

# **The Role of Venetian Architecture in Defining City Identity: The Case of Famagusta**

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## ABSTRACT

Architecture is extremely significant in shaping cities' urban fabric, influencing and displaying their physical, social, cultural, and economic traits. Several scholarly texts have delved into the role of architecture in defining city identity. Around this topic were found key theories: Genius Loci and place theory, which point out the unique spirit and experience of places; or Critical Regionalism and Postmodernism, which focus on local context and cultural responses; or Kevin Lynch's 'Image of the City' and Urban Morphology, which highlight structural elements shaping urban identity; and concepts of cultural and symbolic capital, as well as the social construction of space, exploring the cultural significance and social dynamics of architecture. While these theories give a general knowledge of the role that architecture plays, if not sufficient to its role in shaping urban identity, as well as, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of the Venetian Era on Famagusta. Combined, this study fills that gap by giving a detailed examination of how the Venetian period influenced Famagusta's identity. This thesis contributes to a broader appreciation of the city's architectural heritage by integrating these theoretical frameworks with an examination of Famagusta's architecture from the Venetian period, as well as opening up new discussions on the role of heritage in developing a historically rich city.

**Keywords:** City Identity, Architectural Identity, Venetian Architecture, Venice, Famagusta, North Cyprus.

## ÖZ

Mimari, şehirlerin kentsel dokusunu şekillendirir, fiziksel, sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik boyutlarını karmaşık bir şekilde etkiler ve yansıtır. Çeşitli bilimsel metinler, şehir kimliğini tanımlamada mimarlığın rolünü araştırmıştır. Anahtar teoriler arasında, yerlerin benzersiz ruhunu ve deneyimini vurgulayan Genius Loci ve yer teorisi; yerel bağlam ve kültürel tepkilere odaklanan Eleştirel Bölgeselcilik ve Postmodernizm; Kevin Lynch'in kentsel kimliği şekillendiren yapısal unsurları öne çıkaran 'Kent İmgesi' ve Kentsel Morfoloji; ve kültürel ve sembolik sermaye kavramlarının yanı sıra mekanın sosyal inşası, mimarlığın kültürel önemini ve sosyal dinamiklerini araştırıyor. Bu tez, bu teorik çerçeveleri Gazimağusa mimarisinin Venedik döneminden incelenmesiyle bütünleştirerek, kentin mimari mirasının daha geniş bir şekilde değerlendirilmesine katkıda bulunmakta ve bu mirasın tarihsel açıdan zengin bir kentin geliştirilmesindeki rolü hakkında yeni tartışmalar açmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kent Kimliği, Mimari Kimlik, Venedik Mimarisi, Venedik, Gazimağusa, Kuzey Kıbrıs.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

Identity is integral to understanding architectural design, especially in a culturally and historically rich context. Architecture and urban planning in history, do not only represent a period's identity, but they also influence the local architectural landscape and convey a broader cultural identity. This interplay between architecture and identity becomes particularly evident when examining the impact of external influences on local environments. The Cypriot architectural environment exhibits a rich fabric of cultural heritage, sculpted by centuries of historical upheavals and cross-cultural interactions. Crucial to the architectural legacy are historic heritage sites. They do not only serve as a concrete demonstration of historical continuity but also irreplaceable indicator of identity. Venetian architecture in Cyprus stands out as one of the most admired architectural styles out of many. Certainly, it is well known for its unique Gothic design and elaborate architectural detailing. Unquestionably, the Venetian period has marked its distinctive impact on many towns during its glorious time around Europe and the Mediterranean, including Cyprus.

The Venetian period in Cyprus is distinguished by a stunning diversity of stylistic characteristics and defense architecture that represent aesthetic qualities and structural inventiveness. It was displayed in a variety of forms, ranging from enormous fortifications and public structures to complex domestic designs. These structures are more than simple physical forms to admire; in fact, they have symbolic meanings and

historical accounts that connect with people. These past structures narrate stories of different mixed themes such as political power, economic success, and cultural exchange, reflecting the complex dynamics that have formulated the unique identity of Cyprus. Famagusta, in particular, shines apart as a one-of-a-kind example of how the combination of Venetian architectural influences and local cultural aspects has resulted in the city's distinct urban character.

## **1.1 Research Questions and Aims**

The aims of the thesis are to respond to the three main research questions specified below:

- What are the enduring legacies of Venetian architecture in Famagusta, indicating its unique identity?  
→ The thesis aims to unravel the intricate layers of Venetian architecture embedded in Famagusta's defining features, such as robust fortifications and the city's main hub, highlighting the relationship between architecture and urban identity.
- How has Venetian architecture influenced the identity of Famagusta?  
→ By examining the impact of Venetian Architecture on Famagusta, the research will provide insights into the unique adaptations and influences of the Venetian period, profoundly shaping Famagusta's architectural, historical, and socio-cultural identity, symbolizing its historical narrative, and enriching its architectural heritage.
- What are the main architectural characteristics that give identity to the city and how does Venetian architecture contribute to this legacy?  
→ By examining the literature, the research aims to identify and delineate the essential elements defining identity within architecture and urban environments. This includes understanding how architectural characteristics and urban design

contribute to the expression of identity in a city and how these characteristics are interwoven with historical, cultural, and social contexts.

## **1.2 Research Methodology**

Through a qualitative approach and architectural historiography, the thesis combines historical analysis with architectural study. An investigation of the literature, a peer review of resources was done at the beginning stage of this research, to gather academic journals, articles, conference papers, books, and online resources. Additionally, data will be collected through:

- Archival Research: Examining historical timelines, documents, and maps relevant to Famagusta's Venetian period.
- Photographic Documentation: Capturing architectural details and changes over time.
- On-Site Observations: Visiting Famagusta to observe and document the physical remnants of Venetian architecture.

The collected data will be evaluated using qualitative methods to discern the defining traits of identity in Venetian Famagusta. As mentioned before, the study explores the role of the architecture of this period on the identity of Famagusta, chosen to be the field study for its unique status. Finally, the findings of these multiple lenses—architectural, historical, and socio-cultural—will shed light on the enduring legacy of Venetian influence in shaping Famagusta’s identity narrative up to the present day.

## **1.3 Research Limitations**

This research analysis emphasizes the historical, socio-cultural, and aesthetic aspects of architecture, deliberately excluding environmental factors. Within this framework, the thesis explores the Venetian architecture and its architectural characteristics,

discussing how these contribute to the identity of city of Famagusta, North Cyprus. Additionally, the focus is restricted to specific case studies that best expresses these concerns. The research is constrained by the availability of historical records and accessibility to certain sites. On-site observations are subject to the current state of preservation and accessibility of the buildings. Furthermore, the study may be limited due to time constraints; not all Venetian structures present in Famagusta will be studied, impacting the depth of data collection and analysis possible within the research period. Finally, the research will not include a comparative examination since Venice is unlike any other city and comparability in this case is challenging.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

As contemporary structures rise to meet the sky, there emerges a palpable sense of disconnection from the past—a detachment that defines the soul of Cyprus cities. In this clash between old and new, historic buildings with their rich architectural heritage stand in stark contrast to sleek, contemporary designs. This juxtaposition often results in the loss of the city's historical character and identity as new developments overshadow the cultural narratives embedded in historical architecture. Recognizing the crucial role that architectural identity plays in shaping city identity, particularly in historically significant urban areas, remains paramount.

#### **1.5 Research Structure**

The thesis is organized as follows:

The first chapter provides an introduction and background information about the topic, the research questions and aims, a defined methodology, limitations, the significance of this study, and its structure.

The section, chapter 2, contains the theoretical framework where key terminologies relating to architecture, city and identity are explored. It highlights the definition of identity and scrutinizes architectural elements that contribute to city identity.

Then the research delves into chapter 3, providing a comprehensive overview of the historical background surrounding Venetian architecture and its specific manifestations in Famagusta, North Cyprus. It examines the flourishing of the Venetian style in Italy, as well as in Famagusta including the strategic importance of Cyprus as key trading hub in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Chapter 4 unravels the impact of Venetian architecture on Famagusta's identity, architecturally, historically and socio-culturally. An analysis of two chosen case studies of Venetian structures in Famagusta, North Cyprus that most defines its identity is done.

Finally, in the last chapter, the conclusion will provide a summary of the findings, the importance of city identity, preservation and conservation of architectural heritage. As well as the importance of the past for today's development of a city, Famagusta, filled with history.

## Chapter 2

### CITY, ARCHITECTURE, AND IDENTITY

#### 2.1 City and Architecture

##### 2.1.1 Architecture's Role in the City

Cities are dynamic entities where architecture plays a significant role in forming the urban landscape and defining lived experiences. The built environment in a city is not merely a collection of physical structures; it is a complex and layered tapestry that reflects social, cultural, economic, and historical narratives. Architecture in a city serves multiple functions: it provides shelter, facilitates economic activities, and acts as a canvas for artistic expression. Moreover, it embodies the technological advancements and architectural styles of different eras, creating a physical timeline that tells the story of the city's evolution. A city might also be characterized or easily recognize by its architecture of a famous structure. Notably, cities like Venice, renowned for their distinctive architectural styles and unique urban planning, serve as prime examples of how architecture can create a sense of place. In such cities, the harmony between architecture and urban planning is evident, leading to a cohesive and recognizable cityscape.

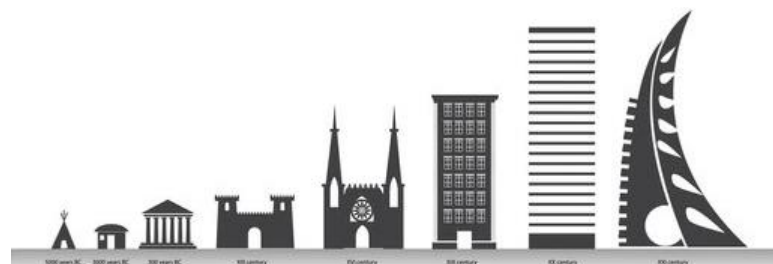


Figure 1: The Evolution of Architecture (Valeriy, 2015)

One can observe the transformations that have taken place and sense the vibrancy of the various societies that have succeeded one another. Identifying the different expressive elements as distinct reflections of a singular direction, capturing specific historical moments, constitutes the essence of the city's architecture. In current times, the rise of globalized architectural trends often leads to homogenized urban landscapes, challenging the preservation of historical sites, if any. Contemporary architectural practices, characterized by concrete, glass and steel structures, frequently prioritize functionality and efficiency. But at what price? In this context, the cost is the interruption of historical continuity and local traditions. If we take the example of skylines of cities with merging high-rise buildings can overwhelm the city's ancient fabric. However, there are initiatives aimed at conserving cities' distinctive architectural legacy. Efforts in urban conservation and adaptive reuse of ancient structures illustrate the constant interaction between conserving the past and meeting contemporary needs. A city's architecture is thus a dynamic entity formed by the interaction of history, society and culture. It's a mix of the past and the present, with historical narratives and cultural heritage blending in with current goals and lifestyles. This collaboration results in a distinct urban character that is both historically significant and adaptable. This continual conversation between the old and the current shapes inhabitants and tourists' senses of place and belonging. The term "old city" refers to a clean and original core. However, this perspective is more of a mental construct than a reality. The ancient architecture represents the city's infancy, a stage that everyone wants to go past, but it continues to influence future developments. It represents the early phases of each area, familiar and personal, knowing every detail and all of its secret nooks.

