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THE ETYMOLOGY OF *İSTANBUL*: MAKING OPTIMAL USE OF THE EVIDENCE*

Abstract. The discussion of the origin of the Turkish city name *İstanbul* that began well over a century ago has divided scholars into two groups: those who accept the Greek phrase *εἰς τὴν πόλιν* (or similar) as the source of the name, vs. those who try to trace it back directly to Greek *Κωνσταντινούπολις* ~ *Κωνσταντινόπολις*. The writings of both parties are encumbered by poor Turcology, inaccurate attention to early records and an overly narrow view of medieval Anatolian Greek phonetics. More scrupulous examination of all three types of evidence has revealed a more interesting picture than has previously been suggested.

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1. Apart from a folk-etymological explanation of the name *İstanbul* as a re-shaped variant of an allegedly original form *İslambol*, lit. ‘lots of Islam, full of Islam’ (which in reality is a distortion of *İstanbul* itself)¹ or *İslambul*, lit. ‘find Islam’,² the town name *İstanbul* is traditionally accounted for as a reflex of the supposed Middle Greek syntagm *εἰς τὴν πόλιν* ‘to the city’. The very form in which this explanation is so frequently given already contains two misconceptions which, when combined

* The investigation presented here grew out of Marek Stachowski’s criticism of the turcological basis and other features of the 2008 paper by Hansack plus a request to Robert Woodhouse to check the Greek material cited in the paper with a view to restoring the traditional interpretation. The check revealed the need for a fresh evaluation of past scholarly treatments of the Greek aspects of the problem, as well as some inadequacies in the interpretations on offer regarding the Arabic and Armenian evidence, the correction of the bulk of which is also due to Robert Woodhouse.

¹ The oldest European attestation of the form *İslambol* is probably that in Meninski (1680: 176, 219).

² The 1872 statement by *Égli* reproduced by Bourne (1077: 78) that the Eastern/Turkish name *Stambul* contains *bul* **‘Menge oder Vielheit’ is thus in error; moreover, *Islām*, being a verbal noun, can hardly mean **‘rechtgläubig’ – as the name of a religion it is often explained as ‘submission (to the will of God)’.

with some of the other shortsighted assumptions with which it has become burdened, make it an easy target for ridicule and consequent replacement by alternative accounts based on corruptions of *Κωνσταντινούπολις* ~ *Κωνσταντινόπολις* itself. The following extract from Rahn (2002: 31 n. 92) is fairly typical:³

Auch Babinger (*Maometto*, S. 164) und Inalcik (*Istanbul*, S. 224) leiten den Namen Istanbul von griech. *eis tēn polin*, gesprochen *is tin bolin* („in die Stadt“) ab. ... [D]ie Griechen [aber] ... werden kaum auf den Gedanken gekommen sein, ihrer Hauptstadt den verständlichen, aber sinnlosen Namen „in die Stadt“ zu geben.

Questionable here are: (1) the form of the Greek phrase; (2) the pronunciation ascribed to the Greek phrase; (3) the meaning attributed to the Greek phrase; (4) the assertion that the name is “sinnlos” with the concomitant implications (5) that the linguistic form of such a reference to a place is otherwise unknown in Greece and (6) that an essential feature of the traditional explanation is that *Stambol*⁴ ~ *Istanbul* vel sim. was once the official name of Constantinople.

The task of the present contribution is to elucidate these and some other deficiencies, not necessarily in the above order, as well as to review the evidence for the traditional version, and in addition to examine what little actual argument there is for the “corruption” alternative, with a view to arriving at an interpretation based more securely on the evidence and on sound Turcology.

Before we do this, the fact should be noted that the modern Turkish spelling of this town name is *İstanbul*, with *İ-*, whereas *Istanbul*, apart from being a common non-Turkish spelling, is in fact a graphical rendering of the popular pronunciation with Turkish *ı-* (= IPA [ɯ] = Russ. *ы*) that is, as a matter of fact, a next step in the vocalic adaptation of this originally foreign name to the Turkish system based on vowel harmony. Therefore, the official literary form with *İ-* is used here, the difference between *ı* and *i* being in Turkish no less important than that between *o* and *ö* in German.

2. The form of the Greek phrase in what appears to be the original source of the traditional etymology is given not as *εἰς τὴν πόλιν*, but its Demotic descendant *στὴν πόλιν*. This source is the unpublished 17th century Demotic Greek grammar of Romanus Nicephorus, a teacher of Greek. The etymology appears to have first been published by the 17th century savant Du Cange (also written Ducange) and transmitted to modern scholarship by Bourne (1887: 78 and n. 1, with lit.). We can

³ Cf., e.g., Rosen (1885), Room (1994; 2006 s.v. *Istanbul*) and Hansack (2008).

⁴ For the sake of simplicity in this paper the shorter alternative will be generally written *Stambol* with the original Greek vowel in the second syllable; the change to *u* in this syllable is almost certainly due to Turkish dislike of *o* outside the first syllable of a word.

emend this etymon still further to *στήν πόλι* (thus also Hesseling 1890: 194) since both the reduction of *εἰς* to the prefix *σ-* before the article and the conditioned omission of the final nasal were established in Demotic Greek during the early medieval period, 600–11th century CE (Browning 1969: 62f.). (Forms reported with initial vowel will be discussed as appropriate below.)

Actually, since a Greek spelling like *ῥαῦδος* for *ῥάβδος* dating from the 1st century BCE (ibid. 34) reveals not only the obvious narrowing of nonsyllabic /u/ in diphthongs to a fricative, but also the important change of the old pitch accent into stress (ibid. 33), with concomitant loss of accent/stress in words of less prominence in the phrase, we shall henceforth, where appropriate, present Greek material of the Current Era in the modern monotonic system (single accent mark, no breathings) with unaccented articles, thus *στην πόλι*.⁵

3. The translation of the Greek phrase as ‘to the city’, while perfectly correct for Classical Greek *εἰς τὴν πόλιν*, is inadequate for the medieval descendant of the phrase on two counts.

First, we have Romanus Nicephorus’ remark that the expression *η πόλις*, the nominative of *την πόλι(ν)*, was used by Greeks only with reference to Constantinople, not to Greek cities in general, the generic name for which was then the Venetian loan (Prof. R.D. Milns, pers. com.) *(το) κάστρον*. According to Hesseling (1890: 191), Oberhummer (1900: 965) and Georgacas (1947: 358), this usage of *η πόλις* is attested from c. 400 CE: it was widespread among Byzantine writers and has been commonplace among the Greek-speaking population at large even to the present day (Prof. R.D. Milns, pers. com.).

Strictly speaking, such usage has not been entirely limited to referring solely to Constantinople: in addition to seven examples of *Κώμη* and twenty-three of *Χοριό(ν)*, both meaning ‘Village’, used as the names of villages, Georgacas (1947: 361) documents eight other instances, beside the reference to Constantinople, in which the apparently obsolescent Greek appellative *πόλις*, and even the archaic variant *πτόλις*,⁶ ‘town, city’ was used as the name of a particular town or city.⁷ These include the Acropolis at Athens, Alexandria on the Nile delta and, somewhat more significantly, a Cretan provincial town that enjoyed a number of names ending in *-πολις*, beginning with *Αργυρόπολις* and alternating and finally finishing with *η Πόλι*, the same New Greek form as for Constantinople. The genitive of this,

⁵ Cf. New Greek monotonic *εκφράζω την ευγνωμοσύνη μου* ‘I express my gratitude’, *να πάρουν μέρος στη μάχη* ‘to take part in combat’, *ανήκει στην εφεδρεία ή τον έφεδρο* ‘appertains to the militia or to the militiaman’ (examples from Varmazi 1985: 319).

⁶ E.g., *Πτόλις*, the old name of Mantinea (ibid.).

⁷ Georgacas (ibid.) also mentions derivatives of *πόλις*, such as *το Πόλιον* and *το Πόλιν* ‘Townlet’ and others, used as town names; but these are perhaps less interesting for our purpose.

