

Για παραπομπή:

Συγγραφή: Ανδριανοπούλου Κωνσταντίνα Μετάφραση: Τσοκανή Άννα

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Περίληψη:

Psamathia (Samatya), in our time known as Koca Mustafa Paş a, was one of the most significant Greek Orthodox districts in Southwestern Constantinople (Istanbul). Mainly inhabited by Greek Orthodox population, it displayed an important presence of Karamanlis (Karamanlides) and Armenians. Five Greek Orthodox churches and several associations and educational institutions were located in Samatya.

Άλλες Ονομασίες

Ypsomatheia, Psamathia, Samatya

Γεωγραφική Θέση

Constantinople (İstanbul)

Ιστορική Περιοχή

Constantinople (İstanbul)

Διοικητική Υπαγωγή

İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality

1. Location – Name – Population

The Psamathia (Samatya) district, in our time known as Koca Mustafa Paş a, extends around the eponymous gate of the Propontis sea walls. According to Scarlatus Byzantius "the gate of Psamathos or Psamatheos was sixth from the Seray to Heptapyrgion [Yedi Kule] and second to the Seray, also called Fifth [Gate], as recorded by Bandourios". The gate has not been salvaged because that part of the city walls was partly demolished in 1871 for the construction of the railway; the gate was named after "sand [psammos] gathered in the neighbouring beach by southern winds".

The area was described as "predominantly Greek" with a populous parish, while <u>Armenians</u> and Muslims are also recorded to reside there along the city walls. The Armenian Eremya Kömürcüyan who visited the city in the late 17th century states that more than 1,000 Armenian families inhabited the area attending mass in the Surp Kevork (St George) church. This used to be the Virgin Mary <u>Peribleptos Monastery</u> – named Sulu Manastir during the Ottoman period "because of the plentiful water in the area" – ceded to the Armenians during the reign of Sultan Mahmud I. According to Evliya Çelebi, it was the place where Armenians from <u>Sevasteia</u> (Sivas) and <u>Tokat</u> were <u>housed</u> after the <u>Fall of Constantinople</u>. Manuil Gedeon remarks that the temple "was seized in 1543 by the Armenians and destroyed in the 1782 fire, nothing but wretched ruins nowadays". It also served as See of the Armenian Patriarchate until 1640, when it was transferred to the neighbouring <u>Kumkapı</u> (Kontoskali) district. 10

The main road of the walled city, the Byzantine Mese, crossed through Samatya. The area included "idyllic parks" and "green gardens", a "pleasant contrast to the other sordid places in poor Constantinople". The area also accommodated many taverns, where "the priests got drunk day and night" as mentioned by Kömürcüyan, 12 a tradition that survived until the 20th century since the area was celebrated for its taverns, most of them owned by immigrants from Greece, mainly the Peloponnese. 13

2. The Greek community in Psamathia, 16th – 20th century

2.1. The Greek-Orthodox Psamathia population

As already mentioned, the area was largely inhabited by Christian Orthodox population. After the Fall of Constantinople and according to a census ordered by the local kadi, there were 3,151 Greek families residing in the Constantinople (Istanbul) peninsula in



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1478.¹⁴ During the next century both the Muslim and non-Muslim population in town increased.¹⁵ With regard to Greek-Orthodox population in particular, according to records of 1540 and 1544 for revenue paid to the Mehmed II wakf, 1,547 Greeks were registered.¹⁶ According to these records, the Samatya district – referred to as Mahalle-i Ibsomatya – was inhabited by 59 families in 1540 and 64 families in 1544.¹⁷