### **2.1.2 Historical Coexistence of the City**

History provides the foundation upon which cities are built. It encompasses the events, cultural practices, architectural styles, and societal changes that have occurred over time, shaping the physical and cultural landscape of a city. Historical environments—urban sites; rural, historical, and archaeological sites—are the symbols of the creativity of societies through their amazing silhouettes, various organizations of different styles and forms, curvilinear streets full of surprises, and careful workmanship. They act as concrete connections to the past, safeguarding shared memory and identity. They are also a mirror of cities' social, economic, physical, political, and, obviously, architectural histories. Between all the basic components of historical environments listed as limits (boundaries), identity, legibility, image, pedestrianism and permeability, compactness, diverse, interconnected street networks, mixed uses, public realm and personalization of space, unity in skyline and silhouette, and variety. Historical environments showcase the creativity and diversity of societies, reflecting their social, economic, physical, political, and architectural histories. They provide continuity and context, ensuring a connection between past and present, which is essential for shaping ongoing urban development. When talking about the urban historical environment, it is crucial to understand the elements shaping the development and evolution of urban areas. In examining historical city architecture, it is also essential to consider how different architectural forms interact with urban planning principles. The configuration of streets, the organization of public spaces, and the integration of natural landscapes all contribute to the overall image of a city.

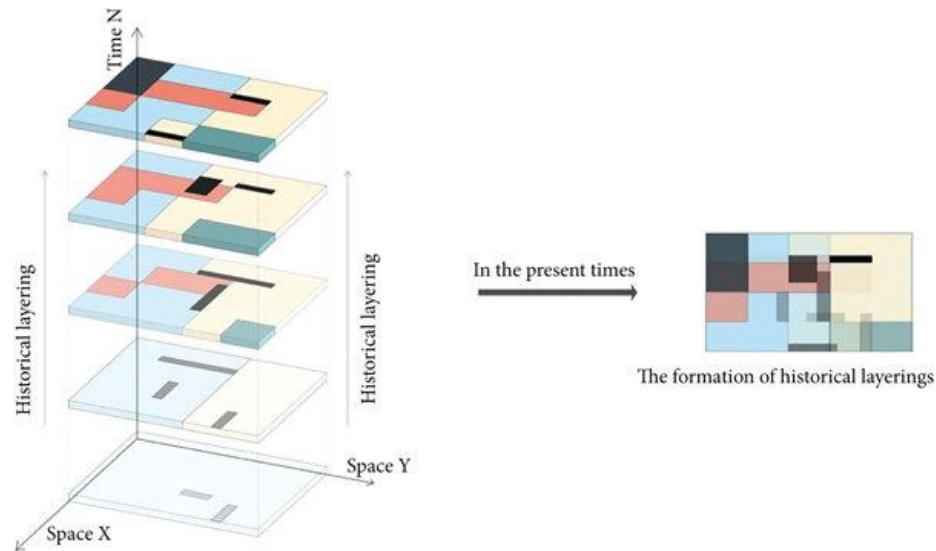


Figure 2: Layering Analysis Diagram of Urban Historical Landscape (Teng, Huang, & Yang, 2022)

Historical architecture often serves as a foundation for contemporary urban development, providing a sense of continuity and context. The preservation of historical buildings and sites not only maintains the aesthetic and cultural value of a city but also fosters a connection between the past and present, forming historical layering. This continuity provides a harmonic combination of old and modern, increasing the urban experience while also guaranteeing that the city's past lives on in the present and future. “In the urban space under the time slice represented by x-axis and y-axis, layering promotes the change of the internal cause of value; however, its essence is still preserved in each time slice, which is also an important cultural context for its shape” (Teng, Huang, & Yang, 2022). Thus, historical architecture serves not only as a relic of the past but also as an integral part of a city's evolution, continuously influencing and shaping urban development. Also, the social traits of the city no longer correspond with its functional and form relationships, nor with its social dynamics. This led to a complete loss of the historical balance that had been meticulously developed over centuries, resulting in a significant erosion of architectural and cultural

identity that persists to this day. The development over the past centuries, surpassing what had been built throughout human history, has disrupted the historical layering process that contributes to the beauty of history.

*“The best architect of the city is time.”* — Renzo Piano (1937)

*“The past does not exist. Everything in our culture is simultaneous. Only the present exists in the interpretation that we make of the past and in the view we have of the future.”* — Giò Ponti (1891–1997)

This view thus puts forth that our knowledge of history is in a constant reinterpretation in the light of present perspectives and future expectations, in which case the continuity of historical essence comes to be more important than ever. Stating the formula 'History + Continuity = City' reduces to one line a leading principle of urban development and identity formation. As such, cities are not just a physical space but a living entity growing over time, deeply rooted in their historical context while continuously being adaptive to contemporaneous needs. Continuity ensures that the historical essence of a city is preserved while allowing for growth and modernization. It involves maintaining the architectural integrity and cultural values of historical structures and integrating them into the present urban fabric. This balance between preservation and innovation creates a sense of stability and identity, allowing residents to connect with their past while embracing contemporary advancements.

In addition, according to Article 1 of the Venice Charter, “the concept of an historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event. This applies not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the

passing of time” (Icomos, 1964). The idea begins with emphasizing the grand scale of an individual building, then expands this concept to include visual expansions that encompass both urban and rural communities. A monument is defined as something that signifies a specific civilization, connects to a historical progression, or marks a significant event. However, the concept of a historic monument is also criticized for its limitations, as highlighted further in the subsequent part of the definition.

### **2.1.3 Socio-Cultural Coexistence of the City**

“Architecture always follows certain known rules and regulations and has a strong and unbreakable bond with the culture, values and behavior patterns of society” (Torabi & Brahman, 2013). Architecture and cities are always changing, adapting to new societal needs and technological advancements. According to traditional definitions, a city is a center of social life, substantial both in terms of population and ability to provide diverse political, economic, and cultural activities. Today, the city is characterized as the urban area where most people reside, marked by ongoing rhythms and dynamic changes.

“Whether it comes to visually "consume" the city architecture, to conserve, promote, support it, or to produce new architectural objects, architecture and planning professionals are aware of the theory that lies behind the act of edifying, producing images-built images as well as cultural background” (Mihaila, 2014). Basically, architecture enhances the visual and sensory aspects of city life. Indeed, well-designed urban areas may create sentiments of comfort, safety, and inspiration while also improving quality of life. Meaning that buildings, streets, and public spaces are built influences to how people perceive and interact with them. Forms, facades, ornamentations, landmarks, materials, colors, lighting, and more are examples of

architectural components that add visual appeal to a city. “Architectural memory is a physical manifestation of society’s cultural memory, and it includes both cultural and architectural monuments, as well as the social norms and customs involved in their preservation and usage” (Remizova, 2020). Now, architecture is significantly related to memory and identity formation. In his book ‘The Architecture of the City’, Italian architect Aldo Rossi argues that “the city itself is the collective memory of its people” (Rossi, 1982) and that “cities are formed by memories and images that people collect in their minds” (Rossi, 1982). What to take out of this is that buildings, monuments, and urban places are tangible manifestations of communal memory, recording and conserving a place's historical and cultural identity.

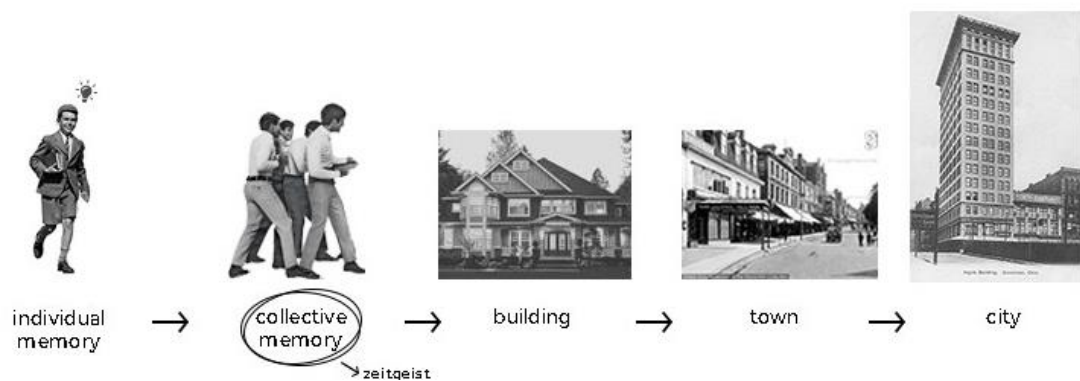


Figure 3: The City of Collective Memory (Şimşek, 2019)

“The old centre is the utopia of our past, an invention and thus a sublimation compared to what it actually was, and that is a dynamic sequence of cultural units that develop over time” (Gambassi, 2016). While we might imagine it as perfect and timeless, the reality is that it is dynamic, evolving, and often far from perfect. For reference, the walled city of Famagusta is often idealized and seen as a benchmark for stability and reliability, providing a sense of social connection in a city that may have lost its cultural cohesion. This idealization turns the old city into a mythical representation of

the perfect, ideal city. However, this is a somewhat utopian view; in a realistic view, the historical city was actually quite different, characterized by dirt, disorganization, fluctuating structures, and a blend of people, animals, and plants, along with significant social inequalities.

## **2.2 City and Identity**

### **2.2.1 Identity**

When referred to as identity, it is a complex concept that carries varied meanings and interpretations across different areas of thought and fields, including psychology, philosophy, politics, sociology, and social, cultural, and physical manifestations. Scholars have offered numerous definitions of identity throughout history. In the context of human identity, it refers to our sense of who we are as individuals and how others perceive and label us. Evolving over time, as human beings, we are in search of our personal identity; the way we express ourselves may be verbally as well as physically, where the first assumptions are concluded. How we understand what we see, or how we perceive what we see, is the meaning of perception psychology and a main topic of identity. The Cambridge online dictionary defines identity as the “fact of being, or feeling that you are, a particular type of person, organization, etc.; the qualities that make a person, organization, etc. different from others” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). In his book “What is Identity?” (Williams, 1989), Christopher John Fardo Williams explores the philosophical paradox that it is neither accurate nor practical to claim that something is identical to itself or to something else. This nuanced view underscores the complexity and multifaceted nature of identity. “Identity's significance reverberates through the intricate web of connections encompassing individuals, groups, and the organizational ecosystems that mirror roader societal structures” (Miscenko & Day, 2016). So, whether applied to

individuals, groups, or architectural ensembles, identity serves as a crucial tool for understanding and expressing collective and personal essence. Identity must be seen as the result of rationality, in which sameness acquires importance from comparative distinctions, implying an element of differentiation. In addition, identity cannot always be confined to one thing; it can encompass a group of people, a collection of buildings, and more. This broader interpretation of identity is essential for comprehensively examining the interplay between architectural forms and urban development.

### **2.2.2 Urban Identity**

“Urban identity is often defined as the unique characteristics that differentiate one city from another” (Lynch, 1960). Urban identity is a broader term that can refer to the identity of urban areas in general, including neighborhoods, districts, cities, and other urbanized regions. This term may be used to discuss broader urban trends, patterns, and phenomena that shape the identity of urban spaces beyond a single city, for instance, a historical city, a smart city, or an eco-city. It includes considerations like urban planning, social interactions, and urban form evolution. It considers how various elements of the constructed environment and social dynamics both play a role in shaping the identity of urban spaces. Urban identity comprises both physical aspects and social and cognitive aspects.

