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The scientific editing of this volume was undertaken by the Center of Excellence entitled "Utilization of Orthodox Heritage and Interreligious Dialogue" of the National and Kapodistrian University (NKUA) of Athens, in the framework of the collaboration provided in the relevant Memorandum of Understanding. Mrs. Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou, Professor of Christian Archaeology and Art, Department of Theology, NKUA has been appointed to be scientific responsible for the publication.

The churches dedicated to the Wisdom of God included in the volume are to be the landmarks of the "European Route of the Monuments of the Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia)". The application will be submitted in the form of a comprehensive joint proposal of the Center of Excellence and the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.) with the aim of recognizing it as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

The editing of the texts and the images, the page layout and the composition of the cover were carried out by the
PEDIO SA Publications.

Syntagmatarchou Davaki 10 & Mylopotamou, 115 26, Athens
Tel.: 210 3390204 • Fax: 210 3390209
e-mail: info@pediobooks.gr • www.pediobooks.gr

© 2021 Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.)
22-24 Vas. Amalias St, 10557 Athens - GR
Tel. +30210 3733533
Fax: +30210 3733532

ISBN: 978-618-85662-0-0

HAGIA SOPHIA

The churches of the Wisdom of God
around the world

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ATHENS 2021

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Editorial note

This volume is the fruit of the cooperation between the Secretariat of the Interparliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy (I.A.O.) and the “Center of Excellence” entitled “Utilization of Orthodox Heritage and Interreligious Dialogue” of the National and Kapodistrian University (NKUA) of Athens. It includes emblematical church buildings dedicated to the Wisdom of God that were erected until the early 20th century (the newest church presented in the volume was built in 1907).

It is not entirely ascertained whether the churches in the volume were originally dedicated to the Wisdom of God. The information is in confusion for many of them. In fact, some other churches, of byzantine architectural expression, bear the name Saint Sophia, even though they were erected in honor of a saint. One such church is the homonymous church of Koroni (in the Peloponnese of Greece), which we have kept in the list as an example of the actual changes that have taken place in the name of the monument over the centuries.

Scientific experts were invited to write the texts presenting the churches included in this volume, who are responsible for the writings. The pandemic hindered the work of researchers, limiting in some cases the possibility of field research or visits to archival sites. Occurrences that showed any weakness of the researchers to respond, beyond their will, to the timely delivery of research data, the text was completed or written from the beginning, with the responsibility of the scientific director of the volume, professor of NKUA, Mrs. Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou.

This volume has been published in nine languages: Arabic, Bulgarian, English, Greek, Italian, Romanian, Russian, Serbian and Ukrainian. The translators are responsible for the translations of the texts; however, for the sake of clarity, some linguistic adaptations were made by the scientific director and the editor of the volume. The control of the Greek texts, as well as the editing of the volume, was undertaken by Mrs. Loula Kypraiou.

Introduction

The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.) is pleased to present this volume, which aspires to introduce the reader to thirty-seven historic churches dedicated to the Wisdom of God, from Scotland to China. Prominent is the unsurpassed symbol of Ecumenical Orthodoxy, the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the thousand-year-old cathedral of the Christian empire, as it evolved in the Eastern Roman State.

The Wisdom of God is an essential spiritual guide to our faith, confirming the psalm written by the prophet David: “O Lord, Your works shall be magnified greatly; You made all things in wisdom.” The believer glorifies God and His Wisdom, thus glorifying the miracle of Creation.

There are many churches dedicated to God’s Wisdom, where the corruptible praises the incorruptible and where the project praises the Word, especially in countries that experienced the byzantine and post-byzantine tradition, integrated in the particular culture of each region and of every people.

Among them, as a crown and an insuperable human creation, stands the beautiful church that for centuries constituted the symbol of greatness and spirituality of the Byzantine Empire: the Hagia Sophia church in Constantine’s City (Constantinople), inaugurated in AD 537, by emperor Justinian, who conceived and realized this miracle of human potential. Its architectural structure, the elaborate decoration, the colorful marbles, the unrivaled mosaics with the deep spirituality of the depicted figures and the light that diffused from the hundred windows of its dome were an ornament of the eyes and the soul and they gave the visitor the feeling that he or she was in another world, closer to the Creator.

The Hagia Sophia church has since then expressed the very soul of Byzantium, its interrelated relationship of its history with the destinies of the empire, in the great but also in the difficult moments.

The Great Church, this beacon of Orthodoxy, after the Fall of the City in 1453 and the end of the Byzantine Empire, was converted into a mosque. Its Christian decoration, covered with lime-casts, remained in oblivion until 1934, when, as part of the secularization of the Turkish state, it was converted into a museum. Shortly afterwards, scientists from the international community revealed and preserved the mosaics damaged by the lack of care and visitors from all over the world flocked to the monument again to see and admire the living miracle of the byzantine spirit. Later, Hagia Sophia was included in the official list of UNESCO’s protected world cultural heritage sites.

Unfortunately, in July 2020, this unique monument, the Hagia Sophia of Hellenism and of the Christian world in general, was once again converted into a mosque, with a decision that overlooks the history

of the monument that no one can appropriate and manage, a decision that is indifferent to international institutions and global reactions.

The City's Hagia Sophia is not the only one that had this luck. It was preceded by the conversion into mosques and other churches dedicated to the God's Wisdom in today's Turkey: in Nice of Bithynia, in Trebizond of Pontus and in Edirne of Eastern Thrace.

Against this arbitrariness which leads up the law of power above the power of law, and constitutes a dangerous dissonance in a world that aspires to establish higher values and nobler standards, we have lodged our utmost opposition.

As the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, from the very beginning we sought with various interventions to highlight the problem to the international community, not allowing it to be handed over to oblivion and therefore to legitimize an illegal decision. The publication of this volume comes within this framework. We hope that our efforts will find favorable ears and eventually the insult to the church and to the culture which Hagia Sophia expresses will finally be removed.

At the same time, this volume aspires, with the photographic material, as well as the useful information that accompanies it, to bring the reader closer to a multitude of churches from various countries and regions, dedicated to the Wisdom of God, attesting the cultural and spiritual unity of the peoples that have created them.

This volume is the fruit of the cooperation between the I.A.O. and the "Center of Excellence" entitled "Utilization of Orthodox Heritage and Interreligious Dialogue" of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, which we thank for its valuable contribution to its success. We also thank all the experts from various parts of Europe who rushed to contribute to this effort by writing the relevant texts. Objective difficulties that have plagued the planet lately have not allowed us to include in this volume churches located on other continents.

We wish the reader, by browsing, to walk in the steps of history that lead to the need to rescue and respect the truth that the monuments emit.

Athens, May 29, 2021

Have a great read

Dr. Maximos Charakopoulos
Secretary General of I.A.O.

Sergei Gavrilov
President of the I.A.O. General Assembly

Foreword by the scientific director

July 24, 2020, the day the Hagia Sophia church in Constantinople was officially converted from a museum into a mosque, is now recorded in the history of the monument. This conversion, with the consequences known for the preservation, promotion and identity of the monument, is an insult not only to the Orthodox Church and the entire Christian world, but also to the history of human civilization. A top and unique monument, a legacy of byzantine civilization, which for a millennium generously shed its lights in East and West and further north to the newly-enlightened Christian peoples, must remain in history in this capacity. This is its identity. Cultural goods, and in fact monuments of such range as the Hagia Sophia church, cannot become objects of political expediencies and religious intolerance, belong to their creators and are offered as a valuable heritage to all mankind. Culture is our hope for a better tomorrow.

When, on the occasion of this event, the idea of implementing a program was created that would include the publication of a volume on the radiation of the Hagia Sophia church in the wider European area, as a result of the cooperation of the Secretariat of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy and the Center of Excellence of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens “Utilization of Orthodox Heritage and Interreligious Dialogue”, with great joy and enthusiasm I took on the role of the scientific director. The aim was, with the center and reference point of the Great Church, to present churches dedicated to the Wisdom of God, which were founded in a wide range of time, from the byzantine era to modern times, and declare the radiance of the monument and consequently of the byzantine culture inside and outside the borders, geographically and chronologically, of the former byzantine empire.

Of course, this volume does not intend to be exhaustive and to include all the churches that from time to time were dedicated to the Wisdom of God, which of course is impossible and even in the narrow time limits of this publication, if we take into account the objective difficulties that the pandemic created to all of us. The list, without being exhaustive, refers mainly to churches in areas that belonged to the byzantine empire or accepted Christianity and cultural elements from Byzantium, but also to churches built in modern times, yet always within European borders. Churches are not included from the New World, America, or Australia.

After the introductory chapter “Reason, Wisdom and Sequence. A course of liberation from secular isolationism,” the presentation of the monuments begins with the Hagia Sophia church in Constantinople and continues geographically to the state entities to which they belong today.

The monuments are listed alphabetically: Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Cyprus, Great Britain, Greece, It-

aly, North Macedonia, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine. The monuments are also listed alphabetically within the geographical areas.

In cases where the origin of the photographic material is not mentioned, it comes from the archive of the authors and the archive of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy.

I feel the need to thank all of you who together, from the idea's submission to its implementation, have come to this beautiful journey through time and space. First of all, the President of the I.A.O. Mr. Sergei Gavrilov, the Secretary General of I.A.O. Dr. Maximos Charakopoulos and the Advisor of the Secretariat of I.A.O. Dr. Konstantinos Mygdalis for our excellent cooperation, as well as the Center of Excellence of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens "Utilization of Orthodox Heritage and Interreligious Dialogue" for the assignment of the scientific responsibility of the program. Mrs. Lily Vardanyan was the "soul" of all this effort, always willing to coordinate and facilitate us in the whole project. We thank her very much, as well as all her collaborators. The contribution of Dr. Michael Asfentagakis was valuable in the collection of photos and the formatting of their subtitles. We also thank the translators of the texts, the photographers and those who provided photos from their archive. We are especially grateful to Mrs. Loula Kypraiou, because, as always, she edited the texts in Greek with sensitivity and knowledge—originals or translated. I left the authors at the end, the main contributors of this volume, who with love and scientific knowledge wrote the texts and made us participants of the history and art of monuments from so many different places. Of course, the elegant and meticulous edition of the volume owes much to the graphic designer Mrs. Elli Nikolaidou. We thank her very much.

All together and each of us individually, with our eyes focused on the Great Church, we share with emotion our thought and experiences, but also the certainty that the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople will always continue to warm the souls of Christians and to radiate throughout the civilized world!

June 30, 2021, commemoration of the Holy Apostles

Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou
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Reason, Wisdom and Sequence

A course of liberation from secular isolationism

Creation of man

For the Fathers of the Church, the creation of man, although it falls under the creation of the universe, is nevertheless differentiated from all other created reality in such a way that man, in terms of his creation and in terms of his place in the world, constitute a special situation. This is already evident from the first chapter of *Genesis*, where, while the creation of all created beings by God is accomplished with God's "command", the formation of man is accomplished with His "hands"¹. If St Basil's observation is taken into account in this diversity of the human existence, that during the creation of man God did not say "let man be" (γεννηθήτω ἄνθρωπος), but "let us make man" (ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον),² referring "to the partner of creation..., through whom he created time" (τῷ κοινωνῷ τῆς δημιουργίας..., δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν),³ then the purpose of human existence is clearly stated, which consists the revelation and knowledge of a Triune God.

The revelation of God as Reason and Wisdom

The presence of God within the world is certainly not perceived through the usual ways of man's perception, which are limited to the view and knowledge of reality through the perceptive organs. God is perceived through the creative divine energy, which reveals the *cause* of the created nature and not God Himself.

1. St Basil of Caesarea, *In Lacizis*, PG 31: 1452C, and Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses*, 26, in *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion II* (*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 31*), ed. K. Holl, Leipzig 1922: 442 (PG 7: 1097C).

2. Gn 1:26.

3. St Basil of Caesarea, *In Hexaemeron IX*, 6, in *Basilede Césarée. Homélies sur l'hexaéméron* (*Sources chrétiennes 26*), ed. S. Giet, Paris 19682 [=SC 26]: 514 ff. (PG 29: 205A). Cf. *ibid.*, SC 26: 512 (PG 29: 204AB).

This creative cause, which is none other than the “reason” of creation, reveals the Reason and Wisdom of God.

So, the Reason and Wisdom as the cause of the existence of the world, without being identified with the world, is known only through the world. Man is invited to understand this Wisdom through science, that is, through the research of the world and natural phenomena.

Man and science

Man, as the only one receptive to “science”, according to St Athanasios the Great, learns from the natural evidence to compose, to transform and to process whatever exists in it. Then, he observes the movements of the material elements and after their experimental verification, he learns to develop the common conclusions he draws, into principles. But the observation and systematization of the conclusions, which constitute the science for St Gregory the Theologian, express precisely the service that man offers in the preservation of life, highlighting the *cooperative role* he has undertaken in the creation without being himself the beginning of the creation⁴. Because the creator does not contribute to an already formed state, as is the case with man and science. The creator does not learn, but, as a *creative cause*, *creates from non-being into being*, which no man in the world can accomplish through scientific knowledge⁵. Thus, man through science can only reach the ascertainment of the existence of a creative principle, realizing the creation of the world in *reason* and *wisdom* and seeking “who gave this principle”⁶. This creative principle should not be included in the creation and create the world with reason and wisdom as “sapient (ἐμφρωνος)”.

Wisdom and science

The Principle’s *diversity* lies in the fact that its wisdom should not depend on science, which means that it should not depend on learning to compose and to process the things of perceptible reality. If it depended on science, then its wisdom would not have a permanent character. Its knowledge would be instructive. But in this case, it would be deficient, which negates its very existence, since wisdom to be wisdom must be complete and perfect without being a result of the duration and quality of learning. Moreover, if wisdom depends on learning, then it is wisdom not by its nature, but because of the learning progress, which, however, can at some point be transformed, stopped and finally disappear depending on the quality of teaching⁷. Therefore, this Principle, which is recognized in the world as the non-being creative principle

4. St Gregory the Theologian, *Theologica II (Oratio XXVIII)*, 29, in Gregor von Nazianz, *Die fünf theologischen Reden*, ed. J. Barbel, ed. Düsseldorf 1963: 120 (PG 36: 68BC). Cf. M. Kolovopoulou, “Θεός και νόμος της φύσεως [God and law of nature]” in *Ἀρχή και εξέλιξη τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου με ἀναφορά στήν ἑξαήμερο τοῦ Μ. Βασιλείου [The beginning and evolution of the world and man with reference to the Hexaemeron of St Basil the Great]*, The proceedings of an interdisciplinary conference (October 17-18, 2017), Athens 2018: 94.

5. St Athanasios of Alexandria, *Adversus Arianos II [Against the Arians]*, PG 26:189C–192B and 204A–C.

6. St Basil of Caesarea, *In Hexaemeron I*, 2, SC 26, p. 96 (PG 29:8C).

7. St Athanasios of Alexandria, *Adversus Arianos II [Against the Arians]*, PG 26: 208A.

of everything, must be identified with this very Wisdom and the Reason, which creatively reveals the truth and frees man from the bondage of imagination and falsehood.

Prerequisites for knowing the truth

In order for man to reach the discovery and knowledge of the truth revealed to the world, he must follow through science the reason of creation, which reveals the Reason and Wisdom of the creator God. That is why Jesus Christ, addressing his disciples, points out:

*“If you abide in My word (λόγῳ), you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*⁸

The first prerequisite in the course of the liberation of man from the bondage towards the truth, that is, towards the knowledge of the first principle and cause of everything, Jesus sets “science”, as His above saying could be interpreted by someone today. In other words, it presupposes the knowledge, which is acquired through learning and demands from all those who are close to Him⁹. This science is not limited to a simple repetition or reformulation of prior knowledge gained through learning. It does not produce “knowledge”, which is a projection of the subjective processing of data. This science, studies and records the natural phenomena of the world, which it tries to understand afterwards. In this way it sets as a precondition the disengagement and rejection of all previous knowledge. Thus, free from references and dependencies, it pervades into the essence of things, retrieves and records whatever primordial it discovers. That is why whatever is observed in this science, is not observed in other sciences too; which means that the conclusions of previous researches are corrected or even overturned by the latest scientific research, because the discovery of new facts either overturns the subjective views of scientists or provides new information, thus correcting the previous ones.

This scientific way of studying and researching the evidence, naturally, requires a continuous, uninterrupted and painful process of the scientist’s education, which is never interrupted. Jesus Christ meant this “scientific” course of man when He urges His disciples to remain “students” of His reason in order to know the truth. Of His reason, in which the Wisdom of the creator God is reflected and interprets the world and man, offering a different worldview. Therefore, this knowledge, which is obtained from the study and research of Wisdom, has nothing to do with the knowledge offered by other sciences, since its source is not the human intellect, but the reason of creation.

According to the above, then, the real “scientists” of the Reason and Wisdom of God are those who always follow the facts of life, which, however, lead to a different way of life than the one lived by the rest of the world. They are the ones who are free from the daily life, seek, as Pythagoras points out, to know the truth¹⁰. They are the ones who are between ignorance and wisdom, according to Plato, that is, between imperfect knowledge and imaginary reality on the one hand, and divine beauty and truth on the other. That is why God can never be a philosopher; because He, like Wisdom herself, never seeks wisdom¹¹.

8. *Jn* 8:31-32.

9. *Mt* 23:8-10.

10. Q.v. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum VIII [Lives of Philosophers]*, 8, in *Diogenis Laertii de Clarorum Philosophorum*, ed. C. G. Cobet, A. Westermann, J. F. Boissonadio, ed. Paris 1878: p. 206.

11. Plato, *Symposium*, 203E, in *Platonis Opera II*, ed. I. Burnet, Oxford 1901.

Therefore, only the scientist who is a philosopher, that is, the one who turns to the essence of things and seeks the knowledge of the true reality¹², can know the creative Principle and Wisdom of God.

The kind of knowledge

The kind of knowledge provided by the Wisdom of God is clearly different from human knowledge and is the second prerequisite of human freedom. It does not concern the learning of prior knowledge, nor the analysis, composition and processing of individual information. It concerns the truth. That is why this knowledge goes beyond science as a simple impartment of the values of a culture or the religious heritage of a nation, which continues the life and work of previous generations, imposes the same way of life and, without allowing the evolution and renewal of the social fabric, traps the new knowledge in a new manifestation of the older generation¹³. The knowledge provided by the Reason itself and the Wisdom of God is a knowledge on the whole, which becomes elusive to the scientific analysis of the fragmented evidence of sciences¹⁴. It is the result of man's overwhelmedness with this very universality of truth, which completes man as the whole of creation¹⁵. It is the knowledge that derives from the belief in the truth and which is the meaning of "*believe and be persuaded in Him [Christ], as the Master and king and physician and teacher of truth, with the hope of eternal life* (πιστεύειν τε καὶ πείθεσθαι αὐτῷ [τῷ Χριστῷ], ὡς Δεσπότη, καὶ βασιλεῖ, καὶ ἱατρῷ, καὶ διδασκάλῳ ἀληθείας, ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ζωῆς αἰωνίου)"¹⁶. This *faith* was presupposed by the prophets, before they realized and revealed the truth. The apostles *believed* this truth. A truth as a knowledge on the whole, addressed only to the *faithful* and always being disciples of Christ¹⁷.

Knowledge and freedom

The result of this knowledge is human freedom. But this freedom, because it refers precisely to a different knowledge from the scientific one, because it pervades and discovers the essence of things, does not refer to social freedom. After all, Christianity does not consist a social system, to be interested in social freedom and fight against social, economic or political bondage. The freedom that Christ promises is freedom from every worldly dependence of man, from any material, economic or political pursuit, which could indeed lead to a violent reaction against the establishment. It is no coincidence that philosophy, which satisfies the knowledge of the essence of things and is not used to satisfy man's practical needs, as is the case with the knowledge of the revealed truth of the Reason of God, is placed by Aristotle above the material prerequi-

12. Aristotle, *Metaphysica I*, 982B, in *Aristotle's metaphysics II*, ed. W. D. Ross, Oxford 1924.

13. Q.v. E. Panoutsos, *Φιλοσοφία καὶ Παιδεία [Philosophy and Learning]*, Athens 19772: 169 ff.

14. N. Matsoukas, *Δογματική καὶ Συμβολική Θεολογία Α'. Εἰσαγωγή στη θεολογική γνωσιολογία [Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology I. Introduction to the theological gnosiology]*, Thessaloniki 2016: 40 ff.

15. Q.v. K. Papapetrou, *Πίστη καὶ Γνώση [Faith and Knowledge]*, a reprint from *Ἐπίσημοι Λόγοι [Official Sermons]* 27, Athens 1987: 15.

16. St Basil of Caesarea, *In Baptismo I*, 2, PG 31: 1516B.

17. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Commentariain Psalmos*, PG 23: 105C-D.

sites for a good and comfortable life, which would interest a man trapped in the apparent reality.¹⁸ Thus, just as philosophy is free and exists only for itself, so is Christianity, a freedom that exists only for itself, free from any revolutionary conception. That is why, the means to reach the freedom that Christianity promises, is the belief *in the truth*, which is not trapped in the conditions and facts of each era that seek the overthrow of the older ones.

The according to knowledge faith and freedom

Belief in the truth as universal, which means the awareness *of reality*, leads to freedom, because it frees man from every desire of this world. Not because it abolishes desire, but because it curbs the lack of symmetry (*dismeasure*) and thus averts man from greediness¹⁹. Therefore, belief in the truth, which means man's surrender to the possibility of being persuaded by it, abolishes greediness, which is the root of bondage and which St Paul identifies with idolatry²⁰.

From all the above, which are briefly presented, one can understand, why does freedom that is offered by Christ, frees man from the bondage to the "law" of conventionality. Jesus Christ as the Reason and Wisdom of God, as teacher and *Lord* (master)²¹ who has the *natural authority*, as opposed to the sovereign authority of worldly life,²² reveals the truth and brings forward as a "deacon" a new form of life and domination²³. He determines the course of man's liberation from worldly isolation and He establishes the new life, which frees man from the bondage and the sorrows that result from the unsatisfied desires. He frees him from the fear of decay and death, which is strongly perceived in the time of pandemics, and gives a new perspective, which is free from any kind of dependence continues beyond the biological death. That is why the according to knowledge faith²⁴, that makes the true lover of truth "a *bondservant of God*"²⁵, means the liberation of man from all forms of bondage and his rebirth to a new existential level of life, which the life of desires and disorder²⁶ is already transcended by this present world and within the Church²⁷.

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18. Aristotle, *Metaphysica I*, 982B.

19. St John Chrysostom, *In Epistolam ad Romanos XIII*, PG 60: 507-508.

20. Col 3:5-6. Q.v. N. Matsoukas, *Δογματική και Συμβολική Θεολογία Α'* [*Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology I*], *ibid.*: 25 ff.

21. Q.v. G. Babiniotis, «διδάσκαλος», in *Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας* [*Dictionary of the Modern Greek Language*], Athens 1998: 508.

22. Jn 13:13-15.

23. Mk 10:42-44.

24. Rom 10:2-3.

25. Tts 1:1-3.

26. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio epistolae ad Romanos*, PG 82: 124B-D.

27. St John Chrysostom, *Non esse desperandum*, PG 51: 368AB. Cf. N. Xionis, *Περὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, ὅτι καὶ Θεὸς καὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ κατὰ φύσιν* [*On the Holy Spirit, who is of God's very being and God by nature*], Athens 2018: 308 ff.



Constantinople. Hagia Sophia. The monument from above.



Hagia Sophia in Constantinople

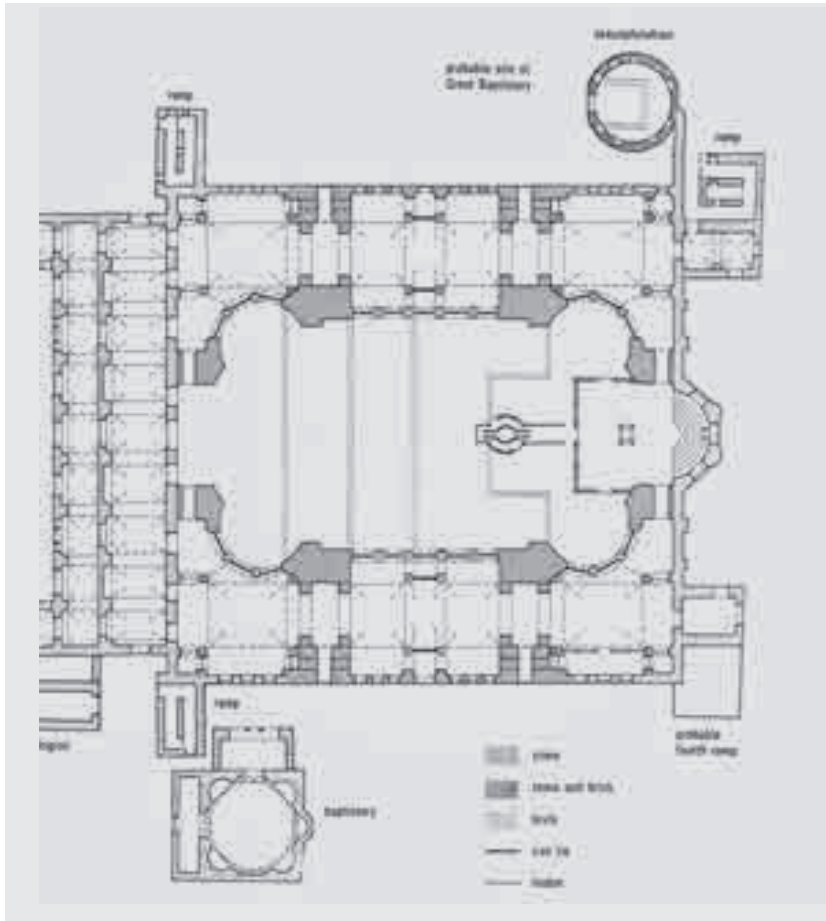
Its history

When Constantine the Great (306-337) transferred the capital of the Roman Empire to the site of ancient Byzantium and founded New Rome (330), the city that would take its name after him, the city's construction program to include the erection of a large cathedral was a natural thing to happen. This tradition is preserved by the *Patria of Constantinople*, where it mentions that Constantine the Great founded Hagia Sophia, among other churches in Constantinople¹.

1. The *Patria of Constantinople* (a folktale collection about Constantinople of the 10th century) mention that Constantine the Great "...τὴν ἁγίαν Σοφίαν... πρώην αὐτὴν ἀνήγειρε δρομικὴν (=βασιλική) ὁμοίαν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀγαθονίκου καὶ τῆς Ἁγίας Δυνάμεως καὶ τῆς Ἁγίας Εἰρήνης τῆς παλαιᾶς τῆς οὔσης πλησίον τῆς ἁγίας Σοφίας· ἤγουν εἰρήνην, δύναμιν καὶ σοφίαν καὶ νίκην [...the Hagia Sophia... was built as a basilica, before the churches of Saint Agathonikos and the old Saint Irene which was next to the Hagia Sophia; namely peace, power and wisdom and victory],” a testimony which should be mentioned at least as the intention and plans of Constantine the Great for building the Hagia Sophia. See Preger 1907: 74.

The bibliography on the Hagia Sophia is so extensive, one can hardly follow it anymore. We will mention only some projects, selecting from the oldest to the most recent: Antoniadēs 1907-1908. Sotiriou 1921. Whittemore 1933-1952. Michelis 1946 and Underwood – Hawkins 1961: 187-217. Mango 1962. Mango – Hawkins 1965:115-151. Van Nice 1965-1986. Janin 1969: 455-470. Mango – Hawkins 1972: 3- 41. Mathews 1976: 261-312. Cormack – Hawkins 1977: 175 ff. Skabavias 1985-1986: 307-313. Mainstone 1988. Teteriatnikov 1998. Teteriatnikov 2004-2005: 9 -19. Detorakis 2004. Russo 2011. Teteriatnikov 2012: 61-76. Taddei 2012 and 2015. Schibille 2014. Sophroniou 2019. Dark – Kostenec, 2019.

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The church's plan view (R. J. Mainstone).

However, Socrates, the historian who is considered to be the most ancient testimony, informs us that it was built by the son and successor of Constantine the Great, Constantius II (337-361) and the consecration of the church took place on February 15, 360². Later sources, rather contradictory, claim that Constantius completed the church at his father's wish, it was consecrated by Eusebius of Nicomedia, then patriarch of Constantinople (339-341), but it was repaired and later renovated again by Constantius and patriarch Eudoxius (360-370)³.

From the very outset the church was dedicated to Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, who is already called “the Wisdom of God” (1Co 1:24) by the Apostle Paul. It is also known as the “Great Church” for its size, grandeur and significance. It officially celebrated on Christmas day⁴, December 25, or according to other’s opinion on Mid-Pentecost⁵. It was the see of the Patriarchate of Constantinople until the Fall—except for the period of the Latin conquest—and the center of ecclesiastical and political life of Byzantium for about a millennium.

2. Socrates, *Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία* ("Ecclesiastical History"), II, 16, PG 67, 217B.

3. Kedrenos, Σύνοψις Ιστοριῶν [*Synopsis historion*] (also known as *A concise history of the world*), PG 121, 561D, 569A, 577A.

4. Both consecrations of the church took place on dates near Christmas.

5. Kalokyris 1988.

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The southern side of the monument and the surrounding structures.



The upper sections of the monument and the dome.

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Successive rows of openings on the west side of the monument. Parapets with the theme of a cross are distinguished on the upper openings (composite windows).



The three gates of the narthex that lead to the nave.

The first Hagia Sophia was built as a wooden roof basilica, as was the nearby Saint Irene church⁶, which seemed to have originally been the city's episcopal church. However, after the consecration of the Hagia Sophia in 360, it became and remained throughout the life of the byzantine empire the patriarchal church, although both churches actually functioned as one⁷. This first church was destroyed by a fire in 404, during the events that erupted in the city due to the exile of St John Chrysostom, then patriarch of Constantinople. Nothing survived from this church.

A second Hagia Sophia will be rebuilt during the reign of Theodosius II. The consecration took place

6. Preger 1907: 74.

7. Mainstone 1988: 9.

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The interior of the church from the gallery.

on October 10, 415. The church, in turn, will burn in January 532 at the Nika Riot. It was at this time when Justinian, who suppressed the revolution, conceived the idea to build at the same place a new and, in every way, unique church.

The plans of the church were executed by the “engineers - chief architects / master builders (*mechano-poioi*)” Anthemios from Tralles and Isidore from Miletus of Asia Minor. The project was passionately supervised by Justinian himself, and was completed within five years, a record time for the size, the difficulty of construction and the luxury of the monument. The consecration was accompanied by public events and with all the pomp on December 27, 537 by Justinian himself⁸, who was thrilled with the magnificent result

8. Detorakis 2004: 27.

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The interior of the church from the west side.



The dome, the spherical triangles and quarter-sphere surfaces.

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The interior of the church from the south side. Parts of the orthostates, the mosaic-decorated arches and the colonnades stand out.

of the work and exclaimed: “Νενίκησά σε Σολομών!” (I defeated you, Solomon!)⁹. The construction of the church is described by the historian Procopius¹⁰.

Despite the wonderful solution of supporting the dome, on May 7, 558, five months after the strong earthquake of 557 and while restoration works were being carried out in the church, the large eastern arch and along with a large part of the dome collapsed, resulting in the destruction of the ambon and the holy altar table with the ciborium. The reconstruction of the dome was undertaken by Isidore the Younger, the architect's nephew bearing his name, and Justinian consecrates the church again on December 24, 563¹¹. Paul the Silentiary will then write his poetic works *Ἐκφρασις του ναού της Αγίας Σοφίας* [*Ekphrasis of the Hagia Sophia church*] and *Ἐκφρασις του Ἀμβωνος της του Θεού Αγίας Σοφίας* [*Ekphrasis of the Ambon of the Wisdom of God church, Hagia Sophia*]¹², leaving an everlasting praise for the Justinian monument.

In 869, a strong earthquake caused a rupture in the western apse of the church, which was repaired immediately by the emperor Basil I the Macedonian (867-886), while in 989 a new earthquake caused the collapse of the dome and the western apse. The restoration works lasted six years during the reign of Basil II the Macedonian (976-1025) and were carried out by Tiridates (Trdat) III of Armenia, who strength-

9. Pseudo-Kodinos, *Περὶ κτισμάτων της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* [*On the buildings of Constantinople*], PG 157, 628B.

10. Procopius of Caesarea, *Περὶ κτισμάτων* [*On buildings*], I, 1. See also Procopius 1971: 10-33.

11. Patriarch Eutychios consecrated the new church of Hagia Sophia. Dindorfius 1832: 687. Theophanis 1883: 238.

12. Paul the Silentiary (also known as Paulus Silentiarius), *Ἐκφρασις του ναού της Αγίας Σοφίας* [*Ekphrasis of the Hagia Sophia church*], PG 86, 2119-2158. *Ἐκφρασις του ἀμβωνος* [*Ekphrasis of the Ambo*], PG 86, 2251-2264.

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The quarter-sphere surface of the sanctuary's niche, with the mosaic representation of the enthroned Vrefokratousa (Panayia with the Child).



One of the ornate capitals of the monument.

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The mosaic of the enthroned Christ and the emperor (Leo VI?) in a kneeling posture, above the royal gate.

ened the large western arc and the quarter-sphere surface, as Isidore the Younger had done for the eastern arc in 558¹³.

With the occupation of Constantinople by the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade (1204), the Hagia Sophia church was brutally attacked and looted. The crusaders seized the gold and silver decoration from the altar table, the ambon and the doors, transported to the West – mainly to Venice – the treasures and the precious utensils and grabbed all the movable property of the church¹⁴. Niketas Choniates even mentions that the crusaders loaded their booty on pack-animals inside the church¹⁵. The church was later converted into the see of the city's Latin diocese.

After 1261, when the Palaiologans recaptured Constantinople, the Hagia Sophia church became once again the patriarchal church. Despite the difficult political and economic situation of the empire, the altar table, the ambon and the other equipment of the church were restored, but without the previous luxury. In 1317, Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328) allocated a significant amount of money from his wife, Irene's property and, because the side walls of the church showed dangerous cracks, the external abutments that still exist today were built, two to support the large pillars on the north side and one to support the southeast pillar¹⁶.

13. Detorakis 2004: 46. Sophroniou 2019: 60.

14. Cf. Detorakis 2004: 50.

15. Niketas Choniates, Χρονική Διήγησις [*Chronike Diegesis* "Historical narratives", *Annals*], 758.

16. Sophroniou 2019: 61.

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The mosaic representation of the archangel in the sanctuary's area.

However, the continuous earthquakes in the area strained the dome and the apses of the church. Thus, in May 1346, the eastern arc collapsed knocking down a portion of the dome and the quarter-sphere surface of the large eastern apse. The ambon and the iconostasis (icon-screen) were destroyed again. The repairs that followed with imperial sponsorships¹⁷ did not significantly alter the shape of the dome of Isidore the Younger. However, financial hardship no longer allowed the maintenance of the Great Church and the restoration of the decays of time. In the mid-14th century, most of the doors had been destroyed and by the beginning of the 15th century many of the church's outbuildings and the patriarchal house had been abandoned¹⁸. However, the Hagia Sophia church continued to be the center of the city's religious life and of the imperial ceremonial as well as to impress its foreign visitors. In 1392, a Russian pilgrim, Ignatius, describes in detail the imposing coronation of Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos and his wife Eleni, during the Divine Liturgy¹⁹.

After the Fall of the City by the Ottomans, the Hagia Sophia church was converted into an Islamic mosque. In 1573, during the reign of Sultan Selim II, the renowned architect Sinan carried out extensive fixing works of the building. He built additional abutments and raised the outer part of the pillars to the windows of the dome—elements that altered the external appearance of the church—and added three more minarets. The figural mosaics were covered with plaster, except those of the Pantocrator, of the Platytera and of the archangels in the eastern niche. The Pantocrator was covered in 1610 during the reign of Ahmet I.

In 1847, by order of sultan Abdul Mejid I, ma-

17. The repairs started and were completed with the sponsorship of Anna, widow of Andronikos II Palaiologos, of Ioannis Kantakouzenos and of Andronikos IV Palaiologos.

18. Detorakis 2004: 57.

19. Simopoulos 1972: 261-264.

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Exonarthex. The mosaic representation of the enthroned Vrefokratousa (Panayia with the Child), with the emperors Constantine the Great and Justinian.

major repairs to the monument and maintenance of its mosaics were made by the famous Giuseppe and Gaspare Fossati brothers, architects of Italian-Swiss origin. The abutments and Sinan's extensions towards the dome were removed²⁰. Some of the mosaic representations were revealed, maintained, designed and covered again. Many of the lost Hagia Sophia mosaics today are known from the designs by Cornelius Loos, the Fossati brothers, Paul Durand and W. Salzenberg. From 1934 (during the reign of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk) up until 2020, for 86 years, Hagia Sophia functioned as a museum.

On July 24, 2020, with the participation of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Islamic prayer was officially celebrated inside the Hagia Sophia church, which, despite the international outcry, was converted back into a mosque. This conversion offends the history of the monument-symbol of Orthodoxy and the whole of Christendom—and the aesthetic highlight of the majestic interior of the space, since strips of fabric cover its mosaics and carpets were placed to cover the floor. But this decision offends Islam itself and its cultural wealth.

20. Sophroniou 2019: 65.

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Gallery. The mosaic representation of the enthroned Christ, with the emperor Constantine Monomachos and the empress Zoe.

The architecture

But what makes the monument unique? Of course, the architecture and its interior decoration, the marble architectural members, the ortho-marbles and the wonderful mosaics on the walls and in the past, the luxurious functional constructions and the gold and silver heirlooms, all adorned with precious stones. Byzantine writers, such as Procopius, Paul the Silentiary, Niketas Choniates, patriarch Photius, but also foreign pilgrims, travelers and diplomats referred to the architecture, mosaics and functional constructions with admiration, and recorded the history of the church in time.

The Justinian Hagia Sophia church, built in the architectural type of the basilica with a dome, is a building almost square in plan (71x77m.). Four bulky built pillars, setting up a wide central block, are raised inside the church and two hold every four arcs. Between them, on the north and south side, colonnades are formed, which are also repeated on the floor (gallery) and support large tympana (wall faces), perforated by windows. On the east and west side, the arcs consist the faces of two large niches, the wide half-cylinder of which splits into three smaller semicircular niches of the same level. The central one to the east consists of the apse of the holy altar and to the west the main entrance of the church. The two side niches are two-story located on the right and left side²¹.

21. Krautheimer ²2006: 255 ff. Bouras 32001: 126 ff.

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Gallery. The mosaic representation of the Vrefokratousa (Panayia with the Child) standing upright, with emperor John Komnenos and the empress Irene.

The large dome of the church (diameter of 32 meters) is carried by the four large arcs that bridge the openings between the pillars and is supported by the two large niches²². It has the form of a hemispherical dome and is based on a circular base (rim). The transition from the arcs to the rim is done through four spherical triangles. On the lower level at the dome's base and between the ribs, forty windows provide ample light to flow into the central area of the church and create the impression that the dome hovers like the celestial dome, according to Procopius "suspended from heaven by a golden chain"²³.

The church has an impressive esonarthex²⁴ to the west side and a humbler exonarthex, while the atrium is not preserved today. In the atrium there was also the fountain ("*phiale*") with the well-known inscription that could be read from left to right and from right to left (cancerous): ΝΙΨΟΝ ΑΝΟΜΗΜΑΤΑ ΜΗ ΜΟΝΑΝ ΟΨΙΝ [*CLEANSE YOUR SINS, NOT ONLY YOUR FACE*]. The baptistery (an inscribed octagon) was located to the southwest of the church and to the northeast, the circular sacristy or diakonikon, in direct contact with the nave of the church.

This complex architectural plan of the Hagia Sophia church was never exactly implemented again, it was a *unicum* of byzantine architecture, since the church was a monument-a symbol of the empire and

22. Mainstone 1988: 21.

23. Procopius of Caesarea *Περί κτισμάτων* [*On buildings*], I, 1. See also Michelis 1972: 136.

24. Mainstone, 1988: 32.

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Gallery. The Trimorphon (Deisis, the “Entreaty”). Christ surrounded by the Panayia and John the Forerunner.

Orthodoxy²⁵. The advantages of the architecture of the basilica church, in the ingenious design of its architects, coexist along with the emphasis of the longitudinal axis and the path to the sanctuary (holy bema), and the edifice’s pericenter (periapsis [=the words “pericenter” and “apocenter” are often seen, although periapsis/apoapsis are preferred in technical usage]), with the emphasis of the vertical axis and the ascent—visual and spiritual—upwards, the celestial. This proves the importance and originality of Justinian architecture, which does not simply adopt new forms and architectural elements but brings about changes in the composition of the plan view and housing of the church and prepares the transition to the mid-byzantine architecture²⁶.

The exterior appearance of the building looks heavy. Forty small struts surround the base of the dome²⁷ and four large ones on the north and south sides of the church. But the aesthetic result of the Hagia Sophia’s church is magnificent. Compared to the closest Roman monument, the Pantheon of Rome, the supremacy of the architectural composition is highlighted, that creates various and endless spaces, which the visitor must discover and explore. The Pantheon’s composition is simple, as the boundaries are clearly defined and immediately perceptible. There is nothing fully visible at first glance in the Hagia Sophia church. The spaces appear sequentially and change, as one moves inside the monument from the narthexes to the central space of the main aisle (nave), which is crowned by the large dome, the circumferential side aisles and the galleries²⁸.

25. The churches of Saints Sergius and Bacchus and of Saint Polyeuctus in Constantinople are considered precursor monuments.

26. Bouras ³2001: 108.

27. These were added by Isidore the Younger after the collapse of the first dome and were repeated in its subsequent repairs.

28. Mainstone 1988: 37.

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Christ, detail from the Deisis.

The diversity and the unity of the space, the rhythmic alternation of the columns and the arched openings, the calm ascent created by the successive curved surfaces, which gradually culminate in the large dominant dome, the successive niches and the many windows that pierce the walls and “dematerialize” their mass, the rich natural light that illuminates everything and makes them look celestial are certainly the advantages of an architectural conception that discloses the genius of its creators. To the overall aesthetic result, which obviously today lags behind, luxury should be added along with the flawless technique of the sculpture and mosaic decoration and of the functional constructions.

The functional constructions

We do not have testimonies that are clearly shaped about the ciborium of the first altar table, that stood over and covered it and of the original ambon of the Hagia Sophia church. We know, however, that on May 7, 558, “the eastern part of the base of the bracket (προϋποστολή, proepostoli) of the holy sanctuary fell... and crushed the ciborium, the altar table and the ambon (ἔπεσεν τὸ ἀνατολικὸν μέρος τῆς προϋποστολῆς τοῦ ἁγίου θυσιαστηρίου... καὶ συνέτριψεν τὸ κιβώριον καὶ τὴν ἁγίαν τράπεζαν καὶ τὸν ἄμβωνα)”²⁹ The second altar table was very luxurious. Its slab was made of a mixture of various precious materials, gold, silver, precious stones, glass, wood, etc., and was supported by golden columns. The steps around the altar table, where

29. Theophanis 1883: 359-360.



View of a spherical triangle under the dome with a six-winged mosaic representation.

the priests stood, were also gilded and made of silver³⁰.

The ciborion of the holy altar table was all silver. Four columns probably had a pyramidal roofing, at the top of which was a cross placed on a sphere. There were also four silver craters in the corners of the ciborion with wax figures. During the 10th century, parts of the ciborion, such as the sphere with the cross and the craters, were gilded³¹.

The barrier of the sanctuary was high. Its twelve columns had a straight architrave³², all made of precious materials. The parapets were gold or gilded and the columns golden. On the architrave, icons of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of angels, of prophets and of apostles had been engraved in medallions. Farther up was the monogram of Justinian and of Theodora, while on top of the architrave was a row of tree-shaped candle chandeliers and in the middle a large luminous cross³³.

