The Porphyry Column in Constantinople and The Relics of the True Cross

The Porphyry Column standing in Constantinople has been given many names over the past centuries. It was called the Great Column, the Column of Constantine, at the end of the Byzantine Empire – The Column of the Cross. In today’s Turkey, however, it is called the Burnt Column or the Hooped Column. The multiplicity of the names itself indicates its long history. Erected during the reign of Constantine the Great in 324–330, it occupied a unique place in the history of Constantinople. It became a symbol of the city, featured in many legends. When the Tabula Peutingeriana was made, the original of which dates at the turn of the fourth and fifth century, it showed the personification of Constantinople seated on a throne with an outline of a column on the right side, identified with the porphyry column of Constantine the Great. The monument was an important landmark where imperial victories were celebrated. Triumphal procession would arrive at the Forum of Constantine to march around the Column chanting the canticle of Moses. It was at the foot of the Column citizens would find salvation when their world, destroyed by enemies pillaging the city after breaking the defensive lines, would be turned into ruin. Later, it was believed that when the Turks would be storming the city, an angel with a sword will descend from the top of the Column and hand it to an unknown passer-by at the foot of the column, who will then lead the citizens of Constantinople and defeat the enemies. This raises the question of the origins

1 It was destroyed by fire on several occasions; the greatest one took place in 1779.
2 Chronicon Paschale (ed. L. Dindorf, Bonnae 1832 [cetera: Chronicon Paschale], p. 528 [= CSHB]) and Theophanes (Chronographia, AM 5821, rec. C. de Boor, Lipsiae 1883, p. 28 [cetera: Theophanes]) date the erection of the statue on the Column in 328. This date is uncertain, however, see C. Mango, Le développement urbain de Constantinople (IVe–VIe siècles), Paris 1985, p. 25, an. 14; S. Bassett, The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople, Cambridge 2004, p. 68.
5 G. Dagron, op. cit., p. 58.
6 R. Janin, Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique, Paris 1950, p. 82.
of legends associated with the Porphyry Column. It seems that its foundations were laid as early as in the Early Byzantine period. In this article, I am attempting to explain what that tradition entailed and how the awareness of the Column's special significance for Constantinople and its citizens was established in the Early Byzantium.

It should be emphasized that the Porphyry Column was inextricably linked with Constantinople, the city founded by emperor Constantine the Great on the foundations of the existing Byzantium upon the Bosphorus River. Sources indicate that the ruler had originally intended to establish his seat elsewhere. The list of probable locations includes Troy, Chalcedon, Sardica and Thessalonica. Choosing Troy would mean a symbolic return to the roots, since the ancestors of Rome were believed to have originated from there. Constantinople, according to Sozomenus and Philostorgius, was founded with divine inspiration, as the law contained in the Code of Theodosius confirmed. According to the tradition associated with Eusebius of Caesarea, and thus dating back to the fourth century, the city of Constantine was dedicated to the God of martyrs, in the opinion of Sozomenus, who was writing about a hundred years later, to Christ himself. In later tradition, on the other hand, it was associated with the Mother of God (Θεοτόκος) who was believed to have the city under her protection – the notion which was universally expressed in the eleventh century.

By making Byzantium his seat and by naming it after himself, Constantine greatly expanded the urban area and conducted a series of construction works. He built city walls, the imperial loge at the hippodrome, the imperial palace and great alleys surrounded by porticos. The urban plans completed at that time and quoted in sources included also

