

5-5-2012

A Spectacle of Great Beauty: The Changing Faces of Hagia Sophia

Victoria M. Villano
victoria.villano@gmail.com

Recommended Citation

Villano, Victoria M., "A Spectacle of Great Beauty: The Changing Faces of Hagia Sophia" (2012). *Master's Theses*. Paper 248.
http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/gs_theses/248

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Connecticut Graduate School at DigitalCommons@UConn. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UConn. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@uconn.edu.

A Spectacle of Great Beauty: The Changing Faces of Hagia Sophia

Victoria Marie Villano

B.A., University of Connecticut, 2009

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts at the

University of Connecticut

2012

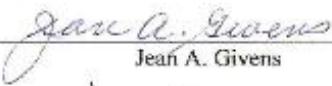
APPROVAL PAGE

Master of Arts Thesis

A Spectacle of Great Beauty: The Changing Faces of Hagia Sophia

Presented by

Victoria Marie Villano, B.A.

Major Advisor  _____
Jean A. Givens

Associate Advisor  _____
Michael Young

Associate Advisor  _____
Anne D'Alleva

University of Connecticut
2012

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to this thesis both indirectly and directly. My sincere gratitude goes out to everyone. First and foremost thank you to the members of my thesis committee. Jean Givens, I could not have done anything without your guidance and patience. You have kept me sane throughout this process and for that I am extremely grateful. Michael Young, thank you for your time and insightful comments, you have been a tremendous help. Anne D'Alleva, thank you for your knowledge of museums, your comments and advice have been extremely helpful in getting me through the writing process. To the University of Connecticut Art & Art History faculty, to my friends, and colleagues, thank you for your constant support and encouragement. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for supporting my efforts, for feeding me and making me go to bed, when I would lock myself in my room to write. I love you.

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Approval Page	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter I: Constantine, Justinian, and “The Great Church”	3
Chapter II: The Ottoman Empire and the Ayasofya Mosque	23
Chapter III: Atatürk, the Republic, and the Ayasofya Müzezi	37
Conclusion	53
Illustrations	57
Works Cited Page	77

INTRODUCTION

Visible from across the Sea of Marmara, Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, with its giant buttresses and soaring minarets, embodies a cultural collision of epic proportions. With a rich history intertwining legacies of medieval Christianity, the Ottoman Empire, a modern secular Turkey, and a resurgent Islam, it is no wonder that within the last ten years, Hagia Sophia has resurfaced as a subject of debate. Orthodox Christians, Muslims, and Secularists are vying for ownership of this religious and political symbol, against the backdrop of Turkey's changing politics and influence over the Middle East region.

With Istanbul's strategic location on the Bosphorus Peninsula, between the Balkans and Anatolia, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, the city has been associated with major political, religious, and artistic events for more than two thousand years. From the founding of the city, to the crusades, to the conquering of Constantinople, and to the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire; Turkey has always been a major player in Middle Eastern politics. Today, Turkey is a vibrant, competitive democracy of seventy-nine million people, with a thriving economy. Turkey's influence in the Middle East has grown as the country has moved away from its secular ties to an Islamic-leaning governmental authority. This seemingly seismic shift in government and religion is nothing new in Istanbul. The city has passed through Christian, Muslim, and secular hands and Hagia Sophia has been an important landmark in each of these regimes. But its significance, much like the city itself, has been re-constructed with each. Each regime has cast Hagia Sophia in a different light. Today, a new Islamic resurgence has once again chosen to re-construct the city of Istanbul and with it the building of Hagia Sophia.

For Constantine, Justinian, Sultan Mehmed II, and Atatürk, Hagia Sophia served as a model for the changing political and religious ideals of a nation. To use the useful phrase coined by Linda Young, Hagia Sophia is a building that is “in between heritage.” Young examines the role of museums as keepers and preservers of heritage. In its current incarnation as a museum, Hagia Sophia functions as a repository of Christian, Muslim, and secular heritage. Its architecture and decoration are on display as objects of natural and cultural significance for the enjoyment, education, and development of Turkish society. Even so, Hagia Sophia remains the target for religious and secular interests; and neither party is willing to negotiate. Religious Christian and Muslim extremists are bent on reclaiming Hagia Sophia for their respective faiths, in attempts to re-claim the building’s heritage, while other Turks remain equally determined to retain the building as a national symbol of a proud and secular civilization.

Debate over the ownership of Hagia Sophia is nothing new. With each re-construction of the city of Constantinople, came the re-construction of Hagia Sophia and its history as having a religious and political voice. For each regime, the construction of Hagia Sophia as a religious and political symbol was matched by an equally pressing need to build links to the past. If Turkey continues to follow the path of Islamicization, the history of the building could change once again. In exploring the history of Hagia Sophia it is evident that not only has the building been transformed and rewritten by Christians, Muslims, and Secularists, but really has been used by them. As the debates over the ownership of Hagia Sophia continue today, each group has a stake in the building, as their claims are directly linked to Hagia Sophia’s past histories: as an Orthodox church, an Islamic mosque, and as the building stands today, a secular museum.

CHAPTER I: Constantine, Justinian, and the “Great Church”

Byzantine chronicler, Theophanes the Confessor tells us that when Justinian the Great (527-565) entered the church of Hagia Sophia on the occasion of its dedication in 537 he exclaimed, “Glory to God who has thought me worthy to finish this work. Oh, Solomon, I have surpassed thee.”¹ The biblical King Solomon is credited with building the first temple in Jerusalem, and he is also considered the greatest of kings, in possession of wisdom, wealth, and power. By comparing his works to those of Solomon, Justinian not only elevated himself to the status of a Biblical king; but he also claims that Hagia Sophia is more glorious than Solomon’s temple. We can only imagine the splendor and magnificence of Justinian’s Hagia Sophia, a monumental church reminiscent to the great basilicas of Rome. From Hagia Sophia’s beginnings, the church has been linked with imperial power.

Justinian saw himself as both the heir of the Caesars and as the elect of God. His self-appointed task was to revive and renew the glory and power of the Western Roman Empire. In this, the church of Hagia Sophia is one of Justinian’s crowning achievements. Justinian was seen as the personification of Orthodoxy and it is the building of Hagia Sophia that incorporates the theological and political themes of his reign. In ordering the rebuilding of Hagia Sophia, Justinian sought to create a powerful symbol of his power and that of the religion of the state.²

A major urban, Capitoline monument, Hagia Sophia was the natural vehicle of Justinian’s imperial message. The building of Justinian’s church began on February 23,

¹ Theophanes, A.M. 6051, pp. 232-33. (This excerpt derives from the complete Chronicle of Malalas that is now lost: CSHB, pp. 489 f.) For more information see: Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire: 312-1453* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1972), 53.

² Helen Evans, “Byzantium Revisited: The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia in the 20th Century.” (Michigan: *The Modern Greek Program*, 2006), 1.

532.³ From its initial construction stages, Justinian planned to build the great church as a monument to ensure his temporal power and immortal fame, as well as become Constantinople's cardinal monument.

The 6th century Byzantine historian Procopius praises the church in Book 1 of his *Edifices*: "Hagia Sophia soars to a height to match the sky, and, like a ship riding at anchor, higher than the other buildings, it looks down upon the remainder of the city, adorning it because it is a part of it, but glorifying in its own beauty."⁴ Procopius suggests that Hagia Sophia was put on display, a new monument of beauty and power that dominated the landscape in a way that the city of Constantinople had never seen before.⁵ Here, Procopius describes Hagia Sophia as an overwhelming and powerful presence. He observes the placement of the building as central, constructing a commanding presence in Constantinople. Procopius uses the simile of a ship to paint the picture of Hagia Sophia as a colossal building that is commanding and powerful. This physical presence and dominance of the landscape is amply illustrated by maps such as those by Cristoforo Buondelmonti and those found in fifteenth-century manuscripts. In Buondelmonti's map from 1475, just 22 years after the fall of Constantinople; we can see that Hagia Sophia was the building, having a prominent place in the city, seemingly untouched by its surroundings. **[Figure 1]** In another map of Constantinople, this one before the fall, done in 1436, Hagia Sophia is seen surrounded by buildings, yet it still stands out, larger and more prominent than the rest. **[Figure 2]** It is striking that although

³ Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 30.

⁴ Procopius, *De aedif.* I, i, 23 ff.

⁵ "The Composition of Procopius' *De Aedificiis*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 78 (1947), 182; see also J.B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (London: 1923), 428.

these maps were produced long after Justinian's reign that Hagia Sophia was still an impressive sight, holding a prominent place in the city center at the time before and after the fall of Constantinople.

Twentieth-century architectural historians are similarly awed by Justinian's Hagia Sophia, observing that with its vast scale, immense cost, stunning interior space and extraordinary speed of construction, Hagia Sophia marks a turning point in Western architecture, one that is still rivaled today. In 2004, a major study on Hagia Sophia by Robert Nelson examined the ways that the West has transformed the building into the international, architectural icon that it is today, focusing heavily on its use as a museum from the time of Atatürk.

The reign of Justinian marked the high point of Constantinople as the capital of the Byzantine Empire; however, he was not the first emperor to capitalize on the location of Constantinople and the significance of establishing Hagia Sophia as a religious and imperial monument. Indeed, his project appropriated a still earlier history. It was the Emperor Constantine (272-337 AD) who chose the East as the new center of imperial power and Hagia Sophia, the city's imperial monument. Byzantium was to be constructed on a larger and grander scale, one that would fit into the city's new imperial role as capital of what was to be the Eastern Roman empire. Dedicated on May 11, 330 AD, Byzantium was to be called Nova Roma Constantinopolitana, the New Rome.⁶ Constantine's goal was to transform Byzantium into the imperial capital.

His new capital of Constantinople was a city inspired not by pagan gods but by the Christian God and Hagia Sophia was made to occupy the most prominent point of the

⁶ John Freely and Ahmet. Çakmak, *Byzantine Monuments of Istanbul*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25.

city.⁷ In transforming Byzantium into an imperial capital, Constantine built many monuments throughout the city, including: the hippodrome, Hagia Eirene, and the Great Palace that served as the chief imperial residence until the eleventh-century. Art historian and Richard Krautheimer describes Hagia Sophia as, “almost an appendage to the adjoining imperial residence.”⁸ Hagia Sophia was linked to the palace by corridors and stairs to grant easy access for the emperor. Beginning with Constantine and continuing with Justinian, the emperor would serve as both the head of state and head of the church. This notion of Caesaropapism combines the power of the secular government with religious power and the physical link of Constantine’s imperial palace to Hagia Sophia illustrates this concept.⁹ Constantine was emperor and his imperial residence showed his citizens the power and glory that he had on his earthly territory. The close connection to Hagia Sophia, the center of religious life, elevated the status of the emperor as having authority not only over governmental but spiritual matters.

Originally called, “The Great Church,” Hagia Sophia was dedicated under Emperor Constantine II in 360 AD.¹⁰ At the time of its dedication by Constantine, Hagia Sophia was known as “Sophia.” Sophia, initially without the prefix Hagia, referred to Christ as the wisdom or word of God made flesh, and not to any saint of that name. No description of the original church has survived, apart from brief references to it as, “circus-like” or “oblong” in appearance.¹¹ Scholars are led to believe that the first church of Hagia Sophia was a simple, rectangular basilica, much like the other churches at the

⁷ Richard Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 3.

⁸ Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals*, 50.

⁹ For more on Caesaropapism in the Eastern Orthodox Church see: Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 1159.

¹⁰ Rowland, Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian’s Great Church* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 129.

¹¹ Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 129.

time. Most likely built of stone and of medium size, Hagia Sophia was roofed with timber and contained a nave with four aisles.

The first building of Hagia Sophia was destroyed after John Chrysostom, Patriarchate of Constantinople, was arrested and exiled on June 9, 404 AD; during riots that followed, Hagia Sophia was burnt.¹² John's biographer, Palladius writes, "Then a flame seemed to burst from the center of the throne in which he used to sit, and climbed up by the chains to the roof . . . and crept like a wriggling snake upon the back of the church."¹³ Palladius describes the event vividly, as if the flames ignited were sparked by God himself.

In 415 AD., under Emperor Theodosius II (408-450), Hagia Sophia was restored, rebuilt, and rededicated. Then, in 532, during the early reign of emperor Justinian, the church was once again burned, this time by rebels, in what has come to be known as the Nike riots. In an attempt to overthrow Justinian, several members of team associations rioted in the Hippodrome arena, vying for social and political control. The Emperor's palace was besieged and Hagia Sophia burnt to the ground. As a result of the week of riots, nearly half of the city of Constantinople was destroyed and a reported 30,000 rioters killed.¹⁴

As Hagia Sophia lay in ruins, it became the ambition of Emperor Justinian to pick up the pieces and build a mightier church. He comes from a long line of emperor's whose imperial ambitions are manifest in the construction of the city. Justinian is credited by Procopius as the greatest builder in the history of the Byzantine Empire and for rebuilding and transforming Hagia Sophia into a beautiful and monumental shrine.

¹² Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 133.

¹³ Palladius, *De vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi*, PG, vol. 47, cols. 35-6.

¹⁴ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 27.

Procopius writes that Justinian is credited with founding or rebuilding thirty-three churches in Constantinople during the time of his reign.¹⁵ He not only inaugurated a new age, but a new way of architecture; his buildings were created to glorify his reign; and Hagia Sophia is no exception.

Five years, ten months, and four days; that is the time that it took to build Hagia Sophia from start to finish. **[Figure 3]** Justinian's church of Hagia Sophia, first dedicated in 537, was finally received in 562, and after the reconstruction of its central dome exists in its definitive form that we know today. Upon completion, Hagia Sophia's architects created an immense interior of cavernous spaces and wide-spanning vaults that have never been surpassed. Procopius notes, "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that god dwells there among men and their service."¹⁶ Here Procopius speaks to Hagia Sophia's splendor and monumentality. Justinian's Hagia Sophia was a monument to the heavens and a dwelling place for God. This is an important aspect of the Orthodox Divine liturgy, the building block and foundation of the Orthodox Church. For sixth-century Byzantium, Hagia Sophia defined the symbolic center of the city. The goal of Justinian and his architects was to create a monument that would overwhelm and awe any visitor who went inside. Hagia Sophia was less a place of private contemplation and more of an arena for the public and state adoration of God.¹⁷

For all of Hagia Sophia's monumental scale and majestic position, the exterior of the building, while open to the heavens was outshone by the interior, enclosing the heavens. The monumental church was a unique cultural creation, fusing ideas of imperial

¹⁵ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 82.

¹⁶ Procopius, *De aedif.* I, i, 23 ff.

¹⁷ Robin, Cormack. *Oxford History of Art: Byzantine Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 39.

Rome with those of Christian Byzantium. Its original form was a compact, balanced structure, imposing as a group of rising masses and volumes that carried the eye upward.¹⁸ Far from being a mere outer casing, Hagia Sophia's exterior embodied a parallel concept of spatial design. It served as a building where imperial ceremony and ecclesiastical ritual were one. After viewing the building upon completion, Procopius wrote, "So the church has become a spectacle of great beauty, overwhelming to those who see it and altogether incredible to those who only hear of it..."¹⁹ As a spectacle, Hagia Sophia stands out as a building that is well known, yet one that exceeds human understanding. The impact of Hagia Sophia relied heavily on the building's enormous height and width, yet whether seeing or hearing about the building, there is no way to truly grasp its qualities.