### **2.2.3 Factors of Urban Identity**

Imperatively, urban space is important because it includes urban districts, physical form, streets, space quality, public space interaction, and the public-private connection. Built heritage, which includes historical structures, historical urban form, historic district also plays an important role in shaping the city's character. This historical heritage not only represents the city's architectural and cultural growth, but it also instills a sense of continuity and affiliation in its citizens. The preservation and

deliberate integration of these historical components contribute to the particular character and historical depth of urban places, making them essential for understanding and appreciating the city's legacy and identity. The natural environment, characterized by climate, topography, and landscape conditions, also influences urban identity. Interfaces such as the history-community-economy interface and the built heritage-cityscape interface further enrich the urban identity by linking the historical narrative and built environment to the broader socio-economic context. Together, these intertwined factors and interfaces create a distinctive urban identity that forms and defines each city.

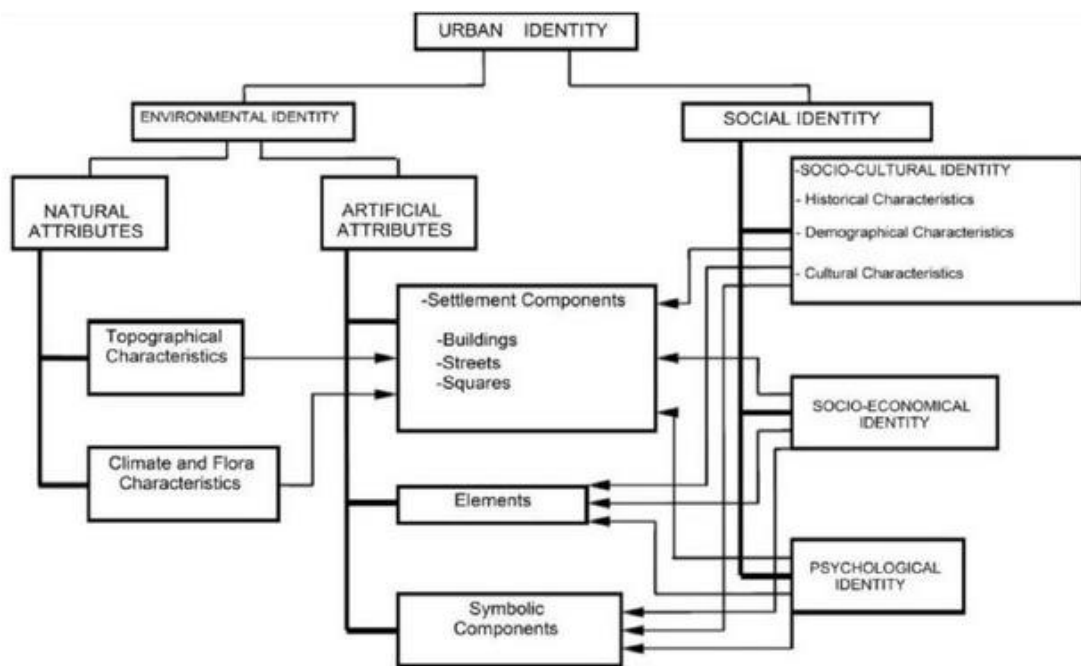


Figure 4: Formation of Urban Identity (Ökesli & Gürçınar, 2012)

According to Anastasiou, Tasopoulou, Gemenetzi, Gareiou, and Zervas (2021), factors shaping urban identity are a combination of social and cognitive aspects and physical aspects that collectively create uniqueness. On the one hand, language, religion, ethnicity, family structure, and food customs are examples of cultural features,

whereas social characteristics include personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions, social interactions, and emotions of security, all of which are associated with the urban identity. They produce place attachment, a sense of belonging, as well as a sense of community. On the other hand, the physical aspect, especially the built heritage linked with history, is a mandatory factor in urban identity.

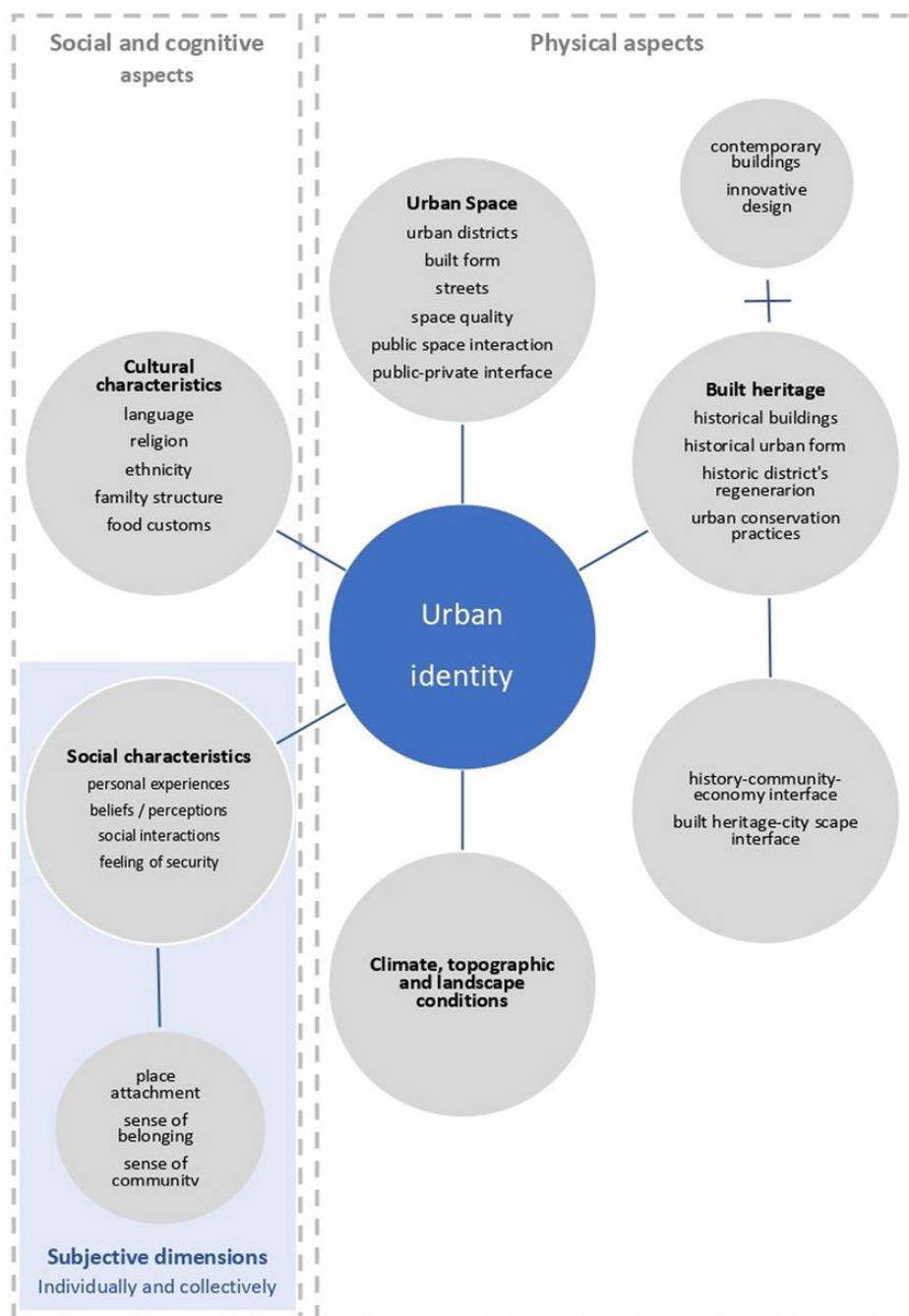


Figure 5: Factors Shaping Urban Identity (Anastasiou Et Al., 2021)

#### **2.2.4 City Identity**

City identity encompasses the distinct features and attributes that characterize a particular city. This includes its historical background, cultural heritage, architectural styles, and social dynamics. “City identity is constructed over time and consists of collectively shared perceptions about a city’s sustained ‘character’ or ‘ethos’ (Bell & de-Shalit, 2011), which architectural theorists call *genius loci*—the distinctive spirit of a place” (Norberg-Schultz, 1970; Jones & Svejnova, 2017). Historic cities are those with multiple identity layers, shaped by various eras of occupancy and the cultural impacts they had. Each historical layer adds depth to the city's identity, resulting in a mosaic of cultural and architectural diversity. It reveals itself in different city identities, including historical tales, landmarks, fashions, public places, and cultural organizations. The importance of famous structures and public places in defining metropolitan character cannot be overemphasized. Cathedrals, palaces, and fortresses are frequently used as city emblems, representing the city's historical story and cultural values. Furthermore, the evolution of architectural styles and urban planning concepts over time has had a considerable impact on the city's character, reflecting larger socioeconomic, cultural, and political tendencies.

#### **2.2.5 Factors of City Identity**

City identity concept is made up of both environmental and social identities. Environmental identity is influenced by both the natural and man-made environments. The natural environment includes geographic formations, topography, climate, vegetation, and water bodies. In contrast, the man-made environment is characterized on different scales: city scale, district scale, space scale, and unit scale. At the city scale, historical characteristics, city images, and urban fabric characteristics (both two-dimensional and three-dimensional solid-void properties) play a crucial role. The

district scale focuses on district images, while the space scale considers street characteristics, square characteristics, and open spaces such as parks and vacant lands. The unit scale is defined by building characteristics. On the other hand, social factors are integral to the identity of a city and are determined by the demographics, social structures, and community practices that shape the way people interact within the urban environment. Cultural factors include the traditions, customs, and artistic expressions that define a city's unique character. Not to forget, political features include legislative and administrative frameworks. Finally, economic features are related to the economic situation of society. The combination of these natural and social aspects defines a city's distinct character and reflects its history, present, and future goals.

## **2.3 Architecture and Identity**

### **2.3.1 Architectural Identity**

Even if two people cannot see reality through the same lens because their views of the tangible world differ, while discussing architecture, such disparate perceptions may find resonance to foster mutual understanding and admiration. Architecture is more than just a function; it symbolizes a cultural narrative—a society's ideals and ambitions conveyed visually and tactilely. From material selection to space layout, every architectural feature serves as a canvas for expressing history, traditions, and current dynamics. Architecture has the ability to bridge personal experiences and uses individual experiences to elicit a collective reaction, expressing identity and cultural values via people's interactions with the built environment. Architecture is a powerful tool for expressing and communicating cultural identity.

If architectural identity had to be defined, it is simply defined as the characteristics and features that make up the architecture of a place, culture, or period in history. It encompasses utilitarian design, aesthetic features, symbolism and associated meanings, historical relevance, cultural reflection, adaptability to geographic and climatic circumstances, continuity, and change. Basically, the historical characteristics of architecture contribute greatly to its identity. Before moving on, it is necessary to explain this assertion. Is it accurate? Do we genuinely require design in the same way we need language? The history of civilizations reveals that these are essential for human expression and needs. The apparition of different styles and movements in different contexts formulates a rich tapestry for architecture to hold onto and formulate distinct identities. The search for identity in architecture is therefore as important as important as in language or other forms of cultural expression. Understanding identity helps in recognizing diversity and uniqueness. Moreover, architecture contributes to a sense of continuity and change within a community. Historic buildings and monuments provide a link to the past. Simultaneously, contemporary architectural interventions can reinterpret traditional forms and create new meanings, adding to the evolving city identity.

### **2.3.2 Characteristics of Architectural Identity**

According to Torabi and Brahman (2013), there are seven main characteristics—building shape and form, design principles, building materials, context relationships, time, semantics, and space organizations—that form identity in architecture.

