse driver, since either horse or mule was the only mode of transport to the monastery. Father Spyridon then told me to go to Gavros through Karpenesi. The letter was to be given to Gregory, who would take me to Panagia. When Gregory observed my serious condition, he was concerned. As a safety precaution, he took a rope and bound me to the saddle. Now the second letter of Father Spyridon was addressed to Hegumen Germanos. By the grace of God, I reached Her Grace. As I stood before the sacred icon to pray and pay homage, an inexplicable shiver passed through my entire body. It was as if an electric current came up from the ground upon which I was standing. I promised that I would spend the night on my knees before her icon. However, I encountered resistance. My request was not approved on account of security reasons. The rule was that the church was locked at night. Providentially, however, Bishop Christopher was in the monastery: He heard me crying and saying to those who would lock me out, 'I am not a bad person. Lock me within if you are afraid that I might steal something.' For, verily, there were many costly votive gifts of gold and silver in the church. The bishop inter-vened, giving instructions that I and the girl who accompanied me would be allowed to stay the night in the church. Hence, it came about that we kept reading our prayers before the sacred icon.

"Now about one-thirty in the morning, the door of the church opened. I turned and remarked to my companion, 'Do not move from thy place. They are anxious to find out what we are doing, so they came to have a look to make sure that we are praying.' There came inside a middle-aged Lady. She was dark-skinned and tall. She came to my side and removed her slippers. She made three prostrations and venerated the holy icon. I spoke to her and said, 'Come close to us. We have a blanket that thou mightest not step on the marble. We are not better than thou.' In truth, I thought the Lady was the sacristan (*neokoros*). She did not respond. I did not hear her voice. She only motioned to keep silence and to resume the Supplicatory Canon. I then observed that she entered the Sanctuary, taking inside the stepladder. She

⁷⁷ Nea Elvetia, a city quarter in nearby Vyronas (a suburb of Athens).

⁷⁸ Trekking, hiking on foot paths and routes in the mountains, is popular in Evrytania. One well known walking path is Karpenesi, Gorianades, Koryshades, Voutiro, Nostimo, Mikro Chorio, Paleo Mikro Horio, Mega Chorio, Gavros, Karytsa, Dermati, Chelidon, and Proussos.

lowered the lamp and relit it since the oil had gone down. She then returned the stepladder and repaired to the Sanctuary. My companion and I waited for her to exit, but a long time had passed. We said to one another, 'Evidently she has something inside like a handy bedroll for her to sleep. What can we do? If we continue to read aloud, we are going to bother her; for we are reading with all our strength lest we should fall asleep.' We then lit a candle and went forward rather timidly. We peeked inside the Sanctuary. But no one was present. We then perceived that it was she who is full of grace, the Panagia. We trembled like reeds until the morning light. At dawn we exclaimed, 'How were we to know! We, the unworthy ones, could take up her slippers, which she left next to us, and kiss them.' From that day, and up to the present, as we describe the event, I am still alive and well, thanks to the grace of the Panagia. I venerate Her Grace reverently. Signed. Eleni Daskalaki."

46. The following wonderworking was wrought on behalf of Stavroula Vigla, residing in Boston. She was suffering from Hodgkin's Disease, a form of cancer to the lymph glands. She wrote to the hegumen of the monastery that it was a difficult period of her life. She informed him that a brother-in-law of hers, who was from Paravola of Agrinion, was acquainted with the miracles of Panagia Prousiotissa. "He has disclosed to me," writes Stavroula, "that we were coming to Prousos where the holy icon was treasured. He said that in the dream, I was suddenly lost. He suggested that I send a small contribution that a prayer service might be served for my health. I ask that pity be granted me, as I am but twenty-four-years of age and the mother of three little children. I also request that you mail me a little oil from her oil lamp."

