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TO SAVE ST. SOPHIA'S CRUMBLING MOSQUE FROM TURKISH NEGLECT

How Christendom Plans to Preserve the Chief Place of Mohammedan Worship to Make It Again the Most Ancient of Cathedrals--When the Turks Are Finally Driven from Europe

Paris, Dec. 23. In each instance the slow widening of the fissures has caused the sheets of glass to part. As in the case of the Campanile at Venice, this slow disintegration of the structure may at any time result in a sudden collapse of the walls. The great dome would fall, to be shattered in fragments and to shatter, in turn, the almost priceless embellishments of the interior.

The interior of St. Sophia shows a bewildering wealth of costly architectural adornment, besides objects of art and furnishings. At the time the building of the cathedral the whole known world was ransacked for rich adornments. From ancient Ephesus the city magistrates sent a gift of eight marble columns of the softest shade of green, taken from the site of the ruins of the famous temple of Diana. These still support the large galleries. Eight porphyry columns that were originally part of the temple of the sun at Baalbek were sent by its citizens. Silver of the value of \$200,000 was used in making various ornaments. The holy vessels were of the purest gold, incrustated with costly gems. Historians assert that \$5,000,000 does not exceed the amount expended by Justinian on the structure and its ornamentation.

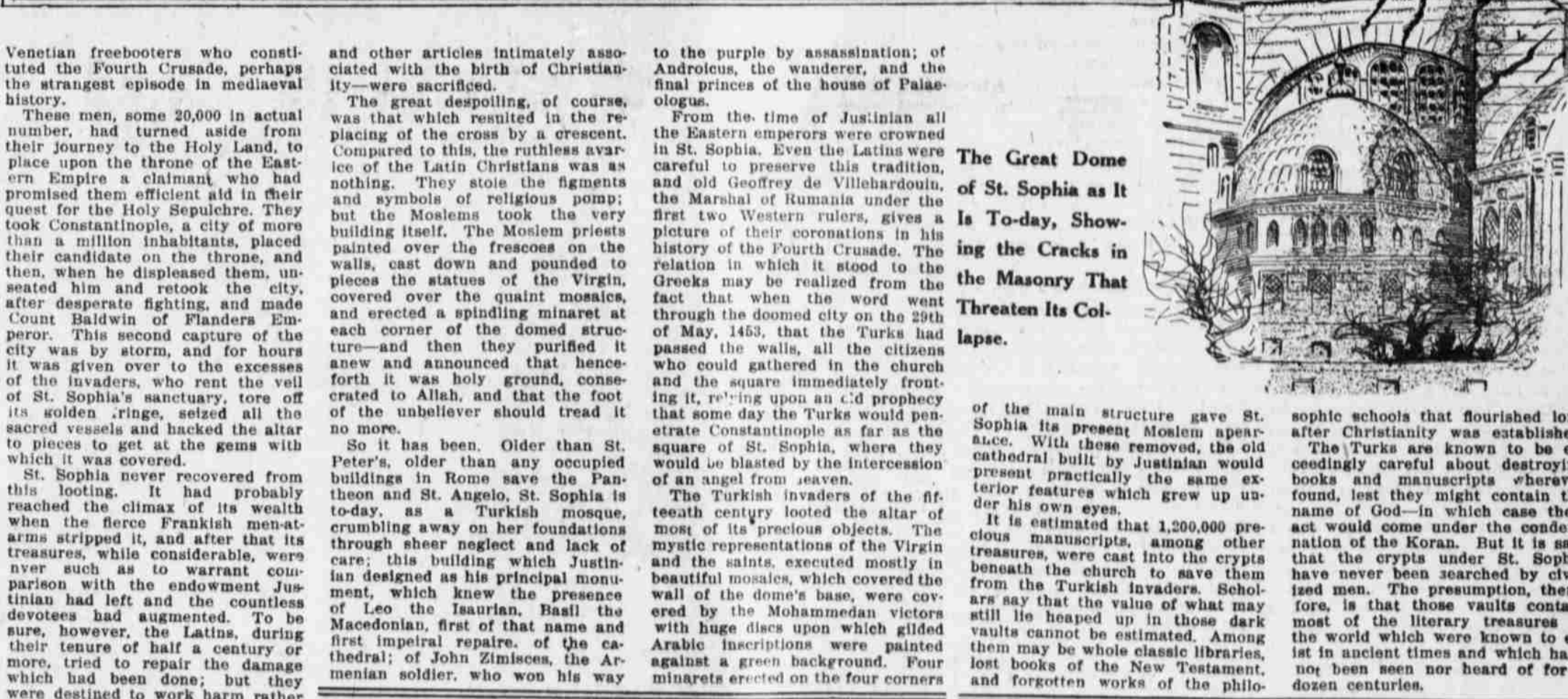
The dome was its sublimest feature. Its diameter is 107 feet and its height 40 feet. Every brick in it was inscribed with sentences from the Gospels. Relics of the saints were placed in the mortar in which the bricks were laid. This dome represented the first efforts of architects to place a circular structure upon a rectangular base. It was Anthemius of Thrales who solved this problem by the building of a huge square formed of columns the heads of which were connected by arches. It was found that by simply fitting the corner of this frame to the corner of the arch, the resulting uppermost surface was that of a circle whereon the dome could be safely and conveniently erected. This was the famous "pendentive" of Byzantine architecture.