According to legend, Hagia Sophia's general form had been revealed to Justinian in a dream. For the work of construction, the emperor gathered, "all the artisans from the whole world."²⁰ He wanted the most skillful, the most educated, and the most talented men to work on his magnificent structure. Gathering these men was a gesture of kingly power. The chief architects commissioned for the work were Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus. Procopius notes that Anthemius was the most learned and skilled craftsman in the art of building and therefore best suited for the task.²¹ These men were not only the most learned of their contemporaries but had intellectually and skillfully surpassed those who lived before them. Justinian saw to it that only the best, most

¹⁸ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 43.

¹⁹ Procopius, *De aedif.* I, i, 23 ff.

²⁰ Procopius, *De aedif.* I, i, 23 ff.

²¹ Robert Mark, *Hagia Sophia: From the Age of Justinian to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 31.

renowned architects and engineers had their hands on the building process. It was these men who stood out among the rest as worthy enough to serve the emperor.²²

Legend reveals that a series of miraculous manifestations occurred during the building process. In the early stages of building, “an angel of god appeared and taught the workmen as they were building.” If the building process was revealed through an angel of God, the building’s ties to Christianity would be engrained in Hagia Sophia’s structure. When there was some disagreement as to whether the apse should have one window or two, the matter was reportedly settled when, “an angel of the Lord appeared, dressed like the emperor with royal robes and shoes appeared.”²³ The angel instructed the craftsman on how to build the window; three, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The structure of the window, built to represent the structure of the Holy Trinity, sets the stage for the rest of Hagia Sophia’s construction. Hagia Sophia was built to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and the divine nature of God. For Justinian, the church was an essential component to the divine order of salvation and if the divine plan was to be fulfilled, empire and church must be united.

The form of the Hagia Sophia was dictated by the form of the Divine Liturgy. Its nave was a wide open space, reserved for the public moments of mass, by the Patriarch and his priesthood. The Patriarch and his priesthood symbolized the celestial hierarchies of the angels.²⁴ These hierarchies being an order of ranking, in which the emperor takes on the role of the Seraphim, the care taker of God’s throne. The rest of the congregation would gather in the broad side aisles beyond the colonnades and in the galleries above

²² Cyril Mango, *Sources and Documents in the History of Art Series* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc, 1972), 91.

²³ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 31-35.

²⁴ Mark., *Hagia Sophia*, 36.

them. The Divine Liturgy was enacted as a great mystery. “As the crowds were led by the master of ceremonies in the chanting of the “troparion,” the patriarch and emperor proceeded by a deacon carrying the gospel and followed by the clergy and the imperial cortege would enter and traverse the empty nave.”²⁵ This is known as the lesser entrance and signified the coming of Christ in the person of the patriarch. Once inside, the faithful greeted each other and recited the Creed of their unity. They watched the clergy in the sanctuary invoke the central prayer of the liturgy and approach the Holy Door at the end of it. This act of participation following the ritual of the liturgy symbolized for the citizen of Constantinople, his brotherhood, and his part in a community that was at once divine and imperial. “Finally in the order in which they had entered, the actors of this magnificent spectacle of faith walked the length of the church, across the two narthexes and the atrium. And then we go out, the patriarch Eutychius wrote, each one to his home.”²⁶

Commanding the east end of Hagia Sophia was the chancel screen, known as the bema or Holy of Holies.²⁷ Here the emperor took part in the liturgy. The Gospel was read, prayers were recited, and important offices during coronations were performed. The bema was flanked by two side chambers leading into the narthex, with its high marbled walls, arches, and gold mosaic cross vaults that were ornamented with color. Three monumental wooden doors in the narthex lead directly into the nave of Hagia Sophia; the central and large one was reserved exclusively for the emperor.

²⁵ Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 266.

²⁶ Kostof, *A History of Architecture*, 267.

²⁷ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 36-38.

If the structure of Hagia Sophia's interior was dedicated to the structure of the Divine Liturgy, then crowing Hagia Sophia with a dome, gives form to the sanctity of the whole building as an earthly analogue to heaven.²⁸ The visible universe was understood in Byzantium as a cube surmounted by a dome. The cube represents the earthly or physical realm, while the dome symbolizes the celestial. Light in Hagia Sophia poured down from the windows of the dome to create a luminous space on the nave below. Procopius describes the lights transformative effects, "From the shadows of the side aisles, the faithful could gaze in wonder, entranced by the divine radiance that shone beyond, above, and upon them."²⁹ The faithful were dazzled by the "divine radiance" which can be understood as the light of God and also the presence of the emperor.

The lightness and brightness of Hagia Sophia were enhanced by the gold mosaics that covered the ceiling of the dome. The light glistened off of the gold and along with the gleam and polish of the stone from the walls and floor, created a radiance that could only be compared to that of heaven. According to Procopius, "he who entered Hagia Sophia might imagine that he had come upon a meadow with its flowers in full bloom."³⁰ Procopius compares Hagia Sophia's cavernous expansion to an open meadow that is full of light and beauty; a natural wonder and a part of the beauty of God's creation, much like a meadow in bloom.

Oddly enough, Procopius's notion of a meadow anticipates a ritual described by a ninth-century visitor. Harun-ibn-Yahyn, a Muslim captive, commented on a procession he saw during the reign of Emperor Basileios I (867-886). "The emperor commands that on his way from the gate of the palace to [Hagia Sophia], be spread out mats . . . strewn

²⁸ Kostof, *A History of Architecture*, 264.

²⁹ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 35-37.

³⁰ *Procopius*, I, I, 54-61.

with aromatic plants and green foliage. He is preceded by 10,000 elders wearing cloth of red brocade, carrying axes covered with gold.”³¹ Harun-ibn-Yahyn emphasizes the connection between Hagia Sophia and the royal palace in Constantinople and the lavishness he describes recalls processions of Justinian, recorded by Procopius. Imperial ceremony, according to Constantine and upheld by Justinian and subsequent emperors contribute to the authority and majesty of imperial power.³²

Imperial ceremony and ecclesiastical ritual became the objective of the emperor’s attendance at Hagia Sophia. This notion of imperial authority is rendered visibly in Hagia Sophia’s interior mosaics. Upon first entering the church, beholders encounter the Mother of God mosaic dating from 944. The Virgin Mary served as the protective guardian of Constantinople. Paired with the Virgin are Constantine and Justinian. Constantine (right) presents the Virgin Mary with a model of the city of Constantinople, Justinian (left) presents to her a model of Hagia Sophia. **[Figure 4]** This offering of humility illustrates the importance of the building of Hagia Sophia as an imperial and Christian monument, as well as the importance of Constantinople itself. Justinian’s model represents Hagia Sophia from the point of view of an imperial procession.³³ The view of Hagia Sophia in Justinian’s hands is that which would have been seen from the palace. The church is shown from the south side, so that actual apses and those depicted feature the same

³¹ Vasiliev, A. “Harunibn-Yahya and his description of Constantine.” *Seminarium Kondako-vi*: (1932), 158-159.

³² For more on the opulence of these processions, see Procopius, *De aedif.* I, i, 23 ff. Processions were held in high regard, as they were seen as a means of maintaining ancestral traditions and replicating the harmony of a universe established by God. Ceremonies were like a mirror, reflecting and radiating imperial order from the center of the palace, a ritualistic expression of the inward turning of the Byzantine Empire.

³³ Robert Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850-1950: Holy Wisdom, Modern Monument* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 9-10.

orientation.³⁴ The model Justinian holds represents the church as experienced, and although simplified, emphasizes the building's central feature: the dome. This mosaic emphasizes the building's function in Byzantine Christendom, a vehicle for religious and imperial power, well after the times of Justinian.

The reign of Justinian marked the climax of Constantinople as the capital of the Byzantine Empire; however, Hagia Sophia was the center of religious growth in the city of Constantinople well into the ninth-century. On Christmas day, 800, Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor. Charlemagne united the West under the, "heir of the Caesars," with claims of supremacy in Christendom, at the expense of the Eastern Empire's authority.³⁵ From here on, religious and political conflict was intensified between Rome and Constantinople.

Hagia Sophia remained the showpiece monument after 843; however, the church had to maintain its image as both the exception and the norm among other Orthodox churches. After the second period of iconoclasm from 814-842, Hagia Sophia underwent a period of reorganization and redecoration. The Virgin and Child mosaic, in the apse was the first to be dedicated in 867, under the patriarch Photios.³⁶ **[Figure 5]** In the mosaic, Mary sits on a backless throne with the Christ child on her lap; with her right hand she seems to hold and point to him. Photios describes the Virgin as, "an interceder for our salvation and teacher of reverence to God."³⁷

³⁴ Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 10.

³⁵ Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 29, 66.

³⁶ Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 119.

³⁷ Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 119. The original apse decoration was presumably non-figurative and was replaced after iconoclasm with an inscription referring to the iconoclasts as heretics and an image of the Virgin with Christ Incarnate. Patriarch Photios inaugurated this new mosaic with his Homily XVII, spoken on Holy Saturday 867. The mosaic was uncovered in 1935.

Like most Byzantine churches, the dome of Hagia Sophia originally featured a central medallion of Christ Pantocrator. This was also added in the second half of the ninth-century, after the Iconoclast controversy. Some scholars maintain that it was a full-length image of Christ seated on the arc of heaven, as opposed to a bust portrayal of the Pantocrator. The mosaic was destroyed in the severe earthquake of 1346 and was replaced with a similar representation after 1355.³⁸ It had not yet been plastered over in the 16th century; however, during the extensive cleaning and restoration works carried out by the Fossati brothers in the nineteenth-century, the dome mosaic disappeared. It may well lie hidden beneath the current decoration.³⁹

The decoration of Hagia Sophia continued well into the 12th century. The Middle Byzantine period in Constantinople was one of military achievement and expansion. After the period of iconoclasm there was a revival of religious art. This new found unity of faith and doctrine was short lived however, and in 1054 a breach was created between the Byzantine Empire and the papacy, culminating with the split of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic faiths. For the city of Constantinople this meant a period of economic, political, and religious hardship. Invasions by the Seljuk Turks from the East combined with religious and political turmoil in the West proved too much for the city of Constantinople.

In 1071, the battle of Manzikert was fought on the Byzantine front, resulting in the Turkish control of most of Asia Minor.⁴⁰ The invasion led to direct retaliation in the form of the crusades, holy wars launched by the West in the eleventh and twelfth-

³⁸ Jannic Durand, *Byzantine Art* (Paris: Finest Sa/Éditions Pierre Terrail, 1999), 99.

³⁹ Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 30. The center dome now displays a calligraphic medallion quoting the Light Verse (Qur'an 24:35), inscribed by Mustafa Izzet Efendi during the Fossati restoration.

⁴⁰ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 195.

centuries ostensibly to liberate Jerusalem and the city's shrine of Christian pilgrimage.⁴¹ The Christian crusaders of Western Europe first occupied and sacked Constantinople in the thirteenth-century, weakening the city's defenses and making the city more susceptible to invasions from the Islamic East. With the fall of the city of Constantinople came a change in the symbolic function of the city's buildings, specifically Hagia Sophia. Justinian's great church, once again, became the seat of controversy and contention, its relics coveted by the West.

The loot of sacred treasure lured the West. Constantinople's conflict with Venice began in 1171, when Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143-80) evicted Venetian merchants from Constantinople, where they occupied a section of the city for nearly a century.⁴² In 1203, after a period of diplomatic peace, the crusaders reached the Bosphorus, after breaking the chain that closed the harbor, the Venetians entered the city and Alexius IV (1203-04) was placed on the throne. The conflict between Eastern and Western Christendom reached a climax with the fourth crusade at the onset of the thirteenth-century. For the Venetians, a sacred mission to recapture the city of Jerusalem from the infidel was the plan; however, the target became Hagia Sophia.

In 1204, the prospects of invading Constantinople, the richest city in Christendom, deflected the soldiers of the fourth crusade from their initial objective. British historian, Sir Steven Runciman writes a history of the crusades, stating, "For nine centuries, the great city had been the capital of Christian civilization. Constantinople was filled with

⁴¹ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 232.

⁴² Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 232.

works of art that had survived from ancient Greece and with the masterpieces of its own craftsmen.”⁴³

Under the reign of the Byzantine Emperors, art and theology fused to create some of the world’s most opulent religious objects, many of which were housed in Hagia Sophia. Relics of Christ’s passion as well as of the Virgin Mary were kept in Hagia Sophia. The most precious relics of the true cross were said to have been obtained from Constantine’s mother Helena. **[Figure 6]** These relics, held by Byzantine emperors, were among the principle demonstrations of the origin of their authority.⁴⁴ Their glories were known far and wide; thus, in 1144, Abbot Suger of Saint Denis contemplated the ornaments of his new church, comparing them with the grandeur of those housed at Hagia Sophia stating, “I used to converse with travelers from Jerusalem . . . to learn from those to whom the treasures of Constantinople and the ornaments of Hagia Sophia had been accessible, whether the things here could claim some value in comparison with those there.”⁴⁵ The relics contained in Hagia Sophia not only made the building a more valuable sight for Christian worshipers, but became, “evidence of the close relationship between emperor and Christ.”⁴⁶ They became a symbol of the relationship between the spiritual, heavenly world and the physical world of temporal authority. It was the Christian emperor’s role to act as guardians of Christ’s legacy on earth and therefore the protector of His sacred relics.

⁴³ Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, vol 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 68.

⁴⁴ Anthony, Eastmond. *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-century Byzantium; Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), 59.

⁴⁵ Teresa Frisch, *Gothic Art 1140-c 1450: Sources and Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 9.

⁴⁶ Frisch, *Gothic Art*, 59.

After the looting of these relics in 1204, many were transported to the west, becoming the centerpieces of Western royal and other relic collections.⁴⁷ Special attention was given to the relics of Christ's passion and particularly those of the true cross. A number of Byzantine relics and reliquaries that purport to hold relics of the true cross can still be seen in Western collections today. For example, the eunuch Basil the Nothos, son of Romanos I (920-944) commissioned a staurotheke, a holder for a fragment of the true cross to be displayed in the imperial palace and presumably Hagia Sophia as well. **[Figure 7]** Along with the fragment of the true cross were other precious relics, including a piece of the towel Christ used to dry the apostle's feet. This reliquary remained in Constantinople until 1207, when it became a piece of crusader loot that was taken to Germany and now resides at the Cathedral of Limburg.⁴⁸

In 1240, the crown of thorns was purchased from Constantinople, by the order of Louis IX and taken to San Chapelle in Paris. As cited in Jean A. Givens, *Observation and Image-Making in Gothic Art*, the holy blood, another cherished relic of Constantinople was taken to Westminster Abbey.⁴⁹ This translation to Westminster Abbey is testified to by the medieval chronicler Matthew Paris.⁵⁰ Relics and especially those of the True Cross became a form of materializing imperial power. Possessing these sacred relics elevated the power of the ruler as a spiritual and worldly leader.

⁴⁷ Eastmond, *Art and Identity*, 59.

⁴⁸ Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 77.

⁴⁹ Jean Givens, *Observation and Image-Making in Gothic Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 180.

⁵⁰ For more on Matthew Paris, see Lewis, Matthew Paris, and Matthew Paris, *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, 7 vols. (London: Rolls Series 57, 1872-83; Reprint, Wiesbaden: Kraus, 1964), III: 242-3.

