ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

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Translation : *Βελέντζας Γεώργιος*
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Summary :

Tryphon was a Christian martyr from Asia Minor, honoured both by the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church. In the Byzantine years the main centres of his cult were Asia Minor and Constantinople. Especially after 1204, when his relics seem to have been transported by the crusaders from Constantinople to Rome, his cult became widespread in Nicaea. The beginnings cult of the saint as the patron of cultivation, and particularly viniculture, probably date back to the 10th century.

Date

From 6th c. onward

Geographical Location

Nicaea

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1. Hagiological Sources of the Life of St. Tryphon

The basic source of the life and activity of Saint Tryphon is the Synaxarion of Constantinople, probably dating to the 11th century. Tryphon came from Lampsacus of Phrygia, lived in the years of Emperor Gordian (first half of 3rd century) and, according to the S*ynaxarion*, earned his living by breeding geese. He seems to have been able to heal all diseases and to cast out demons with the help of the Holy Spirit already from the early years of his life. Among those healed by him was the daughter of Emperor Gordian, who suffered from demons; Tryphon was able to even identify the demon with a black dog, which he showed to the people attending, thus causing a lot of them to turn to Christianity. In the years of Decius (249-251), the emperor who reigned after Philip, the successor of Gordian, Tryphon was taken to the praefectus praetorio per Orientem Acylinus accused of not regularly worshipping the statues of the gods. Thus, he was taken to Nicaea, the seat of the eparch, to defend himself. He confessed his Christian faith there. According to the tradition, Tryphon was tortured in various ways in order to forsake his religion before he was finally beheaded in 250.

2. The Cult of St. Tryphon in Constantinople

According to the Synaxarion of Constantinople, the synaxis of Saint Tryphon was held on the 1st of February at his martyrion, which was inside the church of St. John the Theologian, near the churches of Hagia Sophia and St. Eirene in Constantinople.[1] The establishment of that martyrion was separately celebrated on the 19th of October.[2] The synaxis of St. Tryphon was also celebrated on September 19, the day the martyrs Trophimos and Dorymedon were celebrated, near St. Anna, in the quarter known as *Deuteron*.[3] However, according to the Synaxarion, in Constantinople there was a church exclusively dedicated to St. Tryphon, whose opening was celebrated on 1 December.[4] Indeed, according to the information provided by the Byzantine written sources, in Constantinople there were at least seven churches dedicated to St. Tryphon.[5] As a result, his cult was particularly popular in Constantinople, at least from the years of Justinian (6th century). It is also known that both Theophanes (early 9th century) and Emperor Leo VI (886-912) wrote encomia honouring the martyr, which shows that the cult was spread in Constantinople in the following centuries as well.

3. Details of the Cult of St. Tryphon

No particular qualities are attributed to St. Tryphon in the encomia of Theophanes and Emperor Leo VI. However, in later texts St. Tryphon is considered ‘Anargyros’, meaning saint-healer, as well as patron of cultivation, gardens and vineyards. Both these qualities are probably somehow based on the events of the saint’s life, since his synaxarion reports that Tryphon cast out demons (healing abilities) and kept geese (a professional in close contact with nature, particularly with cultivation lands in the near region). A lot of official ecclesiastical works (like Euchologia), as well as various manuscripts with anthologies of ecclesiastical and other texts, include blessings and exorcisms ‘of St. Tryphon’ concerning the success in farming gardens, vineyards and land. As a result, it should be concluded that from some time between the 10th and the 13th century the saint started to be considered patron of a particular part of agricultural production, mainly of the part connected with fruit, vegetables and wine. In particular, the saint was believed to be fighting

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all insects and small animals that could harm such cultivation.

4. St. Tryphon in Art

The fact that specific qualitites (healer and patron of gardens and vineyards) were attributed to St. Tryphon only from some time on, has also affected the way he is represented in art. Tryphon always appears as a young man, usually beardless, rarely having some grown hairs on his cheeks and chin, while he always has a lot of hair, oftenly unkempt, which stresses his humble origin and the fact that he spent his whole life in the country. He always wears a chiton down to his feet and a long tunic-like garment (ependytes) over it.