της Πόλης, figures in a Greek-Latin contract of 1299 matched in the Latin text by *Stinboli*; and the town was known during the period 1868–1878 by “the Turkish name *Stambólköj*” (ibid. 359f. and esp. n. 80), i.e. with suffixed Tksh.⁸ *köy* ‘village’. It must be said that it is hard to see how the name *Constantine* could have figured in the creation of either of these forms of the name.

From this it is clear that Greeks in general had few if any qualms about using appellatives meaning ‘town’ and ‘village’ as the actual name of the local focal point of business and communications. It is also clear that in most cases context would have been sufficient to distinguish a strictly local referent bearing the name Πόλι(ς) from the centre of the Eastern Empire. Consequently, we, too, can have few if any qualms about accepting Georgacas practice of writing Πόλι(ς), with capital initial, as a name of Constantinople or about following Hesseling’s (1890: 193) French in translating this in the phrase *στην πόλι(ν) ~ στην Πόλι(ν)* with the English form ‘Constantinople’.

Our second semantic point of contention, which is encapsulated in Rahn’s remark about the unlikelihood of an expression meaning ‘to (a particular place)’ becoming a placename, was also anticipated (over a century ago!) by Hesseling (1890: 195; echoed by Georgacas 1947: 367) thus: “Cet usage me paraît sans exemple et rien ne le justifie: aller dans un endroit est une circonstance purement fortuite; y séjourner est un fait constant.” Hesseling (l.c.), followed by Georgacas (l.c.), corrected (or expanded) the semantics by pointing out that the post-Classical preposition εἰς (and by implication its Demotic descendant σε⁹/σ-) has not only the terminative meaning ‘(in)to’ but also the purely locative or inessive meaning ‘in’ “dès une époque relativement ancienne” – in fact it is attested at least as early as the New Testament (Browning 1969: 42). Hesseling (l.c.) cites a number of parallels containing locative constructions as placenames in other languages, particularly such German names as *Amsteg*, *Ambach* and – the most striking for our purpose – *Im Dærfl* literally ‘In the Hamlet’.¹⁰

There is therefore no reason why Greek should not have similar names similarly constructed. In fact, as we shall see in the next section, Greek can boast a substantial number.

4. The fallacy, partly exposed above, that the Greek use of such a construction as *in (the) X* as an informal placename would be “senseless” and unheard of was also disposed of over a century ago by lists of similarly formed material

⁸ Abbreviations used: Ar. = Arabic, Arm. = Armenian, Bulg. = (Slavonic) Bulgarian, Gr. = Greek, It. = Italian, Lat. = Latin, Ott. = Ottoman, P = Proto-, Pers. = Persian, Span. = Spanish, Tksh. = Turkish.

⁹ Also written without accent in the monotonic system instead of earlier σέ.

¹⁰ Georgacas (l.c.) produces some other similar names though none are as striking as Hesseling’s *Im Dærfl*.

pertaining to the Greek sphere compiled by both Bourne (1887: 81f.) and Hesseling (1890: 195f.). The material in these lists is clearly based on orally transmitted phrases consisting of *σε/σ-* (+ article) + acc. of placename or appellative – as shown below for each item where these things are known to us. Two of them are found in a list compiled by one Christopher Bondelmonte (also written Buondelmonte) who visited Greece as early as 1422 (Hesseling 1890: 191); they are (with monotonic source name or appellative in the accusative in parentheses) *Stanco* (*Κώ(ν)*) and *Stalimene* – *Stalimini* on p. 196 – (*Λήμνο(ν)*). Other examples, common to both Bourne’s and Hesseling’s lists, are: *Setines* ~ *Satine* ~ *Astines* (*Αθήνα(ς)*), *Isnicmid* (*Νικομήδεια(ν)*), *Sam(p)son* (*Άμισον*), *Standia* ~ *Stantia* ~ *Estanti* (*Δία(ν)*). To these Bourne adds: *Tzembela* (*ἀμπελα* ‘vines; vineyards’), *Tzecampon* (*κάμπον* ‘sea-monster’) and the less easily verifiable *Tzitana* ~ *Sitana* (*Itanus*), *Setea* (*Etea*), *Tzerapetna* (*Hierapytna*) and *Satalia* (*Attalia*); while Hesseling adds: *Estèves* (*Θήβας*), *Stampalia* (*Στα παλία*), *Sdiles* (*Δήλο(ν)*), *Isnik* (*Νίκαια(ν)*). In addition to *Stanco*, occurring in both a non-Greek and a Greek source, and the above clearly foreign attestations, Hesseling (l.c.) also cites the further intra-Greek example *Στοράκιον*. Clearly it would be absurd to claim that all these names somehow result from gradual abbreviation of some form of the name *Constantine*.

It is striking that names of this kind seem to be reported rather more often by foreigners than by Greeks themselves, and this, combined with the factual ambiguity of the phrase, may leave the question of semantic origins somewhat open. In the days before plentiful roadmaps and good signage, a traveller’s declarations of interest or intention to visit and his/her enquiries within the Greek-speaking world about the best way to get *to* such and such a place may well have elicited responses containing the target placename in the *στην* ~ *στον* phrase quite probably with the meaning ‘to’. Perhaps this is what more recently prompted Moravcsik (1976: 12) to keep both meanings in mind by glossing the traditional etymon of *İstanbul* as ‘in der Stadt’ or ‘in die Stadt’, although in the latter case a more realistic gloss might well be ‘(so kommt man) nach Konstantinopel’. On the other hand the more frequent reporting by foreigners, if indeed it is true, may have had more to do with the colloquial flavour of the Greek expressions themselves, which in turn would condition their general avoidance in writing – witness Hesseling’s (1890: 191f.) inability to unearth any Greek record of *στην πόλιν* or *σταν πόλιν* earlier than Du Cange.

Looking at the phonology of the names in the above lists, it is noteworthy that initial vowels are found only in the Old French *Estèves* and in the Turkish examples *Isnicmid* (now *İzmit*, from the shortened form *Μήδεια* – Room 1994: 379) and *Isnik* (now *İznik*), both languages having an aversion either to initial *st-* (Old French, see Ewert 1943: 91) or to anlaut clusters in general (Turkish). To the Turkish examples we can add *İsparta* (*Βάρπδα* cf. nom. *Βάρπς* – Symeonidis 1976: 103) and the later Turkish development *İstanköy* of *Stanco* (this time with Tksh. *köy*

‘village’ replacing the Greek name of the island). All these forms therefore clearly attest prothesis and, like the rest of the list, supply no evidence for the literary preposition *εις*. This last remark clearly applies also to *İzmir* (*Σμύρνη*), which has been included in this group (by Symeonidis l.c.), no doubt quite correctly despite its obvious lack of evidentiary value. Consequently we should like to amend, as underlined, Leake’s (1814: 52) remark (quoted by Hesseling 1890: 195) to read “[the] Custom of Romaic of expressing names of places in the acc., with the preposition *εις*, colloquially *σ-*, and the article *τον* or *την*; whence *π*, *κ*, *τ* after the article have the force of *b*, *g*, *d*”.

The nasal in *Stampalia*, if Hesseling’s derivation is correct, may be due either to a Greek reinterpretation of the etymon as singular following the loss of the final nasal in the accusative singular of nouns (cf. the New Greek reassessment of the former plural *Ἀθῆναι* to the singular *Ἀθήνα* and the sg.-pl.-sg. oscillation of Boeotian *Thebe(s)*: Epic gen. sg. *Θήβης* – allative pl. *Θήβασδε*, Classical pl. *Θήβαι* – Modern sg. *Θήβα*) or to analogical transfer from the other forms containing *Sta-* + nasal. In the other forms *Sta(n/m)-* must, by and large, have arisen in some way from Middle Greek *στην*. It is now appropriate to examine how this may have come about.

5. The question of how Greek *στην* yields *stan* in *İstanbul* and many of the other similarly formed names has to date not been treated adequately either by those in favour of the traditional etymology or by those against. First it is necessary to dispose of the traditional fallacy that the only possible phonological interpretation of *στην* all over the Greek speaking world was or is *stin*, even though this is the pronunciation recommended in grammars etc. of New Greek.

