



SAINT SOPHIA MUSEUM



TÜRKİYE TURİNG VE OTOMOBİL KURUMU YAYINI

TT-605017

SAINT SOPHIA MUSEUM

FERİDUN DIRİMTEKİN

TOURING AND AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF TURKEY
ISTANBUL



MESSAGE TO TRAVELLERS COMING TO İSTANBUL

Istanbul is, without a doubt, the only city in the world which adds to its incomparable natural beauties, so admirably described by numerous writers such as Lamartine, Théophile Gautier, Henri de Régnier and Loti. not simple vestiges, but intact masterpieces of so many different civilizations; the only city in the world which, since over fifteen centuries, has uninterruptedly been not only the capital of the largest states, but the center of gravity of the synthesis of both European and Asian art.

While the whole of Turkey is a land of legends and history which preserves imperishable souvenirs from Antioch and Tarsus to Ephesus, from Konya to Edirne, of Christianity as well as of Islam, Istanbul embraces in its bosom live images of the most brilliant periods of the Roman, Byzantine and Turco-Ottoman Empires.

Istanbul is not, such as certain other cities of the Orient a city of myths which childish imaginations nebuloously evoke. It is a city of poetic reality or of real poetry, of beauty, of harmony and of majesty which are actually alive, visible, tangible.

In no other metropolis of the old continent, including Rome and Athens, can one observe, study and compare simultaneous, side by side in one expanse, the most varied manifestations of social and artistic evolutions throughout the centuries.

With St. Sophia -splendid Byzantine edifice of the VIth Century built by two Anatolian architects, restored several times and surprisingly well preserved by the Turks- and the magnificent Suleymaniye - which, like all imperial mosques, towers, in its sober majesty, over its numerous appurtenances which form a vast city of schools, libraries, hospitals, hotels, public kitchens, caravanserais, hans, mausoleums, baths and fountains - Istanbul obviously remains the world's richest center of historical monuments.

The Turkish Republic, while respecting these invaluable souvenirs of a glorious past, composed of three civilizations, by restoring and enhancing them, has resolutely engaged itself in a vast program consisting of the opening of a network of highways, taking into account the urgent requirements of urbanism and circulation in a medieval city whose population has increased one hundred percent only within the last forty years.

The traveller will notice the same process of modernization in all Turkey, in the capital Ankara, in the Ottoman Bursa, in the Seljuk Konya, in the Aegean İzmir, everywhere in Anatolia which is covered by an increasingly close network of new highways. These highways lead to the most picturesque sites, such as the Turquoise coast from Antalya to Alanya, Göreme and Urgup in Cappadocia, where the exciting vestiges of the early periods of Christianity, up to now totally unknown by the wide public, can be found.

Finally, the traveller will meet in this country one of the world's noblest and most hospitable nations, who throughout a thousand years has let live and prosper in its territories, millions of people of the most varied religions, a considerate and heroic nation whose ancestors have dominated at various periods the two continents, from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and have preserved the Mediterranean civilization by maintaining from its prestigious traditions a rare dignity, as G. Duhamel remarked, which distinguishes it from all its neighbors, its former vassals.

REŞİT SAFFET ATABİNEN

Chairman of the Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey



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SAINT SOPHIA

St. Sophia is the largest church built in Constantinople in the period of the Eastern Roman Empire. It was used as a church for 916 years, from 537 to 1453. After the Conquest it was used as a mosque for 482 years, until 1935, when it was transformed into a museum by order of Atatürk.

Most of the authors who attribute the first church of St. Sophia to Constantine the Great lived in the 6th and 7th centuries. Earlier authors, and first of all Socrates, write that the church was built in the reign of Constantius, son of Constantine the Great. It may be that Constantine the Great planned to build such a church, and perhaps laid down the foundations, but the church was built in the reign of his son, and opened to prayer on the 15th of December 360 (*Chronique pascale*, 01 285,1, 15 décembre 360). As it was the largest church in the city it was given the name of **Megale Ekklesia** (meaning the Great Church). It received at a later date its present name, Hagia Sophia, or Theia Sophia (meaning Divine Wisdom), derived from the Eternal Wisdom, which according to the Christian creed, is an attribute to Jesus Christ. The name has no connection with the lady who was persecuted in Rome in the 2nd century, and subsequently canonized.



The first church of St. Sophia was on the basilica plan. The apse, which was probably circular, adjoined the lateral walls, and the basilica thus took the shape of a rectangle of which one side was arched (dromikos naos). The walls were built of stone and the roof of wood. It thus resembled the churches of Mary Maggiore in Rome, St. Appollinare in Classe, in Ravenna, and St. John of Stoudion (the Mosque of İmrahor), in Istanbul. The building was divided lengthwise into several naves. In front was a narthex. During the Council of 381 the Arians set fire to the wooden roof (Cofbesis. Construction of St. Sophia), but the damage was repaired.

That first building was burnt on the 20 th of June 404, during the rebellion which broke out when the bishop John Chrysostomos, who was renowned for his intolerance and his vehement and enchaining eloquence, was deposed and exiled by the Emperor Arcadius, for having severely criticized his wife, the Empress Eudoxia.

The church was rebuilt by the Emperor Theodosius II., and opened to prayer on the 10 th of October 415. The remains of that church have been discovered in the excavations made by A.M. Schneider in 1936, so that we are better informed about it.

The building was again in the basilican style, with wooden roof. In front was a monumental columned propylaeum. The church was entered by a flight of six steps. The floor of the propylaeum was paved with mosaics in geometrical patterns. The columns were 8.40 ms. high. In front was an atrium. The church was divided into five naves, and it was entered by three doors.

The church remained opened to prayer for 117 years. But a new rebellion broke out. The people were angry against some statesmen, the monophysists were angry because they were persecuted, and the Greens were angry against the rebel faction. The misguided policy of the government enraged also the Blues, they joined the rebels, and the revolt became general. It is known under the name of the Nika Rebellion. Justinian's very throne was in danger. On the 13 th and 14 th of January 532 the rebels burned a large number of edifices, among which were the churches of St. Irene and St. Sophia. On the 18 th of January 532 the rebellion was suppressed with heavy slaughter.

On the 23 rd of February 532 the Emperor Justinian, 39 days after the conflagration, began to rebuild the church, and laid the foundations of the present St. Sophia. He was deter-

mined to spare no sacrifice in making the new edifice larger and finer than the famous temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.

He entrusted the construction of the new building to the greatest mathematician of the age, Anthemius of Tralles (Aydin), and the greatest architect, İsidor of Milet (Söke). One hundred of the best master-builders were brought to Constantinople from all parts of the Empire. Under them were ten thousand workmen. In order to induce competition the construction of the right side was entrusted to fifty master-builders, and the left side to the fifty others. The teams which worked better and faster were rewarded. All pains were taken to encourage the workmen to work well, and their wages were payed regularly. As the church had already been burnt twice, Justinian forbade the use of any wooden material. The new church was built of stones and bricks. The Emperor supervized the work himself.

The four colossal piers supporting the edifice were made of blocks of sanstone joined together with melted lead without using any mortar. The walls and domes were made of brikcs specially baked. Most of them were stamped with the name Megales Ekklisias, or the names of the brickyards, such as Mamas, Domanos, Typhon, Presbyters Magnos, and Konstantinopolis.

All the province governors in the Empire were ordered to ransack the most beautiful parts of the ancient edifices in their respective provinces and send them to Constantinople to be used in the construction of a building under Divine protection. Eight of the porphyry columns brought to Rome from the Temple of Heliopolis in Egypt were presented by a prefect. From the ancient temples of Ephesus, Cyzicus, Baalbec, and Delphi were transferred to Constantinople columns, and ivory and gold objects, to be used in St. Sophia. Marble quarries were put on toll. White marble was brought from the islands of Marmara (Prokonnose), green marble from the island of Eubea, pink marble from Synnada, in the vicinity of Afyon Karahisar. Yellow marble was brought from Africa.

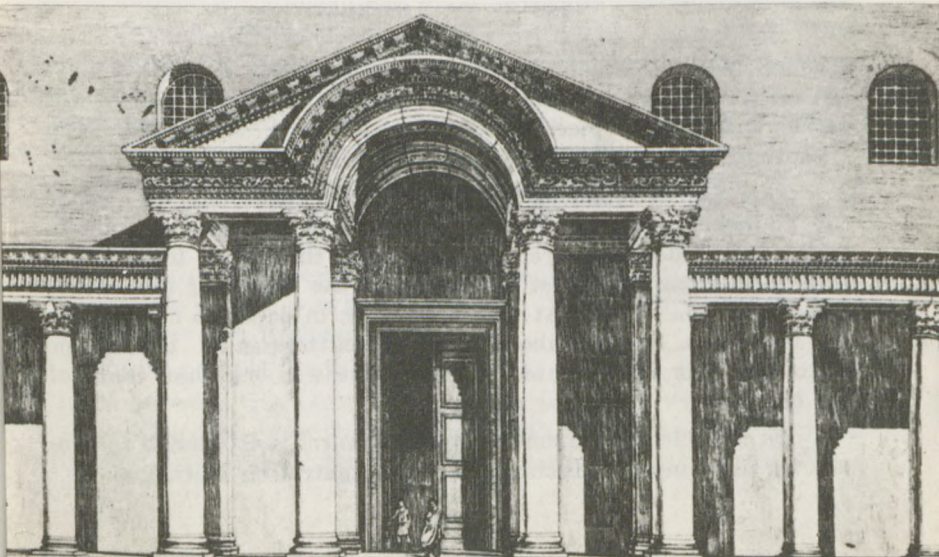
The sum spent for the construction is equal to 75 million dollars in present currency. Justinian strained his genius and his treasury to the utmost for the completion of the edifice. For this purpose he even laid down new taxes. The construction was begun immediately, without clearing off the remains in the area of the conflagration. The ground was levelled, and the church built there. For this reason the ground level of Justinian's St. Sophia is 2.50 ms. above that of the second St. Sophia.