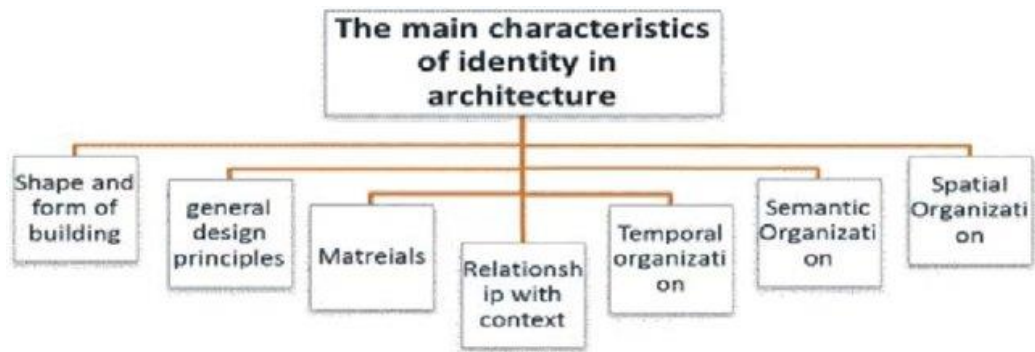


Figure 6: Main Characteristics of Identity in Architecture (Torabi & Brahman, 2013)

According to Alavi and Tanaka (2023), the characteristics of identity in architecture are; context, form and function, materials, memory (history and culture), political and economical factors, environmental factors, and finally individual creativity.

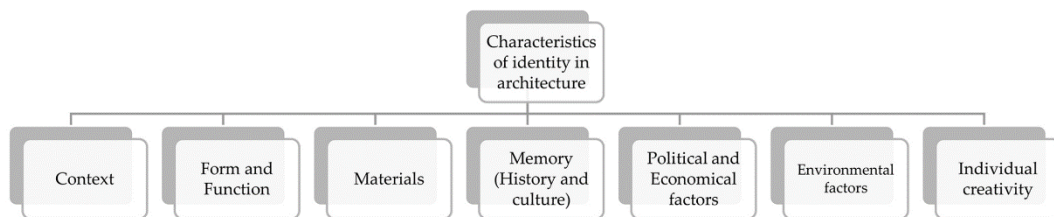


Figure 7: The Fundamental Components of Identity in Architecture (Alavi & Tanaka, 2023)

The elements of architectural identity comprise a rich tapestry woven from the threads of historical context, architectural styles, local materials and construction techniques, urban planning strategies, symbolic meanings, iconic landmarks, adaptive responses to societal changes, and the cultivation of vibrant public spaces. Each element contributes uniquely to the collective identity of a city or region, reflecting a dynamic interplay between past influences and present aspirations. Historical context provides the foundational narrative upon which architectural styles emerge, evolving over time to reflect cultural, economic, and technological shifts. The use of local materials and construction processes is more than just about physical attractiveness; it also

demonstrates regional skill and concern for environmental sustainability. Urban design principles govern the physical layout of streets, squares, and neighborhoods within their larger urban setting, ensuring that they both literally link and stand out from the rest. Symbolic meanings attached to architectural features therefore hold deeper cultural and social narratives, acting as mnemonics that connect contemporary communities with their historical origins. Whether it is an ancient monument or a modern structure, an iconic landmark forms a visual anchor that defines the contour of the city—its skyline—and triggers the pride and identity of the people. In these adaptive responses to societal change lie the potentials of architecture in balancing accommodation of evolving needs and values with the preservation or reinterpretation of a cultural heritage. Finally, it is in public spaces that design will engender community interaction, cultural exchange, and civic engagement, infusing the constructed environment with a feeling of vitality and belonging.

There is no doubt that city architecture serves as a vital component of identity, profoundly shaping the urban landscape and the lived experiences of its inhabitants. However, proving this seemingly simple and apparent fact can be quite challenging. Therefore, these characteristics exploration will help of further examine the intricate formation of identity. On the basis of identity, the characteristics to be considered into the categories of form and function, space organization, design principles, aesthetics and materials, and semantics.

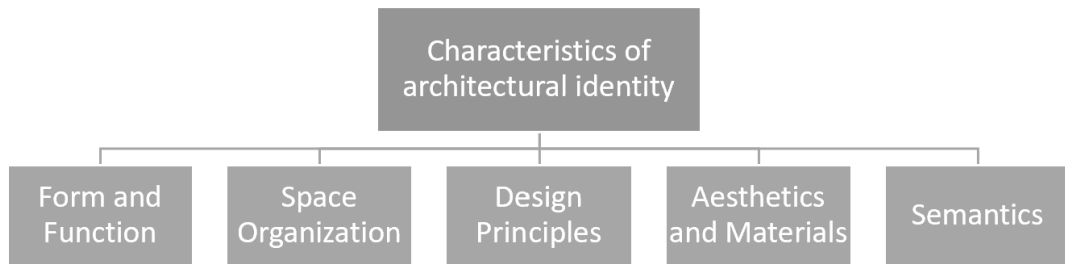


Figure 8: Characteristics of Architectural Identity (Author)

### 2.3.2.1 Form and Function

No vision of architecture can be fully understood without considering its shape. The visible form of a structure is the most critical and immediate aspect of its identity within the constructed environment. “Form describes the physical appearance of a building, including its size, shape, color, texture, and other visual features” (Trisno & Lianto, 2019). “The function of a building, on the other hand, refers to its purpose and practical utilization” (Hendrix, 2013). In theory, by its intended purpose, however, the theory of function alone does not account for all factors affecting a building's form. The creative imagination of the designer also plays a crucial role. The concept for an architectural form often originates from the designer's internal resources or intuitions. Form and function go hand in hand; this is why the collected works of any given architect show recurring themes despite the individual building’s different functional requirements; the similarities derive from the forms originating within the same personal resources. This theory on its own, once again, is unsatisfactory; therefore, the classification of buildings as Renaissance, Gothic, Revival, or Post-Modern shows the architecture working contemporaneously often utilizes common ideas of forms. Architectural form may be determined by the prevailing spirit of the age. It suggests that in every era, there is a prevailing spirit or collective set of attitudes, traits, and abilities that influence all artistic creations of that time.

Architectural form can also be shaped by dominant social and economic circumstances. This theory, like the spirit of the age, posits that all individual artistic endeavors are shaped by the compelling influence of broader collective forces. Social and economic factors contribute to shaping physical conditions, such as the methods of economic production and distribution that are common in an architect's society. Architectural form can be based on enduring principles of design that go beyond specific styles, cultures, and climates. This implies that there are fundamental universal principles that underpin all exceptional architecture. Regardless of the specific conditions of the design challenge, the designer, or the cultural context, everyone will recognize its enduring beauty and instantly grasp how to utilize it! None of these theories provides a comprehensive or definitive explanation of the origins of design ideas. If a theory can account for the role of the creative individual in shaping design, it cannot simultaneously explain how individuals appear to be subject to the dominant influence of a prevailing style or overarching ideology.

In addition, the architectural form of a community is a reflection of its culture concept. This may result in a product without identity, including foreign elements without allowing them to be adapted to the local culture. Buildings' physical appearance expresses through size, shape, color, and texture, revealing a harmonious balance between aesthetic appeal and functional practicality. Narrow streets, interlacing canals, and ornate facades not only answer the geographic and environmental challenges of the region but also represent the historical and cultural bequest of the city. In such a way, public spaces and buildings have been ingeniously designed for socialization, trade, and civic activities, which emphasizes the social fabric of the community.

### **2.3.2.2 Space Organization**

In architecture, space organization can be defined simply as how physical spaces are structured, arranged, and interconnected in an environment that is built. Spatial organization involves the purposeful design and structuring of spaces to achieve set objectives, thereby determining how often and in what manner elements will communicate. It also determines the structure, sequence, and place of spaces, which then defines the semantic relation between them. These relations and spatial arrangements differ from culture to culture and from one application to another. Spatial concepts, such as passages and voids, among others, are cardinal in most cultures and form a basis for constructing buildings with identity. In addition, “Architecture with identity has a design system and spatial organization that can transfer semantic relationships of spaces in different uses” (Torabi & Brahman, 2013). This simply implies that a well-organized space may express cultural values while also supporting a variety of activities, so maintaining the location's character.

The theory of space organization considers urban planning to be not only functional in purpose but also a way of forming social interaction and community identity. According to theories such as Kevin Lynch's "Image of the City," spatial organization influences the way in which residents structure their perceptions and move around in the environment, creating the notion of place and cultural continuity. These features, among others like paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks, create a mental map through which citizens relate more to the urban space. Other space syntax theories and ones on urban morphology deal with how spatial configuration influences human behavior and social dynamics since architecture can work to either induce community cohesion or engender cultural identity. Space syntax analysis, for instance, focuses on

the connectivity and integration of spaces in an urban grid, outlining the patterns that facilitate or hinder movement and interaction. The morphology of towns deals with the form and structure of urban space, clarifying how historical and cultural determinants have devised the built environment through time. Urban public space is a precondition of exchange and communication among citizens of a city. As Madanipour (2003) discusses, these spaces are managed in the public interest by public agencies, serving the public interest by providing a shared environment where everybody interacts beyond the immediacy of family or professional circles. Indeed, the richness of a city can often be discerned through its public spaces, which reflect social life, civic culture, and daily discourse. According to Jan Gehl (1996), good public space is the most important thing since a good urban design implies that there will be a place to stop, sit, and enjoy trees and the chirping of birds or other natural elements, but at the same time, provide room for casual meetings between fellow citizens.

### **2.3.2.3 Design Principles**

Architectural design is both straightforward and challenging. The main consideration in architecture is the process of thinking before a building actually becomes a structure. This thought process could be defined with the ideation of spaces that sustain functional requirements and at the same time keep aesthetic harmony. Creative imagination and execution are balanced with pragmatic and logical considerations when architects translate these basic visual-conceptual, often abstract ideas into their real, practical forms. This would essentially be driven by the principles of proportion, symmetry, rhythm, balance, and harmony that channel the developing architectural form. It ensures that the various elements of a building are in harmony with each other in their arrangement and with the building at large, to bring out everything in order

and in aesthetic unity. The element of symmetry brings with it balance and stability, usually created by the rhythm of form, which can be easily perceived by the eye. Rhythm produces movement and flow in the architectural space by the repetition of elements in design. Balance can take place in a design via the composition of symmetrical and asymmetrical elements, which creates dynamic and interesting, but still stable and cohesive space. Harmony brings together different elements and principles into a unified whole and ensures that all parts of a building work together in supporting the general design intent. These are principles relating to ensuring that the final developed structure not only performs the intended purposes but also contributes to the aesthetic and spatial coherence of buildings. Using these basic principles in design, architects can come up with buildings that are not only beautiful but also functional. Therefore, design principles in architecture pertain to basic ideas guiding the visual and functional characteristics of buildings.

The theory of design principles postulates that architectural form is not arbitrary but follows certain principles corresponding to structures of human perception and cultural patterns. Valued in this concept is the idea that buildings are purposefully designed, following rules that make them not only sound in construction but also visual and functional within their culture. It provides principles by which architecture guides the creation of harmonious and meaningful spaces full of identity. Vitruvius' theory on *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas*, therefore, evokes the need to strike a balance between the structural integrity and aesthetic appeal of the building. The meaning of *Firmitas* can be translated to mean strength, which depicts the durability and stability of the structure to withhold the test of time and other external forces. On the hand, *Utilitas* has to do with functionality and practicality, making sure that the building serves

effectively for its intended purpose and satisfies all that is required by the occupants. Venustas deals with the beauty and aesthetics of a building, making it beautiful, pleasing to the eye, and culturally important. From this triad, there emerges a sense that successful architecture gives due attention to these aspects of design so that a comprehensive, long-lasting result is achieved. Besides, theories on architectural style and typology help explain the evolution of design principles through time and within varying cultural contexts. Architectural styles are not static; they change and evolve by following cultural, social, and technological changes. Typology deals with the classification of buildings by form and function. It makes possible the understanding of how the building types have responded to the user's requirements in different historic and cultural contexts. If this investigation gives any indication, then it definitely proves that principles are dynamic, showing a perpetual dialogue between tradition and innovation.