The rot was no doubt started by Rosen (1885) who, in order to reject the traditional etymology, referred explicitly to the itacism of Constantinople, meaning that *στην* would have been treated there as *stin*. Now while there is evidence for this in the explicitly Greek pronunciation *Istimboli*¹¹ recorded in 1426, apparently in the city itself, by the Bavarian traveller Schiltberger (Bourne 1887: 80; Hesseling 1890: 192)¹² there can be no doubt that this represents in fact the puristic itacistic

¹¹ The representation of written <np> by spoken [mb], alluded to also by Leake (above §4) does not require Turkish mediation to explain it. Judging by Browning’s (1969: 33f.) treatment of the status of *b*, *d*, *g* in Koine and New Greek, it seems probable that the Greek set of assimilative changes [np]/[mp] > [mb], [nt] > [nd], [nk]/[ŋk] > [ŋg] goes back to the 2nd century CE.

¹² Both these scholars quote the relevant passage in Langmantel’s (1885: 45) edition of Schiltberger’s travels with scrupulous correctness: “Constantinopel hayssen die Chrichen Istimboli und die Thürcken hayssends Stambol”. In a perplexing round robin of errors, Rahn (l.c.) incorrectly labels Schiltberger’s 15th century Greek record an Osmanli pronunciation from the end of the 14th century, citing as authority Inalcik (1978: 224), who uses, or perhaps misuses, Schiltberger’s Greek form as support

literary ‘correction’ *εἰς τὴν Πόλι(ν)* of the Demotic phrase,¹³ yet the testimony cited above for the pan-Greek use of *ἡ Πόλις* ‘Constantinople’ suggests that the Demotic phrase *στην Πόλι* would have been in use wherever Greek was spoken, not just in the city itself. Consequently, beside itacistic *stin*, travellers would also have had opportunities for hearing etacistic *sten* and even Laconian/Tsakonian *stan*, since this almost unique survival of a non-Koine dialect, like some of the Greek dialects of Italy, preserves the quality of the ancient pan-Greek *ā* that changed only in Attic/Ionic to *ē* yielding the later Koine (itacistic) *i* ~ (etacistic) *e* (Browning 1969: 123).

Since etacism was a typical feature of a number of Greek dialects spoken in Asia Minor until 1922/23 and Tsakonian was spoken along the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara until the same date (Browning 1969: 122f.) it is evident that there were ample opportunities in earlier centuries for Turks and other relative newcomers to Asia Minor to hear Greek names pronounced with these dialectal characteristics.

Proof that Turks did indeed have contact with both of these less favoured kinds of Greek pronunciation is provided by Greek loans in Turkish.

Thus Pontic /e/ for ⟨η⟩ has been identified in the underlined vowels of Tksh. dial. *anehder*¹⁴ ~ *enetter* ‘key’ (Pont. *ανοιχτέρι*, NGr. *ανοιχτήρι* ‘id.’), *defne* ~ *tefne* ‘bay tree’ (Pont. *δάφνε*, NGr. *δάφνη* ‘id.’) and other words (Symeonides 1976: 74) – note that the other instances of *e* in these Turkish items corresponding to Gr. /i/ and /a/ are due to vowel harmony; similarly:

for one of the otherwise unsupported transcriptions he cites of the Seljuk and early Ottoman spelling in Arabic script *استنبول*, in precise transliteration ‘*stnbul*’; Inalcik also has the date wrong despite citing as authority “Pauly-Wissowa, s.v. Constantinopolis Oberhummer”, i.e. Oberhummer (1900: 967), who has the correct date and also cites the relevant passage from Langmantel’s edition, but unfortunately misspells the crucial name “*Istamboli*”. Where Inalcik got the correct *Istimboli* from he does not say. To complete the perplexities, Bourne (1887: 80) spells the name of Schiltberger’s editor “*Langmentel*”.

¹³ This judgement is based on the statement, to which attention was drawn by Hesseling (1890: 193 n. 2), that Schiltberger lived in the patriarch’s house for three months (Langmantel 1885: 47) and Hesseling’s (l.c.) information that the transcriptions of Greek words provided by Schiltberger are reasonably accurate, meaning, presumably, free of Demotic ‘taint’, as is no doubt to be expected in material supplied to a foreigner in such august lodgings – certainly the spelling “*prosvora*” for Gr. *προσφορά* ‘communion bread’ (Langmantel 1885: 48) seems to show that Schiltberger had few if any problems with hearing Greek words accurately; cf. Hesseling’s (1890: 191f.) inability to find any written Greek record of *στην πόλι* or *στην πόλιν* before Du Cange (above §4).

¹⁴ The *x* and *χ* of our sources have been changed here to *h* in Turkish data in conformity with normal Turkish orthography and the principle which, paraphrasing Ockham’s famous razor, we may express thus: *transcriptiones non sunt multiplicandae praeter necessitatem*.

Tsakonian *a* < non-Attic-Ionic *ā* (> Attic/Koine *η*) in Tksh. *artukal* ‘paddle on which maize bread is cooked’ < **αρτόκαλον* < *ἄρτος* ‘bread’ + *κᾶλον* ‘paddle for putting loaves into an oven’, Tksh. *andatika* ‘kind of cherry laurel with lilac-coloured fruit’, *hamdakuka* ‘blackberry’ < **αχαντόφουκ’α* < *ἀχάντιν* (= *ἀκάνθιν*-‘thorn’) + *φούκ’α* (= *φύσκη* ‘blister etc.’, cf. also *αχαντίτζα* ‘blackberry’, *φούσκα* ‘id.’) (Tzitzilis 1987: 156f.) and Tksh. *anahtar* ‘key’ < *ανοιχτάρι* (= NGr. *ανοιχτήρι* ‘id.’, as above) (Meyer 1893: 14).

The reason that Hesseling (1890: 193), followed no doubt independently by Meyer (l.c.) and admirably by Georgacas (1947: 367 n. 123), ruled out the possibility of “Doric” (i.e. Tsakonian) influence in considering this question is that at the time Hesseling was writing, and even considerably later, the idea that any form of Greek other than the Koine had survived antiquity was controversial and had actually been brought into disrepute by overenthusiastic attempts to demonstrate the relationship between Tsakonian and ancient Laconian.¹⁵ Moreover, Hesseling (1906) himself was in the forefront of the deniers.¹⁶

The extraordinary claim of Hansack (2008: 91), an opponent of the traditional view, to the effect that Gr. *-tinbol* would yield only Tksh. *-tinbul* is most easily dealt with since it is simply incorrect. If the vowel of *-tin-* had remained narrow, the modern reflex of this name would most probably have been **İstinbul* or even **İstunbul*, whereas the form **İstinbul* would only have been possible as

¹⁵ This, together with a brief overview of some of the research history, emerges from judgements collected from Scutt (1912–13: relevant pp. indicated for each item) on: Villoison (1788: 49–50; “first important information on the dialect”, p. 140); Thiersch (1832; “system of recording the sounds is very misleading, and his phonological explanations are fanciful”, p. 140); Leake (1967 [1846]: 298–340; “a few very inaccurate notes on the phonetics and grammar”, p. 140); Oikonomou (1846; “valueless philologically, but the vocabulary and texts are useful, though the spelling is very misleading”, p. 141); Deville (1866; “excellent historical and topographical introduction with a good map, an etymological study of 374 selected words, an examination of the phonetics and morphology [...] weak point is phonetics); Deffner (1881; “was more concerned with proving the identity of Tsakonian and ancient Lakonian ... and in consequence gives far too much weight to doubtful etymologies and to philological explanations which are either improbable or entirely untenable”, p. 142); Thumb (1894; “clearly proved that the proportion of Slav names is extremely small”, p. 142f.) and published online by Nick Nicholas (2009), together with Nicholas’ own remarks on Deffner (1880; “[r]easonably cogent[,] for its time[,] summary”); Pernot (1914; “combatting speculations on Doricisms”); Bourguet (1927; “includes some analysis of Tsakonian words in light of Laconian”); Sarris (1956; “[o]n the Laconian pedigree of Tsakonians (doesn’t prove much)”); Panayiotou (1993; “on the reliability of Neo-Laconian”), as well as the titles of such works as Deffner (1874), Hermann (1913–14; 1914), Thumb (1914), Schwyzer (1921).