Stavroula then describes in another letter what took place. "I believe that the following occurred during those days that prayer was being offered. It was in the very early hours of the morning before dawn in Boston, when I had the following dream—though I feel the vision should be called a miracle of Panagia. I saw myself outside the Monastery of Prousiotissa. I was kneeling and weeping, supplicating our Lady to make me well. I should mention that I have never been inside the Prousiotissa Church. But in my vision, outside of the church, from the left side of the vestibule, I could see the icon. It began to move and I beheld Her Grace emerging from her icon quite alive. She was clad in black velvet raiment. Glittering stars were embroidered on her dress. She passed before me. I went to my knees with my sister-in-law, Constantina Vigla. We entreated Panagia to make us well. The Theotokos then entered her church. I was still watching her from outside. She entered the Sanctuary and went to her knees before the holy Table, where she was engaged in prayer. Soon after, most majestically, she exited and walked outside of the temple toward me.

"I was profoundly shouting with all my strength health and leave me strong. She touched me. I could see of the sun. I tried to gaze radiant splendor she emitted much, but now thou shalt touch and went inside her icon. A saying, 'Is it thou, my Panagia?' a sign that Your Grace appeared within the icon was moving. It appeared that projecting to Mother of God.

"With much emotion the following morning. I was still weeping in my dream. I went downstairs to Greece to assist not only my mother, but also recounted my vivid dream in the midst of my torments, my condition. I said to her, 'My Panagia, I am in my sleep. And she told me that I was moved by this disclosure:

"Now two days for confirming that the Supplication of Panagia's oil lamp, which was a difficult one, I was submitted. I trod day by day, I was in the hands of my patroness, Panagia Prousiotissa. Indeed, I am well. I believe that I am here in Boston and perfecting my children, my husband, and my Grace. I shall never cease to thank you for years have now passed. I

Then, on the 15th of August, I returned to Greece. For the first time I went to thank the Theotokos before the icon with much emotion. From the beginning I know how to express my love and weave a crown of glory for you with heartfelt thanks in hymns

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"I was profoundly moved. I was crying at the same time. I was shouting with all my strength that she might take pity on me. 'Grant me my health and leave me strong for my children!' She was then standing near me. She touched me. I could see her countenance, beaming brilliantly like the rays of the sun. I tried to gaze at her, but it was not possible on account of the radiant splendor she emitted. She then said to me, 'Thou hast passed through much, but now thou shalt become well.' Then, in a stately manner, she turned and went inside her icon. At this point, I was weeping and crying loudly. I was saying, 'Is it thou, my Panagia, who spoke to me or am I dreaming? Give me a sign that Your Grace spoke to me.' I then noticed that her sacred shape within the icon was moving in an affirmative gesture. Before my eyes it appeared that projecting toward me were her initials for *Meeter Theou*, that is, Mother of God.

"With much emotion, I flew out of bed. It was seven o'clock in the morning. I was still weeping violently as I had been in that real life miracle-dream. I went downstairs and found my mother. She had just come from Greece to assist not only me but also my spouse and children. I wept as I recounted my vivid dream, which was more like real life to me. I was still in the midst of my torments, since the physicians knew not the prognosis of my condition. I said to her, 'Mama, I fear nothing. Last night I beheld Panagia in my sleep. And she told me that I shall become well!' My mother was very moved by this disclosure and exclaimed, 'My child, thy faith shall save thee!'

"Now two days following the dream, I received thy correspondence, confirming that the Supplicatory Canon was performed. The oil from Panagia's oil lamp, which was enclosed, arrived safely. For nearly one year, a difficult one, I was submitting to therapies and daily visits to the doctors. As I trod day by day, I was improving. Today is one year, since 1978, that my patroness, Panagia Prousiotissa, assured me that I would become well. And indeed, I am well. I believe, from the depths of my soul, that she visited me here in Boston and performed her miracle. She graciously granted me my children, my husband, and my relatives. As long as I live, I shall glorify Her Grace. I shall never cease testifying to her immaculate might and power. Six years have now passed. I am still well."

Then, on the 15th of August, in the year 1980, Stavroula Vigla traveled to Greece. For the first time she went to the monastery and fulfilled her vow to thank the Theotokos before her wonderworking icon, which she kissed with much emotion. From the depths of her soul, she wrote to Panagia: "I do not know how to express my thanks to thee, O my Panagia. I do not know how to weave a crown of glory for thee....I say thank you, thank you, and send my heartfelt thanks in hymns and doxologies to thee, O Panagia Prousiotissa."