Once the crusade had ended and Constantinople was besieged and emptied of its most sacred treasure, the city fell under Latin occupation.⁵¹ Baldwin I (1172-1205) became the first emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. For westerners, the Byzantine Empire was known as “Romania,” the kingdom of the Romans.⁵² Constantinople remained a Latin capital for fifty-seven years.⁵³ **[Figure 8]** During this time, Hagia Sophia remained the city’s imperial church, which made the state responsible for its upkeep.

In 1261, Constantinople was recaptured and the Venetians driven out.⁵⁴ The Palaeologian Dynasty became the last rulers of the Byzantine Empire. New emperor Michael VIII (1259-82) thanked God for the restoration declaring, “The Divine Providence has now restored to our arms the city of Constantine, the sacred seat of religion and empire; and it will depend on our valor to render this important acquisition the pledge and omen of future victories.”⁵⁵ In time he sought to return Constantinople to its former glory under Emperor Justinian.

For the Palaeologians, Hagia Sophia was once again at the forefront of the city. Michael VIII entered Constantinople through the Golden Gate in 1261, a moment when hopes were high that the city of Constantinople would rise from the ashes and become the powerful city of the past.⁵⁶ The emperor’s procession to Hagia Sophia is described by historian George Akropolites. “The emperor entered the holy building, the Temple of Divine Wisdom, in order that he might hand over the cathedra to the prelate. Assembled

⁵¹ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 248.

⁵² George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*. Translated by Joan Hussey. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 352.

⁵³ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 248.

⁵⁴ Goffman, Daniel, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 21.

⁵⁵ Goffman, *The Ottoman City*, 21.

⁵⁶ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 251.

with the emperor were all of the archons and the entire multitude.”⁵⁷ Michael VIII entered Hagia Sophia the way emperors Constantine and Justinian did before him. Following in the footsteps of Constantine and Justinian, Michael positions himself in the line of great emperors. The coronation of an emperor was a public scene, taking place in Hagia Sophia. As he took the arm of the patriarchate, the emperor stated, “Take your throne now, O Lord, and enjoy it, that of which you were so long deprived.”⁵⁸ Here, Michael VIII re-establishes Hagia Sophia as the seat of the patriarchate. Even so, the revived empire was only a shadow of its former self; territorially reduced, politically divided, economically impoverished, and socially disrupted. Constantinople was a ruined city, abandoned and seared by four major fires that occurred during the Latin occupation.

Despite this decline, Constantinople remained the city in the diminishing realm of the eastern Roman Empire.⁵⁹ As a center of intellectual and artistic accomplishments under the Paleologians, Constantinople underwent a kind of cultural renaissance, in which there was a revival of the Hellenistic tradition. New churches were built, smaller in scale but rich in design and private patronage was on the rise. Michael VIII was responsible for the buildup of the city and the restoration of such monuments as the Tekfursaryi Palace, the Monastery of Constantine Lips, and the Church of St. Andrew in Krisei.⁶⁰ This architectural boom created a more private church going experience. Hagia Sophia was the imperial church but by no means the only church in the city. The buildup

⁵⁷ George Akropolites, *Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg, 2 vols. (Leipzig: 1903).

⁵⁸ Akropolites, *Opera*, 527.

⁵⁹ Kostof, *AHistory of Architecture*, 269.

⁶⁰ For more on these other buildings of Istanbul see: Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 252. The Church of St. Andrew in Krisei became the Koca Mustafa Paşa Camii, after the Ottoman conquering of Constantinople.

of the city took away from Hagia Sophia's prominence; however, its importance remained.

Hagia Sophia was looked after and maintained as the crowning achievement of Byzantine architecture. Palaeologian emperor, Andronicus III (1328-41), restored the damage done to the church by the crusaders. In 1344, a major earthquake caused damage and instability to the foundation of Hagia Sophia. The collapse of the eastern arch and part of the dome was catastrophic. The repairs of Hagia Sophia were eventually contributed by Symeon, the Grand Duke of Moscow, who saw himself as the patron and protector of Orthodoxy.⁶¹

Despite restoration attempts, the condition of Constantinople was grim and the general decay of the dying city was noted by travelers and pilgrims of the period. In 1391, Spanish ambassador González de Clavijo wrote, "everywhere throughout the city there are great palaces, churches, and monasteries, but most of them are now ruined . . . the outer gates by which [Hagia Sophia] was approached are broken and fallen; it seems as if only the dome of the Church remains, as everything is fallen down and in ruins."⁶² One foreign traveler observed that the bazaars were devoid of produce, the businesses infested with rats.⁶³ The apparent disarray of Hagia Sophia may indicate that other churches had been built, taking away from the magnificence of the Great Church. Indeed it was during this time that the Church of Christ in Chora was rebuilt and redecorated. **[Figure 9]** After

⁶¹ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 279.

⁶² Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo of the Court of Timour: 1403-1460. (First translated by Clements R. Markham), F.R.G.S., 29.

⁶³ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 280.

Hagia Sophia, the Church of Christ in Chora can be considered the most interesting and most important Byzantine church in the city.⁶⁴

The Florentine cartographer, Buondelmonti also observed the decay of the city. Writing in 1422, Buondelmonti noted that, “only the dome of Hagia Sophia remains, as everything else is fallen and in ruins.”⁶⁵ He hints at the outright destruction and devastation that took over Constantinople at the beginning of the fifteenth-century. In his map from 1480, [Figure 10] Buondelmonti highlights the vanquished city's imperial identity that made Byzantium and Constantinople by placing prominent buildings like Hagia Sophia and the hippodrome in view; however, he begins to incorporate new buildings, added under Sultan Mehmed II, in attempts to show the city's changing identity.

The devastation of the city and of Hagia Sophia had taken its toll, making the city more easily susceptible to invasion. For nine hundred years, Hagia Sophia served as the great monument of Christianity. But with the fall of the Byzantine Empire, and Constantinople sequentially, Hagia Sophia would take on a new meaning, as the new symbol of the Muslim faith.

⁶⁴ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 270. “Chora” means in the country, and the original church along with accompanying monastery were outside the city limits. The building of the Theodosian Walls incorporated the church within the city limits.

⁶⁵ Christopher Buondelmonti's *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*. As referenced in Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 97.

CHAPTER II: The Ottoman Empire and the Ayasofya Mosque

It proved to be the Turks who took full advantage of Constantinople's decline. As the Byzantine Empire began to crumble, a new empire from the Islamic East gained strength.⁶⁶ Hagia Sophia made a deep impression on the Ottomans. Hagia Sophia's grandeur and sheer size commanded respect, and although other Christian churches were sacked and destroyed, the building of Hagia Sophia remained an important landmark in the Ottoman capital. The Ottomans converted Hagia Sophia into an imperial mosque, blending its past and present histories. Hagia Sophia served as the patriarchal seat in Constantinople until the conquest of the Ottoman Empire. As Ayasofya it continued to function as a symbol of imperial and Islamic power and authority.

In 1453, under the leadership of Sultan Mehmed II, the Ottomans conquered the city of Constantinople. The gates of the city were sealed, and the people of the city prayed and took refuge in Hagia Sophia. Hagia Sophia served as a safe haven during the siege on Constantinople. Congregating within her walls; citizens began praying for the city's salvation and if need be were ready to die for the honor of God and Christianity. On May 25, 1453, Sultan Mehmed gave orders for a final all-out assault on the walls. The city of Constantinople put up a fight, resulting in the loss of many lives, including that of the last Byzantine emperor; however, the impenetrable walls were finally breached. As the siege of Constantinople was under way, Muslim chants were heard from inside the city walls. "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet."⁶⁷ Mehmed and his army fought and conquered in the name of Allah. This chant, in opposition with the

⁶⁶ Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 1.

⁶⁷ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, pp. 294-295.

prayers being said in Hagia Sophia, marked the beginning of a religious battle that continues to today.

On the evening of the assault of the city, Mehmed proclaimed, “I give you today a grand and populous city, the capital of the ancient Romans, the very summit of splendor and of glory. I give it over for you to pillage, to seize its incalculable treasures...and everything that adorns it.”⁶⁸ He gave his army permission to invade, conquer, and pillage the city of Constantinople of all of its Christian treasures; the treasures of Constantinople were gifts for Mehmed’s followers. He knew the reputation and power the city of Constantinople had and to conquer the city, especially in the name of Allah was a feat that would gain Mehmed wealth and prestige. This passage shows another side of his character. A lover of the arts and of classical Greece and Rome, he described Constantinople as, “the capital of the ancient Romans,” thus linking his current victories to the glorious, ancient history of the city.

The Ottomans plundered palaces and houses and sacked churches and monasteries. Hagia Sophia too became a target as it had been filled with worshipers and contained tremendous wealth. Jason Goodwin’s book, *Lords of the Horizons* colorfully illustrates the triumphal entrance of Mehmed and the destruction upon the city of Constantinople. Goodwin remarks, "Mehmed rode into the city on the morning of the first day and called a halt to the plundering in defiance of Islamic law . . . At the threshold of St Sophia he dismounted, and sprinkled a scoop of dirt over his turban as a sign of humility.”⁶⁹ Goodwin continues to describe the gruesome scene taking place in Hagia Sophia; as

⁶⁸Tursun Beg. *The history of Mehmed the Conqueror*. [Tarih-i Eb Ifeth] Halil Inalcik and Rhoads Murphey trans. (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica), 1978, 30.

⁶⁹ Jason Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Holt Publishing, 2000), 42.

Mehmet enters and stumbles over a pile of slain. It is said that even the priests were being hacked to bits, and the nuns were being ravished on the altar.⁷⁰ According to legend and recorded by fifteenth-century historian Doukas, several priests, in attempts to protect the holiest of vessels, took them and miraculously passed through the south wall of the sanctuary, which opened to admit them and closed behind them.⁷¹

During the Ottoman sack of Constantinople, holy vessels were stolen and torn to pieces. Icons were stripped of their gold and gems. Reliquaries were opened and their contents defiled and the church of Hagia Sophia, once a symbol of Christian strength was looted and defiled. The 15th century historian Sphrantzes expressed his lament for the glory of old Byzantium and the church of Hagia Sophia stating, “We saw the beautiful cathedral of the Holy Wisdom, that heaven on earth, throne of the loveliest of God...this we looked upon, as the heathens in the holy place ate and drank on the holy altar table and gave free rein to their appetite.”⁷² Sphrantzes laments the barbarism and lack of respect the Muslim invaders had for Hagia Sophia, the most holy of Christian buildings. To see Hagia Sophia fall into Muslim hands was the final insult to the city of Constantinople.

After a fifty-three day siege, the Christian city of Constantinople came to an end; perhaps due to the sheer size or well known historical significance, Hagia Sophia was singled out as the church most suited to the sultan’s dignity. For Sultan Mehmed II,

⁷⁰ Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons*, 42.

⁷¹ For more on this legend see: the historian Doukas (c. 1400- c. 1462), referenced in Kazhdan, Alexander, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1991. See Bekker, *Bonn Corpus Scriptorum History of Byzantium*. vol.1, (1834). It is said that the wall will open again, when Hagia Sophia becomes a Christian church once more.

⁷² George Sphrantzes, (1401–1477), *The Fall of the Byzantine Empire: A Chronicle*. Translated by Marios Philippides (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 27. George Sphrantzes was a late Byzantine, Greek historian. Born in Constantinople Spharantzes was an Orthodox Christian who escaped the city after its capture. He retired to the monastery of Tarchaneiotes in Cofu, where he wrote his chronicles.

Hagia Sophia became a symbol of prestige. When the victorious sultan made his entrance into his newly conquered city, he headed directly to Hagia Sophia. Upon viewing the ruined state of the great church, he reflected on the transitory nature of worldly power, which inspired melancholy meditations.⁷³ Ottoman historian, Tursun Beg records Sultan Mehmed II's alleged reaction upon viewing the ruins of Hagia Sophia and the great palace of Justinian saying, "the spider serves as the gate-keeper in the Arch of Chrosroes; the owl plays martial music in the Castle of Afrasiyalo, and so fleeting are mortal things."⁷⁴ This quote speaks to the way the Ottoman Sultan identified with these symbolic creatures of Islamic tradition, asserting that the new power of the Ottomans is in control of these grand monuments.⁷⁵ Here, Mehmed II also addresses the fall of the Byzantine Empire, a once mighty empire that has come to ruin and the new meaning given to its imperial monuments by the Ottomans.

Mehmed II was quick to recognize Hagia Sophia's imperial prestige and monumental significance. The role Hagia Sophia played in the Byzantine past would play a role in Ottoman history, as well. Sultan Mehmed II was perceived as a warrior and peacemaker, as well as defender of the Islamic faith. As he began to see himself as the legitimate heir to the Byzantine emperors, Hagia Sophia was restored as his symbol of power and authority. Mehmed II declared Constantinople to be the new capital of his

⁷³ Tursun Beg, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, 33.

⁷⁴ Tursun Beg, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, 34.

⁷⁵ Islamic tradition holds that during the Hijira, the Prophet Muhammad and his companion Abu Bakr took refuge in a cave while there were being pursued by the Quraysh. The tale goes on to say that God commanded a spider to weave a web across the opening of the cave and a dove to construct a nest in front of it, thus deterring the Quraysh from entering. Since then, it is held in many Muslim traditions that spiders are, if not holy, then at least to be respected. Birds also are commonly revered in the Islamic tradition. Especially in Sufi literature, birds stand as metaphors for the soul's divine journey to God. It was believed that upon one's death, the soul departs from the body in the form of a bird, usually a sort of owl. For more on this story and others visit: <http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php?author=wilmotbuxtion&book=crusades&story=muhammad>. See: American Institute of Child Life, *Young Folks' Handbook*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1913), 194.

empire. The city would from then on be known as Istanbul, meaning “into the city.”⁷⁶ Hagia Sophia was consecrated to Muslim worship and treated with great respect by the conqueror. Tursun Beg describes how the awe-struck Sultan wandered through Hagia Sophia and experienced its paradise-like and celestial magnificence.⁷⁷ He writes, having fully comprehended the significance of the building, the “emperor of the universe” ordered it to be repaired and transformed into his royal mosque.⁷⁸ Sultan Mehmed merged classical imperial traditions with a Turco-Islamic heritage of universal sovereignty. The Sultan’s receptiveness to Hagia Sophia’s formal values was natural, given that Islamic Ottoman architects had for more than a century been experimenting with smaller domed mosques, like that of the Üç Şerefeli Mosque in Edirne, built by Mehmed II’s father between 1437 and 1447.⁷⁹ Mehmed’s familiarity with the architectural style of Hagia Sophia probably contributed to its preservation.

The Sultan was strongly committed to the glory of Islam, but his restoration of Hagia Sophia as the royal mosque of Ayasofya was part of an ambitious program to restore the new Ottoman capital to its glory in the golden age of the Byzantine Empire. Sultan Mehmed II went to great lengths to ensure Constantinople’s status as an Islamic city and Hagia Sophia as an Islamic place of worship. For Mehmed II, this meant the rewriting of the building’s history to instill in the popular imagination the image of Hagia Sophia as a mosque. The difficulty he faced in getting the people of Constantinople to recognize Hagia Sophia as a new Islamic mosque was similar to the task Constantine the Great faced when he appropriated the pagan city. In constructing the building of Hagia

⁷⁶ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 296.

⁷⁷ Tursun Beg, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, 34.

⁷⁸ Tursun Beg, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, 35.

⁷⁹ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 197.