¹⁶ Cf. Nicholas’ (2009) remark concerning this work: “Hesseling’s controversial proposal that Tsakonian is a creole with Avar influence”.

a sociolinguistic marker of either a Greek speaking Turkish or an Ottoman Turk wishing to suggest that his pronunciation was different from the (consistently harmonic) pronunciation of Anatolian Turks. Both cases are socially possible but linguistically unprovable and it is patently absurd to suggest that such an aberrant outcome would have been the only one possible.

Hesseling (1890: 193f.), on the other hand, a proponent of the traditional view who is followed approvingly by Oberhammer (1900: 967) and Georgacas (1947: 366f.), claims that Gr. *-tinbol* would yield Tksh. *-tanbol* by Turkish vowel harmony. We have doubts about this formulation: Meyer's (1893: 14) rule that unaccented *i* and *e* in loans allegedly yield Tksh. *a* in the vicinity of back vowels, lacks secure examples for /i/, since the bulk of Meyer's material possibly containing /i/ has the relevant phoneme spelt η which could just as easily represent Pontic /e/; and in any case the replacement of /i/ by *a* can in all instances be due to the *a* ~ *i/i* alternation that is a well-known fact in the Turkic languages and is the explanation of the two items to which the above caveat does not apply, viz. Tksh. *anahtar* 'key' < *ανοιχτάρι* /anixtári/ (with Tsakonian /a/ = Gr. η as indicated above) and *çamariva* 'all hands on deck!' < It. *cima arriva* 'id.', although the latter, being a naval command, is also subject to all the potential distortions of pronunciation that membership of that category normally implies. To go into the *a* ~ *i/i* alternation in detail would take us too far afield. Suffice it to mention some examples of the phenomenon both in anlaut: Ott. *ayalet* ~ modern Tksh. *eyalet* 'province, county' < Ar. *iyālet* id. and a change in the opposite direction: Ott., modern Tksh. *ibrişim* 'silk thread' < Pers. *abrīsam* ~ *abrīsum* 'silk'; and in inlaut: Tksh. *anason* ~ *anisun* 'biol. anise' < Ar. *anīsūn* ~ *ānīsūn* id. < Byzantine Gr. *ánison* id. < Classical Gr. *ánnēson* id. (Symeonidis 1976: 93); Tksh. *arastak* ~ *aristak* 'roof' < Arm. *arastal* id. (Stachowski 1994: 194). And while all this may superficially seem to be a matter of vowel harmony, the coexistence of the Turkish variants cited above shows that this is not so. Moreover, two of Meyer's (l.c.) own examples, somewhat surprisingly, support the *a* ~ *i/i* alternation by disproving his own rule for the reverse case, i.e. *a*, *o* and *u* allegedly > *i* in the vicinity of front vowels, viz. Tksh. *kalinis* 'sandpiper' < NGr. *γλάρος* 'seagull' and (alleged) *ivatine* 'wormwood (? – we have not been able to find any other reference to this remarkably un-Turkish-looking item as Turkish)' < Gr. *ἄβρότονον* 'wormwood', the indicated Greek source words in each case manifestly lacking front vowels. Thus original *tin* or *tin* could have been changed to *tan* in Turkish but only as an instance of the *a* ~ *i/i* alternation. However this is an irregular phenomenon that probably should not be relied upon in this context.

Naturally the Tsakonian possibility should also be approached with care. Thus, given that the name of Lemnos in ancient Doric, i.e. non-Attic/Ionic, was *Λῆμνος*, it is unlikely that *Stalimene* would be of Tsakonian origin since that would mean that the Tsakonians would have completely replaced their own non-Koine

name of the island by the Koine version. This would be a most unlikely occurrence – even though the island itself was, according to Schwyzer's (1939: 83) chart, linguistically solidly Attic – because placenames are a particularly frequent refuge for the preservation of archaism. On the other hand it is also clear that the *-a-* of *Stalimene* is unusual in the company of the solid front vowels in the rest of the word and may have been introduced on the analogy of other forms having *a* in this position, or be another instance of the *a ~ i/i* alternation.

This leaves only *Standia* etc., *Stanco* and *Stambolköj* attesting the same development as *Stambol*. As things stand, all four could be derived from Tsakonian Greek; or it might be the case that only the illustrious *Stambol* is naturally derived and, thanks to its great fame, it has bequeathed its “prefix” to the other three. On the other hand not all such names have suffered the same fate: thus Meyer (l.c.) reports itacistic *İstindil* for *Τήνος* (with *l* for *n* by dissimilation). Consequently, it is probably better to keep an open mind on the question, at least for the present.

The above judgements imply that Turkish may have had little or nothing to do with the origin of the form *Stambol*. Indeed a number of scholars, such as Bourne (1887: 79f.), Inalcik (1978: 224) and Rahn (2002: 30f. n. 92), have concluded that an observation made by the Arab traveller al-Masudi during the first half of the 10th century and bequeathed to posterity in his *Kitāb at-tanbīh wa al-išrāf* (de Sacy 1810: 132) written c. 956–957 (Haywood 1975: 610) must demonstrate that the syllable *Stam/n-* was present in the name well over a century before the entry of the Turks into Anatolia following the Battle of Manzikert in 1071. This conclusion, however persuasive it may appear to be on the surface, is unfortunately based on an inadequate appreciation of the niceties of what al-Masudi is actually reported to have written.

According to our sources, al-Masudi recorded that the Greeks had two ways of referring to the city that differed somewhat in their emotional charge, viz. *būlin* and *stan būlin* (or *Būlin* and *Stan Būlin* for those who prefer to add the capitalization lacking in the Arabic script), the latter, which allegedly indicates pride and admiration, being explicitly two words in the extracts published in Arabic by de Sacy (1810: 172; 1827: 371),¹⁷ a fact that is respected in de Sacy's first (1810: 172) translation of the relevant portion of the text, but not in his second

¹⁷ Although de Sacy is not entirely consistent in his reproduction of Masudi's forms in the Arabic script, the discrepancies do not constitute any contradiction. Thus (we reproduce the Arabic script forms here also in a precise transliteration in angle brackets ⟨⟩) in 1810 de Sacy has *Polin* بُولِن ⟨b^uwl'n⟩ and *Stan polin* سَتْن بُولِن ⟨st^an b^uwl'n⟩, whereas in 1827 he has *polin* بُولِن ⟨bwl'n⟩ and *stanpolin* سَتْن بُولِن ⟨st^an b^uwl'n⟩; and from either of these versions we have no hesitation in reconstructing بُولِن ⟨b^uwl'n⟩ and سَتْن بُولِن ⟨st^an b^uwl'n⟩, i.e. the forms as transcribed above, even though without consulting the MS we cannot be completely certain what al-Masudi actually wrote.

(1827: 370),¹⁸ and is obscured in Oberhummer's (1900: 967), Inalcik's and Rahn's accounts of the matter.

While al-Masudi's account of the ranges of application of his *būlin* and *stan būlin* may strike us as odd and probably reflects some misunderstanding, his transcription *stan būlin* is remarkable on several counts: (1) for its distinct representation as two words; (2) for its un-Arabic biconsonantal phrase onset *st-*;¹⁹ (3) for the notation with (long) *ū*, which no doubt represents the Greek accented/stressed omicron, and (4) for its use of so-called "non-emphatic" (i.e. non-pharyngealized)²⁰ Arabic *t*.²¹ These details suggest to us that al-Masudi could hear phonetic details beyond at least some of the limitations that might have been imposed by his native Arabic and that he strove to make an accurate record of the sounds he heard.

