

# [Hagia sophia in terms of plotinus views](https://assignbuster.com/hagia-sophia-in-terms-of-plotinus-views/)

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Hagia Sophia Manifestation of contemporary philosophies and civilizations is a learned and known function of art and architecture. Monuments, palaces, churches, mosques and other constructs and structures stand tall to represent the life and values of a particular age. This is particularly true for few ancient structures on our planet that are there for centuries and have got a touch of major civilizations while somehow avoiding a distortions and deformations of basic architecture on which they were perceived and built. Hagia Sophia is among the oldest constructs on this globe. Built in 537 CE still offers a beautiful sight in Istanbul, Turkey. However, the symbolic value of Hagia Sophia in philosophy and history is far richer than the aesthetic contribution of the structure. Plotinus philosophy was prevailing when the Hagia Sophia was initially conceived and constructed as a Cathedral of Constantinople by Emperor Justinian. (Nelson, XV). Plotinus views that, “ beauty communicates the order and harmony of the cosmos, both visually and intellectually” (Plotinus) seems to be the major influence on the architectural design and interior of the Hagia Sophia. The link between Hagia Sophia architecture and the spiritual values of the Christianity is analyzed by several contemporary writers, articulating his interpretations Eastmond (60) states, “ This interpretation of the architecture and ritual associated with Hagia Sophia suggests that the Grand Kornneoni were acting in with the standard Byzantine and indeed with broader Christian preoccupations.” At the same time it is important to understand that “ Plotinus theories were fundamentally those of Plato” and Platonism “ had significant influence on the thinkers of the Christian Church”. Therefore the Plotinus view on art and beauty had an indirect impact on the all art and architecture produced by Christians in the contemporary period. (Plotinus). The impact of this perspective is evident from the fact that Hagia Sophia is equally beautiful, artistic and epitome of ancient architectural intellect from a layman and a highly learned intellectual of this age. Beyond the city limits and at a relatively elevated site the church of Hagia Sophia, also know to be the church of wisdom was surrounded by a double story gatehouse. This can be seen as an emblem of Plotinus philosophy of self purification through well guarded set of virtues and “ highly purifying values.” The church being the center of purification activities stood majestically inside a layer of protective structures. The very structure of the Hagia Sophia was designed to represent the beauty. In Platonism beauty is viewed as “ the manifestation of divine” (Plotinus) and the splendor and majesty of the Hagia Sophia is the core symbol of beauty. Perhaps this divine and spiritual touch in the construction has fortified the aesthetic look of the structure. Beyond the aesthetic beauty of the location, it was the biggest church construction of its times and was considerably imposing and fascinating. The original church building is a sequence of beautiful domes with a central 18. 5m dome. The central dome is surrounded by a series of smaller domes to reiterate the basic spiritual principal of Platonism; self purification through protection of the virtues and values. Because purification is a beauty in itself and the purified man made artifacts embody beauty which connects the human beings with divine. Relationship of beauty and divine is questioned by the Plotinus, “ is there any such likeness between the loveliness of this world and the splendors in the Supreme?” (Plotinus). The beauty of Hagia Sophia integrates it with Plotinus philosophy of love, art and beauty. Another important link between the architecture of Hagia Sophia and the Plotinus philosophy of art and beauty is its intellectual intricacy. It is a complex architecture and one need to employ intellection to fully interpret the beauty and out of sight meanings of this structure. The process of discovering these mysteries of Hagia Sophia is like discovering the beauty of soul. Plotinus believes, “ For intellection and all that proceeds from intellection are the Soul’s beauty, a graciousness native to it and not foreign, for only with these it is truly Soul.” (Plotinus). After conversion of Hagia Sofia to a mosque in 1453 four minarets were constructed at four corners to give it a Muslim exterior and later on the Hagia Sophia switched into a museum in 1934. (Eastmond, XV). Despite a complex architectural history and transformations Hagia Sophia is an emblem of love and beauty for those who dare to find the truth of soul and achieve inner purifications. Works Cited Nelson, Robert S. Hagia Sophia, 1850-1950: holy wisdom modern monument. USA: University of Chicago Press, 2004. Print. Plotinus. 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