47. We shall now close our wonderworkings with one more account that was wrought for a barren woman, named Smaragda (Emerald). She and her husband, Basil Papaefthimiou, hailed from Lamia. They were childless. The gynecologists in both Greece and England excluded any possibility of her becoming a mother. In fact, one gynecologist, a professor, remarked at the hopelessness of her case and said, "If thou bearest a child, I shall tear up my medical gown." Smaragda did not give up hope. She took refuge in Panagia Prousiotissa. Smaragda went to the monastery, where she prayed to our Lady. In July of 1980, at the age of forty, Smaragda gave birth to a daughter. The happy parents named her Theodora, because she was for them, in accordance with her name, "a gift of God."

"O Virgin, no mortal tongue suffices to relate the endless ocean of thy wonders and strange mysteries, which thou dost show daily to those who with faith hasten to thy divine icon."⁷⁹ Hence, no matter where we are on the earth, we may pin our hopes on Panagia Prousiotissa. We resort to her in every necessity, for as the Mother of God she is able to bring about all that she wishes and wills. By her intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

The Prousiotissa Monastery Today

The church honoring Prousiotissa is in the cross-domed type, dating from 1754. Within the west side of the church there is a crypt modified to be used as a *parekklesion* (chapel). The frescoes are dated from the year 1785. There are also frescoes of the thirteenth century preserved in the external west side of the crypt. Two phases can be distinguished when viewing the frescoes in the internal side: one is dated 1518; and those of the noteworthy wood-carved iconostasion, dated 1810, decorating the crypt.

When one takes in the spectacular sight of the monastery, one gains a better understanding of how it is actually built hanging against the precipice. The monastery sits at a height of 675 meters or 2,214 feet. The canyon town of Prousos,⁸⁰ at 900 meters, today has a population of 2,253 inhabitants.

Across from the monastery one may view the historical building of the first Greek School to function during the dark times of Ottoman rule. The school was started by the holy Priest-monk Kosmas Aitolos.⁸¹ On account of his ideas, he faced a martyric death. The notable clock tower, standing across

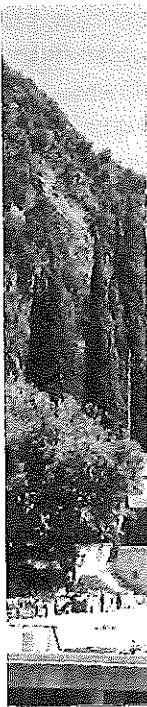
⁷⁹ Dismissal Hymn.

⁸⁰ Prousos (38°44'35.62"N 21°39'06.09"E) of the Evrytalian prefecture of Sterea Hellas.

⁸¹ Saint Kosmas is commemorated by the holy Church on the 24th of August.

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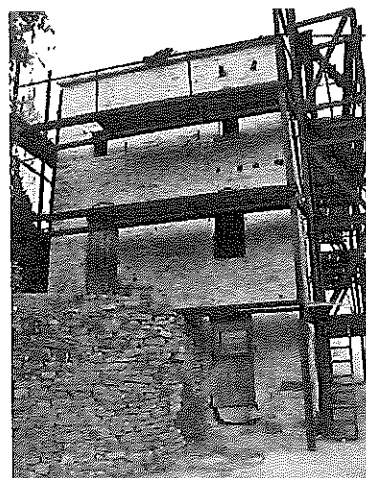
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the gorge from the monastery, also invokes awe. It is built on precipitous cliffs, at an altitude of 2,217 feet. Opposite the monastery is also the Chapel of All Saints (Hagion Panton), which was constructed in 1754. There is also a museum, exhibiting many items of interest, including typeset books, manuscript codices, old traditional vestments, and even a sword from 1821 believed to be that of General Karaiskakis. It was he who undertook the expense of having a silver riza fashioned for the icon. He had been cured of malaria, after spending six months in the monastery.