There are two main iconographic types of St. Tryphon according to the way he is represented and the symbols he has in his hands.

First iconographic type: In the first phase of his cult, when he was not a patron of cultures yet, Tryphon was represented holding in his right hand, like all martyrs, only a cross (the symbol of his martyrdom). The other hand was holding and raising the edge of his garment. This seemingly earlier type of representation was preserved even in later periods, when Tryphon was considered patron of cultures.

Second iconographic type: A second and probably later type of representation, clearly showing the known qualities of the saint, depicts Tryphon holding, apart from the cross in his right hand, a small sickle in his left hand [fig. 1 and 2]. It was the billhook of the Middle Ages, a basic tool for gardens and vineyards. Along with this iconographical type it seems that there was another one representing the saint holding, instead of a billhook, either a specific kind of lily or a vine branch full of grapes in his left hand. In another version, the saint is also holding, apart from the sickle, a small box with medical tools (as it often happens with saints-healers, such as the Saints Cosmas and Damianos and St. Panteleemon) indicating his healing abilities. There is also a representation of St. Tryphon in which the cross is missing and the martyr is holding the sickle in his right hand and the lily in his left hand. All the above representations should be considered versions of the second iconographic type, which, unlike the first one, attributes specific qualities to the martyr (healer and patron of gardens and vineyards).

5. Spread of the Cult of St. Tryphon.

Representations of St. Tryphon are often found in wall paintings of several churches and in portable icons from various regions: from all over Greece (from Macedonia to Crete) from Serbia and Asia Minor. It seems that the cult of the saint was particularly popular in the entire Christian world. As mentioned above, the cult was particularly widespread in Constantinople as early as in the 6th century. According to lots of other sources, Constantinople was the most important centre of cult of several saints and celebrations in the Byzantine world.

However, at the same time, there are several reasons why Asia Minor must have been another important centre of St. Tryphon's cult. First of all, the martyr was born, lived and was martyred there: as a result, it seems reasonable that his cult appeared there. It is known that in Lampsakos, his birthplace, there was a sanctuary dedicated to him. Then his cult arrived (possibly in the 5th century, during the reign of some Asia Minor emperor) in Constantinople, before it spread over the wider Byzantine territory. Second, the earliest representations of St. Tryphon preserved so far are in Asia Minor. It is not by chance that several Cappadocian churches (from the 10th century onward) include a representation of the saint, often holding a prominent position. Third, Asia Minor was always known in the Byzantine world as the 'cradle of saints'. The cult of several saints had began as a local cult from there: St. Polykarpos in Smyrna, St. John the Theologian in Ephesus, St. Nicholas in Myra, Archangel Michael in Chonai, St. Phokas in Sinope, St. Eugenios in Trebizond, St. Hyakinthos in Amastris, St. Theodore in Euchaita, the Forty Martyrs in Sebasteia, St. Merkourios and St. Mamas in Caesarea. The cult of St. George was also particularly spread in Paphlagonia.[6] In this framework, it is not strange that the cult of St. Tryphon was particularly popular in Nicaea, the city Tryphon had been martyred.

6. The Cult of St. Tryphon in Nicaea

The cult of St. Tryphon in Nicaea must have spread more widely after 1204. It seems that, after Constantinople was captured by the

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crusaders, the relics of the martyr –as it happened in other cases as well– were taken to West Europe. In particular, they were deposited at the church of the Holy Spirit in Rome (the Roman Catholic Church celebrates the saint on November 10). This must have been a heavy blow to the cult of the saint in Constantinople. The Empire of Nicaea, the most powerful of the states created by the Byzantine aristocracy after 1204 in the regions the crusaders could not control, was formed a little later. It is possible that the rulers of the state of Nicaea, in their attempt to stand against the then Latin Empire of Constantinople, encouraged the cult of Tryphon, a local saint particularly known and familiar to all Orthodox, whose relics had just been stolen by their rivals.