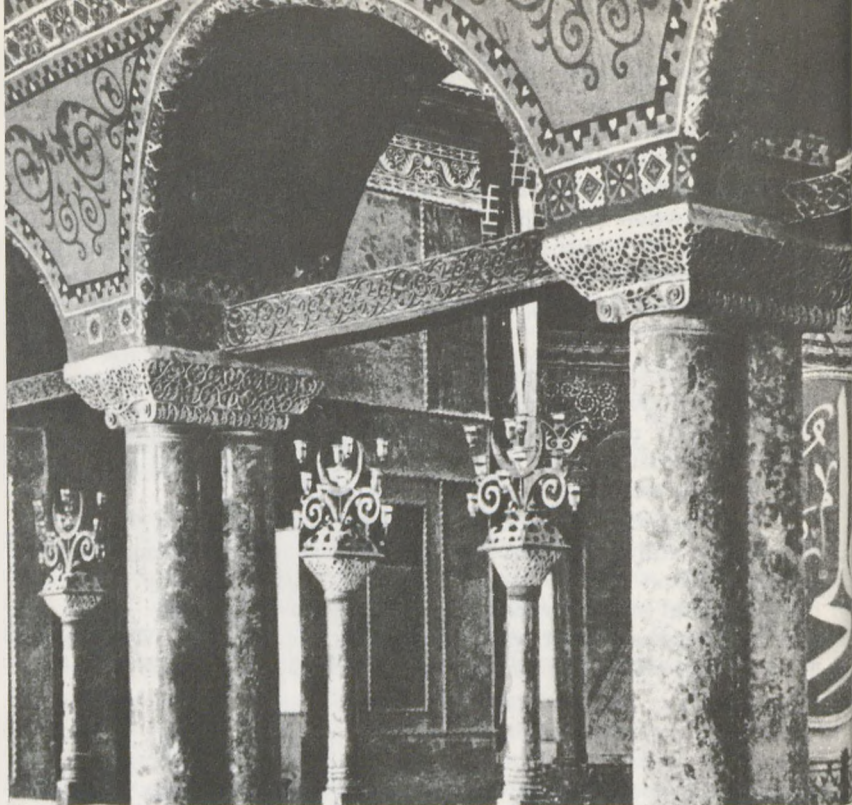
The inauguration took place on the 27th of December 537. The Emperor came to the church in a triumphal chariot drawn by fourhorses, followed by all his state officials. He was received at the imperial door by the Patriarch Menas. According to state etiquette the Emperor and the Patriarch were to enter hand in hand. But when Justinian entered the church he was overcome by emotion in presence of its majestic aspect, and, hastening to the apse, rendered thanks to God, Who had allowed him to achieve such a building, and he cried, "O Solomon, I have surpassed thee!"

The entrance of the church was on the west side. There was a beautiful atrium surrounded by a porch 34 ms. deep, with arches supported by marble columns. In the middle was a pond. According to Silentiarius the pond was made of jasper, and the water ran from bronze pipes.

The structure was not solid enough. The span of the dome was larger and the height less than in the present dome. The horizontal thrust had not been calculated quite correctly. The building suffered in an earthquake on the 15th of August 553, and the large eastern arch was damaged in the middle. When a second earthquake took place on the 14th of January 557 the arch

The plan of the remains of the second Aya-sofya built by Theodosius II and reconstruction made according to the remains after excavation.





The section for the Empress in the West gallery.

cracked. While it was under repair, on the 7th of May 558 a piece fell off the eastern half-dome, the eastern arch crashed down, together with a large piece of the dome which it supported. The ambo, ciborium, and apse were damaged.

The task of repairing the damage was entrusted to Isidor the Younger, nephew of Isidor, the architect who built the church. Isidor pulled down the remaining half of the dome. In order to ease the horizontal thrust he increased the height of the dome by 20 feet (6.25 ms.). At the same time, in order to consolidate the four piers, he built above them the buttresses in the shape of towers. The diameter of the new dome was less than that of the old one.

On the 24th of December 562 the church was opened to prayer by the Emperor Justinian and the patriarch Eutichius.

In the reign of the Emperor Basil I. the Macedonian (868-880), on the 9th of January 869 began an earthquake which lasted 40 days. The western half-dome of St. Sophia seemed in danger of collapsing. The building was repaired in 870. In a tower on the northern side of the building was placed, probably in 865, a bell presented by the Doge Orso Partricionu Grelot, who visited Constantinople in 1678, saw the bell-tower, which appears in drawing he made of St. Sophia.

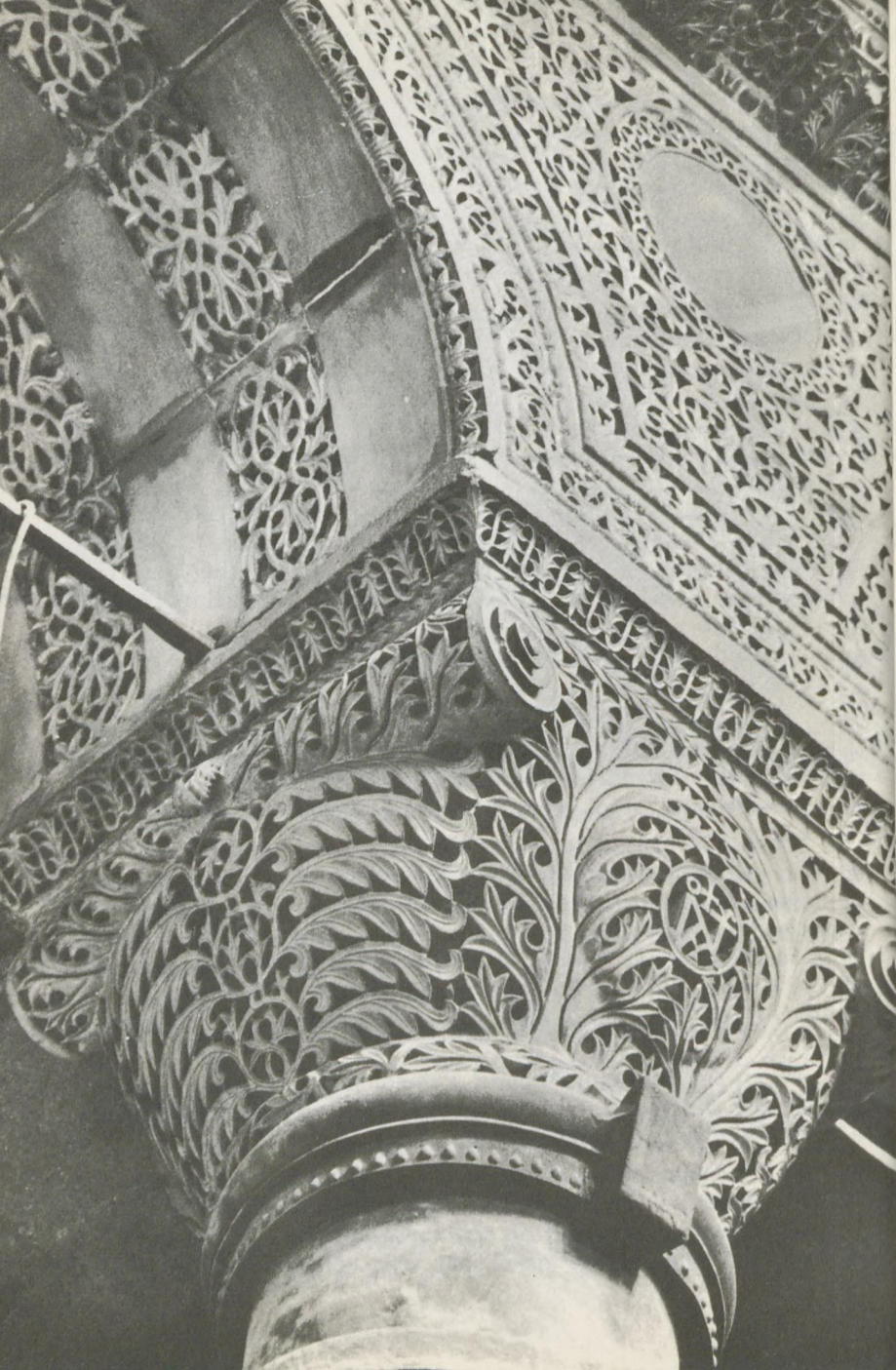
In 912 part of the Patriarchate was burnt down. In the night of the 25th and 26th of October 986 a violent earthquake shook the town. The western apse collapsed, part of the dome was damaged, and a large crack appeared in the walls of the church. The dome seemed to be in danger, and the church was closed to prayer. The Emperor Basil II. entrusted the work of repairing the building to an architect named Tiridates, who was staying on Constantinople, and who had built the cathedral of Ani. A new plan was made to consolidate the dome. Ten thousand gold bezants were spent to build the scaffolding for the repair of the dome alone. After six years of repair the church was opened to prayer on the 13th of May 994. The Emperor Romanus II. adorned the column capitals with gold and silver.

When the army of the Fourth Crusade approached Constantinople the Emperor Alexis III., whom they had helped to ascend the throne, had to pay the money he had promised to the Venetians, and for this purpose he requisitioned the gold crowns and silver candelabra which were the gifts of his predecessors.

When the Crusaders seized the city they looted all the churches. In St. Sophia the silver facings of the ambo, the ornaments of the altar, the silver plates on the doors, the sacred vases were divided among the plunderers. The precious stone slabs in the building were pulled off and sent to diverse countries. In the period of the Latin Empire the church remained in the hands of the Venetians, and was administered by Venetian priests.

When the Emperor Michael Palaeologos captured Constantinople the church was repaired under the supervision of Ruchas, a priest, and an architect.

In the reign of the Emperor Andronicus II., in 1317 one large buttress was built on the south façade of the church, two large buttresses were built on the north façade, and one buttress on the north side of the apse. They were all pyramidal in shape.