Through the intercessions
of Thy Saints, O Christ God,
have mercy on us. Amen.



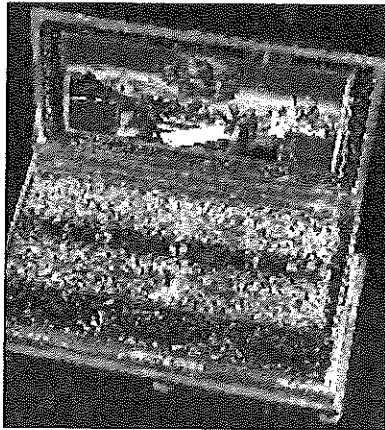
*The Greek School
started by Saint Kosmas*



*Tower of Karaiskakis overlooking
Prousiotissa Monastery*

chapel dedicated to the sacred cincture is on the slope of the immense stone-paved courtyard of the monastery. The iconostasion contains three important panels: Christ, John the Forerunner, and John the Theologian. The sash was only once removed from the Holy Mountain. This took place in 1963 when, for a few days, it was brought to Athens, for veneration during the one-thousand-year anniversary of Athos.

"Deliver us, Virgin, from friendship with the treacherous passions, as thou art compassionate."¹⁸



Reliquary of Cincture on Athos

**On the 31st of August, the holy Church commemorates
the Consecration of the Temple
of our Most Holy Lady THEOTOKOS at Neorion.**

During the time of the reign of Michael and Theodora, that is, in the year 842, there was a certain godly patrician. His name was Anthony. He had a modest home in Constantinople. It was situated in the residential section surrounding Neorion or Neorium (New Dock), the harbor facing east toward the Bosporos.¹⁹ This was the most ancient port in the city. In this neighborhood there was a glorious temple, dedicated to the most holy Theotokos. It had been denuded of the sacred icons by the former emperors who were iconoclasts. The patrician Anthony assumed the expense of redecorating the church. He

¹⁸ August 31st, Orthros Canon, Ode Nine, Mode Plagal Four, by Saint Joseph.

¹⁹ Neorion harbor is in the area of modern Sirkeci. In 698/699 the harbor was dredged. A wall discovered at the new post office site at the northeast harbor may have been an early Byzantine (5th-7th C.) quay and, along with geological evidence, suggests that the Neorion harbor was much larger than hitherto supposed. The harbor was probably silted in the 7th C.

also constructed underneath with bodily ailments. Above services glorifying God. Nov this sacred precinct for the s Christ. With the completion evidence.

Now certain lovers of bath once weekly in the pool brethren of Christ and especially gathered there many sick Christians bath with faith, and they were for the sake of the salvation of his soul as well as the bathing-place, time. Those Christians, however, for revenue, they were unable to. The degree of their ardor cooled. dedicated to the glory of God waned in keeping the water at its temperature became a matter. The bathing-place, little by little, the needed vessels to refresh the Church of the Theotokos but one priest who served. The workings rendered for suffer did well for his means of saving inhabitants about the wonder.

When the blessed emperor constructed his palace and residence in wood, he learned that the harbor that the structure was about problems, the grace of our temple. She in no wise was contemplating. She, therefore, superintendent (or in Latin kinsman of the former. She they were not to level her little his sleep first. He made haste revealed to her the vision he

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also constructed underneath it a bathing-place as a therapeutic pool for those with bodily ailments. Above the bath took place the continual conducting of services glorifying God. Now the grace of the most Holy Spirit overshadowed this sacred precinct for the sake of the most pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. With the completion of the pool, healing of diverse diseases came into evidence.

