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The Development of an Eclectic Style in Architecture due to the Cultural Evolution and Reflection of National Identity during the Westernisation of the Ottoman Empire and British Colonial Period in Cyprus

This paper¹ intends to present and discuss the architectural movements in Cyprus during the westernisation period which started during the last phase of the Ottoman Rule and continued during the British Colonial Rule started in 1878 and lasted in 1960. During this period an eclectic style of architecture which is a combination of the traditional styles and the western elements developed in the island. This is in fact an expression of the attitudes of the local people as well as the rulers to achieve their idealistic aims. Thus all elements used in the contemporary architecture reveal the national identity as well as the yearning for the modernity, a trend which already was in full progress in the capitals of the mainland, İstanbul for the Turkish citizens and Athens for the Greeks. Therefore, the focus in this paper will be on the architecture within the defined periods that currently must be considered as part of the architectural heritage since they reflect the architectural history as well as the socio-economic and political situations of their times.

Examples from the concerned periods are selected and analysed from the North as well as the South part of the island. The analysis is accompanied with self descriptions and wherever possible documentation about

their past history is attempted. The concept of nationalism and westernisation is also attempted to be elucidated theoretically to clarify the case in Cyprus.

Cyprus as an island of a rich legacy of various civilisations bears different characteristics that reflect the national identities as well as religious beliefs of its citizens. However, although there are many Latin religious monuments with original character, there are only a small number of civil buildings from the Medieval Latin and Ottoman periods that we have inherited with little alterations all of which were constructed for the need of social welfare in traditional, modest styles. Cyprus having inhabitants consisting of Moslem and non-Moslem citizens, mainly the Turks and the Greeks, kept on a traditional, modest style for the domestic as well as the religious buildings. Even though there were large complex of buildings constructed mainly for

the public use such as inns, aqueducts, medreses and tekkes by the Turkish people, it is known that mainly the remains of the Latin buildings were primarily used with simple alterations and restorations according to the need of the Islamic religion. Only few Ottoman buildings show the classical Ottoman



1- Sultan Mahmud II Library interior. (©Yıldız)

2- House built for the daughter of Kufizade Belig Pasha in Saray Özü, Nicosia. ©Yıldız



style with their squinched domes and Islamic ornamentation. A glance at some monuments dating back to eighteenth century or prior to this century show a rather simple plan bearing little or almost none decorative repertoire. It is a known fact that due to several reasons such as lack of financial means, appointment of officials for short term missions in the island whose only duty was collecting taxes on behalf of the Port, heavy taxation burdened on the local people or neglect to preserve the original characteristics of the existing buildings, there is not much remained to show the original plan or decorative elements of the buildings dating back to sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For similar reasons the Orthodox religious architecture also kept on the modest version of the Byzantine style and did not yield out a great deal until the mid-eighteenth century.

Although the westernisation trends in the Ottoman Empire initiated in the 18th century during the so-called Tulip Age, this was practiced at a rather small scale and relatively late in the smaller provinces. Larnaca, on the southern coasts of the island was the first urban area to display European styles with the state as well as domestic buildings since it served as the main harbour and being the residential area of the foreign consulates besides the Levantine merchants during the periods dealt in this paper. The house of the foreign consulates and foreign merchants were splendid buildings in the town, completely built and furnished in western style. This was the first place where cultural and social events like theatre or balls were held by the foreign residents which were also attended by the natives of higher, wealthy class. An engraving concerning the British occupation published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1878 already depicted the modern buildings on the harbour in Larnaca while another photograph published by Ohnefalsche-Richter in 1917 is depicting buildings in neo-classical style as well as people dressed up in rather elegant European costumes².

As the contacts with the mainland as well as the Western countries increased, the buildings constructed at the end of eighteenth and during the nineteenth centuries reveal some influences of the western. However, in consideration of the island's past history and its legacy, westernisation trends in fact was not unfamiliar to the

people of the island since it had the Roman as well as the Gothic and Renaissance architectural heritage all around the island. Although these motifs did not affect the Ottoman art until the end of nineteenth century, repetition of some motifs continued only on ethnographic objects such as dowry chest or embroideries and later on the bell towers of the Orthodox churches. Nevertheless some roman or gothic architectural elements such as arches, columns, or the building material mainly sandstones, will be a selection for the buildings constructed in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which we could define as an eclectic style.