On the 19th of May 1346 the eastern half-dome collapsed, together with about 3/8 of the adjoining dome. The ambon and iconostasis were crushed down. A large quantity of mosaics fell down. For want of money the church could not be repaired. Ceremonies were performed in the Church of Theotokos in the Blachernae.

The Empress Anna of Savoy repaired the bema, and the place in front, with the help of the people, and the levying of new taxes. The remaining part was repaired by the Emperor John VI. Cantacuzinos. The repairs were made partly by the architect Farcio-lato, and partly by the architects Giovanni Prallas, and Astras. The last part was repaired in the reign of the Emperor John V. Palaeologos. The mosaics of the Virgin Mary, Sts. Peter and Paul, and the Emperor John V., which were seen under the large eastern arch during the repairs of 1847 - 1849, date from that period.

The mosaic above the imperial door.



One of the marble capitals.

St. Sophia reflected the state of decay of the Byzantine Empire in the 14th and 15th centuries. A Russian priest, who visited Constantinople in 1350, saw the doors of the church barricaded because they could not be repaired. The Castilian ambassador, Clavijo, who came in 1402, found the building in a state of great dilapidation. Most of the doors had fallen down and were lying on the floor.

When the Conqueror's army entered Istanbul on the 29th of May 1453 his supreme goal was St. Sophia. On the first of June the victorious Sultan attended the Friday service in the building converted into a mosque. He immediately repaired the building. First he added a pulpit and a wooden minaret. Afterwards he built a minaret of bricks, and underneath that, a large buttress. The minaret in the north corner was built in the reign of Bayazid II.

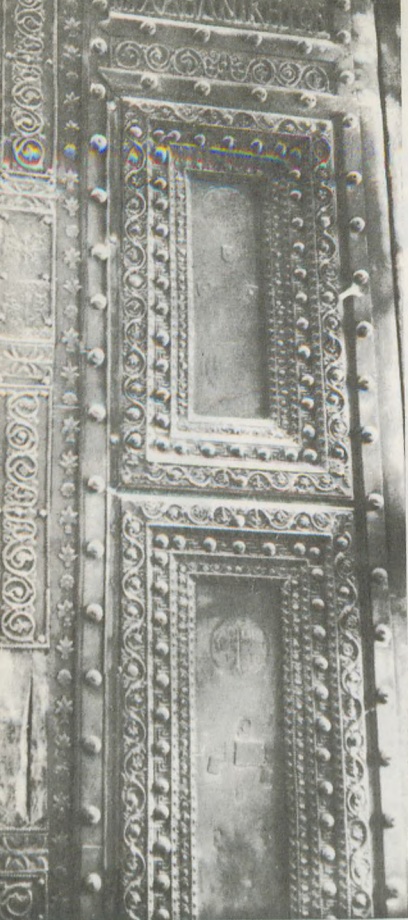
In the reign of Selim II. houses were built close round the mosque, and very narrow passages left open. According to the historian Mustafa efendi of Salonica (*Selaniki Tarihi, Matbaai Amire baskısı*, pp. 120-121) the building leaned to one side for a *zirâ* and a half, and seemed likely to collapse. Sultan Selim examined the mosque, attended by his ministers, *ulemâ*, and the Chief Palace Architect, Sinan. He ordered all the buildings erected around to be pulled down..

In front of each of the right and left façades of the mosque was to be reserved an empty area of 35 *arşuns*. Around the school was to be left a path 3 *arşuns* wide. The government warehouse was to be pulled down. The wooden minaret on the dome was to be removed, and a new minaret erected on the wall of the buttress in front. In the open spaces 35 *arşuns* wide before each façade were to be built new buttresses and sustaining pillars. Inside and outside St. Sophia other places wanting repair were to be carefully noted, repaired, and cleaned. The stones and bricks from the buildings to be demolished were to be used in those repairs. That vast restoration was to be made under the supervision of the Head Architect Sinan ağa (Ahmed Refiq, *Onuncu asrı hicrî İstanbul Hayatı*).

According to Peçevi (vol. I, p. 501), "in the year 980 H. Sultan Selim II. ordered great pillars to be built as a precaution, to consolidate the great dome of the holy mosque of St. Sophia, and also two minarets, two high schools, and a mausoleum to serve as a burial place for himself".



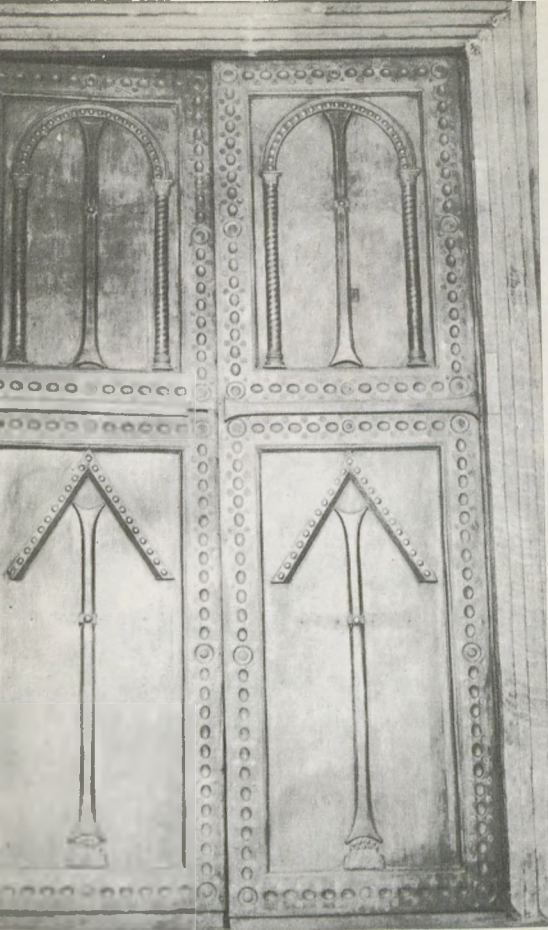
Mosaics of the Patriarch in the North
tympanum.



Decorated bronz doors.

According to Abubakir Bahram Dimaşqi (1906) Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror added to the mosque the **mihrab**, pulpit, minaret, müezzin's tribune, and **mescid**, Sultan Selim II. a minaret with one şerefe, on the south-east side of the **mihrab**, and Sultan Murad III., two minarets, one at each end of the western façade. During that repair the supporting walls of the pyramidal buttress built by Andronicus were raised to a greater height, and consolidated.

As Selim II. died one year after ordering the erection of the minarets it is likely that they were built by Murad III.



Bronz doors leading from
the outer narthex
to the inner narthex.

In 1717, in the reign of Ahmed III., the plaster fell off the walls of the mosque and was renewed. A large octagonal chandelier was made. It was quite plain, but harmonized with the majesty of the building. It was removed during the repairs of 1847-1849, and replaced by the present chandelier. We know Ahmed III.'s chandelier from a fine drawing by G. Fossati.

As Swift justly expressed it, the Turks showed in St. Sophia their usual tolerance in matters of religion, and did all they could to keep the building. The Conqueror did not change the shape of the building. He retained the name in the form of "Cami-i Aya-

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Constantine the Great and Justinian on
the door in the vestibule.

sofya-i Kebir". After the Conquest all the mosaics were left open. Charles XII, King of Sweden visited İstanbul in 1711 and with him Loose also came, he did a lot of pictures in Ayasofya and these drawings are in the Museum of Stockholm, according to the evidence of this album all the known mosaics in Ayasofya was in view at the beginning of the XVIIIth century. The mosaics were covered by whitewash after this period.

In the reign of Selim II., and subsequently, the building was kept in good condition by constant repairs. In 1747, in the reign of Ahmed III., the plaster fell off the dome, and it was renewed. Murad III. installed the marble tribunes, Murad IV., the stone pulpit, and Ahmed III., the chandelier. Mahmud I. built the şadırvan, the primary school, and the library.

The most important restoration of the building under the Empire was made from 1847 to 1849 by the Swiss architect Gaspar Fossati. The dome was consolidated with iron circles, bent columns were straightened, the plaster was renewed. The mosaics were cleaned and consolidated, and afterwards covered with a layer of plaster, which was afterwards ornamented with stenciled paintings imitating ancient mosaics. The restoration, which is due to the initiative of the grand-vezir Reşid paşa, cost 200 000 Turkish liras (equivalent to 20 millions in present currency)..

The building was damaged in the earthquake of the 10th of July 1894. Part of the plaster fell off. In 1897, a staff under the direction of İsmail paşa of Tokat, renewed the plaster and whitewash that had fallen off.

The most important restoration under the Republic was made in 1926 by a staff of professors, from the High School of Architecture. After a through examination it was understood that the foundation of the building reposed firmly upon a bed rock. The southern pier, which was found weak, was consolidated. The dome was encircled in a thick band of steel. Essential precautions were taken to prevent the infiltration of water. Subsequent earthquakes caused no damage to the building.

On the 1st of February 1935 St. Sophia was transformed into a museum by order of Atatürk. The Byzantine Institute of America had undertaken the task of uncovering the mosaics plastered over by Fossati, and the work had begun in 1931. All the mosaics extant have now been uncovered, cleaned, and consolidated. The same Institute drew a plan of the building on a scale of 1/50. From 1953 onwards the building is repaired every year.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

St. Sophia is a masterpiece of the 5th and 6th centuries, which are considered the first golden age of Byzantine architecture, and it presents the typical qualities of the architecture of that period. It is essentially in the form of a basilica with a nave and two aisles. The nave is much wider than the aisles, and it measures 38.07 ms., while the aisles measure 18.29 ms. each.



The royal box of the Sultan.

The total length of the building, including the apse, is 81.80 ffs. Those are the interior measures established by R. Van Nice. If we add to the length 10.50 for the inner narthex, and 6.60 ms. for the outer narthex, and the thickness of the walls, we shall find that the length of the building is 98.90 ms. According to E.H. Swift's computation the building covers an area of 7570 square metres, which proves it to be the world's fourth largest building, after the cathedrals of St. Peter in Rome, of Sevilla, and of Milan. The height of the dome being 55.60 ms. it ranges after those three buildings and the Church of St. Paul in London, of which the dome is 67.33 ms. in height.