The fourth point above, the non-emphatic *t*, is of particular interest since it contrasts with the emphatic *ṭ* found in al-Masudi's writing of the Arab equivalent of *Constantinople*, which, by modernizing the transcription found in some older authors, we may represent as *quṣṭanṭīn-īyah*,²² literally 'Constantinian (sc. city)' or, with the article 'the Constantinian'. Incidentally, this writing may be interpreted as simply representing the literary *Κωνσταντίνου* 'Constantine's' in which the underlined nu has been lost through Arabic phonotactics, but it is far more likely to be a faithful copy of the colloquial *Κωνσταντίνου* with non-nasalized first syllable, the existence of which at an early date, together with the similar

¹⁸ There is also a change in the translation of *wa-'innamā (a)l-'arabu ta'biru 'an-hā bi-quṣṭanṭīnīyatīn* from "ce sont les Arabes qui lui donnent ce nomme [Constantinople]" (rather it is the Arabs who refer to it as "Constantinian") in 1810 to "il n'y a que les Arabes qui ..." etc. (only the Arabs refer...) in 1827, revealing the same uncertainty over the function of Ar. *'innamā* as between Wehr/Cowan 1971: 29 sv. *innamā* and Wright 1967, 1: 285B; 2: 254B, 335B.

¹⁹ I.e. written without the alif conjunctionis that would mark the variation between adding a simpler onset syllable when the item is spoken in isolation and liaison with the auslaut vowel of the preceding word when in connected speech, meaning in the present case the *-ū* of *qālū* 'they say'.

²⁰ The vocalic phenomena associated with the consonants explored below suggest that, in al-Masudi's day, pharyngealization of the emphatic consonants in Arabic had already replaced the glottalization often, usually or increasingly reconstructed for Proto-Semitic.

²¹ The *b-* of *būlin*, on the other hand, does not tell us very much because Arabic has no *p* and there appears to be no record prior to the 11th century of the use of the letter invented by the Persians to represent *p* in their adaptation of the Arabic script for recording their own literature (Oranskij 1960: 263f.).

²² By *h'* we denote the wordfinal symbol indicating [h] or zero that is replaced by [t] (nonfinally also written ⟨ṭ⟩) when the substantive or adjective is in the construct state, i.e. governs an immediately following suffix or genitive, or when the word is given its full Classical pronunciation. This and other quotations from al-Masudi's text, apart from *būlin* and *stan būlin*, are taken from de Sacy 1827: 371.

Κωσταντινούπολις (“in inscriptions and papyri of the third and fourth centuries”) and *Κωσταντινόπολις*, is demonstrated by Georgacas (1947: 357).²³

At one level, al-Masudi’s *qusṭanṭīnīyah*¹ simply exemplifies the longstanding convention of representing unaspirated European voiceless stops *t*, *k* by the Arabic emphatic sounds *t*, *q* since the corresponding non-emphatics in Arabic are slightly aspirated.²⁴ Why then does al-Masudi depart from this convention in the case of his *stan*? The answer must be that al-Masudi heard two different vowels in the syllables he recorded as *stan* and *-ṣtan-*; and in the context of the threeway phonemic contrast /a i u/ reconstructible for Proto-Semitic and still standard in Modern Written Arabic, it is clear that the /a/ of *-ṣtan-* in *qusṭanṭīnīyah*¹ would lie in the range [a]-[ɐ], while the same phoneme in *stan* would lie in the region of [a]-[æ]-[ɛ]-[ə].²⁵ Confirmation that a form with something like the pronunciation of *stan* thus indicated was in play among Arabic speakers is probably to be found in the Armenian form Մտմբաւ *Stəmbawl*, i.e. [(ə)stəmbol] with movable [ə]-,²⁶ which is recorded in a colophon of the year 1398 quoted by Rahn (2002: 32 n. 101, see also p. 30 n. 92), the written diphthong in the last syllable having represented /o/ since the 12th century (Jensen 1959: 8). We are entitled to conclude therefore that what al-Masudi heard was the etacistic Greek phrase *σεν Πόλις*.

Al-Masudi’s *stan* = *σεν* in his *stan būlin* contrasts similarly with the spelling of what is ostensibly the same name recorded about four centuries later (i.e. during the period 1325–1349) by the next traveller known to us to have recorded this designation in Arabic, namely the Berber Ibn-Battuta (also written Ibn Batoutah etc.), who described the pronunciation of the name of one of the two

²³ In fact the sequence [ns], though occurring in Homer thanks to syncope of an intervening vowel, was not a normal part of the phonotaxis of either Attic-Ionic or the Koine, the nasal having been lost prehistorically (Rix 1976: 67f., 79) and the process having since spread in New Greek to the position before contiguous voiceless spirant derived from an ancient aspirated stop (Thumb 1964: 24).

²⁴ Actually this applies to Semitic more generally as students of the Septuagint and New Testament will know, e.g. Hebrew *qáyin*, *tébaḥ* = Gr. *Κάιν*, *Τάβεχ* (sic) (Gen. 4:5; 22:24) and Syriac *ʿiyshōq*, *yōhūšōpōt* = Gr. *Ἰσαακ*, *Ἰωσαφατ* (Mt. 1:2,8), whereas the non-emphatic voiceless stops are represented in Greek by the aspirated stops, e.g. Hebrew *knáʿan*, *túbal* = Gr. *Χανάαν*, *Θοβέλ* (sic) (Gen.12:5; 4:22) and Syriac *tōmōr*, (*ʿaʿttōʿ*) *knaʿnōytōʿ* = Gr. *Θαμαρ*, (*γυνή*) *Χαναναία* (Canaanite [woman]) (Mt. 1:3; 15:22) in interesting contradiction of the equivalences obtaining when the Greeks adapted a Semitic alphabet for their own use.

²⁵ Even those with little or no Arabic may be aware of such things as the variation *el-/al-* in transcribing the Arabic definite article and the older spellings *moslem*, *Koran*, *Mohammed* (usually pronounced by anglophones as if written **Mahommed*, cf. It. *Maometto*), for the nowadays more usual *Muslim* and more possible *Qurʿan*, *Muhammad*.

²⁶ Written Armenian anlaut sibilant+stop clusters, except when immediately preceded by a vocalic auslaut, have not been tolerated in speech for at least a millennium and a half (see Jensen 1959: 14f.).

parts of Constantinople in the following, most painstaking way (for the Arabic text see Defrémery/Sanguinetti 1854: 431f.):

اصطنبول بفتح الهمة واسكان الصاد وفتح الطاء المهملتين وسكون
النون وضمّ الباء الموحدة وواو مدّ ولام

in precise transliteration:

'ʂʂnbwl bftħ 'lhmzh' w'sk'n 'lʂ'd wftħ 'lṭā? 'lmhmltyn wskwn 'lnwn wḍm^m 'lbā?
'lmwḥdh' ww'w md^d wl'm,

translating:

“ʂʂnbwl with /a/ after the ʂ and zero voweling after the ʂ and /a/ after the ṭ, the two consonants being undotted [i.e. in the original Arabic script, so confirming ʂ and ṭ are meant, not their dotted counterparts ḍ and ẓ, respectively – MS, RW], and zero vowel after the n and /u/ after the b single-dotted [i.e. not the double-dotted letter y – MS, RW] and w of prolongation [i.e. converting /u/ to /ū/ – MS, RW] and l’”

in short, that the name is to be read *ʂaʂtanbūl*,²⁷ the emphatic consonants once again indicating that both Arabic /a/s lie in the range [ɑ]-[ɒ] and the *ū*- probably indicating *u*- rather than *o*-quality.

In other words, it appears that the etacistic Greek *σεν Πόλις* heard and faithfully recorded by al-Masudi had been converted, given potentially at least two and a half centuries (1325 minus 1071) of Turkish familiarity with it, by the following series of Turkish-inspired changes: Meyer’s rule for *e* > *a*, stress placement in placenames, prosthesis, the *i* ~ *a* variation, a tendency to replace *o* by *u* in non-initial syllables, and some others, into the Turkish variants *Astánbul* ~ *İstánbul*. Possibly these Turkish forms persuaded many Greeks to adopt what must have been originally the Tsakonian form *Stambol(i)* which became regarded in puristic circles as the “Turkish” form. And perhaps this in turn persuaded Ottoman poets that the form without initial vowel (see below §6.1) was the more poetic.

