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The nunnery of St. Andrew in *Krisei*<sup>1</sup> in Istanbul Khodja

Muṣṭafā Mosque or Sünbül *Efendi* Mosque:

a photographic, historical and bibliographical context

By

**Maria Vaiou**

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<sup>1</sup> R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris, 1964), 375.



Entrance





The east end of the church

The building is situated within the Koca Mustafa Paşa Külliyesi in Ali Fakih Mahallesi in the Fatih district. Northwest of the monastery of the *Peribleptos* The monastery was built by Arcadia (400–44) sister of emperor Theodosius II (d. 450), in honor of St. Andrew, founder of the church of Constantinople; the building was also called also Phodophylion. The monastery was later converted into a nunnery. In 792 St. Philaretos of Paphlagonia bought a grave in the convent named *he Krisis* where he was buried and his wife too later. At a later date the nunnery was re-dedicated to St. Andrew of Crete (*BHG* 113), a contemporary of St. Stephen the Younger, who suffered a martyr's death in 766, during the Iconoclast crisis, in the reign of the emperor Constantine V (741–75). It is in this church that Andrew of Crete (d.740) was buried. The Byzantine hagiographer Symeon Metaphrastes (d. 987) who wrote the 'Life of St. Andrew', says that his body 'was deposited in a holy place named *Krisei*'. The church contains many ornamentations which date to the 6th century. In the Iconoclast controversy it sided with the iconodules and suffered damages. Restored and embellished by the emperor Basil I (867–86). Shortly after 1284 the princess Theodora Palaiologina Kantakouzene Raoulaina (d. 1300), the niece of the emperor Michael VIII (1259–82), renovated the church and restored the convent and the damages caused by the Latins during the Latin occupation. She built a shrine to commemorate the patr. Arsenius Autoreianus (d. 1273)<sup>2</sup> and his remains were transferred there from St. Sophia. Maximus Planoudes (d. 1305) wrote three epigrams for the church. The monastery underwent an eclipse during the Latin occupation. Empress Theodora Palaiologina (1240–1303) restored the monastery and renewed the church between ca. 1282–9. In 1289 she offered the retired patr. George/Gregory Cyprus (1283–9) an apartment in the monastery Aristina, which was close to the monastery of St. Andrew. Possessed a library, probably a foundation of Theodora's. She obtained from her cousin emperor

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<sup>2</sup> D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100–1460: A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study (Washington DC, 1968), 17 n. 8.

Andronicus II (1282–1328), the permission to depose the remains of patr. Arsenius in the monastery. Mentioned in patr. Acts of 1371 and 1400. Mentioned by Stephen, and the anonymous Russian. The monastery continued to function after the Turkish conquest. The church of the nunnery existed until 1489 when, in the reign of the sultan Beyazit II (1481–1512), the grand *vizier* Koca Mustafa Paşa (d. 1512) converted the monastic complex into a mosque in 1486-90 known to this day by his name. The establishment of a *tekke* has had a huge role in the spreading of Halveti branch<sup>3</sup> of Sufi Islam in Istanbul. A *küllüye* was formed by building dervish lodgings, a kitchen, an elementary school, a *medrese* and a bath around the converted Byzantine monastery. The final restoration works on the *Tekkesi* were done by the sultan Maḥmūd II (d. 1838) and Serasker Rıza Paşa (d.1920). The Archaeological Museum of Istanbul preserves a door frame from the entrance to the Byzantine monastery. In old times a chain hanging from an old cypress tree within the monastery's enclosure was associated with a procedure in the administration of justice. Later tradition relates many instances of this peculiar way of passing judgement by the automatic lowering and raising of the chain. This form of judgement originated in Byzantium and explains the name of the locality (*Krisis* = judgment).

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<sup>3</sup> J. J. Curry, *The transformation of Muslim mystical thought in the Ottoman empire. The rise of the Halveti Order, 1350–1650* (Edinburgh, 2010).

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