



## Summary :

Monk from Trebizond who first ascended the patriarchal throne in 1466 supported by influential houses of Trebizond before he served for another two periods (1472-1475 and 1482-1485). It was the first time an amount of money had ever been paid to the sultan for the ascension to the patriarchal throne, which became an established practice from then onwards.

## Other Names

Trapezountios (from Trebizond)

## Date and Place of Birth

between 1400 and 1420 – Trebizond

## Date and Place of Death

1485 - Constantinople (possibly)

## Main Role

Ecumenical Patriarch 1466, 1472-1475, 1482-1485

## 1. Life and Work

Before Symeon became a patriarch he had been a monk. He was born in [Trebizond](#) probably between 1400 and 1420 and settled in [Constantinople](#) (Istanbul) after his birthplace [fell to the Ottomans](#) and a part of the population had to [migrate by force](#). According to Komninos Ypsilantis, he had “ . a lot of virtues and was everybody’s friend”.<sup>1</sup> He belonged to the upper social strata and had relationships with the important families from Trebizond, who after the fall had settled in Constantinople and established relations with the Ottoman authorities; those circles helped him to ascend the patriarchal throne. He was first elected [patriarch](#) in 1466, after the above circles illegally overthrew patriarch Markos II Xylokaravis and had to pay for the first time an amount (*peşkeş*) of 1000 golden coins to the Ottoman authorities. The names of those who promoted Symeon to the patriarchal throne remain unknown. The most prominent of them possibly was Georgios [Amiroutzis](#) along with his sons, but it is likely that other influential Trebizond families were involved in the case as well. As for the Amiroutzis family, their support for Symeon could also be suggested by the fact that in his third ascension to the patriarchal throne (1482) he succeeded Maximos III, an enemy of Amiroutzis, while after Symeon’s death, İşkender Bey, the Islamized son of Amiroutzis, tried to appropriate his inheritance. The first patriarchal tenure of Symeon was very short and ended in 1466, when Mara Branković<sup>2</sup> took advantage of his dispute with Markos II Xylokaravis and, using as an argument the pacification of the Church, she paid the double sum to the sultan and succeeded in dethroning Symeon for the benefit of Dionysios of Philippopolis.<sup>3</sup> Symeon retired to a monastery in the area of Stenimachos. However, he was reelected in 1472<sup>4</sup>, which is possibly connected with the efforts of the sultan to suppress the commotion that had broken out in Trebizond due to [the movement of Alexios Komnenos](#) to recapture the city. It seems that when Symeon ascended the throne he promised the sultan that he would contribute to the restoration of order in his birthplace. As a matter of fact, one of his first actions within the same year was to replace [Pangratiος](#), the [metropolitan of Trebizond](#), who must have been involved in the rebellion, with [Dorotheos](#). This tenure ended in 1475, when he was overthrown by the Serb monk Raphael, allegedly supported by influential circles, and paid 2500 *florins*.<sup>5</sup> Symeon ascended the patriarchal throne for a third time in 1482 and remained until his death in the mid-1485. In addition to the role he possibly played in the restoration of order in Trebizond, between 1472 and 1475 he renewed the privileges of the monasteries of [Patmos](#) and Eikosifinissa on Mt. Pangaion, while in his tenure between 1482 and 1485 he convened a council in Constantinople, which officially renounced the agreements of the Council of Florence.



## 2. Evaluation

The patriarchal career of Symeon I reveals the mainly political role of the office of patriarch under the new conditions prevailing after the subordination of the Orthodox populations to the Ottoman administration. The first ascension of Symeon in 1466, supported by the influential circles of Trebizond, and the second ascension in 1472, which served the sultanic policy, show that from then onwards the succession of patriarchs was going to be a means of promoting the political aspirations or interests of the Greek Orthodox and/or Ottoman circles, while the approval of any patriarchal election by the sultanic authorities depended on the amount paid. Symeon I served the sultanic interests, as suggested by both the policy he followed on Trebizond and his openly anti-Western attitude, which culminated when he convened the council that officially renounced the decisions of Florence.