8 G. Dagron, op. cit., p. 29.
10 Philostorgius, Kirchengeschichte. Mit dem Leben des Lucian on Antiochen und den Fragmenten eines arianischen Historiographen, II, 9, ed. J. Bidez, F. Winkelmann, Berlin 1981 (cetera: Philostorgius), p. 20–21 [= GCS, 21]: "Ὅτι Κωνσταντῖνον ἐρώτησεν καὶ εἰσεῖστε ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ τὸ Βυζάντιον εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν μετασκεύασαι, καὶ τὸν περίβολον ὁριζόμενον βάδην τε περιίεναι, τὸ δόρυ αὐτῷ ἀνεστήσας δὲ καὶ αἱ δύο ἀψίδες πρὸς τῷ καλουμένῳ φόρῳ καὶ ὁ πορφυρὸς καὶ περίβλεπτος κίων, ἐφ’ οὗπερ ἱδρῦσθαι Κωνσταντῖνον ἔστησεν ἀνδριάντα, ἔχοντα ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ αὐτοῦ ἀκτῖνας ἑπτά σχέδων ἀποκρινάμενα· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· «ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα»; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα"; τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· "ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου ὕδατος διαπυνθάνει· "ἕως ποardless text
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The statue probably resembled the image of Sol Invictus which appears on coins. If it was indeed a depiction of the emperor Constantine, he was probably portrayed in military attire\(^59\). The figure on top of the Column had a crown on its head adorned with seven sun rays, which were later interpreted as the nails of Christ’s Passion\(^60\). In addition, in its left hand, it held a bronze globe\(^41\), surmounted by a winged Victoria, and, according to Nicephorus Callistus – with a cross, which apparently contained a relic of the Holy Cross\(^52\). As it seems, however, Callistus could be describing one of the subsequent globes. As a result of earthquakes, the first two came apart in the years 477\(^43\) and 869\(^44\). In the right hand, the figure was holding a spear (λόγχη), as attested by John Malalas\(^45\), Theophanes\(^46\) and Cedrenus\(^47\) or a scepter (σκῆπτρον), as Anna Comnena\(^48\) maintained. In the iconography, the statue crowning the Column usually is holding a spear. This is consistent with the account given by Philostorgius, according to whom Constantine used a spear to mark the borders of the city (τὸ δόρο τῆς χείρι φέροντα)\(^49\). The attribute in question was to fall off from the statue during the earthquake of 541, as Theophanes argues\(^50\), or 554, according to the accounts by Cedrenus and Malalas\(^51\).

In the account by Anna Comnena, the citizens of Constantinople called the statue Anthelios or Anelios and all efforts to replace this name with the name of the emperor Constantine failed\(^52\). Michael Glykas informs of the destruction brought by a lightning which struck in 1079, when three iron hoops were torn\(^53\), probably


\(^{29}\) G. Dagron, op. cit., p. 38.

\(^{30}\) R. Janin, op. cit., p. 82.

\(^{31}\) According to Adam Ziółkowski (Sokrates Scholastyk, Historia Kościoła, I, 17, trans. S. Kazikowski, intr. E. Wipszycza, comm. A. Ziółkowski, Warszawa 1986, p. 111, an. 97) This giant statue was in fact a statue of Christ as the Sun of the Faith, which explains why the relics were placed in it. Cf. C. Mango, Constantin’s Column..., p. 3–4.

\(^{32}\) G. Dagron, op. cit., p. 38.

\(^{33}\) Malalas, XIII, 7: ὅπερ χαλκούργημα ἠγαγεν εἰς τὸ Ἴλιον ἑστηκός, πόλιν τῆς Φρυγίας

\(^{34}\) Malalas, XIV, 1: ἐν εἰς χρυσόν ἐκβαλεν τὴν Φρυγίαν ὃ πολὺ, ἐς ἐγένετο πατὴρ Ἰλίου καὶ Γενναδίου. Λόγχη ἔχει ταῖς ἀκίνδυνοι ἰδοι..., Cf. C. Mango, Constantin’s Column..., p. 4.

\(^{35}\) Georgius Monachus, Chronicon, ed. C. de Boor, Lipsiae 1904 (cetera: Georgius Monachus, p. 500 [= BSGR]).


\(^{37}\) Chronicon Paschale, p. 528; cf. above an. 22.