There are two main points advocating this view. The first is that the emperor of Nicaea Theodore II Laskaris (1255-1259), in his work Encomium to the city of Nicaea, says that Tryphon was particularly dear to the Nicaeans and that his memory was greatly celebrated every year, at the same time citing an encomium he had written honouring the martyr.[7] According to a Byzantine chronicle of an unknown writer of that time, Theodore II considered Tryphon his patron saint and said that the saint often visited him in his dreams encouraging and advising him. According to other sources, Theodore said that he had seen the saint leading his fighting troops. Thus, Theodore II decided that St. Tryphon should be represented beside his figure on the coins he minted. The coins represented lilies as well, one of Tryphon's symbols within the framework of the special cult of the saint in Nicaea at the time.

7. The Church of St. Tryphon in Nicaea

The second and probably the most important point is that, according to the same anonymous chronicle, immediately after his difficult victory against the ruler of Bulgaria Michael in Northern Macedonia in 1254, Theodore returned to Nicaea and the first thing he did was to build a magnificent church dedicated to St. Tryphon, to whom he credited his victory. According to information, the church was built on the site of an earlier small plinth-build church dedicated to the saint, which had been built on the site of his martyrdom and was in a very bad condition. In his encomium to the saint, Theodore II also refers to the annual miracle of the saint, who made the lily 'beside his lamp' blossom on his name day, in midwinter (one year after it was cut). As a result, it should be supposed that the church of St. Tryphon was a real 'martyrion', where, perhaps because of the absence of his relics, the martyr Tryphon made clear his presence and his favour with the city and the emperor, by means of an annually repeated miracle of great political importance. In addition, together with the church he built and in collaboration with the then Patriarch Arsenios, Theodore II also founded a school where grammar and rhetoric were taught.

Thus, it is very possible that Theodore II, for specific reasons of internal and external policy, encouraged again the cult of St. Tryphon, which must have been declined even in the city where the saint had been martyred. This information is also verified by archaeological evidence, as the remains of a quite imposing church (22.5 x 19.5 m) were excavated in Nicaea in 1947. The church was built circa 1255 and was of the well-known cross-in-square type. The church –the so-called 'C' by excavators– must have been decorated with brilliant mosaics and an opus sectile floor shortly after it was built.[8] Perhaps the church was on purpose built in the northern part of the city, on the main street leading from Nicaea to Constantinople.[9]

8. St. Tryphon and St. Mamas

There is at least one case, in a church of Attiki (13th century), when St. Tryphon is represented holding a small animal in his left hand and a staff in his right hand. It is most certainly St. Tryphon because the painter, as it usually happens, wrote the name of the saint beside his head. However, this is the first time the saint has been depicted in this way. Perhaps there are more similar representations. It should be assumed that in cases like that St. Tryphon is confused with St. Mamas, the patron of flocks and herds. The latter is often represented standing and holding a small animal in his right hand and a staff in his left hand.

There are lots of similarities between the two saints. Both Tryphon and Mamas were from Asia Minor, where the latter lived and was martyred shortly after the former, towards the late 3rd century. The place where St. Mamas was martyred, which was also a centre of his cult, was Caesarea of Cappadocia. The cult seems to have spread from Caesarea to Constantinople, as it happened with the cult of St. Tryphon, possibly in the 5th century. However, the most interesting thing is the fact that their 'specialties' are almost supplementary. Tryphon was the patron of cultivations and Mamas was the patron of herds, while both saints actually protected life in a society where agriculture and stock breeding were the most important means of livelihood.