In front of the sanctuary was the elongated solea, which started from the royal doors and reached the center of the church, where the luxurious ambon stood, also made of precious materials. After the destruction of 558, the ambon was replaced by another one “of stones and silver-coated columns (διὰ λίθων καὶ κιόνων ἀργυρενδύτων)”. It was circular with two ascending ladders, on the east and on the west, and seems that it was surrounded by a circular arcade with low suppressed parapets, columns and an architrave that bore tree-shaped candle chandeliers and silver luminous crosses³⁴.

30. According to Procopius (Procopius of Caesarea, *Περὶ κτισμάτων* [*On buildings*], I, 1): «τά μεν τοι τῶν κειμηλίων τοῦ νεῶ ἅπαντα μεν φράσαι ἀκριβολογούμενῳ ἀμήχανον. Ἐνὶ δε μόνῳ τεκμηριώσαιτ' ἂν τις αὐτῷ, τὸ θυσιαστήριον μόνον λίτρων ἀργύρου μυριάδας ἐπιφέρεισθαι τέσσαρας». Cf. and Antoniadès 1907-1908: 102-104.

31. Antoniadès 1907-1908: 113.

32. For the barrier of the sanctuary of the Hagia Sophia church see Paul the Silentiary, *PG* 86, 2145-2147. Antoniadès 1907-1908: 85-89. Xydis 1947: 5-23. Mathews 1971: 98. Stoufi-Poulimenou 1999: 76. For the functional constructions of the Hagia Sophia church see also Mainstone, 1988: 221 ff.

33. Paul the Silentiary, *PG* 86, 2145-2147. Antoniadès 1907-1908: 86-88.

34. Antoniadès 1907-1908: 58-59.

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The northern tympanum of the central aisle. Mosaic representations of hierarchs. Marble relief architraves can be distinguished below.

The thrones of the patriarch and of the emperor, should be added to these luxurious constructions, located in the nave, between the sanctuary and the large eastern pillars, the patriarch's throne on the right and the emperor's on the left.

The mosaics

Of the mosaic decoration that adorned the Great Church at various times, few samples have survived or are now visible. Although we do not know the complete iconographic program of the monument, before and after the Iconoclasm, a picture is provided by the drawings and notes of the Fossati brothers and of Saltzenberg in the 19th century, the interior sides designed by Cornelius Loos (1710) and the descriptions of the travelers³⁵.

It was supported that in the time of Justin II or Justin the Younger (565-578) the Hagia Sophia church was adorned with christological scenes (the Dodekaorton, the *Twelve Great Feasts*)³⁶, but in reality, we know little about the icon painting of the church during the Justinian period³⁷. Probably the original dec-

35. See the publication of these plans by Mango 1962: sporadically.

36. Mainly from Heisenberg 1912.

37. The references of modern historians and chronographers, such as Procopius, Paul the Silentiary, Evagrius, focus on their description and admiration for the architecture and functional constructions of the church. Cf. also Mango 1962: 93.

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The mosaic representation of Saint John Chrysostom at the northern tympanum of the central aisle.

oration of Hagia Sophia was largely of non-iconic abstraction, but there was a mosaic cross on the dome³⁸. Besides, the size of the church and its architecture, with the many openings and the destruction of its interior surfaces, did not allow the icon painting of many representations. The only indication for pre-iconoclasm figural representations is the mosaic decoration in the Small Secret. At that place, among the shoots, there are crosses depicted in the medallions, covered by figures of saints, during the Iconoclasm, as evidenced by their names written below³⁹. The iconoclasts would certainly destroy or cover any figural representation in the church, as implied by the inscription on the arc's face of the apse in the sanctuary: ΑC ΟΙ ΠΛΑΝΟΙ ΚΑΘΕΙΛΟΝ ΕΝΘΑΔ' ΕΙΚΟΝΑC ΑΝΑΚΤΕC ΕCΤΗΛΩΣΑΝ ΕΥΕΒΕΙC ΠΑΛΙΝ [*THE IMAGES WHICH THE IMPOSTERS HAD CAST DOWN HERE PIOUS EMPERORS HAVE AGAIN SET UP.*]

A few years after the end of the Iconoclasm and the final restoration of the icons, on May 29, 867, Patriarch Photius will deliver a speech from the ambon of Hagia Sophia before Kings Michael III and Basil I⁴⁰. Most scholars believe that this homily was uttered for the revelations of the representation of the Theotokos *Βρεφοκρατούσα* Vrefokratousa (Infant-bearer) enthroned, which survives to this day; an excellent example of the classic art of the of the Macedonian “renaissance”⁴¹. The representation was surrounded by the archangels Gabriel and Michael on the intrados of the arch above the sanctuary (today only Gabri-

38. According to the testimony of Paul the Silentiary (Εκφρασις του ναού της Αγίας Σοφίας, 493, 506-508). Cf. also Gkioles 2007: 69-70.

39. Mango 1962: 93. Cormack – Hawkins 1977: 175 ff.

40. It is about the 17th Homily of Photius (Laourdas 1959: 164-172. Mango 1958: 283 ff.).

41. C. Mango believes that this is not the representation of the Virgin Mary that survives today, which, according to him, should be dated about a century later, in the mid-10th century. According to the same scholar, the Virgin Mary described by Photius was not enthroned but standing upright, in the style of the Virgin *Οδηγήτρια* Hodegetria (the one who shows us the way), and restored a previous similar representation, which was destroyed during the Iconoclasm, Mango 1962: 95.

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el survives). The icon painting continued on the remaining surfaces of the church, during the following decades up until the Palaiologan period. In the *Βίος του Βασιλείου* (*Life of Basil*), it is mentioned that the emperor donated a mosaic with the Vrefokratousa (Panayia with the Child) between the apostles Peter and Paul in the western arch of the church⁴². Drawings and watercolors seem to have come from this representation, lost today, by the Fossati brothers and Saltzenberg⁴³.

The post-iconoclastic iconographic program of Hagia Sophia also included the Pantocrator on the dome, perhaps enthroned in a rainbow⁴⁴, which replaced the large cross of the 6th century, probably after the earthquake of 869. The four spherical triangles had depictions of the six-winged seraphims (angels), three of which are still preserved today. Hierarchs and prophets were depicted on the large tympana of the church⁴⁵. Of these representations, only three hierarchs exist today on the northern tympanum: Saints John Chrysostom, Ignatius the God-bearer and Ignatius the Younger. On the intrados of the large eastern arch, the Preparation of the Throne was depicted, the praying Theotokos (orant) on the left and the Forerunner on the right, a theme with liturgical and eschatological content. There was a founding inscription on the right attributed to the emperor Romanos III Argyros (1028-1034). Christological scenes were illustrated on the domes of the galleries, such as the Baptism (in the north), the Pentecost and Christ the Pantocrator (in the south), representations that are also not preserved today and are known from the designs of Cornelius Loos, Fossati and Saltzenberg⁴⁶.

The mosaic decoration of the church continued during the reign of Leo VI the Wise (886-912) and of the son of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959). It is considered by many scholars that the kneeling emperor in the representation of the enthroned Christ Pantocrator, above the royal gate, is Leo VI who, as a beggar, asks for forgiveness for his fourth marriage. This depiction is generally typical of the performance of the founder of a church, who undertook an extensive repair or decoration project. This is why the eminent sponsor of Hagia Sophia during the period of the Macedonian emperors, Basil I, can be depicted⁴⁷. The presence, after all, of the Theotokos and of archangel Gabriel on the medallions to the right and left of Christ may imply a concise version of the Annunciation of the Theotokos or a form of the Deisis (Δέσις “Entreaty”) or to imprint the patrons of the depicted emperor. The representation is also connected with the report of Constantine Porphyrogenitus [*Ἐκθεσις της Βασιλείου Τάξεως* (De Ceremoniis, I, 1)] that the emperor, before entering the nave (main aisle) from the narthex, would worship by making three prostrations in front of the imperial gate. At the same time, it is loaded with political content, reminding the emperor of his relationship with the Pantocrator and consequently with his Church.

The mosaic representation of the emperor Alexander (912-913) in the northern gallery probably indicates his concern for the continuation of the icon painting of the church. The depiction of emperor builders-founders continues in the following centuries with representations at the southern entrance of the narthex and the southern gallery. The mosaic located above the entrance from the southwest compartment to the narthex is dated to around the year 1000. There is a depiction of the Vrefokratousa (Panayia

42. Ioannes Cameniata – Symeon Magister – Georgius Monachus, 1838: 322.

43. See Mango 1962: fig. 100-102.

44. See the drawings of the Fossati brothers (Mango 1962: fig. 23-24). We do not know for sure the iconographic type of the original representation of the Pantocrator, nor whether it remained the same until the Fall after so many repairs of the dome.

45. Mango 1962: 48-49.

46. Mango 1962: fig. 29-34.

47. This view was supported by Mango 1962: 96.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN CONSTANTINOPLE



Non-iconic mosaic themes.

with the Child) enthroned between the emperors Constantine the Great and Justinian, who offer, the first one, the model of the City and the latter one, the Hagia Sophia church⁴⁸. Characteristic is the monumental figure of the Virgin Mary with the beautiful features of the face and the correct proportions. Greater rigidity and linearity are observed in the figures of the emperors, which are depicted identically, with strong contours and a contrast of dark and light color tones on the faces.

On the east wall of the southern gallery, the votive mosaic representation of the Christ-Pantocrator enthroned survives today, preserved by the augusta Zoe († 1050) and the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055), Zoe's third husband. The imperial couple are depicted as sponsors, Constantine carries a purse / money box *αποκόμβιον* (βαλάντιο) with gold coins, a sample of his generosity to the Church, and Zoe a closed scroll, where the imperial donations are recorded. The head of Constantine Monomachos and the inscription that accompanies it, were added afterwards and replaced the depiction of Zoe's first husband, Emperor Romanos III Argyros (1028-1034) or the second, Michael IV the Paphlagonian (1034-1041)⁴⁹.

The imperial portraits of three more emperors are depicted on the same wall of the southern gallery. John II Komnenos (1118-1145) and empress Irene who was the daughter of Ladislaus I of Hungary (Saint Ladislaus) and later she also became a saint of the Eastern Church⁵⁰, surround the Vrefokratousa (Panayia with the Child) standing upright. They are also known as founders, offering to the Church a money box with gold coins by the emperor and Irene with a closed scroll with the imperial donations⁵¹. Later, the representation of a third emperor, their son Alexios, was added to the continuous pilaster. The composition with the Vrefokratousa (Panayia with the Child) and the imperial couple was treated artistically in the autumn of 1118, in memory of

48. Whittemore 1933-1952 (1936): 9 ff.

49. Whittemore 1933-1952 (1942): 9 ff., mainly 17-18.

50. She became a nun and was renamed Xenia. Her commemoration day is on August 13.

51. Whittemore 1933-1952 (1942): 21 ff.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN CONSTANTINOPLE

the ascension to the throne of John II Komnenos, while the representation of the young Alexios in 1122, when he was proclaimed co-emperor at the age of seventeen⁵². The mosaics are characterized by exquisiteness, technical perfection and strong linearity, while the side-look adds vitality to the flat faces of the kings.

The famous Deisis mosaic in the central part of the southern gallery of Hagia Sophia belongs to the Palaiologan “renaissance”. The representation today survives with many damages. Jesus Christ was depicted enthroned with the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Forerunner⁵³. The mosaic, a leading work of the Palaiologan art, with the painting and idealistic rendering of the figures and the desired beauty, reveals the conscious revival of the classical patterns during this period. It dates after 1261 and is considered an offering of the emperor Michael XVI Palaiologos to the Hagia Sophia church, after Constantinople’s recovery from the alterations made by the crusaders, although some scholars date it a little later.

One of the many lost mosaics of the church, which also belonged to the Palaiologan period, is the figure of the emperor John V Palaiologos, one of the well-known sponsors of the church, depicted in the large eastern arch and, on the left of the Virgin Mary, in the representation of the Preparation of the Throne⁵⁴.

Its radiation

Justinian was to leave to humanity a unique monument, pioneering for his time and unrepeatable for future generations. Because Hagia Sophia is not just an important byzantine monument, it is the symbol of Orthodoxy and of ecumenical Christianity, in which architecture and its decoration with theology along with Byzantine aesthetics meet and harmonically converse, luxury with piety, and human creation with God’s presence.

This is exactly what the envoys of the Russian prince Vladimir experienced when they visited Constantinople in 987, and how they transferred it to their ruler: “We did not know if we had already ascended to heaven. Truly, no one on earth would ever find such wealth and grandeur. The only thing we can convey to you is that in there, one actually realizes the presence of God and that religion is far beyond the religion of any other country”⁵⁵. Thus, the Hagia Sophia church “became an imaginary baptismal font of the Russians... proved to be the most charming invitation for Illumination and Baptism of an entire people”⁵⁶.

Hagia Sophia, the Great Church, was never architecturally repeated. It radiated throughout Christianity—and elsewhere⁵⁷—and many churches of metropolises or dioceses were dedicated, like this one, to the Wisdom of God, the Incarnate Word of God. We find theses in important cities of the empire, such as Thessaloniki, Nicaea, Trebizond, Ochrid, Sofia of Bulgaria (known as Serdica in antiquity), Mystras, and elsewhere, but also outside the byzantine territory, such as in Italy, and in areas converted to Christianity by the Byzantines, such as in Kiev and Novgorod. Its radiance continued in later years with important monuments throughout the Orthodox Christian world.

Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou

52. Op. cit.: 28.

53. Whittemore 1933-1952 (1952): 10 ff. Mango 1962: 29.

54. Mango 1962: 74-76.

55. Hazzard-Cross – Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953: 111. Savvides 1990: 83-94 Cf. and Mainstone 1988: 11.

56. Sophroniou 2019: 254.

57. Its influence on Islamic architecture is well known.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN CONSTANTINOPLE



The omphalion, where the coronation of the emperors took place.

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Polotsk. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

Hagia Sophia in Polotsk



The Hagia Sophia church (or Saint Sophia Cathedral), built in Polotsk in the second half of the 11th century, became a symbol of independence, power and grandeur of the first state in modern-day Belarus, of the principality of Polotsk. It was the political, economic, religious and cultural center of the city and of the principality. Peace agreements have been signed here, or a war was declared, trade documents were signed, the prince's treasury was guarded, Polotsk's chronicles were kept and books were copied, the library and the standard clock that helped control the honesty of the merchants. The church was also the bishop's see. In the event of war, citizens could remain hidden behind the strong walls of Hagia Sophia.

In the mid-11th century, the architects that were invited by the legendary Prince of Polotsk or Vseslav Briacheslavich (reign 1044-1101) built the Hagia Sophia church in five construction periods (five years without the winter months). There is also the opinion of the archaeologist Sergei Tarasov¹

1. С. Тарасов, 2007: 61.

BELARUS



The east bank of the river Dvina, the Hagia Sophia church and part of the city.

that a team of workers from the Balkan Peninsula (probably from Ohrid) were involved in the construction of the church.

The excavations in the years 1970-1980, that were carried out by the Russian art critic and archaeologist Valentin Bulkin², showed that the church was of a crossed-dome plan, had three apses and the shape of a cube with a side of 26.4 meters, and was crowned by seven domes in the shape of a helmet. The church was not plastered on the outside. Stones of irregular size were used in the masonry. Internally, the volume of the church was divided by sixteen columns into five elongated aisles and had a stoa, which was located above the church's entrance at a height of about 7 meters.

The church of Hagia Sophia was placed on solid foundations (height 1.2 m), which have survived to this day. Today, in addition to the foundations, one can see the apses of the sanctuary, the western and eastern

2. В. Булкин, 2012: 14-66.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN POLOTSK



The Hagia Sophia church and the Dvina River from the southeast.

wall that survive from the mid-11th century at the height of 8 and 12 meters, the synthronon, the remains of columns, as well as the 11th century remains of frescoes (20 m² of frescoes with vegetative and geometric designs have survived) in the Museum of the History of Architecture of the Saint Sophia Cathedral, which opened in 1987 inside the church.

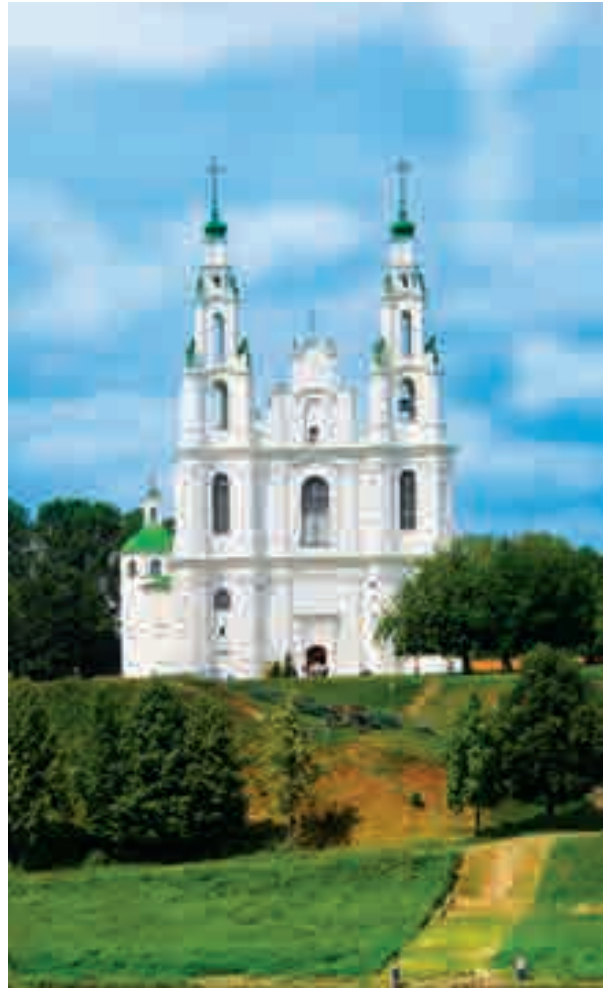
Along with the city, the church experienced many dramatic developments, disasters and fires. In the 15th to the 16th centuries, it was reconstructed in a defensive type church. This is shown by the earliest known evidence of the drawing of Polotsk of 1579. From 1596, the Orthodox church building of Hagia Sophia passed into the hands of the Uniates and remained Unitarian until 1839.

In 1710, at the Hagia Sophia church, an explosion took place in the powder magazine, which was housed there during the Great Northern War at the behest of Peter the Great. Twenty-eight years later, the Uniate archbishop Florian Hrebnicki invited Johann Christoph Glaubitz, the architect from Vilnius to rebuild the church.

BELARUS



The church from the north.



The west side of the church.

For ideological or economic reasons, the old foundations and the remains of the walls and apses were incorporated in the new composition of the church, the construction of which was completed in 1750. After the reconstruction, the church was converted into a three-aisled basilica with an apse oriented to the north. On the south side, at a height of 50 meters, two symmetrical towers were erected.

The new church was rebuilt in the late Belarusian Baroque or Vilnius Baroque style and gained a new interior decoration. Many sculptural decorative elements, carved sills and a slightly unusual color palette appeared in the interior decoration, besides the baroque columns. The church's sanctuary was separated from the central aisle by a high iconostasis. There was a relief depiction of the Holy Trinity that has survived to the present day in the arch. The second and third zone of the iconostasis were painted and adorned with sculptures. A replica of the famous fresco of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" as well as the icon of the Savior, Not-Made-By-Hands (Αχειροποίητος) has survived from the painting of the iconostasis.

The subsequent fate of the Hagia Sophia church in Polotsk is as dramatic as that of the 18th century.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN POLOTSK



Parts of the older building phases of the church, integrated in the new structure.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the general repair of the church took place and soon after the repair it was adapted to the needs of the museum and then to that of a barn. The church functioned during the Second World War. It was used as an archive warehouse after the war.

Restoration works began on the Hagia Sophia church in 1969. The restoration plan was drawn up by the well-known Belarusian architect and restorer Valery Slunchenko (1945-1992). Belarusian and Lithuanian restorers, Russian archaeologists (Pavel Rapoport, Valentin Bulkin) and Czech organ players took part in the restoration work.

In 1983, the concert hall for chamber music was opened in the church of Hagia Sophia. The first musical event was the performance of pieces from the "Polotsk Notebook" (16th century) by the music band "Cantabile". In 1985, the majestic music of the church organ was heard for the first time. The organ for the Hagia Sophia was made and installed by the Czech company "Rieger-Kloss". It has 3.905 pipes of different sizes, 48 scales, a system of pedals for the feet (40) and three manual keyboards.

Under the church's vaults, the voices of world-famous singers have been heard including Irina Archipova, Vladislav Piafko, Alexander Venternikov, Maria Biesu, Boris Stokolov, Vergilius Noreinka, Lisitsian sisters, Svetlana Daniluk, Natalia, Gaida. Musical works were performed by orchestras and choirs under the direction of Gennady Nikolayevich Rozhdestvensky, Valery Poliansky, Svetlana Bezrodnaya, Vlantimir Spivakof, Vladimir Minin, Saulus Sodetskis and solo played by known musicians Margarita Fyodorova, Igor Olovnikof, Natalia Serilogina, and Vladimir Tretyakov. The church organ was played by musicians from the Vatican, Germany, France, Austria, Switzerland, Latvia, Ukraine, Russia and other countries.

Like nine hundred and fifty, and two hundred and seventy years ago, the light, color, music, sculpture and architecture have merged organically and created an amazing artistic image in terms of the power of its emotional impact. The concert hall

BELARUS



The interior of the church from the west during a music event.

with its unique acoustics inside the monument is naturally combined with the permanent exhibition of the museum, the main exhibits of which became the ruins of the 11th century church. The new use of the church did not distort its original appearance. On the contrary, it revealed and highlighted the most important item that does not depend on time and specifically the high art of its creators.

Timeline

- 1050s: construction of the church of Hagia Sophia.
- 1447: after a fire, the church of Hagia Sophia was reconstructed into a church in a defensive type.
- 1620: the Hagia Sophia church was restored after a fire damage.
- 1710: the Hagia Sophia church was destroyed by a powder magazine explosion.
- 1738-1750: restoration of the Hagia Sophia church by Vilnius architect Johann Christoph Glaubitz.
- 1850, 1870, 1913: repairs to the Hagia Sophia church.
- 1969: the commencement of the restoration works of the Hagia Sophia church.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN POLOTSK

1983: opening of the concert hall for chamber music.

1985: installation of the pipe organ and the opening of the concert hall for the pipe organ.

1987: opening of the exhibition of the Museum of the History of Architecture of the Hagia Sophia, a branch of the Polotsk National Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve.

Since 1987, international festivals of old and modern chamber music are organized every April in the church of Hagia Sophia.

International festivals of the pipe organ “Holy Wisdom’s Sounds” are hosted in the Hagia Sophia church annually in November, since 1997.

The official Orthodox Divine Liturgy is celebrated every year on June 5, which is the commemoration day of Saint Euphrosyne of Polotsk, who spent her first eight years of solitary ministry in the church of Hagia Sophia copying books.

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Mesembria. Hagia Sophia. The interior of the church from the west.

Hagia Sophia in Mesembria



The beautiful remains of the basilica “Hagia Sophia or Saint Sophia” are one of the symbols of ancient Nessebar. The basilica is also known as the “Old Metropolis” and is located in the supposed old center of the city, on the site of an ancient temple of Apollo¹. The church was part of the residence of the Metropolitan of Mesembria and continued to function until the end of the 18th century.

The Mesembrian Church was founded in apostolic times, but the name of its founder has not been preserved. It is possible that the Apostle Andrew passed from here on his way to Odessos (today Varna), but unfortunately the historical sources have retained the name only of the final point of his journey, the city of Odessos. Indirect support for such a hypothesis is the fact that some of the holy relics (part of hand and jaw) of St. Andrew the First Called until the 13th century were preserved in the Metropolitan Church of Nessebar “St. Sophia”.

The city was presented at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 by its bishop Peter². The Church of Nessebar is sanctified by the steps of many faithful followers of Christ, such as the holy martyr Anastasius Apocrisiarius, a disciple of St.

1. Preshlenov, H. 2018, 401.

2. Σταμούλης, Μ. 1940, 137.

BULGARIA



The successive colonnades of the church from the northwest.

Maximus the Confessor, who spent some time in exile in the city. St. Sava the Serb arrived in Nessebar in 1235 after his second trip to the Holy Land and many others. At the beginning of the 12th century, the head of the local church was St. Luke, Metropolitan of Mesembria, famous for his miracles and healings.

The Metropolitan church of Nessebar, dedicated to the Wisdom of God, was built after the Council of Chalcedon (451) and fits into the series of churches “St. Sophia”, erected in different parts of the Christian Ecumena. The first construction dates back to the 5th and the beginning of the 6th century, and the church acquired its current architecture in the 9th century. Some researchers believe that it was destroyed shortly after its construction, probably by an earthquake, and its first restoration took place in the early sixth century, during the reign of Emperor Anastasius (491–518). Subsequent reconstruction took place during the 7th–8th century. The reconstruction followed the original plan of the basilica, but the colonnades between the naves were replaced by arcades composed of masonry pillars, and the galleries were removed³.

Architecture

Archaeological excavations of “St. Sophia” began in 1948⁴. The church is a three-naved basilica with a length of 25.5 and a width of 20.20 meters. The central nave is significantly wider than the other two. The

3. Boyadjiev, S. 1962, 321-346.

4. Покровски, С. 1949, 245

HAGIA SOPHIA IN MESEMBRIA



The northeast side of the church.

naves are separated by rectangular stone pillars connected by brick arches, and above them there is a second arcade. The central nave ends with a semicircular apse, which is 6.5 wide and 3.25 meters deep. The synthronon in the apse, consisting of four concentric steps, is almost completely preserved. In the eastern part of the apse there are three arched windows. To the right of the apse is a built-in marble block, on which is engraved a verse from an Old Testament psalm: “And let my cry reach you!” (Ps. 101: 2). It dates from the 4th–5th century, and was used in the original construction of the church and in its restoration in the 7th century⁵. The basilica also has a narthex and an atrium.

The masonry of the basilica is mixed, consisting of areas with five layers of rectangular stone blocks and bricks glued with mortar. The church had a mosaic floor, from which fragments from the 6th century are preserved, stored in the local museum. A characteristic element is the colored cup of the lotus, which is a favorite decorative motif in the early Christian mosaic art and is also found on the upper floor of the second church under the basilica of “St. Sophia” in Sofia. In the upper part of the eastern side of the southern colonnade are preserved traces of frescoes from the 17th century.

Many researchers trace the strong influence of the churches of Constantinople on the formation of the liturgical space of “St. Sophia”, in particular drawing parallels with the cathedral of the monastery “St. John the Studios” in Constantinople, dated to the second half of the 5th century. The similarities of the Old Metropolis with “St. John Studios” is due to the fact that the Mesembrian was built on the model of the

5. Preshlenov, H. 2018, 402.

BULGARIA



Left: One-room three-niched structure, at the north side of the church.

Bottom: The Sanctuary. The semicircular synthronon of the church.



Studios⁶, or that both are approximately synchronous and follow “the same normative liturgical planning for the whole patriarchate of Constantinople”⁷.

Shrines and relics

During the war in 1257, the Venetians, led by Jacomo Doro, invaded Nessebar and looted the church. They took away the holy relics stored in it - the body of St. Theodore, who became one of the patrons of

6. Boyadjiev, S. 1996, 13.

7. Stanev, St. 2007, 65.

Venice, the hand and jaw of St. Apostle. Andrew, the skull of St. Cistus and the hand of St. Bartholomew. The relics were transferred first to Constantinople and then to Venice in the church “St. El Salvador”, where they are today⁸.

At the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century in the church “St. Sophia” was buried Matajsa Palaeolog Kantakouzenos. In fact, it is Princess Maria Kantakouzenos, daughter of Emperor Andronicus III Palaeologus, who died as a nun in the city, after the death of her husband Michael Assen, king of Bulgaria. The marble tombstone, which is now in the Archaeological Museum in the city, has been preserved. The tomb is located opposite the altar and faces south. The arcade above the tomb is made of wedge-shaped cut stones, on which there are seven monograms - three of them by the Palaeologus, two by Kantakouzenos and one by Emperor Manuel I Comnenos⁹.

The church “St. Sophia” functioned as a metropolitan church until the 16th century, when the metropolitanate moved to the church “St. Stefan”, called the “New Metropolis”.

Dr. Zlatina Ivanova

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8. Klein, H. 2010, 221.

9. Theoklieva-Stoycheva, 2001, 209-214.



Sofia, Hagia Sophia. The west side of the church.

BULGARIA

Hagia Sophia in Sofia

Today's capital of Bulgaria, Sofia, the ancient Serdica is a city with several thousands of years history. Christianity penetrated here as early as the first century AD. Its distribution is associated with the names of Saint Clement of Rome and Saint Potit of Serdica, as well as many other early Christian martyrs, whose names have not reached us¹. In AD 311, emperor Galerius issued here his famous edict of tolerance, thus ending the persecution of Christians in the Eastern Roman Empire. A little later, Serdica became a favorite place of residence of Emperor Constantine the Great, who even considered moving the capital of the empire from Rome to Serdica. His remarkable words remain in history: "Roma mea Sardica est" (Serdica is my Rome)². During his time, a number of Christian churches and monasteries began to be built, some of which are preserved to this day.

One of the most important churches, which became an emblem and symbol of the city is the Basilica of Hagia Sophia (church of the Holy Wisdom of God), dedicated to God's Wisdom, the second person of the Holy Trinity, to which the whole city will be dedicated later. The church was built on a large necropolis, extending more than a kilometer to the

1. Каравълчев 2011: 116-127. Каравълчев 2020: 44-54.

2. Müller 1851: 199.15.





The masonry of the vertical walls and vaults inside the church.

east and south, which is located nearby, but outside the fortress walls of the city³. The earliest attested burials here dates from the second half of the 3rd century, with Christian burials predominating⁴.

Under the current church are two earlier basilicas, with several construction phases, (see below).

Initially, probably immediately after the Edict of Serdica (AD 311) or the Edict of Milan (AD 313), a “martyrium” of a hitherto unknown martyr of Christ was erected here (Popova, 2014: 131)⁵. The “martyrium” was soon became part of the first church built on this location, which is today under the basilica and which also dates back to the 4th century⁶. This early basilica underwent two more reconstructions and expansions. The floor of this basilica was covered with mosaic. In the immediate vicinity a second basilica was built, also dating from the 4th century. The basilica measures 24.5 x 10 m., was probably single-naved and single-apsed with a transept⁷. A third basilica was discovered, about 10-15 meters south of these churches, which dates back from the 4th-6th century. This basilica is single-naved, single-apsed, with a narthex and dimensions 16 x 5.6 m.⁸.

3. Динчев 2014: 7.

4. Филов 1913: 67, 86-87, 106-107.

5. Ророва 2014: 131.

6. Чанева-Дечевска 1999: 293.

7. Op. cit.: 294.

8. Господинов 1921: 65-66.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN SOFIA



The interior of the church during the Divine Liturgy Service.



The interior of the church from the west.

A large three-naved, single-apsed basilica with a narrow narthex, measuring 31.8 x 17.45 m., was built on the first church⁹. There is a synthronon in the niche of the sanctuary, which indicates that it was episcopal. The side aisles were divided by two colonnades with five columns each. The floor was covered with mosaic. Some five meters north from the basilica, a baptistery consisting of two rooms, was revealed, which is also dated to 5th century¹⁰. It is interesting, that the narthex of this basilica lies on the ruins of the second early Christian basilica, mentioned above¹¹.

The basilica of Hagia Sophia, almost in the form in which it has reached us, was built in the period of the mid-5th-early 6th century, during the reign of emperor Justinian (527 - 565)¹², on the ruins of older basilicas, as mentioned above. The basilica measures 46.5 x 23 m. It is a vaulted three-nave basilica, with one apse of the sanctuary, with a narthex and a transept, vaulted, aisle. The height of the middle aisle is 16.1 m. and the maximum height of the church with the dome 19.75 m. Both ends of the narthex conclude with towers that have no external entrances, communicating through the narthex.

9. Чанева-Дечевска 1999: 294.

10. Op. cit.: 294.

11. Op. cit.: 295.

12. Krautheimer 1965: 183-184. Krautheimer – Ćurčić: 255-257.

BULGARIA



Part of the colonnade and the southern wall's superstructure.

The foundations of the basilica are made of stone blocks, reinforced with brick belts, and the walls are made only of bricks welded with mortar mixed with crushed bricks¹³.

According to the information given by a number of foreign travelers, summarized by B. Filov, Hagia Sophia ceased to function as a Christian church, shortly after the conquest of the city by the Ottoman Turks. From the beginning of the 16th century, we have information, that its vestibule was converted into a mosque, and the church's interior into a warehouse¹⁴. The complete conversion of the Christian basilica into a mosque took place at the very beginning of the 17th century, before 1621. A minaret was built for this purpose and Hagia Sophia became the main mosque of the city¹⁵.

13. Чанева-Дечевска 1999: 292-293. Филов 1913: 110-114.

14. Филов 1913: 148-151.

15. Op. cit.: 151-152.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN SOFIA



Part of the early Christian mosaic floor of the church.

Construction phases

It should be noted that different researchers talk about three, four, five and even more construction phases¹⁶, most prevalent of which are the following:

- First phase: corresponds to the original construction of the church.
- Second phase: some of the arched windows were reduced in height, and others were completely clogged without changing their original shape.
- Third phase: Ottoman. It is characterized by extremely solid and careful construction of stones placed between four rows of bricks, or just bricks. The windows were further reduced and gained well-built pointed arches.
- Fourth phase: also, Ottoman. Characterized by great negligence in the construction, which is everywhere uneven and hasty.
- Fifth phase: after the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878. This period includes the restoration of the church in its present form and the construction of the entire current roof of the church.

16. Динчев 2014: 5, 19. Филов 1913: 49-60, 110-113, 144-148. Бояджиев 2009: 22-36.

BULGARIA



Early Christian mosaic floor with depictions of plants and birds.



Part of an early Christian painted decoration with geometric shapes and plants.

During the numerous archeological excavations of the site, which began at the end of the 19th century and continued through the entire 20th century, more than 70 m² of mosaics were revealed, some of them from the floors of the early basilicas and some from the numerous burial facilities. In 1893, under the apse of the basilica of Hagia Sophia, Vatsav Dobruski discovered a grave with a silver reliquary containing coins from the 4th century¹⁷. During an excavation carried out at the end of the 20th century, the researcher K. Shalganov, under the mosaic in the apse of the first basilica, where the base of the altar table was located, he found two more silver reliquaries¹⁸.

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17. Добруски 1896: 434-435.

18. Шалганов, К. 2002: 582-584.



Harbin. Hagia Sophia. The west side of the church.

Hagia Sophia in Harbin

The church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) in Harbin is one of the most famous Orthodox churches in China, which survives to this day. The city of Harbin, located on the left bank of the Songhua River, was founded by Russian engineers in 1898, following an agreement between Russia and China on the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway. The modern church had two precursor churches. The first was a small wooden church of Hagia Sophia, built in the early years of the 20th century at Camp Corpusni, on the site where the 4th Eastern Siberian Rifle Division was camping. In 1906, after the Russo-Japanese war, the Division returned to Russia and the church, at the request of the tea merchant I. F. Chistyakov and at his own expense, was relocated near Pristan, the commercial port of Harbin.

In 1907, the church was restored on Vodoprovodnaya Street (modern Towloon-dze), partially reconstructed and covered with bricks. This consists the second precursor church of the modern Hagia Sophia. Its main sponsor was the merchant I. F. Chistyakov until his death in 1924.

The church is a religious and architectural landmark that dominates the region of Pristan, whose streets were surrounded by two-story and three-story buildings. The church's presence in the area was based on the contrast between the low volume of the church building and the tall and elegant bell tower. "The construction and decoration of the bell tower with an octagonal tent-like construction and floors repeats according to the type, the stone church building of the 17th century, even though it is wooden and has only brick cladding"¹.

Harbin and Chinese Eastern Railways were built in Manchuria, which at the time was a border region of China, rich in natural resources, with mountains, taiga (coniferous forests) and steppes that were least explored. Political, trade and industrial circles planned to integrate it into the Russian presence, perhaps even to annex it. It was one of the reasons why the church was dedicated to Hagia Sophia with special emphasis placed on historical references. "The direct reference to the Hagia Sophia church in Kiev was tantamount to the desire to establish national and orthodox roots and culture through a symbolic imitation of the well-known structure of awe and veneration. There is no architectural resemblance to the plan view of the church in Kiev, however the dedication found its expression in the interior decoration: as the

1. Левашко, 2015, p. 44.



The church from the southwest.

parishioners entered the church, they were able to see the scenes “The ambassadors of Vladimir in the church of Hagia Sophia in Vassilevousa [the Queen of Cities, Constantinople]” and “The Baptism of the inhabitants of Kiev during Vladimir’s reign”².

It is also important to point out that for the Russian Orthodox conscience, the representations of Hagia Sophia are closely connected with the biblical perceptions pertaining to the creation of the world, in which the Wisdom of God participates. Thanks to Its participation, the world is created on the principles of wisdom and of beauty, of harmony and of joy. Therefore, from non-existence, a physically and spiritually orderly wholeness is born, creation. These perceptions were very familiar to Harbin city planners, who were creating a city, a new “home” of the Russian world in the wild steppe of Manchuria. In terms of its general architectural conception, Harbin was designed as a modern-day city, harmoniously combining the practical and spiritual requirements of the people, as a garden-city. The complex image of the Holy Wisdom of God corresponded in the best way to the ideas of the architects and the moods of the people.

The church built in 1907 was relatively small. However, the city was developing and the church could no longer accommodate all the parishioners. This became particularly apparent in the early 1920s, when Harbin was filled with tens of thousands of refugees from Soviet Russia. The parish priest of the church Mikhail Filologov and the parishioners headed by I. F. Chistyakov applied to the Chinese authorities regarding the construction of a new church building on the site of the old one. The construction was assigned to G. P. Zhdanov and then to M. M. Oskolkov, a well-known engineer and architect from the Far East who had immigrated to Harbin. He received as a model, the design of the church of the Epiphany on Gutuyev island in Saint Petersburg, which was built in the 1890s with

2. Op. cit.: 44.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN HARBIN



The church from above after the first restoration (1997).

designs by B. A. Kosyakov who had in mind the Christ the Savior cathedral in the village of Borki, near Kharkiv. “Although there were no radical changes in the overall dimensions, design and character of the volume composition, Oskolkov did some things to the Hagia Sophia church in a different way³”. According to the conception, the church had to accommodate two thousand people. The total area of the church amounted to 717.25 m².

Significant donations of money and building materials were collected to start the work. On 14/27 September 1923, the foundations of the new building were laid. The church was built in a difficult time. However, the sponsorships were not drained and the widow of the main donor I. P. Chistyakov covered about half of the expenses.

3. Крадин 2001: 109.

CHINA



Above: The onion-shaped central.

Below: The church in modern chalcography (2018).



The official consecration of the church took place on 12/25 December 1932. “The church of Hagia Sophia belongs to the type of churches with a holy altar, it has the shape of a Latin cross (with a longer western part), and the apse on all three sides is surrounded by a gallery. The area of the holy altar is divided into three aisles by two rows of pillars. The octagonal shaped area of the nave is very well lit by sixteen windows that pierce the high massive tympanum. The church is crowned by a huge onion-shaped dome, it has octagonal tent-like elements (...) on top of the side aisles and its facades are built in Russian style⁴”. The total height of the church is 48 m., with the cross, over 53 meters. The frescoes were painted by A. K. Holodilov.

The church began to function since the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. Even though the Japanese authorities did not interfere much in the work of the Russian Orthodox in the Diaspora, the persecutions and demands for the celebration of daily religious rituals in honor of the Japanese emperor concerned the Russians too. The parish priest of the Hagia Sophia church, Mikhail Filologov, was jailed for three months for refusing to perform Shinto national and religious rituals. He died shortly after his release and was buried inside the church, at the southern aisle⁵. However, the parish generally lived the usual ecclesiastical life and the church continued to function until the early 1950s.

After the mass exodus of Russians from Harbin, the church was deserted. It was brutally desecrated during the years of the “Great Cultural Revolution,” in the late 1960s. The interiors were destroyed and part of its exterior decoration was used as a warehouse. In the 1980s, the attitude of the Chinese authorities and residents changed rapidly. In 1986, with a special decision, the church acquired a special status of a monument and is under the state’s protection. In November 1996, it was

4. Лєвошко 2015: 44.

5. Еремин 2020, pp. 134-135.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN HARBIN

included in the list of monuments of the People's Republic of China. Donations of about 10 million yuan were collected from ordinary citizens initiating the restoration of the building, which was the symbol of the old Harbin. The large-scale reconstruction of the surrounding area was completed with the demolition of the newer structures which were located on the outskirts, and the opening of a large square. The church almost returned to its original state, and the icons were hung again in its interior. The frescoes that survive in some spots were not maintained. The conservators, due to their exceptional value, deliberately left them until better days come. Maintenance and restoration work, both inside and outside the church, continue from time to time with the participation of artists from Russia.

The building serves as a Museum of Harbin's Russian history. Its exhibition displays documents, photographs, posters and paintings from the life of Harbin of the first half of the 20th century. The Hagia Sophia church once again became the main symbol of Harbin. It is reproduced in albums, brochures and countless tourist products. You can find it everywhere, even inside the cabins of the luxury trains with routes from Harbin.

The bells, which have been restored in the belfry, have a sound that sometimes rises – above the spacious square and the huge skyscrapers and diffuses – into the sky.

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Nicosia. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southeast.

CYPRUS

Hagia Sophia in Nicosia



The gothic church building of Hagia Sophia¹ is located in the city within the Venetian walls of Nicosia. The church is dedicated to the Wisdom of God, i.e., to Christ, and seems to have been built on the site of an older byzantine church. The case is supported by the architectural members of an older church immured in the gothic church, as well as the seal of the Latin archbishop Eustorge de Montaigu (1217-1251), which depicts the former, apparently, domed church².

The church of Hagia Sophia is one of the most significant examples of the crusader architecture in Cyprus³. It has dimensions of 66 x 21 m., without including the chapels and the propylon, and is the largest gothic church built in Cyprus. It has an ambulatory, an element that is not found in any other church on the island and a pseudo-transept aisle⁴. The construction of the church began with Cypriot sandstone from the early years of Frankish rule⁵. The foundation stone was laid in 1209 during the Latin archbishop Thierry⁶. The successors of Thierry, Albert and Eustorge de Montaigu, continued the construction work of the church⁷.

1. Papageorgiou 1990: 274-276. Schabel s.a.: 412-414.

2. Enlart 1987: 83.

3. Navari 2003: 89, 113, 122, 149, 163, 236 where maps with the location or depiction of the Hagia Sophia church.

4. Enlart 1987: 89, 94-95, 98.

5. Ibid.: 91.

6. Ibid.: 82. Schabel s.a.: he notes that the foundation stone was laid by Archbishop Albert.

7. Enlart 1987: 103. Schabel 2012: 155.



The interior of the church from the west.

The works of the first phase continued until the 13th century and follow the gothic architectural type of the mid-12th century. This phase is influenced by the gothic architecture of the Paris and Campania region⁸. The eastern part had been constructed by 1228, which included the ambulatory, the holy altar and the transept aisle. The transept aisle included two chapels, attached to the north and south walls of the eastern area of the church that houses the choir. The height of the chapels reaches the height of the side aisles and not the height of the central aisle, as was customary at that time. The sculptural decoration is limited during the first phase. The two pairs of struts from two halves of a succession of arches above the transept aisle are also included to this decoration. The lower arch of these struts is supported on a strut immured into the skylight of the central aisle and on a colonette with a capital, which is decorated with double helixes and foliage.

On the outer side, the arches are supported by a strong rectangular strut, with a gable ridge, which is attached to the north and south walls of the church. At the top of the highest arch, a rainwater drainage ditch is created, where water is collected on the roof of the central aisle. The ditch ends in a lion-shaped gutter.