Now certain lovers of Christ besought the patrician's permission to bath once weekly in the pool. He granted permission as one who loved the brethren of Christ and especially those with infirmities. As it happened, there gathered there many sick Christians. They hastened to this wonderworking bath with faith, and they were cured. At length, the patrician reposed. For the sake of the salvation of his soul, he bequeathed the Church of the Theotokos, as well as the bathing-place, to the God-loving Christians found there at that time. Those Christians, however, were frugal and poor folks. Without revenue, they were unable to provide an adequate supply of water to the pool. The degree of their ardor cooled toward finishing this church, which was dedicated to the glory of God and His Mother. Their devotion, furthermore, waned in keeping the water warm. At length, attention both to the water and its temperature became a matter to be disregarded and abandoned altogether. The bathing-place, little by little, came to nothing and disappeared. On the one hand, the needed vessels to maintain the site were seized. On the other hand, the Church of the Theotokos, a lofty structure and poised on high ground, had but one priest who served. This came about despite the incontestable wonderworkings rendered for sufferers. Nevertheless, by the grace of God, the priest did well for his means of subsistence by reason of the more conscientious inhabitants about the wonderworking Church.

When the blessed Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos (r. 920-944) constructed his palace and required building materials, that is both stone and wood, he learned that the house of the Theotokos had a sufficient supply—but that the structure was about to collapse. Nevertheless, despite its structural problems, the grace of our Lady Theotokos inhabited and supported that temple. She in no wise would allow the emperor to execute what he was contemplating. She, therefore, appeared in a night vision to the palace superintendent (or in Latin *rector*) and a certain youth of the household, a kinsman of the former. She commanded them by way of a stern warning that they were not to level her little church at Neorion. The youth was roused from his sleep first. He made haste to the mother of the palace superintendent and revealed to her the vision he had received.

The emperor was soon apprized of what had taken place and remarked, "I do not wish to have a crisis with the Theotokos. Indeed, much rather, you will renew her small house, if in some part it requires renewal."

Therefore, instead of demolishing the bathing-place, the pool was enlarged and made grander so that the bathers might wash comfortably. Now Romanos had crowned his sons Christopher, Stephen, and Constantine as co-emperors. So when the bathing-place was completed, he went with his sons Constantine and Christopher in order to enjoy the waters. They, thereafter, decided to grant a *solemnion*, that is, a stipend of an annual payment which came from the imperial purse for expenses. This was established by an imperial chrysobull, a document bearing the emperor's gold bulla confirming the gift granted by the imperial family. These were granted to the monastery which took on the name Rectoros, as it was the rector who was entrusted with providing for the bathing-place, the temple itself, and the monks of the monastery. As many miracles as there were previously wrought in that place, more were now in evidence. Since they all cannot be recounted in this limited work, we need to overleap this impressive number. However, for the verification and edification of all, we shall report two accounts that occurred in the early years.

A certain lady of high repute succumbed to a relentless disease, which caused swelling in her body. She expended all of her fortune on physicians and their therapies, but received not the least relief or benefit. She experienced the bitterest of pangs in her distended members. She came to hear of the wonders accomplished at the Neorion house of the most holy Theotokos. Emboldened by faith, she hastened to the church and tarried there for many days. Her symptoms, however, did not abate at all. She was much straitened by her sufferings, so she departed. She had recourse to the Theotokos Church at Vlachernai. She prostrated herself in the temple, begging with much vehemence the Theotokos with these words: "Have mercy on me, O Mother of Christ! Unto thee do I flee for refuge, for I have despaired in finding human help." So the afflicted woman remained there for nine days, after which our compassionate Lady Theotokos appeared to her in a dream and said, "O woman, why dost thou cry out and importune me? Why dost thou not pray in deep silence?"²⁰ The suffering woman replied, "O Mistress, I know that it is on account of my sins that I am suffering and that I am being tempted. But I pluck up courage, since I know that for our sins thy Son and our God descended from the heavens, and was born of thy sacred womb, and became man, so that the misfortunate fallen may hope to find mercy in Him and thee, my Lady." Then the Theotokos said to her, "Go to my humble house of Neorion, where within thou wilt find health."

Therefore, the woman was stirred from her sleep and gave thanks to God. She hastened directly to Neorion, prostrating herself there and imploring

God's Mother: "Have mer compassion upon me!" Wh again. She observed the Th Theotokos said to him, "Bel navel." This procedure was took the staff that he was completing this, both the Th the woman petitioner, she v body yielded an intolerable c the bathing-place attached she emerged from those salt was sound of health. In he shrine at Neorion, censing Mother of God and to Him Christ.