\(^{40}\) C. Mango, Constantin’s Column..., p. 4. Gilbert Dagron believes (op. cit., p. 38) the origins of the statue to be an issue of significance. The combination of the dynasty’s Apollonistic tradition with Troy as the original place of worship of the statue could indicate to Constantine’s willingness of the unification of the Hellenistic with the Roman.

\(^{41}\) Anna Comnena, XII, 4, 5.

\(^{42}\) Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, Historia ecclesiastica, VII, 49 (cetera: Nicephorus Callistus), [in:] PG, vol. CXLV, col. 1325 CD.

\(^{43}\) Theophanes, AM 5970, p. 126: ἐπεὶ δε καὶ ἡ σφαῖρα τοῦ ἀνδριάντος τοῦ Φόρου.

\(^{44}\) Leo Grammaticus, Chronographia, ed. I. Bekker, Bonnæ 1842 (cetera: Leo Grammaticus), p. 254.

\(^{45}\) Malalas, XVIII, 118: ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ τῷ φόροι ἐπέσε ἡ λόγχη, ἡ ἐκράτησε τὸ ἁγία τὸ ἐν τῷ φόρῳ Κωνσταντίνου.

\(^{46}\) Theophanes, AM 6034, p. 222: ἐπεὶ δε καὶ ἡ λόγχη, ἡ ἐκράτησε ἀνάδρομος ἐστώς εἰς τοῦ φόρου τοῦ Ἅγιου Κωνσταντίνου.

\(^{47}\) Cedrenus, p. 656.

\(^{48}\) Anna Comnena, XII, 4, 5: σκῆπτρον μὲν κατέχων τῇ δεξαίᾳ, τῇ δὲ λείαι σφαίραν ἀπὸ χρυσοῦ κατασκευασθείσην. However, when Anna Comnena was writing her work, the statute had been absent from the Column for over forty years.

\(^{49}\) Philostorgius, II, 9, p. 21; cf. G. Dagron, op. cit., p. 38, an. 6.

\(^{50}\) Theophanes, AM 6034, p. 222.

\(^{51}\) Malalas, XVIII, 118; Cedrenus, p. 656.

\(^{52}\) Anna Comnena, XII, 4, 5: Ἐλέγετο δ’ οὖν εἶναι οὗτος Ἀπόλλωνος ἀνάδρομος. Αὐτὸς δὲ εἶχε, ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐλεγοντικῆς αἰσθήματος αὐτοῦ προαγάγατος. Ὅν τοῦ μέγες ἐν βασιλείᾳ Κωνσταντίνου έκδοσε καὶ τῆς πώλεως καὶ τηρήσατο εἰς τὸ ιερὸν μετέθηκεν άναμμα, Κωνσταντίνου αὐτοκράτορος ἀνάδρομες αὐτῶν προσεαθήνησαν. Επεκράτησε δὲ ἡ ἀρχὴν τῇ παραγγελίᾳ τοῦ ἀνάδρομου καὶ ἤτοι Αὐτός ο Ἀνάδρομος ὑπὸ πάντων ἐλέγετο. Cf. Pseudo-Codinus, p. 257.

\(^{53}\) Glykas, p. 617.
those which were mounted in order to reinforce the Column during the reign of Theodosius II in 416. On April 5th, 1106, a violent southern wind knocked the statue to the ground, causing casualties, which was treated as a bad sign by opponents of the ruling emperor, Alexius I Comnenus, an ill omen of the imminent death of the ruler. Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180) had the monument repaired. On top of it ten rows of stones were laid, fused with concrete, and a marble block was placed there, probably giving it the shape of the Corinthian capital. However, from that moment, the Column was topped with a cross instead of the statue. The emperor also had a commemorative inscription placed under the column, reading: *Manuel, the pious ruler, restored this God's work destroyed by time*. The column was bound with metal hoops, in the eighteenth century due to the threat of earthquakes.