The two-story chapel, which is located to the east of the northern chapel of the transept aisle, belongs to the first phase. It has a semicircular apse covered with a quarter-sphere surface, which is probably due to the influence of the local byzantine architecture. In the northwest corner there is a screw-shaped staircase, which led to the chapel on the first floor⁹. It should be noted that the chapel on the first floor had a rectangular opening on the side of the central aisle, from where one could watch the church's divine services. However, this opening was blocked in the 14th century, when archbishop Giovanni del Conte or Polo

8. Schabel 2012: 155-157.

9. Enlart 1987: 102.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN NICOSIA



Gradational doorway of the two central west entrances of the church.

(1312-1332)¹⁰ changed the covering of the chapel, which he allegedly dedicated in honor of Saint Thomas Canterbury¹¹. The windows of this first part of the church are large, pointed, without dividing columns.

The church was completed by archbishop Giovanni del Conte¹². This archbishop arrived in Nicosia in 1319 and by 1326 completed the construction of the cathedral. He then built the central aisle and constructed the flat roofs, which are decorated with a series of four-lobed openings. The top of the walls of the central aisle has a cornice, decorated with palmettes and leaves. The cornice, above the windows, bends upwards and forms a small pediment, the top of which was decorated with a shoot stem. There is an arched opening below the pediment and above the window. The cornice relief is interrupted at the points of the strut supports by pilasters of three niches, with a pediment-shaped ridge. The struts have a rainwater drain at the top, which ends in animal-shaped gutters. The struts have a gable ridge, which is interrupted on the sides by pediments. They are covered by shoot stems at the top. Under the pediment of the second strut of the southern side, a bust of a human figure is projected, with hands holding the disc sundial.

During the days of archbishop Giovanni, the facade of the church was formed and a chapel-baptistery was built in the west part of the southern wall. During that time, the altar and part of the central aisle, enclosed by the first three columns that separate it from the sides, gained frescoes¹³. The church was consecrated on November 5, 1326 by the archbishop himself, although the propylon and the towers were not finished. In 1347, Pope Clement IV¹⁴ issued a bull for the completion and repair of the church, which had been struck by earthquakes¹⁵. The propylon and the northwest tower belong to this phase. The south-

10. Enlart 1987: 86.

11. Ibid.: 99. Schabel 2012: 156-157. Schabel s.a.: 413, where there is a reference to the generous donations of ecclesiastical objects by archbishop Giovanni to the church of Hagia Sophia.

12. Enlart 1987: 86.

13. Schabel 2012: 157.

14. Caporilli, 1999: 60.

15. Enlart 1987: 85-86.



The church from the southwest.

ern tower was never built nor the arched array that would connect the two towers, although they were planned¹⁶.

The church's west wall has three magnificent entrances, of which the central one is larger. A large impressive window on the first floor takes up the length of the central aisle.

The gradational doorways of the entrances have multiple arches, decorated with leaves and palmettes. On the side gates, there were three niches on each side for the placement of statues, where in the two central ones, there were statues of the prophets Moses and Elijah, and in the middle, a statue of Christ (representing the Transfiguration). The statue of Christ stepped on the colonette that divided the entrances in half. The doorway of the main entrance has a rich sculptural decoration. Three of the four succession of arches are decorated with figures of kings, prophets, apostles and bishops.

The Lusignans were crowned kings of Cyprus in the church of Hagia Sophia¹⁷. The church was converted into a mosque by the Turks when they occupied Nicosia in 1570 and was named "Ayasofya"¹⁸. During that time, two minarets were added and the rich sculpture and frescoes of the interior were destroyed, as well as burial monuments of kings of the house of Lusignans¹⁹. Some crosses on columns remained from the frescoes, including remnants of colors in an arched cornice, both on the north wall of the church²⁰.

Christodoulos A. Hadjichristodoulou

16. Ibid.: 92. Schabel 2012: 158.

17. Enlart 1987: 87. Schabel 2012: 159.

18. Schabel 2012: In 1954 it was renamed "Selimiye" mosque, after the Ottoman sultan who occupied Cyprus.

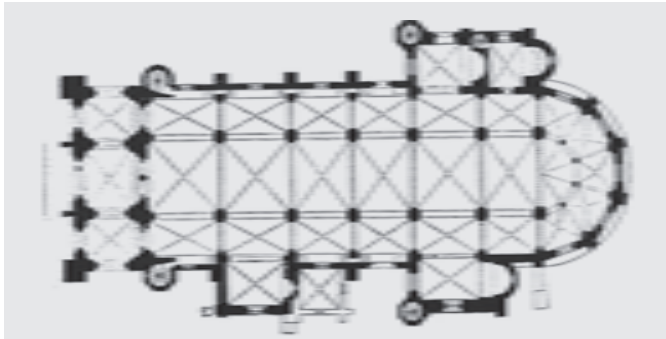
19. Enlart 1987: 83, 85, 88-89. Schabel 2012: 159

20. Hadjichristodoulou (under publication).

HAGIA SOPHIA IN NICOSIA



The church from the northeast.
Design by Camille Enlart (Enlart 1987).



The plan view of the church (Enlart 1987).

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Paphos. Hagia Sophia. The church from the northeast.

Hagia Sophia in Paphos

When the general of the Turkish land forces Lala Mustafa Pasha, on August 9, 1571 entered triumphantly in the looted Famagusta¹, the period of the Venetian presence in Cyprus (1474-1571) finally ended and the long period of the Turkish rule² began that would last 307 whole years until 1878 when the island will fall under English occupation. It was preceded by the fall of the capital of Nicosia³ on September 9, 1570, and the fall of Famagusta eleven months later simply ended the Ottoman domination in Cyprus. Characteristically, only these two cities of Cyprus, Nicosia⁴ and Famagusta⁵ were fortified cities, since the other cities of the island, Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and Kyrenia had only small castles.

In accordance with the standard practice of the conquerors, the Christian church buildings, especially the cathedrals of the cities, were immediately converted into mosques. Therefore, the magnificent Gothic cathedrals of Hagia Sophia in Nicosia⁶

1. Kitromilides 2011.

2. History of the Greek Nation 1974: 307-310, 312-313. Papadopoulos 2011.

3. Kitromilides – Tornaritou-Mathiopoulou (ed.), 2015.

4. Michaelides 2012: 231-322.

5. Walsh – Edbury – Koureas 2012. Weyl Carr 2014. Grivaud – Nicolaou-Konnari – Schabel 2020.

6. Michaelides 2012: 154-160. Bağışkan 2009: 129-13.



CYPRUS



The church from the south.

and of Saint Nicholas in Famagusta⁷ are converted into mosques. Every byzantine and gothic church will have the same fate, not only those of the cities, but also of many communities of the island⁸.

The city of Paphos, Nea Paphos succeeded Palaipaphos and was a glorious capital of Cyprus during the Hellenistic and Roman years⁹. The Roman commander had his seat there and the Apostles Paul and Barnabas taught in Paphos making their way through the whole island during AD 46. In fact, during that period the Roman proconsul of Cyprus Sergius Paulus was the first Roman official to embrace Christianity and from the mid-1st century AD, Paphos became an episcopal see. The terrible earthquake of the 4th century, but also the subordination of Cyprus to the Eastern Roman State radically changed the circumstances and Salamis/Constantia became the capital of Cyprus. Nevertheless, Paphos soon regains

7. Bağışkan 2009: 214-219.

8. The conversion of Christian churches into mosques continues gradually and increases throughout the period of Ottoman rule, mainly in the countryside and has a direct link to mass islamizations that are taking place in Cyprus. It is noted that many villages with a pure Turkish Cypriot population bear the names of saints of the Orthodox Church, such as Saint Symeon, Saint Chariton, Saint Andronikos, Saint Thomas and others. Another characteristic is also that in the Province of Paphos all five mosques, which are declared as Ancient Monuments, are Christian churches, which, in fact, retain the names of the saints to whom they were dedicated. These churches are Hagia Sophia in Timi, Hagia Sophia in Paphos, Saint Nicholas in Chrysochou, Saint Andronikos in Polis Chrysochou and Saint Catherine in Pelathousa. On the subject of islamization in Cyprus see Samaras 1987, Papadopoulos 2003, Kokkinofas 2019. The phenomenon of the conversion of Christian churches into mosques will be repeated massively, immediately after the Turkish invasion of July/August 1974 and the occupation of the northern part of Cyprus. On the subject see Chotzakoglou 2008 and Savvidis 2019.

9. Maier – Karageorghis 1984.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN PAPHOS



The church from the northeast.

its old radiance of glory, as new glorious basilicas are built, such as those like the Chrysopolitissa, one of the largest basilicas in Cyprus. The Arab invasions follow and the city begins to decline¹⁰. After the liberation of Cyprus in AD 963 from the emperor Nikophoros Phokas it seems that the city of Paphos does not recover its former condition. Its glorious early Christian basilicas are in ruins and there are few churches in the city, such as Panayia Theoskepasti, although the current church is newer.¹¹ Nearby, however, very important monuments were saved, such as the church of Saint Paraskevi¹² and the church of Panayia Chryseleousa in Emba¹³.

During the turbulent years of the Arab invasions, the population of the city moved and settled in a new location on a rocky hill further north which is today known as Ktima¹⁴. It seems that a magnificent church was built in this place which was the cathedral of the diocese of Paphos and see of the bishop of Paphos.

This is the Hagia Sophia church which was converted into a mosque during the years of the Turkish rule (Fig. 1). The current church of Hagia Sophia is built in the Moutallos district of Ktima and its size dominates the entire region (Fig. 2). We do not know if it was dedicated to Hagia Sophia from the beginning. The name, however, is preserved through oral tradition. The statement that the church was dedicated to Saint Filagrios, bishop of Paphos, cannot be sufficiently substantiated¹⁵. Even though the Hagia Sophia church is the most important church of Paphos' city, it has not been sufficiently studied and only simple references were

10. *GCE*², vol. 15: 176-240.

11. An important two-faced icon that is kept in the Byzantine Museum of the Diocese of Paphos of the 12th century comes from the church of Theoskepasti. Papageorgiou 1991: 26-27.

12. Foulías – Philotheou 2008: 61-94. Foulías – Chatzichristodoulou 2019.

13. Papageorgiou 1996: 63.

14. *GCE*², vol. 10: 113-114.

15. Vryonis 2017: 34-35; for Saint Filagrios see Makarios III Archbishop of Cyprus 1997: 47 and *GCE*² vol. 18: 468.

made to this church building¹⁶. This is mainly due to the fact that the church was converted into a mosque and underwent many interventions that did not allow its in-depth study¹⁷.

The current church of Hagia Sophia is built on the site of an older church, of which the northern aisle has been preserved at a low level, which ended in an apse. The original church may have been three-aisled with a dome, built in the 11th century and constituted the orthodox cathedral of Paphos, where the bishop of Paphos might have had his see. This is supported by the fact that in Kato Paphos no byzantine church has survived that can be considered as a cathedral.

This byzantine church was probably destroyed by the terrible earthquake in May 1222 that leveled Nea Paphos¹⁸. The byzantine castle of Saranta Kolones was among the buildings that were destroyed. A few years earlier, in 1191, Cyprus was conquered by the English king Richard the Lionheart, sold to the Templars and then ended up being occupied by the Lusignans who established the medieval Frankish kingdom of Cyprus (1192-1474). In 1260, the Cypriot Autocephalous Orthodox Church subjugated to the Latins with the Bulla Cypria issued by the Pope Alexander IV and provided that the Orthodox dioceses would be reduced to four. The expulsion of the orthodox bishop of Paphos to Arsinoe in today's Polis Chrysochous is within this context¹⁹.

It seems that these two events, namely the earthquake of 1222 and the relocation of the diocese's see of Paphos to Arsinoe, were the reasons for the almost complete destruction of the church of Hagia Sophia in Ktima²⁰. It is clear that Ktima must have succeeded Nea Paphos and was the episcopal see of Paphos after the 10th century. This is archaeologically testified by the first construction phase of the Hagia Sophia church, which is located in the northern aisle of the current church.

We do not know if Ktima had another name in the mid-byzantine period, since its name is more associated with the Frankish and Venetian period²¹. The region of the current Ktima was a royal estate (domain royale) and in 1193 it was ceded by the Frankish king of Cyprus to Aimery the former constable of Jerusalem. It was inhabited by the rich Franks and Greeks, since it had an excellent climate in relation to Kato Paphos. Nevertheless, in Kato Paphos, a brilliant Gothic cathedral was built at the beginning of the 14th century, from which, however, few remains survive today. In the area of the early Christian basilica of Chrysopolitissa, during the same period (late 13th-early 14th century), a Gothic church was built, which probably belonged to the Franciscan monks, the ruins of which have recently come to light after the excavations of the Depart-

16. Gunnis 1936: 147. Tsiknopoullos 1971: 82-83. Papageorgiou 1996: 81.

17. As a mosque, the Hagia Sophia church was used until 1974 by the Turkish Cypriot residents of Paphos, who moved after the Turkish invasion of 1974 in the regions currently occupied by the Turkish troops in the Republic of Cyprus. The Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus between the years 2002-2017 proceeded with extensive and important maintenance and restoration works of the church, fully respecting its character as a mosque. The church, after being converted into a mosque, is owned by the EFKAF of Cyprus, which manages the waqf (hubous) properties and is declared along with eighteen other mosques located in the free areas of the Republic of Cyprus as an Ancient Monument. For maintenance works see *ARDAC* 2002: 43; 2003: 36-37; 2004: 50; 2005: 42; 2006: 38; 2007: 36; 2008: 35; 2009: 28; 2010: 38.

18. This earthquake had a force of 7 magnitude of the Richter scale and is considered one of the most devastating earthquakes that struck Cyprus. Papazachos, Scordilis, Papaioannou, Solomi 2013: 87-110.

19. Papadopoulos 1995: 543-665.

20.20 A second strong earthquake measuring 6.5 of the Richter scale that struck and leveled Paphos again in 1350 would possibly contribute to the complete destruction of the Hagia Sophia church. Papazachos, Scordilis, Papaioannou, Solomi 2013: 87-110.

21. In the great map of Leonida Attar of 1542, Ktima is marked as *CTIMA* with the indication of a castle with towers, which, however, has not been located. Paphos is also marked with the existence of larger buildings, which probably refer to the Gothic churches. See Romanelli, Grivaud 2006: 105, 143-144.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN PAPHOS



The church from the southwest.

ment of Antiquities²². During the Turkish rule, Kato Paphos fell into complete decline, while Ktima is now the main place of residence²³.

The current church of Hagia Sophia was built on the site of the three-aisled byzantine church, from which the northern aisle was preserved ending in a semicircular apse, and part of the central apse is preserved (Fig. 3). The viewpoint that the church was Latin does not stand to reason, for it should have been used again as an orthodox cathedral after the return of the orthodox bishops to their sees²⁴.

The Hagia Sophia church is a cruciform inscribed type with an octagonal dome and a semicircular apse to the east. Each side of the dome is pierced by a single-lobed window, while the niche of the sanctuary is also pierced by a single-lobed window (Fig. 4). The church in its plan view presents asymmetry, since the northern antenna is larger than the southern one due to the fact that the northern aisle of the original byzantine church, which ends in a semicircular apse, was incorporated in the current church. The western antenna is quite elongated too and it seems that the western side (Fig. 5) would have undergone alterations during the Turkish rule, since it does not have the monumentality of the southern entrance with the carved portale and the blind arch above it (Fig. 6). In addition to the southern entrance on the south side, there is another door in the middle of the western antenna, and on the north side there was respectively an entrance that was blocked and became a window during the Turkish rule (Fig. 7). On the northern side, there is a round clerestory (oxeye), which is usually found on the western side of churches of that period of Venetian rule.²⁵

22. *GCE*², vol. 15: 239-240.

23. Registered in the first census of Cyprus conducted by the Ottoman administration just one year (1572) after its conquest, are ten Christian parishes in Ktima, while in Paphos only five. See Theocharidis 2021: 99.

24. Gunnis 1936: 147.

25. Chrysochou 2018: 40-41, 181-183.

The morphology of the dome, the correct proportions, the morphology of the southern entrance advocate the reconstruction of the Hagia Sophia church at the end of the 15th century, during the period of Venetian rule.

No traces of fresco decoration were detected during the maintenance works and the removal of the newer coatings inside. On the northern side, inside, under the circular clerestory, a stone coat of arms was found, which presumably belongs to the donor's family, which has not been identified yet (Fig. 8).

The Hagia Sophia church does not seem to have been immediately converted into a mosque with the conquest of Cyprus in 1571 by the Turks and this viewpoint is confirmed by the fact that a small number of guards initially settled in the repaired castles of small towns. The Hagia Sophia church, twenty-one years after the Turkish conquest, in 1592/3 was converted into a mosque by Mehmet Bey Ebubekir, who was the governor of Paphos (Sanjaic Bey) from 1578 to 1606 and to whom the mosque is dedicated. However, it is better known, and recorded in the cadastral maps, as Kebir mosque, i.e., large mosque²⁶. With the conversion into a mosque, it underwent important interventions, such as the construction of a stone minaret in the northwestern corner. A prayer niche (mihrab) was also created closing the southern entrance, a pulpit (minbar) was placed, and on the south side, a wooden women's section [the upper level of the church reserved for women only] was created (Fig. 9).

Inside, the pavement was covered with a new wooden floor and the two entrances on the northern and southern sides were converted into windows. The west side facade underwent interventions by opening two windows on both sides of the entrance. On the southern side, at the western antenna, a stone staircase was built which does not seem to have any functional use and which altered the morphology of this church's side. The grave of Hafiz Ibrahim Sitki Efendi (1803-1885) is located in the southern aisle, which ends in a semicircular apse inside.²⁷

The Hagia Sophia church is one of the most important monuments of Cyprus and the most important byzantine monument preserved in the city of Paphos (Fig. 10). It is a monument that its perusal gives us many interesting facts about Paphos and sheds new light on many aspects of its history.

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26. Bağışkan 2009: 318-322.

27. Op. cit.: 322-323.

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Galston. Hagia Sophia. The church and its outbuildings from the northwest.

GREAT BRITAIN

Hagia Sophia in Galston (Scotland)



In the town of Galston in East Ayrshire, Scotland, at number nine on Bentinck Street, the Roman Catholic church of Hagia Sophia stands, a monument from the last quarter of the 19th century, which was inspired for its erection by the church – now a mosque – Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (Istanbul). John Patrick Crichton Stuart, the third Marquess of Bute (1847-1900), is behind the sponsorship of the project, but also the conception of the idea of its reconstruction, as at the age of eighteen he traveled from Chios to Constantinople, where he was impressed by the imposing Justinian monument. He had decided to finance the construction of a church with a dome, which would have, in the plan view, the shape of an isosceles cross, and at the same time to create the first church in Scotland built entirely on the byzantine style. Originally, the town of Troon was chosen to for the construction of the church, but eventually ended up in Galston, as it was a short distance from certain locations, with which the marquess was emotionally attached.¹

1. Hannah 2003: 255-257, 259.



The church from the southwest.

In addition to the marquess' admiration for the majestic structure of the Vassilevoucha (the Queen of Cities, Constantinople), which functioned as a mosque at the time he visited it, one of the main reasons that led him to the dedication of the church he designed to the Wisdom of God, Christ, was the name of his beloved mother lady Sophia, who passed away, after a long-term illness, on December 28, 1859, close to the date of Christmas.²

The project was commissioned to the architect Robert Rowand Anderson, who, a few years earlier, had also undertaken the design of the magnificent Mount Stuart's residence from the Marquess of Bute. The reconstruction works of the church began in the early months of 1885 and were completed a year later. The Opening of the Doors service took place on Christmas Eve in 1886.³

2. Op. cit.: 258-259.

3. Op. cit.: 255, 259, 262.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN GALSTON (SCOTLAND)



The church's west side.

The church typologically belongs to the category of the inscribed cross domed types. Its length is one hundred and four feet, its width sixty-four and its height, up and including the top of the dome, eighty-two.⁴ The east side ends in three apses and the west side in a narthex, while the south wall has a small extension, in order to create separate confessional spaces. The dome has a conical cover and a high tympanum with eight large openings. The church is longitudinally covered with a gabled roof. The apses of the sanctuary are semi-circular on the inside and three-sided on the outside. The central one, which stands for a sanctuary, is wide and has three light openings. The other two are much smaller in size which have an opening and function as chapels. One is dedicated to the Theotokos and the other one to Saint John the Theologian. On the north side of the narthex, a staircase has been constructed

4. Macintosh 1890: 15-16.

GREAT BRITAIN



Above: The sanctuary area and the entrances of the side chapels.

Below: The sanctuary area. The original altar table stands out in the background, with the Greek letters A and Ω.



HAGIA SOPHIA IN GALSTON (SCOTLAND)

leading to the gallery, while on the south side, which ends in a three-sided niche with an opening, there is a sacristy.⁵

With the dedication of the pastophoria [the two compartments known as *Prothesis* and *Diakonikon*] to the Panayia (Ever-virgin Mary) and to John the Theologian, a symbolism is achieved, which was the basic pursuit of the founder of the Hagia Sophia: to architecturally represent the moment of the Crucifixion of Christ, with the Crucified One occupying the space of the sanctuary, which is the top section of the inscribed cross, so that these two main figures of the representation to create an imaginary triangle. The marquess saw himself in the face of Saint John, his patron saint, and the early loss of his mother in the face of the Ever-virgin Mary. He sought to create a kind of connection with the erection of the church between himself, his mother Sophia and the crucified Christ, the only source of redemption.⁶

A combination of reinforced concrete and red bricks was used for the construction of the monument. To the sunward side, due to the number of windows that have been opened, its interior can accommodate around three hundred and fifty to four hundred people.

The church bears no fresco decoration, except for some stained-glass windows (*vitraux*) and an elegant mosaic decoration, with encarpuses and flowers, on the facade of the original holy table.⁷

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5. In the plan view of R. R. Anderson, it seems that the architect destined this space for a baptistery, and he intended to use the southern niche, next to the sanctuary, for a sacristy. See Hannah 2003: fig. 3.

6. Hannah 2003: 262.


7. Op. cit.: 260, 262 ff., fig. 8.



London. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

GREAT BRITAIN

Hagia Sophia in London



The Greek Orthodox Church (Cathedral since 1922) of the Holy Wisdom of God on Moscow Road in London's Bayswater area was erected between 1877 and 1879 and consecrated in 1882. It was the first church that was chosen in the capital of the British Empire to be of "byzantine" (or rather "neo-Byzantine") style¹. The increasingly affluent Greek community had taken the initiative with its expenses and supervision to build "The New Greek Church", which, from the mid-19th century, was moved to the newly-built resettled neighborhood of western London, to the north and west of Hyde Park. In the past, and specifically from 1849 to 1882, this community attended church services in the Church of Our Savior (Christ Church), at 82 London Wall in east London, in the heart of the City, where most of the Greek trading houses of the Diaspora were located. Among them were great national benefactors: Rallis, Ioannidis, Argentis, Spartalis, Mavrokordatos, Skylitsis.

1. Many of the thoughts contained in this article have been negotiated in *Manginis*, under publication.



Left: The dome and the spherical triangles. Right: Mosaic decoration in the sanctuary's arch, work by Boris Anrep.

Within strictly neoclassical aesthetic rules, the Basilica of the Savior was the work of Lysandros Kaftantzoglou (1812-1885), a Greek architect who had designed not only churches but also secular buildings in the young Greek state under the Bavarian king Otto (r. 1832-1862)². The furniture's quality of the Savior Church is attested by the elaborate pews, which were reused in the Hagia Sophia church, and by the candelabra, which are now kept in the sacristy of the cathedral.

When the decision was made to build a new church for the growing Greek Orthodox congregation of London, a British architect, John Oldrid Scott (1841-1913), was chosen. He was the second son of Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) and, in general, designed his buildings in a "gothic revival" style, which was also adopted by his father³. In contrast to both Kaftantzoglou and his earlier work, Scott sought inspiration for the Hagia Sophia church in the morphology and decoration of the most important Byzantine church, the Patriarchal Cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (532-537)⁴. Nevertheless, the instructions given by the Greek salespeople to the British architect to design a "byzantine" Hagia Sophia church had initially directed him to another church, Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice.

The original five-domed design submitted to the construction committee referred to Saint Mark and through this church to the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople in the 6th century. However, the cost of such a project was considered excessive and a less daring construction of a more economical proposal was finally approved, with only a humble dome and short antennas, which in-

2. Theodoritos, 2002: 23-24, fig. 21, 22.

3. Konialidis, 2002: 27, 31.

4. Konialidis, 2002: 27-39. Ferguson, 2008: 29-30.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN LONDON



The church's wood-carved iconostasis.

scribe a Greek cross on the plan view.⁵ Scott also adopted the “byzantine” decoration in the wall coating both externally, with brick strips, and internally, with colorful marble paving stones. His meticulous neo-Byzantinism found his Greek salespeople agreeable, who probably had taken care to orient him in this direction—actually many of them came from Constantinople. In addition, he must have studied scientific books and been influenced by the byzantinologist Edwin Freshfield (1832-1918)⁶. A copy of the edition of *Alt-Christliche Baudenkmale von Constantinopel vom V. bis XII. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 1855), with colored engravings from byzantine churches in Constantinople, is kept in the Hagia Sophia's sacristy and is associated with Scott. The similarities between the iconographies in this edition and Scott's drawings for Hagia Sophia, which are kept in the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and in the sacristy, confirm this link.

The furniture and decoration of Scott's building continue to this day. The iconostasis, made of precious walnut wood with inlays, was made by Farmer & Brindley and adorned with icons painted in 1879-1880 by the Bavarian painter Ludwig Thiersch (1825-1909), following the popular at that time “Nazarene” technique. Thiersch was supported by both Otto and Kaftantzoglou during his stay in Athens (1852-1855), which further emphasizes the contact of the Greeks of London with the Greek cultural scene.

The decoration of the dome, with the mosaic representation of the Pantocrator, surrounded by the cherubim, apostles and evangelists, was designed by A. G. Walker (1861-1939) and materialized by

5. Konialidis, 2002: 31, fig. 26, 30. Ferguson, 2008: 27-31.

6. Konialidis, 2002: 31, 39. For the study of Byzantine art in Great Britain, see Bullen, 2003: 113-117.



The interior of the church from the north. The bishop's throne can be distinguished.

the workshop of G. M. Mecenero & Co. in 1891-1893. Later mosaics on the front of the arch, below the dome (1887), and in the quarter-sphere of the sanctuary's apse followed the same western style. Nevertheless, the mosaics created by the Russian Boris Anrep (1883-1969) in 1928, 1952 and 1954, above the sanctuary and on the arches that support the dome differ in style and combine the byzantine tradition with the expressionism of the interwar period⁷.

Subsequent decorative interventions by younger generations of commissioners continued to prefer mosaics for the upper sections of walls and arches, as well as marble cladding for the lower sections. This decorative consistency as well as the name and the architectural morphology of the cathedral testify to the conscious adoption of the "neo-Byzantine" style, an adoption that is associated with both the ethnic and religious narratives of the Greek community in London. The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Wisdom of God, Hagia Sophia remains the heart of this community. In 2004, the Greek victory in the European Football Championship gathered crowds on Moscow Road. It was a spontaneous reaction, demonstrating the continuing importance of the church in the 21st century.

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7. Konialidis, 2002: 27, 39, 43-54. For the mosaics of Boris Anrep, see Konialidis, 2002: 47-54 and Manginis, 2006: 34-37.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN LONDON


- Early Phases of its Decoration]”. *Ελλήνων Κειμήλια. Δωρεές στον καθεδρικό ναό της Αγίας Σοφίας του Λονδίνου* [*Greek Heirlooms. Donations to Hagia Sophia, London*], 27-58. Athens.
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Andravida. Hagia Sophia. The sanctuary and the chapels from the west.

GREECE

Hagia Sophia in Andravida



Located in the center of the modern city of Andravida in Ilia (or Elis), is the gothic church building of Hagia Sophia, the only visible remnant of the city's medieval past. Andravida¹, “the most brilliant country in the plain of Morea”² has been an important city of the Peloponnese since byzantine times. After the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204 and the dismemberment³ of the byzantine empire's territories, the knights William of Champlitte and Geoffrey I of Villehardouin from Champagne of

1. For the city of Andravida see Bon 1969: 318-320.

2. *Χρονικὸν τοῦ Μορέως* [Chronicle of the Morea], verse 1427. It is a chronicle possibly by a gasmulos, of unknown origin chronicler of the 14th century, preserved in four linguistic variants (Greek, Aragonese, Italian and French) and is an important source for the feudal organization of the Principality of Achaia.

3. The territories of the byzantine empire were divided between the Latin emperor, the Venetians and the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade, as provided for in the treaty '*Partitio Imperii terrarum Romanie*' signed among them in March 1204.

GREECE



Aerial view of the church from the southwest.

France conquered the Peloponnese establishing the Principality of Achaia, and designating Andravida as its capital⁴.

Hagia Sophia is one of the three gothic church buildings, which according to the Aragonese version of the Chronicle of Morea was erected by the Franks in the city. Of the other two, Saint Stephen and Saint James, funerary chapel of the Villehardouins, no traces of them are preserved today⁵.

The monument gained the interest of scholars as early as the late 19th century. The first surveys were carried out by the Christian Archaeological Society⁶ in 1891, while R. Traquair, Sp. Lambros, G. Papan-dreou and A. Bon⁷ give us important information about the church and the medieval city in general. More recently, the Hagia Sophia church was thoroughly studied by B. Kitsiki-Panagopoulos, C. Sheppard, M. L.

4. The Principality of Achaia or Morea survived for more than two centuries (1205-1432). In the mid-13th century, during the reign of William II Villehardouin, it emerged as one of the most powerful crusader states in the Eastern Mediterranean and the southern Balkans. The sea-port of the capital of Andravida was Clarentia, while its administrative and military center was located in the castle of Chlemoutsis (Clermont).

5. Sheppard 1985: 211. Kitsiki-Panagopoulos 1979: 65-66.

6. ΔΧΑΕ 1, 1894: 98.

7. Traquair 1923-4: 17-20. Lambros 1916: 480. Lambros 1923: 101-103. Lambros 1927: 389-392. Papandreou 1924: 171-174. Bon 1969: 547-553.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN ANDRAVIDA



The sanctuary's apse.

Coulson, and N. Cooper⁸. At the same time, with the solicitude of the Archaeological Service, excavation and fixing works have been carried out at the monument⁹.

The church of Hagia Sophia was founded by the Order of Dominican¹⁰ monks as the courtier church of the Villehardouins¹¹ and the cathedral see of the Latin Bishop of Oleni¹². However, it is also the place where the Grand Court¹³ meets, the prince's council with the main function of awarding high justice, while important social events took place here¹⁴.

It is a large three-aisled wooden-roofed basilica, the original length of which exceeded 45 m., extending

8. Kitsiki-Panagopoulos 1979: 64-77. Sheppard 1985: 201-220. Sheppard 1986: 139-144. Coulson 1996: 49-59. Cooper 1996: 29-47.

9. Gialouris AΔ 19, 1964: 178. Zias – Kakouris, AΔ 30, 1975: 121-122. Georgopoulou AΔ 35, 1980: 208. Athanasoulis AΔ 56-59, 2001-2004: 611.

10. Kitsiki-Panagopoulos 1979: 65-66. Coulson 1996: 49-59.

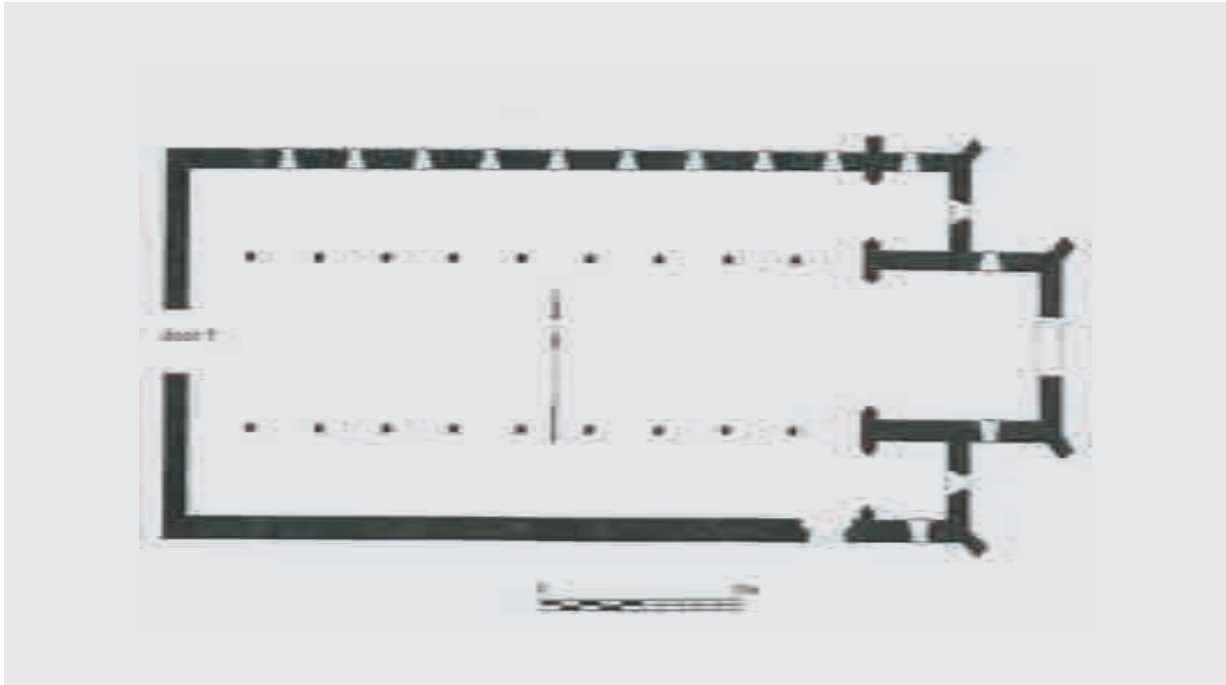
11. Sheppard 1986: 139-144.

12. Kitsiki-Panagopoulos 1979: 66. Sheppard 1985: 211.

13. The Grand Court was a council of the Prince of Achaia with judicial functions, which consisted of himself, his barons and the subordinates of his dependent areas.

14. Sheppard 1986: 139.

GREECE



Restored floor plan of the church (Cooper 1996, design 6).

to the west below the modern road, on the west side of the fenced archaeological site. From the church, the holy altar is preserved including the two square chapels on both sides, covered by cruciform vaults with ribs, as well as the foundation of the side walls and the array of arches¹⁵. The chapels are separated from the sanctuary by walls without openings of communication¹⁶.

The masonry consists mainly of large rock-hewn sandstone but also incorporated older byzantine sculptures¹⁷. Western type windows pierce the walls of the apse and of the chapels, while niches are formed in the southern wall of the sanctuary and of the southern chapel.

The surviving architectural elements, such as the cruciform vaults with ribs, the capitals with the vegetative decoration and the corbels, the exterior radially arranged supports etc., certify the construction of the church inspired by gothic prototypes.

15. Most of the building material of Hagia Sophia has been built with unworked stones and lost. The English traveler Rennell Rodd (Rodd 1907: 174) reports that there were six granite columns in the area, four of which were moved to the neighboring town of Lechaina to be used in another church.

16. The door of communication that connects the sanctuary with the northern chapel was opened in recent years, when Hagia Sophia was converted into an Orthodox church building (Papandreou 1924: 171-174). The walls that sealed the western openings are preserved from this phase.

17. It is possible that the building material was relocated from the nearest ancient Elis, although it cannot be ruled out that an older byzantine church may exist, perhaps at the spot where Hagia Sophia was later built, from which part of its building material was constructed (Cooper 1996: 33-34).

HAGIA SOPHIA IN ANDRAVIDA



Perspective representation of the church interior (Cooper 1996, design 7).

In terms of dating, the church of Hagia Sophia, although a building of the 13th century, seems to have been built in successive phases, most likely the northern chapel and the corresponding aisle do not belong to the original construction¹⁸.

After the overthrow of the Frankish empire, Hagia Sophia is said to have functioned as an Orthodox church building, while according to tradition during the Turkish rule, unsuccessful attempts were made to convert it into a mosque¹⁹. An Orthodox small church functioned in the surviving remains of the gothic church building in recent years, after the independence of the Greek state²⁰.

Two remarkable sculptures come from the region of Andravida²¹, which are now on display at the Chlemoutsi (Clermont) castle Museum. It concerns the marble tombstone of princess Anna / Agn s Villehardouin, daughter of the byzantine ruler of Epirus Michael II, the third and last wife of William II Villehardouin, adorned with a large relief cross, that is surrounded by peacocks, the symbols of heavenly immortality, and reptiles; its frame bears an engraved French inscription: “ + ICI GIST .MIKAILLE ET

18. Traquair 1923-4: 20. Kitsiki-Panagopoulos 1979: 66, 77. Sheppard 1985: 218. Sheppard 1986: 139. Coulson 1996: 50-53.

19. Papandreou 1924: 171-174.

20. Op. cit.

21. The archaeological site of Hagia Sophia functioned for years as a ‘repository’ of antiquities that came from the wider area of Andravida.

GREECE



Marble tombstone of Princess Anna Villehardouin, wife of William II Villehardouin (1286).

[--/--MCCL]XXXVI AS IIII IOURS DE IANVIER” (“ + Here lie the remains of Mrs. Agni, once the daughter of the despot Mr. Michael and [of --/--] who died on January 4, 1286), as well as a capital bearing in reliefs the scutum of the princely couple Isabella Villehardouin - Florent de Hainaut (1289-1297)²².

The Hagia Sophia church, a symbol of the city of Andravida, is an important monument of the cultural heritage of the region, while at the same time, despite its fragmentary preservation, it contributes significantly to the study of gothic architecture in the Peloponnese during the Frankish period.

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Drama. Hagia Sophia. The east side of the church.

Hagia Sophia in Drama

The church of Hagia Sophia is located in the center of Drama, in the northeastern part of the area defined by the byzantine walls of the city. The church has been erected in a prominent position, on a natural rising ground, on the ruins of an earlier Christian church.

No references to the church have been found in the written sources¹. Based on its particular typological characteristics, its dating to the 10th century has been proposed; a view that has prevailed in literature². However, the date of erection and the construction history of the church (later interventions and repairs over the centuries), the owner, its function—the monastery's *katholikon*,³ a parochial or episcopal church⁴—as well as its initial dedication, to the Hagia Sophia or to the Dormition of the

1. Anything mentioned by Stratis 1924: 11, about the restoration of the church during the reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos, is inaccurate. The specific passage cited by Nikephoros Gregoras refers to the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and not to the Hagia Sophia in Drama.

2. Velenis – Triantaphyllidis 1991: 113. Kountouras – Bakirtzis 1992: 145. Tsouris 2002: 113. Georgiadis 2012: 127-129.

3. Kountouras – Bakirtzis 1992: 145.

4. The dedication to Hagia Sophia refers to an episcopal church. However, this dedication does not seem to be the original, see Kissas 1992: 200.



GREECE



The church from the southeast.

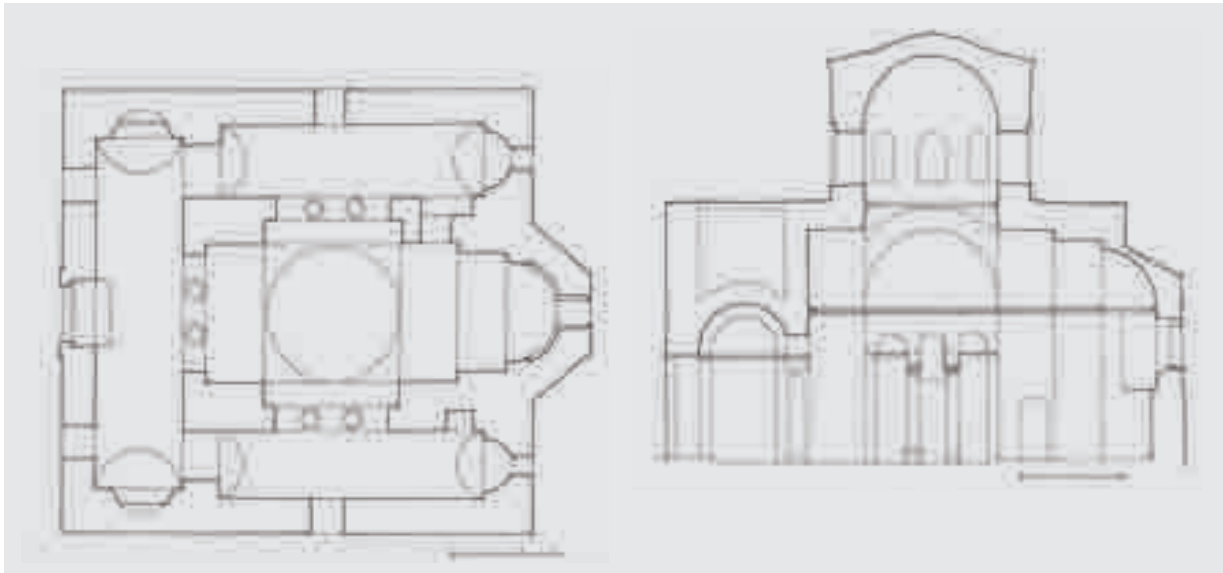
Theotokos⁵, are issues that remain open for investigation and interpretation. The date of its conversion into a mosque and its Ottoman name remains unknown⁶.

In Ottoman times, a colonnaded portico was added to the west, at a level of 2 meters higher than the current level of the church, as well as a minaret in the SW corner of the church. At the beginning of the 20th century, the building functioned again as a Christian church. The portico was widened into a covered vestibule-narthex, while the minaret was lowered and converted into a belfry.

5. A note on a codex of the diocese of Drama states that the Hagia Sophia in Drama was originally dedicated to the Dormition of the Theotokos, see Giannopoulos 1892: 634 and Kissas 1992: 200, note 15. As Eyice rightly observes, 1990: 18, “While a number of mosques in many places that were originally built as churches are popularly referred to as ‘Ayasofya’, it is known that very few of them actually bore the name ‘St. Sophia.’”

6. Evliya Çelebi, a 17th century traveler, mentions the existence of a single mosque within the walls of Drama, the “bey’s mosque (bey camiisi)”, in this regard, see Moschopoulos, 1939: 151. Stratis, 1924: 21, indicates a different name: “Επειδή δὲ κεῖται παρὰ τὸ ἀρχαῖον Βυζαντινὸν τεῖχος καὶ ἐντὸς αὐτοῦ, μετωνομάσθη ὑπὸ τῶν Τούρκων Ἰσὰρ Τζαμισῆ, ἥτοι τοῦ Φρουρίου Τζαμίων [Since it is situated next to and within the ancient Byzantine wall, it was renamed by the Turks Issar Mosque, namely, the Mosque of the Fortress].”

HAGIA SOPHIA IN DRAMA



The church's plan view and longitudinal section.

The Hagia Sophia church generally follows the type of the church with a domed core and a peristyle⁷. It consists of a central four-sided area defined by four pillars and is covered with arches and a dome, and by the peristyle that surrounds it on the north, west and south side; it is covered by semi-cylindrical arches. The central area communicated with the peristyle through three three-lobed openings, from which the western one has been removed⁸. To the east, a sanctuary niche is formed with a protruding three-sided apse. The side stoaes end to the eastern areas that do not communicate with the sanctuary. These areas are formed as independent chapels and end in niches, which are inscribed in the thickness of the eastern wall. The original formation of the western side of the church is not known to us. The masonry of the church consists of dry-stone walling that is interrupted in height by belts of three or four overlapping layers of bricks. The first phase of the byzantine walls of the city presents a similar masonry⁹.

The type of church of a domed core and a peristyle, in its various variants, is located in Constantinople, Macedonia along with their sphere of influence, and is represented by a few relevant examples dating from the 6th century to the late byzantine period¹⁰. Respectively, the masonry of the church is a feature of the monuments of Constantinople and survives until the late byzantine period¹¹. Typological, morphological and structural elements of the Hagia Sophia in Drama integrate the church in the Constantinopolitan tradition of church construction.