In parallel to the developments in the mainland, a number of early nineteenth century Ottoman religious buildings reflect the western trend particularly with the ornamentation style which bears baroque influences on the *mibrab* and *minbar* of the Islamic mosques and the tomb stones as well as the wooden iconostasis and the furniture of the Orthodox churches. The large central *mibrab* of Selimiye Mosque (St. Sophia Mosque) as well as the *mibrab*, *mimber* and *mahfil* of Turunçlu Mosque (also called as Fethiye Mosque), both located in Nicosia, bear rather beautiful rococo ornamentation. The interior of Sultan Mahmut II. Library is also unique with its neoclassical style decoration particularly with its bookcases and the band of decoration with inscriptions running all around the main reading hall (figure 1).

On the other hand, new houses with western influences built for a couple of Cypriot natives who managed to gain higher education in Europe or Turkey and held important positions at the Ottoman Port had created a new fashion which was followed by other wealthy people living on the island. Kamil Pasha, the prime minister, or Kufizade Belig Pasha, the treasurer of Egypt, Dervish Pasha, the member of the Legislative Council and newspaper publisher, were among the last few dignitaries who were respected by the local people as well as the British authorities. Kadı Burhanettin was an Ottoman Officer who had education and working experience in İstanbul and England. His son, Kadızade Ahmet Burhanettin was the first painter in European style to practice and teach in the Turkish society while Kufizade Belig Pasha and some members of his family contributed to the Turkish society for the development of theatre, music as well as constructing the first Turkish cinema building. The house built for his daughter in Sarayönü³ in neo-classical style (figure 2) is still one of the most beautiful domestic buildings in this area.

Nevertheless, the westernisation trends were more enthusiastically adopted by the non-Moslems living in the island chiefly in the religious and education buildings. The last quarter of eighteenth century and the early quarter of nineteenth century is the time of awakening of the Greek for the struggle to gain independence in the Ottoman Empire. As the Orthodox Church managed to expand its power and wealth in time, they made great efforts to organize the Greek education under the Church into a better condition. Besides the close links with the Orthodox Church, they made further efforts to establish a new education system based on the Hellenic ideas. This was already started in 1742

when the Hellenomouseion, the Greek school was established and two teachers were brought by Archbishop Philotheos from Greece⁴. And the Hellenic education improved during the nineteenth century and continued during the Colonial period with no objection of the British rulers.⁵

The Greek Revolution in Greece supported by the European states acknowledged by the Ottoman Port put on some reforms and meanwhile granted them some privileges to restore or rebuilt churches in every part of the island. In the attempts to restore the churches, insertion of Greek architectural elements like triangular pediments (figure 3) and Ionic columns as well as Byzantine emblems in spite of their Orthodox character as an



3- A Church in Sipahi Köy, Karpaz region. (©Yıldız)

4- Agios Synesios Church in Dip Karpaz (Rizokarpasso). (©Yıldız)



expression of the national identity and aim for the Hellenic ideals became a common task. The Orthodox churches redecorated or rebuilt in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries all had iconostasis with delicate carvings in baroque style ornamentations. However, they continued to produce the schematic two dimensional icons for the iconostasis until currently.

St. Barnabas Church in Famagusta and Kanakaria Church in Lythrankomi (Karpas) are all restored with the addition of some triangular or segmented pediments over the windows. Agios Synesios Church in Dip Karpaz (Rizokarpasso) is one of the churches to bear a rather eclectic manner (figure 4) when the architecture style and ornamentations are taken into consideration. A church plan in an Orthodox style with the nave covered along its main axis by three domes in succession, which is a local Byzantine style developed particularly in Cyprus shows the signs of being extended at various periods⁶. Nevertheless, a careful analysis of the western and southern facades reveal different styles with all architectural elements designed in a combination of Gothic, Orthodox as well as Hellenistic elements. The SS. Barnabas and Hilarion Church in Peristorona also bears Hellenistic

elements with triangular pediment moulds over the portal and windows. The Monastery of Makhearas rebuilt in 1900 as it was burnt down in 1530 and 1892 is another church which reflects the combination of Orthodox and Hellenic styles particularly with the articulation and openings on the facades. There is a similar case with the Church of Constantine and Helen in Tokhni⁷. Here particularly the niches on the façade of the apse are quite interesting since they represent blind doors framed by Corinthian columns and a pediment resting directly on these columns.

However, after the establishment of the British Colonial rule in Cyprus since 1878, a new and original style appeared in the newly constructed buildings. The newly settled British officers, engineers, artists and authors besides a minority of educated local people were responsible for the development of eclectic styles and certain styles in neo-classical and neo-gothic combined with local characteristics that shaped particularly the public buildings and spaces in the main urban areas.