Sophia, Constantine also constructed its history. From the outset, Mehmed treated Hagia Sophia with respect. He retained the name, merely adapting the name to Islamic form, calling Hagia Sophia the Great Mosque. Mehmed did his part to make sure that Ayasofya retained its sacred character.

Mehmed II ordered a group of Greek and European learned men to write a history of the city of Constantinople, which included the city's many monuments. This history combined both the city's pre-Christian history and Islamic present. Mehmed placed himself in line with great sovereigns like Solomon, Constantine, and Justinian.⁸⁰ Subsequently, these texts helped place the city of Constantinople in a scheme of universal cosmography. In Mehmed's version of the creation of the city, Constantinople is described as a great historical city, founded by the mythical ruler Yanko bin Madyan.⁸¹ In order to present the re-consecration of Hagia Sophia and Constantinople, Mehmed adapted their histories to a new Islamic context. These Ottoman histories attempt to justify Hagia Sophia's conversion into a royal mosque by complementing its Christian associations with Islamic ones; as well as placing emphasis on its prestigious imperial past that would last until the end of the Ottoman Empire.⁸²

According to Mehmed's histories, Hagia Sophia was constructed with the spolia from the structures built by Solomon. In the Islamic tradition, Solomon is revered as prophet. Fifteenth-century Ottoman chronicler, Şemsüddin inferred that Justinian ordered the leaders of other kingdoms to send rare stones, removed from ancient pagan temples to

⁸⁰ Mark, Robert, *Hagia Sophia*, 199.

⁸¹ Mark, Robert, *Hagia Sophia*, 198. Yanko bin Madyan is a descendant of the Persian emperor Shaddad, who according to legend was divinely guided in a dream to build a wonderful city where two seas meet.

⁸² Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 199. The earliest surviving Turkish and Persian versions of these texts composed in 1479 and 1480 are based largely on the Byzantine 9th century *Diegesis peri tes Hagias Sofias*. A Greek copy, written for Mehmed II in 1474 survives among the royal manuscripts of the Topkapi Palace.

aid in Hagia Sophia's construction.⁸³ In this way, Justinian's monumental church was reconstituted in Ottoman context, as a symbol of universal rule. This universal rule reflected a perfect concordance between divine will and imperial power. Hagia Sophia became an emblem for the imperial and divine. Mehmed II was fueled by an ambition to reunite Constantinople and Rome under a world empire, unified by a single religion and a single monarch.

The original construction of Hagia Sophia signified the triumph of Christianity over paganism. Hagia Sophia's second consecration as Mehmed II's royal mosque represented the final victory of Islam. According to Islamic history, as recorded by Şemsüddin, the consecration of Hagia Sophia by the prophet Muhammad helped legitimize the building's conversion into a mosque, with no radical changes in the structure or decorative program.⁸⁴ Şemsüddin, wrote that the name Ayasofya, understood at that time to mean the house of worship, of God, had been divinely communicated to Justinian through the immortal messenger Hızir.⁸⁵ The mosque at Ayasofya continued to be referred to by that name, implying that Hagia Sophia had always been the sanctuary of one God, the same God, worshiped by Christians and Muslims. These fables and legends rose out of Islamic lore, in an attempt to justify the building's conversion.⁸⁶

By the sixteenth-century, Hagia Sophia became an integral part of the Ottoman collective memory. The Ayasofya Mosque was compared by many to the Aqsa Mosque,

⁸³ Şemsüddin, *Ottoman chronicle* in 1491, translated into French with a detailed analysis of its sources and textual variants. See Stephane Yerasimos, *Legendes d' empire: La foundation de Constantinople et de Sainte-Sophie* (Paris: 1990), 123.

⁸⁴ Hagia Sophia's history in accordance with Islamic tradition can be found in *Légendes*, 1491, 24. Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 202.

⁸⁵ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 200.

⁸⁶ For more on the Christian traditions and the invention of new ones, see Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1: 10-13; Evliya, *Seyahatname*, 1: 133-6. Popular traditions reported by pilgrims before the Ottoman conquest are conveniently compiled in George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1984).

the holiest of Muslim sanctuaries.⁸⁷ Court poet Cafer Celebi remarked, “There may be many other holy mosques covered with high domes, but this one is the victorious Shah of them all.”⁸⁸ This quote alludes to the fact that these legends of the life of Hagia Sophia as a mosque testify to the success of its mythical history, as part of Mehmed II’s efforts to legitimize the preservation of the Byzantine church as the main, imperial mosque of the new Ottoman capital. Mehmed’s attempt to create a new history of Hagia Sophia, while incorporating aspects of its Christian existence was in part an effort to legitimize the preservation of the Byzantine church as the main, imperial mosque of the new Ottoman capital. Celebi effectively vanquishes all sense of Hagia Sophia as a church. Hagia Sophia is now, “the victorious Shah.” Hagia Sophia becomes the king of all monuments. The conversion of Hagia Sophia to the sultan’s mosque thus was associated with his imperial policy. This imperial policy marked the elevation of the Ottoman state from a modest principality to a world empire.⁸⁹

The change in the symbolic nature of Hagia Sophia was complemented by changes in its architecture and decoration as well. Mehmed II attached several potent signs of Islam onto the pre-existing fabric of the church, and he called for the removal of all relics, icons, and crosses. He also added the first two minarets, signifying the architectural change of Hagia Sophia into an imperial mosque.⁹⁰ **(Figure 11)** The bells were removed from the bell tower and the cross was removed from atop the dome. Mehmed II replaced the large metal cross atop the dome with a crescent, a sign that is

⁸⁷ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 207.

⁸⁸ Cafer Celebi’s poem is published in Agah Sirri Levend, *Türk Edebiyatında Sehr-Engizler ve SehrEngizlerde İstanbul* (İstanbul: 1957), 76-78.

⁸⁹ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 202.

⁹⁰ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 203. For more on maps of Constantinople in the 15th century see Hartmann Schedel, *Liber Chronicarum*, 1493.

associated with Islam. He also added a minbar or pulpit, in the mosque where the leader of prayer stands to deliver sermons (**Figure 12**) and a mihrab, or semicircular niche in the wall of the mosque that indicates the direction of Mecca (**Figure 13**), thus the direction in which Muslims were to pray. Behind Hagia Sophia, Mehmed built a madrasa, a building dedicated to the study of Muslim theology.⁹¹ To Hagia Sophia's interior, plastering was added over mosaics.⁹² Only the figural mosaics on the lower levels were plastered over; the ones situated above or beyond the views of the congregations survived.⁹³ The plastering of mosaics was complemented by several Muslim inscriptions that helped announce the new conversion of the building.⁹⁴

By the sixteenth-century, Hagia Sophia had transformed into a meaningful, commemorative monument, celebrating the triumph of Islam over Christianity. Inside the mosque of Ayasofya, Mehmed II placed Muslim relics and mementos of victory. These relics were meant to signify that Hagia Sophia was a mosque acquired through holy warfare. The church that Justinian had built commemorated the triumph of Christianity by incorporating into its structure the marbles and spolia from pagan monuments. As with Justinian's church, Mehmed II's Hagia Sophia came to represent the glory of Islam through the new spoils of victory.

Selim II (1524-74) undertook Hagia Sophia's first large-scale renovation in 1572.⁹⁵ Selim II's effort was to consolidate the structural support of the building by

⁹¹ <http://istheworldyouroyster.wordpress.com/2011/08/04/hagia-sophia>.

⁹² Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 203.

⁹³ For the preservation of the mosaics, see Cyril Mango, *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*, (Washington D.C., 1962), 204.

⁹⁴ For a detail of the Muslim inscriptions see: *Tercüme-i Heşt Behişt*, fols. 79v.-91r. These early inscriptions are attributed to Mehmed bin Hamdi bin Mehmed bin Hamza, a descendant of Akşemseddin, Mehmed II's teacher who was assigned the professorship of the madrasa of Hagia Sophia. 442.

⁹⁵ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 205.

strengthening Hagia Sophia's buttresses and building the other two minarets. After inspecting Hagia Sophia's grounds it is recorded that Selim II gave the architect Sinan permission to renovate, saying, "It is my wish to renovate the noble mosque in order to make it my own royal monument."⁹⁶ Again Hagia Sophia becomes an emblem of re-appropriation. Selim II wished to renovate Hagia Sophia, making it not only a seat of religious power and authority but his own royal monument. Here, Selim II claimed personal ownership of the buildings, like Constantine, Justinian, and Mehmed had done before him.

The function of Hagia Sophia changed once again, with the establishment of Selim II's mausoleum, located behind Hagia Sophia's south façade.⁹⁷ **(Figure 14)** This was in keeping with the Ottoman practice of constructing royal tombs after the death of the sultan. It appears that Selim II wanted to associate Hagia Sophia with his own person. In doing so, he forever transformed Hagia Sophia's image. The addition of two minarets as well as the construction of his mausoleum helped to complete a dialogue between Ottoman imperial and Islamic religious architecture and allowed the sultan to leave his own, personal stamp on the monument. A four-minaret mosque was a privilege reserved for sultanic mosques.⁹⁸ Selim II's choice to build his mausoleum behind Hagia Sophia ultimately changed the character of building from a commemorative victory monument to an imperial funerary mosque.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ "Murâdim câmi'I şerîfi ihyâ' idüb eser-i hâss idinmekdür," Mustafâ Selâniki, *Târîh* (Istanbul, 1864-5), 120-1.

⁹⁷ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 208. Contemporary historian Peçevi describes Selim II's renovation under the chapter title "The construction of Buttresses and Two New Monumental Minarets at the Noble Mosque of Ayasofya." He writes: A decree was issued by Sultan Selim Khan . . . ordering the construction of great buttresses As a safety measure for the colossal dome of the noble Ayasofya Mosque, two unequaled minarets, twolofty madrasas, and a noble mausoleum for his burial, (501).

⁹⁸ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 210.

⁹⁹ For more on Selim II's mausoleum see Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 210. After the conquest of Constantinople,

Under the orders of Ahmed I (1590-1617) Hagia Sophia underwent another major renovation. Ahmed I's renovation concentrated on the restoration of Hagia Sophia's dome with the addition of lead sheets to cover and support it. The interior of Hagia Sophia's walls were whitewashed, covering up Hagia Sophia's Christian, figural mosaics. This masking of the figural mosaics signaled the growing intolerance of figural imagery in the context of the mosque. Islamic law forbids depictions of God or the prophet. Thus, Ahmed I selectively ordered the figural mosaics of Hagia Sophia to be painted over based on the acceptability of their iconography from an Islamic point of view. All mosaics not visible to the congregation as they faced the mihrab were acceptable. Passages from the Qur'an were added in an attempt to guide the understanding of the iconography of the mosaics that they replaced. The dome, which was decorated with the Byzantine mosaic of Christ Pantokrator, was covered and replaced with a quote from the Qur'an that reads, "In the name of God, the merciful and pitiful: God is the light of Heaven and Earth. His light is Himself, not that which shines through glass or gleams in the morning star or glows in the firebrand."¹⁰⁰ The dome inscription textually represents the feeling one would have upon looking at the dome, as the natural light illuminates the sanctuary. Looking at the dome is like looking to the heavens and looking to God himself. There is no need for an image to represent Him. This inscription program was able to communicate the Islamic identity of the mosque. The preserved figural mosaics left visible signaled the long life of Hagia Sophia to a Muslim congregation. Hagia Sophia had been a witness to the progress of religion, from paganism to monotheism, from Christianity to Islam. Ahmed I's

all Ottoman sultans had been buried in that city next to mosque complexes built in their own names. The fact that Selim II chose to build a mausoleum and be buried at Hagia Sophia, linked him specifically to the monument.

¹⁰⁰ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 117; 211-221.

renovation of Hagia Sophia reflects a new ideological orientation geared toward a stricter interpretation of Islam.

Ahmed I's renovation of Hagia Sophia reflected the new characteristics and ideological orientations of seventeenth-century Istanbul that emphasized a more dogmatic interpretation of Sunni Islam. Moreover, in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, the Ottoman Empire no longer looked to expansion, and the sultans began to present themselves as caliphs, with claims to religious authority of Muslim populations.¹⁰¹ In this redefined context, Hagia Sophia became the symbolic seat of the Ottoman caliphate, and therefore acquired a new meaning as a symbol of universal sovereignty.

In 1839, Abdülmecid (1823-1861) succeeded his father to the throne and oversaw Hagia Sophia's second major renovation. Abdülmecid's reign became important for the Westernization of the Ottoman state and culture. Abdülmecid asked for the uncovering and repair of the Christian mosaics in Hagia Sophia that had been whitewashed under Ahmed I. Although he did not achieve his goal of uncovering the mosaics, they were repaired by Gaspare and Giuseppe Fossati.¹⁰² The architects consolidated the dome and vaults, repaired the leaning columns, heightened the southeast brick minaret, cleaned and again covered the mosaics, and painted the exterior, as well as the interior. **(Figure 15)** During the Fossati repairs that eight colossal calligraphic roundels were created and added to the mosque's interior design.¹⁰³ These roundels proclaimed Islamic presence in Hagia Sophia more forcefully, each roundel depicting in golden letters, the sacred Islamic

¹⁰¹ Shirine Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 101.

¹⁰² Swiss architects Gaspare and Giuseppe Fossati traveled the world restoring ancient buildings. It was in Russia where they gained notoriety. The Fossati brothers were commissioned to construct a Russian embassy in Istanbul, where their work was admired by Sultan Abdülmecid. For more on the Fossati brothers and their renovation of Hagia Sophia, see Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 30-33.

¹⁰³ Nelson, *Hagia Sophia: 1850-1950*. 29-33.

names: Allah, the Prophet Mohammed, the first four caliphs, and the first imams.¹⁰⁴

(**Figure 16**) For the inauguration ceremony of the newly renovated Hagia Sophia, Abdülmecid had a commemorative medal cast in Paris. On one side was his *tughra*, or monogram and on the other was an image of Ayasofya, with the inscription, “Date of the repair of Hagia Sophia 1849.”¹⁰⁵ (**Figure 17**) The construction of this European medal helped bring Hagia Sophia to the center of international and scholarly attention.

The appropriation of Hagia Sophia as a religious and imperial symbol by the Ottoman sultans and caliphs was reminiscent to the building’s former existence as a religious and imperial symbol of Christianity. Hagia Sophia’s re-use is an example of a cultural collision, where conquerors chose to define themselves in terms of what was conquered. Both the Christians and the Muslims managed to conquer the city, establishing their own political and religious traditions, while remaining meaningful to their own past.

The monument of Hagia Sophia served as the emblem of these changes. The Ottomans were able to take Hagia Sophia, a building from Christian history, and make the building their own, adapting texts and architectural styles to suit an Islamic mind set. However, Hagia Sophia is not merely a Christian sacred space taken over by Muslim conquerors. Hagia Sophia continued to serve as a meaningful, commemorative monument, celebrating the triumph of Islam under the victorious Ottoman dynasty.

Despite nineteenth-century Ottoman efforts to Islamize the building, Hagia Sophia’s Christian memory was not completely erased. Upon his pilgrimage to Hagia Sophia, Prince Vladimir of Kiev commented in ways that recalled Byzantine metaphors:

¹⁰⁴ Freely, *Byzantine Monuments*, 117.

¹⁰⁵ Mark, *Hagia Sophia*, 224.