The large dome in the middle of the building is not circular. It may be that it was originally circular and that the shape changed after the damages and repairs. One diameter is 30.876 ms. and the other 31.877, which gives an average of 31.37 ms. In the Mosque of Sultan Selim at Edirne, the masterpiece of the architect Sinan, the diameter of the circular dome is 31.26, which shows that the Turkish architect Sinan built a dome approaching that of St. Sophia. That dome has resisted all earthquakes.

The large dome of St. Sophia rests upon four pendentives forming a square, and supported by four great arches reposing upon the four massive piers on the middle of the building. The heavy thrust of the dome is received by the two half-domes in the east and west. Those large half-domes are supported on one side by the four massive piers, and on the other side by two minor pillars in the east and two in the west. The thrust of those half-domes is received in turn by smaller domes (exedrae) and conveyed to the main walls. Of the small domes in the east the middle one projects from the outside wall in the shape of a niche, and forms the place of the apse. The thrusts directed northward and southward are counteracted by the buttress walls built outside the walls on that side of the nave, and the thrusts conveyed from there to the exterior walls have been counteracted by the consolidation of the buttresses on that side. The two storied aisles also serve as supports.

The large green breccia columns on each side of the nave, between the massive piers, were brought from Ephesus. The eight red porphyry columns between the massive piers and the minor pillars were brought from Baalbec to Rome, and from there to Constantinople. In order to resist earthquakes the porphyry columns were joined together with metal ties, and tied with large bronze collars in order to preserve the parts that were cracked.

The bronze rings uniting the columns to their bases were formerly gilt in gold.

The aisles are divided lengthwise into three sections. The extreme parts in the east and west are supported by four columns each. The columns on the side of the eastern and western walls are square, and of white marble. The others are round and of green breccia.

On entering through the door we can see on the left, near the north-west corner, the "sweating column" (which is reputed to heal diverse ailments. It is covered up to a certain height with large bronze plates. In the middle is a hole. In the Byzantine period the column was called the "Column of St. Gregory the Thaumaturgist". It was believed to be miraculous and to have cured many ailments.

The weight of the walls of the building has been reduced by opening many arches and windows. They are combined in very artistic forms, embellishing that building.

THE UPPER GALLERY

Above the aisles and the inner narthex is an upper gallery which runs round the building. One part was formerly reserved to women. It was called the Gynaikain. The part above the inner narthex was probably reserved to the Empress and her suite. There is a square of vert antique in the opus sectile style, and on the edge of that square is a circle of green breccia, which perhaps indicates the place of the Empress. The middle of the west gallery was reserved to the Councils, and in the extreme east was a metatorium reserved to the Emperor. There the Emperor changed his vestments, and from there he listened to part of the office.

THE NARTHEX

On the north-west of the main building, and adjoining it, is a narthex measuring 10.50 ms. by 60.90 ms., and adjoining that is an outer narthex of the same length, and 6.60 ms. in width. Both are covered with groined vaulting. The inner narthex is built most somptuously, while the exonarthex, which was reserved to the catachemens (who had not yet been baptized), is extremely simple. The exonarthex opened on the atrium, which was encircled by an arcade. To-day all that remains of the atrium are some traces of its lateral walls.



The material used in the construction of St. Sophia is stone and bricks. The pillars are built of stone and the main lateral walls of bricks. In subsequent repairs were used sometimes alternate courses of stones and bricks. The bricks are square with sides of 35.5 cms., and the average thickness is 5 cms. The north and south main lateral walls are 1.06 ms. thick. The north walls are 1.37 ms. thick. On the west, the wall facing the inner narthex is approximately 1.52 ms. thick. In some places are walls 2.13 fs. thick.

Formerly around St. Sophia stood the Patriarchate and many subsidiary buildings, of which there only remain to-day the Baptistery (near the present entrance gate), and the Treasury, called Skevophylakion, near, the north-east corner of St. Sophia.

The Baptistery is square outside, and octagonal inside. Formerly the door was on the west side, but in the Ottoman period, after the building was turned into a mausoleum for the Sultans



Mustafa and İbrahim, the door was changed into a window, and other windows were opened, so that the interior could be seen from outside. The large baptismal tank which was formerly in the interior of the building is now in the inner court on the north. Of the mosaics which formerly adorned the ceiling no trace is left to-day. It is agreed that the date of construction is prior to Justinian's St. Sophia.

The Treasury is circular outside and inside. The interior diameter is 11.80. There are 12 niches. There are no windows on the first floor. The windows on the upper floor were afterwards walled up and transformed into niches. During the repairs of 1961 the windows have been uncovered, but they have not been opened.



The interior of Aya



They are framed in marble. Up till recently the building served as a book store. The interior walls are plastered. No traces of mosaics have been seen in the dome or anywhere else.

On the left of the apse, and slightly receding from it, was St. Peter's Chapel, and outside the east wall of the church, the Chapel of St. Nicholas, which communicated with the main building by a corridor. None of those chapels remain to-day.

VISIT TO ST. SOPHIA

The main entrance to the building was on the west façade, looking on the atrium, and the Emperor Justinian on the inauguration ceremony entered through that door. Usually the building was entered by the door on the south-west, through the place called the Horlogion. It is the door still used to-day.

On entering through the present outside gate you see on the right hand the building which was formerly the clock-room. On the left is the building which was formerly the primary school (1155 H.), and next to it, the *şadirvan* (ablution fountain), a fine monument of the Turkish art of the 18th century (1153 H.) (ill.3). Those three buildings date from the reign of Sultan Mahmud I., in the middle of the 18th century. The same Sultan built also the Library (1152 H.) adjoining the main building.

On the right of the entrance is the building which was formerly the Baptistery, and now contains the tombs of the Sultans Mustafa and Ibrahim.

On entering you should remark the bronze door. It was taken from a temple dating from the Hellenistic - Roman period, and brought to St. Sophia. The ornamentation is remarkable. The door bears the monograms of the Emperors Theophilus and Michael, and the Empress Theodora, and the monogram, "God and Christ help us". On the right leaf of the door is the inscription, "Michael Nikition", and below that the date 838, which indicates that the door was placed there by the Emperor Theophilus, who reigned from 829 to 848. Recent explorations have excavated the lower part of the door, which was buried 60 cms. in the ground.

On the right of the vestibule is a plain mihrab, which is said to have been made by the Conqueror. It was formerly one of the doors of the ramp leading to the gallery.

Above the door leading into the inner narthex is a large mosaic panel. It has been cleaned and uncovered, and represents the Virgin in the middle, seated upon the heavenly throne, and hol-

ding the infant Jesus on her lap. On the right Constantine the Great offers to her the city, and on the left the Emperor Justinian offers St. Sophia. The background is of gold. On both sides of the Virgin's head are the monograms of her title, M-P. OY, Mother of God. The Emperor's names are set vertically by their side. The panel, a masterpiece of the Byzantine art of mosaic, must have been made, like all the other figured mosaics in St. Sophia, in the last years of the 10th century, after the iconoclastic movement was suppressed.

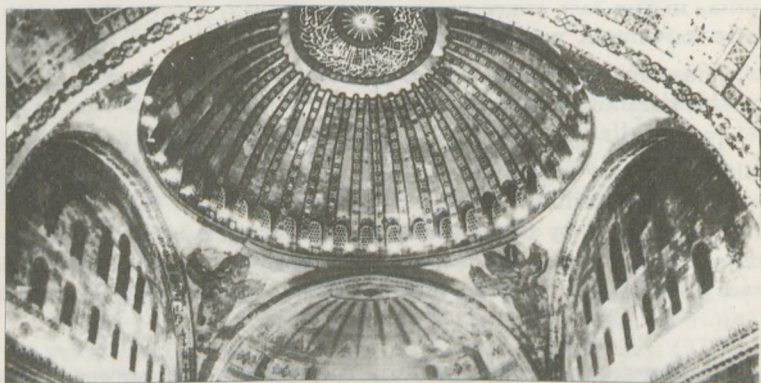
The arms of the crosses on the large bronze door opening into the narthex have been removed.

That door leads into the inner narthex. The groined barrel vault is entirely ornamented with gold mosaics dating from the reign of Justinian. As there are no figures on them they were not destroyed by the iconoclasts. The eastern wall of the narthex is covered up to the beginning of the arch with beautiful colored marbles. Up to a certain height from the floor, a dado of



The mosaic representing Christ, Empress Zoe and her third husband Constantine Monomachus.

green Thessaly marble runs round the entire narthex. Above, marble or porphyry slabs of many colors have been placed in their natural state, or cut and joined together so that various designs are combined by the way the veinings are assembled. The slabs on the walls were formerly encased in gilt frames with finely indented ornaments. At the junction of the marble mosaics



The tribunes above the main pendentives.

