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to the provinces. The Constantinopolitan influence is undeniable, yet noncritical engagement with center–periphery discussions runs the risk of sentencing Byzantine architecture outside the capital to a merely passive role. Though some essays follow a more traditional track, the volume as a whole, following in the footsteps of Slobodan Ćurčić and Robert Ousterhout, demonstrates that Byzantine architecture evolved simultaneously and independently, yet not in isolation, in both the capital and the provinces. Related to this discussion, the article by Justin Mann and Fotini Kondyli deserves special mention, for it introduces an alternative interpretative approach, the architecture of affiliations, which privileges meaning over the type of such relationship.

Lastly, the volume's unapologetic use of the term "Byzantine" should not go unremarked, considering the current trend away from it. This is obviously a disciplinary difference rather than an ideological one, in line with the general reluctance for such relabeling in the fields of archaeology and history of art and architecture. The reason for continuing to employ the term is not simply about avoiding possible confusion with the Ancient Romans but also a matter of identity and a deliberate choice to distinguish the civilization and its material culture at the heart of this volume. This need cannot be entirely avoided by the proponents of novel terminology either, as becomes evident in their use of various qualifiers together with the term "Roman" ("New," "East," "Eastern," etc.). From the perspective of material studies, the substitution of the term "Byzantine" with "Eastern Roman"—a term which, as may come as a surprise, also carries negative connotations outside Western academia—would not add much to the discussion of cultural continuity, nor would it offer a new interpretative outlook toward old monuments. Besides, "Made in the Eastern Roman Empire" would not resonate in the same way as "Made in Byzantium" does.

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Emily Neumeier and Benjamin Anderson, eds., *Hagia Sophia in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024. 312 pages, with 41 color and 54 black-and-white illustrations. ISBN: 9781474461009

> St. Sophia, early as it is in the history of the art, … is most vigorously alive. [I]t is not bound by the past, but it has garnered all that there was in it which was fit to live and produce fresh life; it is the living child and the fruitful mother of art, past and future.[1]

This is how William Morris, artist, designer, poet, thinker, social activist, and founding member of the British arts and crafts movement, summarized the impact of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The church that was founded by Constantine I and restored by Justinian I is not just a monument, is not even *the* monument. The "crown of all great buildings in the world" is an archetypical example of a building redolent with centuries of meaning and significance in the historical, cultural, religious, social, and political spheres, and even in the popular imagination. Through its many restorations, transformations, re-consecrations, and rehabilitations, the building has remained still "vigorously alive," and its past, modern, and post-modern re-imaginings not only shaped the identity and image of Byzantium, the Holy Empire of the Romans that gave birth to it, and the Muslim Ottoman Empire that inherited its legacy, but seem to resonate still as far as the other end of the Atlantic.

The present volume, edited by Emily Neumeier and Benjamin Anderson, is exceptionally pluralistic. In addition to a comprehensive introduction by the editors that sets the framework and provides a detailed biography of Hagia Sophia, it contains nine studies in diverse fields (history, archaeology, art history, literature, folklore, and religious studies) and a variety of methodological approaches that unravel fascinating aspects of the monument's life in the "long nineteenth century," more specifically between 1739 and 1934.

Hagia Sophia has been regarded primarily as an architectural marvel, and the Ottoman period represents one of the most intriguing phases in the monument's architecture and appeal. In the volume's first chapter, Ünver Rüstem discusses the conversion of the imperial mosque of Hagia Sophia into a lavish charitable mosque complex on the initiative of Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730–54). Besides the artistic value of the endeavor, which legitimatized Ottoman baroque and introduced Istanbul to the international baroque scene, the ambitious project established the use of the monument for political purposes in the modern era and strengthened the image of Mahmud as a man ahead of his time and great sponsor of the arts.

Art and politics were certainly behind the numerous reproductions of Hagia Sophia's architecture and specific architectural elements, primarily the legendary dome. In chapter 6, Robert Nelson examines one of the most radical such reproductions, one that attests to the monument's universality and its impact as a global signifier. The author discusses, based on a case study of the Tifereth Israel Synagogue (founded 1924) in Cleveland, Ohio, by the architect Charles R. Greco, the emergence of the so-called Byzantine synagogue style, which had Hagia Sophia as its prototype. The architect of the project was Catholic, the building expresses the religious spirit of the Jewish faith, yet, at the same time, it

was considered "more Byzantine than anything else but still not too oriental," thus reflecting the unique, pluralistic character of its model.