“We [know] not whether we [are] on Heaven or on Earth. For on Earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there, among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations; for we cannot forget that beauty.”¹⁰⁶ Vladimir’s observation speaks to the monument as a metaphorical symbol of Heaven on Earth. Hagia Sophia’s monumentality and spiritual significance beckoned pilgrims from all over the world. The building is indescribable in beauty and unparalleled in splendor. Here, Vladimir observes that Hagia Sophia is well known to other nations, its ceremonies great and of which there is no match.

Throughout the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, Hagia Sophia was always a meaningful monument and expression of sacred and royal power. But the imperial and religious associations that the Ayasofya Mosque acquired over the 481 years of Ottoman rule came to an end with the fall of the Ottoman Empire. In 1923, under the secular, Turkish Republic, the Ayasofya Mosque became a museum—and with it, a transformed statement of the relationship between nation and religion.

¹⁰⁶ Serge A. Zenkovsky, *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. Revised and Enlarged Edition. (NY: Meridian Books, 1974). Selections from the Russian Primary Chronicle were translated by Samuel H. Cross and published in *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, Volume 12, 1930.

Chapter III: Atatürk, the Republic, and the Ayasofya Müzezi

In 1932, Hagia Sophia was transformed once more from the great mosque of the Ottomans to the museum that it is today. By the time of Hagia Sophia's conversion, Turkey had become a new Republic and Mustafa Kemal the Republic's first president. His task was to rebuild Turkey to his standards; he was given the name Atatürk, meaning father of the Turks, thus renaming himself to create a new sense of history.¹⁰⁷ Atatürk moved the capital city from Istanbul to Ankara, formerly Angora.¹⁰⁸ The associations that the Ottoman Empire had with Istanbul were strategically erased in an attempt to create a new Turkish identity, and Atatürk launched a new campaign to transform Turkish society and to rid Turkey of Islam. Known as Kemalists or Secularists, his followers sought to create a new Turkish nation-state, founded explicitly on Turkish, ethnic nationalism and a new set of nationalist values that would replace the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and Islamic oriented values of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰⁹

This new secularism is extremely important in the transformation of Hagia Sophia from mosque to museum. The religious and imperial associations Hagia Sophia had acquired were neutralized under the secular Turkish Republic. Under Atatürk, the mosque had become too closely linked to the legitimacy of the Ottoman past, from which the new government had chosen to distance itself. Hagia Sophia once again had to be adapted to a new cultural and political context as the building was turned into the Ayasofya Museum.

¹⁰⁷ Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 180.

¹⁰⁸ Graham Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*. (Washington, D.C: United States Institute Peace Press, 2008), 26.

¹⁰⁹ Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, 26.

The political events prior to Atatürk's ascension are part of this story and the fate of Hagia Sophia. In the nineteenth-century, Turkey faced European imperial threats to territory, uprisings, and rebellions by various Christian minorities. Internal reformist ideas and demands also contributed to the country's instability. The Ottoman administration developed an interesting fusion of Islamic concepts, reformist initiatives, and Western nationalism in the form of the doctrine on Ottomanism.¹¹⁰ This ideology was the Ottoman administrators attempt to create a new sense of national loyalty to a multinational empire. Ottomanism represented an effort to combine Islamic ideas with those of the West that called for loyalty, not to the sultan or caliphate but to the Ottoman homeland.

This new concept of common Ottoman citizenship affected not only the political but religious sphere as well. It promised legal equality for all, as the homeland was considered common property of all peoples, within the Ottoman state and superseded traditional ethnic, local, and religious identities.¹¹¹ Institutionalizing Ottomanism proved difficult as the ideology called for a spirit of modernization within the framework of existing Ottoman culture. An attempt by the Ottoman government to use one, single citizenship as a common political identity, the goal was to achieve equality and unity among all Ottoman subjects.¹¹²

In the end, this Ottomanism did not succeed as a nationalist expression of loyalty to the empire. On the brink of war, this new ideology could not save the empire, and the Ottoman Empire continued a slow decline. As the empire moved toward collapse, the

¹¹⁰ Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, 20.

¹¹¹ Dietrich Jung and Wolfango Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East* (London: Zed Books, 2001), 44.

¹¹² Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey* (neiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2000), 6.

Arab populations remained loyal to the empire, but the empire's Balkan Christian minorities engaged in a series of rebellions and calls for a national liberation against the Ottoman state.¹¹³ The peoples of the Balkans rose in two successive wars against the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul was targeted and once again Hagia Sophia was the prized possession. Most of European Turkey was lost and the Bulgarians who had besieged the city were preparing to march into the city gates, intent upon placing a cross on the dome of Hagia Sophia.¹¹⁴ The resurgence of Christianity would thus restore Hagia Sophia to the Christian place of worship for which Hagia Sophia was originally intended. However, defenses held and the city of Istanbul was spared. Hagia Sophia remained a mosque.

By 1914, Turkey was at war against the allied forces and The Allies launched an offensive against Istanbul, through the Dardanelles, landing at Gallipoli. The Turkish government made plans to evacuate the city of Istanbul, even moving the archives to Angora and burying works of art for fear of invasion. Dynamite was placed in a number of public buildings, including Hagia Sophia, since members of the Young Turk's Party would have rather seen the destruction of Hagia Sophia rather than see the monument fall into Western hands. It was not until 1918 that the victorious Allied forces finally entered and occupied Istanbul.

Ottoman reformers from within sought to strengthen and modernize the state, during this time of occupation, while maintaining the integrity of the vast Muslim parts of the empire. In an attempt to regain control, Sultan Abdülhamit II (1842-1918) turned to the ideology of Pan-Islamism, issuing a broad warning that the seat of the Muslim world

¹¹³ Sylvia Kedourie, *Turkey Before and After Atatürk: Internal and External Affairs* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), 135. For more on Sultan Abdülhamit II and the Bulgarian crisis see: Hasan Ünal "Ottoman Policy during the Bulgarian Independence Crisis: the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria at the Outset of the Young Turk Revolution."

¹¹⁴ Kedourie, *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, 123.

was under threat from Western unbelievers. Abdülhamit called for Muslim unity against the European Christian enemy invader. Historian William Cleveland observed that at this time, “the Ottoman Empire still viewed itself as the universal protector of Islam; and the support the vast majority of Ottoman Muslims gave to the empire’s war effort demonstrated its devotion to the defense of the Ottoman-Islamic order against European ambitions.”¹¹⁵ Under Abdulhamit II, traditional, Islamic culture was modified in an attempt to create a modern society through a cultural pattern based on traditional values.¹¹⁶ This notion of Pan-Islamism contributed to Turkey’s decision to side with German and Austrian forces against England and France during WWI. It also became the basis for the secular powers that would ultimately transform the country and shape Turkey’s new identity, a move that would ultimately contribute to the fall of the once great Ottoman Empire.

The period following World War I was one of intense turmoil and change. Turkey witnessed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the defeat of Western imperialist attempts to marginalize the failing Turkish state, and Atatürk’s determination to reform, westernize, and construct a new Turkish identity.¹¹⁷ In 1919, Mustafa Kemal “Atatürk” emerged as Turkey’s savior and was given the power that would have tremendous consequences for Hagia Sophia. Atatürk was the military hero of Gallipoli and the only Turkish commander without a defeat to his name.¹¹⁸ He sought to emulate the giants of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires in a new public sphere, comparing himself to the likes of Justinian, Mehmed II, and Alexander the Great. Like Alexander the Great,

¹¹⁵ Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, 22.

¹¹⁶ Karpas, *Ottoman Past*, 76.

¹¹⁷ Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, 25-27.

¹¹⁸ Kedourie, *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, 25.

Atatürk was a Macedonian. Born to Turkish, middle class parents; he grew up in a world where East mingled with West and where Muslims lived at peace with Christians and Jews. Atatürk was extremely patriotic in defense of his Turkish homeland as well as keenly attuned to what he considered to be the west's civilizing influences and political and cultural benefits that could bring advancements to his people.¹¹⁹

In 1923, the Turkish Republic became a secular state in which the spiritual was distinctly separated from the temporal power. Turkey's secularization resulted in total state control that extended over all aspects of religious institutions and practices, Hagia Sophia included. Renouncing imperialism, Atatürk sought to make Turkey great once more by keeping Turkey small. In doing so, Atatürk created a new Turkish identity, bringing with it a new identity for Istanbul, as well as for Hagia Sophia. What mattered in his eyes was to save Anatolia, the heart of the Old Turkish homeland and to make it a new Turkish nation. Acquiring an army of loyal followers, as well as support from rebellious groups, Atatürk began to gain ground as the new leader of Turkish independence. He gave political reform to his military resistance by issuing a Declaration of Independence, in which Atatürk insisted upon a National Pact that instilled a preservation of Turkey's existing frontiers that denied privileges to non-Turkish minorities, and allowed for the election of a provisional, nationalist government. This nationalist government took form in 1920, with the inauguration of a grand, National Assembly in Angora. Under Nationalist pressure, the sultan's government was dissolved, and the last sultan of the Ottoman Empire retired into exile in October of 1922.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹Caglar Keyder, *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local* (Maryland; Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 66.

¹²⁰ Keyder, *Istanbul*, 66-67.

Atatürk, who had already proven himself as a soldier, had begun to prove himself as a politician, diplomat, and statesman as well.

As Atatürk embraced the Western world, he began a series of religious reforms that would further alter the identity of the nation. Included in these reforms were the transformation of all religious schools to secular ones, the closure of religious courts, and the replacement of Islamic law with a civil code based on the Western model. The fez, a symbol of Islam was ordered to be removed from the head of the Turkish male, and the veil removed from the face of the Turkish female. For the new Turkish Republic, religion ceased to be a political instrument and became a matter of individual conscience.

Hagia Sophia played a role in this realignment. Atatürk and his assembly showed his greatest control over religion by abolishing the caliphate, the supreme religious office of the entire Sunni Muslim world. The seat of the caliphate was none other than Hagia Sophia, the once former seat of the Christian Patriarchate. Atatürk's representative Refet Pasha was welcomed to the capital, where he addressed a huge congregation from the pulpit of Hagia Sophia. The new prayer of the Republic omitted any mention of the caliphate. From the great mosque of Hagia Sophia, the prayer was heard, "O God, grant thy protecting aid to our Republican Government and the Muslim nation. Make eternal the glory of the Muslims and raise the flag of Islam, which rests upon the Republic of Turkey, above all other flags and make them live by the Spiritual Prophet."¹²¹ This statement functioned as the new prayer of the Republic. Atatürk called for the establishment of a republic under a secular regime. The caliphate was a potent symbol of Islamic identity, power, and legitimacy. In secularizing Hagia Sophia Atatürk took away the power Hagia Sophia held as a mosque. The abolition of the caliphate came as a blow

¹²¹ Kedourie, *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, 45.

to Islam, depriving the Turkish, Muslim community of its central institution and supreme religious figure.

To further advance his model of secularization, Hagia Sophia was converted into a Byzantine-Ottoman museum and once again the building was rewritten. Upon conversion of Hagia Sophia into a museum, a team of architectural experts were called to survey the monument. The architects found the structure of Hagia Sophia to be sound. They consolidated one of the building's piers and encircled the dome with a band of reinforced concrete, thus protecting the building against leakage. Before the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a museum, a team of American experts were permitted to study, photograph, and measure Hagia Sophia's interior. Robert Nelson's investigations and the studies of the Byzantine Institute reveal that the Turkish Council of Ministry officially authorized the Byzantine Institute to uncover the mosaics of Ayasofya, under the supervision of American, Thomas Whittemore. Whittemore's personal relationship with Atatürk enabled him to gain permission from the Turkish government to start the preservation of the Hagia Sophia mosaics in 1931.¹²² According to Whittemore, "Santa Sophia was mosque the day I talked to him; the next morning, when I went to the mosque, there was a sign on the door written in Atatürk's own hand; it said: The museum is closed for repairs."¹²³ Atatürk recognized the significance of the mosaics Whittemore was to uncover as treasures of Christian art that should be shown to the world. These mosaics function as part of Hagia Sophia's heritage and history, and in uncovering the mosaics of the past, Atatürk wished to present the cultural and religious history of Hagia Sophia—and effectively, undercut the building's identity solely as a mosque.

¹²² Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 160, 167.

¹²³ Whittemore, in Istanbul, to Gano, in Boston, letter dated July 19, 1932, DO. Unpublished diary of George Holt, Medieval Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Whittemore and his team of experts worked on the mosaics of Hagia Sophia until the outbreak of World War II. According to Edward Forbes, the director of the Fogg Art Museum, the reason that Whittemore was always shown in illustrations of the work at Hagia Sophia was to demonstrate to the Turkish Government that he was directing the work. Whittemore's work covered the vaults and the walls of the narthex, the southeast vestibule, the south gallery, the apse, and the north tympanum. During Hagia Sophia's preservation project, he also became extremely interested in Hagia Sophia's mosaic crosses; which he dated to the sixth-century.¹²⁴ Each cross uncovered proved different in color, in jewels, in outline, and in technique. Whittemore asserted, "The crosses offer a clue to the character which Justinian gave to the entire first interior decoration of the building, in order to reconcile the monophysites to the original church, thus strengthening Justinian's own position in the state."¹²⁵ The crosses, from the time of Justinian, showcase decoration in the original church.

Once the mosaics were uncovered, the Ayasofya Müzesi was opened as a great museum. Major art donors and sponsors of the study of Byzantine art took special interest in Hagia Sophia, in light of Whittemore's project. Art collector and Dumbarton Oaks owner Mildred Bliss, along with her husband Robert, were proponents of Whittemore's work and reassured him that his work with the mosaics of Hagia Sophia was a great success saying, "Robert and I both feel that your work at Hagia Sophia is of the utmost importance to the history of Christendom and many forms of scholarship and we want to share in bringing it to a successful conclusion as long as it is possible for us to do so."¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 175-176.

¹²⁵ Thomas Whittemore, *The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Byzantine Institute, 1933), 223.

¹²⁶ Mildred Bliss to Whittemore, letter dated September 25, 1941, DO. That check was for \$3,000 as per a

Mildred Bliss recognizes Whittemore's project as a monumental contribution to scholarly research, as well as for those Christians world wide, who would finally be able to see the Byzantine mosaics.

On November 24, 1934, the very day that Mustafa Kemal was declared Atatürk, the Turkish Council of Ministers officially decreed the secularization of the mosque. The Ministers resolved that, "Due to its historical significance, the conversion of the Ayasofya Mosque . . . into a museum will please the entire Eastern world; and its conversion to a museum will cause humanity to gain a new institution of knowledge."¹²⁷ By turning Hagia Sophia into a museum, the building would no longer be a mosque but a building that would celebrate the historical and religious significance of both Christianity and Islam. With the goal is of pleasing both Orthodox Christians and devout Muslims, Hagia Sophia then becomes a neutral space within a new governmental regime, one that is distanced from the Ottoman empire and focused on the creation of a more modern and western nation.

Not only was the mosque converted but Istanbul too changed shape in the midst of a transformation. Courtyards were prepared as an open-air museum, and the Hagia Sophia's interior served as a museum of Byzantine and Ottoman art with works set in appropriate places. Hagia Sophia square had been created in 1868 and was in need of renovation.¹²⁸ In preparation for the opening of the new museum, several shops and small buildings close by were demolished and other buildings repaired to improve the aspect of the area. Improving the urban image of Istanbul was an important aspect to

letter to The Blisses from the treasurer of the Byzantine Institute, Sept. 30/Oct. 2, 1941, DO.

¹²⁷ Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 180.

¹²⁸ Zeynep Çelik *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 114.