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1. Delehaye, H., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris* (Bruxelles 1902), l. 437. On the proximity to the Church of St Eirene, 'the old and the new', as above l. 818 and 840. The synaxes of the martyrs Golinduc the Persian and Christina of Tyre were also calebrated on 12 and 24 July respectively along with the martyrdom of St Tryphon (as above, l. 818 and l. 840).

2. Delehaye, H., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris* (Bruxelles 1902), l. 150.

3. Delehaye, H., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris* (Bruxelles 1902), l. 90.

4. Delehaye, H., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris* (Bruxelles 1902), l. 271.

5. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin. Première Partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique. Tome III: Les églises et les moinastères*[2] (Paris 1969), pp. 488-490 with a review of the sources. The monastery of St Tryphon, whose abbot participated in the Council of Constantinople in 536, was not dedicated to the martyr Tryphon but to the namesake archimandrite.

6. Vryonis, Sp., Jr., *Η παρακμή του μεσαιωνικού ελληνισμού στη Μικρά Ασία και η διαδικασία εξισλαμισμού (11ος-15ος αιώνας)* [2], MIET (Athens 2000), p. 36. On the cult of the saints in Asia Mionor, see also Delehaye, H., *Les origines du culte des martyrs* (Bruxelles 1933), pp. 145-180.

7. On the cult of St Tryphon in Nicaea and on his encomium, see Foss, C. – Tulchin, J., *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (Brookline-Mass. 1990), pp. 104-108.

8. On church C, see Foss, C. – Tulchin, J., *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (Brookline-Mass. 1990), pp. 108-110.

9. Semavi Eyice brought up the question of identifying the Church of St Tryphon with another, recently excavated, church (church C), which is also of the cross-in-square type. See Eyice, S., 'Die byzantinische Kirche in der Nähe des Yenisehir-Tores zu Iznik (=Nicaea)', *Materialia Turcica* 7-8 (1981-1982), pp. 152-167.

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Παπαδόπουλος Ι., "Ο εν Νικαία της Βιθυνίας ναός του Αγίου Τρύφωνος", *Επετηρίς Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών*, 22, 1952, 110-113

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Ο Άγιος Τρύφων
http://athos.edo.gr/modules.php?name=4ncalendar&op=modload&file=index&type=view&eid=359

St Tryphon, Memory celebrated 1 February
http://home.it.net.au/~jgrapsas/pages/St_Tryphon.htm

Ο 'Αγιος Τρύφωνας, ο προστάτης του Αμπελουργού
http://www.alpha123.gr/page/default.asp?la=1&id=10563

На Трифон Зарезан празнуват лозарите, градинарите, кръчмарите и соколарите
http://news.netinfo.bg/?tid=40&oid=688291

Трифоновден
http://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A2%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%84%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD

Glossary :

cross-in-square church
Type of church in which four barrel-vaulted bays form a greek cross; the central square of their intersection is domed. The cross is inscribed into the square ground plan by means of four corner bays.

euchologio
("The prayer book") A liturgical book containing the various services, sacraments and prayers required for ceremonies and services of the Church. The Great Euchologion contains the three Liturgies, while the Minor Euchologion contains sacraments and prayers recuired for the administration of the sacraments.

martyrion
(pl. martyria) Shrine or building over the grave or the place of martyrdom of a martyr.

opus sectile, the
Technique of floor or wall decoration. Thin pieces of polychrome marble are carved or joined so that a decorative motif could be depicted.

praetorian prefect (praefectus praetorio)
Commander of the emperor's bodyguard under the principate. During the regne of Constantine I the praetorian prefect becomes a dignitary responsible for the administrative unit called the prefecture, which was subdivided into dioceses. In 400 A.D. there were four such praetorian prefectures, of Oriens, of Illyricum, of Illyricum, Italia and Africa and of Gallia. The praetorian prefects were second only to the emperor. The praetorian prefect of Oriens was the mightiest among prefects. His office is for the last time mentioned in 680.

synaxarion
A liturgical text containing a short account of the saint's life and acts meant to be read at orthros (the morning liturgy) on the day of the saint's celebration.