Another miracle wh involved a certain monk, F Galakrenon.²¹ He fell into inflamed from rheumatism and foot paralyzed. The phy which afforded him a little effects of the disease ravag was left disabled from with able to support himself wit years in the monastery, end of pain, but his health was

Now it so happene parts of Constantinople. It God the scepter and victor place, the monks of the G refuge within the city. Fat time inside the monastery's his habit to frequent the w tokos' shrine at Neorion. (fellow monks went forth to

²⁰ Cf. 1 Kgs. (1 Sam.) 1:13—"And she [Hannah] was speaking in her heart, and her lips moved, but her voice was not heard."

²¹ Galakrenon is in the dioce include 430-450 and 730-850, and *Monasteries of Constanti* p. 464.

²² This possibly may be Nikej

the pool was enlarged and tably. Now Romanos had untine as co-emperors. So his sons Constantine and eafter, decided to grant a nt which came from the y an imperial chrysobull, ing the gift granted by the y which took on the name l with providing for the the monastery. As many place, more were now in limited work, we need to erification and edification the early years.

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sleep and gave thanks to rself there and imploring ing in her heart, and her lips

God's Mother: "Have mercy on me, O Mistress, and pour out thy wonted compassion upon me!" While she was making this entreaty, she slumbered again. She observed the Theotokos being escorted by a beautiful man. The Theotokos said to him, "Behold this suffering woman! Make an incision at her navel." This procedure was miraculously and painlessly performed when he took the staff that he was bearing in his hand and tapped her navel. Upon completing this, both the Theotokos and the comely man disappeared. As for the woman petitioner, she was roused from her slumber. She sensed that her body yielded an intolerable odor. She, thereupon, quickly disrobed and entered the bathing-place attached to the Neorion church. After she washed herself, she emerged from those salutary waters. She understood within herself that she was sound of health. In her elation and gratitude, she venerated the sacred shrine at Neorion, censing it with fragrance. She gave thanks and glory to the Mother of God and to Him Who was born of her, our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

Another miracle which took place at the Theotokos Church of Neorion involved a certain monk, Father Anthony. He was from the Monastery of the Galakrenon.²¹ He fell into a dreadful illness. His right hand had become inflamed from rheumatism. Complications developed, leaving his right hand and foot paralyzed. The physicians excised superficial tissue on his right arm, which afforded him a little relief so that he could move his hand slightly. The effects of the disease ravaged the right side of his body, so that gradually he was left disabled from withered and damaged nerves. Anthony, however, was able to support himself with a cane, getting about on one foot. He spent five years in the monastery, enduring this crippling disease. He never complained of pain, but his health was not good.

Now it so happened that enemies of the empire attacked the outlying parts of Constantinople. It was then that Emperor Nikephoros received from God the scepter and victory against his adversaries.²² While this was taking place, the monks of the Galakrenon Monastery had taken fright and sought refuge within the city. Father Anthony went along with them, spending his time inside the monastery's *metochion*, or dependency, inside the city. It was his habit to frequent the waters of the bathing-place of the most holy Theotokos' shrine at Neorion. On the eve of the Dormition of the Theotokos, his fellow monks went forth to their monastery in order to commemorate that holy

²¹ Galakrenon is in the diocese of Chalcedon. Dates of operation of this monastery include 430-450 and 730-850, and perhaps another fifty years. Peter Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople ca. 350-850* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 464.

²² This possibly may be Nikephoros I (802-811).

feast as best as they could. Father Anthony, however, was left behind in the *metochion* in order to tend the animals.

