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The Holy Virgin-Martyr Helen of Sinope, Pontos

A Hopeful Message
For Chastity in Our Days



The Holy Icon of St. Helen
of Sinope, Pontos

**The Martyrdom of the
Holy Virgin-Martyr
Helen of Sinope, Pontos,
Who Contested in the Eighteenth Century**

THE VIRGIN-MARTYR of Christ, St. Helen, was the daughter of the pious Bekiary family and lived in the eighteenth century in beautiful Sinope, the oldest city of Pontos.

Her parents brought her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and implanted in her pure heart a fervent love for Jesus Christ.

She was especially influenced in her upbringing by her uncle—her father's brother—who was then teaching in a secret Greek school in Sinope.

Physically most beautiful, her purity lent a special grace to her face, which shone with the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

She was distinguished for her obedience to her parents and the fervent love of her soul for Christ, our Savior and Bridegroom.

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SHE was fifteen years old when her mother sent her one day to buy embroidery thread from the shop in Kryonas.

On the way lay the house of Ukuzoglu Pasha, Governor of Sinope, who saw Helen from his window. Her beauty attracted his licentious soul and he thought to defile her.

The Pasha ordered that she be brought to him. Having learned who she was, he tried two or three times to defile her, but an unseen force pushed him back!

An invisible wall was protecting the girl: it was the wall of prayer. Throughout the entire duration of this ordeal, Helen prayed mentally, continuously reciting the Six Psalms.

The Turk did not lose hope. He ordered his soldiers to keep her at his house, hoping that he would be able to carry out his execrable plan later....

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DURING her imprisonment, the pure girl managed, with God's help, to escape the attention of the guards and to return to her

anxious parents, to whom she recounted all that had come to pass.

Shortly thereafter, upon becoming aware of her escape, the Pasha flew into a rage and threatened everyone and everything!

He summoned the Sinope Council of Elders and demanded that they bring Helen to him. Otherwise, a general massacre of all of the Greeks in the city would follow.

The elders came together to deliberate the matter at the Greek School of Sinope.

They called for Helen's father and asked him to hand over his daughter to the Pasha for the sake of the others.

Dissolving into tears, her father finally submitted, like the Patriarch Abraham, and agreed that his daughter be sacrificed in order to avoid a general massacre.

He returned home and, having sufficiently fortified Helen, took her—stifling his fatherly pain—and handed her over to the Pasha, in order for her to offer herself not, of course, to the Turk's lustful desires, but as fragrant incense to her Bridegroom Christ.

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THE DESPICABLE Ukuzoglu Pasha received the beautiful Helen with unspeakable delight, hoping that he would fully satisfy his lustful desires.

Thus, he attempted again many times to defile her, but again the same surprise: an invisible wall around the girl was impeding the Pasha, while an unseen force was driving him back.

The holy maiden was praying fervently, secretly reciting the Six Psalms, which she had learned from her uncle....

The next day, the Pasha again attempted to carry out his despicable intention, but yet again met with the same strange obstacle. Vexed and wrathful, he ordered that she be locked up in the frightful, damp prison of Sinope.

The ill-intentioned Pasha's heart growing ever stonier, his eyes did not see the living miracle; his impure soul did not regain consciousness, but rather the opposite: possessed by a satanic force, he wanted without fail to defile the pure virgin.

Thus, the next day he went to the prison, determined finally to succeed in gratifying his passion.

But again the invisible wall! And again Divine Grace drove him back!

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EXCEEDINGLY wroth, the Pasha ordered that Helen be tortured and put to death, which is indeed what came to pass.

Her holy body was put in a sack and thrown into the sea. But instead of sinking, the Martyr's Relics floated, while a heavenly light beamed down upon them.

The Turks were terrorized and cried out: "The Greek girl is on fire! The Greek girl is on fire!"

Her holy body continued to float until it reached the locality of Gai, where, on account of the great depth of the sea, the water is black. There, it sank....

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SEVERAL days later, a Greek ship dropped anchor at Gai. On the third night, the ship's guard noticed that a light was coming up from the bottom of the sea, and he thought that there must be a great treasure of gold in that spot.

He immediately informed the Captain that they should send divers to hoist up the treasure; but instead of gold they brought up the sack containing the holy Relics of the Holy Virgin-Martyr Helen.

In the precious sack was the venerable head of the Saint, cut off from the rest of the body. In the crown of the head was a nail. There was also another hole made by a nail. It was evident that, having tortured the Saint, the Turks drove two nails into her head and decapitated her.

Two of the Turkish divers knew about the martyrdom and that the Saint had been cast into the sea, but they had been afraid to tell of it earlier.

The Captain then secretly took the precious head of St. Helen to the Church of the *Panagia* in Sinope, and placed the venerable Relics on another ship that was leaving with Greeks on board for Russia.

At the spot in the sea where her Relics sank, a fountain of fresh water sprang up, and from that time on the area has been called "*Agiasmata*": "Holy Waters."

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MANY miracles were worked in Sinope by means of the precious head of the Holy Virgin-Martyr Helen.

In particular, whoever was suffering from headaches would call the Priest, who would bring the holy head, chant a canon of supplication, sprinkle Holy Water, and the pain would go away.

During the exchange of populations before 1924, the President, Christos Kapharopoulos, took the holy head of St. Helen and placed it in the Church of the Holy Great Martyr Marina in Ano Touba, Thessaloniki, where it is kept to this day, giving off a fragrance and working miracles, to the glory of our Lord and God Who is glorified in His Saints.

**Through the holy intercessions of the
Holy Virgin-Martyr
Helen of Sinope, Pontos,
O Christ God,
have mercy on us and save us.
Amen!**

Sources

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- ♦ **Hieromonk Nikephoros of Small St. Anna's Skete**, Service, Canon of Supplication, and Salutations to the Holy Virgin-Martyr Helen the New of Sinope, Small St. Anna's, Holy Mountain, Athos, 1985.
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