After the Fall, also residing in the area and in the context of Mehmed the Conqueror's population transfers were Turkish-speaking Christians from Cappadocia and Lycaonia; most of them settled down around the church dedicated to the St Constantine and Helen. The researcher Stefanos Yerasimos has made most interesting observations about this Karaman community. Starting from the fact that for many years the Orthodox Patriarchate denied to include the St Constantine and Helen Samatya parish to its flock—also called Karamania according to Manouil Gedeon—, he observed that the aforementioned records do not include only Orthodox Christians hailing from Anatolia, although many of the names are typically Karamanli. The people bearing these names, however, are introduced as members of the Armenian community. Tryphon Karabeinikov also mentions the community in his 1582 catalogue as "part of the Karaman Armenian community, largely inhabiting the quarter around the St Constantine church". Based on the above facts, as well as the well-known Ottoman tendency to consider all Eastern Christians as belonging to the Armenian ethnicity, the historian concludes that this might be the beginning of the detachment of a Turkish-speaking group bearing Turkish names from the extended Armenian community and the following establishment of a new parish around the church dedicated to the St Constantine and Helen, a group consequently assimilated partly by the Greek and partly by the Armenian community. 20

2.2. Psamathia parishes

A block of Christian Orthodox, mainly Karamanli, quarters was created within the extended Samatya district. Each quarter developed around a church, thus constituting a separate parish. Five orthodox churches and parishes belonged to the Samatya district: the church dedicated to the St Constantine and Helen, St. Menas, St. Nicholas, Ascension of Christ and St George Kyparissas (of the Cypresses). Each parish operated its own schools and associations.

St Constantine and Helen church was also known as "the one in Karamania" or Karaman Mahalle, while Gerlach, who visited it in 1577, refers to it as "seized by the Turks", meaning Turkish-speaking Karamanlis. ²¹ The area was largely inhabited by Christian population from Cappadocia and Lycaonia, several of them working as builders. ²² Not incidentally, pretty close to the area (outside Heptapyrgion/Yedi Kule) the Karamanli cemetery, called Balıklı, was located. The wealthy and quite large St Constantine and Helen parish is referred to in an 1875 document as "a Karamanite quarter close to Heptapyrgion, where people spoke Turkish until 1830 [...] and dominated by people originating from Asia Minor", as chronicled by Gedeon. 23 Its great size and affluence was verified by the 1740 revenue records.²⁴ The church neighboured the Stoudios Monastery – which was transformed into a mosque in the 15th century called Imrahor Camii – and dated back to the Byzantine period. 25 As the rest of the churches it was destroyed in the 1660 fire but soon was rebuilt, since it appears in Smith's 1669 catalogue – geographically defined as "the one close to the Seven Towers (Heptapyrgion)"; it burned down again in 1696.²⁶ In the great 1782 fire, which "destroyed ¾ of the city", ²⁷ all the churches in the area were devastated. The St Constantine church was completely reconstructed in 1804, while the architect Konstantinos Giolasigmazis renovated it in 1830.²⁸ Around the same time all five district churches were rebuilt or repaired, a fact interconnected with Mahmud II's reform policies, which allowed for the reconstruction of non-Muslim religious buildings.²⁹ In 1903, during the reign of Abdul Hamid, a bell-tower was also added to the construction.³⁰ The church was destroyed once more during the violent incidents of September 6th-7th 1955. In addition, close to this church and outside the Rodios gate on the beach, a holy water fountain (agiasma) was located dedicated to St John the Precursor; it was destroyed, however, when the coastal avenue was built.³¹

In Samuel Hantzeris' patriarchal document of 1764 it is recorded that "an academy and Greek school operated in St Constantine of Karamania in Psomatheia", while a "common school of Ypsomatheia" was located across the church, supported with the collaboration of the five local churches.³² In the beginning of the century, two schools are mentioned in the parish: the seven-grade Photiadis' High School, built in 1894 in the churchyard on the expenses of the Photiadis bros, Nikolaos and Alexandros; and the Psamathia Central All-Girls School, opposite the street, completely abandoned in our time.³³



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Several <u>associations</u> and societies were active in the parish, most of which under the patronage of more parishes than one. Manouil Gedeon refers to two fraternities operating in the beginning of the 19th century – predecessors of the more elaborate second half of the century associations –, namely the St Nicholas Fraternity (1809) and the Holy Cross Fraternity (1809-1815), both of which operated at the St Constantine church. He also mentions the Transfiguration of Christ Society (1803).³⁴

