

St. John the Chrysostom (Ivion)

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On the land of the

Ivion monastery near to a cell of

St. Nikolay named "Bourazeri" there is a cell named after St. John

Chrysostom. This cell is considered to be one of the most ancient ones. The

year of its construction is unknown but according to some sources it's more

than 600 years old. Till 1821 it belonged to Greeks and then it had passed in Russian hands.

Arseny was the first Russian superior of the cell. On the

boundary of the 20th century the brotherhood of the cell consisted of 26 monks headed

by the celibate monk Constantine Semernikov who was

the fourth Russian superior of the cell.

Father Constantine

(Konon Vukolovich Semernikov) originated from the Don Cossacks, was born in 1842 in a Kochetovsky village. He had spent

twenty years from 1861 to 1881 on military service, participated in the suppression

of the Polish revolt in 1863 and in Russian-Turkish war 1877-78. He was among courageous soldiers who crossed

flooded Danube

on the horses and occupied the Turkish coast

nearby Michin. After a capture of Plevna he was

responsible to accompany the captive Osman Pasha

who was well-known for his bravery. Father

Constantine had been awarded by several awards and medals and by the

certificate which had been given out on the highest command and gave him special

privileges on the state and military service. The war was

over and public service didn't seem attractive to Father Constantine. He went

to Athos and was made a monk in the

Ivion monastery. In 1887 he becomes

the superior of the cell of St. John Chrysostom. He had spent his entire funds

on the renovation of the cell.

The glorious way

of the former soldier wasn't over

yet. The Russian-Japanese war broke out and Father Constantine organised a

sanitary group of 53 monks and with the permission of the Red Cross helped

Russian soldiers on the battlefield. His contribution was

highly appreciated by the Russian Emperor. He was

awarded a medal on the Georgian ribbon. Subsequently the Emperor personally awarded

Constantine with a golden Cross from his office.

On August 26, 1913

Father Constantine died in hospital of the skete of St. Andrew.

Conditions in the

cell corresponded to the ideal of monastic

life more than in many other well-known cells. One of the pilgrims wrote: «...
 The Life in Athos cells is immeasurably

better, than in the Russian monasteries.

Better not materially but spiritually, monks are living like brothers without

insults but like people united by the same idea, without trying to harm each other, and on the contrary bringing benefit to each other and to the brotherhood of the cell » . Such lines are written by an author after visiting the cell and a conversation with the superior - celibate priest Simeon.

The monastery was known for the wonder-working source which had opened in the XVII century on the day of St. John Chrysostom.

Nowadays there is a road from Karyes to the Iveron near the cell. Ruins of the temple restored in 1900 can be seen on that way. The temple and one of the buildings of the cell were destroyed by fire presumably during the Second World War. The present superior Father Mikhail preserved the books and the icons remaining of the Russian monks. Cell walls are decorated with images of the Russian elder Constantine whom Mikhail respects and worships. He also keeps the head of the elder Constantine. On the second floor of the cell's building that remained intact he created a small temple. In an iconostasis there are Russian icons which were rescued from the fire.