The Column was placed on a high pedestal, which was in turn embedded on a broad a square platform with each side 8.35 meter wide. A drawing by Melchior Lorck, dating to 1561, suggests that the Column base was decorated with bas-relief known as *aurum coronarium*. However, no other source has been found to confirm it. According to Nicephorus Callistus, there were arches adjacent to the plinth of the Column on each side, which opened to the Forum of Constantine. Raymond Janin was convinced that under Nicephorus Callistus, there were arches adjacent to the plinth of the Column on each side, the notion, however, is rejected by Cyril Mango, who argued that there is no source information to confirm it. According to Cyril Mango, the chapel, probably built in the period of iconoclasm, was adjacent to the Column plinth on the north side. The aforementioned arches were added only during the renovation of the Column after the crash in 1106, when the wind from the south knocked the statue, causing much destruction and probably also damaging the chapel, which was never rebuilt. After the tenth century, the Chapel of Constantine is no longer mentioned in the sources. This is probably because at that time the emperor Constantine ceased to be regarded as the patron of the city and the empire, as that role was reserved for the Mother of God (Θεοτόκος).

It is also thought that originally an altar was placed by the plinth of the Column in the ancient fashion over the *Mundus* (the image of the entrance to the underworld), where sacrifices were usually made to the underground gods. According to tradition, under the base of the column an archaic statue of Pallas was to be buried, called *Palladium*, secretly brought out of Rome by Constantine. It probably originated from the belief that the ruler wished to ensure good fortune for Constantinople. Thus, both cities during their prosperity were to be under the care of the same goddess. Perhaps the collapse of the Old Rome, which occurred in the fifth century, inspired the contemporary thought of losing the favor of Pallas to Constantinople – the New Rome. It also emphasized the continuity of the existence of Rome in its new form, as the city of Constantine was considered, as well as referred to the choice of the location for the new capital, which initially was supposed to be Troy.

It was said also that in the plinth, in the statue or atop of the Column various magic items and relics were concealed. John Diacrinomenus mentioned gold coins with the likeness of Constantine imprinted on them, which were a symbol of prosperity. Later Christian tradition late added the information of holy relics: a portion of the True Cross (*Vera Crux*), baskets from the multiplication of bread, a vase of holy oil (the chrism), Noah's ark handle, the rock from which water sprang at the command of Moses, nails from the Passion of Christ, relics of saints, wood from the crosses of the two thieves and pots of perfume. In this way, the Column became sacred in itself in the social consciousness.

Tradition has retained three dedications of late origin, which were to be placed

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54 Chronicle Paschale, p. 573.
55 Anna Comnena, XII, 4, 5. In the opinion of Raymond Janin (op. cit., p. 83) three cylinders were knocked off along with the statue, the notion, however, is rejected by Cyril Mango (Constantinopolitana..., p. 310), arguing that there is no source information to confirm it.
56 10 people are said to have died on that occasion, cf. C. Mango, Constantine’s Porphyry Column..., p. 108.
57 C. Mango, Constantinopolitana..., p. 312.
58 R. Janin, op. cit., p. 83: Τῇ δέκτῃ ἑδρᾳ ἐνθάδε φώβησαν ἑρώων καὶ Μαινομελεύς ἐστηθήσας αὐτοκράτωρ.
59 C. Mango, Constantine’s Porphyry Column..., p. 104.
60 Idem, Constantinopolitana..., p. 308–311.
61 Nicephorus Callistus, VII, 49.
63 De cerimoniis, I, 10, 3.
64 R. Janin, op. cit., p. 81.
67 G. Dagron, op. cit., p. 39; S. Bassett, op. cit., p. 69–70.
68 Sozomenus, II, 3.
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The base of the Column. The first one, pagan, To Constantin, who shines like the Sun (Helios) 72; the second, inspired by Vita Constantinii by Eusebius 72 and the text by Sozomenus 72: To you, Christ, God, I entrust the city 74; third one, the most literary: To thee, Christ, who art the creator and ruler of the world, to thee I entrust this city which is thine, like the scepter and the power of Rome. Save it and deliver it from all calamity. 75 Thus, the statue was perceived by the authors of source texts both as a Christian and pagan monument. The representation of Christ as the god of sun and these dedications addressed to him became the basis for the suggestion that the Column was surmounted with a statue of Christ himself 76. It is possible that Christians began to see the Column as a sacred monument because of a widespread belief that it housed sacred relics.