Besides architecture, texts play a pivotal role in Hagia Sophia. These are sometimes implicit, as in the figure of the Christ Child, the incarnated Word (*Logos*) of God, in the celebrated Virgin with Child apse mosaic. And they are sometimes emphatically displayed, as in the lengthy inscriptions on the imperial mosaics in the upper gallery and the calligraphic roundels of the nave. In both cases, Byzantine script, Islamic script, and, metaphorically, divine script, the Word of God, transform the interior of Hagia Sophia into a most exciting canvas where the art and meaning of the inscribed written text stands on par with that of the mosaic and sculptural decoration. The Byzantines themselves used the same word to refer to the writing or narration of a story and the art of mosaic or fresco painting (*historein*), while calligraphy was considered, besides the actual meaning of the recorded text, a most celebrated art in the Muslim world.

Two essays in the present volume deal with the written word, texts, in Hagia Sophia. In chapter 2, Tülay Artan focuses on the inscription by the eminent thirteenth-century Sufi poet and mystic Sharafaddin al-Busiri which decorates the ablution fountain that was added to the atrium of Hagia Sophia in 1740. Artan brilliantly discusses the function of the inscription within the cosmopolitan milieu of eighteenth-century Constantinople, arguing that besides its spiritual significance, the inscription had a profound political and social impact. A multicultural crowd of merchants, diplomats, pilgrims, and locals constituted its diverse audience, and its placement at a focal point in Hagia Sophia, which was already decorated with an earlier Byzantine inscription also referring to the mystically purifying qualities of water, enhanced the Ottoman Empire's image and prestige in a subtle but powerful way.

The prominent and imposing oversize calligraphic roundels in the nave of Hagia Sophia, inscribed in gold script on a green background, were added to the monument by Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839–61). Designed by Muslims and executed by Greek Orthodox carpenters, these replaced earlier ones and recorded the names of the four caliphs who succeeded Muhammad as well as other champions of the Ottoman religion. In contrast to the fountain inscription, which blends literary and metaphorically into the monument and its premises, and despite the fact that these panels are among the most significant, easily recognizable, and widely reproduced features of Hagia Sophia, an indispensable part of the monument's biography, they seem aesthetically and spiritually disconnected from it: their main purpose, as Emily Neumeier convincingly argues in chapter 3 of the volume, was primarily, and most openly this time, political: to elevate the subsequent restorations of Hagia Sophia by the sultans.

These panels feature prominently in the album of twenty-five lithographs printed in London in 1852, which records the famous Fossati restoration conducted under the same sultan, Abdülmecid, as Aslı Menevse discusses in chapter 7. The Swiss-Italian Fossati brothers aimed at the structural consolidation and repairing of the monument, attending to missing or damaged decoration; however, their work became a celebrated part of the monument's history not for that, but for the unexpected discovery of the upper gallery mosaics. Menevse rightly argues that the impact of the Fossati restoration was twofold: it was politically exploited by the sultan to promote in Europe the image of a civilized Ottoman Empire and of a sultan who cared for the cultural and religious identity of all his citizens, and, perhaps most importantly, it gave birth to a cornerstone publication as regards the monument and its decoration, that of the Prussian engineer Wilhelm Salzenberg in 1854.

In contrast to Salzenberg's rather "scientific" approach, the Fossati album captures not only Hagia Sophia's art and architecture but also moments of its liturgical and ceremonial life. Ayşe Hilâl Uğurlu, in chapter 8, extensively discusses one of these, the Night of Power prayer ceremony. The ceremony was developed in three stages, which coincided with key moments in the monument's history. Particularly during the nineteenth century, the ceremony was used as an opportunity for a cosmopolitan social gathering in the presence of the sultan, European ambassadors, and Muslim and Christian attendants, primarily of the upper classes. With a prestige comparable to that of the National Prayer Breakfast hosted nowadays by the US president, it was repeated after eighty-two years in 2016, demonstrating once again that the cultural and the spiritual still blend inextricably with the political in Hagia Sophia.

Benjamin Anderson's article, chapter 4, covers one of the most important aspects of the monument's life: its place in folklore and the subsequent creation of its legend. Although Hagia Sophia was the protagonist in popular myths already during the Byzantine era, Anderson focuses on nineteenth-century publications that offer more or less comprehensive descriptions of Hagia Sophia with a pronounced interest in folklore. Ranging from the cornerstone of E. M. Antoniades's *Ekphrasis* to empirical folklore accounts of the monument, such as Fauriel's *Anthology* and J. Nikolaidès's 1894 publication, Anderson investigates the principal parameters of an empirical approach to a building that became, more than any other in architectural history, central in the popular (sub)conscious.