Actually the critical part of the conversion, the change *e* > *a* in the penultimate syllable, must have taken place well over a century earlier if Inalcik’s (1978: 224) report, repeated by Rahn (2002: 30 n. 92), of a 12th century Armenian form *Stampol*, i.e. [(ə)stampol] is to be believed – which it is, despite the quite understandable clash

²⁷ The initial *E*- of Ibn-Battuta’s editors’ transcription *Esthamboûl* may be intended to represent a schwa-like allophone – which in our view is problematic in this context (why then write *a* in the next syllable?) – or it may be motivated by a desire to present a compromise between an expected ***/i/* and the actual explicit */a/*; their *h* no doubt represents the pharyngealization or, at a pinch, the reconstructible glottalization of the emphatic stop.

with the late 14th century Armenian *Stəmbawl* [(ə)stəmbol] noted above. Indeed the change $e > a$ will have happened as soon as Turks began to adopt as a name the Asia Minor etacistic form *σεν Πόλις*, no doubt not very long after 1071.

So much for the absurd stories purporting to portray the rise of the name *İstanbul* during the actual Turkish conquest of 1453 – stories concocted and/or transmitted by scholars such as Rosen (l.c.) and Hansack (2008: 91) for the purpose of ridiculing and refuting them along with the traditional etymology. Hansack in particular, having read Rahn, should have known better.

6. There are a few loose ends to tidy up.

6.1. Not everyone has accepted al-Masudi's evidence as significant. Thus it was rejected by Hesseling (1890: 193), partly as merely one of what he regarded as a bewildering and therefore unreliable array of foreign attempts to represent the name, and partly on the ground that de Sacy had complained of the curiously mutilated forms of Greek names recorded by the Arab traveller. These names presumably include al-Masudi's مدينة قسطنطينية (بدأ) (*badaʔa*) *madīnah* *qusṭanṭīn-īy-ah'*, literally "(he founded) a Constantinian city",²⁸ which – given the phonological properties of the first element of *qusṭanṭīn-īy-ah'* discussed above, and the word's adjectival suffix *-īy-* and feminine ending *-ah'* in concord with *madīnah* 'city' – is about as good a rendition of the colloquial *Κωνσταντίνου πόλις* (§5), with its genitive termination *-ou*, as one could hope to come upon in an Arabic text.²⁹

The other, allegedly so diverse, foreign representations available to Hesseling and (1890: 192) likewise taken over from the transcriptions quoted by Bourne³⁰ are:

1. A report taken from p. 459 of an article by E. Jacquet in the *Journal asiatique*, vol. 9 (1832), which we have not been able to sight, of a form *Esdampol* said to

²⁸ An interpretation *madīnah*^h *qusṭanṭīnīyah'* 'the city of Constantinople' begs the question of why elsewhere in the text, but not here, the alleged name of the city is defined by the article, e.g. *wa-lā yad'ūna-hā* (*a*)*l-qusṭanṭīnīyah'* 'and they [the Greeks] do not call it the Constantinian'.

²⁹ There is of course the question of *بوريطا* *bwryṭ'* for which de Sacy (1827: 371), chiefly with a judicious reassessment of the dots, suggests the reading *بوزنطيا* *bwzntiy'* 'Byzantium', presumably a name less well known to al-Masudi and which as a consequence fixed itself in his memory less satisfactorily than the other items we have been citing from his work; and the same in all probability applies to the other less satisfactorily recorded items that de Sacy had in mind.

³⁰ Though omitting Jacquet's view (reported Bourne 1887: 80) that the Chinese name for the Roman Empire in the early Middle Ages, *Folin* (also *Fulin*), represented the same *Πόλις*; this has since been contested by F. Hirth who finds *Butlim* to be the oldest Chinese form (see Oberhammer 1900: 967), which may represent *Πτόλις* (cf. n. 6 above), hardly (*Κωνσταντινο[v]πολίτην* (mentioned *ibid.*: 965).

be recorded in the early 14th century by the Armenian “Vartan”. But “Vartan” turns out to be Վարդան Արևելցի Vardan Arevelci (Vardan the Easterner); consequently since Jacquet’s Western Armenian transliteration “Vartan” for *Vardan* is in error, we may suppose the same error attaches to “Esdampol” for *Estambol* in which the French scholar’s unadorned “E-” no doubt represents the anlaut Armenian schwa discussed above (§5). Indeed Rahn (2002: 30 n. 92) cites a somewhat similar Armenian form with written anlaut schwa from a poem written in 1453 commemorating the fall of Constantinople along with the conqueror Mehmed II’s alleged attempt to islamize the city’s name to *Islampol*, viz. the acc. sg. զանունն Հստամպոլի ին *zanowwnn Əstampolin*³¹ – Rahn translates “den Namen *Ĕstampolis*”.

2. The *Esthamboül* of Ibn Battuta’s editors, which we have already dealt with (n. 27).
3. *Escomboli* recorded in 1403 by Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador to Samarkand, another speaker of a language that does not tolerate anlaut *s*+consonant: even modern loans from English spelt *slogan*, *snob*, *sprint* and *stand* are all pronounced in Spanish with anlaut [e-]. Since the *c* in Clavijo’s form has already been adequately explained by the editor of the work as a mistake or misreading for *t* (Bourne 1887: 80), it would be superfluous to suggest that an Arab pronunciation with pharyngealized *t* might have been heard as a *k*. On the other hand the *o* in the antepenultimate syllable instead of *a* is readily explained by realization of /a/ as [ɑ]-[ɒ] in the vicinity of the Arabic emphatic consonants in a form such as Ibn-Battuta’s and this could provide a sufficiently strong contrast with the relatively fronted /a/ of Spanish in a comparable context, at least in the modern period (on which see, e.g., Stevenson 1970: 11), to encourage recording the vowel as if it were /o/; a less likely alternative is that the /a/ of the syllable became somewhat nasalized, the lowering of the velum altering the central timbre of the vowel to that of a somewhat raised back vowel perhaps with concomitant labialization, cf. French tautosyllabic <en/m> pron., at least within living memory, [ã], or the back nasal vowel of Polish [ɔ̃] still written as though it were a nasalized version of the central vowel /a/ (cf. Karaś/Madejowa 1977 table 1, between pp. xxiv, xxv); Puppel et al. 1977: 17f).

This leaves only Schiltberger’s c. 1426 remark that the Greeks called Constantinople *Istimboli* (which we have dealt with above, §5), the Turks *Stambol*, concerning which little more remains to be said (also §5 above) beyond pointing

³¹ The different spelling with *n o* instead of *ու ա* *aw = o* in the *pol*-syllable between this form and the one cited in the Armenian script in §5 probably signalled little if any difference in pronunciation at the period in question.

out that Inalcik (l.c.) also cites the spelling *ستنبول* *stnbwl* from Ottoman poetry with suggested expansions “S(i)tinbol” and “S(i)tanbol”, of which, we would suggest, there is evidence only for the second.

Since all the forms Hesseling found so incredible can easily be accounted for, it is clear that Hesseling’s rejection of them was not soundly based.

6.2. While earlier scholars espousing the theory of corruption from some form of *Constantinople*, such as Rosen (l.c.), Room (ll.cc.) and Rahn (l.c.), assume that a bare statement of their belief in the theory is sufficient to solve all the problems, Hansack (2008) has at least had the decency to attempt an explanation. It is, however, an explanation that leaves far too much to be desired.

First, Hansack borrows Rahn’s idea that motivation for the corruption was the inordinate length of the name *Konstantino/opolis* for normal daily use, both scholars being evidently blissfully ignorant of the fact that Greeks have had continuously on offer the abbreviation *Polis* for several centuries before and after both the Turkish invasion of Anatolia and especially the period of Middle Bulgarian – the language Hansack sees as the incubator for a sound change essential to his explanation to be discussed below.