The Porphyry Column played an important role in the ceremony of the foundation of Constantinople, which was divided into two stages 77. Celebrations began with an official procession, going from Philadelphia or Magnaura to the Forum of Constantinople, to place the statue and holy relics on the Column 78. The festive procession was composed of Christians, led by priests, chanting hymns and entrusting Constantinople to God’s care with the words of a prayer: Keep it (the city) in prosperity until the end of time, our Lord, and reciting the Kyrie eleison 79.

The second phase of the foundation ceremony, called pompa circensis, which took place on 11 May 330 AD, was, on the command of emperor Constantine himself, repeated annually on the day when the anniversary of the founding of the city was celebrated on the hippodrome 80. A wooden statue covered with gold, probably a replica of the statue on the Porphyry Column, was solemnly brought in a chariot into the hippodrome 81. The depicted figure had a crown of rays and in its right hand was also gilded, the Tyche of the city. Most likely, it was a globe surmounted by Victoria rather than a figural personification of Constantinople. The statue was accompanied by a squad of soldiers (dressed in chlamys and campagi boots), each of whom was holding in his hand a white candle. When the chariot on which the statue was placed circled the hippodrome, it stopped in front of the imperial box, and the currently reigning emperor rose and gave a deep bow before the statue and the representation of Tyche of the city. At the end of the ceremony, the people chanted hymns and worshiped at these depictions by adoration 82. Thus, in the pompa circensis ceremony, the chariot carrying the statue had its triumphant run, setting off from carceres, circling the spina and coming to a stop in front of the imperial throne.

The author of the Chronicon Paschale identified the chariot as ὀχήμα 83, and the Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai pointed to its solar character, calling it a ἡλίου ἄρμα 84. A similar term was used by Pseudo-Codinus 85, in whose opinion the statue crowning the column at the Forum of Constantine depicted Apollo 86. According to Gilbert Dagron, in the hippodrome, Constantin-Helios from the Porphyry Column became a coachman driving his solar chariot 87.

This ceremony, according to some sources, was to continue until the reign of Julian (361–363), when the emperor was to recommend the gilded statue to be buried because of the cross adorning it 88. Pseudo-Codinus, on the other hand, at one point associates the ceremony abolition with Julian 89, and another time with Theodosius the Great 90, while John Malalas (†578) asserted that this ceremony took place even in his day 91. It seems likely that the real reason for the abolition of the adoration ceremony could be that it was