#### **2.3.2.4 Aesthetics and Materials**

“Architecture is more than just the construction of buildings. It is the art of designing and creating interior and exterior spaces that are both functional and beautiful. One of the key components of architectural design is the use of decorative elements that add visual interest and highlight the unique features of a building” (Blackwood, 2023). The concept of aesthetics in architecture posits that beauty is subjective yet informed by cultural norms and historical contexts. Theories of architectural ornamentation and aesthetics explore how decorative elements communicate social status, religious devotion, and political power, highlighting the role of architecture as a means of cultural representation and identity. In addition, these elements can create a sense of place and identity, connecting a structure to its cultural and historical roots.

Building materials, serving as more than just structural components—they embody the beliefs, values, and cultural identity of different historical periods—crucial in shaping the identity of a region, stand out as key elements in defining architectural identity. “According to William Morris, the subject of materials is the foundation of architecture” (Alavi & Tanaka, 2023; Thomas, 2006). Each material possesses unique properties that contribute to the specific characteristics of the building it is used in. Throughout history, materials like brick and wood have symbolized beliefs in mortality and resilience. For instance, the widespread use of these materials in buildings signifies a community's acknowledgment of the transient nature of life. Conversely, materials such as stone, renowned for their durability and strength, were often chosen for royal palaces, symbolizing the stability and power of monarchs. Beyond functional roles in utility, materials communicate and symbolize values and meanings. If replacing the sight with the hearing sense, we can say that materials are instrumental in not only decorating spaces, more like a beautiful symphony, but also in transmitting concepts and cultural music narratives. Architectural spaces make use of very divergent materials—traditional native or modern—stressing purity and innovation. The choice of material infuses architectural spaces with certain features that embody identity to space. Traditional materials rooted in the local heritage could nurture an intense relationship with cultural identity in architecture, and therefore a sense of place and continuity with the past. The ultimate choice of materials in architecture is, therefore, a deliberate act beyond the technical considerations, one that deeply impacts the perception and experience of spaces by users.

#### **2.3.2.5 Semantics**

Surely, every society has its culture, which explains the ideologies involved. It has shaped a collective identity with shared meanings, starting from the historical events

like wars and victories. Architecture is a deep subject realized through the building structure. It is an art that exceeds the mere process of construction by bringing spiritualism and other philosophies into its designs. This is a very wide and all-encompassing discipline, for it explains the expression of human values, the cultural beliefs, and societal aspirations by converting them into built forms. Semantics, careful organization, and depth give architecture the ability to convey deeper meanings and resonance in the human unconsciousness. But what is semantic? Semantics in architecture entails towards the symbolic meanings and cultural narratives inscribed in constructed forms, which express historical, ideological, and societal values. How I may ask? Well, since symbols have distinct meanings in different cultures, each of which resonates with the people who live in those countries. Still How? Through spatial arrangement, ornamental themes, and the placement of monuments in the urban fabric. But why? So, architectural spaces could be seen as manifesting different values or beliefs of a community by expressing those ideas through design and their physical appeal. To put it another way, semantics are not only architectural markers of the community's values, but they also provide visible and tactile expression to the group's spirit and philosophy.

#### **2.4 Interplay Between City, Architecture, and Identity**

“Urban identity, architectural identity and the urban images about them are sometimes formed by very different components in a long period in urban space.” (Yaldız, Aydın, & Sıramkaya, 2014). That means it underlines that the urban and architectural identities are formed by different complex sets of actions for a long period. The relationship between a city, its architecture, and its identity is interactive and two-way process. In conceptualizing a city's identity, it is useful to draw a line of demarcation between several other related concepts that are often mistakenly considered as

synonymous. These identities are not fixed; rather, they have an ongoing evolution due to internal developments and pressures from outside. In this regard, the continuous process reflects the ability of the city to adapt and transform within the historical and cultural framework for its own renewal. This is supposed to manifest or bring out its evolving character and the play between the architectural and social dimensions in a city.

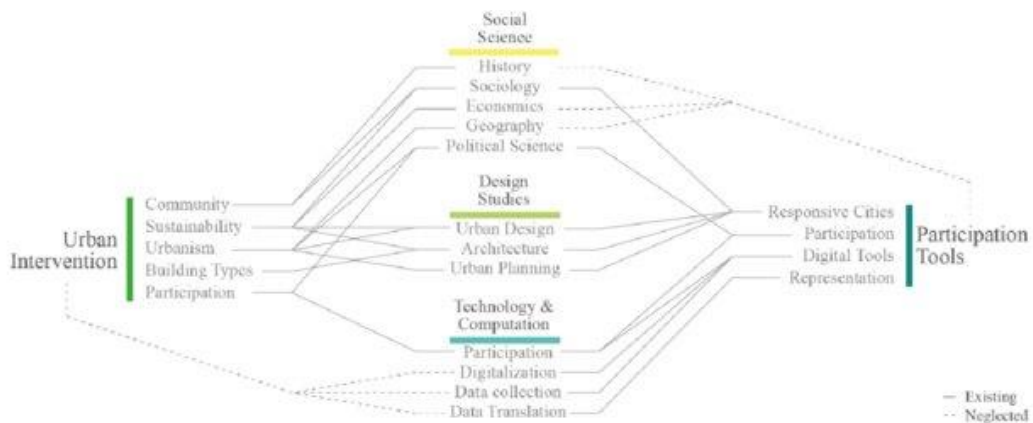


Figure 9: The Relationship Between Research Domains and Thematic Areas (Ataman & Tuncer, 2022)

The interconnection of identity and architecture underlines the key positions of time and space in forming identity. While time concerns history and tradition, relating to the past, space belongs to the geographical aspect, which represents the physical platform mirroring the cultural underpinning of identity. Architects and urban planners bear special responsibilities as designers and transformers of physical symbols that make up the complex phenomenon of individual and collective identities of people. Their work not only impacts the present environment but also shapes historical and cultural narratives within the built landscape that give meaning to belonging and continuity. All these elements, when thoughtfully integrated, achieve spaces that echo and further shape the unique identities of communities they serve.

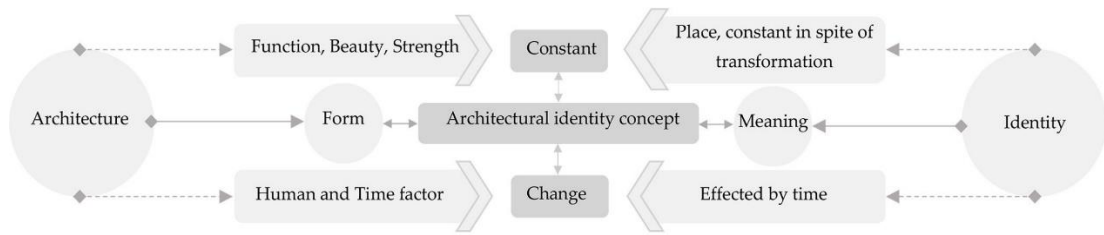


Figure 10: Architecture and Identity Relationships (Alavi & Tanaka, 2023)

Adding, the level of this interaction is fully noted more in cities whose historical and cultural backgrounds zone on the preservation and transformation process of architectural styles for maintenance and development of urban identity lies. Architecture is the physical representation of the history, culture, and social value of the city. The distinct character comes from iconic buildings, public spaces, and urban layout, that becomes a part of its identity. On the other hand, it is the urban identity that propels architectural sensibility and conservation. A city strives to contain the works of architectural marvel while meeting demands, frequently. This balance between preservation and development requires a nuanced understanding of how architectural forms and styles contribute to a city's character. In case new forms and functions do occur in contemporary architecture, they will nonetheless have the possibility of being derived from historical contexts, thus setting up a dialogue between old and new. Also, not to confuse identity of the city with branding of the city wherein the branding of the city is a combination of the strategies to promote itself as marketing. “Thus, city branding has to be concerned with how culture and history, economic growth and social development, infrastructure and architecture, landscape and environment, among other things, can be combined into a saleable identity that is acceptable to all people” (Zhang & Zhao, 2009; Riza et al., 2012).

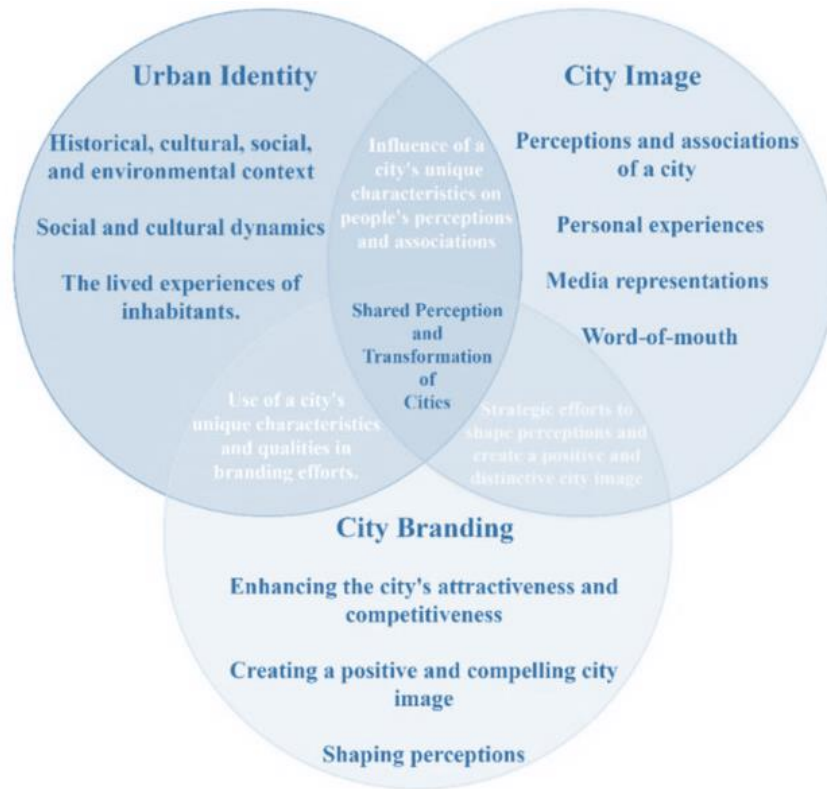


Figure 11: Urban Identity, City Image, and City Branding Interplay (Mansour Et Al., 2023)

“The balance between preserving a city's heritage and allowing for its natural evolution is key, acknowledging the dynamic nature of urban identity” (Mansour et al., 2023). This balance provides protection for historic and cultural assets but at the same time gives room to contemporary needs and novelties. Cities should focus on careful integration of new developments with existing heritage to foster rich, layered identity respecting the past while embracing the future. By doing so, this will help to ensure an aesthetically and functionally enriched urban space, one of continued beings and belongings. Such balance can only be achieved through a thought process that is very considerate and inclusive of the diverse perspectives and needs of the communities, making sure that historical value and modern progress are harmoniously included into the urban fabric. Moreover, in the processes of planning and architectural design, there has to be consideration of the cultural and social narratives within the built

environment. Effective urban development strategies recognize the importance of integrating new constructions harmoniously within the existing architectural fabric, ensuring that the city's identity is both respected and enhanced.