The buildings located in the city squares always undertook changes based on current political or religious trends of each period. These are the important administrative, commercial as well as religious buildings that recall the socio-economic level as well as the nationality or religion of their residents. Figurative or heraldic sculptures added to these areas were again national symbols for power or for the aimed destination of the society. There is an attempt to stamp the British, particularly a Latin identity starting from the last quarter of the nineteenth century until 1940s principally in the city squares. In this attempt particularly wiping away the Islamic symbolism is clearly reflected in the new arrangement of the main square of the capital city. The Konak, which was originally the Lusignan Palace in flamboyant Gothic style and modified according to Turkish needs during the Ottoman period together with some other buildings around the Sarayönü (Konak)

Square, (renamed as Atatürk Square in 1940s) were completely demolished during the last years of nineteenth century since it was in a rather bad condition. The whole area was redesigned to form a symmetrical square plan with the new government office buildings arranged around the Venetian column which was already in this square since the Venetian period. The complex of government buildings built in 1901⁸ used as the law courts, police headquarters, post office and some other head-offices were designed in neo-classic style, a style much favored by the British people since the mid-seventeenth century. (figures 5,6,7) Although the local character is partly reflected in the law courts (figure 5) with all of the rooms opening into arcaded porticos and balconies, the post office building (figure 6) is rather imposing with its marble columns and balustrades as well as the triangular and segmented gables on the façade which gives the impression of a perfect Neo-classical style building. The most surprising part of the project is the replacement of the domed mosque⁹ with a building completely different than the usual local styles that almost could be defined as Orientalist style recalling the North African Magrib buildings at first glance with its horseshoe-shaped arches and the trussed roof in the Tudor style only visible from the interior of the mosque (figure 7).

This is a rather identical building policy in all of the colonial lands under the British Empire. As Abel stated, in order the colonial governor aimed to function effectively, it is required that the representatives of the metropolitan centre should be settled in reasonable comfort, even in the most peripheral reaches of the empire. Therefore since it is aimed to “function effectively” it should also impress the local inhabitants with the power and superior culture as well as the lifestyle of their exploiters which would include anything from full blown replicas of Colosseum to more recent Tudor styles¹⁰.

Other colonial buildings made for the governor and other administrative purposes are interesting to reflect the Colonial eclectic style. The Governor’s house, which was used for the residence of the President of Cyprus in the southern Nicosia and the residence of the high commissioner built on the bastion on the left side of Kyrenia Gate in northern Nicosia built in 1938¹¹ currently the residence of the president of the Turkish Republic, government buildings and schools in Kyrenia, Paphos and other places are all in neo-classical style or an eclectic type with the mixture of neo-classic and the neo-gothic besides some traditional elements.

On the southern part of the walled city of Nicosia however, the Greeks managed to establish their own quarters and centres by constructing new churches and archbishopric since the eighteenth century without any interference from the Ottoman and then the British administrators. In addition to several new churches, schools, leisure places and memorial sculptures were constructed in the public places of various towns of Cyprus, all designed in a mixture of styles mainly reflecting an eclecticism of Hellenistic and Byzantine influences rather than Orthodox character during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The architecture styles had shifted from curving lines to angular, emphasised with triangular pediments or gabled roofs as the power shifted towards European rulers while it did the opposite during the dominance of the Byzantine or Islamic styles.

One of the important squares on the southern part of Nicosia is the centre for the Greek Orthodox life in Cyprus which is the crossing point of a wide boulevard starting from the fortress walls towards inward, up to



5- Law Courts in Saray Özü (Atatürk Square), Nicosia. (©Yıldız)



6- Post Office in Saray Özü (Atatürk Square), Nicosia. (©Yıldız)



7- Saray Özü Mosque, Saray Özü (Atatürk Square), Nicosia. (©Yıldız)

8- Gazi
İlkokulu,
Famagusta.
(©Yıldız)



the gates of the archbishopric. Across the square is located the Pancyprian Gymnasium next to the Saint John Church, in neoclassical style with has a portico designed with Ionic columns. The gymnasium, originally called Hellenomouseion, founded in 1742 and rebuilt in 1893 is a rather strong symbol of Hellenistic propaganda. The central organizing principle of the Pancyprian Gymnasium was the creation of Hellenic citizens with knowledge of Ancient Greek language and history, and still be prepared to take an active part in commerce and other professions, and in the intellectual life of the Greek kingdom that it was believed Cyprus would eventually join. Most importantly, the gymnasium became the training centre for teachers of village schools. Therefore, teachers from Greece were imported or young scholars graduated from the gymnasium were sent to Greece for further education¹². This building became the model of later schools, all built with mainly ionic style of columns and a pediment which recall the Greek temples. Similar tendencies could be seen with the Famagusta, Lapta and Dip Karpaz Village Gymnasiums which recall this strong Hellenic propaganda with their Ionic portico. It is interesting to see that one of the Turkish schools built within the walled city Famagusta had followed the same fashion, with its pediment and ionic columns (figure 8).