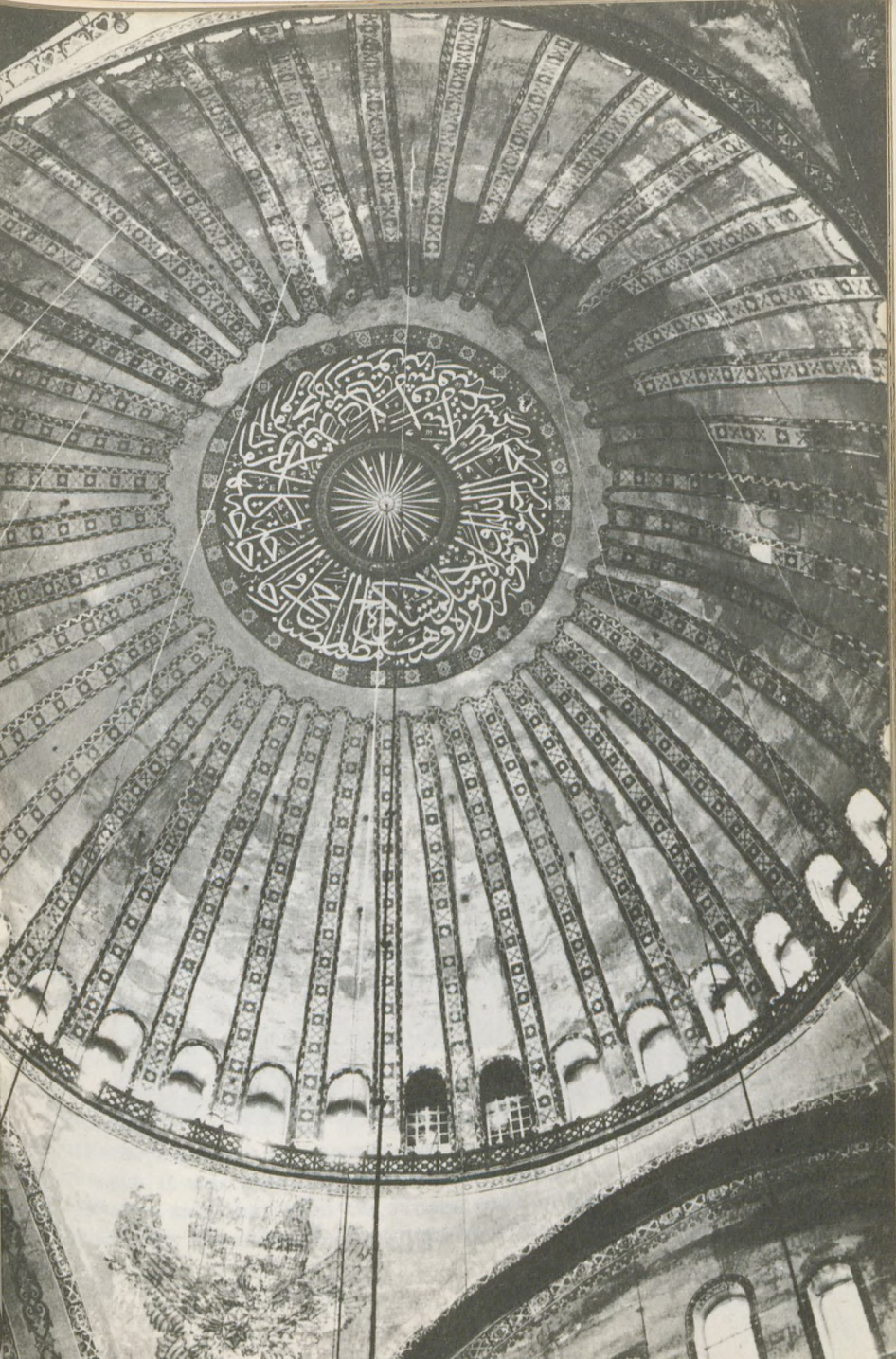
is a frieze artistically combined, with marbles of various colors, a band in opus sectile, and a plaster cornice. Part of the colored marbles which formerly adorned the west wall of the narthex no longer exist. During the repair of 1847 - 1849 the empty places left in that wall were painted to imitate marble, but to-day the colors are faded.

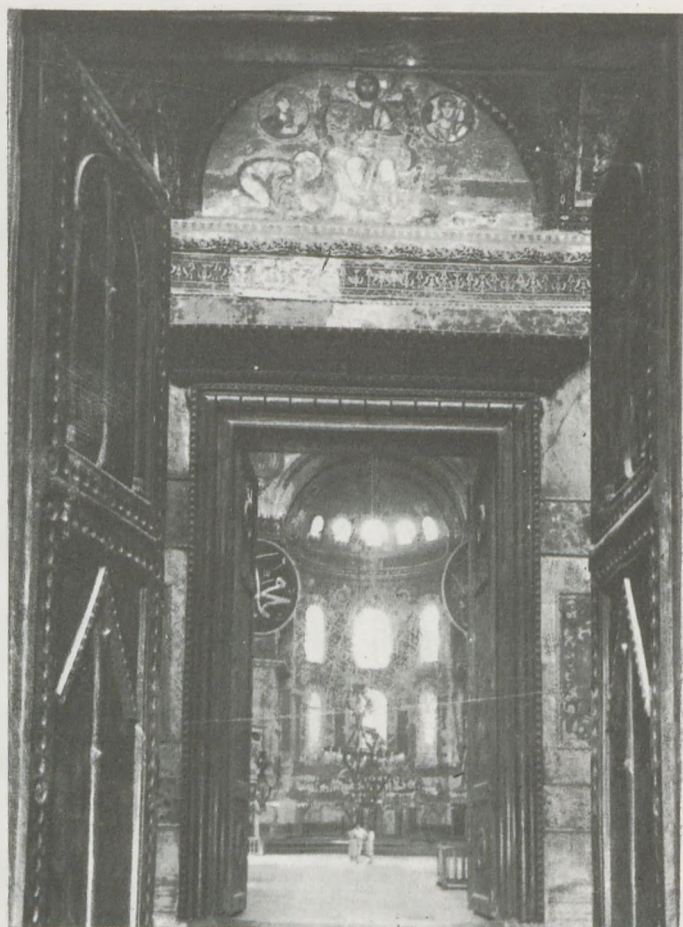
The floor is paved with large marble panels brought from the Island of Marmara.

Seven doors lead from the inner narthex into the outer narthex. In the extreme north is a door which opens into the garden, and communicates with the ramp leading to the upper gallery.

Under the inner narthex is a place covered with a vault supported by short pillars.

Of the nine doors leading from the inner narthex into the main building three were imperial doors. The middle one was larger and higher than the others. The emperor and the patriarch used that door on solemn ceremonies. In that door only the frame dates from the reign of Justinian. The leaves are new. Ro-





View from the outer narthex to the interior.

bert de Clary writes that those doors were covered with silver plates gilt in gold. In 1204 when the army of the 4th Crusade captured and plundered Constantinople those plates were torn off, like many other precious works of art, in order to be melted into coins. To-day all that remains of the ancient gold gilding can be seen on the bronze jambs of the door. Above the doors are hooks in the shape of a bent finger, to hang curtains. In the Byzantine period doors were covered with curtains called vela. In the Turkish period were thick curtains. The north doors were reserved to those who sought sanctuary in the church. The Castilian ambassador Clavijo, who visited Constantinople in the early 15th century, wrote, "If a murderer takes refuge there no one can touch him".

The west doors of the inner narthex open into the outer narthex. The outer narthex is quite plain in structure, but the doors opening into the inner narthex are remarkable, as they are the original doors dating from the Byzantine period, and are plated with bronze. They are ornamented with representations of large crosses shaped circles, vases with handles and filled with flowers, and various small animal figures. From remains extant it is evident that formerly those doors also were gilt in gold.

To-day three doors lead from the outer narthex into the atrium. Of the seven doors which existed formerly four are now walled up. To-day only traces remain of the atrium. It was formerly surrounded on three sides by a portico. In the middle of the the portico was, as in Turkish mosques, a font, a pond, and an inscription notifying that those who enter a place of worship must clean not only their face, but also their heart.

In front of the middle doors of the outer narthex are some remains from the St. Sophia of Theodosius II., discovered in the excavations made in 1936 by the German Archeological Institute. In the garden are architectural fragments from the same excavations. A reconstruction of that church was drawn according to those remains.

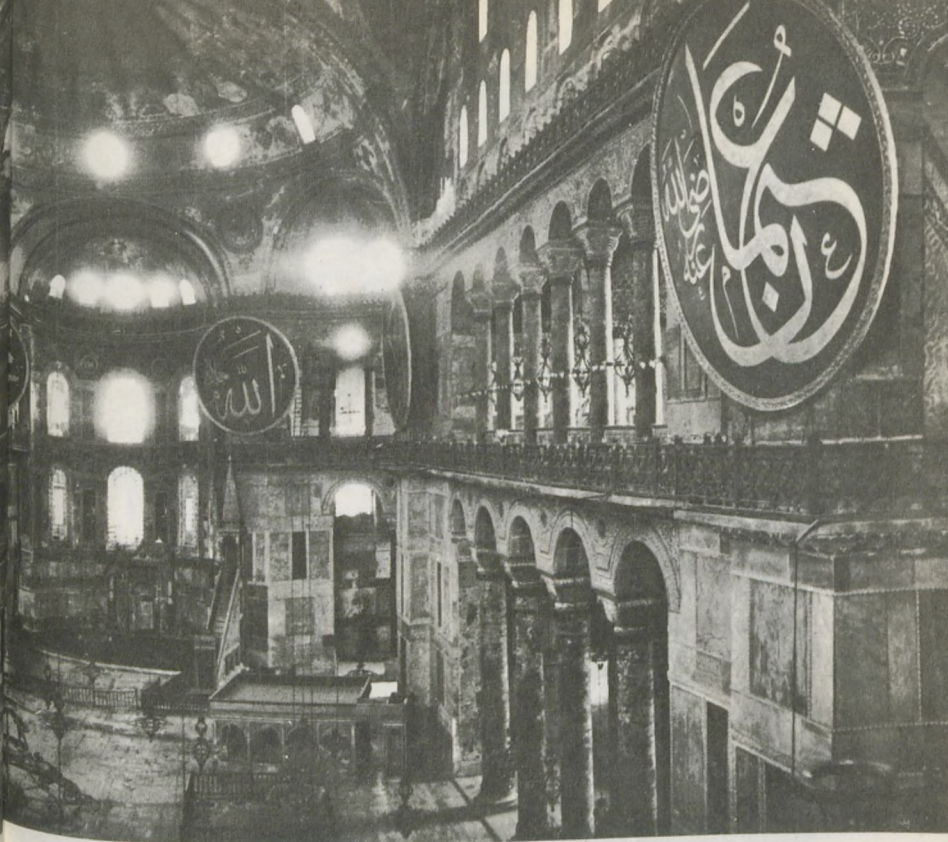
In the middle of the doors leading from the inner narthex into the main building is the Imperial Door, higher than the others. It is very large, and rests upon a huge block of green breccia. It was formerly covered with silver plates gilt in gold, and it is said that even the hinges were of silver. To-day it is of wood, like the other doors. Upon each face of the lintel, which



The interior of Ayasofya.

was formerly covered with a facing gilt in gold, is represented a throne upon which is an open book, inscribed with John the Evangelist's words about the Good Shepherd, and upon the book is a dove. The throne represents the Father, the book the Son, and the dove the Holy Ghost, the three Hypostases of the Greek Church.