Synaxarion of Constantinople
A compilation of brief accounts on every saint that was celebrated during a liturgical year, arranged by months. It was one of the first and most thorough compilation of synaxaria and it is considered a valuable source for the Byzantine studies. Its compilation must be dated to the 10th century and was probably linked to the tradition of the Church of Constantinople. It was the model for many synaxaria compiled later (such as the Menologion of Basil II), and it was completed or slightly altered in some parts through the years. It was published in 1902 by the Belgian scholar Hippolyte Delehaye (*Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano* [Bruxelles 1902]).

synaxis

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An assembly, especially a monastic or liturgical clerical gathering. Also "synaxis" refers to the special commemorative services celebrated the day following some of the great church's feasts.

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'Vita Tryphonis', *Acta Sanctorum*, Nov. IV, pp. 318-383.

Quotations

Encomium of St Tryphon by Theodore II Laskaris

'Οὕτως ἠγωνίσατο ὁ γενναῖος καὶ τοιαύτας τὰς ἀμοιβὰς ἔλαβε, τὰς ἐπουρανίους καὶ ἐπιγείους, ἐκείνας περὶ αὐτόν, ταύτας διὰ τοὺς προσκαλουμένους αὐτόν. ἀνθεῖ γὰρ καθ' ἑκάστην τὰ θαύματα, ῥαίνει τὰς δωρεάς, πλημμυρεῖ τάς εὐεργεσίας. Δράμετε ἄνθρωποι οἱ νοσοῦντες πρὸς τὸν ἰατρόν, οἱ αἰτοῦντες πρὸς τὸν χορηγὸν τῶν καλῶν αἰτημάτων, οἱ πάντες πρὸς τὸν πάντα μεσιτεύειν δυνάμενον εἰς Θεόν. καὶ μηδεὶς στραφήτω κενός, τὴν προαίρεσιν φέροντες καὶ τὰς εὐεργεσίας ἀντιλαμβάνοντες. οὐ γὰρ ἐστι τοῦτο δεόμενον ἐξετάσεως. ὁ κόσμος βοᾷ, καὶ τὰ ἔργα κηρύσσει διαπρυσίως καὶ γνησίως ὡς καλοῦ προμάχου καὶ ἀσφαλοῦς ἡ πόλις τῶν Νικαέων. ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ τὸν ἀγῶνα τοῦ μαρτυρίου διήνυσε καὶ τανῦν ἐν ταύτῃ τέλει τὰς μεγαλουργίας, κρίνων ἀνθήσεις παραδόξους καὶ ἐκβλαστήσεις ἐνιαυσιαίους καρποφορεῖ εὐλογίας, ὧ τοῦ θαύματος, ἐν παγετῷ καὶ χιόνι τε καὶ χειμῶνι ἀνθεῖ τὸ κρίνον τῇ τοῦ μάρτυρος λυχνίᾳ ἐγκείμενον. Μετὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐκκοπὴν τούτου συντελουμένου ἐνιαυτοῦ, καθ' ἣν ὥραν τὸ ἑωθινὸν τελεῖται ὑμνώδημα καὶ τοῦ ἀθλοφόρου καλλιεπῶς ἐξᾴδονται τὰ ἐγκώμια, τὸ ξηρὸν ἐκ τοῦ πάραυτα ἀχρόνως βλαστάνει τὴν αἴσθησιν διαφεῦγον κατὰ βραχύ. Καὶ ὁρᾷ τότε τὸ πλῆθος τὰ τοῦ Τρύφωνος θαύματα. τοῦτο βασιλεῖς ἐθεάσαντο πατριάρχαι τε ἑωράκασι. τοῦτο σέβεται ὁ λαὸς πᾶς, πιστὸς μᾶλλον ἐκ τούτου στηρίζεται. δαίμονες δραπετεύουσι τῇ θαυματουργίᾳ, νοσήματα φυγαδεύονται, αἰτήσεις πιστῶν πληροῦνται, μία πανήγυρις τότε πάνδημος, ὅτε δὴ τελεῖται αὐτό, βρεφῶν, νηπίων, μειρακίων, ἀνδρῶν, γερόντων, πρεσβυτῶν, γηραλέων, γυναικῶν, κοσμίων, στρατευομένων, ὑποτελετῶν, ἱερέων, μοναχῶν ὁρῶσα καὶ σκιρτώσα αὐτῷ πᾶν γένος καὶ ἡλικία πᾶσα. οὐ γὰρ ἐστι τὸ γιγνόμενον ὡς ἐν γωνίᾳ καὶ ὑποσκίῳ τόπῳ τινὶ γινόμενον, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεοῦ. Διὰ τοῦτο δεῖ πάντας τὸν μέγαθλον Τρύφωνα διὰ θαύματος ἐγκωμιάζειν ὅτι πολλοῦ. Ἐμὲ δὲ καὶ μάλιστα καὶ ὅσον κατ' οἶκτον ὃν ἔλαβον παρ' αὐτοῦ ἀξιοπρεπῶς ἀμελεῖ καὶ ἐπιτέρπεσθαι ταῖς τούτου μεγαλουργίαις καὶ ἐπιγάννυσθαι καὶ ἐνθουσιᾶν, ὡς ὁ θεοπάτωρ Δαυῒδ ἐπὶ τῇ καταπαύσει τῆς κιβωτοῦ, ἵνα θαυμαζομένου τοῦ δούλου, ἡ τιμὴ διαβαίνῃ πρὸς τὸν δεσπότην'.