Besides these, a number of buildings for leisure purpose were constructed during these periods in several districts of Cyprus with several symbolic elements recalling the Hellenistic philosophy of the Greek Cypriots which was part of the movements for the division of the island. The municipal theatre building with its Ionic portico, painted in white colour is a typical building of the southern Nicosia. The interesting case is the addition of such a small portico in the ionic style to the entrance of Cyprus Museum during the renovations in 1930s. Some sculptures or monuments erected during the early twentieth century such as the bust of Kimon standing on an Ionic column in Larnaca, or the buildings with Ionic orders, as well as the free standing Ionic columns and capitals in the middle of the square in the 28th October Square in Paphos are strongly the symbolic propaganda of Hellenism. 28th October is one of the most important national holiday celebrated by the Greek community which is commemorating the Greek leader Yannis Metaxas¹³. There is almost one square or street in each city or town called after Metaxas¹⁴ or 28th October in Cyprus similar to the ones dedicated to Atatürk in the Turkish parts of the island.

Westernisation attempts affected the family life towards a more non-conservative, modern attitude. Thus, during the last decades of the nineteenth century the planning of the houses showed a new tendency towards an outward life style character rather than an inward character. Therefore openings on the facades were enlarged, and located on lower part of the building to create a communication between inside and outside as well enabling more lighted interiors. Doors even had openings and fanlights decorated with elegant ironworks. These houses were designed with a small portico opening into a sofa usually flanked by windows in gothic style, protected by decorative iron rails, doors with fanlights, elegant balconies resting on stone consoles usually ending in scrolls and large eaves decorated in the traditional Turkish style. A careful analysis show the combination of the old traditional Mediterranean house with the imported ideas of the loggia of the Renaissance or the neo-classical tendencies mixed up with the neo-gothic elements. The trefoil gothic arches were also used in some buildings during this period. One of the houses in Ayasofya (Selimiye) Quarter is a rather elegant example with the trefoil arcades and columns ornamented with delicate relief carvings (figure 9). Besides these, nationalistic symbolism became almost an important element in the domestic architecture. Mainly in Arap Ahmet Pasha Quarter and Ömerge Quarter in Nicosia all house doors and dating style of the buildings indicated the religion or nationality of the occupants. The Turkish houses were crowned with a star and a crescent motif (figure 10) and dated in Arabic numerals while the Greeks had Latin numerals and cross motifs. The Latin cross motif was the indication of the nationality of the Christian occupants, presumably Armenians. However, the best example of Neo-gothic is the Ledra Palace hotel built in 1950s.

British houses in Troodos Mountains and elsewhere were reflecting English country side houses mainly in Tudor or Edwardian styles. A notable example is the 'Latomia House' located in Kyrenia in both Edwardian and Art Nouveau style, which is today housing the Fine Arts Museum in Kyrenia. This house is rather interesting with its unusual façade and entrance, staircases each one different in style, fire places, terrace covered with a trussed roof and space organisation. Latomia house was built by William Douglas Caröe, (1857-1938), a rather famous and active British architect from Liverpool, whose works mainly matured in arts and crafts style as well showing influences of Scandinavian and Viking architecture. He spent the last years of his retirement life in Kyrenia (Cyprus) where he built his last home, Latomia house¹⁵. Some of the examples presented here particularly the domestic architecture revealed to show the attempts of the owners to modify them with new modern material, particularly aluminium window and door frames. These examples particularly makes one realize the urgent need to include these monuments under the protection lists since they are now the examples of the past twentieth century.

I would like to dedicate this paper to Prof. Dr. Günsel Renda, a great energetic scholar who devoted all her career life to the development of the history of the Turkish art with her research and education activities with her deep knowledge, research capacity and beautiful personality.