In the lunette above that door is a mosaic panel representing Jesus seated on a throne, holding a book in which is the inscription, "I am the light of the world". On each side of Jesus is a medallion. In the medallion on his right is represented the angel Gabriel, winged, holding a scepter. In the left medallion is the Virgin Mary. On the left is an emperor, crowned, prostrated before Christ. Opinions vary as to whether the emperor is Basil I.



or Leo VI. The likeness to the pictures on coins makes it more probable that it is Leo V., who reigned from 886 to 892, which would date the mosaic in the end of the 9th century.

THE MAIN BUILDING

On entering through the Imperial Door the visitor finds himself in an immense and wonderful space (ill. 9a and 9b). He cannot but be deeply impressed by the great height of the dome, as well as by the varied and beautiful ornamentation all round. The long nave ends in a semi-circular apse, separated from the aisles by pillars covered with colored marble, between which are columns of green breccia and porphyry. The mighty columns support capitals of white marble covered with a fine tracery



enveloping the monograms of Justinian and Theodora. Above a band of ornaments in opus sectile rises the colonnade of the upper gallery. As you approach the apse, details are better discerned. On looking down you see the floor paved with huge marble blocks brought from the Islands of the Marmara, and cut so as to combine the veinings, and you can distinguish between them bands of green marble representing the four rivers of Paradise. The marble pavements were worn out in time and at a later date replaced by smaller blocks. On looking up you can see the dome, at a height of more than 55 ms., which seems to float in the air, you can see the gold mosaics decorating it, and you may sympathize with the founder of the church, the Emperor Justinian, who, on the inauguration day, forgot in his emotion the rules of state etiquette. In St. Peter's Church in Rome you are obliged to walk to the middle of the church to see the dome, whereas in St. Sophia you can see the dome in all its magnificence as soon as you enter through the door. St. Peter's is one story high, and St. Sophia two stories. Details are very few, so that as soon as you enter you can see the whole at one glance. In St. Peter's you have to think before you completely realize its grandeur.

A scrutinizing look at the drum of the immense dome, taking into account the three periods of collapse, can distinguish the difference between the colors and shapes of the mosaics.

Of the forty windows which existed formerly four are closed to-day. The frame of the dome is formed of forty ribs, built in bricks, and 1.10 ms. wide. Between those ribs are arched windows. The lateral thrust of the ribs is counteracted by the pillars outside. The windows form a perfect support together with the parts which fill the spaces between the ribs. The candelabra on each side of the mihrab were brought from Budapest in 930 H. by Sultan Suleyman the Legislator, and placed there as a souvenir of a victory. In the mihrab are inscriptions, and above, ornamentations in circular frames of stained glass, dating from the Ottoman period.

Formerly on each side of the apse, between the minor pillars in the east, was an iconostasis of solid silver gilt in goll, which separated the nave from the choir. Behind was the golden altar, and other sacred objects. Behind the altar was a golden cross twice the human height. Behind that were the seats of the priests (syndronon). All were plundered by the army of the Fourth Crusade, together with the ambo of silver decorated with precious stones, which stood in the middle of the church, facing the east. The ambo which replaced it was destroyed in the earthquake of 1346.

In the west façade of St. Sophia, above the three middle doors are ornaments in opus sectile. Above is represented a chapel with a cross in the middle. Below are represented two dolphins, symbol of Byzantium, and between them Poseidon's trident. That crest is repeated on the four piers facing the east and west galleries.

In the extreme east of the right aisle is the room called metatorium, which was formerly reserved to the Emperor. The Emperor came there after prayers, and received the homage of his courtiers. After a light repast he went out through the door called Funeral Door, and by the Chalcea door, which was close by, he entered the Palace. On the pier on the north side of that room a stone inserted into the pillar bears the trace of a hand, which is said to be the hand of the Conqueror or of a janissary, who rode into St. Sophia, over the coreps, and, as his horse reared, pressed his hand upon the stone where the trace remained .

It is impossible that the Conqueror or any other Muslim could ride into a church belonging to Christians, who are recognized by Muslims as "People of the Book", and the trace of a hand is at a height which could not be reached by the rider of a prancing horse. It is nothing but a legend. Formerly in the famous Church of Theotokos in the Blachernae was a similar trace of a hand, which was said to be that of the Virgin. It may be that after the church was burnt the trace of a hand was brought to St. Sophia, as a holy relic.

It is also reported that the crack on the porphyry column opposite the trace of a hand was cut by the Conqueror with one stroke of his sword, and the shape on the marble near the base of that column is said to be a trace of his horse's foot. It is impossible to cut a porphyry column with a sword. What is said to be a horse's footprint is evidently the trace left by all the worshipers who knelt before an icon which formerly existed on the column, and of which the place can still be seen to-day.

On each side of the middle door opening into the narthex is a round urn dating from the Hellenistic period. The urns were brought from Bergamon by Sultan Murad III. They are made of marble extracted from the Island of Marmara. The four tribunes extant were made by the same Sultan. The preacher's pulpit on the left of the nave was made by Sultan Murad IV.

In front of the müezzin's tribune on the right of the nave is the omphalus, o mosaic pavement in opus sectile. It is made



Verde antique columns.

of rare stones of many colors, and in the middle is a circular place of granite. According to Antony of Novogrod, who visited Constantinople in the early 13th century, that was the place where the Emperors were crowned.

Behind the müezzin's tribune, on the right of the mihrab is a **minber** (pulpit), a masterpiece of Turkish sculpture.

The present imperial pew must have been built by Fossati during the repairs of 1847 - 1849. Judging from an illustration in Fossati's book, the former imperial pew occupied part of the passage on the left on the mihrab. It was supported by gilt co-





lumn, and surrounded by a gilt grille. It had a mihrab made of beautiful tiles, and the walls were decorated with tiles. In the passage opposite is a picture of the Ka'ba, made of beautiful tiles.

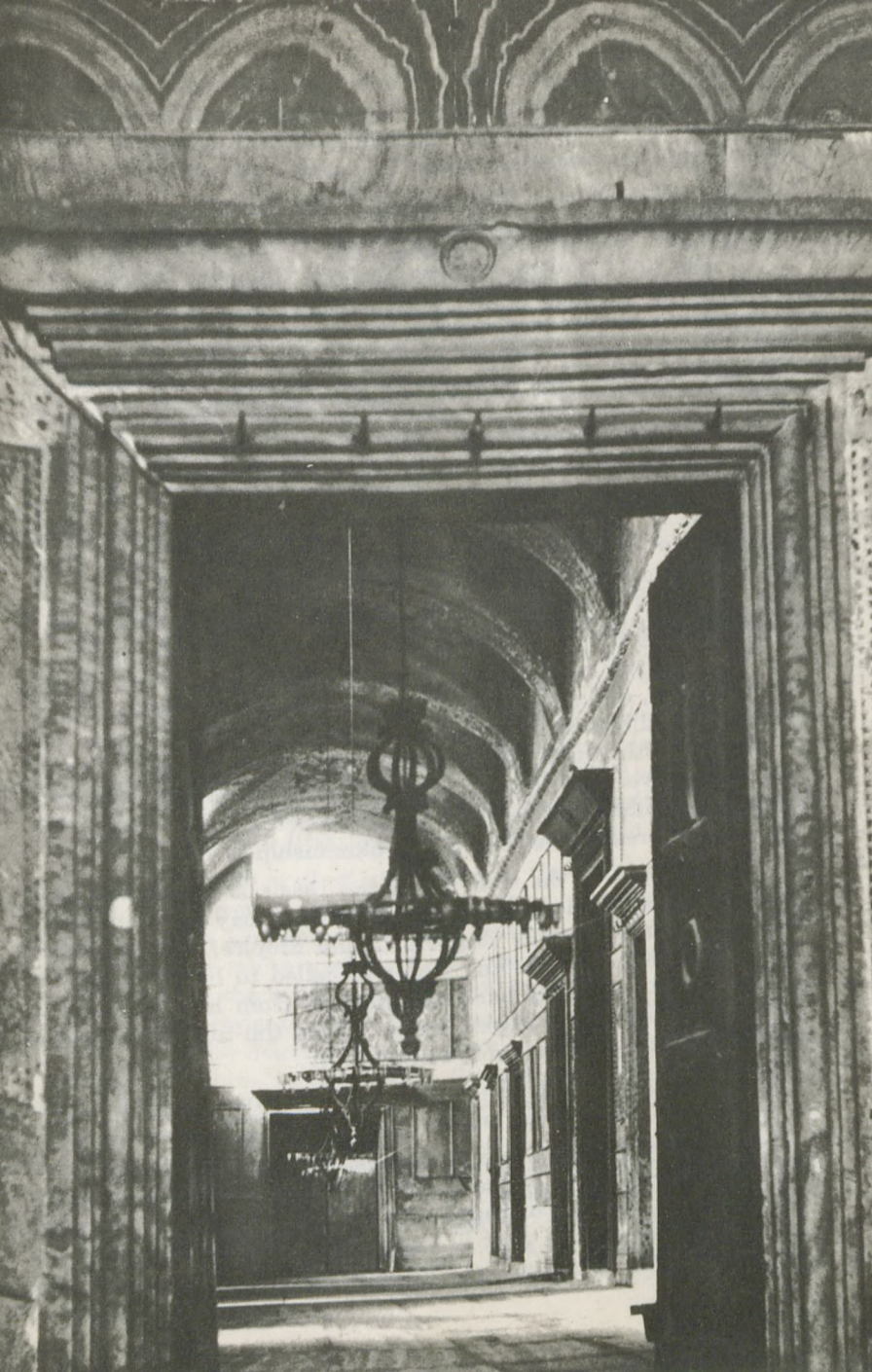
The walls in the first story of St. Sophia are decorated with marble panels of many colors, formed by cutting marble slabs and assembling their veinings so as to combine diverse strange designs.