Published in Foss, C., *Nicaea, A Byzantine Capital and its Praises* (Brookline-Mass. 1990), pp. 105-6.

Auxiliary Catalogues

List of churches dedicated to St Tryphon in Constantinople

According to Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin. Première Partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique*. Tome III: Les églises et les monastères[2] (Paris 1969), pp. 488-490.

1) *St Tryphon ta Vasiliskou*: Built in the years of Justinian or, according to others, Justin II; it was a great, fabulous and richly endowed church; also a very wealthy one. The quarter 'ta Vasiliskou' was to the northeast of Julian's harbour (or 'Sophia's', named after the wife of Justin II).

2) *St Tryphon ta Euboulou*: Built in the years of Justinian or, according to others, by Isidoros, the brother of a certain Euboulos, who refitted his house as a church of the saint in the first half of the 6th century. The area '*ta Euboulou*' was to the northeast of Hagia Sophia. Probably the church is identified with the one the *Synaxarion* locates near St Eirene, which was in the same area.

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3) *St Tryphon endon tou Ioannou en to Diippio*: It seems that this was the church reported by the *Synaxarion* as the official sanctuary of the saint. The Church of St John probably was built by Herakleios and, as a result, the chapel of St Tryphon was built later. St John was to the right of the entrance to the Hippodrome.

4) *St Tryphon near St Eirene*: This church is reported by the saint's *Synaxarion*. The Church of St Eirene was to the north of Hagia Sophia.

5) *St Tryphon en to Kastoreo*: *The Life of St Michael the Synkellos* mentions a metochion belonging to the monastery of Chora named after St Tryphon, which was outside Constantinople, in the unidentified area 'Kastoreon'.

6) *St Tryphon tou Pelargou*: According to Prokopios, the church was built by Justinian. The church, also known as 'Pelargos', was near the area 'Strategion'.

7) *St Tryphon plision ton Chamoundou*: According to a tradition earlier than the 10th century, the procession of the Sunday before Easter (Palm Sunday) was gathered there and started from this point before it was directed to the Church of St Romanos 'en tis Elebichou', where the religious service was held. The area 'ta Chamoundou', not reported in other sources, was in the central or the western part of Constantinople.