Twice in history were the beauties of St. Sophia laid at the mercy of the pillager. The first time was the occasion of the capture of the city by the host of Frankish and Venetian freebooters who constituted the Fourth Crusade, perhaps the strangest episode in mediæval history. These men, some 20,000 in actual number, had turned aside from their journey to the Holy Land, to place upon the throne of the Eastern Empire a claimant who had promised them efficient aid in their quest for the Holy Sepulchre. They took Constantinople, a city of more than a million inhabitants, placed their candidate on the throne, and then, when he displeased them, unseated him and retook the city, after desperate fighting, and made Count Baldwin of Flanders Emperor. This second capture of the city was by storm, and for hours it was given over to the excesses of the invaders, who rent the wall of St. Sophia's sanctuary, tore off its golden rings, seized all the sacred vessels and hacked the altar to pieces to get at the gems with which it was covered.

St. Sophia never recovered from this looting. It had probably reached the climax of its wealth when the fierce Frankish men-at-arms stripped it, and after that its treasures, while considerable, were never such as to warrant comparison with the endowment Justinian had left and the countless devotees had augmented. To be sure, however, the Latins, during their tenure of half a century or more, tried to repair the damage which had been done; but they were destined to work harm rather than good toward their prize, and it was to the poverty of the last Baldwin of the House of Courtenay that the most sacred relics of the ancient fame—the Crown of Thorns



General View of the Ancient Cathedral of St. Sophia at Constantinople, Built by the Roman Emperor Justinian in the Sixth Century, and Which Is Threatened with Collapse. The Minarets Were Added by the Turks When They Converted It into a Mosque in the Fifteenth Century on Taking Constantinople from the Greeks.



The Great Dome of St. Sophia as It Is To-day, Showing the Cracks in the Masonry That Threaten Its Collapse.

and other articles intimately associated with the birth of Christianity—were sacrificed.

The great despoiling, of course, was that which resulted in the replacing of the cross by a crescent. Compared to this, the ruthless avarice of the Latin Christians was as nothing. They stole the fragments and symbols of religious pomp; but the Moslems took the very building itself. The Moslem priests painted over the frescoes on the walls, cast down and pounded to pieces the statues of the Virgin, covered over the quaint mosaics, and erected a spindling minaret at each corner of the domed structure—and then they purified it anew and announced that henceforth it was holy ground, consecrated to Allah, and that the foot of the unbeliever should tread it no more.

So it has been. Older than St. Peter's, older than any occupied buildings in Rome save the Pantheon and St. Angelo, St. Sophia is today, as a Turkish mosque, crumbling away on her foundations through sheer neglect and lack of care; this building which Justinian designed as his principal monument, which knew the presence of Leo the Isaurian, Basil the Macedonian, first of that name and the first imperial repairs, of the cathedral; of John Zimisceos, the Armenian soldier, who won his way

to the purple by assassination; of Andronicus, the wanderer, and the final princes of the house of Palaeologus.

From the time of Justinian all the Eastern emperors were crowned in St. Sophia. Even the Latins were careful to preserve this tradition, and old Geoffrey de Villehardouin, the Marshal of Romania under the first two Western rulers, gives a picture of their coronations in his history of the Fourth Crusade. The relation in which it stood to the Greeks may be realized from the fact that when the word went through the doomed city on the 29th of May, 1453, that the Turks had passed the walls, all the citizens who could gather in the church and the square immediately fronting it, relying upon an old prophecy that some day the Turks would penetrate Constantinople as far as the square of St. Sophia, where they would be blasted by the intercession of an angel from heaven.

The Turkish invaders of the fifteenth century looted the altar of most of its precious objects. The mystic representations of the Virgin and the saints, executed mostly in beautiful mosaics, which covered the wall of the dome's base, were covered by the Mohammedan victors with huge discs upon which gilded Arabic inscriptions were painted against a green background. Four minarets erected on the four corners

of the main structure gave St. Sophia its present Moslem appearance. With these removed, the old cathedral built by Justinian would present practically the same exterior features which grew up under his own eyes.