From the sculptures that have been preserved in their place, it can be concluded that the marble sculpture decoration of Hagia Sophia was rather simple and was based on ancient material in second use, was recommended on architectural sculptures. These include the four supports of the two three-lobed openings between the core and the peristyle, on the north and south side, most probably spolia of the earlier

7. Vokotopoulos 1975: 126-131. Kountouras – Bakirtzis 1992: 141-155. Stratis (1924: 23) erroneously characterizes the church as a three-aisled basilica.

8. Kountouras – Bakirtzis 1992: 142.

9. Velenis – Triantaphyllides 1991: 113. Tsouris 2002: 113.

10. Vokotopoulos 1975: 126.

11. Velenis – Triantaphyllidis 1991: 112.

GREECE



The southern pastophorio of the church.



Three-pointed opening that connects the central area of the church with the north side of the peristyle.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN DRAMA



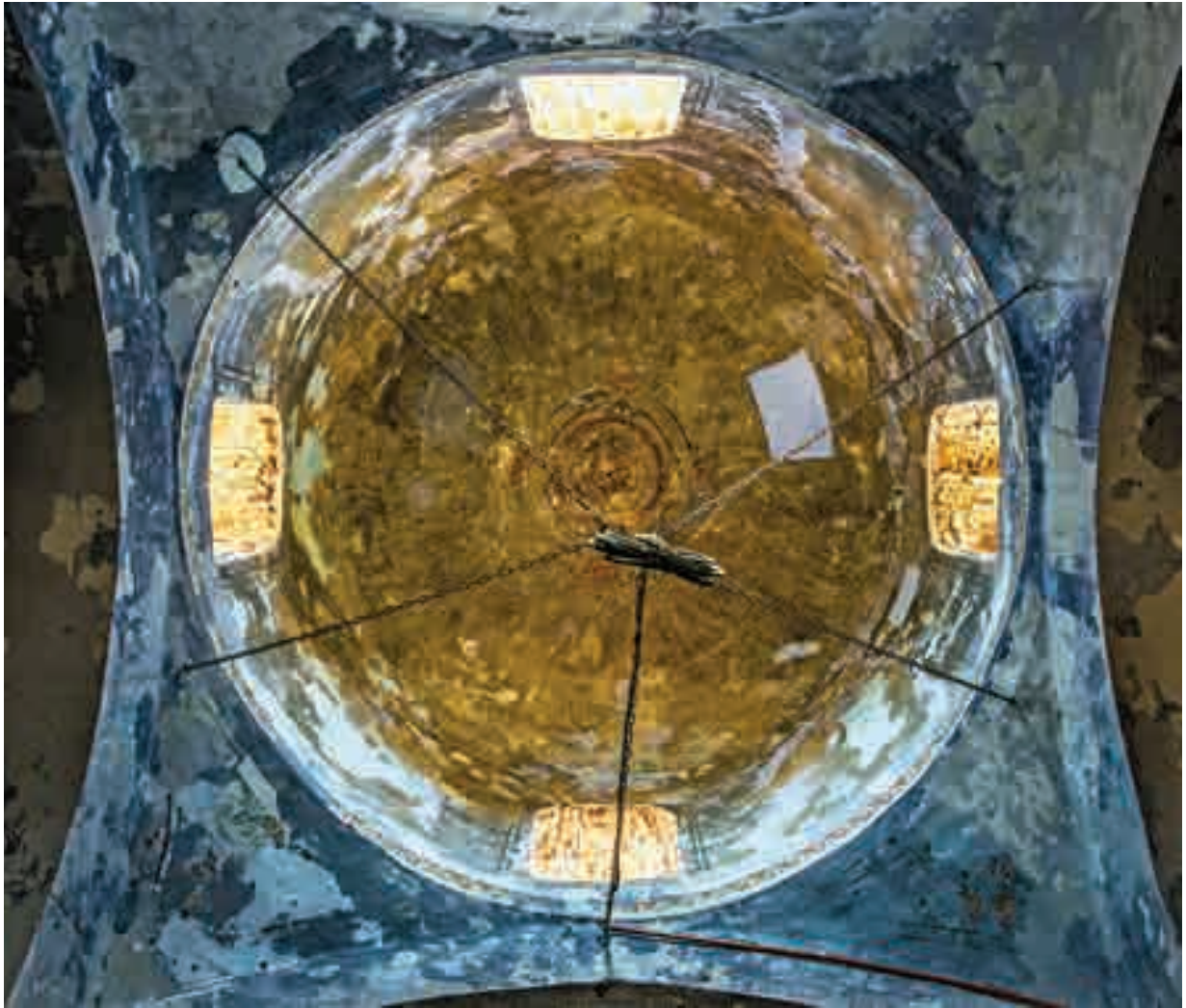
The central area of the nave and the sanctuary.

church in the same location. In the northern three-lobed opening, monolithic columns of off-white marble and Ionic capitals were used, while large imposts of white marble served as bases. The monolithic trunks of the two columns, in the supports of the southern three-lobed opening, are made of gray marble and off-white with dark veining, respectively, while the capitals are impost types of gray marble. The bases of white marble are reminiscent of Doric capitals with adherent imposts.

The fresco decoration of the church has been destroyed to such an extent that its iconographic program cannot be reconstructed. Fragments of frescoes of the byzantine period are located mainly in the sanctuary's area¹². Parts of three upright figures are currently in poor condition in the quarter-sphere surface of the niche. According to Stratis' testimony, of the early 20th century, two of them could be identified with Christ and John the Forerunner¹³.

12. See Stratis 1924: 24-25. These are a few figures of saints and hierarchs, who were indistinguishable as early as the beginning of the 20th century and remain unidentified (with the only possible exception being that of Chrysostom's figure).

13. Stratis 1924: 24: "...διακρίνομεν τὸ ἡμισὺν τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ τὸ ἄνω μέρος τοῦ φωτοστεφάνου τοῦ Ἱ. Προδρόμου παρ' αὐτὸ δὲ καθέτως τὴν μόνην ἐπιγραφὴν ἐν τῷ Ναῷ. Ο ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΣ [...we distinguish half of the Lord's head and the upper part of John the Forerunner's halo with the only vertical inscription in the church. THE FORERUNNER]."



The dome and the spherical triangles.

Respectively, we have very little information on the original pavement of the church, which today is covered by industrial type tiles. Stratis' information about the existence of a beautiful mosaic pavement, which was destroyed in its entirety during the period of its reopening as a Christian church, remains unconfirmed¹⁴.

Restoration works of the Hagia Sophia church were carried out within the framework of the NSRF 2007-2013 and continue within the framework of the NSRF 2014-2020¹⁵. The aim of the planned works is

14. Stratis 1924: 22: “διελύθη ἔξαφανισθὲν τὸ ὡραῖον μωσαϊκὸν τοῦ δαπέδου, μὴ φυλαχθέντων μηδὲ τῶν χρωματιστῶν λιθαρίων πρὸς ἀνάμνησιν [the beautiful mosaic pavement was utterly destroyed and disappeared, not even the colored stones were kept as a reminder].”

15. Dadaki – Tsatsos 2018: 8, 24-34. The first phase of the works was carried out in the framework of the project “Restoration of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Drama NSRF 2007-2013” which was executed on account and under self-supervision by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Kavala-Thassos. The second phase of the works is carried out in the framework of the project “Restoration-Promotion of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Drama, Phase II, NSRF 2014-2020” which is executed on account and under self-supervision by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Drama.

to reduce the decay of the monument, to improve the static adequacy of the building and the maintenance of its parts that present problems, the revelation and maintenance of the frescoes of the church and the restoration of its form¹⁶. They include extensive excavation research and landscaping of the surrounding area of the church, investigation of the construction phases and the painting decoration. These works will reveal unknown aspects of the history of the monument and will contribute to the reconstruction of the history and image of the byzantine city¹⁷.

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16. Dadaki and Tsatsos, 2018: 24-34.

17. For the byzantine Drama, see also Fountoukidis 2006: 169-180.



Kardamili. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southeast.

Hagia Sophia in Kardamili



The elegant church of Hagia Sophia, located at the edge of the picturesque of its residential area, dominates on a hill overlooking the homeric acropolis and the coastal residential area of Kardamili. Perhaps the most beautiful church built in Mani after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. The church is built on a limestone rocky bulge, on which the intensive and long quarrying activity has left indelible traces. The residential area, known by the name (the) Gournitsa, owes its medieval name to the carved recesses of the quarry sections, which in recent years was renamed Hagia Sophia in honor of the impressive homonymous church.

The monument became known to the scientific community as early as the beginning of the 19th century with the publication of R. Traquair about the churches of Mani¹. Many decades later a brief description of its architecture was included in the study of A. Christofidou and M. Michailidis for the monasteries of Kardamili².

1. Traquair 1908: 208.

2. Michailidis – Christofidou 1989: 193-195.

GREECE



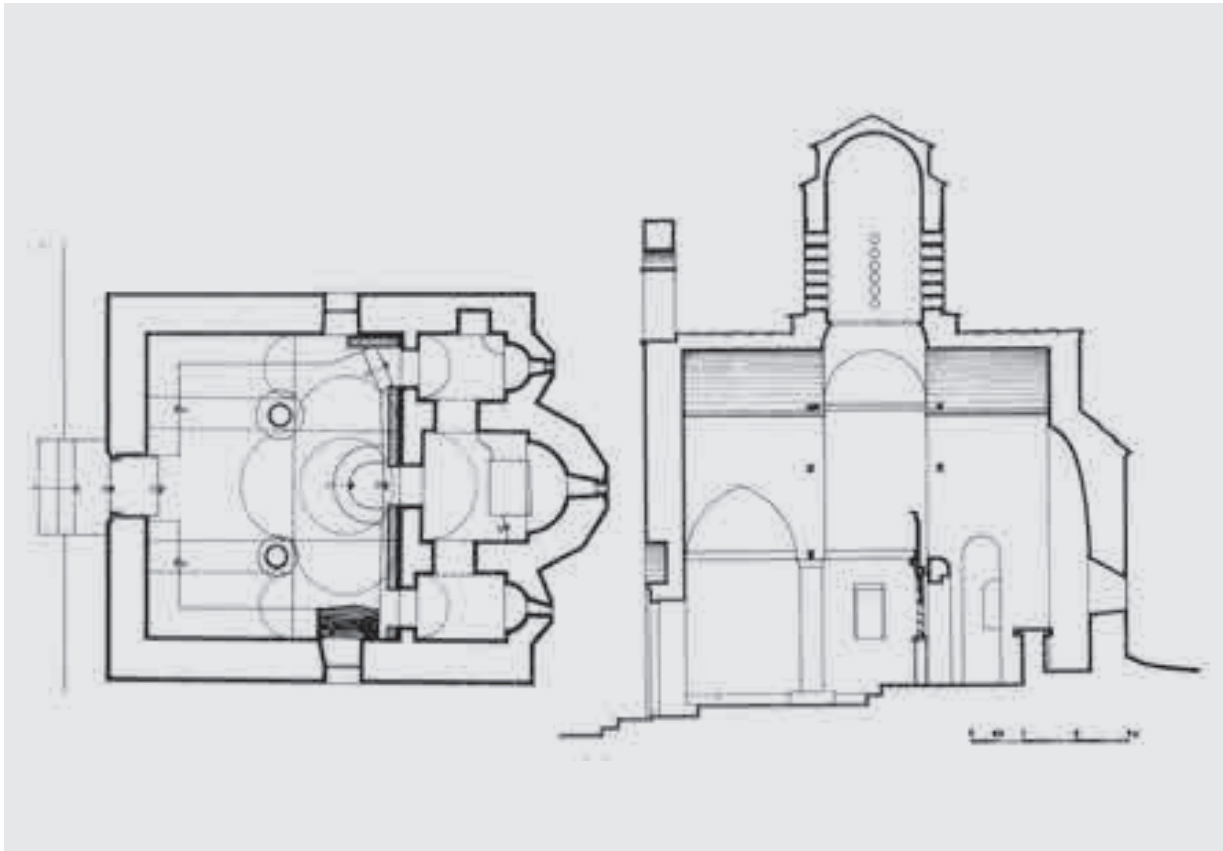
The east side of the church.

It concerns a two-column inscribed cross domed church to the east of which the three apses of the sanctuary stand out. The central one is five-sided on the outside while the side ones are three-sided. The dome rests on the walls that divide the areas of the sanctuary and on two marble, monolithic columns without streaks, in second use. The covering of the side-walls of the cross and the corner compartments is achieved with semi-cylindrical arches. The highly accentuated axis of the building that seems to be inspired by palaeontological standards, as well as the excellent technical perfection in the construction are things that are impressive.

One of the well-designed of post-byzantine architecture is the octagonal dome that rises at the junction of the antennas. Its tympanum ends in a double-gradational roofing, a very rare solution. A narrow window opens on each side of the dome, spreading natural light inside the church. Two zones of wooden tractors decorated with painted geometric and vegetative patterns are being developed for its static reinforcement inside the church.

The church is built according to the isodomic system with well carved rock-hewn sandstones coming from the quarries of the region. The detail in the carving and joint of the stone blocks creates admiration.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN KARDAMILI



The church's plan view and longitudinal section.

Carved cornices with beveled edges are formed in the crowns of the walls, while the harshness of the construction crew is perceived mainly in the details of the windows of the dome, where semi-circular arches alternate with arches of multiple curvature, the original source of inspiration for which is likely to be traced back to the architecture of Francocracy. A series of curtain walls structures the tympanum over the windows. In its second tier, rows of triangular and rarely circular recesses are formed.

The separation of the sanctuary from the nave is achieved with a built iconostasis, in front of which an elaborate wood-carved iconostasis was adapted to a later period, possibly towards the end of the 18th century.

Based on three carvings on the south side, the church was built in 1604³. It is therefore one of the oldest precisely dated monuments built in the Peloponnese after the Ottoman conquest, while based on the morphological and constructional details, the erection of the newest katholikon of the monastery of Saints Theodores in the neighboring Prasteio can be attributed to the same construction crew.

3. The founding inscription mentions the year of 1630, as the year of reconstruction.

GREECE



The wood-carved iconostasis of the church.

The frescoes inside the church have been executed in a single phase. The iconographic program impresses with the richness and fullness of theological messages that notes down to remember, drawing from the earliest iconographic tradition of the most famous post-byzantine painters of the Peloponnese, the Kakavadians and the Muscovites, both from the city of Nafplio, the peak of activity of which is placed at the late 16th and the early decades of the 17th century.

The dome is dominated by the figure of Christ Pantocrator framed by the angelic orders, while the zone of the prophets who were represented between the windows has been completely destroyed. Depicted on the quarter-sphere surface of the central arch is the “In you rejoices,” the scene of the Communion of the Apostles at a lower level, and further down a row of concelebrating hierarchs looking towards the depiction at the axis of the semi-cylinder holy chalice. In the apse of the prothesis, the Angel of the Great Counsel is represented and below the Extreme Humiliation, while in the niche of the diakonikon, the Christ-Child Reclining. The interior of the church is divided into several sections where, apart from the customary Christological cycle, a variety of other themes are developed, such as the Akathistos (Gk. “not seated”) Hymn, the cycle of miracles of Christ, the rendering cycle of the sayings of Jesus (Mt 25:35-36), scenes from the Creation as well as other themes from the Old Testament, such as the Receiving the Commandments and the Unburnt Bush. The arch of the western section of the cross is adorned with the



The quarter-sphere of the niche at the prothesis (table of oblation). Christ as the Angel of the Great Counsel.

representation of Praises along with the zodiac circle framing the central medallion of the scene, while the Second Coming is depicted in the northwest corner compartment. Full-length saints, in an upright position, are depicted in the lower zone of the church, including hierarchs in the area of the holy altar, women martyrs on the northern wall of the nave, monks on the western and militaries along with the therapeutic saints on the southern wall. Over the depicted saints, the scene of their martyrdom is often portrayed, an iconographic arrangement beloved in the monumental painting of the years after the Fall.

According to the uncial (majuscule) founding inscription above the main door of the church, the frescoes were painted in the year 1700, i.e. about a hundred years after the erection of the building, thanks to the collective sponsorship of a group of rulers from the wider area mentioned by name. At the end, the hagiographer who painted the church also signs in minuscule script: “Διὰ χειρὸς ἐμοῦ Γεωργίου Μακρομάλη ἀπὸ χώραν Νησι [By the hand of Georgios Makroimalis from the land Nisi],” that is, from today’s Messinia⁴. This painter, whose work has been recognized in other monuments of the region, seems to continue the glorious tradition inaugurated by the famous workshops of the Muscovites and the Kakavadians in the monumental painting of the Peloponnese during the seventeenth century.

4. For the painter Georgios Makromalis, see Petronotis 1982, 131-132. Drandakis 1988: 133. Hatzidakis – Drakopoulou 1997: 165.

GREECE



Above: The semi-cylinder of the niche at the prothesis (table of oblation). The Extreme Humiliation.

Below: The semi-cylinder of the sanctuary's niche. Concelebrating hierarchs.



The most important information offered to us by the founding inscription of the church concerns its original name: Ἀνηγέρθη ἐκ βάθρων γῆς καὶ ανιστορίθη ὁ θεῖος καὶ πάνσεπτος ναὸς οὗτος τῆς πανυπερευλογιμένης ἐνδόξου Δεσπίνης ἡμ(ῶν) Θε(εοτό)κου τῆς ἐπονομαζομένης Ἁγ(ίας) Σοφ(ίας)... [*Erected from the foundations a(nd) setting up this divine and all-venerable church of o(ur) most blessed and glorified Lady the Th(eoto)kos named Hag(ia) Soph(ia)...*] With the most official way it is stated in the founding inscription itself that the church, although it was dedicated to the Theotokos, the natives called it Hagia Sophia, as they still do today. This dual name is not attested to as far as we know in any other case of a byzantine or post-byzantine church, the interpretation of which remains a question, since the available facts are not sufficient at present to formulate a reasonable explanation.

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Koroni. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

GREECE

Hagia Sophia in Koroni



One of the most important monuments of the byzantine period is preserved in the castle of Koroni and especially at the entrance of the western precinct, next to the monastery of Saint John the Forerunner. These are the ruins of a three-aisled basilica of large dimensions, remnants of the Hagia Sophia church. It is probable that the church was built on the foundations of the ancient temple of Apollo, although no archaeological excavation has been carried out to confirm these speculations. The baptismal font, the stone steps of the ambon (pulpit) and one niche of the sanctuary, can still be seen.

The foundation of the monument can be placed from the 7th century, but probably between the 8th and the 9th century, when the byzantine rule was reorganized in the Peloponnese. The fact that the diocese of Koroni was founded in the 8th century, combined with the presence of an impressive synthronon, which was included in the original design of the Hagia Sophia church, reinforce the possibility that the building was built from scratch to meet

GREECE



Above: The church from the southwest and architectural members of the three-aisled ruined basilica.

Below: The church from above and the ruins of the three-aisled basilica; in its northern aisle the newest church of Hagia Sophia has been erected.



HAGIA SOPHIA IN KORONI

the worship needs of the faithful of the diocese. Fragments of columns, capitals, imposts and other architectural members are preserved in the church.

After the occupation of the Peloponnese by the Franks in 1204, the Hagia Sophia, as well as all the assets of the Orthodox diocese of Koroni, passed into the possession of the Latin bishop of the city. The church will function throughout the First Venetian Empire as a Latin cathedral, up to and including the occupation of the city by the Ottoman forces in 1500¹.

The original surviving structure is a one-room vaulted church, to the west of which a compartment was built with a roof on the East-West axis. In this way, the church is obviously two-sided on the outside. The interior has a built iconostasis that had three openings. Arches are opened from the four corners of the square, on which the low tympanum of the dome rests, which has windows, except for its eastern side.

An icon of byzantine style was found that depicts the figure of the female Saint Sophia in 1927, and in 1935, at the prothesis of the three-naved basilica, a small church was built dedicated to this female saint.

The church, as a monument, is under the supervision of the monastery of Saint John the Forerunner G.O.C., since 1930, when it was granted to the monastery by the Curator of Antiquities of Laconia - Messinia at the time, according to the model of Mystras².

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1. Kappas 2010: 147.


2. Tagonidi-Maniataki 2020: 155-156.



Monemvasia. Hagia Sophia. The church from the northwest.

GREECE

Hagia Sophia in Monemvasia



At the northeastern edge of the Upper Town of the Castle of Monemvasia, the imposing church of Hagia Sophia dominates in a prominent position. The monument, a tangible proof of the economic prosperity that the city of Monemvasia experienced, especially during the 11th and 12th centuries¹, is one of the most important and most interesting monuments of the Peloponnese.

Tradition connects the church with the sponsorship of the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328)². However, the evidence that the structure itself preserves and the written sources led scholars to date it to the 12th century, especially to

1. For the historical route of Monemvasia see Kalligas, 2010, where the older bibliography is also gathered.

2. Probably due to its special connection with the city of Monemvasia, in favor of which it launched at least four golden bulls (decrees), granting significant privileges to its inhabitants. Kalligas, 1979: 217 note 1. Kalligas 1990: 101-115. Stikas 1986: 276, note 1. For the privileged position of the diocese of Monemvasia during Andronikos II see Pikoulas 1996: 393-394.



The Hagia Sophia church and part of the Upper Town from above (photo taken from the east).

1150 and to its identification with the church of the Theotokos the Hodegetria, a tribute of a probably prominent personality as a reward for the naval successes of the inhabitants of Monemvasia³.

The use of the monument has been uninterrupted until today, as it has undergone repairs and alterations, directly related to the historical development of Monemvasia. During the first Venetian rule (1463-1540) it functioned as a church with the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine and is referred to as *Madonna del Castello*⁴. After the surrender of the fortress to the Ottomans (1540) it was converted into a mosque

3. It was probably built after the successful repulse of the Norman naval forces in 1148. Kalligas 1979: 217-221. Kalligas 1990: 68-69, f.n. 95. Bouras – Boura 2002: 241-246. Stikas considers the church to be a structure of the late of the 11th or the early 12th century, during the time of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118). Stikas 1986: 276.

4. Kalliga 2010: 120.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN MONEMVASIA



The narthex and the northern compartments of the church.

known as the Fethiye Mosque or of Sultan Suleiman's⁵. With the return of the Venetians (1690) it returned to Christian worship and was dedicated to Madonna del Carmine⁶, and in the second Ottoman conquest it reopened as a mosque⁷. After the liberation of Monemvasia in 1821 it was dedicated to the Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia), because it was considered a copy of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople⁸.

The church building, founded largely on the rock, belongs to the architectural type of the octagonal or

5. Kalliga 1994a: 131 note 18. At this time a mihrab is built on the south side, a door is opened in the niche of the sanctuary and a minaret is erected.

6. Traquair 1905-6: 273. It constituted the philanthropic foundation of three Franciscan monks. The massive exonarthex to the west is also being built during this period. Kalliga 1994b: 181-183. Kalliga 2010: 234.

7. A new minaret is erected in the southwest corner of the church.

8. Papamichalopoulos 1874: 57. Kalligas 1979: 217-221.



The main entrance of the church and a wall-mounted relief slab.

continental octagonal complex and presents typological similarities with the monastery of Daphni⁹. Its interior is spacious and magnificent. The central square is covered by the large dome, seven meters in diameter, perforated by sixteen windows. The building is surrounded on all sides by small secondary compartments¹⁰. To the east, the church ends in three semi-hexagonal apses of the sanctuary and to the west, in a tripartite narthex¹¹. A two-story luxury outbuilding—known as “stoa”—with a vaulted reservoir in the basement was situated to the south¹².

In terms of its construction, the monument is of particular interest due to the general use of the rock-hewn sandstone in vaults and arches¹³, with the exception of the pendentives and the dome's hemisphere which are made of thin plinths. The decoration of the exteriors is complemented by a serrated strip and ceramic plastic decorations, while marble was used in various areas. Characteristics of the 12th century are the horseshoe-shaped arches above the marble lintels of the portali. The church's pavement was decorated with marble paving with inlaid decorations.

The prominent proportions on the facades are complemented by the rich sculptural architectural decoration, works of high-quality design, with rich thematology, representative samples of the 12th

9. Stikas 1986: 271, 319-322. Kalliga 2010: 228. Churches of this type are distinguished for their size and the particular wide dome and are found mainly in Central Greece and the Peloponnese. The katholikon of the monastery of Osios Loukas was the first monument of the complex octagonal existed in Greece and was the model for the founding of other octagonal structures with a simplified form and purely Greek masonry. Bouras – Boura 2002: 352. For the church of Osios Loukas see Stikas 1970. Stikas 1974-1975.

10. A hypothesis has been formed that the chapels had a burial character and in fact that the emperor John VI was buried in one of them. Kalligas 1990: 142, f.n. 144. Kalliga 2010: 234.

11. The narthex was originally two-story.

12. The outbuilding collapsed in 1893. Kalliga, 2010: 229.

13. Following the monemvasian tradition. Kalliga 2010: 228. Regarding the sandstone quarries of the area, see Dergalin – Kouloglou ²1976: 16. Kalamara, 2001: 33-34.

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The main entrance of the church and the wall-mounted relief slab.

century art¹⁴. Some of the sculptural architectural members are preserved in their original position, but the ones that could not be set in their initial position, after the restoration that took place in the 1950s, have been relocated and exhibited in the Archaeological Collection of Monemvasia¹⁵. An element of originality were the sculpted marble shrines that originally adorned the surfaces of the nave (main aisle)¹⁶, while only parts of its marble iconostasis are preserved by country¹⁷.

The church's interior was decorated with hagiographies. The few representations left from the original decoration are of exceptional art, distinguished by the concept of classicism and the sense of monumentality

14. For the sculptural decoration of the church see Xyggopoulos 1936. Stikas 1986: 314, 316, fig. 27-28, 32, 37-41, 44-45. Bouras – Boura 2002: 243, 447-450, 534-538, 543-551, 556-562 and sporadically, fig. 278-279, 487-488, 543b, 559.

15. Kalamara 2001: 26-33, fig. 26-28, 33, 35, 43. The Archaeological Collection of Monemvasia has been housed since 1997 in the building of the Ottoman Mosque in the castle of the lower town of Monemvasia. For the building of the archaeological collection see Charalambous 2001. Charalambous 2008. 142-144.

16. None was saved intact. In their place are some of the braces that supported the arches and held the pair of colonnettes. The element is considered unique in byzantine architecture. Bouras – Boura 2002: 450, fig. 487-488.

17. Ibid.: 243-246, f.n. 9, fig. 276.



Part of the dome, of the horseshoe arches and of the arches.

and reflect the work of an art workshop of constantinopolitan influence of the early 13th century¹⁸. From the remaining themes of the iconographic program, we mention the full-length frontal portrait of hierarchs in the sanctuary, the figure of Christ represented in the Ancient of Days type in the altar's arch and scenes from the life's cycle of Saint Nicholas in the prothesis (pastophorio). In the nave, at the highest points, medallions of martyrs are preserved in the eight spherical triangles that support the dome and further down, where the decoration was developed in zones, there are parts of representations probably from the Christological cycle. Finally, the side walls depict full-length saints in splendid military uniform or court attire, monks and anchorite saints, in almost life-size. An imitation of orthomarbbling occupied the lowest part of the walls. A special place among the representations is occupied by the composition that is developed in the tympanum of the royal gate and bears significant damages due to a later arch that was opened in its center. It depicts Christ in a bust between two angels standing in awe, while in the lower part an uncial (majuscule) dedicatory inscription is developed in two parts¹⁹. Two archangels in military attire stand at the lower level of the entrance. The representations including the sanctuary and the nave, were demarcated by colorful decorative zones, with vegetative or geometric themes that impress with the richness of the colors, but also of their themes.

18. For the frescoes of the church see Panayotidi 1975: 350-354. Panayotidi 1989, 463-464 and sporadically, fig. CLXI-CLXIV. Skawran 1982: 176, fig. 336. Sevčenko 1983: 31, fig. 193-195.

19. Kalligas 1979: 221, f.n. 16.



Sanctuary. Christ as the “Ancient of Days” (13th c.).

The Hagia Sophia church has gained the interest of scholars since the end of the 19th century²⁰, while extensive repairs were carried out in the 1950s under the responsibility of the architect Efstathios Stikas²¹. Its recent restoration and the promotion of its wider area by the services of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, have achieved the dynamic reintegration of this brilliant monument in the cultural and ecclesiastical event of the area²².

Dr. Danai Charalambous

20. The monument was visited by members of the French delegation under Gabriel Millet, as well as the British, R.W. Schultz and S. Barnsley, who designed and photographed the monument. Millet 1916: 112-117, and sporadically, fig. 59, 60, 95, 113. The designs by Schultz and Barnsley were published by H. Kalliga. Kalliga 2010: 230-233, design 12/5-12/8.

21. Orlandos 1959: 192-193, fig. 195-200. Stikas 1986: 21 f.n. 1.

22. The monument was restored by the Directorate for the Restoration of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments in the framework of the NSRF 2007-2013. At the same time and under the same financial framework, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia carried out works to highlight its surrounding area, connecting the church with the nearby neighborhood of Upper Town, which was also restored.



Narthex. Christ among angels standing in awe (13th c.).

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Mystras. Hagia Sophia. The church and part of Upper Town from the southwest.

Hagia Sophia in Mystras

The church of Hagia Sophia in Mystras, the *katholikon* of a byzantine monastery,¹ located in the “Upper Town,” southwest and higher above the palace settlement, is part of the organized archaeological site of Mystras, has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1989.

The Hagia Sophia church, dedicated to Christ, to the substantial Wisdom of God, has been considered as the “palace church”². Its founder was Manuel Kantakouzenos (c. 1326-1380), second son of John VI Kantakouzenos and first despot of Mystras (1349)³. Truthful witnesses of his beneficence are the compilations of his office and his paternal surname on the capitals (chapiters) of the pilasters on the west wall of the church: *Δεσπότης Καντακουζηνός* [*Despot Kantakouzenos*]⁴. The French abbot Michele Fourmont in 1730 copied a metrical inscription of several lines, epigram⁵ that was written in one of the two stoaes of the Hagia Sophia church and praised the personality of Manuel’s parents and himself, even attributing to him the founding of the church *τῷ παντοποιῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ πατρὸς Λόγῳ* [*to the Creator of all things, the Logos of*

1. Sotiriou, ²1956: 46-49. Dufrenne 1970: 13 ff. and sporadically. Hatzidakis 1987: 68-71. Drandakis 1979-1985. Sinos 1999: 430-433. Emmanuel 2003. Emmanuel 2007: 120-122. Marinou 2009.

2. Hatzidakis 1987:69. In the absence of reliable sources, see Tantsis 2015: 265.

3. Nicol 1968: 122-129. Zakythinis 1975, vol. I: 95-113 and 335-338. Talbot 1991. For the office of the despot, see Guiland 1965, vol. II: 1-24. Failer 1982. Kazhdan 1991.

4. Emmanuel 2003: 154. Marinou 2009: 172.

5. Millet 1899: 143-146.





The east side of the building complex.

God the Father], from the foundation. On Manuel's suggestion, the royal couple was depicted on the facade of the monument, according to the wording of the versification, *πρὸ τῶν πυλῶν ἔγραψε τῆς ἐκκλησίας τὴν βασιλικὴν συζυγίαν* [*in front of the gates he wrote the royal couple of the church*]. The presence of the kings dates the construction of the Hagia Sophia church during the period from 1349, the first year of Manuel's exercise of absolute authority as a despot up to and including 1354, the year of John VI Kantakouzenos' resignation from the throne of the empire.⁶ An interesting piece of information, emerging from the poetic composition, is the presence of a large brotherhood (*χρηστῶν ἀγέλην μονοτρόπων*) in Manuel's important foundation, as confirmed by the rich material remains around it.

The Hagia Sophia church has been identified with the monastery of Christ the Giver-of-Life (*Ζωοδότης*)⁷, which is illustrated in a patriarchal sigil of 1365⁸ and in a liturgical manuscript of 1363/1364 from Constantinople (paris gr. 47)⁹. The sigil letter gave a stavropegic value [being under the jurisdiction of the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople] and converted the church to a patriarchal one that Manuel had founded *in the name of the honorable Lord and God and our Savior Jesus Christ* (*εἰς ὄνομα τιμώμενον τοῦ κυρίου καὶ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*) and had already restored it to a men's small monastery (*μονύδριο*), before the year of 1365.¹⁰ The depiction of Christ the Giver-of-Life in the niche of the sanctu-

6. Nicol 1968: 85-86. Failer 1971. Failer, 1976.

7. Hatzidakis 1987: 69, 70.

8. Miklosich - Müller 1860: 472-474.

9. Ommont 1890: 21. Lampros 1907: 168-169. The topographic designations of these sources are worth paying attention: in the sigil, the monastery is placed *around the city of Myzethra* (*περὶ τὴν ἐκεῖ πόλιν τὴν Μιζηθράν*), and in the manuscript codex, in the castle of Myzethra of Lacedaemon (*ἐν τῷ τοῦ Μυζιθρᾶ τῆς Λακεδαιμόνος κάστρῳ*).

10. Louvi-Kizi 2019: 225.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN MYSTRAS



The church and the bell tower from the northwest.

ary, Manuel's monograms on the capitals of the church's pilasters, the metrical inscription saved by Fourmont and the wall-mounted relief icon of Jesus Christ on the east side of the bell tower advocate in favor of the identification of Hagia Sophia church with the monastery of Christ the Giver-of-Life¹¹. Recently, this view has been called into question and it was proposed to consider the identification of the Monastery of Our Lady Pantanassa (the Queen of All) in Mystras with the monastery of Christ the Giver-of-Life¹².

Hagia Sophia was converted into a mosque at the first Ottoman conquest¹³.

The monastic ensemble of Hagia Sophia consists of buildings with a variety of functions¹⁴. Access from the countryside was through a gate of the outer walls to the southwest of the monastery, while its gateway was formed in the northernmost of this entrance, at the height of an arched composition with side curtain walls, contiguous to the large three-story building of cells. The oblong Refectory (dining hall "trapeza") with remnants of frescoes on the northwest of the katholikon and in the easternmost a large underground cistern (reservoir) supported by colonnades, ancillary buildings westernmost of the Refectory and a second elongated building parallel to the three-story wing of cells, separated by the southern end of the establishment including a building on its eastern side with a large niche infer the organizational structure of the monastic ensemble giving us a better understanding of the parts that compose it.

11. Tantsis 2015: 266. The relics of the wife of the despot Constantine, Magdalene-Theodora Tocco were translated in the monastery of Christ the Giver-of-Life, and Cleopa Malatesta, the wife of the despot Theodore II, was buried there, see Bekker (ed.) 1838: 154.14, 158.8-9.

12. Louvi-Kizi 2019: 215-246.

13. Its architectural restoration in the 1930s is ascribed to the tireless restorer Anastasios Orlando, Sinos 2009: 19.

14. Hatzidakis 1987: 79. Marinou 2009: 158-168.



Part of an epistyle (architrave) built into the southern dividing wall of the sanctuary.

Typologically, the katholikon is an expression of the two-column inscribed cross domed church,¹⁵ known from two more of its applications in the medieval urban ensemble of Mystras, of the Perivleptos¹⁶ and of the Evangelistria¹⁷. A narthex with a dome, chapels to the east, two stoa, one restored to the northern side with exquisite view of the valley of Evrotas and a dilapidated stoa towards the west, an elegant, three-story belfry and a complex of chapels, further to the west, are jointed at the monument's core. The concept of the composition of Hagia Sophia, the result of a dynamic architectural creation recorded in different time phases of the late Byzantine period¹⁸, has been influenced by the edifice and simulacrum of the Constantinople architectural tradition in the remote province of Byzantium, the church of Odigitria in the "Lower Town" of Mystras¹⁹, the dome-covered narthex, the stoa, the chapels and the belfry.

The familiar to the Greek school's *cloisonné* structural system is applied to the formation of the free faces of the stoa or chapels of the Hagia Sophia church. The surfaces of the domes and the tympana of the antennas of the cross form plinth elements in balanced compositions forming decorative shapes, serrated strips and a succession of window arches.

The interior of the church characterizes an unusual increase of height for the byzantine church construction, attributed to the western influence²⁰. Sculptural members of an older iconostasis with a variety of techniques, from a church in the vicinity, were reused in the new sheathing²¹. A small section of the epistyle (architrave) built into the southern dividing wall of the sanctuary is recorded and preserved by country, while a similar member is in the Museum of the archeological site. The elegant sculptural figures that have been carved in high relief (*haut-relief*) on a low relief depth (*bas-relief*) according to the double-layered technique are respectively, a griffin and a lion the moment when they capture calm bovids (*bovidae*). These sculptural members, complemented with late byzantine incuse, few in number and smaller

15. See plan view of the church in Millet 1910: table 31.4; for the construction phases of the church in representation by R. W. Schultz and S. H. Barnsley (1888-1890), see Chlepa 2011, fig. 145.

16. Louvi-Kizi 2019: 76-77.

17. Hatzidakis 1987: 91.

18. Sinos 1999: 430-432.

19. Etzeoglou 2013: 15-18. Koufopoulos – Myriantheos 2018.

20. Hatzidakis 1987: 70.

21. Pallis 2006: 93-94. Marinou 2009: 169-174.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN MYSTRAS



The church's interior from the west.

than those in the Museum of Mystras along with the two arched shrines of the Metropolis, belong to the same sculptural composition of the late 12th-early 13th century, the construction of which is recorded in the activity of the “Samarina’s workshop”²² and was included in the decoration of the late byzantine monument as an expression of marble sculpture of high art²³. Contemporary with the church are the capitals of the pilasters and the impost of the columns²⁴. Their uniform sculptural formulation²⁵ includes palmettes (ανθήμια) consisting of five fronds (leaves) that frame a central theme with the double-headed eagle or the monograms Δ(EC) Π(OT)(HC) and K(A)N(TA)K(OY)Z(H)N(OC).

The church’s pavement was richly decorated with various ornaments of omphaloi²⁶ and colorful marbles surrounded by frames of marble paving stones with geometric patterns²⁷. The surviving central pentaomphalo below the dome and the fragments of marble paving stones intimate the underlying aesthetic orientations of the decoration, testifying to the eclecticism of the expressive means of the late byzantine period.

There are a few representations preserved from the interior decoration of the nave (main aisle). An old iconographic custom is revived according to which Christ Pantocrator²⁸ (fig. 12) is depicted instead of the Theotokos Platytera (More Spacious than the Heavens) in the niche of the sanctuary. The Ascension in the arch of the sanctuary, traces from the concelebrating hierarchs in the half-cylinder of the apse with the “Fraction” (Μελισμός,

22. Pallis 2006.

23. The composition was probably framed by other members that were carved ad hoc, see Marinou 2009: 172-173.

24. Parts of the impost of the northern column are kept in the Museum of Mystras.

25. Marinou 2009: 172.

26. Millet 1910: table 31.6. Sinos 1999: 432, 433.

27. Hatzidakis 1987: 70.

28. Emmanuel 2003: 157-158. Emmanuel 2007: 120. Probably as a reminder of the imperial origin of the monument’s founder, Manuel Kantakouzenos, first despot of Mystras, Emmanuel 2003: 158. Emmanuel 2007: 120.



The quarter-sphere surface of the sanctuary's apse. Christ in the type of the enthroned Pantocrator.

the fraction of the sacred Bread into four portions during Liturgy), and a few remains from the representation of the Panayia Vlachernitissa with Christ in the dome of the narthex constitute the meager remnants of the byzantine frescoes.

The northeastern chapel with an underground vaulted space²⁹, presents a complete iconographic program from which its deathlike character emerges including scenes from the Dodekaorton (Twelve Great Feasts) referring to the death and resurrection and the presence of the archangels Michael and Gabriel near the entrance³⁰. These frescoes were stylistically connected to the frescoes of the nave and to the decoration of the Perivleptos church and were attributed to the painter of the City (Constantinople) who worked during the mid-14th century³¹. The chapel, as a deathlike sheathing, was associated with the burial of Manuel or members of his family³².

In the shallow dome of the southeastern chapel³³ there is a depiction of the oranta or praying Theotokos with the Child in a medallion and around that area the Celestial Liturgy with Christ as High Priest. The eastern wall of the chapel depicts the Annunciation of the Theotokos and the western wall is dominated by the Nativity of the Theotokos. The gigantic figures of Christ and of the Vrefokratousa (Panayia with the Child), inspired by the standards of imperial iconography, adorn the side walls. The decoration of the southeastern chapel has been iconographically and stylistically connected to the written ensemble of the Perivleptos church, which was considered a summary, while its execution was attributed to the

29. Drandakis 1952: 516-517.

30. Drandakis 1979-1985. Emmanuel 2003: 159.

31. Drandakis 1979-1985: 489.

32. Ibid.: 478-479. Emmanuel 2003: 182. There were numerous graves uncovered by the research excavation of N. Drandakis in 1955, in front of the church's stoa, see Arvanitopoulos 2008: 86-92 with their summary report. There were fabrics made of plentiful raw materials, among the findings, see *Το ένδυμα μιας βυζαντινής πριγκίπισσας. Αρχαιολογικά υφάσματα από την Αγία Σοφία του Μυστρά* [*The garment of a Byzantine princess. Archaeological fabrics of the Hagia Sophia church of Mystras*], exhibition catalogue, Genève 2000.

33. Emmanuel 2003: 159-186. Emmanuel 2007: 121-122.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN MYSTRAS



Southeastern chapel.
Frescoes on the shallow
dome and the surrounding
surfaces.

work done by the working group of Perivleptos and the period of its decoration between the years 1370 and 1380³⁴. As a matter of fact, the presence of a woman, the dynamic wife of Manuel Kantakouzenos, French princess Isabelle of Lusignan³⁵ and her desire to have children is traced out in this decorative composition³⁶.

Evangelia Pantou

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34. Emmanuel 2003: 185. Emmanuel 2007: 121.

35. For Isabelle, see Emmanuel 2003: 182-184. Emmanuel 2007: 121-122. Louvi-Kizi, 2019: 53-72.

36. Emmanuel 2003: 184. Emmanuel 2007: 122.

GREECE



The Nativity of the
Theotokos.



Frescoes on the upper surfaces of the
sanctuary and of the nave.

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Thessaloniki. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southeast.

GREECE

Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki

The earliest written reference to the Hagia Sophia is from the year 795, in a letter of Saint Theodore the Studite, exiled to Thessaloniki¹. The church is often referred to as “the metropolis”² in Eustathius of Thessaloniki, while in the 13th century it is the metropolis of the Latins³. Prior to the 12th century we do not have clear references on the order of the church building among the churches of Thessaloniki, but there are several indications that Hagia Sophia was a metropolis before Eustathius’ time.

The church was built on the site of a large five-aisled early Christian basilica, which occupies the western part of the three aisles of the nave (main aisle)⁴. At the time of the erection of today’s church building, the narthex to the west of the basilica was preserved, that had been originally integrated in the church. It is considered a typical sample of a transitional cross domed church type and peristyle—opus reticulatum (also known as reticulated work). In the center of the building, the shape of

1. Theodore the Studite, epistle X, column 917 (PG 99:917d).

2. Tafel 1832:152.

3. PL 215, 1478. PL 216, 213, 603, 605.

4. Drosogiannis 1963: 235-242.





Dome. The orant Panayia without the Child among angels. Part of the mosaic representation of the Ascension of Christ (9th c.).

the cross is clearly traced, framed on its three sides by the side aisles and the narthex, in a circumferential type stoa. The center, on its three sides, communicates with the peristyle through an array of arches, the dome rests on four massive pillars, while a tripartite sanctuary is attached to the central area and the side aisles.

The current form of the church is the result of four Byzantine phases and some during the Turkish rule. The initial phase is built with masonry of successive rows of roughly rectangular limestones and bricks built with strong rosy horasan mortar. The whole ground floor, the tripartite sanctuary and the central cruciform core, up to the base of the dome tympanum belong to the initial phase⁵. The existing elements of the initial phase support the existence of a vaulted cover in the galleries. The problem of the initial ascent to the galleries is solved with the assumption that the narthex of the former basilica with its staircases was preserved and integrated in the byzantine church⁶.