In the context of the boom of clubs and associations (syllogoi) in the second half of the 19th century, another two associations are recorded in the parish aiming to aid indigent students, "Thaleia" Philanthropical Society (1864) and "Voitheia" ("Help") Philanthropical Society (1884). In 1867 the Philanthropical and Philharmonic Society "Helicon" is established, in 1866 the "Arogos ton Efivon tou Apollonos" Society and Club, as well as the Hellenic "Club of the Philomousoi", which owned an extended library, a billiards room and a theatrical stage. During World War I, the local Boy Scouts organisation was housed in the building of the club. 35

Walking towards the eponymous gate of the Samatya district, the next church one stumbles upon is one dedicated to St Nicholas, which "lay very close to the church of Ascension". Karabeinikov visited the church in 1593, which was also mentioned by both Paterakis in his 1604 catalogue and Smith in his 1669 one. A small, insignificant and "poor" hamlet – according to Manouil Gedeon – extended around the church. The church was completely destroyed in the 1782 great fire, rebuilt thanks to financial aid from the wealthy St Nikolaos parish in Cibali, and completely reconstructed in 1834. It was one of the few churches not affected by the September riots (1955), probably because it is located in the small back roads. A parish school is recorded in 1850, 7 possibly rather short-lived, while the beginning of the 20th century marks the appearance of a Society of St Savvas pilgrims. Two holy water fountains were located in the church, one of which was dedicated to St Nicholas. The church had many visitors – mostly girls – who came to pay their respects to the St Phanourios icon. 39

The Ladies Philanthropical Society "St Barbara" of the St Nicholaos church was founded in 1872 aiming at supporting the church, as well as at providing the indigent students of the Holy Ascension School with books and other necessities. ⁴⁰ Very close to the St Nicholaos church and the coastal walls there is a church dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which during the 19th and early 20th century constituted a joint parish with the St Nicholas church. ⁴¹ In the past, the same church was dedicated in the name of Virgin Mary of the Golden Truth (Chrysalithini). Gedeon notes that the earliest record on the Chrysalithini church dates to 1566, while Karabeinikov also visited the church in 1593, as did Paterakis who entered it in his 1604 catalogue. This too burned down in the 1782 fire, when it was probably referred to as the Assumption of the Virgin Mary for the first time. It was completely reconstructed in 1782 by the architect Kostantinos Giolasigmazis and remained intact during the September incidents. ⁴² A holy water fountain (agiasma) of the same name is located behind the church, and an ancient second one in the churchyard. ⁴³

Around the end of the 18th century, a monitorial (Lancastrian) school operated in the churchyard, while a century later a primary and an all-boys school were added, ⁴⁴ while the Charitable Society of Ypsomatheia "Omonoia" ("Concord") was also active within the community. ⁴⁵

Very close to the St Nicholaos church, the one dedicated to St Menas is located. Built upon Byzantine foundation, it was known until the 18th century as St Polycarpos; it probably derived from the corruption of the name "papylocarpus", which referred to the site where the saints Carpus and Papylus suffered as martyrs in the 5th century; that site was located in a crypt in the church's basement. The church is referred to as St Polycarpus by Karabeinikov in 1593 and Paterakis in1604, while in a 17th century record it is chronicled as "St Polycarpos in the Zeytun quarter of the Karamania district". Lechevalier in 1785 mentions the St Menas holy water fountain (agiasma) within the church, which is the earliest record of the fountain, after which the whole church was probably named later on. The name St Menas had already prevailed in the mid-19th century, while the church is also referred to as the church of the Sulu Manastir parish. It burned down in consecutive fires in 1782 and 1792. According to Manouil Gedeon, the church burned down or collapsed around 1830 and was rebuilt in 1833 in the form that has survived to this day; it was probably renamed around that time as well. Was once more destroyed during the September riots, but reconstructed in 1963 by the