Atatürk's goal of westernization, and attempts were made to bring the old city of Istanbul up to modern standards. Embellishment, regularization, and road enlargement were aspects of the city's urbanization.¹²⁹ A report from the Tanzimat Council on the reorganization of the land of the Ottoman Empire reports that, "If some artful embellishment is added to the natural beauty of Istanbul, which is unique in the world, there is no doubt it will become the most beautiful of the most beautiful cities of Europe."¹³⁰ This desire to align itself with Europe did not only affect national identity of Turkey but also the physical make-up of the city. After the site was prepared, the mosque was opened as a museum and the sacred site of Hagia Sophia became an instant tourist attraction.

The museum took on a new function as an emblem of the new Republic. With that change in function is an effort to control its memory by combining Hagia Sophia's past histories in a new secular environment. As a museum, Hagia Sophia would showcase the union of East and West through the display of cultural art and artifacts. Today, for a little over 11 U.S dollars, you can visit the Ayasofya Müzesi, open Tuesdays-Sundays, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. **(Figure 18)** The last exhibition held in Hagia Sophia in 2007 was a literary exhibition in which texts of poetry from former sultans were displayed. At the time of this writing, there is no exhibition inside the museum, but there are information panels at the entrance to the museum discussing the history of the building itself. There are also audio guide services that give information on the Ayasofya Museum in 11 languages. The Ayasofya Müzezi is continuously restored and renovated in attempts to

¹²⁹ Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul*, 158.

¹³⁰ For a survey of plans developed for Istanbul during the republican period, see N. Duranay, E. Gürsel, and S. Ural, "Cumhüyetten Bu Yana İstanbul Planlaması," *Mimarlık*, 7 (1972): 65-109.

recover the building's "old magnificence."¹³¹ Dr. A. Haluk Dursun, director of the Ayasofya Müzezi states, "The Hagia Sophia has existed for 1,500 years . . . there are still secrets to it."

Turkey's politics today are continuously changing, leaving the future of these mysteries and Turkey at large uncertain. Many Muslims have long considered Turkey's break with the country's historical and cultural past to be so radical as to be damaging to Muslim society. Turkish Islamists seek to retain an Islamic identity while undergoing a modernization process. With the rise of the Justice and Development party and the election of current president Abdullah Gül in 2007, there is a new face of Turkish Islam. The election of Abdullah Gül was the first time an Islamist has ever assumed the presidency, which until then had been regarded as the stronghold of Secularism.¹³² President Gül's wife wears the first headscarf ever seen in the presidential palace. The President has redefined Secularism as no longer denoting state domination of religion, but state neutrality on religious issues. Turkish Islamists represent the most creative intellectual force in the country. In foreign policy, Turkey is now backed by a large public mandate, confidently moving in the direction of a more independent foreign policy, emphasizing good neighbor relations with both the countries Middle Eastern and Eurasian counterparts. Also under Gül are efforts to lesson the role of the military, the former powerhouse in Turkey's private and political spheres. Although Turkey will most likely remain a secular state, the role and involvement of secularism within Turkish society could change, as the country is beginning to embrace the Ottoman past that Atatürk was so adamant to erase.

¹³¹ <http://www.ayasofyamuzesi.gov.tr/en/basinda.html>.

¹³² Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, 179.

Turkey's new Islamicist regime has successfully challenged Turkey's secular elite, pushing the military out of its longstanding role as guardian of the secular governing traditions that began with Atatürk's founding of the Republic in the 1920's. Turkey's government is under the direction of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was elected in 2003, and whose conservative party was elected again in 2011. Erdogan has been hailed as the voice of modern Islam, representing the rising underclass of religious Turks. Erdogan comes from a background of political Islam and on the top of his agenda is bringing Turkey into the European Union.

This new sense of rising Turkish power and influence is so pronounced that the country's deep current of nationalism and in some cases romanticism influences the more religious sect's call for Turkey to return to the Arab world that ruled for more than four centuries. The current director of the Strategic Communication Committee, Suat Kinikioglu, likely reflects broader sentiments in the Turkish Parliament when he observes that, "We are not out there to recreate the Ottoman Empire, but we are out there to make the most of the influence we have in a region that is embracing our leadership."¹³³ Casting the debate at hand in terms of a "re-creation" of the Ottoman Empire, Kinikioglu positions Turkey as a progressive country, as opposed to being more retrospective. At the same time, any mention of the Ottoman Empire automatically recalls its dominance as a regional and international power. Even so, there is considerable pressure elsewhere to embrace the Ottoman heritage when it comes to religion. This idea coexists with the current regimes supported push for Islamicization, which embodies a return to Muslim values, communities, and dress codes and emphasizes a strengthened community.

¹³³ Anthony Shadid, "In Riddle of Mideast Upheaval, Turkey Offers Itself as an Answer," *New York Times*, 27 Sept. 2011, A1.http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/27/world/europe/in-mideast-riddle-turkey-offers-itself-as-an-answer.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1&sq=turkey%20erdogan&st=cse&scp=24.

Islamicization not only embodies a personal belief and code of action; but also provides a sense of identity and belonging, both moral and communal.¹³⁴

Amidst this push for Islamicization, Hagia Sophia remains a museum. The building's rich history, as well as its religious and architectural significance lures visitors from all over the world. Major political powers make an effort to visit Hagia Sophia each year. President Obama made the trip in 2009 and Turkey's current President, Abdullah Gül visited in 2011. Last year, the Ayasofya Müzesi was visited by 2,952,768 people, making it Istanbul's number one tourist destination. Hagia Sophia no longer stands as a house of worship but rather as a tourist attraction. The Secularist party today wishes for Hagia Sophia to remain a museum, a monument to the great art, politics, and history of the Turkish people and a symbol of the Republic.

Although Hagia Sophia has been a secular building for seventy-seven years, both Christian and Muslim advocates wish to see the building returned to their respective religious places of worship. Within the past ten years, Hagia Sophia has made headlines as a feud over its ownership continues to rage. In 2006, protests by devout Islamists were sparked by Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Hagia Sophia. According to BBC News, the Pope spent a half hour in Hagia Sophia, while Islamist-nationalist party members were demonstrating outside. Members of the Islamist party protested the Pope's visit, saying that the Pontiff's tour was an affront to secularism and an attempt to claim the site as Christian. The demonstrators warned that any hint of prayer there would be deeply offensive. Guards were put in place to help control the mobs and prevent riots. The Pope's actions did not contradict the demonstrator's wishes.

¹³⁴ Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, 55.

Tens of thousands of protesters jammed surrounding streets and squares in days before the Pope's arrival chanting, "Constantinople is forever Islamic," and "Let the chains break and Ayasofya open."¹³⁵ Thirty-nine male protesters were arrested by police for staging prayer inside the museum and hundreds of woman wearing head coverings brandished a petition claiming that they had gained one million signatures demanding the reconversion of Hagia Sophia to a mosque. The protestors' cry that Constantinople is forever Islamic was an appeal to historical precedent, but an invented precedent that writes out the centuries of Christian rule and even, the twentieth-century secularist regimes. Similarly, the notion of Ayasofya in chains speaks to the metaphorical bondage of the building under the secular regime. In the museum's guest book the Pope wrote, "God should illuminate us and help us find the path of love and peace."¹³⁶ The Pope did not intervene with a solution promoting the re-consecration of Hagia Sophia as a church. Rather, retreating from the unresolved issues, the Pope chose a more diplomatic approach, one in which he appealed for divine intervention and specifically for the love and peace that would make a solution possible.

Hagia Sophia has not only become a symbol for devout Islamists, but a potent symbol for Greeks and in particular, Greek Americans. In June, 2007, Chris Spirou, president of the "Free Agia Sophia Council of America" testified in Washington, D.C at hearings sponsored by the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. Spirou asserted that the one-time cathedral had been, "taken prisoner by the Turks," and there before the council, called for Hagia Sophia to be restored as the "Holy House of prayer" for all Christians of

¹³⁵ Fergus Bordewich, "A Monumental Struggle to Preserve Hagia Sophia," *Smithsonian Magazine*. December. 2008, 2.

¹³⁶ Bordewich, "A Monumental Struggle," 2-4.

the world.¹³⁷ Spirou stated, “Hagia Sophia stands as the greatest testimony to the ruthlessness, the insensitivity, and the barbaric behavior of rulers and conquerors towards human beings and their rights.”¹³⁸ For Spirou, the ownership of Hagia Sophia is a matter of human rights. Spirou argues that he is promoting religious freedom, not religion and that Hagia Sophia belongs to the faithful who have a desire to pray there. Spirou is looking at the history of Hagia Sophia, and seeing the building as an Orthodox church. He claims that he is not leading an anti-Turkish movement; rather, he is critiquing a violation of human rights and in particular the right to practice a religion.

These claims, have in turn, sparked protests. In 2010, two hundred and fifty Greek Americans cancelled their plans to hold a religious service in Hagia Sophia, after receiving a strongly worded statement from Turkish authorities. In preparation for the planned service, Spirou sent a letter to Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan saying, “We believe, Prime Minister, that the global pilgrimage and service in the church of Hagia Sophia will be the trigger for a global summit on peace and coexistence.” Using the language of pilgrimage as a sacred right, Spirou hopes to appeal to the notion of globalization. The online Turkish newspaper, *The Hürriyet Daily News* reported a Turkish Foreign Ministry Official’s response, “We have directly and indirectly held talks to stop this Hagia Sophia initiative; we made it clear that any attempt to disturb the public order would not be tolerated by Christian or Muslim groups.”¹³⁹ Turkish Foreign Ministry Official, Ahmet Davutoğlu insisted that Hagia Sophia remain a secular institution. And, Turkey’s Cultural Minister, Ertuğrul Gûnay, stated that the iconic

¹³⁷ *Hürriyet Daily News*, “Groups Mission to Hagia Sophia Aborted.”
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=no-tolerance-to-spirou-led-group-government-says-2010-09-16> (accessed 7 June 2011), 1.

¹³⁸ *Hürriyet Daily News*, “Groups Mission,” 2.

¹³⁹ *Hürriyet Daily News*, “Groups Mission,” 1.

Istanbul site would never host any kind of religious service and would maintain its status as a museum.¹⁴⁰ Both ministry officials claim to be prepared to fight religious groups and initiatives in favor of the re-consecration of the building. In their eyes, Hagia Sophia will continue to function as a museum and attempts to change this, by either Christian or Muslim groups will be withheld.

With these debates as a backdrop, events continue to unfold. In July 2009, a six winged angel mosaic was uncovered on the North section of Hagia Sophia's dome, after being hidden behind plaster for 160 years. The mosaic measures 1.5 meters by 1 meter and is believed to date from the 14th century. This six-winged figure is believed to be seraphim, a type of celestial being mentioned in the biblical book of Isaiah. **(Figure 19)** Upon viewing this figure, Culture and Tourism Minister Ertuğrul Gûnay expressed his joy, "For the first time in my life, I am part of an endeavor this exciting." Gûnay also stated that this endeavor made at the northeast quarter of the dome is a very important one for Hagia Sophia and what he believes is for Christian theology as well. Thus, a member of the new Islamist regime is excited by the building's Christian history and its unfolding revelation.

¹⁴⁰ *Hürriyet Daily News*, "Groups Mission." 2.

CONCLUSION

“The wisdom of its hemispherical dome shall outlive peoples and outlast the ages still to come.”¹⁴¹ This line, by Russian poet and literary critic Osip Mandelstam (1891-1938) speaks to the longevity of Hagia Sophia. As long as the building or its memory survives, its cultural reception will continue to change and adapt. Hagia Sophia stands today as a great monument in a city that is culturally and politically changing. Last year, two and half million people visited the Ayasofya Müzesi.¹⁴² Throughout the year, it draws a steady flow of visitors of all faiths, from all parts of the world. Modern-day pilgrims come to Hagia Sophia with awe, curiosity, and reverence for the foremost shrine of three great epochs, the Byzantine, Ottoman, and Secular periods of Turkey’s history. Hagia Sophia has adapted to these changing times. As new leaders emerged, whether emperor, sultan, or president, Hagia Sophia was the building of choice. Through Hagia Sophia, we see the shifting dimensions of the role that Constantinople and later Istanbul played as a symbol of political and religious governing authorities.

For Constantine as well as for Justinian, the two major players in Hagia Sophia’s early Christian and Byzantine histories, the building represented a melding of religion and imperial ceremony. Constantine’s search for a building that would foster his new found faith was manifest in Hagia Sophia. In ordering the rebuilding of Hagia Sophia, Justinian sought to create a powerful symbol of his power and that of the religion of the state.¹⁴³ Hagia Sophia was physically connected to the palace, thus giving the emperor physical and spiritual authority; a heavenly dwelling on earth. For nine hundred years, Hagia Sophia served as the great monument of Christianity. With the fall of the

¹⁴¹ Osip Mandelstam, “Hagia Sophia,” in *50 Poems*, trans. Bernard Meares (New York: 1977), 33.

¹⁴² <http://www.tourismturkey.org/>.

¹⁴³ Evans, “Byzantium Revisited,” 1.

Byzantine Empire, and Constantinople sequentially, Hagia Sophia would take on a new meaning, as the new symbol of the Muslim faith.

The Ottomans were able to take Hagia Sophia, a building from Christian history, and make the building their own, adapting texts and architectural styles to suit their purposes. Not only was the history of Hagia Sophia reconstructed but the history of Istanbul as well. Hagia Sophia is not merely a Christian sacred space taken over by Muslim conquerors; rather, it continued to serve as a meaningful, commemorative monument, celebrating the triumph of Islam under the victorious Ottoman dynasty. The appropriation of Hagia Sophia as a religious and imperial symbol by the Ottoman sultans and caliphates was reminiscent to the building's former existence as a religious and imperial symbol of Christianity. Both the Christians and the Muslims managed to conquer the city, establishing their own political and religious traditions, while remaining meaningful to their own past. Under Atatürk, Hagia Sophia was displaced and stripped of its religious function. As a museum, Hagia Sophia would showcase the union of East and West through the display of cultural art and artifacts.

Hagia Sophia continues to be the focus of political and religious claims. Turkey's Prime Minister, Erdoğan, has been hailed as the voice of modern Islam, representing the rising underclass of religious Turks. Until recently, bringing Turkey into the European Union topped his agenda and with Turkey's upcoming EU negotiations in 2015, the fate of Hagia Sophia remains in the balance. Once again the political effects of Istanbul's changing authorities will affect the function of Hagia Sophia. Today, Hagia Sophia remains stuck in a game between religious and secular parties; and neither party is willing to negotiate. Religious extremists are bent on reclaiming it for their respective faiths,

while other Turks remain equally determined to retain it as a national symbol of a proud and secular civilization.

“What is beautiful, what is historic, what tears the mask off the face of the past, and helps us to read its riddles, and to look it in the eyes—these, and not the dogmas of combative theology, are the principal criteria to which we must look.”¹⁴⁴ Although George Curzon (1859-1925), Lord of Kedleston and Viceroy of India was discussing another building in India, this statement can be applied to the Secularist use of Hagia Sophia. In turning Hagia Sophia into a museum, Atatürk rid the building of its religious affiliations. However, religion is not completely erased in that in going to the museum one is able to see a mix of Christian and Islamist art and architecture. Religious use is not the only way to establish a building’s history.