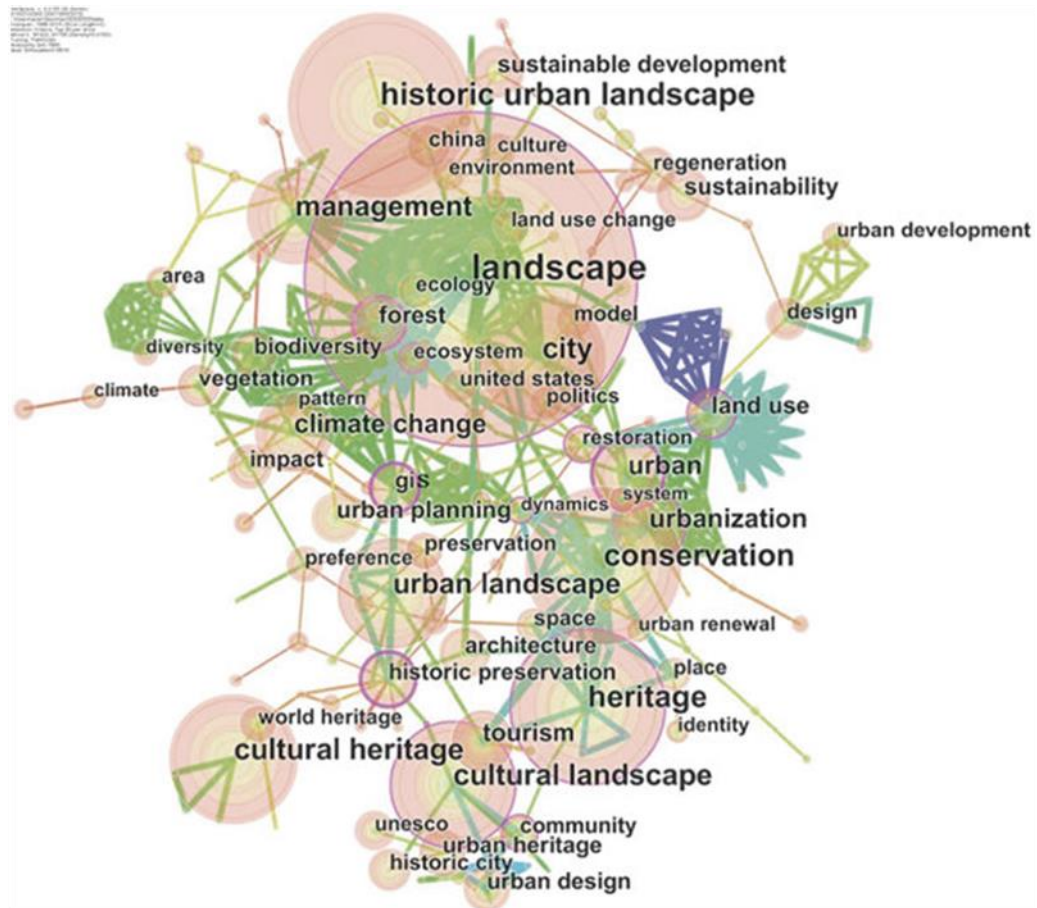


Figure 12: Cooccurrence Relationship Diagram of Keywords in The Urban Historical Landscape (Teng, Huang, & Yang, 2022)

## Chapter 3

### OVERVIEW ABOUT VENETIAN ARCHITECTURE

#### 3.1 Venetian Architecture in History

*"Underneath day's azure eyes,  
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies.  
A peopled labyrinth of walls,  
Amphitrites destined halls,  
Which her hoary sire now paves  
With his blue and beaming waves,  
Lo! the sun upsprings behind.  
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined  
On the level, quivering line  
Of the water's crystalline:  
And before that dream of light, As within a furnace bright.  
Column, tower, and dome, and spire  
Shine like obelisks of fire,  
Panting with inconstant motion  
From the altar of dark ocean  
To the sapphire-tinted sky."— Percy Bysshe Shelly  
(Shelly, 1818)*

To understand the character of typical Venetian architecture, we first need to understand the history of Venice. Venice, a city renowned for its unique position and historical significance, has a history that spans over a millennium and is marked by its rise from a small settlement to a powerful maritime republic and cultural hub.



Figure 13: Bird's-Eye View of Venice (Braun & Hogenberg, 1577)

Founded in the 5th century by refugees fleeing barbarian invasions, Venice was built on a series of islands in the Venetian Lagoon, a strategic location that provided natural defense and facilitated maritime trade. By the 9th century, it had become a significant trading hub, influenced by the Byzantine Empire. In 828, the relics of Saint Mark were brought to Venice, enhancing its status. Venice became an independent republic in the 10th century, reaching its golden age in the 11th to 13th centuries with maritime expansion and trade dominance. The city peaked in prosperity during the 14th and 15th centuries, becoming a cultural and economic center. However, the rise of new trade routes and conflicts with the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century marked the beginning of its decline. The Venetian Republic ended in 1797, when Napoleon conquered the city. Following this, Venice was ceded to Austria under the Treaty of Campo Formio. In 1805, Venice became part of the Kingdom of Italy under Napoleon but was returned to Austrian control in 1815, after the fall of Napoleon, as part of the Habsburg Empire.

The city remained under Austrian rule until 1866, when it became part of the newly unified Kingdom of Italy following the Third Italian War of Independence.

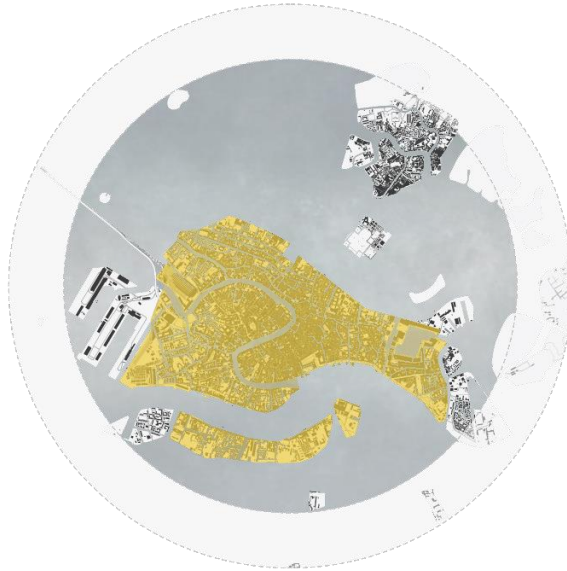


Figure 14: Venice Map (Author)

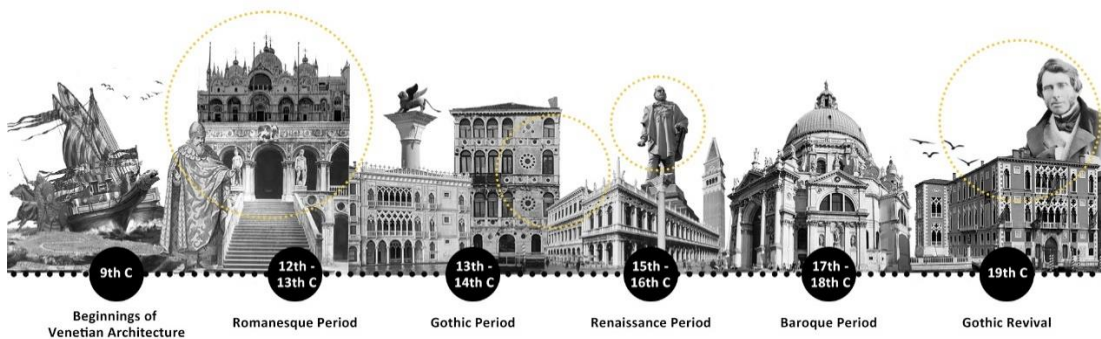


Figure 15: Venetian Architecture Timeline, Venice (Author)

Venetian architecture has evolved significantly over the centuries, reflecting various cultural and stylistic influences. These architectural influences differ completely from the influence of Italy, geographically, geologically, religiously, socially, politically, and historically. In the 9th century, the beginnings of Venetian architecture were heavily influenced by Byzantine architecture as Venice established itself as a prominent trading hub. The 12th and 13th centuries saw the Romanesque period,

characterized by thick walls, round arches, and small windows, with significant buildings like St. Mark's Basilica being constructed. The development of trade routes and the Crusades are important events that made Gothic become a universal style. The 13th century witnessed the flourishing of Venetian Gothic architecture, producing notable buildings such as the Doge's Palace, Ca' d'Oro, and the Scuola Grande di San Marco. “The Venetians had a beautiful type of Gothic architecture of their own, and, being farther from Rome, were not so much under the influence of that city” (Fletcher, 1905).



Figure 16: The Doge's Palace, Venice (Buffaloah, 2022)

One of the most well-known examples of Venetian Gothic architecture in Venice is the Doge's Palace. The intricacy of details, including those found on column capitals, quatrefoils, and other marble elements, highlights the exceptional craftsmanship and elegance in the construction of this building. As well as the surface, the way the brick gets laid up, and the series of diamonds, it almost seems like it's more interested in the pattern-making for the sake of pattern-making than pattern-making to reveal how forces are moving through the building. Comparing it to the Colosseum in Rome,

where the pattern is stacking the column orders and the columns are not structural at all but ornamental, it lets you logically connect to how the Colosseum is being supported structurally, and the very opposite is going on with the Doge's Palace.



Figure 17: The Colosseum, Rome (Gemini, 2014)

Considering the concept of gravity and material weight, this type of building can be described as an antigravity structure, meaning it does not focus on showcasing or revealing the principles of force distribution within its design. There is a fairly massive wall in the upper part, and then down below are spindly columns that appear to emerge from the ground without any visible foundations. This relates to the fact that Venetian foundations use parallel planes, unlike the perimeter foundations typically employed on land. For instance, Palazzo Davanzati is a building in Florence where the heavy part is at the bottom and the light columns are on top.



Figure 18: The Palazzo Davanzati, Florence (Sailko, 2009)

In fact, if you had to think of something that looks like the Doge's Palace, it wouldn't be architecture but more like a carpet. The fringe of a carpet makes you think about the lightness of how it meets the ground and the lightness of how it meets the sky. This unraveling of the solid planes of surface as it comes to its perimeter condition is very much like a textile, especially if you think about these connections with the East that Venice, this maritime culture, had—that they are looking at not only palaces or churches in Alexandria but more vernacular ideas about an architecture that might be more textile-based. Even in this amazing detail, it looks as though two carpets have been woven together.



Figure 19: Doge's Palace Corner, Venice (Marc, 2019)

“It dominated the 14th century, and because of the city's conservatism, Venetian Gothic buildings, especially smaller palaces, continued to be built well into the second half of the 15th century” (Mack, 2002). During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Renaissance period introduced architectural elements in Venice characterized by symmetry, proportion, and geometry, with contributions from prominent architects like Jacopo Sansovino and Andrea Palladio, leading to iconic structures such as the Biblioteca Marciana, the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore, and the Rialto Bridge.