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architect Christos Ioannidis. Nowadays, the church has been fraternised with the St Menas church in Herakleion (Crete) and remains under its protection. In its narthex a holy water fountain is located, ⁴⁹ visited, as Manoull Gedeon notes, by many pilgrims and "gathering a lot of money"; he adds that the parish was quite small, numbering about 15 houses. ⁵⁰ Around the mid-19th century a public school and an Educational Society ("Proodos", meaning "Progress") operated as well. ⁵¹

The fifth parish was the one of St George of Kyparissas, a poor parish located between Vlanga and Samatya, in an area also known as Little Vlanga. The church dated back to the Byzantine period, the second one with a dome in the city, which "remained in the hands of Christians because of its small size". In 1625 Paul the deacon records it as "the most ancient of the remaining Christian churches, with a beautiful mosaic icon of the St George, as well as the holy water fountain and the remains of St Anastasia the Pharmakolytria". This church was also burned down in 1782 during the great Samatya fire, when "the cypress that gave the church its name burned down as well". The church was rebuilt in 1833 thanks to the Patriarch Konstantios I and its characteristic cypress tree replanted. During the incidents of September 1955 the church was completely destroyed, but repaired later on. It accommodates three holy water fountains: one dedicated to Christ the Savior, one to St Anastasia the Pharmakolytria and one to the Holy Ascension.

The parish operated a monitorial school, referred to as an all-girls school until 1906, and a nursery in the churchyard.⁵⁷ In the beginning of the 19th century several guild fraternities were active (of the weavers' guild, dedicated to the Birth of Virgin Mary, of the barbers' guild, dedicated to Taxiarch, of the gardeners' guild, dedicated to St Tryphon), while from the middle of the 19th century several societies were established, such as the Charitable Society of the Zoodochos Pigi and the Ladies Charitable Society "St Barbara" in St George Kyparissas, aiming to aid indigent families and support the nursery school.⁵⁸

All these parishes were obviously closely interrelated, since they were located in the same area and operated as autonomous units of the greater <u>Greek Orthodox</u> Samatya community, as was the case with all the big communities. The seals of all these organisations within the community, however, often confuse the researchers: a seal labeled "Greek Orthodox Ypsomatheia Community" dates back to 1920, while the seal of "Committee of the St Constantine and Helen Ypsomatheia Community" is dated both at the same time as the previous one and a few years later, namely 1920 and 1926. In 1927, on the other hand, a different seal was issued by the "St Menas of Ypsomatheia" community. This fact leads to the assumption that, on one hand, the terms "parish" and "community" were merged or used alternately and, on the other hand, that the St Constantine parish as the largest one represented the whole community, since, apparently, the committee as the community's highest administrative foundation was located in that parish.

In addition, several societies in Samatya operated on an intra-parish level, such as the Four Parishes of Ypsomatheia Charitable Society, which aimed in providing for the community's indigent population and offering fire control by maintaining the fire pumps kept by the four major community churches. Moreover, in 1904 the Ladies Charitable Society "St Eleftherios" of Ypsomatheia was founded, aiming to provide indigent students attending the Sts Constantine and Helen parish school with shoes and clothing; it also undertook church decorations, produced theatrical, dance and musical performances and organised "agricultural excursions". Finally, in April 1922 the Young Ladies Association "Angyra" ("Anchor") of Ypsomatheia was established and later on validated by the Mixed National Council, aiming at: a) culturally educating and elevating the national and religious character of the young ladies in the community, b) promoting Greek culture and, c) assuring their assistance to the national needs that may occur and their aid of the Greek soldiers in Asia Minor". 62