Next, Hansack says, the vowel *i-* in *İstanbul* cannot possibly be a prosthesis because there is also a form with anlaut *E-*, viz. “*Estampolis*”. Since Hansack does not favour his readers with an attribution of this form but admits to drawing on Rahn (2002: 30f. n. 91) for his “Belege” we can only conclude that it represents Rahn’s Armenian record *Ėstampolis*, in which the initial vowel represents, as we have seen, the seldom written anlaut schwa that is phonetically obligatory for a word with the phonological anlaut sibilant+stop in the context cited (above §6.1). Phonemically, therefore this schwa represents an Armenian zero and as such can hardly bear the weight of argument Hansack wishes to impose on it. We have actually noted some other forms transmitted to us with initial written *E-*, such as the amended French transcription of the Eastern Armenian Vardan’s *Estambol* (ibid.), to which the same remarks obviously apply. Equally little weight can be accorded the Spanish transcription *Escomboli* and still less to the somewhat erroneous transcription arrived at by Ibn-Battuta’s editors (ibid.).

Even if there were a genuine medieval or later Ottoman form of the name with a demonstrable anlaut /e/, then it must be said that prosthetic *e-* was perfectly normal in Ottoman Turkish, e.g. Ott. *eryal*, name of a coin < Span. *real* ‘id.’, Ott. *eskonto* ‘early payment discount’ < It. *sconto* ‘id.’, Ott. *estofa* ‘brocade’ < It. *stoffa* ‘textile, fabric, cloth’ (Stachowski 1995: 179 sq.). Moreover, such a vowel would have tended to yield *i-* in the modern language, cf. Ott. *eskorbut* ~ modern Tksh. *iskorbüt* ‘scurvy’ < Fr. *scorbut* ‘id.’ ~ It. *scorbuto* ‘id.’; Ott. *eskurçune* ‘scorzonera’ < It. *scorzonera* ‘id.’ (Meyer 1893: 29), contaminated with It. *scorzona* ‘1. grass snake; 2. summer truffle’ > modern Tksh. *iskorçina* ‘scorzonera’; and with *i ~ a*

variation : Ott. *istabur* ~ *astabur* ‘protective wall; laager, wagon fort’ < Bulg. *stobor* ‘balustrade; barrier’. So the second plank of Hansack’s explanation is as valueless as the first.

On the other hand the fact that Hansack is doubly wrong about the prosthesis does not in itself rule out his explanation of what the anlaut syllable of İstanbul might represent. We shall return to this when we have dealt with the next argument in Hansack’s exposition, which is his assertion that the necessary loss of the two syllables *-tino-* suggested by a comparison of *Kon|stan|tinó|polis* and *Í|stan|- - -|bul* was achieved by the relocation of the accent to the initial syllable as demonstrated by the modern German pronunciation *İstanbul*. It is only a minor misfortune that Hansack’s modern form does not represent any native pronunciation of the name (cf. Tksh. *İstánbul* with accent on the penultimate syllable, as is usual with foreign geographical names in Turkish). The real problem is to find a plausibly influential linguistic grouping in which such a relocation of the accent might have taken place. Certainly the Greeks cannot be relied on: the best that can be achieved through them is with their two-word (and thus biaccentual) variant *Konstantínu pólis* with no chance of the accent proceeding any further towards the beginning of the first word since the final vowel of *Konstantínu* continues to function as long for the Greek rules of accentuation. The Arabs are even less helpful with their *Qustanṭīnīya* accented one more syllable from the anlaut. The Turks would have left the accent of the composite form where it was or shifted it to the penult, i.e. closer to the end of the word; and they were probably too late on the scene anyway. The Armenians, who were probably also too late to be considered, would have moved the accent to the last syllable not containing schwa in any form in their paradigm. Perhaps the Vikings or Varangians could be invoked, but their name for the city was *Miklagarðr* and it seems hardly plausible to suppose that it was Viking attempts to pronounce the Greek name that led those who were accustomed to daily use of the Greek form to adopt, as their own, the mispronunciation that Hansack’s theory requires. On the other hand, it is not our place but Hansack’s to come up with a plausible people whose language would have permitted the accent shift required by his theory by the appropriate time. Hansack mentions Middle Bulgarian for a supposedly later sound change in the process but since the onset of Middle Bulgarian is taken to be c. 1100 CE this is obviously far too late to meet the al-Masudi deadline. As things stand therefore it is clear that Hansack’s explanation of the loss of *-tínu-/-tinú-/-tinó-* remains inadequate.

Hansack then “explains” the deletion of *k-* in *Konstan(tinó)polis* thus: “Das anlautende *K-* ist ganz einfach abgefallen. Der Verlust eines anlautenden Gutturals (hier des *K-*) tritt so häufig auf, dass das Phänomen nicht erörtert werden muss” (op. cit. 92). We disagree. To begin with, not all back consonants can necessarily be treated equally. Cross-linguistically, it is well known that voiceless stops

produced by contact at the rear of the oral cavity, such as *k* and *q*, are in general much more stable than voiced stops at the same location (e.g. Woodhouse 1993 with lit.). To be sure there are the cases of anlaut *k*-loss in Eng. *knock*, Gr. prefix (chiefly Old Attic) *ζυv-* > *συv-*, PGr. **ta kwāmn* > Gr. dial. *ta ppāma* which Hock (1986: 88f.) treats as cluster simplification. What is needed here, however, is a raft of cases of unclustered anlaut *k*-loss and we are at a loss to know what Hansack has in mind. There is the somewhat unclear instance of PSlavic **kôstb* ‘bone’ vs. Vedic *ásthī*, Gr. *ὄστέον*, Lat. *os* ‘id.’, beside Lat. *costa* ‘rib’ (Derksen 2008 s.v.), and the still murkier one of PSlavic **kozà* ‘she-goat’ which appears to offend against Winter’s law in its supposed connection with Vedic *ajá-* ‘goat’, Lith. *ožỹs* ‘id.’ (Mayrhofer 1992: 51; Smoczyński 2007: 434 writes of PBalto-Slavic “vr̥ddhi”), unless like **kôstb* it is reconstructed with Proto-Indo-European (PIE) **H-* (but this time **h₂-* rather than **h₃-*) with dissimilatory loss of the Winter-inspired laryngeal reflex in Slavic, as has been suggested for PSlavic **edĩnb* ‘one’ (Woodhouse 2012 §§3.2, 4.2, 5.2, 6): **kozà* would then supply a second example of **H-* > PSlavic **k-*, at the same time raising questions about the proposed relationships with Albanian *kedh* ‘kid’, Old English *hēcēn* ‘id.’ (Orel 2000: 69; de Vries 1977: 280; also Vasmer/Trubačev 1986–1987 s.v. who print OE *hēcēn*); but these seem then to be not cases of *k*-loss, rather the opposite.³² Nor does it seem likely that Hansack would have had in mind the contrast between Old Church Slavonic *ako* rel. conjunct. ‘as’ and *kako* interrog. conj. ‘how?’ since the former is simply the dejetized variant of *jako* and the anlauts *j-* ~ *k-* reflect the corresponding relative **Hi-* ~ interrog. **k^w-* of PIE. In PGermanic, of course, there was the wholesale change of pre-Germanic **k*, especially unclustered anlaut **k-*, to Germanic *h-* with the usual propensity for that sound to disappear in some dialects – but surely Hansack does not have in mind such a wide-ranging process. So for us at least, Hansack’s explanation once again fails to convince.

What now remains, after the *K-* has been dropped is a weird form **Onstanpol*, unattested either in Greek or in Turkish. Hansack (op. cit. 92) suggests the following (rather too late) evolution in Middle Bulgarian: **on-* > (nasal) **ǫ-* > (nasal) **ę-* > *e-* ~ *i-* (hence Hansack’s ghost form ***Estanbul* ~ İstanbul and the like). Needless to say, no document confirms the existence of **on-*, **ǫ-*, **ę-* or genuine **e-* forms. In fact the nearest to confirmation of **Onstanpol* is Ibn Battuta’s 14th century *ʔaṣṭanbūl*, the problem with which is not the quite natural lack of nasality in the first syllable but the fact that it is approximately four centuries too late to be a precursor to al-Masudi’s 10th century *Stan Būlin*.