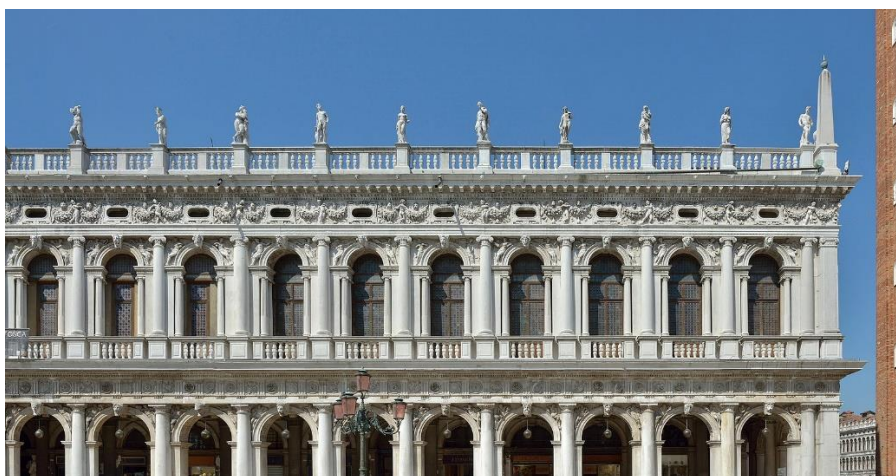


Figure 20: Biblioteca Marciana, Venice (Moroder, 2013)



Figure 21: San Giorgio Maggiore Church, Venice (Descouens, 2006)

“Venetian Renaissance architecture began rather later than in Florence, not really before the 1480s” (Huse, Wolters, & Jephcott, 1993). Clearly, these Renaissance style hints were brought from other part of Italy to Venice. This is the secret story behind this remarkable architecture, not found anywhere, with its own creation, imagination and adaptation of other styles. “Compared to the Renaissance architecture of other Italian cities, there was a degree of conservatism, especially in retaining the overall form of buildings, which in the city were usually replacements on a confined site, and in windows, where arched or round tops, sometimes with a classicized version of the tracery of Venetian Gothic architecture, remained far more heavily used than in other cities” (Huse & Wolters, 1993). The value of architecture in establishing confidence was instinctively sensed by the Venetians as a matter of collective intuition, and it was “the most beautiful and illustrious city which at present exists in the world” (Burns, 1983).

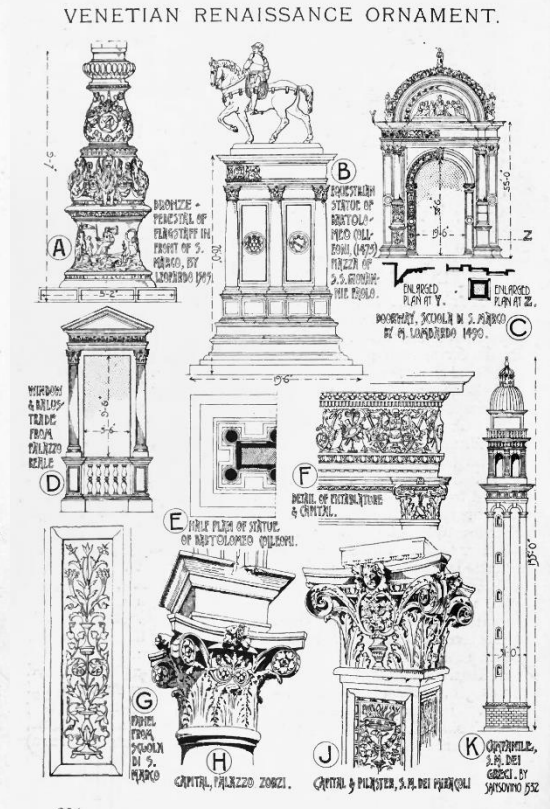
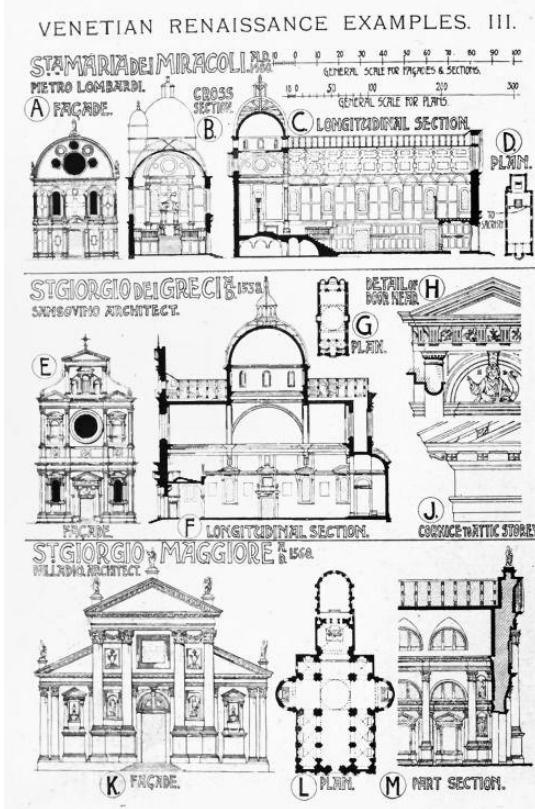
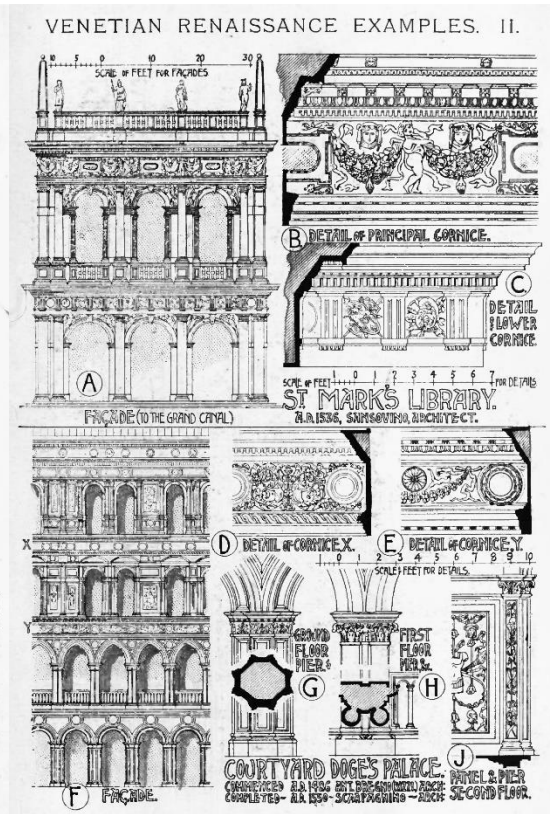
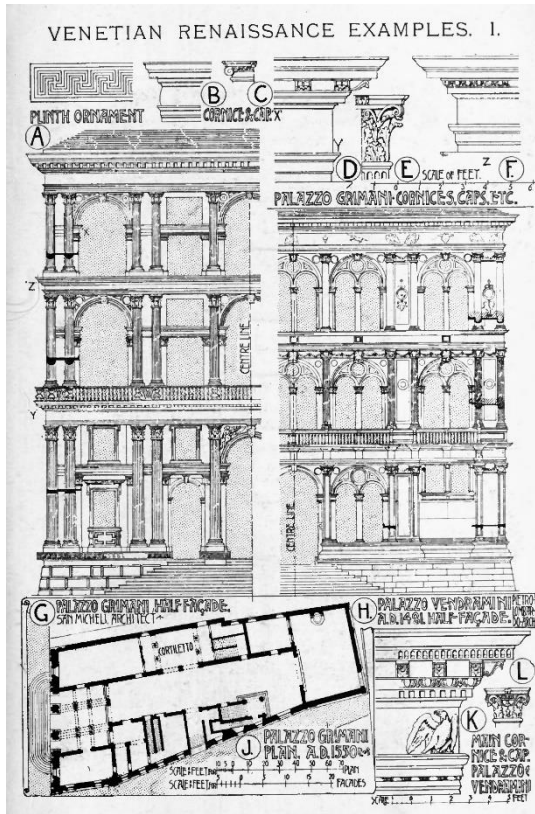


Figure 22: Venetian Renaissance (Fletcher, 1905)

The 17th and 18th centuries marked the Baroque period with its dramatic use of light, bold ornamentation, and movement, exemplified by buildings like the Church of Santa Maria della Salute and the Teatro La Fenice. The 19th century experienced a Gothic Revival, spurred by writers like John Ruskin, resulting in the restoration and reinterpretation of Gothic elements in contemporary buildings as a segment of the wider Gothic Revival trend in Victorian architecture and the completion of the clock tower in Piazza San Marco.



Figure 23: Piazza San Marco, Venice (Canaletto, 1742-1746)

One notable aspect of Venetian architecture, characterized by its graceful, pointed arches and intricate details, is how distinctly it stands apart from the architectural styles commonly seen today. Notably, the palace had a significance in this architecture filled with character. These palaces of Venice were high rectangular blocks with all the ornamentation confined to the front elevation. Whatever its period or style, the Venetian palace follows a specific and immediately recognizable model.



Figure 24: Venetian Façades Collage (Author)

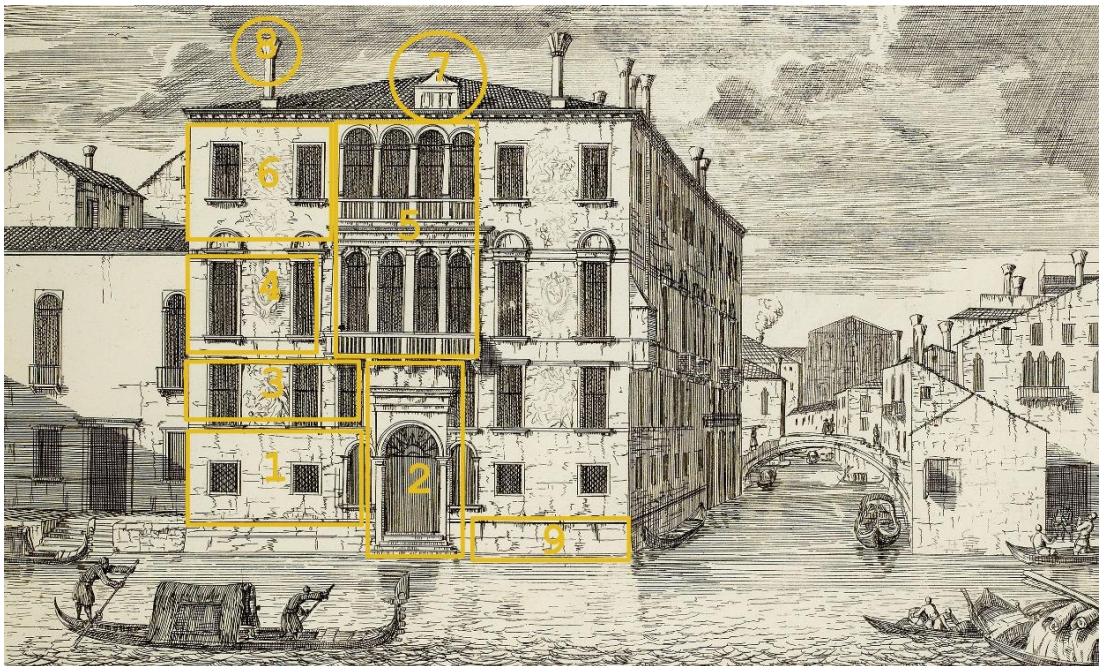


Figure 25: Venetian Palace Façade Characteristics (Passerelles, 2024)

In this figure, the architecture of a Venetian palace is described as follows;

Number 1) The ground floor: The Venetian palace was built by families who made their fortune through trade. Often, their activity is carried out within the very walls of their home. The ground floor is occupied by a warehouse lit by modest-sized windows. But the wealthiest families can also have a separate warehouse built.

Number 2) The water gate: The wide door opening onto the canal allows goods to be loaded and unloaded. Next to the door are usually the painted wooden posts that allow boats to be moored.

Number 3) The first floor or noble floor: It houses the large lounge (or portego) reserved for receptions and parties. The facade, especially at this level, can be decorated with marble patterns or even colorful mosaics.