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71 Leo Grammaticus, p. 87: Κωνσταντινῷ λάμποντι Ἰλίου δίκην; Cedrenus, p. 518.
72 Eusebius, III, 48, p. 98.
73 Sozomenus, III, 7, p. 240.
74 Cedrenus, p. 565: Σύ, Χριστέ, κόσμου κοίρανος καὶ δεσπότης, Σοὶ νῦν προσηῦξα τήνδε τὴν δούλην καὶ ὑμνῳδίας δεξαμένη εἰς Τύχην τῆς πόλεως προσεκυνήθη παρὰ πάντων, δὲ Προτείχισμα καλούμενο (ἐν οἷς καὶ πόρτα ἦν τὸ πρότερον ἑπικατασκευασθεῖσα) ἀνήνεγκαν ἔπειτα τὸ γενέθλιον τῆς πόλεως αὐτοῦ.  
75 More on the subject of the association of the worship of Christ with the solar cult, see H. Chadwick, Κύριε ἐλέησον’ πάντων βοώντων ἐν ρ´ μέτροις; cf. G. Dagron, τὸ ἐν οἷς καὶ τὰ ἐξέρκετα· ἔσχατον πάντων τότε ὑψοῦτο ἐν τῷ κίονι, τοῦ ἱερέως μετὰ τῆς λιτῆς παρεστηκότος καὶ Φόρῳ τεθεῖσα καὶ πολλάς, ὡς προείρηται, ὑμνῳδίας δεξαμένη εἰς Τύχην τῆς πόλεως προσεκυνήθη παρὰ πάντων, δὲ Προτείχισμα καλούμενο (ἐν οἷς καὶ πόρτα ἦν τὸ πρότερον ἑπικατασκευασθεῖσα) ἀνήνεγκαν ἔπειτα τὸ γενέθλιον τῆς πόλεως αὐτοῦ.  
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Thus, the Porphyry Column with the statue, and since the reign of Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180) – with the cross which replaced the latter, remained throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire a symbol of Constantinople and its foundation, as well as the divine protection over the city. In addition, in early Byzantium, it presumably united the ideas of paganism and Christianity, becoming sacred to pagans and Christians alike. It must seem extremely interesting, therefore, how it was presented by Constantinople church historians in the mid-fifth century – Socrates and his successor, Hermias Sozomenus.

Socrates in his Ecclesiastical History refers to the Porphyry Columns twice. The first time he describes the circumstances under which the relics of the Holy Cross were found by Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great94; the second time – when he presents the circumstances of the death of heresiarch Arius95. In the first case, he refers to the Column as the place where the relics of the Holy Cross Tree were deposited96. The emperor, having received them from his mother, convinced that the city where such holy items are kept would never perish, was to order them to be hidden in the Porphyry Column97. In the second case, according to the account by Socrates, Arius, having deceived the emperor Constantine as to his faith, boasting about his triumph, left the imperial palace following the route along which rulers usually celebrated their victories98. When he arrived at the

92 G. Dagron, op. cit., p. 90.
93 De ceremoniis, I, 70.
95 Socrates, I, 38.
96 The relics of the Holy Cross were distributed to various places in the Imperium Romanum (Cf. J.W. Drijvers, op. cit., p. 89–92), according to Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechesis, X, 19, [in:] PG, vol. XXXIII, col. 685 B), they were located all over the world.
97 Socrates, I, 17, p. 180: ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐγένοντο πληθύνσι ἐπί τῆς ἐπιλεγομένης ἀγορᾶς Κωνσταντινοῦ, ἐν ἓν πορφυροῖς ἔβρετα κάιν.
98 Socrates, I, 17: Τούτο μὲν οὖν ἀκόσμη γράφεσα ἧν ἁπάντας διὶ σχεδόν ἢ τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολι οἰκεῖντα ἁλητῶν ἀλητῶν εἶναι φαντασμόν.
100 Sozomenus, II, 1.
wrote about the death of Arius\textsuperscript{103}. In the first case, his account is consistent with the story by Socrates. The discovery of the tree of the Holy Cross was made possible through God’s help, shortly after the Council of Nicaea, when the mother of the emperor, Helena, was staying in Jerusalem\textsuperscript{104}. In a miraculous way, with the participation of Macarius, the bishop of Jerusalem, the Cross of Christ was distinguished from the crosses of the two thieves, thanks to the healing of a dying woman. Both of them, Socrates and Sozomenus, also stressed that a part of the relic is kept in Jerusalem in a silver box and Helena sent another part to Constantine, like the nails from the Passion of Christ. The two accounts are different in some of the details. In the account of Socrates, the mother of the emperor went to Jerusalem as a result of prophetic visions she received in her dreams, while in the text by Sozomenus she came there at the time when her son decided to erect a temple in Jerusalem near Golgotha, and the purpose of her pilgrimage was her religious passion – the desire to pray and explore holy places. Finding the tree of the Holy Cross was only her great desire. Thus, in the work of Socrates, Helena plays an active role in the search for relics, ordering the relevant work to be performed, while in Sozomenus’ account she is only a witness of their discovery during the works undertaken at the command of the ruler. According to Socrates, the woman healed by touching the Cross was a resident of Constantinople, while in the opinion of Sozomenus she belonged to the elite of Jerusalem. Helena assisted at her healing, which Socrates does not mention explicitly. The issue of the healed women appears to be a seemingly minor detail. In Jerusalem, however, there were probably a number of seriously ill people. The fact that in the account by Socrates it is a woman that is healed – a resident of Constantinople, bears some significance. As can be expected, in this way Socrates wanted to express the belief in the importance of the relics of the Cross for the future of the capital, since the discovery of the true Cross of Christ saved the resident of the city. In addition, it also seems that her gender is not without importance either. Personifications of cities were in fact female. Perhaps, therefore, Socrates saw in that healed woman a symbol of the city itself? Sozomenus did not share the views of his predecessor on this issue. Most likely, it was his approach to the Porphyry Column that distinguished him from Socrates, because he also held the relics of the Cross in great esteem. The historians agree as to the actual nature of the facts they are quoting, they only differ as regards the details, including the most important ones concerning the role of the emperor’s mother, and placing the relics in the Porphyry Column.