There are more severe problems than these with Hansack’s nasalization theory. First, one is forced to wonder why, if the nasal consonant in the first syllable caused nasalization of the vowel, the same thing did not happen in the second syllable.

³² Cf. also PSlavic *gnězdò* beside PIE **nisdóm* etc. (Derksen 2008 s.v.).

A parallel with the superficially similar situation in Polish (nasalized vowel before spirant vs. oral vowel + homorganic nasal consonant before stop) can hardly be invoked since the Polish situation reveals the results of a retention vs. a dissolution of nasalized vowels in the named contexts. The references to Slavic mediation, and Slavic and Greek denasalized hypocoristic forms of the name *Kostja* ~ *Κώστας* do not help Hansack's case at all.

The reason there is no nasal in these forms is that, as has already been explained above (§5 and n. 23), the full colloquial form *Κωσταντίνος* had no nasal in the first syllable from an early date. The nasal may have been at home in the original Latin name but not in its Greek adaptation, nor in fact in medieval Latin either, as Georgacas (1947: 357) points out, citing Latin inscriptional *Constantinopoli*, *Constantinus*, *Costas*. Slavic almost certainly adopted, to begin with, the colloquial Greek form with no nasal in the first syllable. This is borne out both by the nasalless first syllable of the common 12th century Old Russian adaptation of the anthroponym *Kostjan(b)tinъ* (cf. e.g. Lavrov 1966: 73, ll. 21, 30; Čerepnin 1969: 393 n. 55; Kotkova 1977: 547) and, still more interestingly, by two features found in the second syllable of this form, viz. (1) the *ja* which points to Slavic nasalization of the vowel around the dawn of Slavic literacy and (2) the nasal consonant no doubt subsequently restored on the basis of greater familiarity with the genuine spoken Greek form (while the first syllable remained of course, as expected, without any hint of nasality). The slightly later Old Russian form *Kostantinъ* (e.g. Kotkova 1971: 593) evidently reflects complete restoration of the stem of the spoken Greek form. So much for Hansack's theory of a nasalized vowel in the first syllable, yet without this fiction, we suggest, his entire explanation dissolves into nothing.

Further, had an initial vowel arisen in the impossible way proposed by Hansack it is unlikely that this vowel would have been Tksh. *i*, which bears all the hallmarks of being the recent form of a prosthesis circumventing the initial cluster in a form such as *Stanbul*, cf. Tksh. *istampa* 'stamp' and the forms given in §4 above.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to reiterate that al-Masudi's 10th century writing, readily interpretable as *sten búlin* or *sten pólin* etc. is totally irreconcilable with Hansack's impossible explanation, which, as we have established, has absolutely nothing to recommend it.

6.3. For those who may consider that we have not dealt sufficiently fully with the possibility of a purely Turkish conversion of *Ko(n)stantinópolis* into İstanbul there is hard evidence – from Bulgaria in fact – for the sort of development one might really expect. This is provided by the city name *Kjustendil* (southeastern Bulgaria) which is of course = Tksh. dial. *Küstendil* = Std. Tksh. *Köstendil* < **Köstendin*. The reason for the fronting of the vowels is that both the *k* and the *l* of European languages are usually perceived by Turkish speakers as so-called

“palatal consonants”, i.e. they can only be combined with palatal vowels (even if the consonants are not pronounced palatally themselves). Arabic words receive the same treatment in Turkish, e.g. Ar. *kalima(hʻ)* ‘word’ > Tksh. *kelime* ‘id.’; cf. especially Ar. *qibla(hʻ)* ‘Qiblah, the position facing Mecca adopted by Muslims when praying’ > Tksh. *kible* ‘id.’ with *-i-* > *-i-* because *q* is perceived as velar; while *-a-* > *-e-* because *l* is perceived as palatal. Which means that a direct Tksh. reflex of *Konstantinopol(is)* should inevitably have palatal vowels, because of both (original) *k-* and *-l(-)*, just as is the case with *Küstendil* ~ *Köstendil*.

7. Conclusions and final remarks.

7.1. Those opposed to the traditional explanation – and also some of those in favour of it – present it in a highly corrupted form requiring the following corrections:

1. The form of the etymon is the colloquial Middle Greek phrase *στην Πόλι(v)*, not the puristic literary ancestor of this.
2. The meaning of the etymon is probably ‘in Constantinople’, possibly ‘to Constantinople’ and just possibly ‘into Constantinople’; it may have taken shape as a name in interactions between Greek speakers and non-Greek speakers.
3. Both the use of an appellative meaning ‘city’, ‘village’ and the like as the name of such a place and the occurrence of such a locative/allative locution as a quasi-placename do not constitute isolated developments but are richly supported within the Greek speech area.
4. The pronunciation of the etymon used by Greeks was not restricted to that of the itacistic Koine. In fact the earliest record of it by an Arab traveller in the 10th century can hardly be interpreted otherwise than as etacistic *στεν Πόλιv*. Such a pronunciation is probably supported by the late 14th century Armenian form *Stəmbawl*. All three variants of the first element – *stin*, *sten* and Tsakonian *stan* – would have been heard in various parts of Asia Minor until the early 20th century.
5. The vocalism of the *-staN-* syllable probably derives via Turkish vowel harmony from etacistic **steN bol* although it may also represent a Turkish reformation of itacistic **stiN bol* or continue Tsakonian **staN bol*. The vocalism of *-bul* is pure Turkish.
6. The initial vowel of İstanbul is a Turkish prosthesis to displace the consonant cluster from the anlaut.

7.2. The final *-i* of the early forms may have been lost through Arab influence if the vowel was perceived by them as akin to the final short vowels largely

marking case and mood in Classical Arabic. These are still pronounced in reciting the Koran and some other functions, but only survive in colloquial speech, if at all, as cluster breakers.

7.3. There appears to have been a medieval Turkish form with prosthetic *a-*: *astanbul*; *istāmbol* and *istanbol* are recorded thus by Meninski (1680: 176, 205). The different prostheses are reconcilable as Turkish *a ~ i* variation.

All representations of *istāmbol* and *istanbol* known to us in the Arabic script have ⟨n⟩, not ⟨m⟩, in the penultimate syllable, whereas *İslambol* is for obvious reasons written with ⟨m⟩ and is, we submit, the more meaningful variant beside *İslambul*. It would appear then that the modern choice of *İstanbul* was conditioned by a desire to choose a traditional secular Turkish form as different as possible from the religion-inspired *İslāmbol*.

7.4. Proponents of the “corruption” derivation have yet to produce a satisfactory explanation of how colloquial Greek *Kostantinópolis* or *Kostantínu póli*, even upon passing into another language, could have lost a stressed syllable in order to become abbreviated to *Istanbul*. Indeed in view of the Greek hypocoristic *Kóstas* a more likely Greek abbreviation might have been something like **Kostápoli* or, for Turkish use, the attested Turkish abbreviation *Köstendil*. Nor, more pertinently, has it been explained why, in the light of colloquial Greek *Póli*, any need for another – and longer – abbreviation should ever have been felt by anyone.

7.5. The transmission of Greek forms into Turkish may, in outline, be shown as follows:

Modern Tksh. *İstanbul* < Ott.-Tksh. *Stambol* (~ 14th c. *Astanbul*) < Middle Greek (Tsakonian, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara:) *stambóli* ~ (other dialects:) *stembóli(n)* ~ *stimbóli(n)*, lit. ‘to/in/into Constantinople’ < *stan Póli(n)* ~ *sten Póli(n)* (> Ar. [al-Masudi, 10th c.] *stan būlin* ‘Constantinople’) ~ *stin Póli(n)* < coll. Greek *s-* ‘1. to; 2. in; 3. into’ + *tan ~ ten ~ tin*, article + *Póli(n)*, acc. < *Pólis*, lit. ‘City’, i.e. ‘Constantinople’.

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