The second phase of the church is characterized by masonry that forms belts of green stone and bricks

5. Theodoridou 1994: 63-69.

6. Ibid.: 85-93, 97-101.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN THESSALONIKI



The dome with the mosaic representation of the Ascension of Christ (9th c.).

and a rosy horasan mortar, as in the first phase. The second phase is always above the ground floor and shapes the outer walls of the galleries at a height of 2.55 m above the floor of the women's section [the upper level of the church reserved for women only], the diaphragms of the antennas of the cross at the level of the galleries and the dome⁷. The form of the church in this phase includes wooden-roofed galleries with a roof level much lower than the current one, above the arched windows in the lower belt of the outer walls of the northern and southern gallery. In the western gallery, the available evidence suggests that for some time the central part remained uncovered.

The third phase is located on the outer wall of the central part of the western gallery, from the current floor to the aprons of the single-lobed windows of the upper belt. In this phase, the uncovered area of the central western gallery is housed, while externally of the western wall, a sloping level of ascent is created⁸.

The fourth phase is characterized by masonry that follows the incomplete *cloisonné* system and is recognized in the elevation of the eastern and northern outer wall of the northern gallery, where a series of dou-

7. Ibid.: 69-75, 76-81.

8. Theocharidou 1994: 81-82, 114-117.



Capital with wind-driven high relief leaves.

ble-lobed and triple-lobed windows is created. The upper belt, with the small single-lobed windows is built on the western wall of the western gallery. The galleries are covered with a wooden roof, at a level of 60 cm higher than the one that exists today⁹.

An extensive phase that refers to the time of the Turkish rule pertains to the eastern, southern and western walls of the southern gallery, the western wall of the northern gallery and the western end of the northern wall of the northern gallery, as well as the current tower ascent to the galleries.

The fourth phase of the church can be dated, from the elements of its masonry and the few remains of the frescoed decoration at a window of the western gallery, to the 11th or 12th century¹⁰. The third phase is characterized by the reopening of the galleries in their entirety, dates based on the coins found in the excavation of the pavement in the mid-10th century¹¹.

The finding that the whole dome leading up to the second phase gives an *ante quem* limit for this phase from the dome's mosaics. The representation of the Ascension is placed in the 9th century, but the newer reading of the inscriptions at its base, which belong to an oldest decoration, leads to a dating that cannot be later than the end of the 7th century¹² and the year 690/1 is proposed to be the year as the most probable dating for the first phase of the dome decoration. For the dating of the second phase, we have an *ante quem* limit considered to be the year of 690/1 and we are looking for a major disaster that caused the fall of the vaulted superstructure of the galleries and of the dome or the possibility of not completing the building initially due to disasters. The cause of the disaster is being sought in a major earthquake. The first earthquakes just before 690/1 are the great earthquakes of the years 620-630, which refer to the miracles of Saint Deme-

9. Ibid.: 82-83, 118-120.

10. Ibid.: 185-186.

11. Ibid.: 187-189.

12. Theodoridou 1976: 265-273.



Capital with a decoration executed in low relief.

trios. We can therefore place the destruction of the first phase in these earthquakes and a post quem limit for the second phase¹³.

For the dating of the first phase, we have an ante quem limit considered to be the year of 620-630 and we are looking for a post quem limit which is none other than the destruction of the previous basilica in the same area. The most probable cause of disaster seems to be another earthquake before 620-630 and the only known case is the earthquake of 618, again from the miracles of Saint Demetrios, very close to the previous earthquakes, which may mean that the second earthquake found the building half-finished¹⁴.

The sculptural decoration of the church includes the six columns on the ground floor and the eleven of the galleries that are not preserved today. On the ground floor, we find four columns with capitals with waving leaves and two with tectonic ones, in second use. There were Ionic capitals with an adherent impost, known from old photographs and a few remains on the columns of the galleries, which were replaced during the Turkish repairs after 1890.

The mosaic decoration of the church is preserved in the area of the sanctuary and of the dome. The preserved inscription “Χριστέ βοήθη Θεοφίλου/ταπινού επισκόπου” [Christ, help Theophilus/the humble bishop] and the monograms of Constantine VI and Irene, that lead to the date between 780 and 797 is found on the cylindrical apse of the sanctuary, under two zones with crosses and leaves during the period of Iconoclasm. In the quarter-sphere of the niche’s apse, the figure of the Virgin Mary is depicted in a golden background, which is of a later dating, that replaced a large iconoclastic cross¹⁵.

The magnificent composition of the Ascension is represented on the tympanum of the dome. The

13. Theocharidou 1994: 189-194.

14. Ibid.: 196-197.

15. Diehl – Le Tourneau – Saladin 1918:36. Kalligas 1935: 57 ff. Pelekanidis 1964: 29-40. Cormack 1981: 111-135.



Angel. Detail of the mosaic representation of the Ascension of Christ (9th c.).

composition deepens in golden depth, with Christ in the center, the Panayia between two angels and the twelve apostles in a landscape with olive trees. The mosaic is dated for stylistic reasons to the 9th century¹⁶, while at the base of the Ascension a zone with a coiled garland contains two half-finished inscriptions, remnants of a previous decoration, which give dating elements and the name of Archbishop Paul.

From the frescoed decoration, only a very small part survives in the intrados of the arched western openings of the narthex.

Dr. Kalliopi Theocharidou

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¹⁶ Smirnov 1900:60-67. Grabar 1957: 195-196. Cormack 1968: 124-131.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN THESSALONIKI



Mosaic inscription with the name of the archbishop of Thessaloniki, Paul at the dome's base.



Mosaic linear ornaments and inscription. In a medallion, the monogram of Empress Irene.

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PG: Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris.

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Ypati. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

Hagia Sophia in Ypati

Ypati¹ is a small town of Phthiotis, 22 km southwest of Lamia, built on the slope of a steep conical hill in the northern foothills of mount Oeta (Oiti), in a naturally fortified position, which oversees the valley of the river Spercheios. Its century-old history is reflected in the written sources, in the findings of numerous excavations and in the scattered ancient, byzantine and post-byzantine monuments². The citadel and the cross-

1. For details on the names that mark the historical route of the city (Hypàte, Ÿpata, Hypàta, Neai Patrai, Neopàtria, La Latria, Patracik or Patratziki), see Koutroubas 1993: 87-89, footnotes 1-3. Delopoulos 2007: 113-129 and 2009: 30-55.

2. For the historical outline of Ypati and the basic bibliography, see Béquignon 1937: 308-310. Vortselas 1907: 39-43, 82-89, 202-226, 275-277, 286, 294-301, 317-323, 330-339, 354-358, 374-376, 383-386, 391-393, 402-404, 416-421, 473-476. Gonis 2011: 19-40. Zafeiropoulou 2007: 9-13. Kakavas – Yfanti 2011: 42-47. Pallis 2011: 495-503. Papakonstantinou 2015: 6-11. Papanayiotou 1971: 221, 223-228. Stählin 22008: 368-371. Sythiakaki-Kritsimalli 2001: 48-67. Y Lluç Rubiò 1912: 52-73. In short, it was the capital of the Koinon of the Aenianes (4th c. BC), see of the Aetolian League (2nd c. BC), an important Roman city with famous witches (1st-3rd c. AD), see of the diocese (4th-6th c.) and of the metropolitan (9th c.), capital of the state of John I Doukas the illegitimate (1268-1318), co-capital of the Catalan duchy of Athens and Neopatras (1319-1393), see of the pasha and of the administrative district called *armatoliki* of the captains Kondogiannis during the Turkish rule. It took an active part in the Revolution, became the center of a military outpost of the newly formed Greek state and became a holocaust by the German troops (June 17, 1944).



The semicircular apse of the sanctuary.

walls of the byzantine castle-city can be seen on the southern steep hilly slope³. The ottonian barrack houses the Byzantine Museum of Fthiotida. There are two parish churches, that of Saint George and of Saint Nicholas, both among the atrocity committed by the Nazis.

The Hagia Sophia church belongs to the parish of the latter one. It is located on the eastern hill at the entrance of Ypati. Written sources state the diachronicity of its position. An early Christian basilica, a Byzantine church, a Catholic church of the archdiocese of the Franks and the Catalans, possibly an Ottoman mosque and an orthodox church were successively built on the ruins of an ancient church⁴. The current church building was probably built after 1840, on the site of an older one that was destroyed during the Revolution. It was renovated during the period 1978-1995, after the collapse of a part of the northeast-

3. In 2008, a study was prepared and between the years 2011-2015 works of fixing, restoration and promotion of the castle were carried out by the 24th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities and the Fthiotida and Evrytania Ephorate of Antiquities, within the framework of the O.P. CULTURE and of the NSRF 2007-2013, see Kakavas - Yfanti, 2011: 47-61. Papakonstantinou 2015: 12-25.

4. Vortselas 1907: 474. Giannopoulos, 1910: 444-445. Y Lluh Rubiò 1912: 54, 56. According to Giannopoulos, its conversion into an Ottoman mosque at the beginning of the 15th century is not documented, because in 1643 a pre-existing church of Hagia Sophia was renovated. It was probably renovated at the beginning of the 19th century.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN YPATI



The west side of the church.

ern wall and the stone enclosure. It is a single-aisled church building, wooden-roofed, with a rectangular plan view and external dimensions 10.80x5.10 m. Until 1977, the church had a plastered exterior, with a serrated cornice of bricks and a circular skylight on the west side. A small exonarthex was added to the renovation, the roof was replaced, the openings were remodeled, the exterior masonry was uncovered and the existing stone enclosure of the courtyard was also restored⁵.

The masonry consists of unwrought and semi-hewn stones of various sizes, where rows of plinths and ancient courses are inserted between them, especially in the stoneworks of the corners and openings. The larger protruding foundation of the semicircular apse of the sanctuary indicates the existence of an older church. The apse bears a tiled roof, a serrated cornice of bricks and a rock-hewn sandstone vertical lighting cleft. The external entrance at the diakonikon was modified to a window. Arched recesses were formed above the west and north rectangular entrances.

5. It remained intact during the Holocaust. It was temporarily used as a parish church instead of the burned church of Saint Nicholas (testimony of Fr. Karagiannis, Archive of the Fthiotida and Evrytania Ephorate of Antiquities, Simopoulos 1985: 38. Nikolaou 2003: 18-19).



The wood-carved iconostasis of the church.

Many fragments of marble members of ancient and byzantine architecture and sculptures are immured on all sides. Prominent among these are, sections of parapets and of a capital on the southern and eastern sides, sections of a byzantine inscription, of an impost and of capitals of early Christian times on the northern side, double-colonettes, a small pillar, sections of a rose window, of a portale, of an epistyle (architrave), of capitals and of an impost of byzantine times, as well as two Ionic capitals and of an ancient times base bearing an inscription on the western side. A relief slab was placed in the western niche with a representation of a crowned double-headed eagle under a cross, between cherubic figures and vegetative decoration, probably of the late byzantine times. Under the cornice, a marble slab with an engraved inscription was immured, which refers to the renovation of 1643, that included a roof, a ceiling and an iconostasis, at the expense of John, the priest and treasurer or sakellarios⁶. Two relief slabs with animal-shaped representations frame this inscription, probably coming from the decoration of the byzantine portale of Saint Nicholas⁷.

The church is simple inside. The exonarthex is elevated by a low step and communicates with the rest of

6. Giannopoulos, 1910: 445-446

7. Giannopoulos, 1910: 448-450, fig. 3, 6, 6a.



Engraved inscription above the west gate, which refers to the renovation of the year 1643.

the church through three rectangular openings. There is neither a ceiling nor frescoes. Modern tiles cover the floor. In the southern threshold, square clay slabs of the older floor have been preserved. The niche of the sanctuary occupies almost the whole eastern wall. Two shallow niches are inscribed in the thickness of the walls of the prothesis. Ancient spolia compose the holy altar table.

The wood-carved iconostasis was built around 1995 by a craftsman from Trikala, named Kyritsis. The three icons of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Panayia Prousiotissa on the northern wall are signature works of Fr. Karagiannis⁸, of 1983. Three inscribed portable icons of the 19th century are kept in good condition ⁹.

The local tradition, the excavation findings and the abundance of architectural members and sculptures collected from the surrounding area of the church, where there are still several spolia, indicate that it was built on the site of an early Christian basilica, which according to testimonies was destroyed by landslides

8. Father Demetrios Karagiannis records local traditions, folk songs, culture and customs and has contributed to the collection and preservation of antiquities in the area. He studied under the hagiographer P. Vaboulis and at Mount Athos.

9. The Hagia Sophia icon, of 1872, comes from Syros and was dedicated by Chr. D. Anagnopoulou, wife of the Ypatian fighter, from a wealthy family of tobacco and silk traders. The icon with the women saints Sophia, Faith, Hope and Love was dedicated in 1883 by G. Kolovos as atonement for an attempt to set fire to the previous icon by his son. The bizonal icon of Prousiotissa, of 1861, is the work of the painter Anagnostis from Grevena.

and from the opening of a road at its southern aisle area. The excavation of 1980 in the southern opposite building land of Dem. Schizas revealed a rare type of a square early Christian baptistery, with a four-lobed built-in baptismal font (first half of the 5th century). It was surrounded by a colorful mosaic floor¹⁰ with a geometric thematic structure, the construction of which is attributed to a tessellation laboratory in Nea Anchialos¹¹.

The church of Hagia Sophia is a special monumental landmark of Ypati, a complex architectural mosaic, which interacts with the local collective memory and composes an experiential narrative for the visitor¹².

Alexia Yfanti

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10. It is kept in the Byzantine Museum of Fthiotida. Kakavas – Yfanti 2011: 41-42, 54.

11. Kalantzi 1979: 100-101, 109. Atzaka 1988: 182-183, table 310-313.

12. Warm thanks, due to their contribution, are given to His Eminence the Metropolitan of Fthiotida, Mr. Symeon, to the director of Eph.A. Fthiotida and Evrytania, Mrs. Efth. Karantzali, to the parish priests of the church of Saint Nicholas of Ypati, Very Reverend Herodion Rizos, Reverend Dem. Karagiannis and to the photographer Mr. Dem. Anagnou.

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Benevento. Hagia Sophia. The west side of the church from above. On the right, the belltower of the church with the pointed roof.

ITALY

Hagia Sophia in Benevento

The church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia, Santa Sofia) was founded by Duke Gisulph II and was completed by Arechis II when he became Duke of Benevento. Its erection began in the year 758 next to a Benedictine monastery, and completed in the year 762, while from 768 it housed the relics of Saint Mercurius, patron saint of the Lombards of Benevento. Arechis II, probably at the suggestion of deacon Paul-Christian, monk, poet and writer, dedicated the new building to the Holy Wisdom of God. In the following centuries, the monastery became one of the richest and most famous in southern Italy. It reached its peak in the 12th century, a fact that is attributed not only for church's splendor katholikon with its colonnade and the bell tower, that were built during the previous century, but mainly for its copying room (scriptorium), the heart of Benevento's famous and widespread script.

The Hagia Sophia church, despite its small size (having a circumference of only 23.5 meters) is a building of great interest of early medieval architecture. Originally, the church consisted of a central



ITALY



The west side of the church.

hall inscribed in a hexagon, whose vertices have six columns, from ancient roman buildings that existed in the city and with a double colonnade: the first decagon with eight pillars of white limestone blocks joined together by rows of plinths and two pillars at the entrance (which were added during the 12th century); a second colonnade is located between these pillars and the exterior building wall. The pillars of the first colonnade have a square plan view, have their sides are parallel to the exterior walls, the layout of which is still the subject of numerous studies. Today, the plan view is circular with three small apses, and then interrupted abruptly that form the Benedictine's star of Benevento.

The form of the Hagia Sophia's church has been altered over the centuries, either due to the numerous restoration interventions, or due to collapses, demolitions and reconstructions. In the 12th century, the church underwent a first restoration. At first, the plan view remained the same, while a bell tower was added to the left of the small facade and an elegant portico at the entrance, supported by four columns with a partial reduction of the facade, which was originally only 9 meters long. Inside, two pillars of the decagonal colonnade towards the entrance were replaced by columns, which survive to this day.

The earthquake of 1688, which levelled much of the city, caused enormous damage to the Hagia Sophia church. The central dome of a hexagonal support collapsed—it was much shorter than the present one and without light openings—while the romanesque bell tower collapsed onto the portico destroying it completely.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN BENEVENTO



The interior of the church from the west.

With the baroque construction of 1698 by the archbishop of Benevento Cardinal Orsini, later Pope Benedict XIII, and the further modifications after the next earthquake in 1702, radical changes were made that were decisive for the disappearance of the original Lombardic modification, causing, among others things, the almost complete destruction of the precious frescoes of the 9th century. The interventions consisted mainly of changing the shape, from star-shaped to completely circular, the demolition and reconstruction of the central apse in a new form, the reduction of the eight pillars of the interior colonnade and the construction of the new facade, which exists until today, as well as the construction of two chapels and of the sacristy. The interior walls were covered with lime mortar and adorned in a baroque style.

In 1947, as part of the restoration works of the post-war period, the two small apses were revealed, as well as the remains of frescoes of the 9th-10th century. Finally, in 1951, under the supervision of the Ephorate of Monuments of Naples, the restoration works began, which allowed the what was considered to be the original Lombard construction to come to light and to complete the parts that had been demolished or altered by the interventions of the baroque reformation. In particular, the two chapels on the sides of the facade were abolished, including the central apse and part of the circular wall that had incorporated the outer edges of the star-shaped walls, which were reconstructed. On the baroque facade, the two windows and the rose window were closed, while the gate was restored to its original position.

The interior of the church presents an architectural fragmentation of the area, from which its recogniz-



The interior of the church from the southwest.

able peculiarity derives with unexpected perspectives. The same can be said for the exceptional diversity of the vaults, which is due to the unusual combination of the hexagonal stellate of the central hall with the decagonal one of the inner colonnade and the second colonnade with the perimetric masonry work. This diversity is achieved thanks to the sequence of square, rhombus and triangular vaults of various dimensions. The entire perimetric masonry work is 95 cm thick and is made, both internally and externally, of rows of thin clay bricks in which a series of irregularly squared stone blocks of sinter is interpolated.

On the facade, in the central tympanum above the new gate, which received it in form in the 12th century, a relief was added that depicts Christ enthroned, the Panagia on the right and Saint Mercurius the Great-martyr on the left (Roman soldier whose remains are today located under the altar table of the right chapel) and a bearded monk, perhaps the Abbot John IV, who directed the restoration.

The interior of the church, initially, was completely frescoed. This is evidenced by the sections that came to light during the restoration of 1947 and are now visible mainly in the apses. In the left apse, scenes are depicted from the life of Zachariah – father of Saint John the Baptist – while in the right apse, scenes from the Theomestic cycle. The central apse, which had collapsed and then reconstructed, does no longer have any marks of frescoes, and it is impossible to determine if there even was a fresco decoration with its themes.

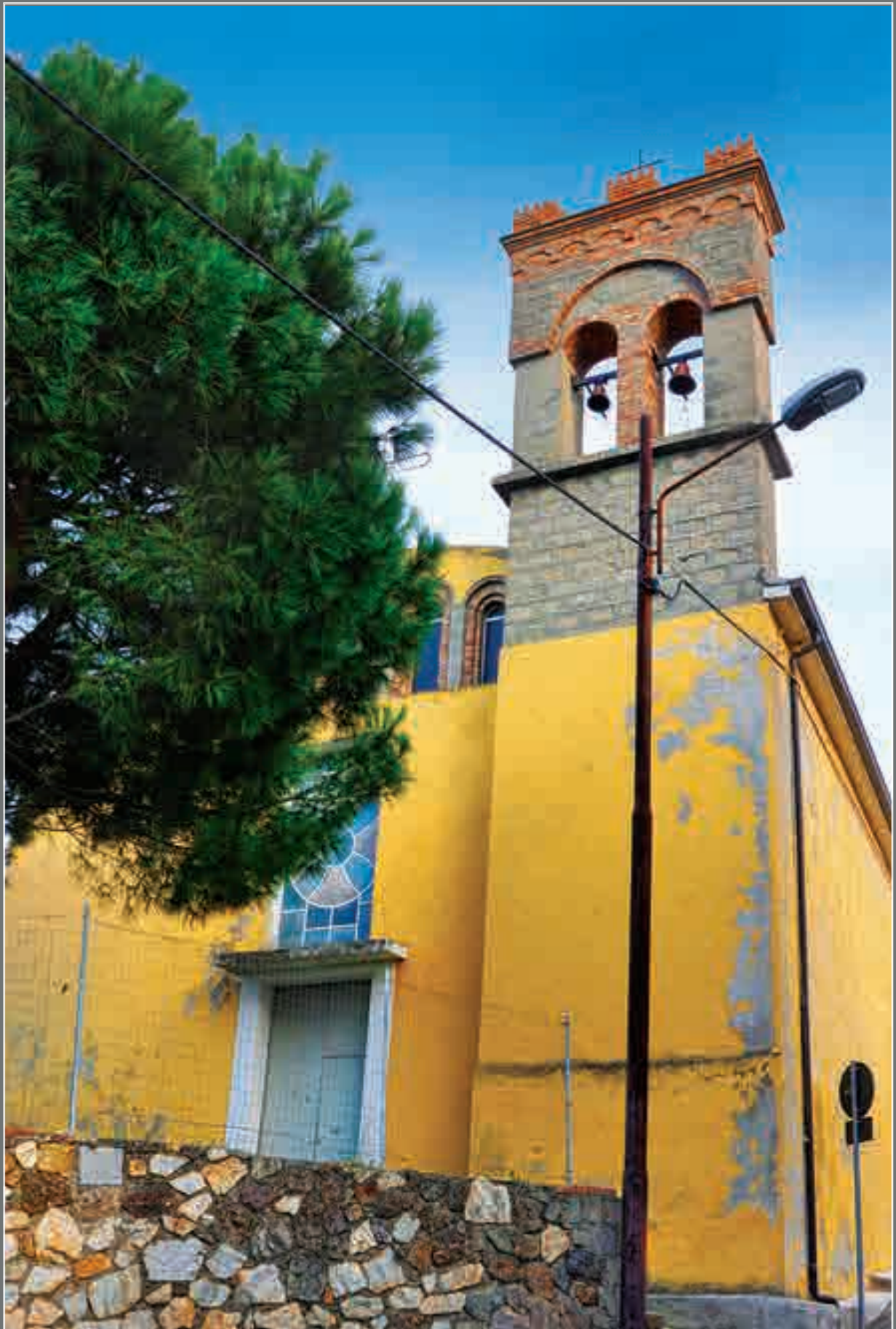
HAGIA SOPHIA IN BENEVENTO



Fragment of a fresco.

Between the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the square in front of the Hagia Sophia church was completely remodelled, in line with the design adopted for Corso Garibaldi Street in which it is located, while a wide strip of white limestone is used as evidence of the precinct in front of the church, that is visible in the papal design of the city of the late 18th century.

Nicola Mucci



Calabria. Hagia Sophia d'Epiro. The church from the southwest.

Hagia Sophia d'Epiro (Calabria)

Since the 7th century, the territorial continuity of present-day Italy under the geopolitical rule of Rome no longer existed, with the southern border delimited by the rivers Crati and Savuto, from the tyrrhenian coasts of Amantea to the Ionian coast at Sybaris¹.

For the defense of the region from north to south, units of Lombard soldiers encamped, while the Byzantines developed mainly along the coastal road, which leads from Rossano to Bisignano and Cosenza. The soldiers in charge of the control, for their safety, had lined up along the dike that ran parallel to the riverbed of the historic tributaries of Crati. This was done to protect them from invisible natural opponents, until they reached that high headland, which in the case of Hagia Sophia intersects the area where the Galatrella stream flows from the Duca Valley.

Along the historic dike, a camp was built consisting of huts for housing and one-room structures for religious purposes. This practice characterized the entire trench from Rossano to Cosenza and the proof is the existence of similar structures, such as those built adjacent to Caminora Street in San Adriano, of byzantine type and having as a model the Great Mother Church of Constantinople.

Among the dioceses of Cosenza, Rossano and Cassano, as well as the wider Calabria, the churches of Bisignano and of Hagia Sophia must be mentioned, as well as others, built in the areas of Acri, Lucchi, Rose, San Demetrio and San Cosmo. The above, are confirmed not only by the Greek Orthodox faith, that is still alive in the region, but also by the commercial transactions between the Greeks of Constantinople and the residents of the diocese of Bisignano, as documented both by the churches that were erected and by the abundance language loans still used in the wider region.

The church built in Santa Sophia Terra, to which the surrounding area owes its place name since the time of its construction, we observe that it reproduces architectural elements that refer to Constantinople.

1. Roma, 1998.



The bell tower attached to the western side of the church.

After all, from the 9th century onwards, the Casale Terra area in Bisignano began to be called “Santa Sofia Casale di Bisignano”. The residents of the area followed the byzantine ritual since its erection, while the church, referred to as “*tenimentum ecclesiae Sanctae Sophiae*”², is recorded in a historical inventory document as an asset.

The church is known as the Old Church of Hagia Sophia of Epirus (Chiesa Vecchia di Santa Sofia d’Epiro in Italian also Kisja Vieter in the local Arvanitic language). The church is a rectangular plan view structure, with the sanctuary area at a higher level than that of the nave. The apse of the sanctuary and the chanter’s stand are placed on the east side, the main entrance (the men’s door) on the west side, and the

2. Cassian, 1997.

HAGIA SOPHIA D'EPIRO (CALABRIA)

small entrance (the women's door) on the south side. The masonry consists of planed river stones with lime mortar, river sand and argil as a binding mortar; the same mortar was later used as a lime-cast (coating) in the entire masonry work. The roof was a structure that consisted of rudimentary trusses, which were supported by the secondary tie-beams, on which the vaulted roof was placed³.

The bell tower and its structure over the centuries changed in shape, layout and its position. It was originally raised touching the north wall on the outside, just above the line that separates the sanctuary from the aisle.

On the opposite side, to the west, which was safer from a geological point of view – the area is affected by earthquakes – it was possible to build an addition. Without rebuilding the wall that had collapsed, arches and columns were constructed in order not to interrupt the continuation of the masonry and to ensure access to the new aisle from the rest of the church. The new bell tower was built at the corner of the west with the south side of this addition.

The main entrance leads directly into the aisle⁴, while at the side entrance area there was the baptismal font of the baptistery, including the women's entrance gate and the chapels dedicated to the Panayia, the Lord's Mother (Santa Madre) and to the Panayia of Mount Carmel (Madonna del Carmine). On the north side of the aisle there were small recesses for chapels, the dedication and features of which were lost during the successive interventions. The interior was poorly lit. It must be observed that when the nave of the church was illuminated by the window located above the entrance, it marked the end of the Divine Liturgy, while the lighting from the window above the sanctuary's apse marked its beginning. On the right side of the entrance area, there was the baptismal font of the baptistery, the stone elements of which, after having withstood multiple collapses, were finally completely destroyed and used as second-hand material.

From September 1471, after the Ottoman occupation, the church became a place of reference for the Christian refugees from scattered parts of Epirus⁵. These people, respecting their religious "beliefs" settled near the church creating neighborhoods with small houses, according to the customs they had in their homeland. It was precisely these people who gave new life to the afflicted religious area in which they settled.

The Hagia Sophia church, in the early of the 15th century until the mid-17th century was also dedicated to their patron saint Athanasios the Great, of Alexandria⁶. When the refugees from Epirus reached Casale, under the guidance-protector of an icon of the Alexandrian bishop, found the ancient structure dedicated to the Great Mother Church of Constantinople, they took this emblem as a divine sign and considered this place as the "Promised Land".

The church was known in the past for another custom. The local population was buried in its basement, while in the area located in the northern side, strangers were buried according to the Christian ritual, including people who had been murdered, people who committed suicide, adulterers, thieves and pagans. In August 1726, the "ecclesiae Sanctae Sophiae" was replaced by a more modern church, dedicated to Saint Athanasios.

From the mid-18th century, the church was left in a slow and relentless decline, isolated from the city center. It functioned only during the period of September, a little more than fifteen days a year, for the

3. Jochalas, 1999.

4. Pizzi, 2003. Pizzi, 2021.

5. Mazziotti, 2004.

6. Masci, 1928.



Modern icon depicting the procession of the icon of Saint Athanasios of Alexandria by refugees from Epirus.

celebrations of the Panayia. In addition, from 1839, the function of the historic basement of the church as a burial place was banned by royal decree.

On February 23, 1957, the restoration process began, due to the precarious static condition of the church, and its entire inner surface was unified with an unsuitable inverted concrete reef⁷.

In the Hagia Sophia church, for over a millennium, the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated in Greek. First by the byzantine soldiers who were defending the historical borders of the empire and then by the refugees who found accommodation here after the Fall of Constantinople, a separate identity was formed which, without interruption, continues to hold religious observances and with the same Greek Orthodox ritual.

In recognition of this course, from 17 to 20 of September 2019, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew,

7. Pizzi, 2003. Pizzi, 2021.

HAGIA SOPHIA D'EPIRO (CALABRIA)

with his historic visit to the diocese of Lungro, wanted to honor the love of the refugees towards the Mother Church of Constantinople.

Atanasio Basile Pizzi

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The settlement of Papasidero from high above.



ITALY

Hagia Sophia in Orsomarso. Hagia Sophia in Papasidero

The Mercure region

The Mercure region is a large geographical area that stretches across the border between today's Calabria and Basilicata. The Mercure-Lao river, which originates from the Pollino massif is located in the center.

Here, since the 7th century AD, a large number of Greek speaking monks of the Eastern Church created an ascetic and then a monastic core: the monastic province of Mercure, one of the most important historical and cultural chapters of the Middle Ages in southern Italy.

For about eight hundred years, actually from the 7th to the 14th century, innumerable monks settled in the most inaccessible places of this rugged and sparsely populated area, which, rich in rivers and forests, was the ideal environment for religious people, who in order to escape the Muslim invasion they took refuge here and decided to dedicate themselves to monastic life and prayer.



Papasidero. The Deposition or Apokathelosis, and female saints Catherine, Lucia and Apollonia.

In these places, at the beginning of the Middle Ages, there was still a significant presence of a Greek population both in terms of language and culture, which drew its roots from what scholars define as the “first Hellenization”, a historical moment that contributed to the selection of these areas by the monks from the East, who inaugurated a migration flow that was never to be interrupted.

The first wave of migration occurred in the second half of the 7th century, when, they abandoned Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Libya¹, a large number of monks flooded the area of Mercure, where countless hermitages and monasteries soon appeared, strengthening even more the ideological affinity that has always existed between southern Italy and the Christian East².

In the 8th century, the Iconoclasm³ and the decision of the emperor Leo III of Isaurus to detach the dioceses of Calabria from the Church of Rome (AD 731) and to make them dependent on the patriarchate of Constantinople caused new migratory waves of monks from the Greek Orthodox East. Even after the emperor’s decision, a popular destination was northern Calabria, which for centuries was ruled by the Lombards and the Byzantines, without major armed conflicts⁴.

The expansion of Greek monasticism in the region of Mercure continued uninterruptedly during the

1. Russo, 1953. The famous *Codex Purpureus Rossanensis* (6th c.) of Rossano arrived in Calabria with them.

2. Orsi 1929: 261.

3. Lacava Ziparo 1977: 69.

4. Gay 1917: 158 ff.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN ORSOMARSO. HAGIA SOPHIA IN PAPASIDERO



Papasidero. The enthroned Panayia with the Child among the angels, and saints Rokkos and Vlasios.

second half of the 9th century, supported by the imperial forces, which, despite the submission of Sicily⁵, managed to detach huge areas in Calabria from the Lombards.

Mercure reached the peak of its prosperity. At the same time, the three ways of life that are characteristic of the eastern monasticism followed: anchoritism (isolation and prayer), living in the lavras (in nearby caves and a common place for prayer) and the coenobitic monasticism (communal, coenobitic life and obedience to the monastery's rules and to the abbot)⁶.

Mercure, in fact, was the precursor of pioneer monastic experiences, which marked the birth of the most famous monastic communities of the Middle Ages, such as Mount Athos, Olympus and Meteora.

The dedication of churches to the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia), was very widespread in the area, which remains to this day as a place name in the municipalities of Papasidero, Orsomarso and Laino Castello.

Hagia Sophia (Santa Sofia) in Orsomarso

At the highest end of the residential center of Orsomarso, a small church emerges, which stands out between a watermill and a large number of small fields on the riverbed of Porta la Terra.

⁵ Sicily was occupied entirely by the Arabs in 902, with the conquest of Taormina.

⁶ Cappelli 1963: 281.



Above: Papasidero. Detail of the Deposition.

Below: Papasidero. Detail of the enthroned Panayia with the Child among the angels.



The small church was the katholikon of a Greek speaking coenobium of the 10th century, the ruins of which are still visible on its right side. The church is a one-room church building. In the middle of the long sides, there is a kind of connection with consequent modification of the extension of the walls, which is probably due to the structural expansion that took place in the 16th century. There is an elevation difference between the old core and the extension, which does not affect the facade, in a small niche which fresco traces of Panayia Hodegetria can be distinguished. Although connected by a single roof, the two parts of the church differ from each other in shape and decoration.

The iconostases that are built around the area of the entrance door, have frescoes above, that include the representation of the Lament over the Dead Christ by Giovanni Battista Colimodio, hagiographer of the 17th century from Orsomarso.

The original part of the church's structure is characterized by "benches"—low masonry walls along the walls, on which monks sat during prayer and divine services.

On the north wall, two frescoes—illuminated by three small windows—depict saint Fantino Juniore, abbot and spiritual guide of the province of Mercure in the 10th century, named with the Latin word *titulus* in abbreviated form, and a face, unrecognizable, with a halo and vestments, referring to an abbot or a bishop. In the background of the wall, there was an elegant apse, which was at one time the boast of the sacred place; today, unfortunately a simple niche that houses the icon of Saint Leonard.

Hagia Sophia (Santa Sofia) in Papasidero

In the center of the settlement Papasidero (in Greek Πανάς Ισίδωρος), on the lower side of the parish of Saint Constantine, a small church of Hagia Sophia emerges; a work of Greek speaking monks. A small building structure, with a square aisle and a gabled

HAGIA SOPHIA IN ORSOMARSO. HAGIA SOPHIA IN PAPASIDERO

roof, the original installation of which dates back to the early Middle Ages; there are frescoes on three walls where the thematology and style are of pure byzantine style.

On the wall, in the background, next to a Deposizione (Burial of Christ), Saint Catherine is depicted, including Saint Lucia and Saint Apollonia, while the Apostles Peter and Paul can be distinguished on the left side of the wall; all are works of local hagiographers of the early years of the 16th century. There are frescoes on the south wall dating from the second half of the 16th century and depict a second group of saints, including Saint Vlasios and Saint Rokkos.

A third group of full-length figures, which may have replaced other older ones, is found on the wall to the left, where the Holy Wisdom is depicted, and on the right side of the wall, illustrating the life of Panayia Hodegetria (Santa Maria) of Constantinople, to which the church is dedicated distinguished from the right bank of the Lao River, on the outskirts of Papasidero's residential center.

Giovanni Russo

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Padua. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

ITALY

Hagia Sophia in Padua



On February 11, 1123, the bishop of Padua Sinibaldo, renewed the concession of tithes in favor of the canons of the church of Hagia Sophia (henceforth Santa Sofia) in order not only to provide for the sustenance of the clerics but above all to complete the construction of the church. The text renewed a privilege that Sinibaldo himself had granted in 1106 and provided that, once the construction of the church was completed, the community of clerics would adopt the rule of the Portuensi, that is, the one drawn up by Pietro degli Onerati and in force in S. Maria Porto of Ravenna.¹ This document represents the oldest attestation of the presence of the church of Santa Sofia in Padua, offering valuable information on its origin. In fact, it clarifies that already before 1106 the construction of the building was underway within a *burgus* of Santa Sofia.

Sinibaldo's text assumes the presence, in this area, of a church prior to the one built in the 12th century and which had the same toponym. The "title" of Santa Sofia allows us to grasp a peculiar trait

1. Trincanato, 1963; Zuliani, 1975: 137-159; Bellinati, 1982: 34-35.



Part of the church's external array of arches and the bell tower.

of the history of the sacred building which makes it the point of intersection between the Po Valley area, marked by the presence of the Lombards, and the influences coming from Constantinople through Venice.² The primitive church of Santa Sofia, in fact, was dedicated to a holy widow and martyr very venerated in the Lombard area. However, starting from the end of the 11th century, the synonymy with the Greek “Hagia Sophia” led to a re-interpretation of the *titulus* of the church with reference to Divine Wisdom. The construction of the new Santa Sofia, sponsored by Bishop Sinibaldo, is part of this religious and cultural horizon. The church was ruled by the Portuensi canons throughout the Middle Ages and then was first entrusted to the diocesan canons. After an important restoration at the end of the fourteenth century, which involves the construction of cross vaults in masonry, the building of Santa Sofia experienced an architectural development in the second half of the sixteenth century. In fact, starting from 1578, a female Benedictine monastery was built on the north side of the Church, which the bishop Federico Carnaro granted to the nuns of Monte Gemola. The building then became a parish church and was the subject of important restoration works starting from August 1941 and after the damage suffered following the bombing of Padua on 12 March 1945.³

Both the architecture and the remains of the pictorial decoration of the building allow us to understand how, compared to what must have been the original project of the church, the construction then evolved favoring alternative solutions.⁴ The project to build a new church of Santa Sofia must be traced back to the years in which Padua was led by Bishop Ulderico, between 1070 and 1080. It is at that moment that the works of what will be the crypt of the new church begin.⁵ It is not clear if it

2. Niero, 1973.

3. Galimberti, 1940; Forlati, 1941; Franco, 1957.

4. Arslan, 1931; Canella, 1935.

5. Lorenzoni, 1982: 48-49.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN PADUA



The interior of the church from the west.

is a new part of the building or if it has been decided to transform the remains of the ancient church, however the construction of the crypt remains unfinished. It was decided to shift the efforts to the construction of the main building, firstly of the large apse, which on the outside is composed of three levels. A first level equipped with arches that lean on half-columns with decorated capitals; an upper level with deep niches follow one another in pairs and a lower arch opens between each pair. The last level is set on deep arches supported by terracotta pillars. The central part of the apse is dominated by a large “scarsella”. The apse already shows a stylistic relationship with the Venetian area, in particular with the church of Santi Maria e Donato di Murano. The large apse was part of a project that included a church with a structure similar to the great Venetian basilica of San Marco that the Doge Domenico I Contarini had rebuilt starting in 1063. Some important elements present in the rest of the structure from the church support this hypothesis. The “naos” is in fact divided into three naves by pillars and a pair of columns. Among the pillars, the four that mark the intersection between naos and transept underwent a modification at the end of the fourteenth century, when they were cut so as to be able to rest part of a new roof in masonry. The large original size of the four pillars suggests that originally, they should have supported a dome, also following the model of San Marco in this case. It was probably Sinibaldo who modified the project, perhaps to reduce costs and construction times. It was then decided to build the perimeter walls by inserting them into the apse, which effectively eliminates the possibility of an ambulatory, and instead



The church's sanctuary.

of the envisioned domes, a simpler and lighter covering was chosen, with wooden trusses. The facade of the church, where there is the entrance arch flanked by four niches, two on each side, originally had the central double-arched window and the two-lateral mono-arched windows, corresponding to the three naves. Around 1296 the bell tower was built, resting on the southern part of the apse, while at the end of the 14th century it was decided to build an internal covering, in masonry.⁶ This new ceiling made the three light sources on the facade useless and forced the opening of the large central oculus and the two lateral oculi.

The church has no traces of organic pictorial cycles but rather a sedimentation of interventions. Traces of decoration, dating to the 13th century, are today visible in the space between the wooden roof and the masonry vaults, as well as the remains of a representation of the Annunciation.⁷ The latter followed the iconographic model of Byzantine influence, with the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin placed on the two piers of the triumphal arch which led to the presbytery and the text of the angel's announcement that ran above the summit of the arch. The style of these frescoes recalls the mosaic model and suggests that they

6. Canella, 1935: 49-71.

7. Zuliani 1970; Lucco 1977.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN PADUA



Left: Double-lobed window on the church's west side. Right: Fragment of a fresco with Panayia Dexiokratousa (the Theotokos holding the Christ-child on her right side).

were created by a painter who looked at the model of the great mosaics of San Marco in Venice. A reworking of oriental stylistic features also emerges from the fragment of a fresco of the *Eleusa* (that is, Madonna and Child) placed in the cap of the first internal niche of the apsidal hemicycle. The distance between these thirteenth-century paintings, linked to the Byzantine influence, and those of the following century, which show the very strong influence exerted by Giotto's passage in Padua, is evident. The fresco of the Madonna and Child in the upper lunette of the apsidal cell dates back to 1325-1330. The Madonna on the throne, dressed in a widely draped mantle, holds a child in her arms wearing an elegant golden white robe, while on the sides of the "niche" throne are depicted two saints and two smaller male figures in an act of veneration (certainly the clients of the work). The rest of a depiction of the Madonna and Child on the west side of the third right pillar starting from the apse dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century. Traces of pictorial decoration are also found in the four niches of the facade. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, instead, by the hand of Girolamo del Santo or an artist from his workshop, a decoration was created that depicted the prophets in the penultimate arch between the central nave and the left side aisle.

On the sculptural level, in addition to a tabernacle of the Eucharist dated at the beginning of the 15th century, a stoup that came from the ancient church of Santa Caterina and another made from a rough



Representation of prophet Daniel in the intrados of the arch; at the base of the arch an elaborate capital.

Corinthian capital, Santa Sofia preserves a *Piet * sculpted in 1429-30 by Egidio di Wiener Neustadt⁸. The work follows the model of the German “Vesperbilder”, with the Madonna holding her dead Son on her knees with her head slightly reversed and her hands crossed on the abdomen.

The church of Santa Sofia shows an evident historical and religious sedimentation both on the architectural level and on that of the artistic decorations. Built on the basis of an original project that looked to the model of San Marco, the church continued, until the end of the 13th century, to bear evident traces of the oriental artistic influence mediated by Venice. The impact of Giotto’s school marks a first profound change, which then develops on the architectural level with the construction of the new “Gothic” roof of the church. All this makes Santa Sofia in Padua a peculiar case of cultural and historical-religious intersections between West and East.

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8. Wolsters, 1976: 105-106, 262-265.

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Venice. Hagia Sophia. Part of the west side of the church and the bell tower.

Hagia Sophia in Venice

The church of Hagia Sophia (henceforth Santa Sofia) is a witness to the connection between Venice and Constantinople. There are two main hypotheses for the foundation of the church near Rialto. It was either constructed by Giorgio Trilimpolo in 886¹ or by the family Gussoni and Giorgio Tribuno in 1020.² Most have settled for the later date, but in both cases, it was a time when Venice was under East Roman jurisdiction either effectively or nominally. Therefore, the name of Santa Sofia directly recalls the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. It appears to have survived the fire of 1105 but to have been refurbished in 1225³ at the time when Venice was controlling part of the Latin Empire in Constantinople (1204-1261). The Archivio di Stato of Venice holds circa 150 documents connected with the church, including a church register dated to 1517 which contains rules from 1191 pertaining to the church.⁴ The indirect tradition points to a foundation in the byzantine era (either 886 or 1020) while the archival material of the church tells us its rules were established already in 1191.

The name of Santa Sofia is rather unusual for Venice (unique). If the church were founded at the earliest recorded date of 886, one may connect it to the period after the transfer of the seat of the doge from Metamauco (Malamocco?) to the area of Rivoalto (Rialto) by the doge Angelo Partecipazio (811-826). From here the doge's palace was transferred to the area Saint Mark's in the tenth century. Thus, a name like Santa Sofia would be appropriate for a chapel connected to the government seat, like in Constantinople where the church of the emperor was called Hagia Sophia. This very location is confirmed by Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (913-959) in his advice to his son written in the middle of the tenth century. The byzantine emperor writes: κάστρον Ῥίβαλτον, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται 'τόπος ὑψηλότατος', ἐν ᾧ καθέζεται ὁ δοῦξ Βενετίας "The settlement Rivalto, which means 'the highest place' in which the doge of Venice resides".⁵ Nothing remains of the palace, but we do have the church of Santa Sofia.

