



The church of Hagia Sophia was erected in Thessaloniki in the eighth century A.D. The church was erected upon the site of an earlier church, it is loosely based upon the Hagia Sophia found in Constantinople.

The churches of Hagia Sophia Aigos Demetrios in Thessaloniki and how the mosaic found within demonstrate a change in art.

Throughout the centuries different artists and scholars have had different opinions on the changing styles of art between Roman and Byzantine mosaics.

Giorgio Vasari, a 16 century Italian painter and architect believed the change in artistic styles stemmed from a lack of artistic skill in the period. However, this argument is relatively weak, as the quality does not deteriorate , but the style simply changes.

Opposed to Vasari, Reigl believed that it was in fact an almost natural progression from the “Roman” form to the Byzantine style. Reigl’s interpretation of the transition seems more feasible than that of Vasari.

Modern scholarship tends to agree with Reigl over Vasari. Kitzinger believes that it is a mixture of abstract and Hellenistic designs merged, this is quite a likely reason sue to the Byzantine world occupying the Hellenic one. This even more prominent in the church of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki.

Modern scholar mango agrees with Kitzinger in the opinion they were abstract to an extent, this can be seen in the image of Christ (left) found in the Hagia Sophia. Mango claims the following;

"our own appreciation of Byzantine art stems largely from the fact that this art is not naturalistic; yet the Byzantines themselves, judging by their extant statements, regarded it as being highly naturalistic and as being directly in the tradition of Phidias, Apelles, and Zeuxis."



The Aigos Demetrios church was constructed in 413 AD on the supposed site that its patron, saint Demetrios was martyred. This church was built upon the ruins of old Roman baths.

Inside the Aigos Demetrius, several mosaics can be found that seem to depict the saint for which the church was dedicated, his image is found prominently within the mosaics of the church.

Some of the most noticeable changes in the style of the mosaics can clearly seen between the two images on the poster, Jesus Christ (far left) and the Saint Demetrios (left. The first noticeable change in the style is the colour, the Byzantines tended to use more vibrant and brighter colours than those of their Roman predecessors. The next change which was discussed by Kitzinger and mango is the facial designs, the Byzantine art elongates the faces and noses, contrary to the Roman artwork found in the Aigos Demetrius.



En.wikipedia.org. (2018). *Hagios Demetrios*. [online] Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagios_Demetrios#/media/File:Stdemetriusthess.jpg [Accessed 19 Feb. 2018].

En.wikipedia.org. (2018). *Hagia Sophia, Thessaloniki*. [online] Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagia_Sophia,_Thessaloniki#/media/File:Holy_Wisdom_Salonica_1.jpg [Accessed 20 Feb. 2018].

Theheartthrills.files.wordpress.com. (2018). *Cite a Website - Cite This For Me*. [online] Available at: <https://theheartthrills.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/st-demetrios-4.jpg> [Accessed 20 Feb. 2018].

Theheartthrills.files.wordpress.com. (2018). *Cite a Website - Cite This For Me*. [online] Available at: <https://theheartthrills.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/hagia-sofia-2.jpg> [Accessed 270Feb. 2018].

Krautheimer, R. 1980 *Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Haldon, J. 1997 *Byzantium in the seventh century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Kitzinger E. 1977. *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd–7th Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Mango, C. 1963. Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17, p.53.

Papademetriou, GC 2000, 'Byzantine churches of Thessaloniki', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 45, 1-4, pp. 665-667