THE UPPER GALLERY

Of the four ramps which formerly led from the first story of St. Sophia to the upper gallery, to-day three are extant. The fourth has been closed for the purpose of building a buttress on the south-east.



Inner narthex.



Those ramps were built to facilitate access to the upper story, and to allow the Emperor and Empress to be carried in sedan chairs. To-day the gallery is reached by the ramp at the north extremity of the inner narthex.

The upper gallery is composed of the north and south galleries, and the west gallery which unites those two.

In the south gallery, against the wall you can remark two bent columns. You pass through a marble door called the Door of Paradise and Hell, dating from the reign of Justinian. It opens on a narrow place comprised between the south-west pier and the pillar opposite, on the exterior wall. A door on the right leads into a small chapel. It is said that a priest who was praying when the Turks entered the church carried some sacred objects there and disappeared. On the left is a corridor which was built on the pier as an ornamenta addition. The pier was seen to be weak, and in the repairs of 1926-1930 the corridor was closed and the pier consolidated with iron and concrete. From there you enter the large hall where the Council assembled. The pavement shows depression in some places, and is no longer horizontal. But as to-day the building is settled no danger exists.

On the right is the Deisis, the most beautiful mosaic in St. Sophia, and perhaps in all the world. In the middle, Christ is represented seated on a throne, on his right is the Virgin, and on his left St. John the Baptist. The faces are most vivid and expressive. The mosaic dates probably from the 12th century. It resembles the mosaics of the Emperor John Comnenos and the Empress Irene, but the workmanship is finer.

At the foot of the wall facing the Deisis is the funeral slab of the Doge of Venice, Henry Dandolo, who may be considered the real destroyer of the Eastern Roman Empire. He was buried there. The painter G. Bellini, who was called to Istanbul by the Conqueror to paint his portrait, obtained from him the permission to take away the Doge's armor. When the tomb was opened in recent years it was found quite empty.

On the left you must remark the columns facing the nave, and the mosaics in their arches.

A narrow passage behind the eastern pier leads into a room in the south-east end of the building. It was also reserved to the Emperor. At the end of that room are two remarkable mosaics. In the mosaic in the west is represented the Virgin with the child Jesus in her arms. On both sides are the portraits of the

Emperor John Comnenos (1118 - 1143), his wife the Empress Irene, daughter of the King of Hungary, and, in the corner, their son Alexis, who was associated to the throne, and died before his father. The mosaics dates probably from the end of the first quarter of the 12th century. The mosaic in the east represents the Empress Zoe (1028 - 1050), with her third husband, Constantine Monomachus, and, between them Christ seated on a throne, and holding a book in his left hand. The Empress's name and her title, "most pious Augusta", can be read distinctly. The mosaic dates from the middle of the 11th century. From the corridor near that mosaic you can look down upon the mosaic of Christ and the Virgin in the apse, and see it from near, quite distinctly. The mosaic is believed to date from the 9th century, and it is very much like the mosaic extant in the choir of the Church of Dormition (Koimisis) in İznik. In an earthquake which occurred in the 14th century, part of the dome collapsed, together with part of the half-dome of the apse, and it is evident that the mosaic was renewed after that, during repairs. The proportions of the body above the knees has been altered, the Virgin's neck is longer than is usual in Byzantine art, the face resembles the mosaic of the Virgin in Cefalu in Sicily, and a difference is evident in the coloring of the Virgin's vestment.

Of the two mosaic angels on the wide arches near the half-dome only the one in the south is preserved in a fairly good condition, although partly deteriorated. Of the angel on the opposite arch only the tips of the wings and the feet remain. This mosaic must be one of the first made after the iconastic period.

On the north wall of the nave, at the level of the upmost gallery, are mosaics representing Ignatios, patriarch of Antiochus, St. John Chrysostomos, and Ignatios, patriarch of Constantinople, in white vestments. Those remarkable mosaic date probably from the middle of the 10th century.

Of the pendentives which form the transition between the circle of the dome and the square of the walls are represented four cherubim, in mosaics on the east pendentives, and painting on the west pendentives. Fossati, for some reason, covered their faces with gold (ill. 24).

The West Gallery joins the North and South Galleries together. It was reserved to women, the middle part being reserved chiefly to the wives of the courtiers. Near that part are to be remarked columns of green marble with mosaic ornaments above. The wooden ties between the columns are ornamented with tracery..



The Déesis in the South Gallery.



A door at the south end of the gallery opens into a small room. It has undergone many modifications. Formerly the ceiling was entirely covered with mosaics. They are divided into two groups. The first are ornamental mosaics and crosses dating from the 6th century. The second group are on the east side of the ceiling. They were made after the iconoclastic period. They represent Methodius, Terasius, Germanos, and Nicephoros, who opposed the iconoclastic movement. They have been deteriorated by time, but the names can be read. In the middle were probably represented the Apostles. To-day two can be identified as St. Peter and St. Andrew. On the ceiling are the figures of an Emperor, who must be Constantine the Great, and of the first martyr, St. Stephen, and remnants of other figures. Above the entrance door is a Deisis representing Christ upon a throne, and the Virgin on his right. The third figure which should represent St. John the Baptist is effaced. The vestments are dark blue and black. The faces are of a rather more primitive workmanship



than in the other mosaics. They were made in the 9th century, when the art of portraiture had been forgotten, and had to search before attaining perfection. The figures of the other apostles and patriarchs were made at a later date.

In the adjoining room are ornamental mosaics and crosses dating from the 6th century. On the side facing the present entrance of the Museum are mosaics of which one part is to-day covered with a cross. It is evident that human figures were represented there and below were inscriptions giving their names, that they were destroyed by the iconoclasts and replaced by figures of crosses, and that the places of the inscriptions were filled up.

On the west of that room are three small rooms. The room on the extreme west has a door on the north. It is walled up, as it opened on empty space.

In the south-west corner of the North Gallery is a mosaic of the Emperor Alexander I. (912-913). It is the only mosaic portrait of an emperor in St. Sophia kept entire. It shows a 10th century emperor in ceremonial garments. The emperor's name and titles are inscribed on both sides of his head.

The marble plates on the walls of the gallery are covered with graffiti. Visitors who came in the Middle Ages inscribed there their names and prayers. On the inner side of the balusters facing the nave is the inscription.

and next to that the inscription
The first signifies, "Make room for the noble patrician Theodora". The second gives the name of Theodora and the date 801.

TURKISH INSCRIPTIONS EXTANT IN ST. SOPHIA

The inscription extant in the dome was written by the Kazasker (vic-chancellor) and calligraphist Mustafa İzzet efendi during the repairs of 1847 - 1849. The inscriptions in the oversized circular panels measuring 7.5 ms. across, hanging on the walls, were also written by him. The inscriptions written in the 16th century by the calligraphist Tekneci İbrahim in small circular panels harmonize better with the indented frames between the colored marble panels and with the general architectural structure of the edifice.

The inscription on the beautiful tiles around the mihrab is partly damaged. The tiles are broken, and the inscription has been completed with painting.

The mosaic representing Virgin Mary, Emperor John Comennus and his wife Iréne.



Of the inscriptions on the minber, on the side facing the mihrab, the lowest was written by Sultan Mustafa III. On entering through the Imperial Door, you must remark the third of the four green breccia columns between the two piers on the two piers on the right. On the ring joining that column to its base is the inscription, "On sekizinde fi yevmi pazar. Sene 1028". On the ring of the first column, on the side facing the door, is the inscription, "Tarihi kesreti ta'un. Sene 1237".