1. Κομνηνός Υψηλάντης, Α., *Εκκλησιαστικών και πολιτικών των εις δώδεκα βιβλίον Η, Θ και Ι : ήτοι Τα μετά την Αλωσιν: (1453 - 1789) εκ χειρογράφου ανεκδότου της ιεράς μονής του Σινά* (Constantinople 1870), p. 19. On the other hand, Paparrigopoulos is against this patriarch, an attitude also partly adopted by Epameinondas Kyriakidis, mainly due to the way Symeon first ascended the throne (following intrigues of Trebizond circles against his predecessor), but also because he was the first candidate for the patriarchal throne who paid an amount of money for his ascension. See Κυριακίδης, Ε., *Βιογραφία των εκ Τραπεζούντος και της περί αυτήν χώρας από της Αλώσεως μέχρις ημών ακμασάντων Λογίων μετά σχεδιάσματος ιστορικού περι του Ελληνικού Φροντιστηρίου των Τραπεζουντίων* (Athens 1897), pp. 39-40.
2. Also known as Mara hatun, daughter of Đurađ Branković, monarch of Serbia. She was wife of the Sultan Murad II and stepmother of Mehmed the Conqueror, whom she influenced strongly particularly in matters concerning the Greek-Orthodox elites and the Orthodox Church.
3. *Historia Politica et Patriarchica Constantinopoleos*, Bekker, I. (ed.) (CSHB, Bonn, 1849), pp. 39-41.
4. Manouil Gedeon and Panagiotis Nikolopoulos, the contemporary biographer of the patriarch, talk about only two patriarchal tenures without mentioning that of 1466. However, the ascension to the patriarchal throne with the support of the influential circles of Trebizond after the dethronement of Markos II is expressly mentioned by Dorotheos of Monemvasia and is also accepted by Chrysanthos. Since Gedeon and Nikolopoulos do not provide any other evidence disputing the first period of Symeon on the throne in 1466, the tenure should be accepted. See Γεδεών, Μ. [Gedeon], *Πατριαρχικοί Πίνακες: Ειδήσεις Ιστορικά Βιογραφικά περί των Πατριαρχών Κωνσταντινουπόλεως από Ανδρέου του Πρωτοκλήτου του μέχρις Ιωακείμ Γ' του από Θεσσαλονίκης 36-1884* (Constantinople 1890), pp. 483-484. Νικολόπουλος, Π. [Nikolopoulos], "Συμεών πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως", *ΘΗΕ*, vol. 11, p. 547; Χρυσάνθος, μητροπολίτης Τραπεζούντας [Chrysanthos], *Η Εκκλησία Τραπεζούντος* (Athens 1933), p. 526 (including the testimony of Dorotheos of Monemvasia).
5. *Historia Politica et Patriarchica Constantinopoleos*, Bekker, I. (ed.) (CSHB, Bonn, 1849), pp. 43-44.

## Bibliography :



	<b>Χρυσάνθος Φιλιππίδης, μητροπολίτης Τραπεζούντος</b> , "Η Εκκλησία Τραπεζούντος", <i>Αρχειόν Πόντου</i> , 4/5, 1933, 1-1.070
	<b>Κυριακίδης Επαμεινώνδας</b> , <i>Βιογραφία των εκ Τραπεζούντος και της περί αυτήν χώρας από της Αλώσεως μέχρις ημών ακμασάντων λογίων μετά σχεδιάσματος ιστορικού περι του ελληνικού Φροντιστηρίου των Τραπεζουντίων</i> , Αθήναι 1897
	<b>Γεδεών Μ.</b> , <i>Πατριαρχικοί Πίνακες. Ειδήσεις ιστορικά, βιογραφικά περί των Πατριαρχών Κωνσταντινουπόλεως από Ανδρέου του Πρωτοκλήτου μέχρις Ιωακείμ Γ' του από Θεσσαλονίκης 36-1884</i> , Κωνσταντινούπολη 1885-1890
	<b>Νικολόπουλος Π.</b> , "Συμεών πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως", <i>Θρησκευτική και Ηθική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια</i> , τόμ. 11, Αθήνα 1969, 547



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	Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο
	<a href="http://www.ec-patr.org/">http://www.ec-patr.org/</a>

## Glossary :

	florins
	Ottoman gold coins first issued by Mehmed II around 1460 in imitation of the Venetian gold ducats - hence the Italian origin of the name. Otherwise known as <i>sultani</i> .
	peşkes
	Payment made by Christian church officials, at the time when their appointment was officially confirmed by the Ottoman government.

## Sources

Κομνηνός Υψηλάντης, Α. , *Εκκλησιαστικών και πολιτικών των εις δώδεκα βιβλίων Η, Θ και Ι : ήτοι Τα μετά την Αλωσιν : (1453 - 1789) εκ χειρογράφου ανεκδότου της ιεράς μονής του Σινά, Αφθονίδης Γερμανός (ed.)*, (Constantinople 1870).

*Historia Politica et Patriarchica Constantinopoleos*, Bekker, I. (ed.) (CSHB, Bonn 1849).