It is interesting that Sozomenus, like Socrates, felt it necessary to validate his account on the subject, quoting sources of the information provided. He indicated then that he acquired it from people who were knowledgeable, who told the story from generation to generation as well as from written accounts, which he had at his disposal. Significantly, too, that Socrates gave a similar confession about the origin of the facts which he was describing; he did that elsewhere, however, unlike Sozomenus, his successor. Socrates introduced the relevant passage immediately following the information about placing the relics of the Holy Cross in Porphyry Column while Sozomenus, ignoring or rejecting this fact, concluded the account on the finding of the Cross of Christ in this way, as though he wanted to use his words to counterbalance the testimony of Socrates and on the subject of the Column. Thus, it can be asserted that the omission of information about the deposit of relics in the Column of Constantine was not accidental.

As for the description of the death of Arius, also this time the two accounts are consistent in their nature. The heresiarch met his end in a similar manner\textsuperscript{105}. But while Socrates clearly points to the Forum of Constantine as the place where his agony began only to finally end at the back of the square, Sozomenus does not specify the location of the latrine where Arius was to die. In an attempt to lend credibility to his account, he quoted a lengthy passage from Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in which the place of the heresiarch’s death was given in detail\textsuperscript{106}. One can assume that it was the issue of that location that led the historian to quote a rather lengthy citation from the work by Athanasius, who was held in great esteem at that time, although generally Sozomenus rarely referred the citations in his History\textsuperscript{107}.

Sozomenus’ complete silence on the subject of the Column must seem perplexing, all the more so if we agree with the thesis that this historian wrote his History with the work by Socrates in his hand. It is also mystifying since it was Sozomenus, unlike Socrates, who drew attention to the religious aspect of the foundation of Constantinople. It was him who wrote of Constantinople as the city of Christ, with no pagan cults\textsuperscript{108}. It is in his account that Constantine acted on the instructions of God himself, who chose Byzantium as his new capital. The emperor, obeying his orders, expanded the area of the city, surrounded it with walls, developed it, populated with the people he had brought from the Old Rome and gave it the name New Rome – Constantinople. The ruler’s efforts

\textsuperscript{103} Sozomenus (II, 29) points to different interpretations of Arius’ death.

\textsuperscript{104} To Sozomenus, it was more probable that God gave direct guidance on this issue, although the historian does not rule out that the relevant information was delivered by a Hebrew man. The legend of Inventio Crucis, whose origin dates back to 415–450 identified him as Judah-Cyriacus; see S. Borgehammar, op. cit., p. 146–161.