It is estimated that 1,200,000 precious manuscripts, among other treasures, were cast into the crypts beneath the church to save them from the Turkish invaders. Scholars say that the value of what may still lie hooped up in those dark vaults cannot be estimated. Among them may be whole classic libraries, lost books of the New Testament, and forgotten works of the philo-

sophic schools that flourished long after Christianity was established. The Turks are known to be exceedingly careful about destroying books and manuscripts wherever found, lest they might contain the name of God—in which case their act would come under the condemnation of the Koran. But it is said that the crypts under St. Sophia have never been searched by civilized men. The presumption, therefore, is that those vaults contain most of the literary treasures of the world which were known to exist in ancient times and which have not been seen nor heard of for a dozen centuries.

How the Campanile Was Built Up from Its Ruins

AFTER lying in ruins for nine years, the Campanile—the ancient famous bell tower of Venice—was successfully restored, being built up again from the materials of its own scrap heap. This was an engineering task much more difficult than will be that of strengthening the cracked walls and dome of St. Sophia in Constantinople—the oldest church building on this earth.

The ancient foundations of the fallen Campanile proved as solid as ever, for they had been built most carefully. The builders had dug down to the stiff clay, and over the whole area of the footings of the tower they had eleven piles of white poplar, ten to eleven inches in diameter, nearly touching one another.

The original tower was begun in the early part of the tenth century and completed by the middle of the twelfth century. The belfry was erected and finished by Bartolomeo Buono, 1617. The tower was of brick, but the belfry and surmounting pyramid were of marble. The total height was 323 feet, and the tower was but 42 feet square at the base. It was this small foundation, coupled with the poor mortar used, which was responsible for the disaster. As every one knows, there is a constant tug of gravity upon the highest portion of a tower with an insufficient base, and this constant force pulling at the marble and bricks high upon the tower, gradually loosened the marble and bricks, held together so poorly by the dried-out, miserably mortar, until at last the tower cracked and

then slipped down into ruins, bringing all with it a mass of debris.

When it fell, four of the five bells in the belfry were smashed, and much of the famous Loggia of Sansovino, at the bottom of the tower, was damaged. The angel which stood on the summit of the pyramid, made of gilded copper, with head and feet of bronze, while broken, was put together again, and stands in its old place.

In reconstructing the Campanile no scaffolding was used on the interior, but a movable sliding platform, which was pushed up as the work progressed.

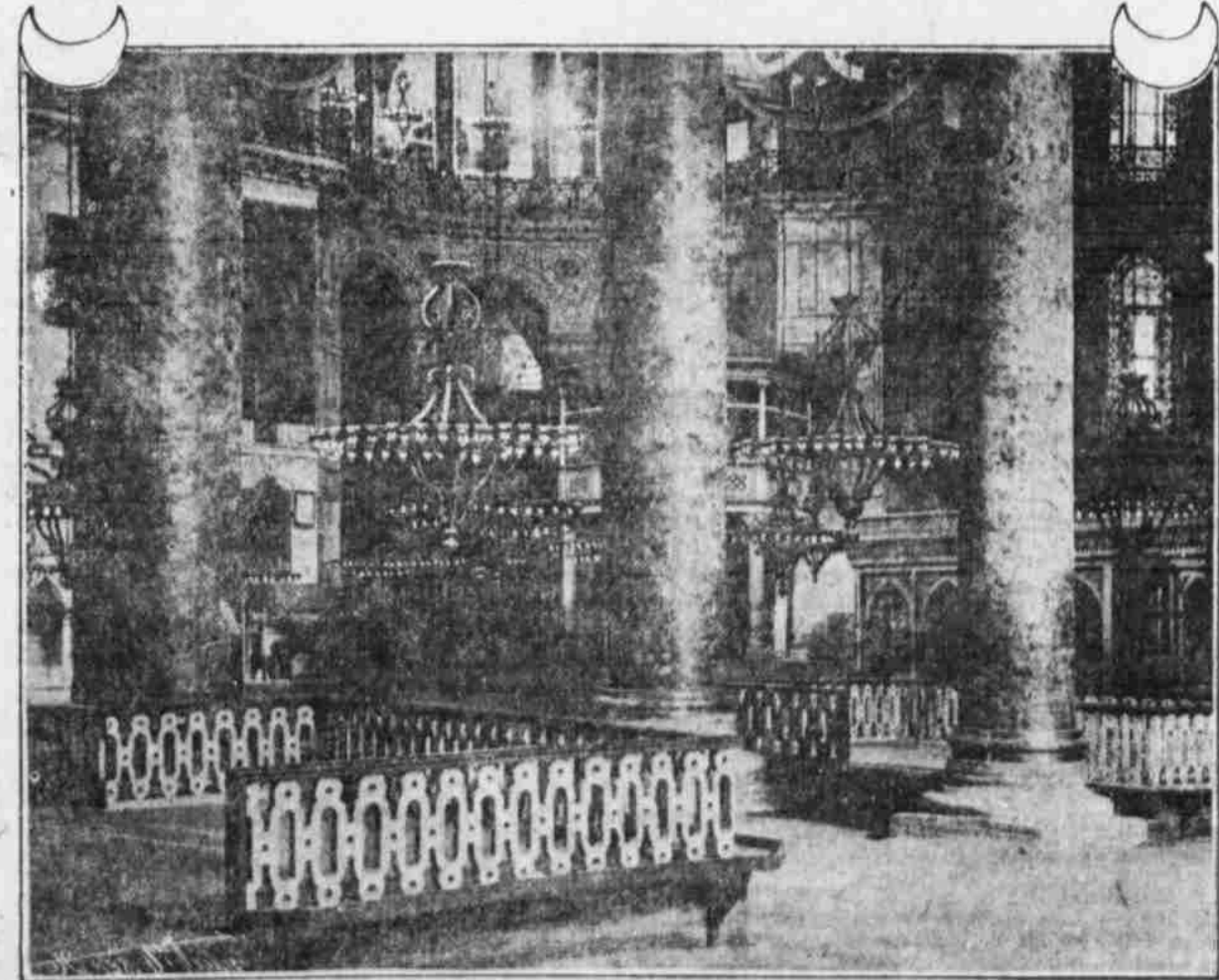
The new Campanile is nothing more or less than the old Campanile fitted together again, piece by piece, stone by stone and brick by brick. The famous architects and artists of Europe collaborated in working on the puzzle, and every