Father Anthony mounted one of the horses and went to water the livestock. Having completed the task, he returned to the *metochion* grounds. He rode into the stable and dismounted. There was a manger there upon which he leaned and supported himself. He stayed there until a companion came with his cane. Even after the passage of a very long while, no assistance was forthcoming. The blessed man was hard pressed to attend the Theotokos Church, where the divine Liturgy was in progress. Since he believed he missed the service, he was both angry and sad. On account of his grief, he fell asleep. By divine power, he was snatched away from the manger. He saw himself, on one foot, proceeding out the stable door and into the courtyard of the *metochion*. Then, by divine impulse he found himself inside the Theotokos Church, where they were still conducting the divine Liturgy. The priest elevated the Lord's body and said, "The Holies for the holy." The choir responded, "One is holy, one is Lord...." Stirred by the priest's declaration, Anthony came to himself. Standing on both his feet, he cried aloud, "Glory to Thee, O God, Who had mercy on me in this hour by the intercessions of the most holy Theotokos!" He then venerated the sacred icon of the Mother of God with a gladsome heart and ardent kisses, so that his warm tears, shed with delight and thanks, bedewed the floor of the church.

All the Christians present, seeing this mysterious and extraordinary wonder, were glorifying God as well and magnifying His Mother. This was also heard by the fathers in the Galakrenon Monastery. They believed the report to be false. When they journeyed back into Constantinople and observed Father Anthony sound of body, they too glorified God. Now after this miraculous cure to the paralyzed and palsied foot, his gait was still not steady. Nor was the right foot that received healing as dexterous in walking as the left one. Nonetheless, one must still marvel, for the Theotokos dispensed this degree of healing in Anthony's best interest as one privy to her Son's will in this case. Let no one imagine that she was not able to effect a complete cure. Away with such rash irreverence!

A similar case happened with Hierarch John of Jerusalem who was rendered blind by divine punishment. He implored blessed Archbishop Epiphanius of Cyprus²³ that he might restore his eyesight. Epiphanius urged him to venerate the Cross and find healing. John, however, persisted until Epiphanius rested his hand upon the ailing John. Forthwith, the vision in the patriarch's right eye returned. John continued to supplicate the saint to heal his left eye as well. The saint commented, "This is not my work, father. God

²³ Saint Epiphanius is commemorated by the holy Church on the 12th of May.

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²⁴ The introductory two-line or and *Synaxaristes* has: "Crown fire, for which the demons we *Synaxaristes* of Dionysiou does they wanted it or not—"to accep their inferiority, being burned

²⁵ This Saint Cyprian is not to Metaphrastes and the subject c

closed it, so He will open it and make it well as it pleases Him, that thou mightest come to prudence. In the meantime, this one that has been opened must satisfy thee." After this episode, since John was duly chastised and humbled, he amended his former acquisitiveness and cupidity. He became merciful, openhanded, and virtuous in all his affairs. Hence, all came about according to the divine œconomy, which regulates what is to the recipient's benefit.

On the 31st of August, the holy Church commemorates the holy FOUR MARTYRS of Perga in Pamphylia, who were made to run over a bed of fire.²⁴

On the 31st of August, the holy Church commemorates the holy Martyrs MENAS, FAUSTUS, ANDREW, and HERAKLEIOS.

On the 31st of August, the holy Church commemorates the holy Martyr PHILEORTOS, who was slain by the sword.

On the 31st of August, the holy Church commemorates the holy Martyr DIADOCHOS.

On the 31st of August, the holy Church commemorates the holy SEVEN VIRGIN-MARTYRS of Gaza, who were slain by the sword.

On the 31st of August, the holy Church commemorates the THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX MARTYRS of NIKOMEDIA, who were slain by the sword.

On the 31st of August, the holy Church commemorates the holy Hieromartyr CYPRIAN, Bishop of Carthage.²⁵

²⁴ The introductory two-line or couplet verses (*distichon*) in the *Menaion Synaxarion* and *Synaxaristes* has: "Crowns of four were received by those whose racecourse was fire, for which the demons were persuaded to accept being the weaker party." The *Synaxaristes* of Dionysiou does not record that the demons were "persuaded"—whether they wanted it or not—"to accept being the weaker party" but that the demons "accepted their inferiority, being burned like combustible splinters (matches)."

²⁵ This Saint Cyprian is not to be confused with the account given by Saint Symeon Metaphrastes and the subject of a poem by saintly Empress Evdokia II. The glorious

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