\textsuperscript{105} Sozomenus (II, 30, p. 364–368; the account by Socrates and Sozomenus on the death of Arius depends on the Athanasian sources: Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae 18–19, and his Epistula ad Serapionem de morte Arii.)

\textsuperscript{106} S. Bralewski, Obraz papiestwa w historiografii kościelnej wczesnego Bizancjum, Łódź 2006, p. 272 [= BL, 10].

\textsuperscript{107} Sozomenus, II, 3. This is inconsistent with the first ceremony of the foundation of the city of a decidedly pagan character held in the year 324 (more on the subject, see: G. Dagron, op. cit., p. 29–47, 373) as well as other sources: Zosimus, Historia nova, II, 31, 2–3; ed. L. Mendelsohn, Lipsiae 1887; Hesychius, 41, p. 15–16. M. Salamon (Rozwój idei Rzymu–Konstantynopola od IV do pierwszej połowy VI wieku, Katowice 1975, p. 78 [= PNUŚ, 80]) pointed out that the belief in the lack of pagan tradition in the Eastern capital was the consequence of its having been founded by a Christian ruler, and the idea itself contributed over the subsequent centuries to an increase of tension between the two capital dioceses.
make his new capital an equal of the Italian Rome\textsuperscript{109} were successful also by the grace of God, because through it, the city grew to such an extent that the number of inhabitants and its wealth exceeded those of the former one. God gave support to the enthusiasm of the emperor and, through his revelations, confirmed the sanctity of churches the ruler built. Thus, in Sozomenus’ version, the new capital was equated with the old; it became a participant of its precedence, equal to the first in terms of honour\textsuperscript{110}.

As can be suspected, therefore, Sozomenus’ silence on the subject of the Porphyry Column was not accidental, all the more so that we know from elsewhere that in other matters he was given to omitting facts inconvenient for his ideas\textsuperscript{111}. Most probably, then, he did not mention the Porphyry Column because of its dual character, which made it possible for Christians and pagans to see it as their sacred monument. It seems that Eusebius of Caesarea never wrote about it in his biography of emperor Constantine for the same reason\textsuperscript{112}. Perhaps Sozomenus rejected the account on the relics of the Holy Cross placed in the Column standing at the Forum of Constantine. This would also indicate that not everyone in the mid-fifth century saw it as an object of Christian worship and therefore some part of the inhabitants of Constantinople did not share the belief in the relics of the Cross of Christ hidden there.

Abstract. The complicated fates of the Porphyry Column of emperor Constantine resemble the reach and difficult history of Constantinople, the New Rome and capital of the eastern Empire from its very beginnings. Perceived by the Constantinopolitans as both Christian and pagan monument, adorned with legends repeated and enriched by generations, it was always a landmark of the city. The article summarizes, compares and analyzes the accounts of Byzantine historians, showing continuity of tradition and the lasting role of the unique object in the very heart of political centre of the imperial capital.

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\textsuperscript{109} Sozomenus, II, 3, 6, p. 240: ἐν πᾶσι δεῖξαι σπουδάσας ἐφάμιλλον τῇ παρὰ Ἶταλοῖς Ἱούλιοι τὴν ὁμώνυμον αὐτῷ πόλιν οὐ διήμαρτον.

\textsuperscript{110} Sozomenus, II, 3, 1–2, p. 236: ἣν ἵνα ῾Ρώμη κρατεῖν καὶ κοινωνεῖν αὐτῇ τῆς ἀρχῆς κατεστήσατο. According to F. Dvornik (Bizancjum a prymat Rzymu, trans. M. Radożycka, Warszawa 1985, p. 30–31) moving the imperial seat to the East was a stimulus for the development of Peter’s idea in Rome.

\textsuperscript{111} As was the case with the papacy, cf. S. Bralewski, op. cit., passim.

\textsuperscript{112} C. Mango, Constantine’s Column..., p. 6.