Samatya is one of the first Greek communities where confraternities were established, a fact indicative of the wealth of the local community. However, despite efforts made for the modernisation and organisation of the urban planning in the area – as early as the middle of the 19th century with the initiative of the Amelioration of the Streets Committee –,⁶³ Samatya, as well as all the intra muros districts, are gradually "marginalised" towards the end of the century; consequently, many Orthodox families transport to the westernised parts of Constantinople (mainly Pera).⁶⁴ Additionally, as noted by Manouil Gedeon, "after 1870, the deterioration of Greek communities around Constantinople came about. The mainland part of the railway system reaching St Stephanos had already been completed (1871) and many residents wishing to live in the suburbs and accommodated by the railway [...] after 1880



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relocated from Samatya to St Stephanos and Makriköy". ⁶⁵ This, of course, did not lead to any significant decrease in population, because the vacancies were covered by immigrants from other parts of the Ottoman Empire and Greece.

2.3. Psamathia during the 20th century

With the transition to the Turkish Republic, the Samatya community faced both administrative (communal elections, encroachments of communal property) and demographic problems. Until the September incidents, however, when a tendency of relocation towards more central areas is recorded, the community remained one of the most significant of the Greek minority in Constantinople.

In a 1949 patriarchal census, 60 families are recorded in the St George Kyparissas parish, 71 in St Menas, 57 in St Nicholas, 35 in the parish of the Holy Ascension and 354 in St Constantine and Helen, while during the schoolyear 1949-1950, 208 students attended primary school, reaching 220 the following year. According to an estimate by the newspaper *Makedonia*, 577 families inhabited the area – referred to as both Psamathia and Yedi Kule. 66

In 1950, the Four Parishes of Ypsomatheia Charitable Society was re-established, with the omission of St Menas that had founded its own philanthropical association; additionally, a soup kitchen was organised in St Constantine accommodating all the parishes of southwestern Constantinople, while a theatrical club and an active educational association were also in operation.

As early as 1950 the district had changed completely because of uncontrolled zoning and unplanned construction. The sight of some of the parishes about two decades later, at the height of the Cypriot Question in the 70s, indicated the demographic deterioration the community had suffered. In December 1975, the St Nicholas parish numbered about 15 families, St Menas 25, St George Kyparissas 10 and the parish of the Holy Ascension only 12; in addition, most of these families were comprised "of a single individual, elderly for the most part". 68

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- 10. Belge, M., İstanbul Gezi Rehberi (İstanbul 2007), p. 160.
- 11. Κιομουρτζι**ά** v, I.T., *Οδοιπορικ***ό** στην Π**ό** λη του 1680 (Athens 1992), p. 20; Φραγκού δης, Γ., Η Κωνσταντινού πολις, p. 100. According to another version, the Byzantine church was ceded to the Armenians, because Sultan Ibrahim fell in live with a beautiful Armenian girl. Belge, M., İstanbul Gezi Rehberi (İstanbul 2007), p. 160.
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- 30. Ορθό δοξοι Ενοριακοί Ναοί και Αγιά σματα της Περιφέ ρειας Βλά γκας, Κοντοσκαλί ου και Υψωμαθεί ων (Athens 2004), p. 55.
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Γλωσσάριο:

agiasma

The holy water (as well as the sacred place from where the water spurts), which the faithful drink, sprinkle or wash themselves in order to be healed.

kadi

Office that combinbed judicial, notarial and administrative duties. The kadi, who held court at the kaza's seat, registered all legal acts and documents in the court's codices (sicil). The kadi passed judgement based on the saria (the holy law of Islam), taking also into consideration the kanun (sultanic law) and the customary law (örf). Resort to his court had all the subjects of the Empire. The kadi had also administrative duties, which he performed in collaboration with the officials of the kaza., and he had to supervise tax collection.

monitorial system

Teaching method developed by Joseph Lancaster, under which the older students (in Greek: "protoscholoi") taught the smaller children some skill or activity.

wakf (vakif)

A foundation, a grant of land or other source of income, including tax revenues, which was considered to be dedicated according to the sacred law (şeriat) and was used for religious and charitable purposes.

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