Hagia Sophia attests to the dynamic nature of historical monuments. The building’s foundation has been one of politics and religion, since 332 CE. It became an important site, as a repository of Christian relics; Hagia Sophia’s space was used and altered for different religious settings and rituals: as a site for worship, baptism, as well as for a mausoleum. It has served as a model for mosque-builders; and as a museum today it serves as a UNESCO World Heritage site. **(Figure 20)** This longitudinal study of Hagia Sophia reveals that the building has been rewritten with each new political regime and that at every stage, Hagia Sophia has had a religious and a political voice. Not only has the building been transformed and rewritten by Christians, Muslims, and Secularists, but it has been used by them as a mechanism by which Constantinople’s history has been

¹⁴⁴ Curzon, George. *Justinian: Being the Lothian Prize Essay for 1883* (Oxford, n.d) For the writings of this essay and more on Curzon’s travels, see the general studies on Curzon by the Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, vol. 1 (London: 1928), 55,79-80 and David Gilmour, *Curzon* (London: 1994), 33-38.

constructed as well. Knowing the subsequent history of Hagia Sophia allows us to better understand it today.

Today, Hagia Sophia is a monument that is in-between-heritage.¹⁴⁵ The Christians, the Muslims, and the Secularists must be willing to work together to come up with a solution that will resolve the conflict over ownership. The new debates over the ownership of Hagia Sophia that have risen within the last ten years have their basis in the history of a monument built during the reign of Emperor Constantine. The debates today effectively reprise all that has gone on before. Christians, Muslims, and secularists all argue that the building is theirs, justified in their claims in the history of Hagia Sophia. With both a political and religious charge, these claims are brought into context. Hagia Sophia is a prime example of how knowledge of the past can inform our understanding of the future.

¹⁴⁵ Young, Linda. "Museums, Heritage, and the Things that Fall In-Between." (*International Journal of Heritage Studies*: 2007), 12.

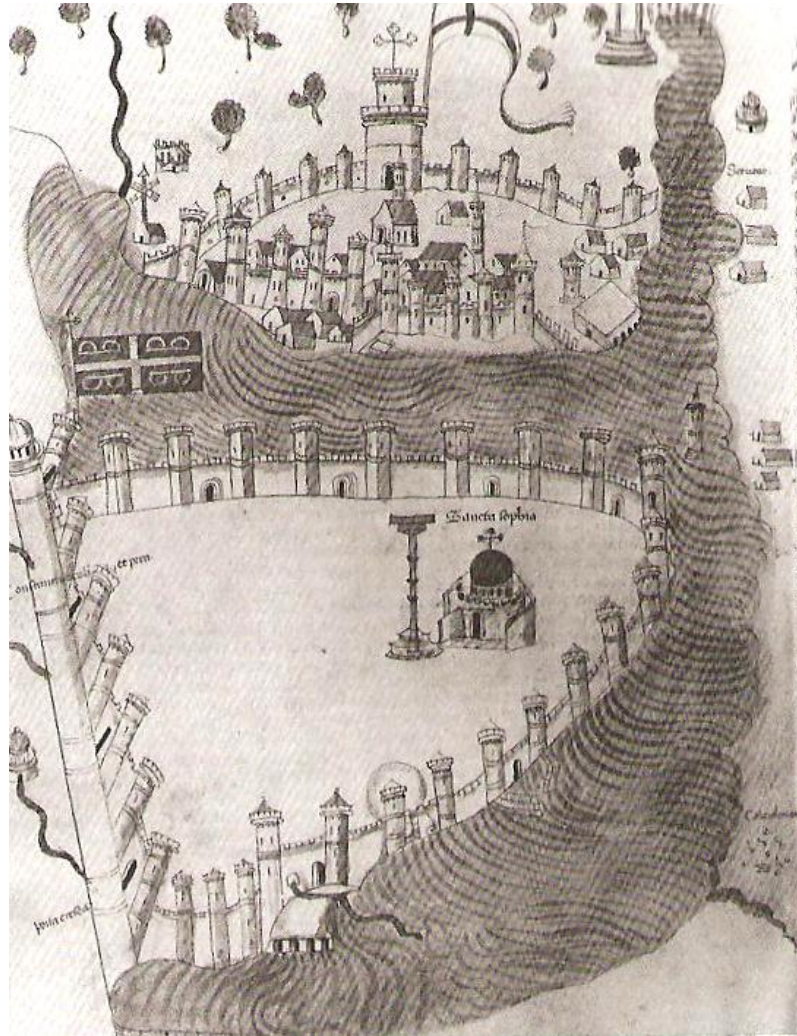


Figure 1: Map of Constantinople, Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Liber insularum archipelagi*, ca. 1475, ink drawing, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MS W309.

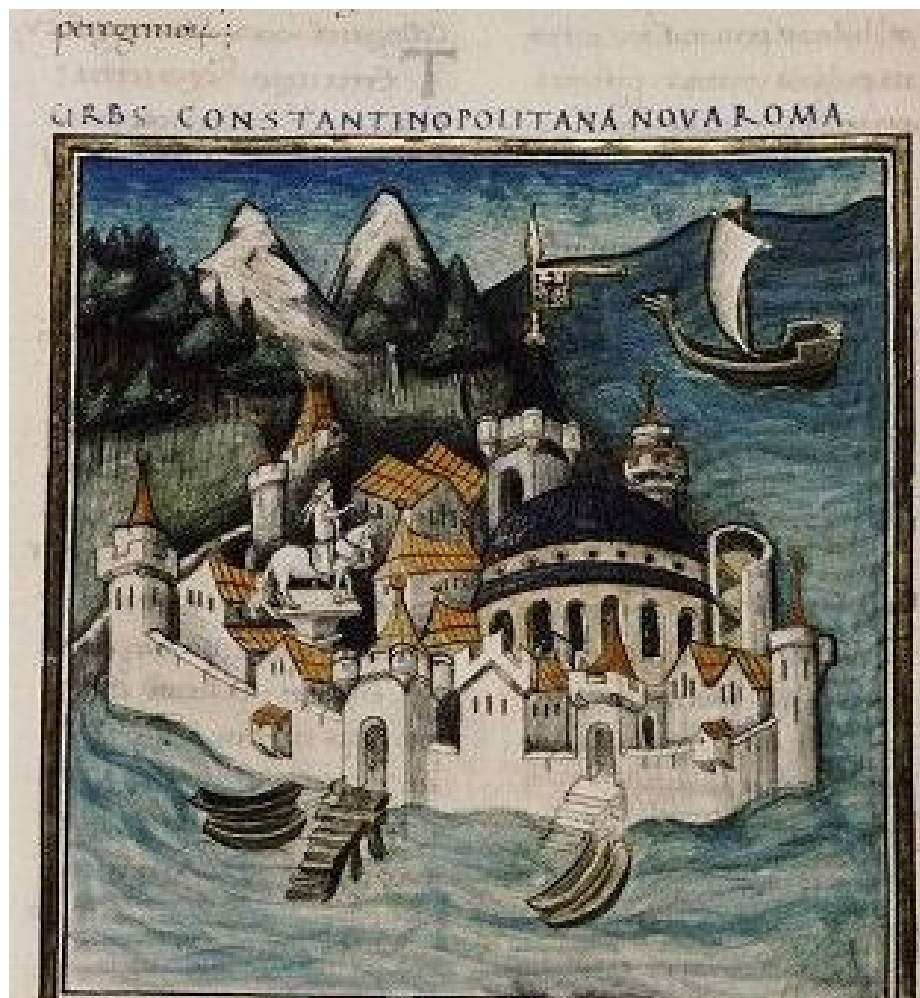


Figure 2: Constantinople in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, 1436, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Cod. Canon Misc, 378, fol. 84

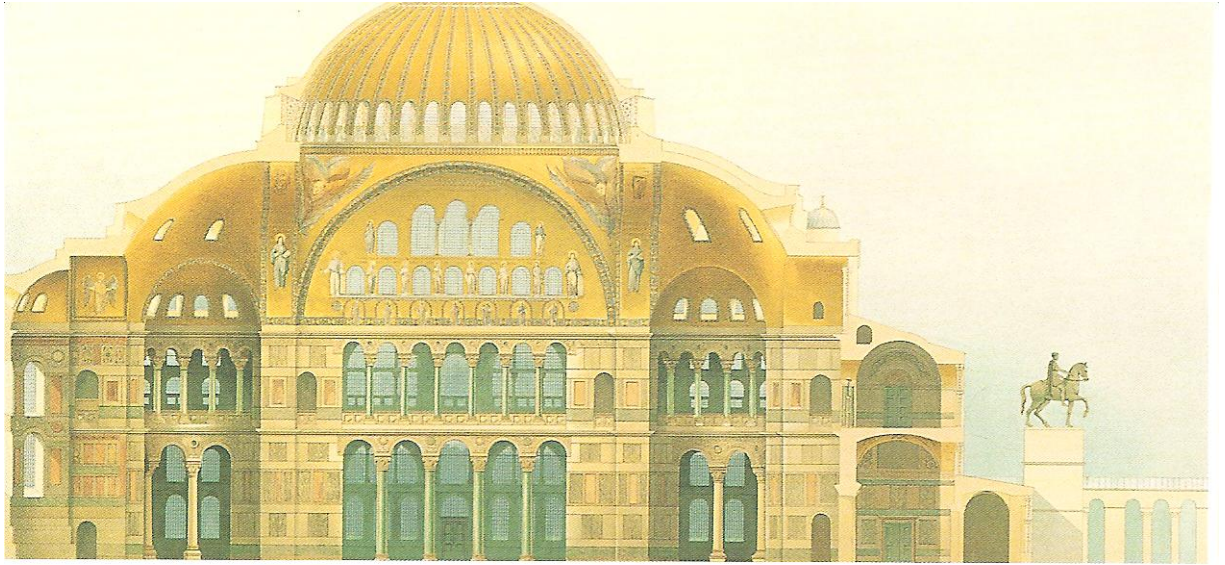


Figure 3: Section of Hagia Sophia, 1854, Wilhelm Salzenberg, *Alt-christliche Baudenkmale von Constantinople*



Figure 4: *Virgin and Child Flanked by Justinian and Constantine*, Southwest vestibule, mosaic at Hagia Sophia, 944



Figure 5: *Virgin and Child*, Apse mosaic at Hagia Sophia, 867

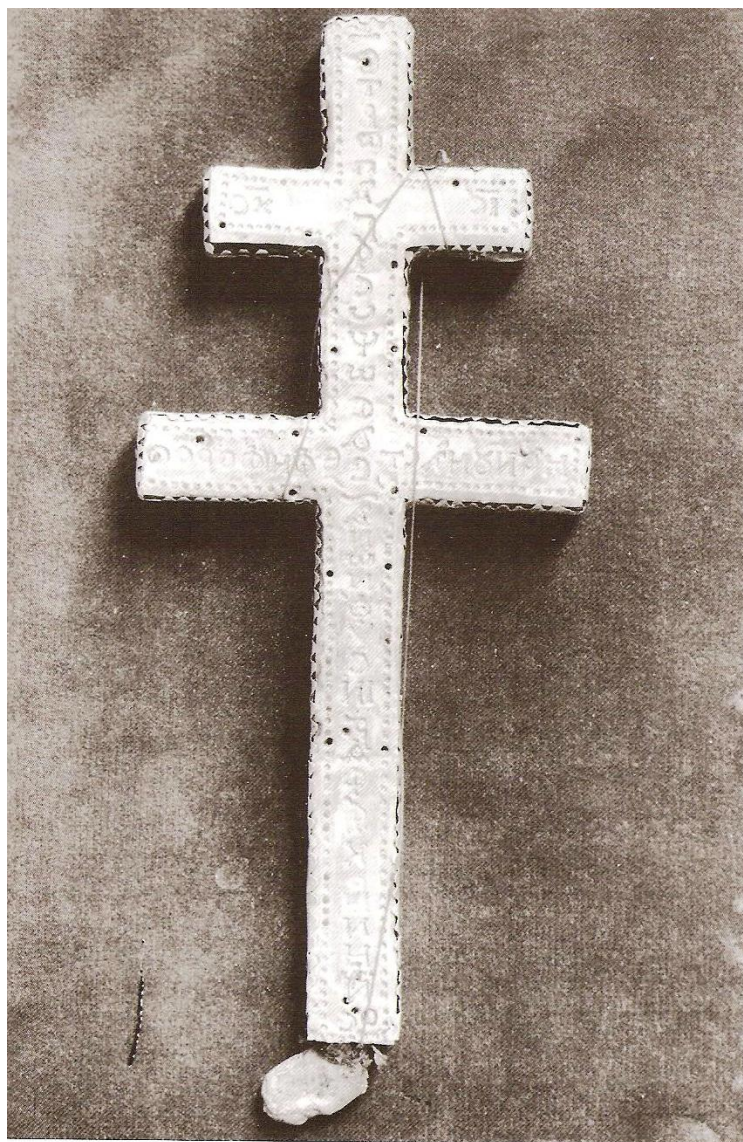


Figure 6: Reliquary of the True Cross of Manuel Komnenos, 10th century, treasury of Notre Dame, Paris, (was in the Polish royal treasury by 1475)

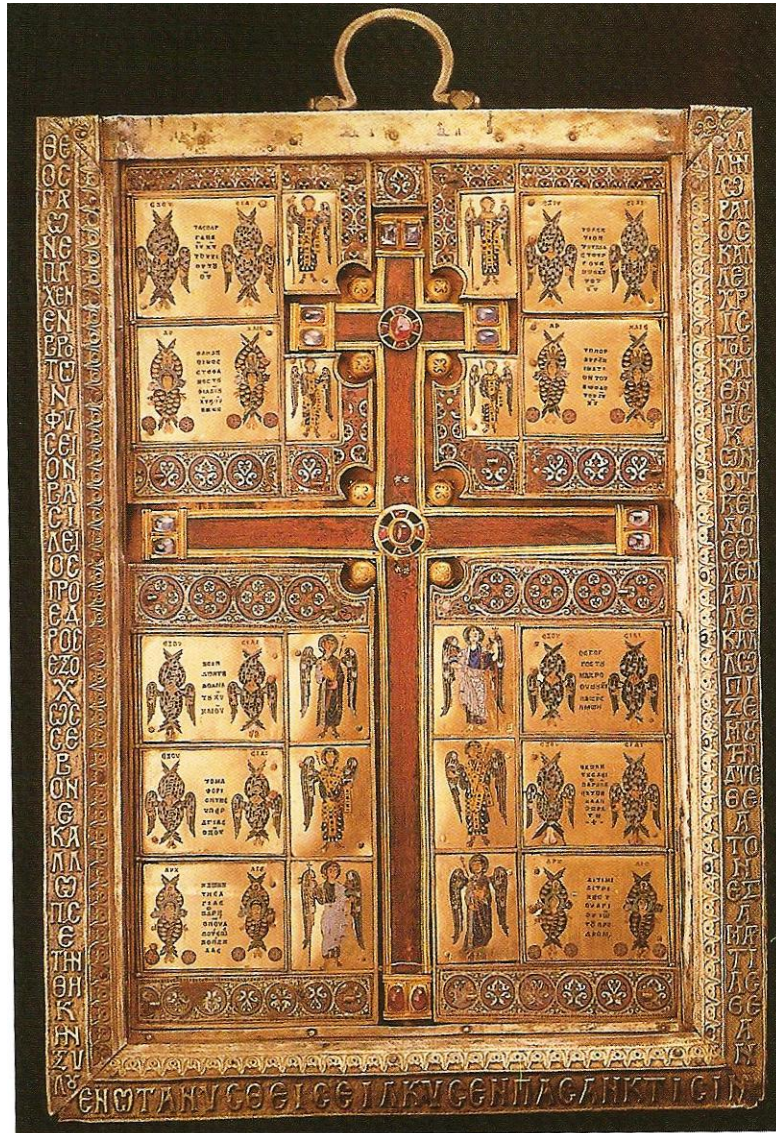


Figure 7: Enameled reliquary of the True Cross, from Constantinople, The Limburg
Staurotheke, 959-63

