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WHAT IS THE *AUTHENTIC* HAGIA SOPHIA?

The complexity of the architectural history of Justinian's Hagia Sophia is well known. What we see today of this incomparable space is the accumulation of the partial changes that occurred in a period of 1473 years after its dedication. The clearest visual impacts are given by slender corner minarets topped by sharp corns and Ottoman domed additions to the south and north on the ground level. This *ensemble*, displaying intricate evidence of historical development, may therefore be a suggestive case for us to consider and discuss once again the key concept of conservation theory and practice – 'authenticity'.

The change of this heritage is not limited to its visual aspects. The western semi-dome, after the collapse in 989, was rebuilt by Armenian architect Trdat. It was quite natural of him to make every possible effort to secure the structural stability, or rather, secure the structural stability based on his belief and experience. The great western arch was reconstructed with exceptionally large bricks, and a couple of windows at the base of the dome were closed to make the border of his reconstruction better connected to the remaining 6th century portion of the dome.

The biggest challenge for him must have been the reconstruction of the western semi-dome itself. His solution was to build the domical shell in a fairly flattened shape, which would secure self-support of his semi-dome and counteract the enormous horizontal outward thrust of the main dome. A series of structural analyses done by my laboratory have shown that this peculiar profile of the western semi-dome was sufficiently effective from a structural point of view both during and after the reconstruction. Thus, Trdat's semi-dome to the west shows a marked contrast with the eastern semi-dome, which, in turn, was reconstructed after its collapse in the 14th century following the curvature of the original quarter sphere.

In view of authenticity, the radical change introduced by Trdat both in shape and structure was not at all a convincing attempt. Has the authenticity of Justinian's Hagia Sophia since been lost forever due to this mid-Byzantine intervention? Or did this history affix an Armenian authenticity beside Justinian's? With a step further into the period after the fall of Constantinople, from the conceptual view of authenticity, how do we understand Ottoman additions, without which the visual integrity would be incomplete for the eye of modern visitors? Even the mid-19th century Fossati brothers' restoration-reinforcement has already become one part of the history of Hagia Sophia. In short, we should ask to ourselves: "What is the *authentic* Hagia Sophia?"

The idea of authenticity, while functioning as a preventive philosophy for excessive intervention, has been widened to cover the diversity of cultural heritage, such as landscape on a larger scale. Returning to the basic meaning of the word, and referring to relevant ICOMOS Principles and Charters, I would like to take this opportunity at Cottbus to discuss the relationship between authenticity and history through an example where the complex historical changes in space and structure constitute its 'authenticity'.