9- House in Selimiye Quarter, with Gothic arcades. (©Yıldız)

10- Door of Derviş Paşa Konak, Nicosia. (©Yıldız)

Kıbrıs'ta Batılılaşma Süreci ve Sömürge Döneminde Kültür Değişimi ve Ulusal Kimliğin Mimaride Yansıması Sonucu Ortaya Çıkan Eklektik Üslup

Kıbrıs adasının uygarlık tarihi açısından oldukça zengin bir geçmişi vardır. Günümüze değişime uğramadan gelebilmiş yapılar arasında Latin ve Osmanlı dönemine ait olanlar batı ve doğu özellikleri yanında yerel üslup özelliklerini de birarada toplamışlardır. Osmanlı idaresinin son yıllarında ve İngiliz Koloni İdaresi altında batılılaşma hareketleri hız almıştır. Özellikle on sekizinci yüzyıl sonu ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıl yapıtlarında geleneksel mimari yanında batı tarzının az da olsa hem konstrüksiyon, hem de süsleme ve bezemede uygulandığı dikkati çekmektedir.

Bunun yanı sıra yirminci yüzyıl başlarında adanın bir İngiliz müstemlekesi olmasından sonra yapılan yapılarda neo-klasik ve neo-gotik üslupların etkisinde eklektik bir tarz ortaya çıkmıştır. Koloni Dönemi diye anılan bu dönemde adaya yerleşen İngiliz uyruklu memur, mühendis, sanatçı ve yazarların batı anlayışında eğitim, yaşam tarzı yanında, mimaride de yeni bir üslubun gelişmesinde payları olduğu şüphesizdir.

Kullanım alanları veya kullanıcılara göre farklılıklar gösteren erken yirminci yüzyıl yapılarında dikkati çeken ortak nokta taş mimariye yönelmiş olması ve bezeme yönüyle eklektik bir üslubun ortaya çıkmasıdır. Özellikle neo-klasik ve neo-gotik elemanların cephelerde kullanılması yanında özellikle konut mimarisinin plan şemasında yaşamın dışı açılımını sağlayacak bir düzenlemeye gidilmesi önemli bir modernleşme belirtisidir. Ancak bugün Lefkoşa'nın Türk kesiminde kalan ve Venedik döneminden beri idari merkez olan Sarayönü'nde büyük bir yıkım sonrası yeniden yapılan neo-klasik üsluptaki idari binalar ve konutlar yanında orientalist üslupta inşa edilen Sarayönü camii bu eklektisizmi en belirgin bir şekilde yansıtmaları yanında Rumların yoğunlukta olduğu Güney Lefkoşa'da ve başka merkezlerde İyon tarzında kolonlarla süslenen cepheler adeta Helenizm ve Enosis gayelerini simgeleyen yapılar olmuştur.

- 1 This paper was presented at the Symposium organised for the honour of Prof. Dr. Günsel Renda. Although the title of the paper appeared as "The Cultural Evolution and National Identities Reflected in the Architecture of Cyprus during the Westernisation Period and the Eclectic Architecture of the Colonial Period" as proposed in the submission of the paper it is changed as above.
- 2 See Rebecca Bryant, *Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2004, p. 14.
- 3 Ali Nesim, *Batmayan Eğitim Güneşlerimiz*, Lefkoşa: KKTC Milli Eğitim ve Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları (Nicosia: TRNC, Publications of Ministry of Education and Cultrure), 1987, p. 335.
- 4 Hill, George, *A History of Cyprus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, Vol. III, 1948, p. 311, 346.
- 5 G.S. Georghallides, *A Political and Administrative History of Cyprus 1918-1926, with a Survey of the Foundation of British Rule*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, Publications, 1979, pp. 47-49.
- 6 Richard Karatheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Revised by Richard Karatheimer & Slobodan Curéré, 1986, p. 401.
- 7 Reno See Wideson, *Cyprus, Images of a Lifetime*, Nicosia, 1992, p. 148.
- 8 Camille Enlart, (Member l'Instuit), *Les Monuments Des Croisés, Dans Le Royaume de Jerusalem, Architecture Religieuse et Civile*, Préface de Paul Léon, Membre de L'Institut, Texte, Volume I, Avec 16 figures dans le texte, Paris, Libraire Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 13, Rue Jacob 13 (vie) 1925, p. 199.
- 9 For the original building see the draft sketch in Turkish Wakf Administration Files, No: 1900/ 3.
- 10 Chris Abel, *Architecture & Identity, Responses to Cultural and Technological Change*, with a forward by Suha Özkan, Oxford: Architectural Press, second edition, 2000, p. 166.
- 11 Nesim, *Batmayan Eğitim Güneşlerimiz*, p. 379.
- 12 Bryant, *Imagining the Modern*, pp. 123-124.
- 13 Wiliam Mallinson, *Cyprus, A Modern History*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2005, p. 19.
- 14 The one in Nicosia is is nowadays called as Liberty Square.
- 15 Ian MacAlister, "Caröe, William Douglas (1857-1938)", Rev. Annette Peach, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32298> ERIŞİM