The present church is rectangular in shape subdivided into three naves. The overall appearance is due to the restoration Antonio Gaspari (before 1660- after 1738) he undertook in 1698. He had also worked at other projects in Venice: San Marcuola, Santa Maria della Fava, Palazzo Michiel delle Colonne, Ca' Zenobio degli Armeni, Palazzo Barbaro a San Vidal.⁶ This restoration was promoted by the priest Tommaso Curini who was in charge of the church.

Within the church one may find a number of significant paintings: Baptism of Christ by Daniel Heintz (1530-1596); The mocking of Christ by Leandro Bassano (1557-1622); The Adoration of the Magi by

1. Galliccioli, 1795: 17.

2. Fontana, 1836: 4.

3. Ibid.: 8.

4. Historical Archives of Churches of Venice, Reg. 1 of the parish of Hagia Sophia.

5. Moravcsik in Moravcsik 1967: 27.93-94.

6. Favilla – Rugolo 2006-2007.



Southern entrance of the church on Calle del Cristo street.

Leandro Bassano (1557-1622); Madonna and child with Saint Antony and Veneranda by Giovanni Battista Maganza il Giovane (1577-1617); Saint Antony of Padua by Girolamo Brusaferrero (1684-1760). On the altar one may admire a sculpture of Mother and Child by André Beauneveu (1335-1400) which had come originally from the church of Santa Maria dei Servi. From there also came four statues of Saints by Antonio Rizzo (1430-1499), who had worked on the capitals of the Doge's Palace.⁷

The church has an important musical history since Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739) composed a number of musical renditions of Psalms for the church, the *Estro poetico Armonico* (1724-1726).⁸ This composition was famous in its day and today is remembered also as one of the first example of Jewish psalmody transcribed.⁹ Indeed Marcello studied some of the melodies sung in the synagogues of the Jewish Ghetto nearby. Marcello was interested in other musical traditions and he based his composition of Psalm 16 on the ancient Greek hymn to the Sun by Mesomedes.¹⁰ Moreover the Requiem may have also been given to the church of Santa Sofia, since the composer wanted his funeral to take place in this church.

The parish of Santa Sofia was abolished in 1810. The church was bought by Giovanni Rebellini and reopened in 1836. Since 1st January 1945, it is subject to the church of San Felice Martire.

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7. Schultz 1983.

8. Selfridge-Field E., 1990.

9. Seroussi 2002.

10. Psaroudakes 2018.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN VENICE



The interior of the church from the west. Central aisle.



The interior of the church from the west. North aisle.

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Ohrid. Hagia Sophia. The east side of the church with the apses of the sanctuary from the northeast.

NORTH MACEDONIA

Hagia Sophia in Ohrid

An earthly project of celestial beauty

The church of the Holy Wisdom was built in the center of Ohrid's old town on early Christian foundations. During the Tsar Samuel's reign (976-1014) it served as the cathedral church building of the Church that had a patriarchal status.¹ The building was reconstructed in the time of the Ohrid Archbishop Leo (1037-1056), when its broad stone dome and its marble iconostasis were built which is among the oldest in the Eastern Christian world. The intensive construction works undertaken in the early 14th century defined the church's appearances with its esonarthex, exonarthex, both two-story. Its west façade has been compared to that of the so-called "Chalke Palace" in Ravenna, also known as the residence of emperor Justinian I.²

The earliest wall paintings of the church were devised and commissioned by archbishop Leo of

1. Чипан 1995: 23-72.

2. Коцо 1949: 350-355.



NORTH MACEDONIA



The iconographic program of the church from the west.



Half-cylinder of the diakonikon's apse. Frontal portrait of hierarchs (11th century painting phase).

HAGIA SOPHIA IN OHRID



The three-pointed opening in the interior of the church.

Ohrid who, being the leading theological erudite, was a negotiator plenipotentiary on behalf of the Ecumenical Church in the doctrinal and theological dispute with Rome in the years of tension preceding the Schism (1054). Around 1045, Leo sponsored a unified iconographic ensemble which would be a testimony in support of the theses and the Eastern Orthodox universalism under the patronage of Constantinople. Based on this program, the first zone of the sanctuary was adorned with depictions of the most prominent primates of the Christian Churches. Depicted in an array, in order based on a specific program, the high priests illustrated the idea of the hierarchy which regulates the sees of the Church throughout the Christian world. Places of honor were given to the bishops of the Ecumenical Church of Constantinople, and to the Churches of Jerusalem, of Alexandria and of Antioch, whereas the Church of Rome, included in the basic Christian institutional system, was represented in the apse of the diakonikon through the portraits of the six popes. Along with the bishops of Cyprus on the south wall of the diakonikon, the full-length figures of Saint Cyril of Thessalonica and Saint Clement of Ohrid were added to the gallery of the high priests' series which is considered as a testimony of the ecumenical status of the Ohrid Church. Both representations of these saints that are mentioned above are the oldest preserved in byzantine art.³ The series of hierarchs at the Hagia Sophia of Ohrid church is the most numerous ever painted and includes the group of popes, while the portrait of pope Innocent I is considered unique in fresco painting.⁴

3. Грозданов 1985: 20-27.

4. Serafimova 2008: 203.



The sanctuary's niche. The enthroned Vrefokratousa (Panayia with the Child) Theotokos (11th century painting phase).

The highly selective list of thematic and iconographic exclusives in this ensemble also includes a unique scene of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, the scene of Abraham's Sacrifice, whose narrative design remains unsurpassed, Christ's blessing of the unleavened bread of Eucharist in the scene of the Apostles' Holy Communion,⁵ as well as the group of female saints in the narthex, where the depiction of the Panayia has a special place. The representation of the Theotokos with her Son on the north pillar is exceptional, in that it shows Christ's bare feet, an element observed in Western painting as late as the 13th century. Their depiction has been recognized as the beginning of the idea of the humanization of the Divine and of Christ.⁶

The prothesis (compartment also known as pastophorio), dedicated to the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste, contains one of the most extensive byzantine cycle illustrating their lives from their conversion to Christianity right up to their martyrdom. Their group representation as canonized saints, with the features of their martyrdom, is the only depiction of this kind in byzantine art.⁷ The entire south part of the sanctuary, the diakonikon, is adorned with the scenes from the life of Saint John the Baptist and was most probably a chapel dedicated to him, serving also as a baptistery.

The outstanding 11th century fresco-ensemble—dark and sombre, expressive and mystical, analytical and stern—is a negation of the earthly and the non-essential, of the corporeal and the material, of a physical beauty. The messages this painting style sends are the summit of monastic aesthetics and an expression of ascetic surrealism in art.

5. Грозданов 2007: 85-92.

6. Ђурић 1974: 11.

7. Грозданов 1990: 42-50.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN OHRID



Part of David in Penitence. The name of the painter John Theorian is preserved on the archangel's sword (14th century painting phase).



The Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great (11th century painting phase).

NORTH MACEDONIA



Above: The Communion of the Apostles (detail).

Below: Frescoes on the north wall of the nave (11th century painting phase).





Prothesis. The Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste, detail (11th century painting phase).

An important hagiographic project also took place in the 14th century during the years of archbishop Nicholas.⁸ During this period, the walls of the upper floor of the church's extensions – narthex and exonarthex – became enticing painting canvases. The chapel to the north of the upper floor of the narthex was the first to be adorned between 1347 and 1350. Its donor, despot John Oliver, had dedicated it to his namesake saint, Saint John the Baptist. The walls were painted with scenes of the saint's life, while the lower zone was adorned with the portraits of the members of the donor's family, who are also significant since they consist a historical document.⁹ The applied stylistic features are illustrative of the echoes that byzantine Renaissance had in the 14th century and eloquently "speak" of the talent of its author, the painter who signed with the name Constantine.

The upper floor of the narthex is fresco was adorned with fresco paintings around 1345, thanks to a donation from archbishop Nicholas of Ohrid. As befits a cathedral church, the area is dominated by the cycle of the Ecumenical Councils. One of the most important painters in the Balkans and teacher of several

8. Serafimova 2014: 3-15.

9. Грозданов 1980: 62-65.

generations of hagiographers in Ohrid, painter John Theorian, left his signature on Archangel Michael's sword in the scene of king David in Penitence.¹⁰

It was precisely Theorian's disciples who depicted the rare painting program on the upper floor of the exonarthex also known as Gregory's Gallery which was erected in 1313. Under the patronage of the same archbishop, the scene of the Last Judgment, the Legend of Joseph from the Old Testament and the cycle of Death and the Afterlife of the soul were illustrated around 1350.¹¹ The cycle of Joseph, displayed in forty scenes, was illustrated so extensively in the Middle Ages only in Saint Mark's church in Venice.¹² The scenes of the posthumous separation of the soul from the body, along with the cycle that bears the same title in the chapel of Saint George (13th century), located in the tower of the Hilandar Monastery of Mount Athos, is the only remaining depiction of this monastic-mystical and didactic saga in byzantine art.¹³ The fresco painting in the upper floor of the portico with its unique visual rhetoric and its flawless use of space make this ensemble the last painterly peak of the medieval Ohrid.

The magnificent fresco paintings in the cathedral of the Ohrid Archbishopric consists of a unique textbook of the mediaeval art between the 11th and the 14th centuries. Here, as in few other places in the Slavonic-Byzantine world, adorned continuously through the centuries, these fresco paintings are a stratigraphy of high European achievements in fine arts.

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11. Грозданов 1980: 81-101.

12. Todić 1995: 92-94.

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Kamenki. Saint Nicholas church (formerly Hagia Sophia). The church and the bell tower from the southwest.

RUSSIA

Hagia Sophia in Kamenki

The village of Kamenki, now within the city limits of Nizhny Novgorod, was formerly called Kamenki Nikolskiye and was located in Nizhegorodski uyezd (secondary-level of administrative subdivision, county). At the beginning of the 20th century, it had more than two thousand residents, almost a third of whom were Old Believers.

In the 19th century it was often visited by the highest clergy, as it was on the way to the men's monastery of the Virgin Mary in prayer with extended arms (Orant), where the procession of the cross that accompanied the miraculous icon of the Theotokos of Vladimir took place twice a year. The most important of these churches in Kamenki is the stone church of Hagia Sophia (of Saint Nicholas), which survives to this day.

At the beginning of the 19th century, there were already two wooden churches here. The first, for the summer, in honor of Saint Nicholas the Miracle-worker, was built, according to tradition, during the first quarter of the 17th century and had the chapel of Prophet Elijah, built in 1788 by the priest Ioan Petrov, with the blessing of Bishop Damascene (Rudniev) of Nizhny Novgorod. The church of Saint Nicholas was demolished due to age in 1820.



RUSSIA



The church and the bell tower from the east.

The second church, dedicated to the saint pious prince Alexander Nevsky, was for the winter months and the time of its construction remains unclarified. It was destroyed in the fire of November 23, 1808. A well-founded hypothesis has been expressed that the church of Alexander Nevsky was built by the residents of Kamenki, the well-known Russian squires Alexander Ilyich Paskov (1734-1809) and his wife Daria Ivanovna, of the genus Miasnikova (1735-1808). This fact was demonstrated, among other things, by the icon of Saint Alexander Nevsky and by the woman martyr Daria who survived during the fire¹ and was later placed in the sanctuary of Prophet Elijah's chapel. It is believed that the founding of Prophet Elijah's chapel, was built in memory of his father Alexander Ilyich Paskov.

The erection of the stone church, dedicated to the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia), began while the two wooden churches were still functioning. It was founded on July 8, 1804 by the same priest Ioan Petrov. In 1809, immediately after the completion of the construction, Prophet Elijah's chapel was consecrated too. The church's "refectory" was consecrated in 1826, probably, because the construction works were continuing. The icons that were relocated here from the wooden church of Saint Nicholas, which was abolished were those of the Pantocrator, of the Theotokos, of John the Forerunner and of the apostles Peter and Paul, which were placed in the second zone of the central iconostasis. Many other icons, including old ones, were located in the "refectory", in the apse between the nave and the chapels, as well as in the chapels. Historical documents and books were kept in the church. Among these, it is worth mentioning the book of Psalms of Symeon Polotsky with music instructions on "How to chant the psalms", published in 1680, and the Gospel book for the altar table printed during the reign of Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich and Patriarch Joasaph (1667-1672). If these heirlooms originally belonged to the

1. Снежницкий 1904: 5-6.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN KAMENKI



The shrine dedicated to the memory of starets Peter Dimitrijevic.

church of Saint Nicholas, then indeed this church existed at least from the second half of the 17th century.

Until its abolition, the church of Saint Nicholas was considered to be the central church of the village, which is why the residents realized the new church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) as the church of Saint Nicholas. The name of the village Kamenki Nikolskiye also contributed to this. When the church was rebuilt in 2005, it was dedicated to Saint Nicholas.

Unclear are the conditions under which a stone bell tower were constructed, that was standing on the east side of Saint Nicholas church. It was probably founded together with the Hagia Sophia church in the early 19th century. The bell tower survives to this day and allows us to understand the historical topography of this particular area.

The church of Hagia Sophia was built with the adoption of the forms of early classicism. It consists of the central square space (chetverik) covered with five domes and the “refectory”, the facades of the chetverik have characteristic pediments, the vaults of the domes are onion-shaped, the tympana of the domes are octagonal, without windows, except for the central dome that is perforated by four openings.

The church was erected with the active participation of the priest Ioan Petrov and the parishioners. However, the cerostatarium (κηροφόρος) Peter Dimitrijevic is honored as its main builder, thanks to whose efforts, money was raised for such an important project.

“Peter Dimitrijevic was a prominent figure not only for his contemporaries but also for his descendants. “Despite his low rank in the church, he was highly esteemed because of his ascetic spirit and zeal”². He was born in Kamenki in 1734. He was a sexton in the days of the priests Maxim Mikhailov and Ioan

2. Снежицкий 1904: 7.

RUSSIA



The interior of the church from the west.

Petrov. “His house was a shabby cell, a bare bench or his floor was his bed (...) Peter Dimitrijevič would go about five kilometers away from Kamenki, to pray by himself, in the forest, behind the Zolotoy Klyuch (Golden fountain). Here, (...) he dug with his own hands a cave with a small and indistinguishable entrance, which was covered with dry branches and leaves and opened his soul to God, secretly from the world”³. It was believed that he was making bricks for the church, because he often returned to the village soiled with clay (...) When he passed away, he was buried opposite the altar table of the Hagia Sophia church. Of the few things he left behind, it is worth mentioning the book of Saint John of Sinai (Climacus) “The Ladder of Divine Ascent” with the following entry: “February 2, 1802. This godly-inspired book belongs to the minister of the church, Peter Dimitriev of Nizegorodski uyezd, from the village of Kamenki, who brought it to the church of Saint Nicholas the Miracle-worker located in the village of Kamenki.”

With the permission of Bishop Moses (Bliznetsov-Platonov) of Nizhny Novgorod a shrine was built over the grave of Peter Dimitrijevič, where a gravestone rock was placed inside, with the following text written on the front side: “Buried under this stone are the remains of the departed in the Lord God’s servant, Peter Dimitrijevič, the cerostatarium, who died in 1814, reaching 80 years of age.” The inscription continued alongside the lateral side: “(...) Thanks to his prayers and efforts, the church was erected at this place in honor of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) and the monument [shrine] was built in 1818 with the solicitude of the large landowner of the Kazan region, Evgraf Alexievich Lebedev.”

In the ruined cemetery of the Hagia Sophia’s church, priest Symeon Ivanovich Kamensky († 1875) was

3. Снежицкий 1904: 7.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN KAMENKI



The interior of the church from the southwest.

buried. A wooden cross is preserved with the inscription: “Here rests the remains of the servant of God, hieromonk Innocent Nadiozin of the monastery of the Virgin Mary in prayer with extended arms (Orant)”⁴.

The church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) in Kamenki stopped to function a few years after the Revolution, and in 1938, it was modified to house a warehouse and the kolhoz garage.

The gradual restoration of the church began at the beginning of the 21st century. In 2005, the parish of Saint Nicholas the Miracle-worker was formed again in Kamenki and on July 17, 2009, the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the church.

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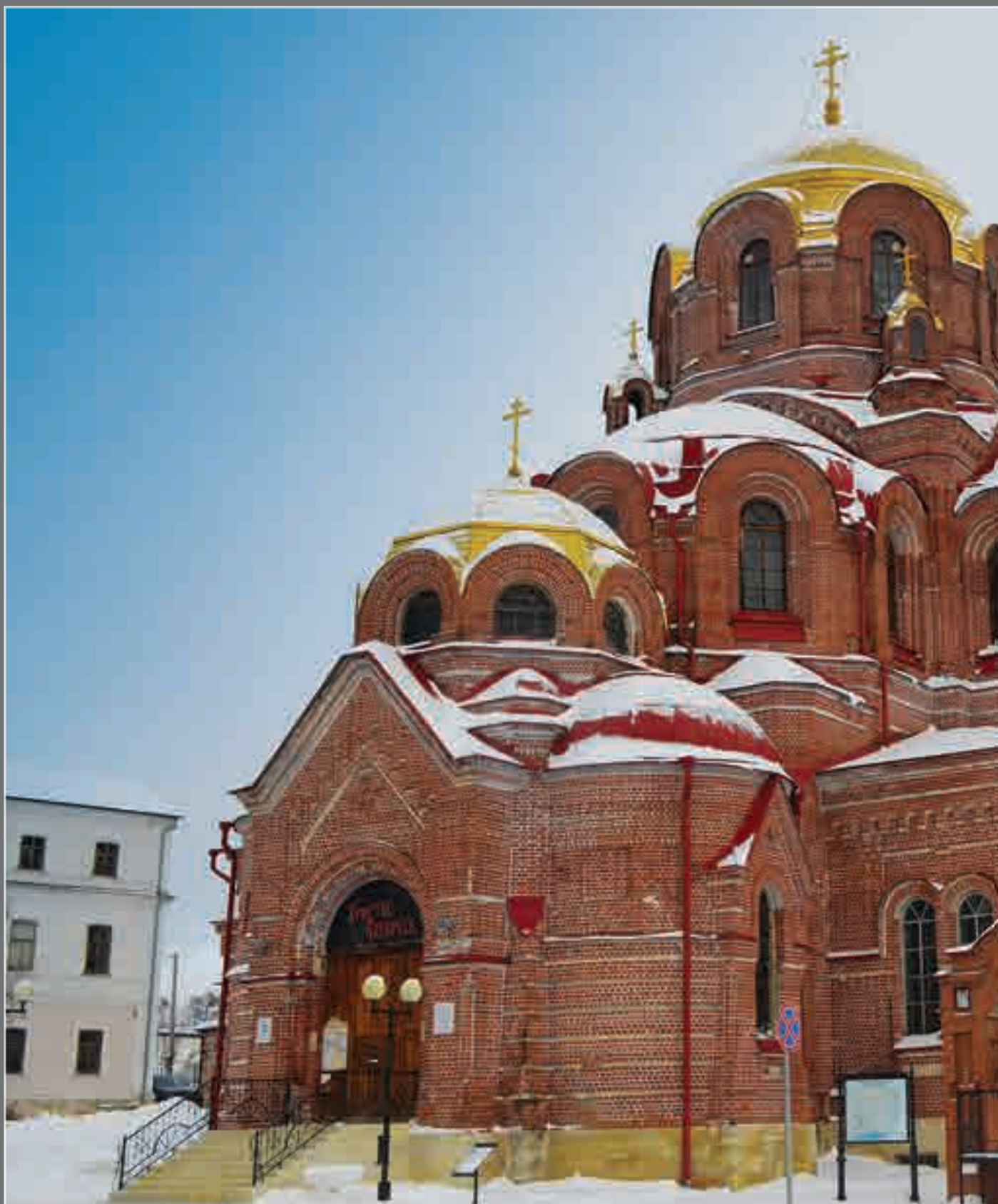
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Laishevo. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

RUSSIA

Two Hagia Sophia churches in Laishevo



Laishevo is a town in Tatarstan with a population of over eight thousand people. It is considered that it was founded in 1557 even though there was still a settlement since the times of the khanate of Kazan¹. Laishevo is located on the bank of the Kama River at the point where, thanks to the Kuybyshevskoye reservoir, the width of the river exceeds 20 km. The Laishevo region is better known as the birthplace of the Russian poet Gavriil (Gavrila) Romanovich Derzhavin (1743-1816). The church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia), from the 18th century, is the main church of the city.

Two churches dedicated to Hagia Sophia are known in the history of Laishevo. The first church was built in 1767. It is widely believed that it was founded for the expected arrival of Catherine II, however the empress did not pass through here when she traveled to the Volga River. In 1780, Hagia Sophia was converted into a metropolis, when Laishevo became an administrative center².

1. Историко-культурный атлас 2014: 48.

2. Республика Татарстан 1998:178.

RUSSIA



The monastery complex from the southwest.

The church existed until the mid-19th century, when it was considered not large enough and in 1853 it was demolished. In the same place, with the blessing of the archbishop of Kazan and Sviyazhsk Gregory (Postnikov), the construction of a larger and more spacious church began, which completed in several stages. Therefore, the chapels in the sanctuary date back to the 1850s, while the new church was consecrated by archbishop Anthony (Amphitheaters) on August 20, 1870.

The church was a structure with five domes in a traditional composition. It had a bell tower, a ground floor refectory (dining hall “trapeza”), the central structure had four pillars that supported three apses on the three sides (except of the eastern one), and two rows of windows on the facades. The arrangement is characterized by the eclectic architectural way with the use of complex compositions of Muscovite baroque on the western wall of the lower floor of the bell tower, which survives to this day. The eastern part of the church was designed for the summer months and the western, of smaller dimensions, for the cold months. The church had five niches on the eastern side: the central one was dedicated to the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia), the southern to Saint Catherine and the northern to Prophet Elias. The chapels of Saint Nicholas the Miracle-worker (1855) and of the icon of the Virgin Mary of Kazan (1858) were located in area of the refectory (dining hall “trapeza”) for the winter months.

“God manifested his omnipotence and omniscience, mainly that He sent His Only-begotten Son to the earth for the salvation of man. The birth of our Lord Jesus Christ from the All-holy Virgin Mary consists the greatest Wisdom of God. That is why your church, dedicated to Wisdom, is a church dedicated to this

TWO HAGIA SOPHIA CHURCHES IN LAISHEVO



Morphological and decorative details on the west facade of the bell tower of the monastery's complex.

Wisdom (of God). Wisdom, says the Bible, founded its house and consecrated seven columns, meaning that Wisdom founded the Church and instituted seven holy sacraments. In this way, Wisdom gave you all the means for salvation.” Such a dogmatic definition of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) was given by the archbishop Arsenios (Brianchev) of Kazan and Sviyazhsk, in his sermon at the Hagia Sophia church during the winter of 1898³.

After the visit of archbishop Arsenios in Laishevo, the reconstruction of the Hagia Sophia church took place. The two parts of the church, for the warm and cold months, were joined by a wide apse and the second part, underfloor heating was installed. In this way, the whole church became warmer and even more spacious⁴. In 1900, another floor was added to the bell tower and in 1901 all five domes of the church were rebuilt.

In 1898, Stepan Dmitrievich Erzia (Nefyodov, 1876–1959), a prominent Russian painter and sculptor of Mordovian descent, took part in the church's hagiography. Its frescoes, located in the four central pillars of the church were not damaged during the Soviet republic era, although the church was closed. “The method of the young painter is recognized when comparing the representation and plastic technique of the frescoes with the surviving icons, which S. Nefyodov had treated artistically earlier. His work is

3. “Церковные торжества” 1898: 78.

4. “Пребывание Высокопреосвященнейшего Арсения” 1901: 743.



The west compartment of the monastery's katholikon from the south.

distinguished by a certain dryness and specification of the color choice, the static composition, the strict observance of the rule and the strict contours of the figures⁵.”

Close to the church building of Hagia Sophia, at the northern wall, the chapel was located with the grave of the schimonah Varsonofios, who was highly revered by the residents of Laishevo. He served in the men's monastery of the Holy Trinity in Laishevo, which existed in the 17th-18th century. He dealt with the collection of donations in favor of the monastery (form of fundraisings) and was killed by robbers. The chapel was built in 1735 by Timofey Yakovlev, as a sign of gratitude because “Saint Varsonofios healed Timofey; saved him from death and robbers”. The chapel does not survive. Even though the schimonah Varsonofios was not officially canonized by the Church, the locals sought his help when they became ill and his name was written on all their notes “for forgiveness”⁶.

The church suffered significant damage after the Revolution of 1917. The parish priest Leonid Evstafievich Skvortsov (1878–1918) was executed by the Bolsheviks for “inciting actions against the Soviet rule and aiding the White Guards.” In 1930, the church was closed and in 1956 it was converted into a movie theater. In the course of the reconstruction, the domes of the church were removed as well as the upper floors of the bell tower. In 2013, the building was returned to the faithful.

In 2017, the central dome and the side domes in the church of Hagia Sophia were restored. After the handover to the Russian Orthodox Church, it was consecrated in honor of Saint Nicholas the Miracle-worker, as the katholikon of the former monastery of the Holy Trinity was dedicated to the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia). Therefore, another architectural structure from 1993 became a church of Hagia Sophia. It is much recent than the Hagia

5. Бутрова 2019: 180.

6. Город Лаишев 1905: 1192.

TWO HAGIA SOPHIA CHURCHES IN LAISHEVO



Saint Nicholas church (formerly Hagia Sophia). The church's entrance from the east and the fresco of the Second Coming.

Sophia church which was built before the revolution, although its exterior impresses everyone who comes to town.

The convent of the Holy Trinity in Laishevo, for which the Hagia Sophia church was built, was founded in 1888. In 1895, the monastic community with the decision of the Holy Synod received the status of a monastery. The church, dedicated to the Life-creator Trinity, was designed by the famous architect Fyodor Nikolaevich Malinowski (1864-?) was founded in 1901 by archbishop Arsenios (Brianchev). The construction was made with money provided by the benefactors, including the Laishevo merchant Capiton Andreevich Makasin and the widow of the merchant, Agrippina Ivanovna Flegontova, known for their care and for the other churches of Laishevo. The church was consecrated by the archbishop Nikanora (Kamenski) of Kazan and Sviyazhsk on May 30, 1910. "It can rightly be considered one of the best churches not only in Kazan but in the whole Volga region," wrote the newspaper of the ecclesiastical province of Kazan "Izvestia," about the Holy Trinity's church building⁷.

The architectural style of this impressive building can be defined as the eclecticism with russo-byzantine elements. The composition and structure of the church is characterized by the upward reduction of the volumes of the hemispherical domes and the other vaults. It belongs to the type of churches with a symmetrical axis and, besides the five domes, it has four columns in the interior and one apse on the eastern

7. "Посещение" 1910: 775.



Hagia Sophia church (formerly the Life-creator Trinity). The interior of the church from the west and the monumental iconostasis.

side. The Naval cathedral of Saint Nicholas in Kronstandt is mentioned as a possible model of the church. One more church building of F. N. Malinowski is similar to the church of the Holy Trinity in Laishevo; it is the church of the icon of the Theotokos “Joy of All Who Sorrow” in the convent of Saint John the Fore-runner in Sviyazhsk⁸.

During the Soviet republic era, the Holy Trinity monastery and its church were closed. The engine room tractor and other services were installed on the premises of the monastery. In 1983, the former church of the Holy Trinity was placed under state protection as an architectural monument. The renovation of the church building took place in the 1990s under the name of “Hagia Sophia”. In 2017, metropolitan Theophan (Asurkov) of Kazan and Tatarstan, during his visit in Laishevo blessed the restoration of the Holy Trinity monastery. Now the church has been consecrated anew in honor of the Holy Trinity and the parish is called the “high-priest’s metochion of the Holy Trinity of the city of Laishevo.

Despite the adventures that the two churches of Hagia Sophia in Laishevo suffered, their history consist an interesting example of how the theological concept, embodied in the church building, is applied to the circumstances of a town.

Mark Siskin

8. Республика Татарстан 1998: 175.

TWO HAGIA SOPHIA CHURCHES IN LAISHEVO



The chapel at the church's north aisle.

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Moscow, Pushechny Dvor. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

RUSSIA

Hagia Sophia in Pushechny Dvor, Moscow

The church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) on Lubyanka Street or Pushechny Dvor (foundry where cannons and bells were made) is well known, as Father Pavel Florensky discovered here a rare list of church services, which he later published¹.

The first wooden church was founded on this site in 1480 by the residents of Novgorod, who were forcibly transferred to Moscow at the behest of Prince Ivan the Great III, after the annexation of Veliky Novgorod to the state of Moscow. It reminded them of the old church of Hagia Sophia in their homeland and had a chapel in honor of Saint Nikitas of Novgorod. It is known that the new wooden church of Hagia Sophia in Lubyanka was built during Nikon's patriarchy and was consecrated on July 19, 1650. After almost thirty-five years, this church was destroyed by fire.

In 1691-1692, the stone church of Hagia Sophia in Pushechny Dvor was built. At the same period the chapel of Saint Nikitas was renamed into a chapel of Saint Nicholas the Miracle-worker.

The Hagia Sophia church has the shape of a "chetverik". The church is crowned by an on-

1. Служба 1912.

RUSSIA



The church from the south.



The upper floor of the bell tower, detail.

ion-shaped vault on an octagonal tympanum which is adorned with “lesenia” (strips) and small rectangular blind niches. The walls of the original structure survive to this day, despite the successive repairs and architectural additions it underwent.

The church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) distinguished for its elongated three-part traditional architecture. To the east, the church has a low rectangular sanctuary, the first half of the 19th century replaced the old triple apse. The two-story bell tower, the vaulted cover of which ends in an arrow, completes the composition from the west. A refectory (dining hall “trapeza”) has been built between them, which is the same height as the sanctuary, and two chapels, semicircular apses of which partially close the facades of the chetverik. The northern chapel of Saint Nicholas is rectangular, while the southern chapel which is dedicated of the icon of Virgin Mary of Kazan, is divided from the building line of Sofiika Street, that separated the church from the foundry, and has the shape of an irregular table.

The outer surfaces of the walls of the main volume also retain the structure they acquired in the late 17th century. In the late 18th century, the church underwent some repairs; in 1729, the chapel of Saint Nicholas was renovated from damages. During the same period, the “chetverik” gained a new decoration on the facades, a dome and false dormers. In the Patriotic War of 1812, the church was not damaged and in 1813, it was consecrated anew. In 1838-1841 the church was radically rebuilt. The new refectory was built, and the bell tower was renovated. All spaces had a uniform style of late “empire”.

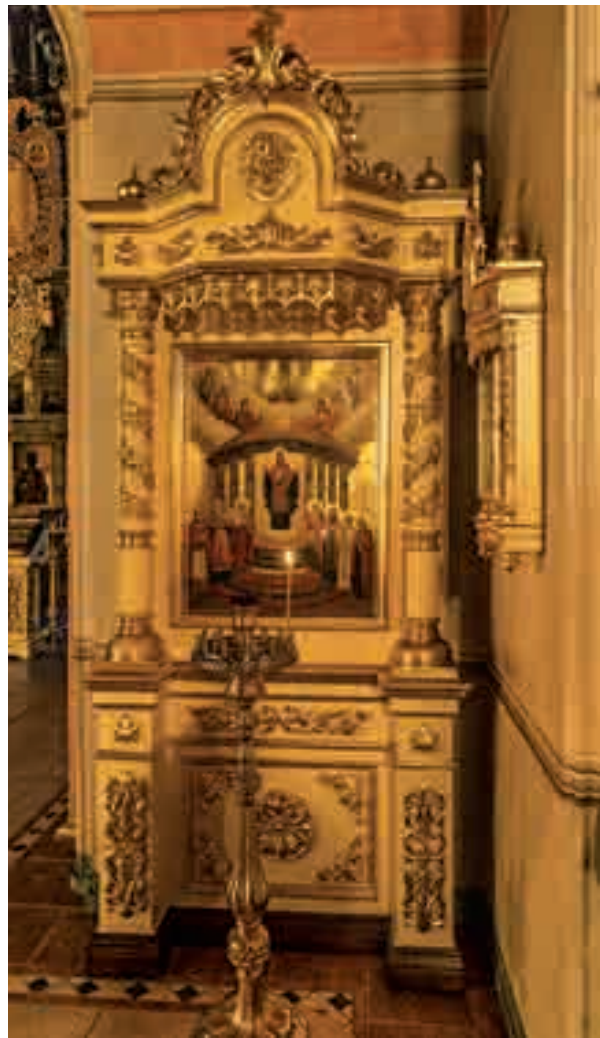
The bell tower’s corner that faces the street in an impressive way, is still the most famous part of the building. The lower floor is coated with irregularly sized structures and is adorned by two porticoes of four double Tuscan columns under triangular pediments, that form the entrance gates (the third, the northern portico during the second half of the 19th century was replaced by a chapel that served as a

sacristy and an area for church officials). Arched windows are located above the pediments. The upper floor of the bell tower is cylindrical. It bears four arched windows axially, the façade of which has a small church-shaped configuration with two colonnades (aediculae), a characteristic pattern of the Muscovite “empire”. The arches of the window apses have a relief decoration with thorn leaves.

It is known that the Hagia Sophia church was also renovated in 1901 and shortly afterwards its interior was restored. At the request of the clergy of 1908, “the iconostasis had to be gilded again, and the kiots (display boxes for icons, shadow box shrines) including the frescoes restored to the old style and accent.” The works were done by the well-known craftsmen, the hagiographer B. P. Guryanov (1866-1920) and the wood carver-gilder O. S. Golubev².

In the 1930s, the church ceased to function and came under the jurisdiction of the Joint State Political Directorate under the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR. The building was remodeled for the needs of the experimental factory of sports uniforms of the “Dinamo” team, while in the meantime the “chetverik’s” dome was destroyed, including the arrow at the top and the porticoes of the bell tower, and the window openings were bricked up. The interior design was entirely lost. In the 1980s, new multi-story administrative buildings of the Committee for State Security of USSR were erected on the northern and eastern side of the church, thereby this historic church was lost in their courtyard.

In 2001, the building was refurbished with money of the employees of the Security Service and in 2002, it was returned to the Russian Orthodox Church. Now the church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) in Pushechny Dvor belongs to the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation.



Shrine decorated with gold with the icon of God’s Wisdom.

2. Материалы по истории 1884. Александровский 1915: 70. Макаревич 1989: 203, 227-228; Святые 1993: 98. Паламарчук 1994: 126-127.



The Ascension of Christ on the ceiling.

The interiors of the church have been restored based on old photographs from the early 20th century. The walls are decorated with frescoes of monumental dimensions in the style of the late academism with predominant accents of pink, gold and light blue. Among the traditional biblical and evangelical scenes, are the full-length representations of the military saints, including the holy pious princes Alexander Nevsky and Dmitry Donskoy, which are located between the windows of the chetverik, as well as scenes from the history of the Patriotic War of 1812 (in the southern chapel of the icon of Virgin Mary of Kazan), as a tribute to the military-patriotic commemoration of events that befits the service status of the church building. The icon of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia), in the Novgorod style, is located at the church's entrance, in the vault of the lower floor of the bell tower. Wisdom with fiery wings sits on the throne attended by the Theotokos and John the Forerunner; further up is the icon of the Savior in glory, the angelic host of heaven and the Lord's Throne with the Gospel book³.

The iconostases in the church and the chapels have morphological elements of the eclectic style where baroque motifs and Russian styles prevail. The gilded details of the decorative wood carving stand out on an off-white background. The central iconostasis consisting of four zones includes, from the bottom up, the large rectangular icons of the Lord Jesus Christ, a zone with square icons with scenes of the Dodekaorton (Twelve Great Feasts), the Deisis ("Entreaty") in elegant arched icons, with Christ in the middle in larger dimensions. The upper zone is occupied by the Theotokos Vrefokratousa (Infant-bearer), in the type of Vlachernitissa, and prophets, also in arched icons of smaller dimensions. The icons are separated by gilded carved columns that form equal sections. The wood-carved beautiful gate has the "Last Supper" is depicted right above, in a medallion. The iconostases of the chapels are low and have two zones, the zone of icons of the Lord Jesus Christ and the zone with icons from the Dodekaorton.

The church's icon – the Holy Wisdom of God – in Kiev's style, is located to the right of the entrance from the refectory to the "chetverik", in a special kiot (shadow box shrine). Like most icons of the church, it was treated artistically in the 21st century in a western style hagiography of the late 17th century. Its composite iconography includes the representation of the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child, in front of

3. Рахиль 2020: 190-194.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN PUSHECHNY DVOR, MOSCOW



Contemporary fresco with the theme of God's Wisdom (copy of the homonymous representation in a portable icon of the 15th century in Novgorod).

the church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) rendered as a rotunda with “seven columns”. The prophets are depicted on each of its sides, and high up, in the clouds, the Lord Sabaoth with an angelic host.

Among the church's heirlooms we mention the icon of the holy martyrs Faith, Hope, Love and their mother Sophia, as well as the reliquary with a fragment of the relic of the woman martyr Sophia located on the southern wall of the chapel of the icon of Virgin Mary of Kazan.

Despite the refits and losses, the church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) is a typical monument of Russian church construction of the late 17th-early 19th century. The appearance of the empire style prevails on the elevation of the building; however, the original motifs of the ancient Russian architecture are preserved in the central chetverik. The destruction and subsequent restoration of the church in the 19th-20th century is a typical example of the difficult and dramatic history of Russia at that particular period.

Alexey Yakovlev

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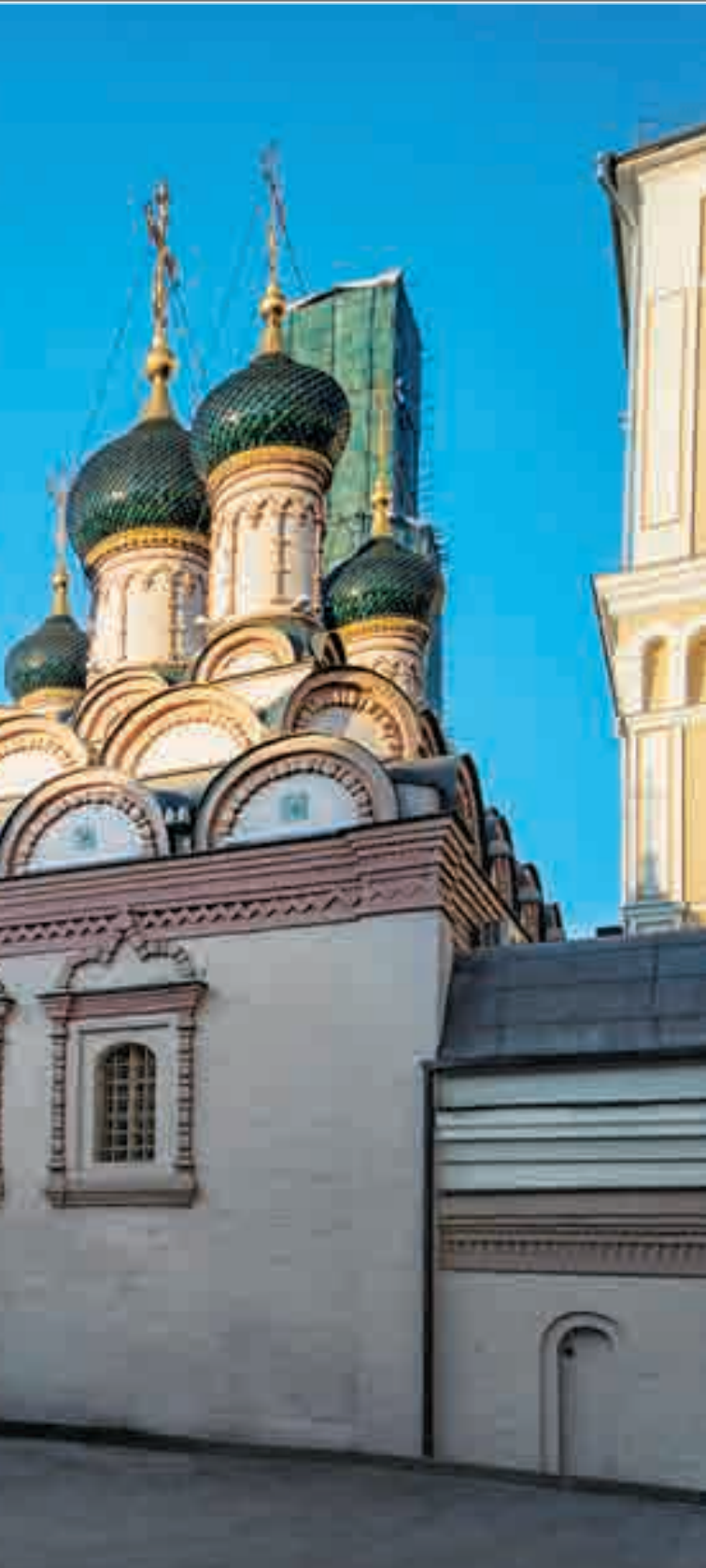
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Moscow, Srednye Sadovniki. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

RUSSIA

Hagia Sophia in Srednye Sadovniki, Moscow



The Saint Sophia church (henceforth Hagia Sophia) in Srednye Sadovniki is located in the center of the Russian capital, on the right bank of the Moscow River, opposite the old Kremlin. On the waterfront side, its bell tower stands and hides a magnificent monument in the very far background, a prima facie small church building with five domes, of which the waterfront was named. The designation “Srednye Sadovniki” is related to the organization of the tsarist garden in Zamoskvorechye (an area on the opposite bank of the Moscow River) and the formation of the Sadovniki (gardeners) neighborhood¹.

The founding of the church in the city center is associated with the migration of the inhabitants of Novgorod in the late 15th century, after the annexation of the Great Novgorod in Moscow. The first

1. *Историческое известие* 1848: 70. Александровский 1915. *Сорок сороков* 1994: 597-601. *Церковь Софии* 1994: 90-92.



View of the domes and of the church's "kokoshniks".

testimony concerning the Hagia Sophia church is the description of the fire in 1493 at Moscow in Symeonov's Chronicle: "Beyond Moskva, the area from Hagia Sophia to the church of Saints Joachim and Anna was burnt down"². At that time the church was still wooden. There are drawings by Adam Olearius dated 1634 and of August Meyerberg, where the church is depicted with a dome and its bell tower. According to testimonies, the senior priest Habakkuk preached in the church of Hagia Sophia, "beyond Moskva in Sadovniki," after his return from exile³.

The first mention of a stone church in this place dates back to 1682, although recent researches prove that it existed as early as the mid-17th century. After the refits in the early of 1680s, the Hagia Sophia church gained five domes on cylindrical tympana without windows and, probably, at the same period the arches of the sanctuary gained again vaulted coverings. Some sources refer to 1686 as the date of construction of "the church with a chapel". At that time, the monument was a typical example of a church that stands as a "boat," where the same axis included the pyramidal bell tower, the refectory (dining hall, "trapeza") and the central square area (chetverik), which extended to the low three-part sanctuary that protruded to the east. The windows of the sanctuary (the central one has been blocked) today are arched and are adorned only with small recesses without frames.

2. ПСРЛ XVIII: 278

3. Урушев 2013: 33

HAGIA SOPHIA IN SREDNYE SADOVNIKI, MOSCOW



The interior of the church from the west and the iconostasis.

The refectory, consisting of two chapels of the late 19th century and built in Russian style, is on the west of the square area (chetverik) of the church. The refectory's corners of the outside surface, are formed with pilasters and the windows have frames crowned by kokoshniks (a semicircular multi-lobed decorative element resembling a boat keel). The tympana of the triangular pediments are adorned with a series of toxillions and with medallions (tondos) with figures of saints in a bust. The decoration is complemented by a series of teeth in the type of classicism.