fragment of marble, or brick, or bronze was carefully scrutinized by them in their efforts to replace it where it had originally belonged.

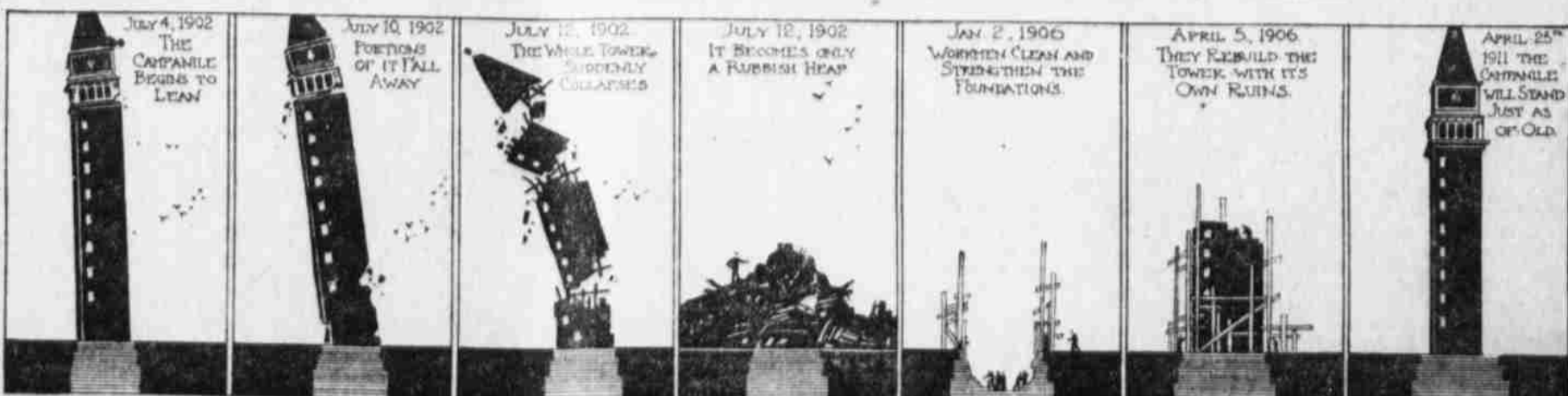
It has been estimated that there were 1,200,000 bricks in the Campanile, and as nearly every one of these was broken into two or more pieces, the task of fitting them together must have been prodigious.

The most artistic work about the Campanile was the loggia of Sansovino, a kind of vestibule to the Campanile built by Sansovino in the fifteenth century. The four historic bronze statues which adorned this loggia, though badly injured, have also been repaired and occupy their original positions as "good as new."

The reconstruction of the Campanile cost more than \$400,000, but Venice has again her most beloved monument.



Interior of the Mosque of St. Sophia, Showing Three of the Great Columns Taken from the Temple of Diana at Ephesus 1,500 Years Ago.



Sketches Showing Different Stages of the Campanile's Collapse and Its Reconstruction.