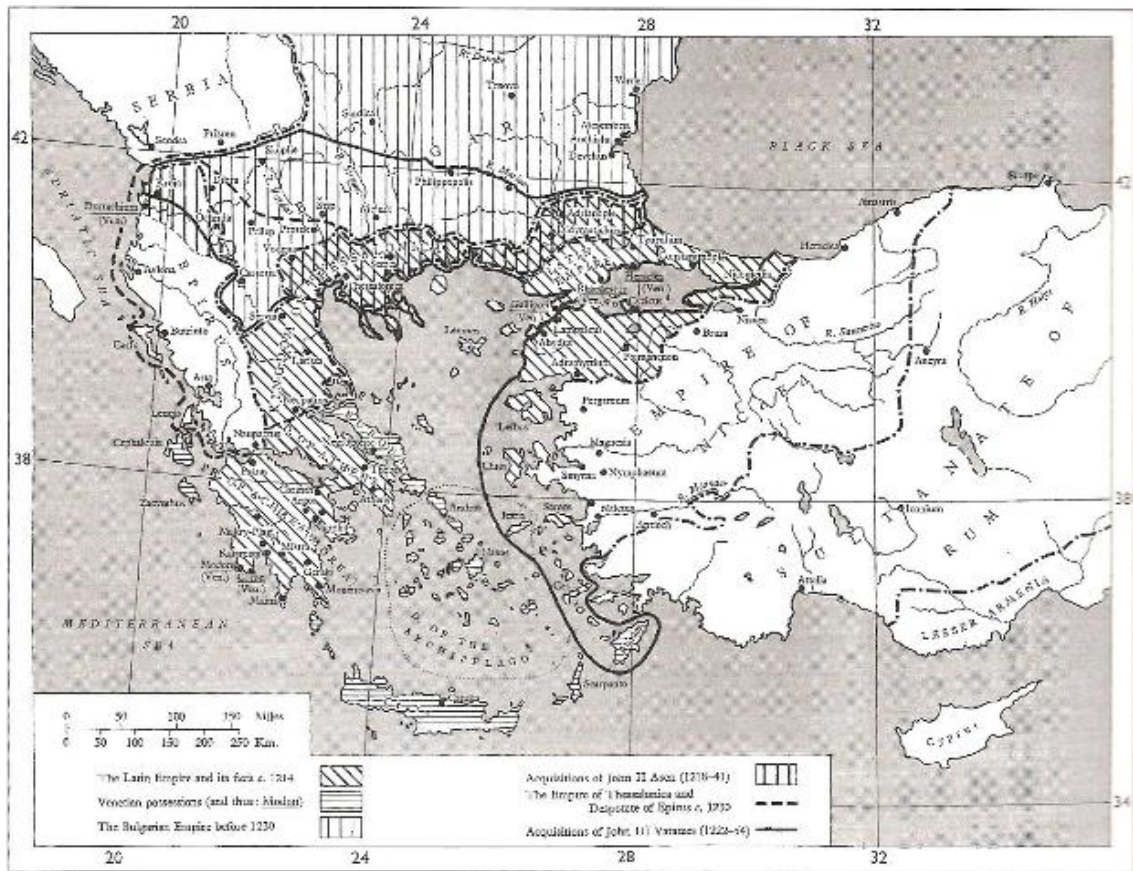


Figure 8: Map of the Age of Latin Rule in Constantinople, 1204-61, George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, translated by Joan Hussey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 416.



Figure 9: Kariye Camii (Church of Christ in Chora), Photograph by Tahsin Aydoğmuş



Figure 10: Map of Constantinople, Cristoforo Buondelmonti's *Liber insularum archipelagi*, ca. 1480, ink and color, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris



Figure 11: Partial view of Constantinople in Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum*, with Hagia Sophia, the column of Justinian, and the Topkapi Palace, 1493



Figure 12: Minbar in Saint Sophia, Sébah, J. Pascal, ca. 1865-ca. 1880, Photograph

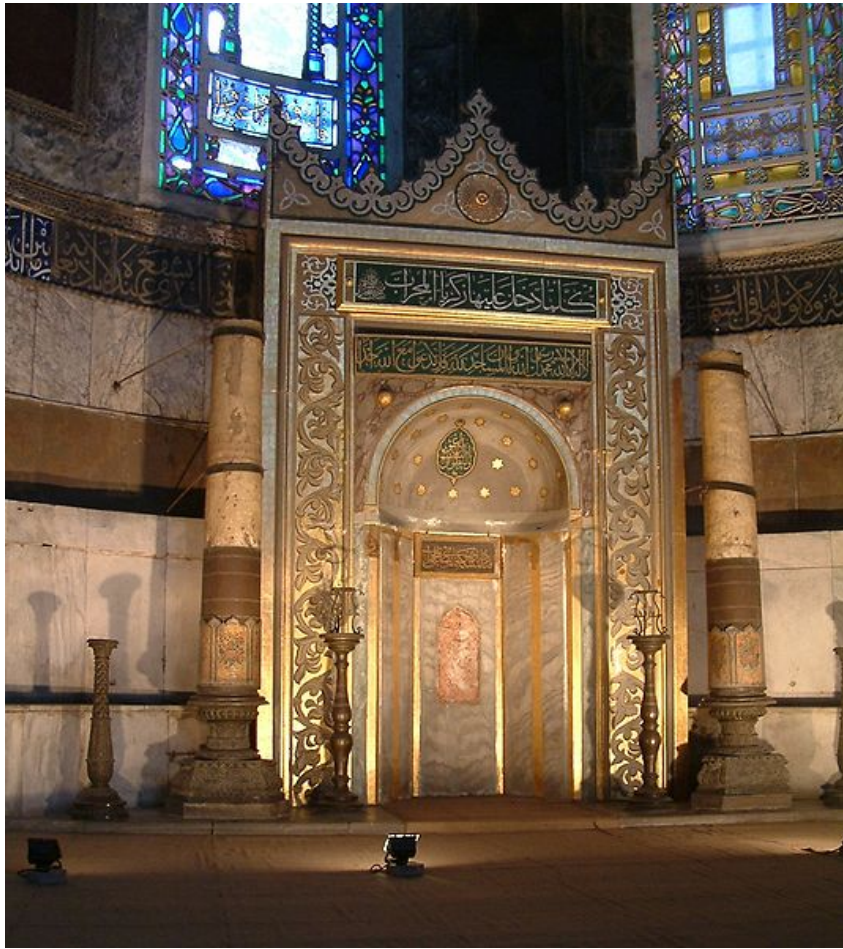


Figure 13: Mihrab in Hagia Sophia, unknown, 2005, Photograph

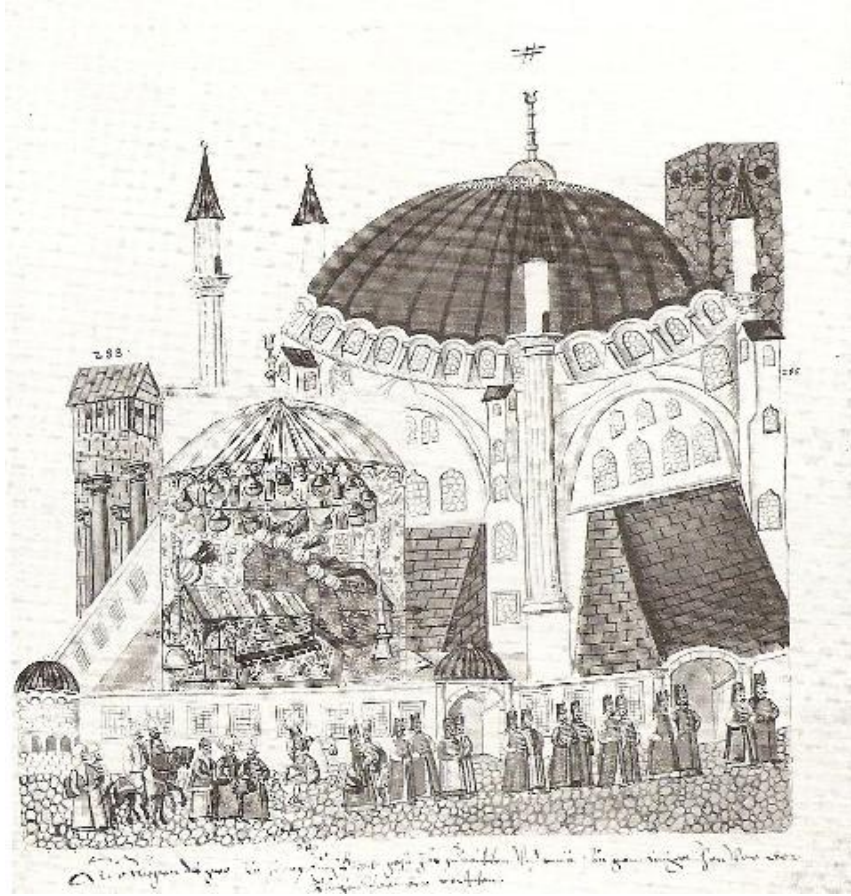


Figure 14: Mausoleum of Selim II, *Lewenklau Album*, 1585, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vindob. 8615, fol. 129r, Vienna



Figure 15: View of At Meydani (Hippodrome) and Hagia Sophia, *Fossati Album*, 19th century, lithograph



Figure 16: Interior of Aya Sofya, Gaspard Fossati, *Aya Sofia, Constantinople*, 1852



Figure 17: Medal of Hagia Sophia commemorating the renovation of Sultan Abdülmecid, 1849, Archaeology Museum of Istanbul



Figure 18: *Ayasofya Museum Brochure*, (Istanbul: Şerif Yenen Press, 2011), photograph



Figure 19: *Angel Mosaic*, North section of Hagia Sophia's dome, 14th century



Figure 20: Hagia Sophia Façade, World Monuments Fund, 1996, photograph

Works Cited

- Akropolites, George. *Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1903.
- American Institute of Child Life. *Young Folks' Handbook*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1913.
- Ayasofya Museum Brochure*. Şerif Yenen Press, Istanbul: 2011.
- Beg, Tursun. *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*. [Tarih-i Eb lfe] Halil Inalcik and Rhoads Murphy trans. Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1978.
- Bordewich, Fergus. "A Monumental Struggle to Preserve Hagia Sophia." *Smithsonian Magazine*. (Dec. 2008), 1-7.
- Buondelmonti, Christopher. *Liber insularum archipelagi*. 1420.
- Celik, Zeynep. *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986.
- Cormack, Robin. *Oxford History of Art: Byzantine Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Curzon, George. *Justinian: Being the Lothian Prize Essay for 1883*. Oxford, n.d.
- Dietrich, Jung and Wolfango Piccoli. *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East*. London: Zed Books, 2001.
- Duranay, N and S. Ural, "Cumhuiyetten Bu Yana Istanbul Planlamasi," Istanbul: Arkitera, 1972.
- Downey, G. "The Composition of Procopius' *De Aedificiis*." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 1947.
- Durand, Jannic. *Byzantine Art*. Paris: Finest Sa/Éditions Pierre Terrail, 1999.
- Eastmond, Anthony. *Art and Identity in Thirteenth –Century Byzantium; Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 1998.
- Evans, Helen. *Byzantium Faith and Power (1261-1557)*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Freely, John and Ahmet Çakmak. *Byzantine Monuments of Istanbul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Frisch, Teresa. *Gothic Art 1140-c 1450: Sources and Documents*. Toronto: University of

- Toronto Press, 1987.
- Fuller, Graham E. *New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*. Washington D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008.
- Givens, Jean. *Observation and Image-Making in Gothic Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Goffman, Daniel, ed. *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Gonzalez de Clavijo, Ruy. *Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo of the Court of Timour: 1403-1460*, trans. Clements R. Markham. London: Hakluyt Society, 1859.
- Goodwin, Jason. *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire*. New York: Holt Publishing, 2000.
- “Groups Mission to Hagia Sophia Aborted.” *Hürriyet Daily News*. (Sept. 2010).
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=no-tolerance-to-spirou-led-group-government-says-2010-09-16>.
- Hamadeh, Shirine. *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004.
- Kafescioğlu, Çiğdem. *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009.
- Karpat, Kemal. *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*. Netherlands: Leiden, 2000.
- Kazhdan, Alexander. *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Kedourie, Sylvia, ed. *Turkey Before and After Atatürk: Internal and External Affairs*. London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999.
- Keyder, Caglar, ed. *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1999.
- Kostof, Spiro. *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Krautheimer, Richard. *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics*. Berkley and Los

- Angeles: University of California Press, 1983.
- Levend, Agah Sirri, *Türk Edebiyatında Sehr-Engizler ve SehrEngizlerde İstanbul*. İstanbul: 1957.
- Mainstone, Rowland. *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988.
- Majeska, George P. *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984.
- Mandelstam, Osip. "Hagia Sophia," in *50 Poems*, trans. Bernard Meares. New York: Persea, 1977.
- Mango, Cyril. *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1962.
- Mango, Cyril. *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453: Sources Documents*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc, 1972.
- Mark, Robert. *Hagia Sophia: From the Age of Justinian to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Nelson, Robert. *Hagia Sophia, 1850-1950: Holy Wisdom, Modern Monument*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004.
- Norton, P.R Coleman, trans. Palladius, *de Vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928.
- Ostrogorsky, George. *History of the Byzantine State*. Translated by Joan Hussey. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Paris, Matthew. *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, 7 vols. London: Rolls Series, 1872-83.
- Runciman, Steven. *A History of the Crusades, vol 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951.
- Selāniki, Mustafā. "Murādim cāmi'I şerīfi ihyā' idüb eser-i hāss idinmekdür." İstanbul: 1864-5.
- Shadid, Anthony. "In Riddle of Mideast Upheaval, Turkey Offers Itself as an Answer." (Sept. 20110). http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/27/world/europe/in-mideast-riddle-turkey-offers-itself-as-an-answer.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1&sq=turkey%20erdogan&st=cse&scp=24.
- Sphrantzes, George (1401–1477). *The Fall of the Byzantine Empire: A Chronicle*.

Translated by Marios Philippides. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980.

Theophanes, *Chronicle of John Malalas*. Translation. Sydney: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986.

Vasiliev, A. "Harunibn-Yahya and his Description of Constantinople." *Seminarium Kondako-vi*: 1932.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978.

Whittemore, Thomas. "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. *American Journal of Archaeology* 42 (Apr-Jun 1938): 218-226.

Young, Linda. "Museums, Heritage, and the Things that Fall In-Between." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 3 (Apr 2007): 7-16.

Zenkovsky, Serge A. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. Rev. ed. New York: Meridian Books, 1974.

<http://www.tourismturkey.org/>. Turkey Minister of Tourism. April, 2011.

<http://www.turkishculture.org/architecture/architects/the-fossati-brothers-959.htm>. Jan, 2012.