



ΧΡΗΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ / CHRISTIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF BYZANTINE
AND POST-BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGY AND ART, FOUNDED IN 1884

c/o Byzantine and Christian Museum, 22, Vas. Sophias Ave., GR-106 75 Athens, tel + 30 213 213 9556

www.chae.gr • e-mail: chae1884@gmail.com

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The Christian Archaeological Society, representing the Greek scholars of Byzantine archaeology and art, condemns in the strongest terms the decision taken by the Turkish authorities on July 10th, 2020, to convert the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople into a mosque.

This decision violates the principles and values of the protection of cultural heritage and the status of the historic church as a top monument of Byzantine culture and a universal value. It is the culmination of a series of destructive interventions in the Byzantine monuments of Turkey in recent years serving other than cultural purposes, and an act that offends the heritage of Hagia Sophia.

It should be underlined that a significant part of the incomparable figurative mosaics unveiled in the mid-19th century during repair works, was destroyed when they were covered anew to enable the function of the monument as a mosque.

We call the international scientific community, the authorities involved, the competent institutions and every person who has the power to intervene effectively, to take action against the now visible threat of new catastrophes in the mosaics, the marble decoration and the archaeological evidence of this unique monument, which will inevitably take place if the monument is to function as a mosque anew.