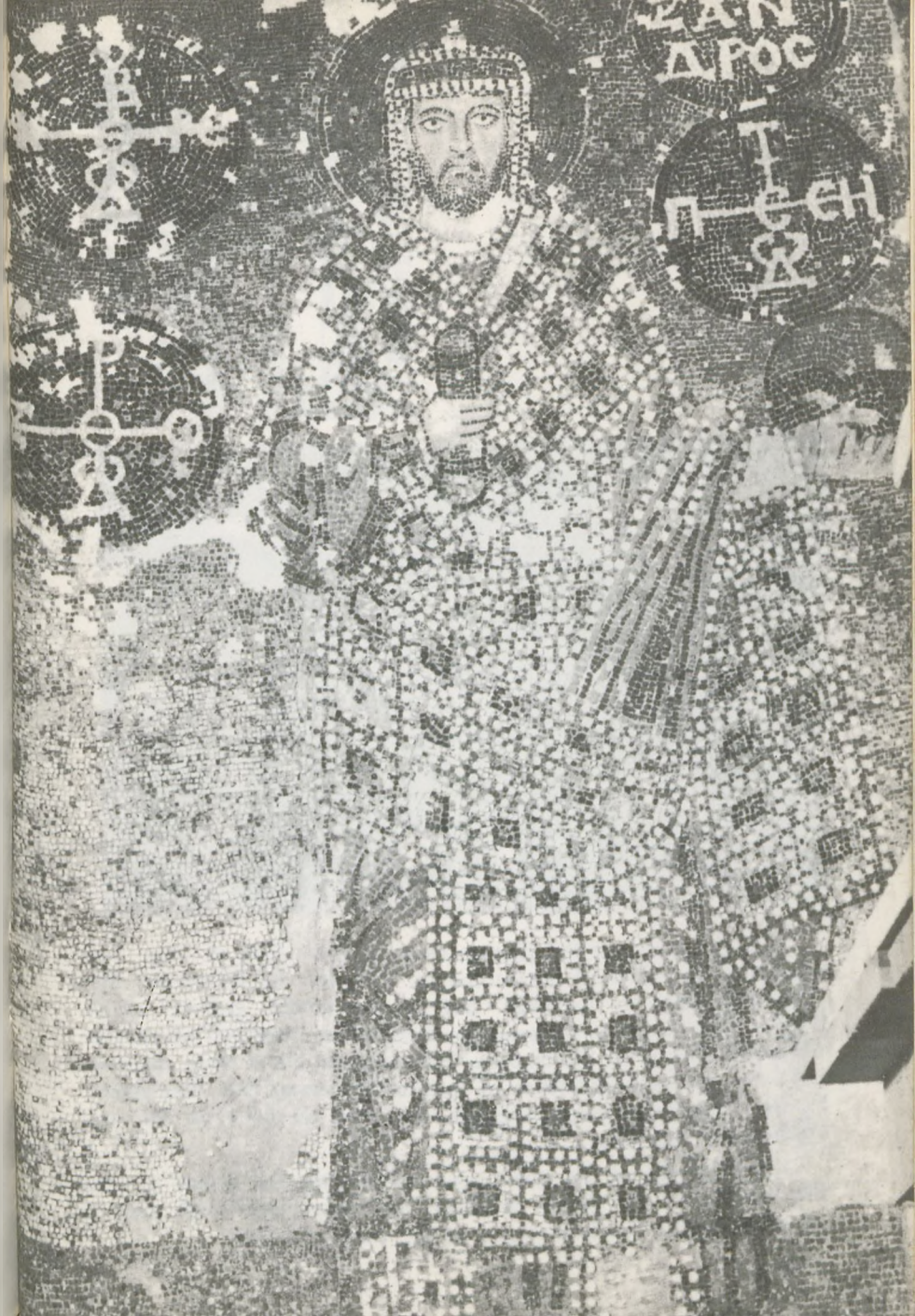
Facing the middle of the south aisle, is the St. Sophia Library, enclosed in bronze grilles. It was founded in 1739 by Sultan Mahmul I., and contains 6000 precious manuscripts.

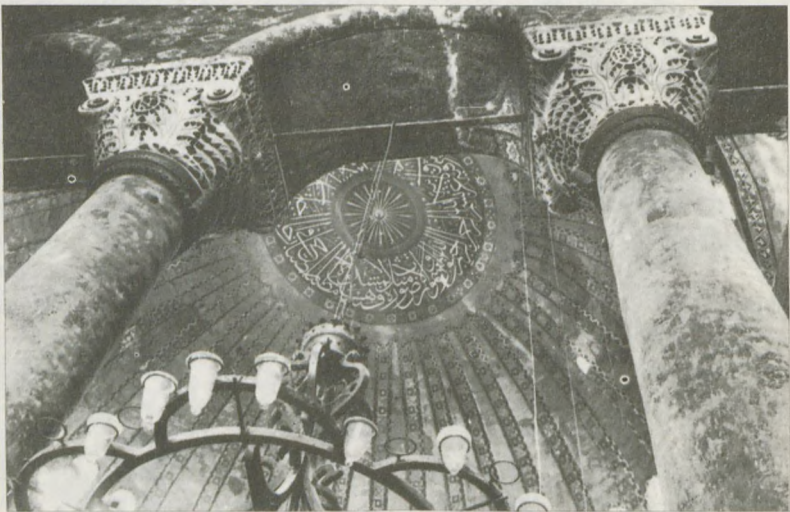
In the lunette of the middle door opening from the outer narthex into the inner narthex (the Imperial Door), is the date MDCCCXLVII, on the edge of the south-west corner of the cornice. It is the date of the repairs of Fossati. In the next lunette is a female bust.

In the north and south ends of the outer narthex are the doors opening into the minarets of the architect Sinan. A room at the west of the north end is used to-day as the gallery of stamped Byzantine bricks. The room at the south end is used as a store. Above is a room which to-day has no connection whatever with the outside.

In the outer narthex are a great number of Byzantine architectural fragments, and one Empress's sarcophagus brought from the court of the Zeyrek Mosque (Pantokrator).

The mosaic representing Emperor Alexandre
in the North galery.





On the wall are the plaster casts of the Acts of the last session of the Council assembled in 1166 by the Emperor Manuel Comnenus in the large hall in the south gallery of St. Sophia. The Emperor ordered the Acts to be inscribed on marble slabs and placed in St. Sophia. The original slabs were discovered later in the mausoleum of Sultan Suleyman the Legislator. Plaster casts were made, and they are now on show on the wall of the outer narthex.

A fragment of the inscription concerning the repair in the 8th century of the Castle of Silivri has been discovered, and is on show in the south-east end of the outer narthex.

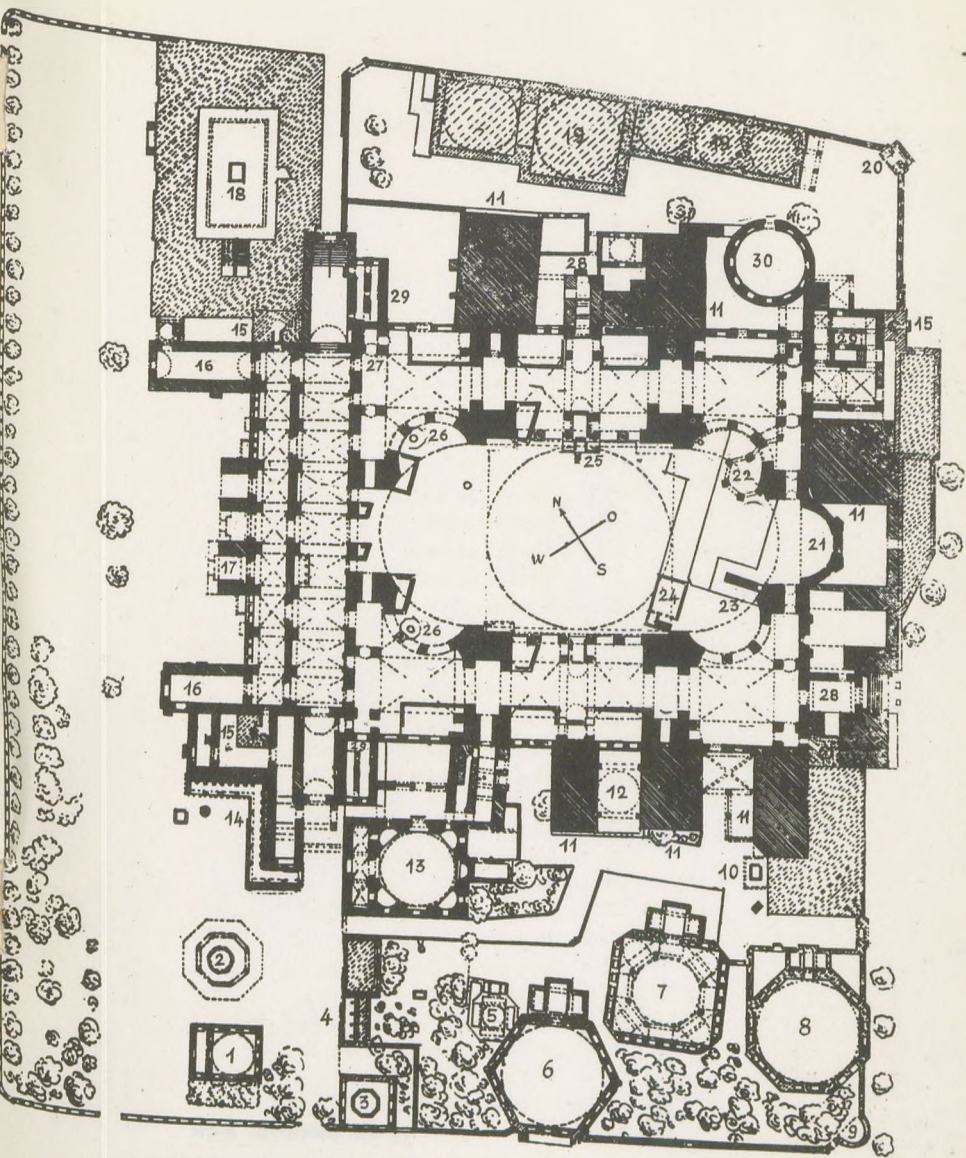


PLAN



PLAN OF SAINTE SOPHIA AND ENVIRONS

- 1 — Shool for children.
- 2 — Shadırvan.
- 3 — Watch repair centre
- 4 — Section of the Trustees (at present office of the Curator)
- 5 — The tombs of the Ottoman princes.
- 6 — The tomb of Murad III
- 7 — The tomb of Selim II
- 8 — The tomb Mehmet III
- 9 — Sebil (fountain)
- 10 — Marble cistern.
- 11 — Retaining walls of the Turkish period.
- 12 — Library
- 13 — Baptistry
- 14 — Sebil
- 15 — Minarets
- 16 — The remains of the Theodosian Ayasofya.
- 17 — The remains of the Theodosian Ayasofya.
- 18 — The medreseh of Ayasofya (does not exist anymore)
- 19 — The "imaret" of Ayasofya
- 20 — The door of the "imaret"
- 21 — Mihrab
- 22 — Royal box of the Sultan.
- 23 — Mimber.
- 24 — Section of the muezzin.
- 25 — Rostrum.
- 26 — The marble containers brought from Pergamum.
- 27 — Perspiring colmn.
- 28 — The door of the Meyit
- 29 — The ramps going up to the gallery.
- 30 — The treasury.



APA OFSET BASIMEVİ TEL: 22 42 87

Basıldığı tarih : 1/8/1964

Kişisel Arşivimde İstanbul'daki
Taha Toros Arşivi



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