In the same line, the late Robert Ousterhout, an architectural historian whose name is so closely linked to the study of key Byzantine monuments, explores in chapter 9 the place of Hagia Sophia in the American press between 1910 and 1927. In the wake of the First World War and the years that followed, Hagia Sophia was established as a trophy symbol in political struggles for power, dominance, and prestige. Lingering between the Christian and Muslim worlds and its function as a church, mosque, and museum, Hagia Sophia became during the era a universal emblem of lost heritage—a function that still holds, most emphatically, in politics, religion, and the popular imagination.

Finally, Sotirios Dimitriades, in chapter 5, examines the restoration of "another Hagia Sophia," in Ottoman Thessaloniki, in northern Greece. The restoration is discussed as part of a well-planned program to enhance imperial power and prestige. Since the monument greatly interested European scholarship during the era, the restoration work on it, and particularly on the dome mosaics, was exploited by the reigning Sultan Mehmed V as a means to advance his image as the protector of global cultural heritage beyond any Christian–Muslim distinctions. A study of the Byzantine Research Fund Archive of the British School at Athens could have informed the article more thoroughly on the circumstances and the historical context of these restorations, as well as the role of the European research teams in the city during the era and their interaction with the Muslim authorities, offering even more detailed technical information on the project.[2]

The "long nineteenth century," and especially its second part, was marked, primarily in Europe, by modernistic, avant-garde intellectual and artistic queries. The British arts and crafts movement, with strong socio-political concerns that developed as a reaction to the rapidly evolving industrialization and commercialization of Victorian Britain, placed Byzantine architecture and art at the heart of its ideological and artistic quests. In this light, Hagia Sophia was rehabilitated by pioneers of the movement, such as William Morris and William Lethaby, as an exemplar of rational and inventive architecture, with meaningful, organic ornamentation, a model building with universal appeal, the prototype of any "living" architectural structure. Although Robert Nelson's 2004 monograph discusses this period in the monument's life, the present volume could have profited much by re-addressing the issue.[3] This, of course, does not in any way diminish the impact of the remarkable volume, which brings together a vast array of compelling essays illustrated with excellent quality black-and-white as well as color images. All manage to succeed in attracting the interest of specialists in the field as well as the wider public, making the volume both a timely addition to scholarship and a reference book on the topic for students and researchers, while providing, with the help of a most comprehensive introduction, the necessary context for non-specialist audiences.

On 24 July 2025, Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan celebrated the fifth anniversary of Hagia Sophia's "resurrection," that is, its reconsecration as a mosque. As this monograph argues, Hagia Sophia has been and will again be resurrected many more times in its past, present, and future. It is even expected to feature as the protagonist in one last resurrection drama, metaphysical this time, when the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire will miraculously reappear, according to the apocryphal literature, folklore tales, and the popular imagination, to restore it one last time, putting an end to its historical adventures and wanderings.

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1 William Morris, "The History of Pattern-Designing," in *Lectures on Art Delivered in Support of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings*, ed. Reginald Stuart Poole, William Blake Richmond, Edward John Poynter, John Thomas Micklethwaite, and William Morris (Macmillan and Co., 1882), 130.

2 Dimitra Kotoula, "The Byzantine Mosaics of Thessaloniki in the 19th Century," in *The Mosaics of Thessaloniki Revisited*, ed. Antony Eastmond and Myrto Hatzaki (Kapon Editions, 2017), 131–43, esp. 132–38.

3 Robert Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950: Holy Wisdom Modern Monument* (University of Chicago Press, 2004).

Timur Hammond, *Placing Islam: Geographies of Connection in Twentieth-Century Istanbul*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2023. xxv + 231 pages. ISBN: 9780520387430

Since the 1990s, scholars of Turkey have increasingly drawn on spatial metaphors, conducted transregional analysis, and highlighted connections, networks, and power relations. Even microhistorians and ethnographers of small localities have come to engage with trans-local and spatial analysis. Among the numerous accomplishments of this spatial perspective is its emphasis on fluidity, borderlines, and the permeability of social relations—as opposed to fixity, essence, and uniformity, all of which might cursorily be associated with "place." Yet some scholars have remained aloof from this trend, continuing to cling to the particularities, nuclei, and subjectivities of places. But do these two approaches have to be mutually exclusive? Could we not examine a place in its spatial embeddedness? That is, could we not simultaneously study transregionality without reducing the local into an empty background and study subjectivities and identities without becoming trapped in essentialism? Timur Hammond's timely intervention, *Placing Islam*, not only affirms that we can but also shows us how to analyze "place making" with all its alterations and connections.

Focusing on the iconic district of Eyüp in Istanbul, Hammond's book asks how people create "places of Islam amidst a changing city, nation, and world" (p. xxv). Moving beyond a static, container-like conception of space, Hammond foregrounds