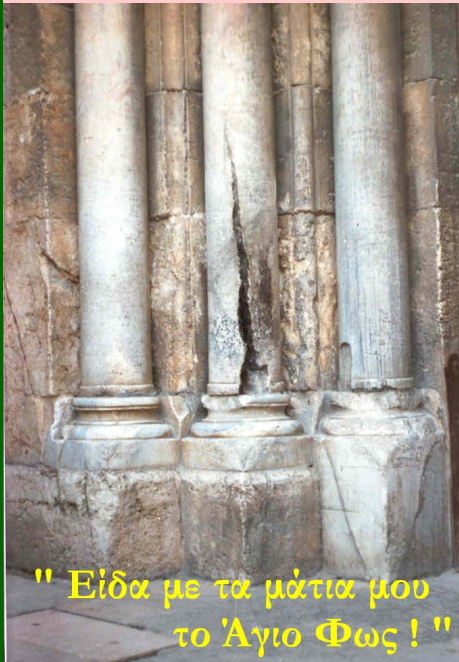


The miracle of the Holy Fire at Sepulshre church, Jerusalem, 1547

Another proof of the
authenticity of the Orthodox
faith

Greek



At the Great Gates themselves, on the left side, stands a column made out of marble with a fissure from which the grace, that is, the Holy Fire, came forth

Let me tell you about this: At the Great Gates themselves, on the left side, stands a column made out of marble with a fissure from which the grace, that is, the Holy Fire, came forth. This column is honored by Orthodox as well as non-Orthodox, and even the Armenians. I would like to write a little about this incident, how the Orthodox Eastern Christians unanimously speak of it and the Turks themselves confirm it. In the wall there is an inscribed marble slab, and they say that this very incident is written on it; but we could not read it because it is written in Syrian letters, in the Arab tongue; and I only heard about it, but did not read it. But the incident happened something like this: At one time when the Greeks were completely oppressed by the Turkish yoke, some rich Armenians took it into their heads to force the Greeks out of the Holy Sepulchre and out of the

Church of the Resurrection. They gathered a large sum of money and bribed the Ottoman Porte and all the Jerusalem authorities, assuring the unbelievers that the Holy Fire comes forth not simply for the sake of the Greeks, but for all Christians, and "if we Armenians are there, we also will receive it!" And the Turks, who are greedy for money, accepted the bribe and therefore did as the Armenians wished, and they affirmed that only the Armenians would be allowed to receive the Holy Fire. The Armenians rejoiced greatly and wrote to all their lands and to their faithful, that more of them should go on a pilgrimage. And a great multitude of them did come. Holy Saturday approached: the Armenians all gathered in the church, and the Turkish army drove the poor Greeks out. Oh, what unspeakable grief and sorrow filled the Greeks! There was only one comfort for them -- the Grave of the Saviour, and they were being kept away from it, and the Holy Gates were locked to them! The Armenians were inside the church and the Orthodox were on the streets. The Armenians were rejoicing and the Greeks were weeping. The Armenians were

celebrating and the Greeks were bitterly lamenting!

The Orthodox stood opposite the Holy Gates on the court and around them stood the Turkish army, watching so that there would not be a fight. The Patriarch himself with all the rest stood there with candles, hoping that they would at least receive the Fire from the Armenians through the window. But the Lord wished to dispose things in a different way, and to manifest His true Faith with a fiery finger and comfort His true servants, the humble Greeks. The time had already come when the Holy Fire issues forth, but nothing happened. The Armenians were frightened and began to weep, and ask God that He send them the Fire; but the Lord did not hear them.

Already a half hour had passed and more, and still no Holy Fire. The day was clear and beautiful; the Patriarch sat to the right side. All of a sudden there was a clap of thunder, and on the left side the middle marble column cracked and out of the fissure a flame of fire came forth. The Patriarch arose and lit his candles and all the Orthodox Christians lit theirs from his. Then all rejoiced, and the Orthodox Arabs from Jordan began to skip and cry out,

"Thou art our one God, Jesus Christ; one is our True Faith, that of the Orthodox Christians!" And they began to run about all of Jerusalem and raise a din, and to shout all over the city. And to this day they still do this in memory of the incident and they jump and shout, running around the Holy Sepulchre, and they praise the one true God, Jesus Christ, and bless the Orthodox Faith. Beholding this wonder, the Turkish army, which was standing around on guard, was greatly amazed and terrified. From amongst them one named Omir, who was standing at the St. Abraham's Monastery on guard, immediately believed in Christ and shouted, "One is the true God, Jesus Christ; one is the true faith, that of the Orthodox Christians!" And he jumped down to the Christians from a height of more than 35 feet. His feet landed on the solid marble as if though on soft wax.

And to this day one can see his footprints imprinted as though in wax, although the non-Orthodox tried to erase them. I saw them with my own eyes and felt them with my own hands. And the column with the fissure still bears the scorch marks. As for Omir the soldier,

having jumped down, he took his weapon and thrust it into the stone as though into soft wax, and began to glorify Christ unceasingly. For this, the Turks beheaded him and burned his body; the Greeks gathered up his bones, put them into a case and took them to the Convent of the Great Panagia, where they gush forth fragrance until this day. The Armenians in the Holy Sepulchre received nothing and were left only with their shame. The Pasha of Jerusalem and other Turkish authorities were greatly displeased with them and wanted to slaughter them all, but they feared the Sultan. They only punished them heavily: they say that they made each one to eat dung as he left the church.
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Written by hieromonc
Parthenius

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