

Monk Ioakeim Karyotis (1893-1988) (Elder Moses the Athonite)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



The late Elder Ioakeim was a real Athonite. He loved the Mother of God, the Holy Mountain its history and the Athonite fathers. He was distinguished for his devotion to works, learning and virtue. He avoided care and verbosity. He was a forgotten, humble and good monk. His poverty gave him a rich heart. Fault was found with Elder Ioakeim, but he never found fault with anyone else.



He was born Ioannis Balasis, in 1893, in the village of Dafni, in Kalavryta, of devout parents who had many children. He was the oldest child of eight. As a child, his first words, in a weird and wonderful fashion, were “I’m going to be a monk”. After leaving school, he worked for a while in a grocery store in Patras. There he became acquainted and formed a friendship with the well-known spiritual father Yervasios Paraskevopoulos († 1964).

From Dafni, Kalavryta, he moved to Dafni, Athos, in 1915. He moved on to the skete of Kavsokalyvia, where, for a few months he stayed with the brotherhood of the late Fr. Hariton († 1906). Two others from his home town were monks there, Hariton († 1930) and Athanasios († 1956). There, in the house of the Akathistos, reigned silence, calm, prayer, contrition, poverty and blessedness. In 1916, he moved to the *kelli* of the Birth of the Mother of God, which belongs to the Monastery of Pantokrator and had a tradition linked to the *kollyvades*[1]. Here he was tonsured a monk by Elder Onufrios. He worked hard for a decade here, his only consolation being his nightly studies. He went for a brief spell to a *xerokalyvo*, a small house without a chapel, at Kavsokalyvia and then to the *kelli* of Saint Dimitrios, in Kerasia, where the famous Hati-Yorgis had lived (†1886). In the neighbouring *kelli* of the Precious Cross, he acquired a small following. A disciple of his, hieromonk Andreas, († 2004) writes of him: “Serene, gentle and sweet in his ways, full of kindness and his words full of wisdom and instruction, with parables. So much so that he won you over, impressed and imprisoned you with the spiritual radiance of his soul”.

In 1942, Elder Ioakeim went with his brotherhood to the *kelli* of the Saints Theodore (Ivion) and in 1953 to that of the Annunciation (Simonopetra). Finally, in 1951, he went to the *kelli* of the Ascension (Vatopaidi) where he remained until his departure from this life. In this he was accompanied by his faithful disciple, the monk Theodoros, who today is in the Monastery of Konstamonitou.

In the 73 years he spent on the Holy Mountain, he left only three times, briefly and at great need. He never went to his home village, nor did he have any correspondence with his relatives. His mother once sent him a letter, which he was much moved to receive, but he did not read all of it before burning it. Every day he would pray: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, anything alien, anything illegal, anything unjust and anything harmful to the soul, remove in any way You want. Let them steal it, ask for it, if they need it, let it break or not work any more. Just let it not take too much effort on my part if I really like it. Don't let it burden my soul”.

He loved reading. He would often say: “Books have kept me on the Mountain”. He had a spiritual bond with the Iosafei, Daniilei and Thomades Elders, Yerasimos (Little Saint Ann's) Andreas and Theodosios (Saint Pauls) Athanasios the doctor (Lavra) Athanasios (Ivion), Iosif the Cave-Dweller, Evloyios (Faneromenou), Theoklitos (Dionysiou), Paisios the Athonite and others. When he was very ill and in great pain, he was visited by Elder Paisios who told him “Elder Ioakeim, do you only want the crown of the monk? Take the martyr's, as well.”

He fell asleep in the Lord peacefully, with an expression of bright sadness. Bishop

Chrysostomos of Rodostolos (the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch) presided at his funeral with twenty vested priests and fifty monks. He often talked to me with holy passion about the ascetic life and the feats of the Athonite fathers in days gone by. He had a marvellous memory that people found astonishing. We published his wonderful Athonite stories in book form twenty years ago, to the great joy of his faithful disciple Theodoros.

See also Monk Moses the Athonite, *Αγιορείτικες Διηγήσεις του Γέροντος Ιωακείμ*, (Stories from mt Athos by Elder Joachim) Thessaloniki 1989, pp. 9-63.

Idem, *Μέγα Γεροντικό εναρέτων αγιορειτών του εικοστού αιώνας*, vol. III, 1984-2000, Mygdonia Publications, 1st ed., September 2011.

[1] From kollyva, the boiled wheat used in memorial services. An 18th century Athonite movement aimed at the restoration of proper practices in the Church and a return to frequent communion and hesychasm.