The church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) in Srednye Sadovniki is a shining example of Muscovite architecture, in the style of the "late uzorotsie, Muscovite baroque". The Muscovite baroque, also referred to as Moscow baroque or Naryshkin baroque is the architectural style formed in the 17th century in the Russian state, characterized by composite shapes, plethora of decorative elements, and complex composition). In the "chetverik" of the church, five domes rise above the successive "kokoshniks". In the second row, the kokoshniks are placed diagonally in the corners. The domes are adorned with a pseudo-arched array. In the upper part there is a large tier, consisting of a series of decorative elements "begunok" ("runner", decorative masonry with triangular small recesses) and "porebrik" ("brick cogging", decorative masonry, in which some bricks are set at an angle to the surface of the wall).

Originally the church had a refectory with a chapel and a pyramidal bell tower, which were all built during the same period, and as to its composition and decoration it had many similarities with the church of Saint Symeon the Stylite on Povarskaya Street (1676-1679). Impressive are the window frames of the second row in the "chetverik", of which the "kokoshniks" are made of decorative bricks and resemble arrays of necklaces. A



Part of the ceramic plastic decoration on the outer walls of the church.

similar detail has been used in the shaping of the tympana of the “kokoshniks”. This impressive decorative style is a characteristic for the later monuments of Moscow’s baroque, such as the church of the Holy Trinity in Ostankino (1677-1683). Some of the tympana of the “kokoshniks” of the Hagia Sophia church are adorned with ceramic tiles in the shape of birds, which is also a common element of the facades of the Muscovite churches of this particular period. We can mention as an example the churches of Saint Nicholas in Khramovniki (1679-1682) and Saint Martyr Nikitas on the opposite bank of the Yauza River (early 1680s) ⁴.

In 1722 the chapel of Saint Andrew the First-called Apostle was consecrated and in 1757, on the left side of the sanctuary, the chapel of Saint Demetrius of Rostov, which was later abolished.

The Hagia Sophia church has been repeatedly restored. During the repair in 1857, the “chetverik” was installed in a new iconostasis. During the time of the parish priest Alexander Nechayev in 1862-1868, based on the designs by N. I. Kozłowski, an independent structure was built, the tall pyramidal bell tower in Russian-Byzantine style, located on the river side, reminiscent of the Kremlin towers. On the second floor of the bell tower, in 1868, the church was consecrated in honor of the icon of the Theotokos “In search of the lost ones,” that was built with money provided by the churchwarden S. G. Kotov. In the new church, an iconostasis of white marble was installed financed by the merchant P. I. Kharitonenko.

In 1891, with a design by B. I. Verigin, the old one was demolished and the new refectory was built in Russian style and at the same time the chapel dedicated to Saint Andrew the First-called was consecrated, and later, in 1893, the chapel of Saint Nicholas. It is known that a series of repair and restoration works were carried out in the church of Hagia Sophia after the flood of April 1908, when the water level inside the church had reached one meter.

4. Баранова, 2012: 53, 68-69.



Fresco with the theme of God's Wisdom.

In 1924, the parish priest Alexander Andreev (1901-1937) was appointed rector of the church. He gathered the people in his parish and offered meals to the poor. He created a prominent library and relocated to the Hagia Sophia church, the iconostasis from the church of the Nativity of the Theotokos in Staroye Simonovo, which was not functioning. During his duty, in February 1925 and shortly before his death, patriarch Tikhon celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Hagia Sophia church. Father Alexander invited the preservers Ivan and Vassily Baranov to renovate the damaged church frescoes, as well as the hagiographer B. A. Komarovskiy (1883-1937), one of the founding members of the “Russian icon” association. In 1928-1929, the artist painted the composition “In you, O Lady full of grace, rejoices all creation” on the dome of the church of Hagia Sophia and the composition “The Holy Wisdom of God” on the right surface of the vault.

In 1929, Father Alexander was arrested, and his exiles along with imprisonments began (in 2000 he was canonized as a new-martyr). In 1932, the church was permanently closed. The honored copy of Our Lady of Vladimir was relocated to the State Tretyakov Gallery from the lower zone of the small iconostasis, made by the hand of “the priest and hagiographer John, son of Michael” — the inscription was on the wrought coating of 1805. After the closure of the church, it was under the jurisdiction of the Union of Atheists and

RUSSIA



The Theotokos Vrefokratousa surrounded by angels.

part of its premises were later converted into residences. In 1960, by decision of the council of ministers of the soviet republic, the church and its bell tower were put on guard as architectural monuments. In 1972, a study of the painting was conducted and in 1974, restoration works began. By 1990, the five domes were restored, the original window frames and the ceramic plastic decoration were revealed. The restoration of the bell tower, which had begun in the Soviet era, also continues.

In 1992, by order of the government of Moscow, the church of Hagia Sophia was returned to the Russian Orthodox Church. In December 1994, divine services started to take place in the Gate church “In search of the lost ones.” The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated inside the church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) on Easter (April 11, 2004). The hagiography on the vaults of the Hagia Sophia church, made by the B. A. Komarovskiy, according to the traditions of the old Russian fresco painting, during the early 2000s were cleared of whitewashes.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN SREDNYE SADOVNIKI, MOSCOW

The Hagia Sophia church is considered to be a unique monument of Russian ecclesiastical art of the 20th century. In 2017, a series of maintenance and restoration works of the lost iconography were carried out. The maintenance was done based on the designs of B. A. Komarovskiy, which have survived and photographic material of the 1930s.

Today, a new iconostasis adorns the east wall of the nave (main aisle) of the church, where individual sculptures of the 18th century have been used for its decoration. There are also some old icons in the church, including: the “Resurrection of the Lord” according to the iconographic type of “Christ’s Descent into Hades,” the “Virgin Mary of Kazan,” the “Dormition of the Theotokos,” the icon of the Theotokos “Axion Estin,” of Athonite art, and other objects of awe or veneration.

Dr. Natalia Merzlioutina

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Tobolsk. Hagia Sophia. The church from the northwest.

RUSSIA

Hagia Sophia in Tobolsk



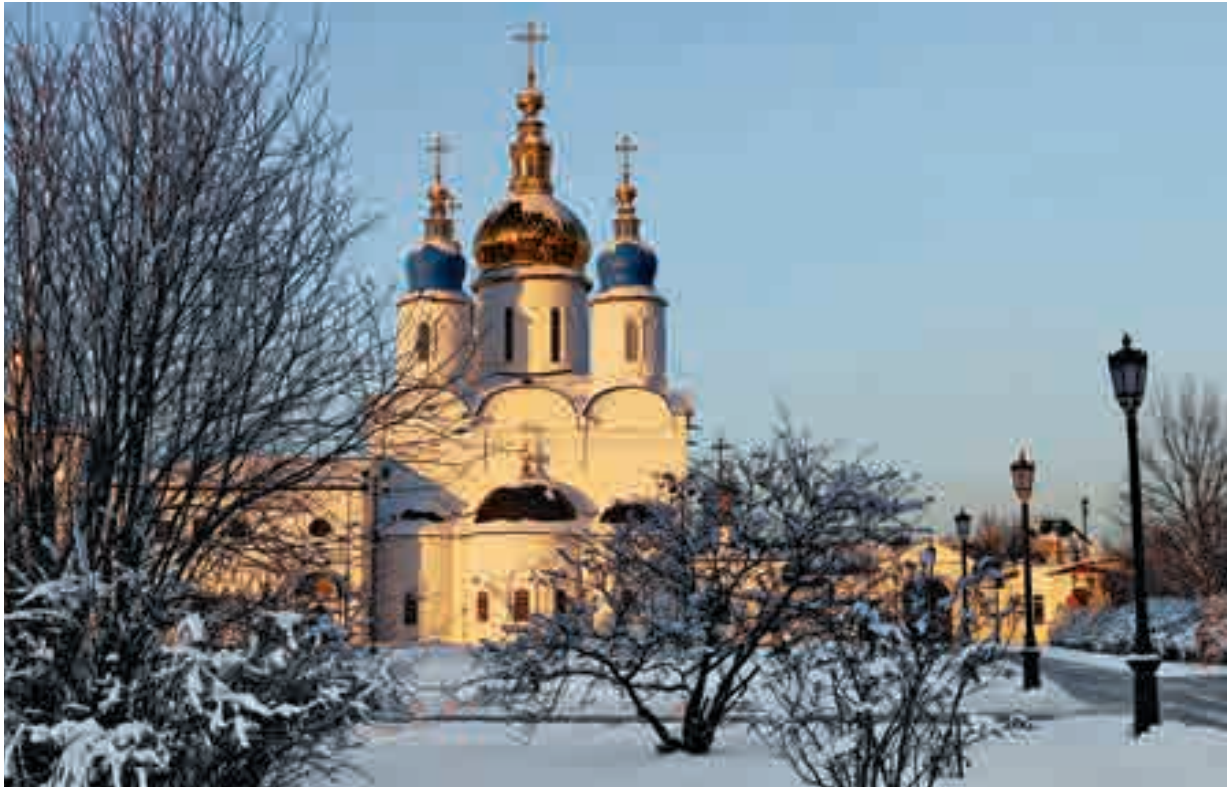
The church of Hagia Sophia in Tobolsk is the first church built in Siberia. Its stern outline hovers over the city and the low riverbanks of the Irtysh River, as it is located on a high promontory. Throughout its century-old history, the Hagia Sophia church in Tobolsk, although underwent numerous repairs, remains the same building that was consecrated more than three hundred years ago.

In 1582, Yermak's army raided the capital of the Khanate of Sibir, 17 km from which Tobolsk was founded in 1587. It was the first settlement in Siberia, which developed into a city, a center of power and visibility of the region¹.

Initially, the new regions of the kingdom of Moscow were part of the vast province of Vologda and of the Great Perm. However, the Siberian territories were not subject for a long time to the Vologda region. The province of Siberia was founded in 1620, which gradually expanded to the Pacific Ocean. The first archbishop was Cyprian (Starorusenkov) who until then was archimandrite of the Khutyn monastery (of the Transfiguration of the Savior) in Novgorod. His priority was the erection

1. Кочедамов 1977. Кириллов 1984.

RUSSIA



The church from the east.

of the metropolitan church. Initially, a wooden house was used as a church of Hagia Sophia, which was founded with the blessing of Makarios, Archbishop of Vologda. Cyprian maintained the dedication to Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) for the metropolis of his province, although the document from Moscow stipulated that it be dedicated to the Ascension of Christ². In this way, the Hagia Sophia church of Tobolsk became the direct successor to the churches of the Hagia Sophia of Veliky Novgorod and of Vologda.

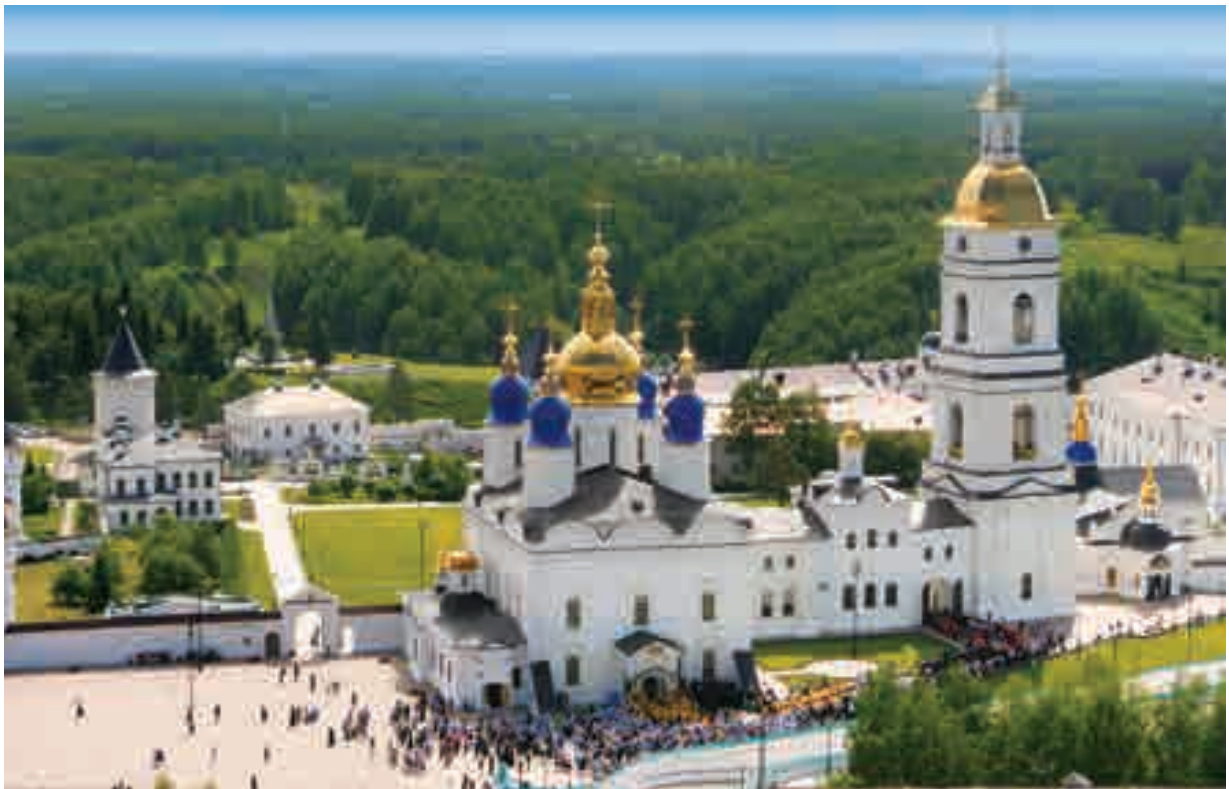
From descriptions of the first built church of Hagia Sophia, of the years 1621-1622, we know that it had five domes, one in the center and one in the four corners. The central dome rose on an octagonal tympanum, that had “zakomars”. The tall “chetverik” of the church was adorned with three semi-cylindrical “zakomars” on each side. The church burned down in 1643.

The second church of Hagia Sophia was built in 1646-1648 in a new location. It is known that it had thirteen domes and may have been symbolically reminiscent of the Hagia Sophia church in Novgorod³. The church is reconstructed as a composite version of the very rare church with nine domes circumferentially located in the “chetverik”. On the other hand, in the center of the roof, instead of a dome, the church had another, quite tall “chetverik” with five domes, one of which was the central one and rose on a small pyramidal structure. The walls of both “chetverik” ended in triangular pointed pediments and not

2. Тобольский архиерейский дом 1994.

3. Баландин 1986.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN TOBOLSK



The Kremlin of Tobolsk and the Hagia Sophia church from the west.

“zakomars”, as in the previous church. In this way, the second church was unique in its composition⁴. This church building was also destroyed by a fire in 1677.

The third Hagia Sophia church in Tobolsk, which still exists today, was built in 1683-1686. The supply of clay plinths for its erection began during the reign of metropolitan Cornelius, who died in 1677. His successor, metropolitan Paul, who was previously archimandrite at the Chudov (Miracle) monastery in the Moscow Kremlin, asked Tsar Fyodor Alekseyevich to send him iron and craftsmen from Moscow and Ustyug. Following a tsarist decree of 1680, the cathedral of the Ascension monastery in the Moscow Kremlin, which was the cemetery of the great Russian princesses and tsarinas, was set as a model for the Tobolsk cathedral. On July 3, 1681, the foundations were laid and on April 22, 1682 the reconstruction began under the supervision of craftsmen from Moscow. On June 27, 1684, when the building had already reached the height of the central dome, the vaults collapsed. During their restoration, the columns had to be enlarged and instead of zakomars,⁵ the church acquired a roof with four sloping surfaces. At that time a pyramidal bell tower was built. On October 27, 1686, the church was consecrated and dedicated to the Assumption (Dormition) of the Theotokos, but, according to tradition, as in Novgorod, it was still called Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom).

4. Майничева 2000.

5. Копылова 1979. Козлова-Афанасьева 2008.

RUSSIA



The frames of the windows, of the door and of the lintel shrine on the south side of the church.

The Hagia Sophia church in Tobolsk as a whole, is a cathedral. A distinctive church building of the second half of the 17th century. However, it had some peculiarities which are unique. It is one of the largest four-columned churches of the time. It has external dimensions 23X36 m and an elongated plan view. Considering the type of church (four-columned), the specific proportions mean that there was a long distance between the columns. The iconostasis is located in front of the eastern pair of columns causing only the two western columns in the nave to be visible. This particular variant of the four-columned church was particularly characteristic of the Russian north.

The location of the western columns in Tobolsk's Hagia Sophia church is unusual. The columns have moved very much towards the east creating an open space full of light at the front area. This peculiarity is also evident on the outside: the westward curtain walls of the church's side outer walls are much wider than the central ones, as well as in relation to the eastern ones. Due to the movement, the columns are located on the axis of the western windows of the central arches, reducing the beam of light entering through them. In the present case, this does not create a problem of lighting the space in front of the iconostasis, there are also two windows in the central curtain walls.

The extremely wide western curtain wall indicates another rare peculiarity of the church: to create a symmetrical composition with five domes, the ones on the west have been moved far to the east. This led

HAGIA SOPHIA IN TOBOLSK

to the creation of a more complex system of vaults. But why was it so important for the Hagia Sophia's builders to widen the western part of the church, even if they sacrificed the lighting from the western domes? The reasons that led to the above solutions can be conjectured that it was the desire to intensify the resemblance of the church to the most famous church buildings that had six columns inside, whose domes were never placed above the outer western curtain wall of the side walls, and to repeat one of the most recognizable elements of the model shown to them by the tsar himself, which was the church of the Ascension in the Moscow Kremlin⁶.

In the 1690s, the southern chapel of the Apostles Peter and Paul was built in the church, which existed until 1769. In 1704, on the northern side of the church, the chapel of Saints Anthony and Theodosius Pechersky was built for the winter months, which was destroyed in 1743. Dedicated to Saint John Chrysostom was a new church built in its place, in 1751, that later underwent many refits.

The original frescoes of the Hagia Sophia church, which were probably painted in the early 18th century, were covered with oil paintings in the mid-19th century. In 1720, the construction of a huge iconostasis was completed and this was replaced in 1862.

In the first half of the 18th century, the shape of the domes changed and were transformed from onion-shaped to pear-shaped, according to the "Ukrainian" architecture. In 1733, the new roof and domes were burned and restored in 1735. Fifty years later, major modification works had to be carried out to support the walls of the church.

In 1785, the governorate architect Alexander Gutchev designed a new bell tower in a classicist style. It was founded in 1791 and the following year collapsed during the construction. It was replaced in 1792-1797 by another in designs by Fyodor Utkin.



The church from the east.

6. Масиель Санчес 2017.



Part of the iconographic program on the dome and on the intrados of the arches.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Hagia Sophia church in Tobolsk did not undergo any major changes. After the Soviet revolution, the church was still functioning and closed in November 1930. Restoration works were carried out in 1956-1966 and in 1985-1987, when its facades again acquired “zakomars”. The church belongs to the Russian Orthodox Church since 1988. The restoration works of the church revealed fragments from the original painting of the early 18th century. In 2010-2011, the church was wall-painted anew under the supervision of Ilya Silaev.

Dr. Lev Massiel Sanchez

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HAGIA SOPHIA IN TOBOLSK



The monumental iconostasis of the church from the southwest.

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Saint Petersburg. Hagia Sophia in Tsarskoye Selo. The west side of the church.

RUSSIA

Hagia Sophia in Tsarskoye Selo



The cathedral of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) was founded on July 30, 1782 by order of Empress Catherine II in the town of Sophia, which was built in 1779 and later incorporated in Tsarskoye Selo. A church-monument dedicated to Russia's victories in the russo-turkish wars was to be built, reminiscent of the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople. The precursor church of Hagia Sophia was the wooden church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

The church was built according to the design of Charles Cameron with the participation of I. E. Starov. The church was dedicated to the Ascension of the Lord and was consecrated on May 20/31, 1788 by Metropolitan Gabriel (Petrov) of Novgorod and Saint Petersburg, in the presence of Catherine II and members of the imperial family¹.

The Hagia Sophia church in Tsarskoye Selo is one of the first buildings in the style of Russian classicism. It is an inscribed cross domed church type. The sides of the church are adorned with Doric porticoes, while its basic block volume is crowned with five domes placed on low cylindrical tympana. It has rectangular window openings and narrow aisles roofed with arches. The square-shaped

1. Историко-статистические 1884: 358.



Part of the church and the bell tower.

church with the low domes partially resembles the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

The interiors of the church had an austere decoration. Its walls were painted in light colors, only the windows had gilded frames. The interior of the church was divided by eight pillars and eight columns of polished granite, which were crowned with gilded Ionic capitals.

A large silver candle chandelier was hanging in the nave, and two massive silver candlesticks were placed at the aisles². Chandeliers, smaller in size, were made by craftsman Boug. The liturgical utensils for the church were made in 1787-1788 by F. Segan and G. N. Lund, and the oil lamps by P. Azi. In 1812, due to the war, the valuable objects were relocated to the church of the Resurrection in the Catherine II palace and then to the church of Saint Catherine in Tsarskoye Selo.

In 1848, during the general repairs of the church, heirlooms were revealed—a marble reliquary with a sacred relic, a silver gilded metal plate that was placed in the foundations of the church in 1782, a hammer and a trowel with the emblem of Catherine II and the inscription in English “Charles Cameron, architect”. Today they are located in a large silver showcase in front of the sanctuary, near the old flags of the constitutions³.

In 1849-1850, the new central iconostasis of the Hagia Sophia church was built based on the design by I. N. Chernik, and the designs of the side iconostases were prepared by P. Yegorov⁴. In 1850, the chapel of saint prince Alexander Nevsky was built at the southern part of the church. During the same period, the northern chapel of Saint Catherine, which existed since 1804, was consecrated anew in honor of Saints Constantine and Helen. The same happened in 1905 after another repair⁵.

The church of Hagia Sophia was originally sub-

2. Вильчковский 1911: 231-232.

3. Ibid.: 232.

4. Хайкина 1987: 18.

5. Цитович 1913: 77.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN TSARSKOYE SELO



The interior of the church from the north.

ordinate to the service of the ecclesiastical provinces, however on September 9/21, 1817, all its property was shifted to the Military service and became the church of the regiment of the Hussars of the Tsarist garrison⁶. Until 1845 it was also the church of the Order of Saint Prince Vladimir. In 1850 the southern chapel was ceded to the standard infantry regiment, then to the 1st and 2nd battalion of riflemen of the Tsarist garrison, while the northern chapel from 1832 to 1899 belonged to the cuirassiers regiment⁷.

The icon “Annunciation of the Theotokos” which was created in 1788 by P. Sokolov was located in the central area of the church’s sanctuary. The icon “The Epiphany on Mount Sinai” was in the northern chapel, since 1833, and in 1898, an icon with the theme of the Resurrection was placed in the southern chapel.

The pillars and the church’s walls, in the 1790s, were adorned with large paintings with evangelical themes, created by well-known painters. In the northern aisle, inside a shrine was the icon of Saint Paul

6. Ibid.: 77.

7. Историко-статистические 1884: 358.



The interior of the church from the west. The dome and the iconostasis decorated with gold in the background stand out.

the Confessor in a silver gilded cover donated in 1836 by the officers of the Hussar regiment. Another icon of saint prince Alexander Nevsky was placed in a white marble shrine offered by officers in honor of their patron, emperor Alexander II.

The flags and insignia that General M. G. Chernyayev had collected from the battle of Chimgent (Shymkent) in 1864, were at the west side of the church. At this place, there was also a marble plaque with the names of the officers of the Tsarist battalion of Hussars who fell in the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1771⁸. In 1903, tsar Nicholas II donated a cross to the church along with church utensils that were exact copies of those donated by Catherine II.

The church did not have its own bell tower. In 1900, thanks to donations from officers of the Hussar regiment, 10 bronze bells were made for the church at the Ushachiov factory in the Valday region, the largest of which weighed 5.6 tons. In 1903-1904, with money provided by Nicholas II the bell tower was erected as a separate structure (on designs by L. N. Benois), having a small chapel dedicated to Saint Seraphim of Sarov on the first floor.

In 1918, Hagia Sophia was converted into a parish church. In 1922, church valuables were removed from the church building, and on November 6, 1933, the executive committee of the suburbs of Leningrad decided the closure of the church. The icons that were in the church were relocated to the Russian Museum and the church building was ceded to the 32nd motorized brigade, which used it as a warehouse.

During the Great Patriotic War (World War II) the church suffered some damage. Then a warehouse was housed here again, in which they lit an open fire to destroy the production waste⁹. The southwestern part of the square of Hagia Sophia has been occupied by the cooperative garage № 4

8. Вильчковский 1911: 231-232.

9. Царскосельская газета 1994: 25 января.

since 1960.

In November 1988, Metropolitan Alexy (Rediger) of Leningrad and Novgorod appealed to the Pushkin Executive committee with a request to approve the petition of the faithful for the registration of an Orthodox community and the concession of the Hagia Sophia church. After the positive outcome of the request, on June 8, 1989, the feast of the Ascension, when the church celebrated its feast day, the senior priest Gennady Zverev celebrated the first Divine Liturgy. On the same day, the northern chapel of Saints Constantine and Helen was consecrated and in July 1990, the southern one, that of saint prince Alexander Nevsky, and in April 1991, the bell tower was restored.

On March 20, 1995, the Hagia Sophia church was included in the list of architectural monuments of the Russian Federation. In May 1998, the “Vyatka handicraft industries” built and installed the new iconostases that are copies of the pre-revolutionary ones. In the church, there are icons of the 18th-early 20th century, deriving from individual collections and museum collections, as well as icons made from the late 20th century in the old Russian style¹⁰.

Mosaics and enamel icons were decorated the walls of the church in 1999-2009. Bronze statues of princes Alexander Nevsky and Igor Chernigovsky, works of sculptor A. Avetisyan, were installed on both sides of the main entrance in 2013.

Dr. Mikhail Skarovsky

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10. Мещанинов 2000: 39-40.



Veliky Novgorod. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southeast.

RUSSIA

Hagia Sophia in Veliky Novgorod



The Hagia Sophia church in Novgorod was built in 1045-1050 “by order of Prince Yaroslav, Volodymyr’s son and Bishop Luke”¹. The master builders probably came from Kiev. The precursor of the stone church was a wooden one “with thirteen domes”, founded by Joachim of Kherson, the first bishop of Novgorod, shortly after the Christianization of the city’s inhabitants. To date, the location of the church has not been determined.

The holy altar of the stone church was consecrated in 1052—we assume on September 13/26. Under the current sanctuary, at the central holy altar, the brick colonnades of the older sanctuary are preserved that bear decorative themes of the early 13th century².

Initially the walls of the church were not plastered. The masonry made of large limestones and a few rows of plinths, which mainly adorn the arches of the windows and doors, precluded the addition of other decorations. The surface of the church

1. ПСРЛ III: 181.

2. Штендер 1968.



Bronze gate from Magdeburg, with scenes from the Old and New Testaments (1153-1154).

walls provides some perspective with its original view on the eastern side and the interiors. The church was first plastered in 1156.

The Hagia Sophia church belongs to the cross domed church type. The interior is divided into five elongated aisles by strong pillars that support the vaults and the loft, from where the princely family watched the divine liturgy. Pilasters correspond to all the internal and external walls on these supports. The central core of the church is surrounded by the three sides, except of the eastern one, by wide two-story stoa, which were originally intended to be open. However, this idea changed in the course of construction or soon after its completion. Only three chapels were built—that of Saint John the Theologian, the Nativity of the Theotokos and of the Beheading of the Forerunner John—and the stoa were converted into closed side “sections” of the church. The fourth chapel was not built in the southwestern part of the church, possibly to expand the courtyard to the south, which soon became a burial place of princes and bishops.

The core of the church building is crowned by five domes of monumental dimensions. In 1408, the vault of the central dome was gilded. There is an impressive dome due to its size located to the southwest, above the tower of the staircase that leads to the princely loft. Because of this particular dome, the composition of the domes that crown the church gained a graphic asymmetry. The external walls of the building end in semicircular “zakomars” or in pointed pediments, which consist a feature of the church’s structure³.

The main (western) entrance of the church closes with an old bronze door. It was built in Magdeburg in the mid-12th century by German craftsmen. It is adorned with themes from the Old and New Testaments, scenes from nature and with historical figures⁴. From the stone decoration of the

3. Комеч 1976. Комеч 1987: 205-206, 233-254. Штендер 1977. Штендер 1995.

4. Царевская 2001.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN VELIKY NOVGOROD



Portable icon with the theme of God's Wisdom (15th c.).

Fresco of the apostle Peter, detail (12th c.).

western facade, a huge relief white cross, of the 14th century, is preserved, which was originally placed in a niche, to the right of the main entrance of the church, by order of Archbishop Alexios⁵. There is a chapel in the southwest corner of the church, dated 1411, dedicated to the martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus. The chapel has undergone numerous refits that have altered its original form. In 1528, on the west side, a monumental fresco was depicted with the representations of the Holy Trinity, of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) and of the Not-Made-By-Hands (Αχειροποίητος). The morphological austerity of the church walls was abolished during the 17th century. The lintels of the main entrances gain a numerous superimposed succession of arches and plastic decoration, and above each door respectively, a large window with a relief frame was opened.

Until the 12th century, the church actually did not bear frescoes. The mosaic lining of the synthronon and the bishop's throne stand out in the sanctuary, as well as the enameled decorative motifs on the floor slabs. As we assume, this decoration is placed in the beginning of the 12th century, two mosaic plates are preserved on the walls of the sanctuary (the remaining ones were restored with the use of ancient enamels in the late 19th century), as well as fragments from the floor slabs of limestone, adorned with strips and palmettes⁶.

One of the few compositions of painting, which probably dates back to the 11th century, is the representation of Saints Constantine and Helen – preserved in (archbishop) Martyrius' southern courtyard.

5. Николаева 1984.

6. Штендер 1968.

In 1108/1109, the craftsmen who treated the frescoes of the Hagia Sophia church artistically arrived in Novgorod, by order of Bishop Nikitas⁷. Among their preserved work include the monumental representations of the prophets on the tympanum of the central dome and of the four standing upright saints between the windows of the sanctuary, of the prothesis and of the diakonikon. The representation of Christ the Pantocrator parapet, which adorned the dome and dates to the same era, was destroyed in 1941 during the bombing of the city by the Nazis. A small part of the old frescoes is preserved in (archbishop) Martyrius' courtyard, on the northern wall: scenes from the life of an unknown saint, the scene of Baptism and the Deisis ("Entreaty"), a project of the year 1144⁸. Two figures of hierarchs are saved, who wear multi-cross phelonia and pray before Christ. In the past, these figures used to be in a small square niche, which is now empty (they are dated to the year of 1466).

At the end of the 19th century the church of Hagia Sophia in Novgorod was illustrated by hagiographers from Vladimir with frescoes that still adorn the church walls. The director of the works was N. M. Sofonov from Mstiora, who belonged to a family of hagiographers of many generations. The frescoes have been painted with the "Keima" technique (using liquid glass) in a "pseudo-byzantine" style, that consist of a mixture of byzantine iconography, academic painting style and standard old decorative motifs.

In addition to the frescoes, there are numerous important inscriptions preserved on the church's walls of the 11th and 12th century, engraved on the original plastered spalled bricks or on the surface of old fresco-ensembles.

There are two iconostases located inside the church. The "large one," that of the Dormition of the Theotokos consists of five zones and is adorned with icons of the 15th-18th century. The depiction of the church of Hagia Sophia was treated artistically during the last decades of the 15th century⁹. The "small" iconostasis, located in the chapel dedicated to the Nativity of the Theotokos consists of four zones, dating back to the 16th century and, according to tradition, bears the "seal" of Archbishop Makarios.

Three portable icons in the church are venerated separately. The most important one is the miraculous icon of the "Virgin Mary in prayer with extended arms" (Orant), of the first half of the 12th century. One of the most famous objects of awe or veneration of the Russian land. This small double-faced icon is highly revered. Thanks to its miracle the inhabitants of Novgorod defeated the inhabitants of Suzdal in 1169; it has since been considered the patron saint of Novgorod¹⁰. The second venerated icon is located in the "small" iconostasis, to the left of the holy doors (beautiful gate). This is the "Virgin of Tikhvin", of the 16th century, an early copy of the famous miraculous icon located in the monastery of Tikhvin. The third icon depicts Christ enthroned and dates back to 1362. The inscription at the base of the throne, written in old elegant gold ornate script, states that the icon was made at the request of the Archbishop of Novgorod.

In the church of Hagia Sophia, works of applied and decorative art are also preserved. Among them, we mention the bronze door of byzantine art from Kherson (Chersonesos, Korsun), which was transferred to the church immediately after its completion. In the 16th century, two richly decorated thrones were added to the interior of the church, the bishop's throne of Archbishop Shepherd (1560) and the throne of Tsar Ivan IV the Terrible (1572). These were constructed by craftsmen from Novgorod Ivan Belozhets, Eutropi Stefanov and Isak Yakovlev, whose names are mentioned in the engraved inscription preserved

7. ПСРЛ III: 203.

8. Лазарев 1968. Лифшиц 1994.

9. Филатов 1974. Гордиенко 1984.

10. Смирнова 1995.

on one of the sides of the bishop's throne¹¹. In 1600, the decoration of the church was completed by a huge "multi-story" bronze chandelier, of Western European art.

The holy sites of the Hagia Sophia church include the old cemetery with the graves of the owner of the church, of Saint Vladimir Yaroslavich, the venerated saints of Novgorod and all Russia — of Nikitas († 1108), of John († 1186), of Gregory († 1192) — and of Princes Mstislav "the Brave" († 1180) and Theodore († 1232), brother of Alexander Nevsky¹².

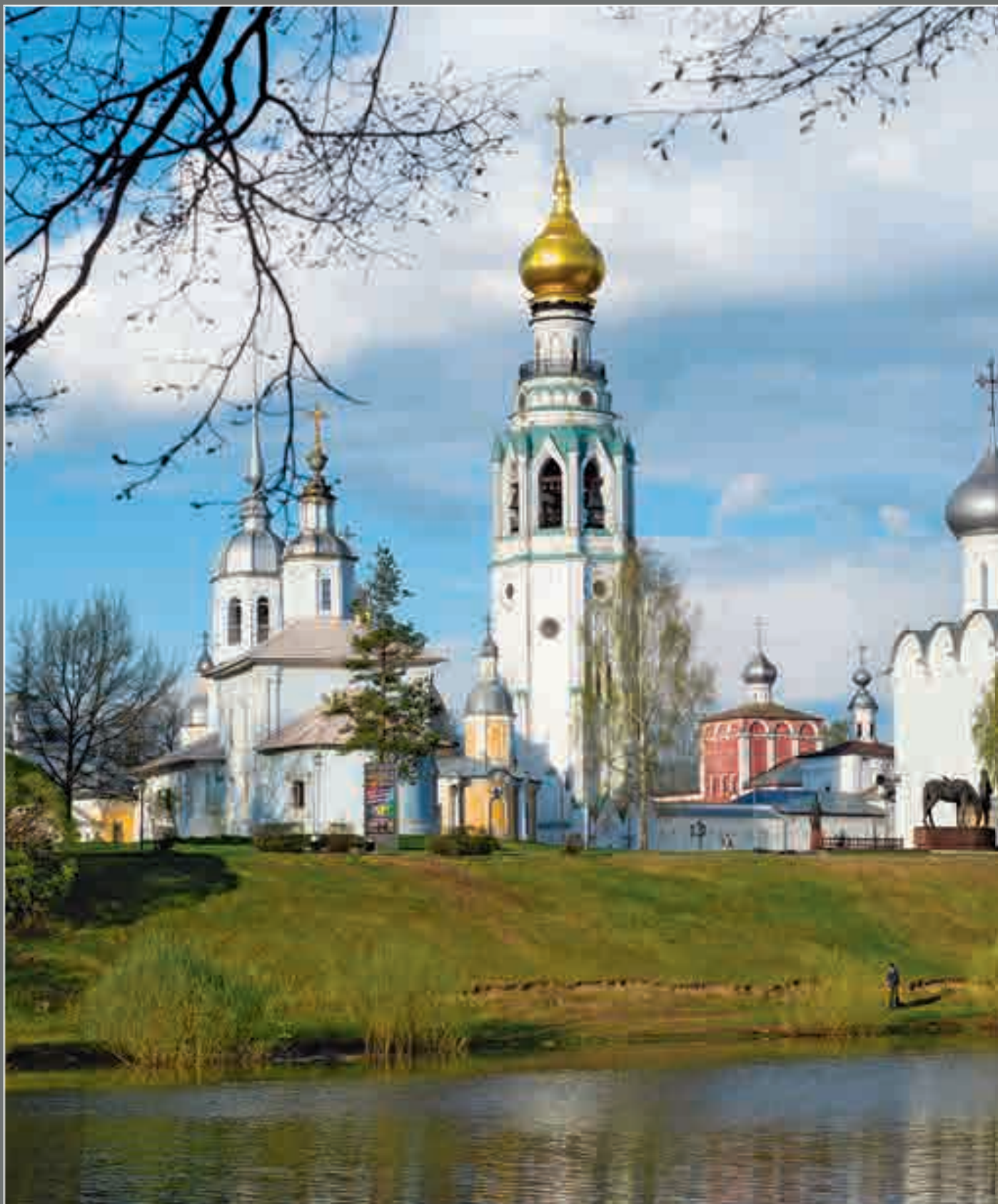
Dr. Tatiana Tsarevskaya

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11. Трифопова 2010.

12. Янин 1988.



Vologda. Hagia Sophia. The building complex of the church from the southeast.

Hagia Sophia in Vologda

The Hagia Sophia church is the oldest stone church in the city, built in 1568-1570 by order of Ivan the Terrible. It is located on the riverbank and plays a dominant role in the architectural ensemble of the historic part of the city. The church was founded inside a large stone castle, whose construction began in 1566. The Vologda chronicle gives us the following testimony: “The great Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich ordered the construction of the metropolis dedicated to the Dormition of the Theotokos, in the city near the high priest’s house and to be completed in two years; at the end of each day to be covered in tree bark and other materials and that is why the metropolis became durable and does not show clefts”¹. In September 1571, the Tsar hastily left Vologda without carrying out his grandiose urban plans that had to do with the relocation of the Russian capital to this large commercial and industrial center.

1. ИСРП/И 1882: 196.





The church from the southeast. Early 20th century photo.

The date of the consecration of the Hagia Sophia church in Vologda is not known. In the past, it was believed based on the Letopisech chronicle of 1716, that it remained unconsecrated for a long time and that the chapel of the Beheading of the Forerunner John was consecrated in 1587. It has been proven that the church of Hagia Sophia was already functioning during the days of Archbishop Makarios, in 1571–1576². In addition to the previously mentioned chapel (stopped functioning in 1848-1851), during the reign of Tsar Fyodor Ioannovich, the construction of the southern chapel of Saint Theodore Stratelates “the General” took place in the church (stopped functioning in 1701).

One of the tragic pages in the history of Vologda is the destruction during the Time of Troubles. “Polish, Lithuanians, Cherkasians, Cossacks and Russian robbers,” attacked, looted and burned the city on September 22, 1612. Among the churches that suffered great damage, was the Hagia Sophia church. The roof, domes and their crosses, including the interior decoration and sacred utensils were destroyed. The antimention dated April 9, 1612 is preserved, where the new sanctification of the church “in the name of the Holy Wisdom of God by his grace Sylvester, bishop of Vologda and Oreshek” is also discussed³.

2. Соколова – Камкина 2018.

3. Чекалова 2018: 270-273.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN VOLOGDA



The building complex of the church from the northwest.

The Hagia Sophia church in Vologda stands out among the 16th century churches thanks to its monumental shape. The church has a rectangular plan view, six columns, five domes and cruciform vaults. Arched gates with a succession of arches lead the way to the church from the three sides. In front of the western entrance there is a large vaulted covered portico. The pilasters-lesenia (strips) on the facades end in imposts and the apses are separated by half-columns. Large onion-shaped vaults rise on the tympana of the domes with the small openings. Lacy cast crosses that are mounted on the top of these vaults were constructed by craftsmen from Moscow in 1686-1688.

The model for the construction of the Hagia Sophia church in Vologda is considered to be the church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Moscow. However, despite the general similarity of the basic architectural elements, the church in Vologda is very different from the Moscow's church in terms of volume and its plastic details: "The form of Hagia Sophia in Vologda with its extremely simple decoration is closer to the monuments of Novgorod than that of Moscow's"⁴.

The church building, from the construction and until its destruction in 1612, probably, had a wood-

4. Рыбаков 1980: 16. Баниге – Перцев 1970: 10-12.



South wall. Scenes with themes from the New Testament, work of the artistic workshop of Dmitry Plekhanov (1686-1688).

en roof over the “zakomars” (the domes acquired the shape of an onion in 1624). During the 17th-18th centuries, the shape and number of windows changed, stone narthexes were built, the roof was converted into a hipped roof, the frescoes of monumental dimensions were renovated. The great fires that took place in the city also contributed to this, e.g., in 1636 and 1698, when the domes and the crosses were damaged. In 1724, a fire broke out inside the church building and as a result the northern part of the iconostasis had partially collapsed and the roof was completely burned.

The Hagia Sophia church continued to function until August 14, 1923, when it was closed and handed over to the Vologda Museum.

In 1959-1970, a large-scale architectural restoration was carried out in the church, designed by V. S. Banige, during which the stone chapels of the 19th century were dismantled and the covering with zakomars was restored. The building gained the appearance that generally corresponds to the form it had in the 17th century.

In 1962-1978, under the supervision of N. B. Perchev, maintenance of the frescoes and of the iconostasis took place. The surviving frescoes were treated artistically by artists from Yaroslavl in the days of archbishop Gabriel in 1686-1688. The Yaroslavl's style standards belong to the workshop leader of thirty craftsmen, Dmitry Grigoryevich Plekhanov. This is the artist's last work which is an important link among his numerous works and consists a feature of his iconographic program⁵.

The “Judgment” composition is the largest fresco in Russia on the particular theme. It occupies about 400 m². The eschatological theme gained a new meaning in the composition of N. G. Plekhanov – it lost its gloomy didactic nature and is combined with the idea of human justification. Unusual is the iconography of the large composition “The Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia)” located on the north-

5. Макарова, 2018: 151-152.



Portable icon with the theme of God's Wisdom, work of painters Vasili Novgorodich and Zdan Dementiev (1618).

ern wall of the sanctuary. John the Forerunner and John the Theologian with royal crowns on their heads and wings attend the angel with a bright face who is sitting on the throne. Located at the top of the composition are the half-figures of Jesus Christ, the Lord Sabaoth and of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. The absence of the figure of the Panayia indicates the relation of the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) with the veneration of the Theotokos⁶.

The frescoes have been made in a characteristically mixed technique of the 17th century (a fresco on plaster which has not dried, was completed with tempera and colors with glue), as well as the organization of the works, when some craftsmen of different specialty worked successively on each composition. The frescoes of the church are taken as a single painting ensemble which is closely connected with the architecture.

The existing, third in a row iconostasis of the Hagia Sophia church in Vologda, was created in 1737-1744. From the previous iconostases, icons that are preserved, include the church's icon of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) painted in 1618 by Vasili Novgorodich and Zdan Dementiev⁷.

A model for the second iconostasis created during 1686-1695 by the woodcarvers Vlas and Artyushka Fyodorov was the iconostasis of the church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in the lavra of the Holy Trinity and of Saint Sergius. The icons were painted by hagiographers from Vologda⁸. The icon that gives a perspective on the painting of the specific ensemble is that of the "Last Supper - Maundy (Pedelavium or Washing of the Feet)" from the zone of the Dodekaorton (Twelve Feast Days), which is preserved only in fragments.

In 1737-1738, the construction of the new iconostasis consisting of five zones began in the style of early baroque. The wood carvings were undertaken by the monk of Polish origin Arseny Vorshevsky.

6. Бочаров, Выголов 1979: 29-33. Рыбаков 1980: 23.

