

Turkey turns another church into a mosque on Christmas Eve

From [*Greek City Times*](#)

Turkey turned on Christmas Eve the Church of Hagia Sophia in Ainos (Enez), in Adrianoupoli (Edirne), into a Mosque (Mosque-i Sharif) after the completion of its restoration by the General Directorate of Institutions. Edirne is in eastern Thrace, where, according to genocide scholars, the Greek genocide commenced in 1913, before the First World War.

The church of Agia Sophia of Ainos (Enez) is a Byzantine building of the 12th century. Mehmed the Conqueror Changed into the Mosque of Conquest in 1456 and now opens again with its former name.

“After last year’s inauguration of the Hagia Sophia mosque in Istanbul (sic), we are meeting here again today, for the inauguration of the Hagia Sophia mosque in Aino-Edirne”, said Turkish President of Religious Affairs Ali Erbas.

The historic Christian church was not used due to damage from an earthquake. It was restored 56 years later and opened for the (Muslim) Friday prayer by Ali Erbas. According to echedoros-a.gr during his speech, Erbas stated that Islamic culture is a culture that focuses on the mosque:

“A few months ago, we visited the Balkan countries. Where our eyes see a minaret, our hearts begin to flutter. Wherever we see a mosque or minaret, we are happy. We are now reopening the Hagia Sophia mosque in Edirne for worship. May Almighty Allah bless it. What a beautiful unity and solidarity we have that we are all here as institutions”.

After Erbas' prayer and speech, the official ribbon was cut, and the mosque's opening took place.



In 2015 when the project to repair the ancient building to be used as a mosque was approved, the Turkish newspaper [Hurriyet Daily](#) reported thus:

Following the conversion of two Hagia Sophia into museums, which were initially built as churches and then turned into mosques and, subsequently, museums, the third Hagia Sophia in Edirne's Enez district will be reconverted into a mosque, according to Foundations General Director Adnan Ertem, despite previous debates on turning it into a museum after reconstruction.

Speaking to state-run Anadolu Agency, Ertem said the Edirne Culture Assets Protection Regional Board approved the reconstruction project of the structure, which he called a "mosque" during the interview.

Explaining why it should be re-opened as a mosque, Erdem said the building was a "sanctuary that was consecrated as a mosque. . . . Thus its function will be preserved,"

Enez's Hagia Sophia is located inside the ancient city of Ainos and although there are no records, it is thought to date back to the 12th century. It is located along the border with Greece and stationed on top of a hill seen from all around. *As the Ottomans did not conquer the area until the 15th century any original foundation in the 12th century would have been as a Christian church.*

Is it significant that the three churches (cathedral in Istanbul) turned into mosques in Turkey recently have all been dedicated to Hagia Sophia, Holy Wisdom, a name of Christ in the eastern Orthodox church? Is it coincidence, being a popular dedication of the Byzantine/Greek Orthodox Church? Or does Holy Wisdom pique the rapacity of Turkish Muslims more

than a dedication to, say, St John the Theologian? If one of our readers knows, I would be interested to hear.