7. Биланчук, Преображенский 2017:43.

8. Евдокимов 1916.



The church's iconostasis. Early 20th century photo.

Maxim Kalinin Iskritsky from Saint Petersburg, specialized in the western European baroque style, was invited for the icons. He created fifty-four icons in the style and technique of oil painting⁹.

In 1988, the festal divine liturgies in the Hagia Sophia church were resumed which were taking place during the summer season (these services are celebrated on a regular basis from 1997 onwards). In August 1992 and in June 2007, His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia officiated at the hierarchical services.

In 1999-2007, in order to normalize the micro climate in the church, the floor was heated and the stone western portico was converted into a closed hall with glass window. In 2003, during the architectural-archaeological works, a stone masonry, probably the foundation of the tsarist throne, was discovered next to the southeastern column. Also, on the northern wall of the prothesis (sanctuary), a niche was discovered that was intended for a grave. The funerary character of the church occupies an important place in the history of the monument, the beginning of which was established thanks to the translation of Bishop Cyprian's relic from the former metropolis (mid-16th century). Along the southern and northern walls are the graves of the Vologda high priests. Funerary monuments and icons were placed on the brick tombs. Most of the icons were located above Bishop Anthony's (†1588) grave, a local saint whose relic is now in the metropolis of the Resurrection¹⁰.

Yelena Vinogradova

9. Комашко 2006: 21.

10. Суворов 1863: 33. Виноградова 2010: 649. *История православных храмов* 2014.

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Ainos. Hagia Sophia. The monument from the southwest.

TURKEY

Hagia Sophia in Ainos



Ainos (or Enez) in the province of Adrianopolis (Edirne) of Eastern Thrace is an area that flourished during the middle and late byzantine period, as seen through the archaeological remnants and the study of the churches at that place.¹

The Hagia Sophia church, better known as Fatih Camii, was one of the most remarkable byzantine monuments of Thrace and is associated with the architectural tradition of Constantinople. It is located in the southeastern corner of the castle of Ainos and was probably rebuilt as a cathedral. The information on the church being dedicated to Christ, the Wisdom of God, is considered arbitrary and is somehow not documented. The local tradition mentions that the church bore the name of Saint Constantine, but, according to the scholars of the monument, it is most likely that it was dedicated to the Theotokos (the Virgin Mary).²

The monument was converted into a mosque in 1456 and functioned as such until 1965, when a strong earthquake caused its collapse. Between 1979 and 1982, parts of the western walls (of the

1. Papazotos 1992-1994: sporadically. Mamaloukos 2002. Ousterhout – Bakirtzis 2007: 17-48. Ćurčić 2010: 400. Konch 2014: 307.

2. Ousterhout 1985: 261-262. Papazotos 1992-1994: 98-99. Ousterhout – Bakirtzis 2007: 30-31.



The monument from the west and the castle of Ainos.

esonarthex and of the exonarthex) collapsed. Around 1990, some actions were taken to repair the western facade of the church. Many years later, on the initiative of the University of Constantinople, its interior space was cleansed.³ Restoration works of the monument began in 2016, in order to function again as a mosque.

Typologically, the church belongs to the category of the inscribed cross domed type. However, it is somewhat peculiar and with large extensions (38 x 21 m., without the apses).⁴ It consists of a tripartite sanctuary, the nave, a contemporary two-story narthex and a two-story, also contemporary or years shortly afterwards, exonarthex.⁵ The central apse of the sanctuary and those of the pastophoria [the two compartments known as *prothesis* and *diakonikon*] are semicircular inside and polygonal outside. The cross inscribed inside the church is defined by walls, in which communication openings have been formed with the corner compartments. In fact, the openings at the arms of the cross on the west side are two-pointed. Its aisles were covered

3. Ousterhout 1985: 262. Ousterhout – Bakirtzis 2007: 23-24. Başaran – Başaran 2012: 91. Konch 2014: 307.

4. Stavros Mamaloukos mentions the dimensions 29.30 x 21 m. See Mamaloukos 2005-2006: 13.

5. Robert Ousterhout expresses the view that the exonarthex was from the beginning a ground floor and a wooden roof (Ousterhout 1985: 272), a view which Stavros Mamaloukos disagrees (Mamaloukos 2005-2006: 15).

HAGIA SOPHIA IN AINOS



The three-pointed opening on the exonarthex.

with semi-cylindrical arches, while the dome dominated at their junction. The narthex was also covered with a semi-cylindrical arch, but only in the middle, as the sides were covered with cross vaults.

Both the entrance to the narthex and the nave were made through three doors on the west side. The exonarthex consisted of a narrow single area of three meters wide. On its west side there was a three-pointed opening formed by two columns and on both sides two other openings, two-pointed with a column. There was an additional door on its north and south wall. Most likely, the exonarthex's roof and floor were wooden. The interior of the church was particularly bright, due to the number of single-lobed and three-lobed windows.⁶

The facades of the church were structured with curtain walls and its walls were built of alternating zones of stonework and brickwork, made with the Constantinopolitan technique of concealed plinth. There was a quite rich ceramic plastic decoration in the tympana of the curtain walls and in the upper parts of the niches of the sanctuary.⁷

6. Ousterhout 1985: 263. Mamaloukos 2002: 62. Mamaloukos 2005-2006: 13-14. Ousterhout – Bakirtzis 2007: 23 ff. Ćurčić 2010: 400. Başaran – Başaran 2012: 91 ff.

7. Ousterhout 1985: 263-265. Mamaloukos 2002: 62. Mamaloukos 2005-2006: 14-15. Ousterhout – Bakirtzis 2007: 26.



The masonry in one of the sanctuary's arches.

Studying the typological peculiarities of the monument extensively, R. Ousterhout placed it to the 12th century, a viewpoint that is embraced by the majority of scientists. He associates it with a group of churches of the same period, which are found mainly in Constantinople, such as e.g., with Saint Theodosia (Göl Camii), Panagia Kyriotissa (Kalendarhane Camii), the katholikon of the Monastery of Chora (Kariye Camii) and other churches.⁸ However, there is also the viewpoint that the structure was erected during the Palaiologan period.⁹

As for the remaining marble architectural members of the monument, it seems that everything is in second use. The byzantine marble quarries ceased to function after the 7th century, but in a region like Ainos there was certainly scattered building material for reuse from monuments of earlier times. Therefore, the Corinthian chapters in the interior of the church, for example, are creations of the 6th century, while the four cube-shaped chapters of the exonarthex, in the shape of an inverted truncated pyramid, also follow models of the 6th century, but were built much later, probably in the 9th or 10th century. The second use material are the portali, as ascertained by that of the southern entrance of the narthex, which consists of unmatched sections between them.¹⁰

The remains of the frescoes are preserved in the interior of the church, which were cleaned and published in the 1990s. The most important fragment is located on a lintel shrine, above the central entrance of the church. In the center, the figure of the Theotokos is depicted, as the clothes of the figure indicate; to her left a figure of a hierarch is depicted, who with his left hand holds a closed code, while extending the other hand to

8. Ousterhout 1985: 263 ff. Mamaloukos 2002: 62. Mamaloukos 2005-2006: 13-14, 16, where other researchers are mentioned. Ousterhout – Bakirtzis 2007: 23.

9. Ousterhout 1985: 261-262, including relevant bibliography. Konch 2014: 307.

10. Ousterhout, 1985: 276 ff. Ousterhout & Bakirtzis, 2007: 29.

the Panayia. This portrayal is the main element regarding the dedication of the church to the Mother of the Lord.

The stylistic observations that can be made in the preserved sections of the few depictions, are extremely limited and relate mainly to the art of drawing folds in clothing (πτυχολογία) and the colors. The frescoes were probably treated artistically during the early Palaiologan period.¹¹

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11. Tunay 1994: 522 ff. Ousterhout 1985: 261, footnote 3. Ousterhout – Bakirtzis 2007: 30-31. Akyuz et al., 2009. Günözü 2014: 105 ff.



Leri. Hagia Sophia. The church from the northwest.

TURKEY

Hagia Sophia in Leri¹



On the outskirts of the historical ponto-armenian world, a structure is preserved which dates, most likely, to the 6th c. It is speculated that it belongs to the justinian years and that it is part of the works carried out by the emperor for the strengthening of the byzantine-persian border and the Christianization of the Tzanni (Zans or Chans) and other disobedient tribes of the inner Chaldea.

Hagia Sophia is a “sturdy” construction of a three-aisled basilica (14.27 x 11.42 meters), with four pillars that form the aisles and support the wooden gabled roof. Although the roof has clearly been reshaped at some point, there is no evidence that the building was domed.

The inscribed apses on the east, the arched win-

1. Occurrences that showed any weakness of the researchers to respond to the timely delivery of their research data, the text was compiled with the responsibility of the scientific director of the volume, professor of NKUA, Mrs. Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou.

TURKEY



Left. Muslim fountain for washing the face, arms and feet. Right: The mihrab for Muslim prayer.

dows and other architectural elements are reminiscent of the Armenian and Georgian churches of the time, which may mean that the builders were Armenian or that the Armenian influences were strong – after all, the name Ler-e is an alteration of an Armenian word meaning mountain pasture. The village is located a little north from the riverbank of Harşit River, 27 km east of the castle of Tzanicha and 35 km west of the Armenian churches of the plateau of Bayburt.

The diocese of Leri (Lerin, Kabakçy, Yetirmez) belonged to the metropolis of Trebizond and was first mentioned around AD 900 (in the *New Tactica* of Leo VI the Wise). Its last reference, in 1734 or 1737, refers to a tragic period of Pontos, one of the many tyrannical periods during the Ottoman rule, when the policy of forced Islamization was re-applied to the detriment of the Christian population. Hagia Sophia was then converted into a mosque (Ayasofya Camii) and a wall was built in front of the sanctuary. The western side was largely rebuilt, probably when the church became a mosque.

Its current name Ayasofya Camii is the only, but specific indication of its original dedication to the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia).

Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou

HAGIA SOPHIA IN LERI



The interior of the monument from the west. The supporting arches on the ceiling and the niche stand out.

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Nicaea. Hagia Sophia. The monument from the southeast.

TURKEY

Hagia Sophia in Nicaea



In the center of the city of Iznik in Turkey, at the place where the Byzantine Nicaea of Bithynia once flourished, the Hagia Sophia church dominates, which functions since 2011, for the second time in its history, as a mosque (Ayasofya Camii). The first conversion of the church into a mosque took place during the 14th century (1330/1), when the area was conquered by the Ottomans, while in 1935 the regime changed and the monument began to function as a museum.¹

According to the research of Naomi Ruth Pitamber, it is concluded that the church in Nicaea was the second church, after the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, in the entire byzantine realm that was dedicated to Christ, the Wisdom of God. After the construction of the Theodosian church in Vassilevousa (415-532), it seems that the Hagia Sophia in Nicaea was constructed in order to play the role of the city's cathedral, which had been upgraded to a metropolis in 365, that is, during the reign of the

1. The conversion of the Hagia Sophia in Nicaea from a Christian church to a mosque, then to a museum and finally back to a mosque seems to have been a foreshadowing of the course that would follow, nine years later (2020), the largest Orthodox church in Constantinople, the Hagia Sophia.

TURKEY



The monument from the northeast.

co-emperors Valentinian I (364-375) and Valens (364-378). In fact, the Seventh Ecumenical Council took place in this exact church (787), a catalytically important event for Orthodoxy, which strengthened the symbolic value of the monument, since the honor and veneration of icons was reinstated in this church. After the fall of the City by the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade (1204), the self-exiled general Theodore I Laskaris (1204-1222), founder of the empire of Nicaea, was crowned emperor in the Hagia Sophia church, which was converted from a metropolitan see into the see of the ecumenical patriarch and the cathedral of the exiled byzantine emperor.²

The monument has been built on a site that probably occupied a Roman gymnasium, an agora (forum) or a large-size ancient temple.³ Various views have been expressed about the erection of the first church. Sabine Møllers, in her monograph on the Hagia Sophia, based on her observations and the excavation data, which concerns both the interior of the church and the exterior sites, considers that the oldest parts of the structure date back to the 5th century and that the first church showed similarities with the katholikon

2. Pitamber 2010. Pitamber 2015: 96-110, where the older bibliography was extracted.

3. Pitamber 2015: 99.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN NICAEA



The south side of the monument.

of the monastery of Stoudios in Constantinople.⁴ Older publications have referred to the eighth century as a period of reconstruction⁵ or renovation of the church,⁶ as well as to the 11th century for some of its sections, such as the two pastophoria (compartments also known as *prothesis* and *diakonikon*),⁷ as well as for the small domes that cover these compartments during the Palaiologan era.⁸

Richard Krautheimer, referring to the construction phase of the 11th century (shortly after 1065), points out that inside the church there are some refined details, in contrast to its relatively simple exterior surfaces, describing it as a “confrontation game.”

Prior to the refit of the church building by the Ottomans, there were two triple successive arched arrays,

4. Möllers 1994: sporadically.

5. Wulff, 1914: 402.

6. Brounoff, 1925: sporadically.

7. Alfons Maria Schneider mentions the following about the construction phases of the monument: a 5th or 6th century structure was built onto the walls of the present side aisle, and around the year 1065, the walls followed the current middle aisle, along with the pillars and the four groups of three-lobed arched arrays, supported by columns, the apse of the altar (sanctuary) and the two dome areas that surround it (Schneider 1943: sporadically).

8. Brounoff, 1925: 480.

TURKEY



Left: The ornate omphalion on the floor of the nave (first half of the 13th century). Right: The sanctuary and the synthronon (in the background).

which were supported by columns; a pillar between them functioned as a partition and a connecting element at the same time. These arched arrays were used to support the raised skylight walls which had five arched windows on each side. Generally, it has to do with a complex type of church, developed in height, surrounded by very simple in structure external walls.⁹

Charalambos Bouras, in a short and comprehensive way, describes the 11th century church as a three-aisled wooden-roofed basilica, with small domes above the pastophoria.¹⁰

The apse of the altar is semicircular on the inside and polygonal on the outside. The original synthronon is preserved, while the three window openings have been restored to their previous form. The finding of a building that is identified with chapel, during the excavations, which communicated with the southern aisle led S. Möllers to date the first Hagia Sophia church to the 5th century.¹¹

In the altar area, a pavement with marble paving stones was revealed, dated to the 11th century, as well as an underlying layer, probably from the first construction phase, with repairs of the 8th century. A pentaomphalo—a circle in a square frame, while, with node overlaps (ανακόμβωση), four smaller circles are formed, which fill in the gaps to the corners of the square—on the unearthed chapel is also dated to the 8th century. Also, a particular ornate omphalion has come to light, which is located on the western side of the central aisle. It was originally dated to the 11th century, but after a thorough research by Christina Pinatsi, the omphalion was redated to the first half of the 13th century and was associated with the renovation works that took place in the church during the reign of the House of Laskaris. In fact, the lilies that adorn all the gaps around the central circle refer to coins of the emperors of Nicaea.¹²

Some frescoes—fragments for the most part—have been preserved in certain parts of the monument, especially in the pastophoria. The composition of the Deisis (Trimorphon) is preserved in a better condition, with Christ in the center, the Virgin Mary on His right and Saint John the Forerunner on His left,

9. Krautheimer 22006: 452-453.

10. Bouras 32001: 262.

11. Möllers 1994: 62-69. Pitamber 2015: 102-103.

12. Pinatsi 2005. Pinatsi, 2006: sporadically, where the older bibliography was extracted.

which adorns an arcosolium on the north wall.¹³ Generally, the portrayals have been dated by the past researchers in the Palaiologan period (13th-14th c.), who were mainly based on the view that the pastophoria belong to a later phase and not to that of the 11th century.¹⁴ N. R. Pitamber, through comparisons and analyses, documents the view that the frescoes of the Hagia Sophia church reflect the art cultivated in Nicaea during the reign of the Laskaris.¹⁵

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13. Indicatively see Alpatoff 1926.

14. Asnu Bilban Yalçın places the composition of the Deisis in the second half of the 11th century (Yalçın, 1990), while Maria Kazamia-Tsernou mentions the year 1300 (Kazamia-Tsernou, 2008: 25).

15. Pitamber 2015: 139-187.



Trabzon. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southwest.

TURKEY

Hagia Sophia in Trebizond

The Hagia Sophia in Trebizond (Trabzon) is another important byzantine monument, whose course in history was a harbinger of the path that the glorious church of Hagia Sophia in Vassilevousa (the Queen of Cities) would follow. After the conversion of the Hagia Sophia in Nicaea (present-day Iznik) in 2011 from a museum to a mosque, the church of Trebizond, which after the restoration of 1957-1962 functioned as an archaeological site, from 2013 started to once again welcome Muslim believers for prayer (during the 16th century it was converted back into a mosque).

The church was erected as the katholikon of the monastery and was built about 1800 meters from the walled city of Trebizond, almost near the coast. Manuel I Komnenos the Great “Megalokomnenos” (1238-1263) appears to be the founder of the monastery, as his name is mentioned on an inscription, now lost. Although the text of our inscription is known from a transcription, but an engraving of the year 1291, which functions as a terminus ante quem, seems to indirectly confirm this information. An engraved text on the dedication of the Hagia Sophia church (1486) is also mentioned. It is noteworthy that in written sources, there are references to the monastery and its dedication to Christ, either by this name or by its characterization as Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia), which describe not Christmas, but the feast of the Transfiguration as a day of celebration.¹

1. Bryer – Winfield 1985: 231-233. Talbot Rice – Ballance 1968. Winfield 1963: 117-118. Eastmond 2004: 13 ff.



TURKEY



The church from the east.

The erection of the church dates back to the time of the reign of Manuel Megalokomnenos. In terms of typology, it follows a local variation of the contracted inscribed cross domed church type, with elongated western corner compartments and deep protruding pillars to the north, south and west, and with arched openings that form two columns on each side. Its sanctuary is tripartite. All three apses are semicircular on the inside, while only those of the pastophoria – the two compartments known as prothesis and diakonikon – on the outside remain semicircular, while the central one is three-sided, with a single-lobed window on each of its side. On the west side, there is a two-story narthex, where a chapel functioned on the upper floor.²

In the heavy stone structure of the Hagia Sophia church, in the almost street-type extension of the aisle, in the cross-sections of its windows, in the absence of decorative elements in its interior and in the existence of sculptural decoration on the outside, someone can perceive the influence of local traditions of the mountainous regions of Asia Minor, from Georgian or Armenian influences. However, in the spherical triangles and in the tympanum of the dome, the byzantine tradition becomes evident, at least in terms of the construction technique, as they are built with bricks.³

2. Brounov 1927-1928. Ballance 1968: 8-27. Bryer – Winfield 1985: 232. Krautheimer 22006: 518. Eastmond 2004: 27 ff.

3. Ballance 1968: 29 ff. Krautheimer 22006: 518-519.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN TREBIZOND



The west side of the church. Fragments of frescoes can be distinguished.

To the west of the church stands a tower-like structure—probably a bell tower—which seems to be a later addition to the monastery complex. According to an engraving, its construction began in 1427. On the outer side of the tower there is a preserved section of an inscription (it accompanies a worn portrayal), in which the name of Alexios IV Megalokomnenos (1417-1429) is mentioned, but it describes his son, John IV (1426-1460). In addition, on the second floor of the narthex, which functioned as a chapel, frescoes are preserved, which certainly date back to 1442/43-1444.⁴

To the north of Hagia Sophia and at an extremely close distance from it are the remains of a small church, whose architectural design is reminiscent of that of the church of Saint Anna in the city of Trebizond, but the period of its erection remains unclear. It is probable that it was built at some point after the completion of the monastery's katholikon and probably during the 15th century.⁵

The monument bears a rich sculptural decoration, where its majority dates back to the 13th century, indicating that the sculptures were chiseled in order to decorate the monastery's katholikon from the beginning. Exceptions are some architectural members, such as e.g., the capitals of the columns which supported the dome and are in second use. Noteworthy, is the stone frieze consisting of twelve slabs, which

4. Ballance 1968: 27-28. Bryer – Winfield 1985: 233.

5. Talbot Rice 1968a: 40-41. Bryer – Winfield 1985: 233.

TURKEY



The southern propylon (atrium). The stone slabs are distinct that make up the sculptural representation of the Proto-plasts.

is located above the arched array of the southern propylon (atrium) and represents the course of the protoplasts, Adam and Eve towards the Fall. The scenes are quite worn and move in reverse, i.e., from east to west, while accompanied by inscriptions.⁶ The church's pavement is also worth mentioning, where the section under the dome is covered with a complex navel, of exceptional art, and various techniques were combined for its creation (e.g., the technique *opus musivum*). Unfortunately, today it is partially maintained.⁷

As for the fresco's decoration of the *katholikon*, although a large part of the iconographic program has been destroyed, the representations that have survived the decay of time are many that can give a picture of the painted ensemble of the church. According to the usual layout, the depictions are the Pantocrator ("Ruler" or "Preserver of all" – the Lord Jesus Christ) in the dome, the *Panayia Platytera* ("She Who is More Wide" or more "spacious") in the quarter-sphere surface of the sanctuary's apse, scenes from the christological circle in the sanctuary area (scenes from the liturgical circle of the *Eothina* – a Greek word for "dawn" – the 11 gospels of the resurrection) and the nave (scenes from the iconographic cycle of the Passion of Christ), scenes from the theomestic cycle – the iconographic cycle pertaining to the life of the Theomator (the very Mother of God) – at the *diakonikon*, representations of Jesus' miracles in the narthex

6. In this regard, see Strzygowski 1895. Alpatov 1927-1928. Talbot Rice 1968b. Safran 1994. Eastmond, 1999. Eastmond 2004: 64 ff.

7. See, in particular, Talbot Rice 1968c.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN TREBIZOND



The interior of the church from the west.

and so on. Impressive is the combination of scenes from the Dodekaorton, Twelve Great Feasts (Baptism, Birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection) besides the Evangelists and their symbols. This combination, which, as it turns out, creates a unicum in byzantine monumental painting, results from the connection of these scenes with the passages of the Gospels read on the celebration days of the above divine events.

In addition to the first painting phase of the katholikon, which dates to the mid-13th century, there is a second phase, which is very limited and probably dates to the first half of the 15th century.⁸

Projects of particular importance are the frescoes of the chapel on the second floor of the narthex of the Hagia Sophia church, which date back to the fifth decade of the 15th century (1442/43-1444), as already mentioned. The compositions of the Deisis “intercession,” and the Communion of the Apostles are preserved in the sanctuary, as well as the christological and theomertic scenes in the nave, individual figures of saints, etc.⁹

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8. Millet – Talbot Rice 1936: 95-100. Talbot Rice – Winfield 1968. Eastmond, 2004: 97 f.f. Caillet – Joubert 2012.

9. Millet – Talbot Rice 1936: 77-88, 100-106. Bryer – Winfield 1985: 234-236.

TURKEY



The surviving frescoes in the sanctuary.

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HAGIA SOPHIA IN TREBIZOND



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Vize. Hagia Sophia. The monument from the southeast.

TURKEY

Hagia Sophia in Vize



Bizye (or *Bizya* or *Vizye*, Turkish *Vize*) is located in Eastern Thrace and was a city known since pre-Christian times, the capital of the kingdom of the Asti¹. The city became the capital of the Odrysian kingdom during the 1st century BC (from the period of Sadala to Rhoemetalces)². It is mentioned by Strabo (64 BC-AD 24), and flourished during the Roman and Byzantine times. An enclosed city, with an exceptional wall. During the reign of Justinian (AD 518-578) the city's walls and towers were strengthened, resulting in being characterized as an impregnable city³. It endured the pressure of the Turkish besiegers and fell into their hands just a few days (March 1453) prior to the Fall of Constantinople. Vize was built on the southeastern foothills of the Balkan mountain range Small Aimos (or Strandzha). The extensive and fertile areas around it were irrigated by many tributaries of the Ergine River. Before the population exchange in 1923, it had 3,500 inhabitants, most of whom were Greek Orthodox Christians (Gk. Ρωμιοί, Rum). The people who loved labor and progress cultivated cereals and vegetables, as well as viticulture and sericulture. The overgrown forests provided ample raw material, with the result that many of the

1. Melissinos 1967: 338-341.

2. Sakellariadis 1929: 159.

3. Samothrakis 1926: 264-265.



The church from the southwest.

inhabitants engaged in felling of wood (logging) and carbonization. The products they produced traveled a distance of about 130 kilometers to reach the large market of the capital of Byzantium and of the Osmons, Constantinople.

The developed trade resulted in affluence and this in turn allowed the performance of the inhabitants in projects of beneficence. Among these, were the construction of schools and two churches, one of which was dedicated to the Wisdom of God and the other to Saint Nicholas (nothing survives today).

During the First Ecumenical Council, in AD 325, Vize was a diocese. In the 14th century, it was elevated to the status of a Metropolis and in 1682 it was merged with the Holy Metropolis of Medea (Kıyıköy). From 1837, Vize is mentioned as the see of the metropolis and the Metropolitan of Medea bore the title of “superior” and exarch of the Black Sea⁴.

One of the most famous Greek writers, Georgios Vizyinos (Georgios Michael Syrmas or Michailidis, 1849-1896) came from Vize. He grew up in Vize listening to Thracian fairy tales. One of his poems, entitled “Αγία Σοφία” (Hagia Sophia), is an adaptation of one of these fairy tales⁵.

The church of the Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia) of Vize belongs typologically to an architectural type, which is also known as a mixed type or type of Mystras: on the ground floor, the church appears as a three-aisled basilica, while on the superstructure as a complex contracted inscribed cross domed church type. Based on its typological, morphological and constructional characteristics including various information from relevant sources, it must have been built around the late 8th or the early 9th century. From the unearthings, which took place during maintenance works to the east of the sanctuary, it seems that it rests on the ruins of a large early Christian basilica. According to the facts, related to the regional church construction of the empire, the church is considered large (approx-

4. Patelis 2019: 19.

5. Vizyinos 1884: 48-52.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN VIZE



The interior of the monument from the west.



One of the two Corinthian capitals inside the monument.

mately 15 x 22 meters)⁶. In AD 902 or 903, Saint Mary the Younger was buried in this church.

After the Osman conquest it was converted into a mosque (*Gazi Söleyman Paşa Camii* or *Κόηόκ Ayasofya Camii*), a fact that contributed to the rescue of this significant byzantine monument from the decay of time, destruction and disappearance⁷.

Over the years, the building suffered severe damages and remained out of use for a long period of time. Restoration and maintenance works began in 2006. Today it functions again as a place of worship of Islam and is one of the most remarkable, surviving, byzantine monuments of Thrace.

Its iconography and the remaining interior decoration were not saved, except for two columns preserved in their position, which are crowned with Corinthian-style capitals, in excellent condition.

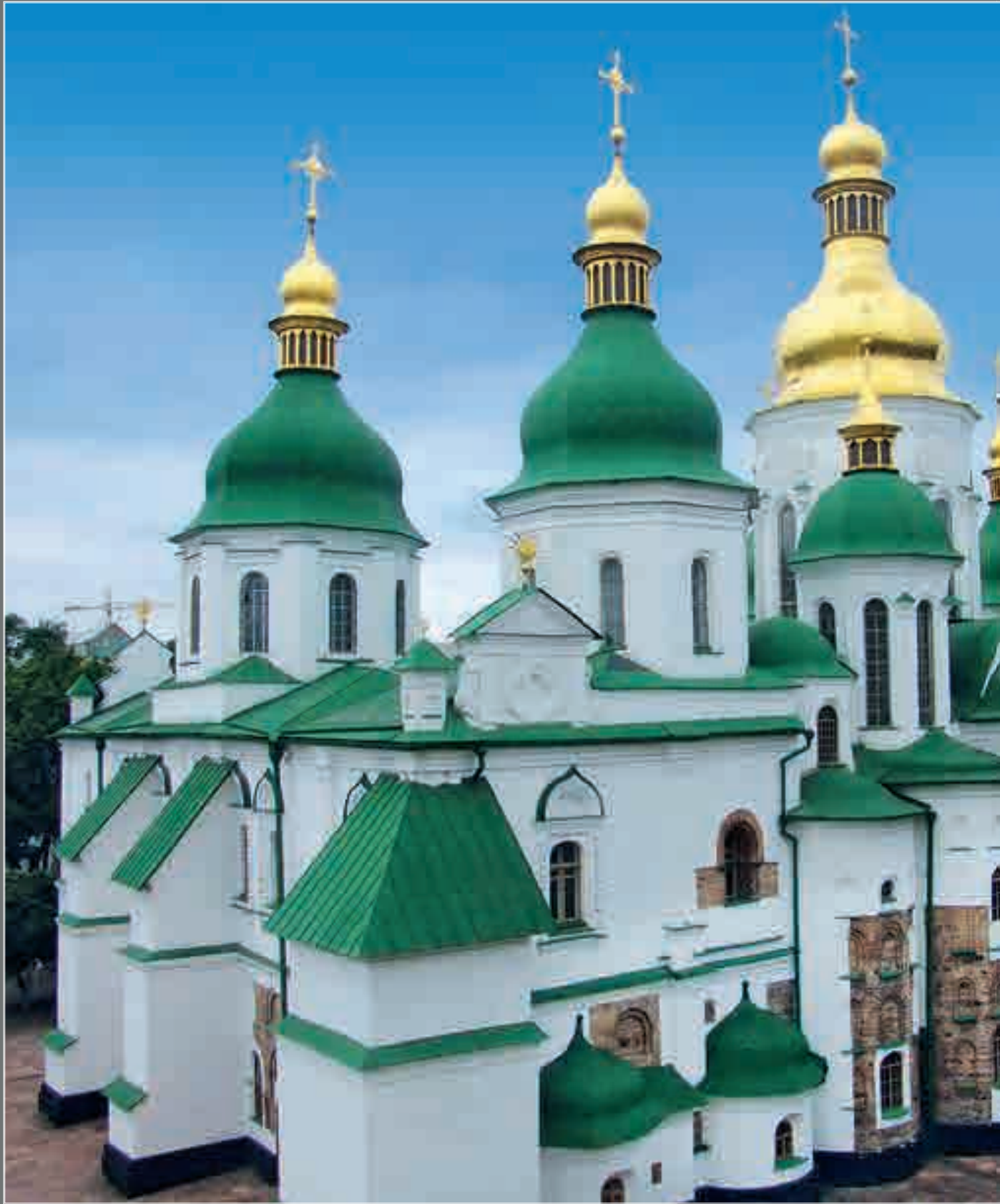
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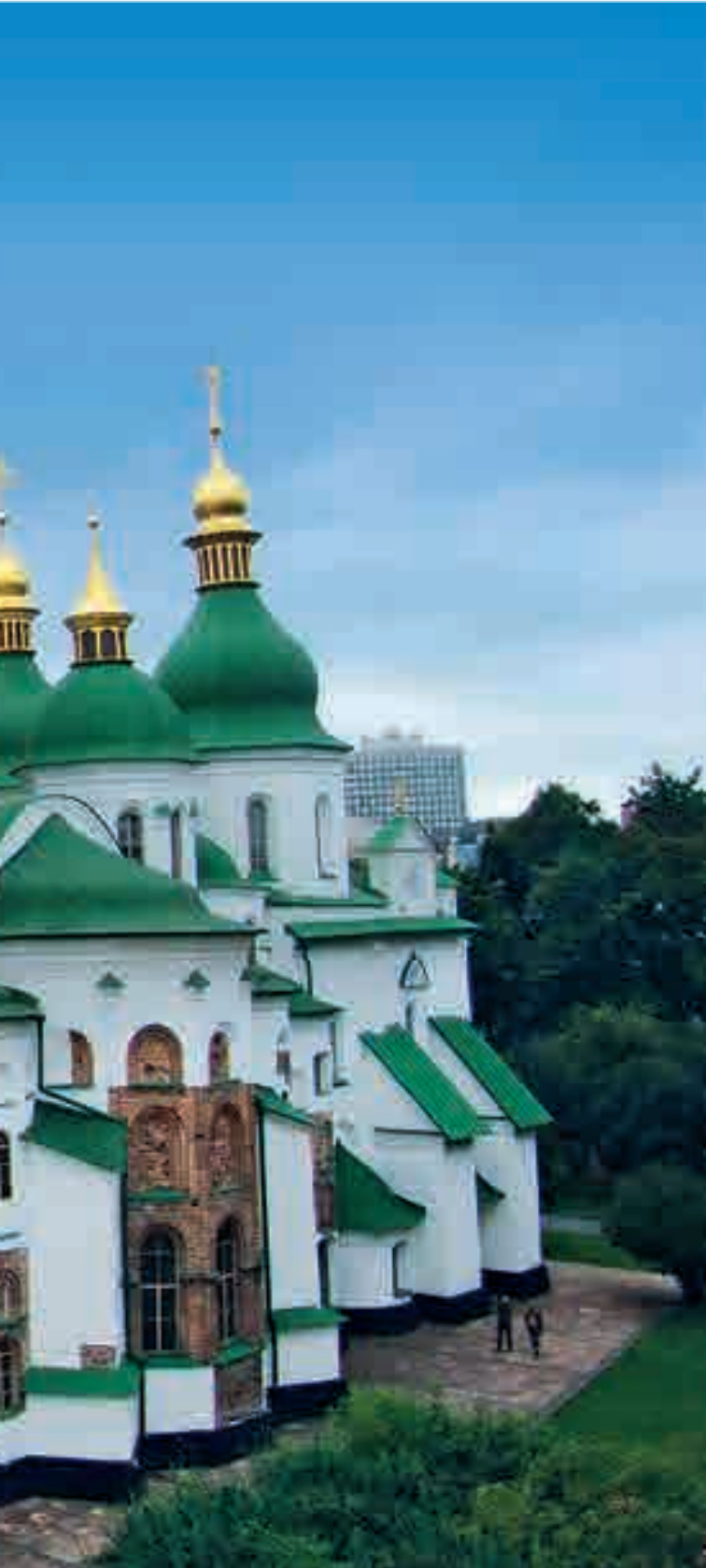
6. Mamaloukos, Stavros 2003: 113.

7. Ibid.: 133.



Kiev. Hagia Sophia. The church from the southeast.

Hagia Sophia in Kiev



The magnificent church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Hagia Sophia)—also known as Saint Sophia of Kyiv—rises in the historic center of Kiev, for over 1000 years, and still stands as one of the most significant monuments of civilization. It is the oldest Christian church that has been preserved on the land of eastern Slavs, that includes the most complete in the world ensemble of mosaics and frescoes of the 11th century throughout the world.

The information on the founding date of the Hagia Sophia contained in the Chronicles are confusing and contradictory, something that provoked the relevant discussion two hundred years ago, and continues to this day. The chroniclers of Yaroslav the Wise (1016-1054) mention 1017 and 1037 as the foundation year of the church and call Yaroslav the founder of the church.¹ These dates mark the beginning and acme of his administration in Kiev. However, the engravings with the dates 1018/21, 1019, 1022, 1023, 1028, 1033 and 1036, that have been found on the frescoes of Hagia Sophia prove that the church already existed during the time of the Grand Prince Vladimir (Volodymyr) the Great, the baptizer of Rus (980-1015). A series of engravings, reported by well-known historians, date back

1. *Лаврентьевская летопись* 2000: стлб. 151. *Новгородская* 2000: 15-16, 180. *Ипатьевская летопись* 2001: стлб. 139.

UKRAINE



The southern choir area of the church.

to 1019², a date that testifies that the Hagia Sophia church had already been standing and decorated with mosaics and frescoes.

The German chronicler Thietmar of Merseburg (†1018) mentions that Hagia Sophia in 1017-1018³ was the see of the metropolitan of Kiev. The metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus, Hilarion, a contemporary of the church's founding states that Yaroslav finished his father's (Vladimir) undertakings, in connection with the founding of Hagia Sophia.⁴ Comparing the earliest dated engravings with the dates of the consecration of the church, which are mentioned in the calendars of the beginning of the 12th to the beginning of the 14th century (May 11 and November 4),⁵ leads to the date 1011-1018.

During Vladimir's and Yaroslav's reign, the state of Kievan Rus (Kyivan Rus) became one of the most powerful countries in Europe. The princes of Kiev were associated with dynastic marriages, with the ruling courts of many countries and the beginning was set by the marriage of Vladimir the Great with the byzantine princess Anna Porphyrogenita, daughter of the byzantine emperor Romanos II.

The Hagia Sophia church, the "Russian metropolis," was a symbol of greatness and sovereignty of the Kievan Rus. As the central church of the state, it played a role of a spiritual, political and cultural center. The official enthronement ceremonies of the great princes, the ecclesiastical councils, the ordinations of the metropolitans, the reception of the ambassadors, the ratification of the political agreements took place under the vaults of Hagia Sophia. The residents of Kiev of all ages gathered here for the *veche* (the all-people's assembly). The first known library of the Kievan Rus was created in the church, where the *Chronicles*

2. Thietmari 1935: 488-489.

3. Никитенко – Корниенко 2012.

4. Thietmari 1935: 488-489.

5. Молдован 1984: 97.

HAGIA SOPHIA IN KIEV



The mosaic representations on the dome, the spherical triangles and the arches on its base (11th c.).

were stored and books were translated from Greek into the Slavic script. For centuries, the Hagia Sophia church was the burial place of princes and of the higher clergy.

One of the oldest heirlooms of the church is the marble sarcophagus of Yaroslav the Wise, who died in 1054. The anthropologist M. M. Gerasimov, based on the prince's skull, reconstructed a sculptural portrait of the prince, which is on display inside the church. In addition to Yaroslav, Vsevolod's son (1093), his grandchildren Rostislav Vsevolodovich (1093) and Vladimir II Monomakh (1125), as well as his great-grandson Viacheslav Vladimirovich (1154) were buried in the church. A total of 7.5 thousand inscriptions in engraving etching style [graffiti], of the 11th-early 18th century, have been revealed from the church's walls. These concern unofficial inscriptions and representations engraved by clergy and visitors of the church.

The church suffered successive looting, fires, desolations, repairs and reconstructions. In 1240, when Kiev was occupied by the hordes of Batu Khan, the church was looted and desolated. Despite the gradual decline of Kiev, the Hagia Sophia church continued to function as the see of the metropolitan and remained the spiritual center of the entire state of Kievan Rus.

The rebirth of the church is linked with the names of metropolitan Peter Mogila (1633-1647) and Ivan Stepanovych Mazepa (1687-1708). The church underwent extensive interventions on the outside in baroque style, in the late 17th to the 18th centuries. During the 18th century, the old frescoes were plastered, the wall surfaces were painted with white color and covered with oil paintings. The church was closed during the Soviet rule; in 1934, the state historical park of Hagia Sophia was founded, where a scientific-research project and maintenance works were developed.

A complete set of mosaics and frescoes of the first quarter of the 11th century has been revealed in the church, (260 m² of mosaics along with 3000 m² of frescoes). In 1990, the church along with the complex of the monastic buildings of the 18th century was included in the List of World Heritage protected by UNESCO.



Fresco depiction of archangel Gabriel from the scene of the Annunciation (triumphal arch, 11th c.).

The sources do not mention the architects and the painters of the Hagia Sophia church. The architecture of the church is based on the cruciform inscribed church type. Initially, the church had five domes and five aisles equal in number sacred bemas. There were two open stoae (covered walkways or porticoes) on the north, on the west and on south side: a two-story interior and a single-story exterior, where the interior loft was located on top. Two towers with an external staircase that led to the choir loft were in the west side corners. The church was crowned with a gradational synthesis, consisting of thirteen domes covered with lead sheets.

As in Byzantium, the masonry remained visible without being plastered. The walls were built with the opus mixtum technique (mixed masonry) of large natural stones—granite and pink quartzite (rose quartz)—which alternated with rows of plinths. The binder of the masonry was based on a pink solution of whitewash and gravel. With the reconstructions that took place at the turning point from the late 17th century to the 18th century, the church gained an external baroque shape, the basic features of which have been preserved until this day.

The interior decoration of the church is preserved almost unchanged from the 11th century. The rectangular space is divided by the twelve cruciform columns into five elongated passageways (aisles), which are crossed by transepts. At the intersection of the central aisle with the central passageway in the space, a cross with equal antennas is formed. The central dome rises above its center.

The second floor is formed by a spacious choir intended for the prince and his court. The library with the scriptorium was probably here, where books were translated and copied, as well as areas related to the needs of the prince and the metropolis.

Initially, the church was decorated with 640 m² of mosaics and 6000 m² of frescoes that consisted the largest ensemble of the mid-Byzantine period. The creators of the mosaics and frescoes were the



Fresco depiction of the Panayia from the scene of the Annunciation (triumphal arch, 11th c.).

best Byzantine craftsmen who used the classical iconographic program. The mosaics and frescoes are distinguished by their fussy pattern, the rich color range, the individual originality and the deep spirituality of the icons, with hyphological analogies, with byzantine monuments of the 10th-early 11th century, mainly with the monastery's church, katholikon, of Hosios Lukas in Boeotia, which reconstruction was completed in 1011.⁶ However, the nearest, from every aspect, to the Hagia Sophia monument is considered to be the church of the Tithes (of the Dormition of the Theotokos) in Kiev, a project by Greek craftsmen, summoned by Vladimir, who continued to work at the church of Hagia Sophia.⁷

The sanctuary and the central dome of the Hagia Sophia church stand out thanks to the mosaics, while the remaining surfaces of the church are adorned with frescoes. The dome depicts Christ the Pantocrator ("Ruler" or "Preserver of all") surrounded by the four archangels (the scene of the archangel in azure clothing represented in the mosaic, has survived) and between the light gaps of the tympanum of the dome are the twelve apostles (the figure of Paul survives in the mosaic). The spherical triangles depict the evangelists (the figure of Mark and a fragment from the representation of Matthew have survived). Fifteen mosaic medallions of the holy Forty Martyrs of Sebastia are preserved on the tympana that support the dome. The Deisis ("Entreaty") is depicted above the sanctuary's niche with the figures of Christ, the Panayia and John the Fore-runner in a bust. On the sanctuary's pillars are the Annunciation and the first high priest Aaron, and in the quarter-sphere the Oranta or Praying Theotokos.

Following this icon is the representation of the Divine Eucharist, with Christ as High priest, and further down are the frontal portraits of hierarchs,

6. Chatzidakis 1956: 14-17. Лазарев 1960: 74, 77-78, 80, 101, 111, 157. Лазарев 1978: 79-80. Лазарев 1986: 77-78.

7. Айналов 1917: 36. Логвин 2001: 28.

UKRAINE



The mosaic decoration of the sanctuary:
The orant Panayia, the
Communion of the
Apostles and hierarchs
(11th c.).

first with of Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus, on whose day of remembrance the church of the Tithes was consecrated, and of Clement of Rome, whose relic was brought from Kherson (Chersonesos or Korsun) by Vladimir (Volodymyr) and laid in the church of the Tithes.

The frescoes are combined organically and harmoniously with the mosaics. Scenes from the christo-

logical cycle and the apostles' work are formed under the dome, and conclude with a monumental representation of the prince's family, that covers the three walls of the central aisle, except of the eastern side, in a painting that glorifies the creators of the church in the most prominent way. The portrait depicts the family of the Baptists of Rus, Vladimir and Anna in tsarist costumes with their children, including Borys and Gleb (Hilb).

On the walls of the two towers, which have external staircases to access the princely choir, there is a large cycle of secular frescoes, such as the engagement of Vladimir and Anna in Constantinople, in 987/988, when the Christianization of Rus began. The Hagia Sophia church in Kiev consists a "monument" over the centuries.⁸

Nadezhda Nikitenko

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The volume
HAGIA SOPHIA
THE CHURCHES OF THE WISDOM OF GOD AROUND THE WORLD

Had its page layout adapted to nine languages:
Arabic, Bulgarian, English, Greek, Italian, Romanian, Russian, Serbian and Ukrainian
in September 2021

from the "PEDIO Publications S.A."
Printed and bound by the Directorate of Publications
and Printouts of the Hellenic Parliament.

General Coordinator: Konstantinos Mygdalis

English Translation: Chrysostomos Tromboukis.