Number 4) Typically situated between the ground floor and the first main level, this space is commonly utilized for secondary functions, such as storage or staff quarters. The windows on this floor are generally smaller and less ornate than those on the noble floor, reflecting its utilitarian function. This mezzanine helps to create a visual break between the more imposing ground floor and the elaborately decorated noble floor, contributing to the overall vertical hierarchy and rhythm of the facade. The use of a mezzanine floor is a common feature in Venetian palaces, aiding in the efficient use of space within the structure.

Number 5) The central windows: Closer and more numerous windows are located in the center of the facade. On either side are positioned more spaced windows. The grouping and arrangement of windows concentrated in the middle of the facade, with the outer sections remaining relatively solid, creates the visual impression of a central element flanked by wings. This arrangement is characteristic of Venetian palaces. The central windows are sometimes supplemented by a loggia, as at the Ca' d'Oro.

Number 6) The upper floor: They houses the private apartments.

Number 7) The roof terrace: Wooden terraces (or altana) are common on the roofs of a city with little green space.

Number 8) Venetian fireplaces: The chimneys of Venice have a very recognizable shape and are intended to prevent fires. Very high, they are topped by a large cone placed point downwards. The smoke escapes from the bottom of the cone, and the still-incandescent fragments cool in the cone before escaping. For the same reason, chimneys are most often placed along the roof and not in the middle.

Number 9) The Istrian stone base: The materials are seen demarcation between the first level of masonry, made of Istrian stone, a dense and impermeable stone resistant to salt, and the upper levels.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, modern and contemporary periods have seen the integration of modern architectural principles while preserving historical integrity, ongoing restoration efforts, and the blending of historic styles with new materials and technologies, as seen in projects like the Punta della Dogana museum and the restoration of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. This makes it very clear that the evolution of Venetian architecture was simply a development of the city's ability to adapt, innovate, and not break away from any given identity. From Byzantine to Gothic, from Renaissance to Baroque, and then from the Modern era, each architectural period has borne witness to cultural, political, and economic changes that happened in Venice. Such rich architectural past not only defines its identity, but also guarantee eternal beauty and inventiveness.

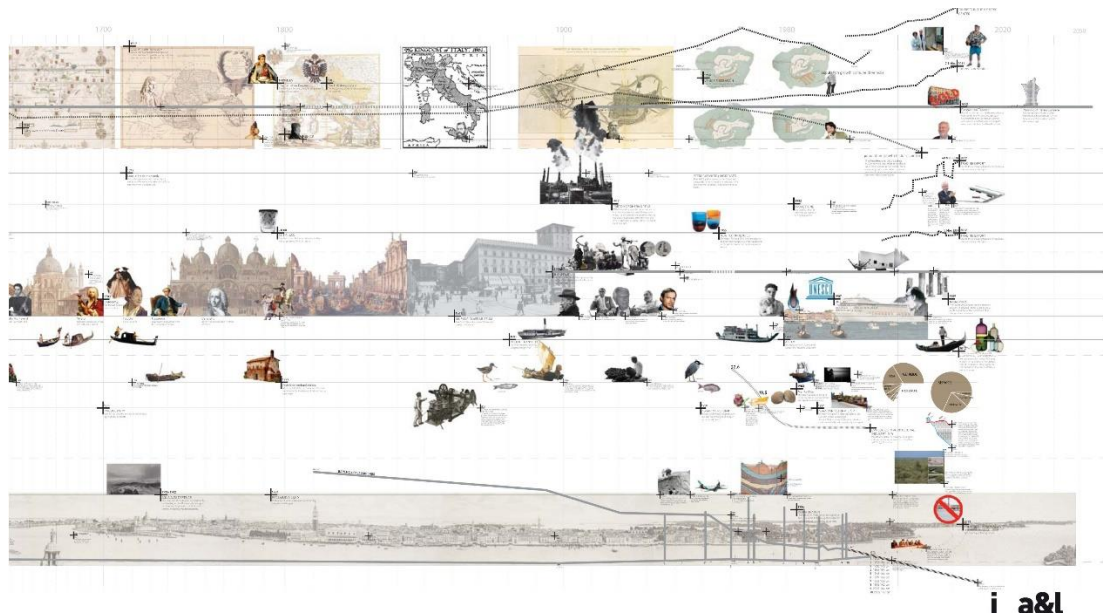


Figure 26: Venice, From Gated Lagoon to Bioregion (Thackara, 2012)

For the characteristics of architectural identity, believing that the equation "City = Form = Function = Need", succinctly captures the essence of how Venetian architecture contributes to the identity of the urban environment. In Venetian architecture, each element of the built environment is a response to the specific needs of the city, which in turn shapes its form and function. The unique form of Venetian architecture is influenced by the city's geographical setting, historical context, and cultural heritage. The narrow, winding streets, interconnected canals, and multi-story buildings with ornate facades reflect the adaptive strategies employed by Venetians to thrive in a lagoon environment. Besides, it is not just an aesthetic, but a practical form that solves the problems created by the location and resources of the city. Functionality was very essential to Venetian architecture. Buildings and public spaces were designed for specific functions: houses and shops, churches and convents, palaces, and civic buildings. It is in the combination of living space with workshops and storage facilities at ground level that the multi-functional nature of most buildings in Venice finds almost a perfect blend of form and functionality, combining to meet the diverse needs of their inhabitants. Such public spaces like piazzas and bridges serve to meet and greet, deal in business, and transport people from one area to another—thereby reinforcing the social fabric of the city. Architecture becomes a direct response to the needs of its residents. The very infrastructure of the city—the bridges, the iconic water management systems—all help solve some of the pragmatic concerns involved in a water-bound city.

Venetian architecture space is organized by practical needs and cultural values. A pattern of streets, canals, and public squares—piazzas—reflects historical evolution during which Venice was a seafaring and trading center. The tight urban texture

comprises narrow streets and well-linked canals with planned open space in the form of piazzas and campi. This layout is designed to provide maximum interaction and facilitate both pedestrian and waterborne transport, reflecting the unique relationship of Venice with its aquatic environment. Private and semiprivate areas in the organization of space within Venetian architecture provide respite from the busy cityscape. In this respect, courtyards and rooftop terraces function as privatized retreats with which to withdraw for relaxation or socializing out of public view. Hence, this ease and fluency of movement through the city connect different districts with bridges and footsteps, fostering social cohesion and great commercial activity. In Venetian architecture, there is great consideration for public spaces, as they are meant to foster community life and civic engagement. Piazzas act as open central spaces within which markets, social life, and public ceremonies have taken place, further underlining the communal aspect of Venetian life. It's not only practical transportation that serves with the integration of water in the urban layout but aesthetically and culturally in terms of cultural identity.

In the same context, such design principles at work are seen in the harmonious synthesis of different stylistic influences. Venetian architecture represents that synthesis of the local traditions with imported influences in the formation of an individual architectural vocabulary. The architects of Venice showed skillful weavings from Byzantine, Gothic, and Renaissance traditions that yielded buildings at once unique but typical of the city's multifaceted cultural heritage. Most of the architecture in Venice stays true to the enhancing principles of harmony, proportion, and symmetry, and it is very detailed. The idea of beauty and order from the Renaissance found expression through this beautiful, balanced, and elegant façade and interior

design in the Venetian buildings. Arches, columns, and intricate facades are indicative of deep understanding for the fine relation between proportion and ornamentation, expressing functional needs as well as aesthetic considerations. Here, the merging of Gothic elements with Renaissance principles in Venetian architecture underlines the potential for fusing different styles into one specific, long-lived architectural language. Axial alignment and symmetry are conventions that generally express order and greatness, marking the status of Venice as a great maritime and commercial power. The adaptation of classical orders and principles in Venetian architecture is motivated by a desire to evoke a sense of continuity with the ancient Roman and Byzantine traditions but also to assert the cultural distinctiveness of Venice. The integration of functional elements with aesthetic considerations ensures that each building serves its intended purpose while contributing to the cohesive visual identity of the city. These design principles not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of Venetian architecture but also convey the city's cultural and historical significance.

It is what forms the aesthetics and materials of Venetian architecture, holding in significance for the building to not feel lifeless but feel dynamic, vibrant, and timeless. It is this that gives it the character and identity to urban spaces that does not seem lifeless. Rather, Venetian architecture is supposed to share dynamism and vibrancy. Of course, a major requirement is the creation of an environment that is striking to view, yet welcoming and pleasing to look at. Personality and visual effect are considered to be the major characteristics of Venetian architectural aesthetics. It typically has ornate facades with marble, decorated tiles, and sculptural elements. These decorations represent not only the economic wealth and cultural patronage of Venice but also enhance the architectural identity of that city. The aesthetic in Venetian

architecture is formed by the combination of local craftsmanship and luxury imported materials. Venetian buildings make abundant use of local materials, like Istrian stone and brick, which provide their durability and unique characteristics. Imported materials, such as marble and decorated tiles, will be used to enrich the buildings with embellishments on the fronts and inside, adding to the richness in sophistication. Ornate detailing, including intricate carvings and relief work, is a testament to the craftsmanship and artistic prowess in this city. This period basically founds its aesthetic values in the ideology of Renaissance, where more emphasis is given to the ideals of beauty and proportion. These public monuments, palaces, and churches are designed in relation to the ideals, which establish a greater conception of Venice as one of the leading centers for art and culture during the Renaissance period.

If semantics of Venetian architecture was a box, the strongest of us would not be able to lift it due to its heavy weight. Yes! Venetian semantics are heavy in terms of cultural, political, and religious identity elements. Clear to the eyes, heraldic symbols, allegorical figures, and religious iconography, typical in the symbolic motifs of Venetian architecture, decorated public monuments, palaces, and churches—messages redolent with power, wealth, and spiritual devotion. It is in churches, with their spatial organization, civic monuments, and decorative schemes of palaces, that architectural narratives are unwrapped. It was part of the Venetian strategy that symbolic elements should be inserted by their architects in order to express Venice's political dominance, religious piety, and cultural sophistication. These semantic elements are what not only deepen visual experiences of Venetian architecture but also create a more profound sense of history and culture in the city, trying to shape its identity as one of the leading centers of Renaissance art and Venetian grandeur.

### 3.2 Venetian Cyprus

In Cyprus, a crossroads of civilizations, the architectural landscape is a palimpsest of historical layers, each contributing to the island's unique cultural fabric. Under various rulers, Cyprus holds so much hidden layers to unravel. One layer not commonly coveted is the Venetian rule after the end of the Kingdom of Cyprus in 1489, until the Ottoman Rule conquest in 1571.

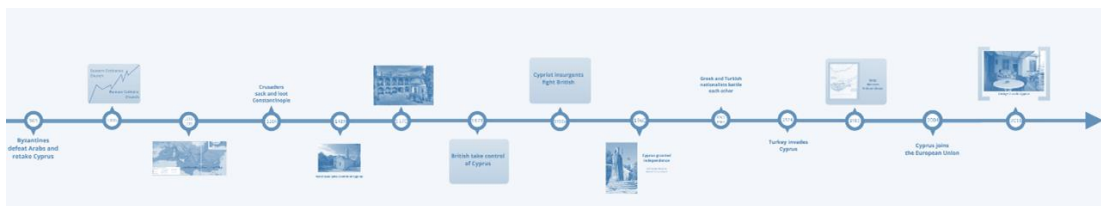


Figure 27: Cyprus history timeline (Cosby, 2018)



Figure 28: Venetian Cyprus Map (Blaeu & Blaeu, 1690)

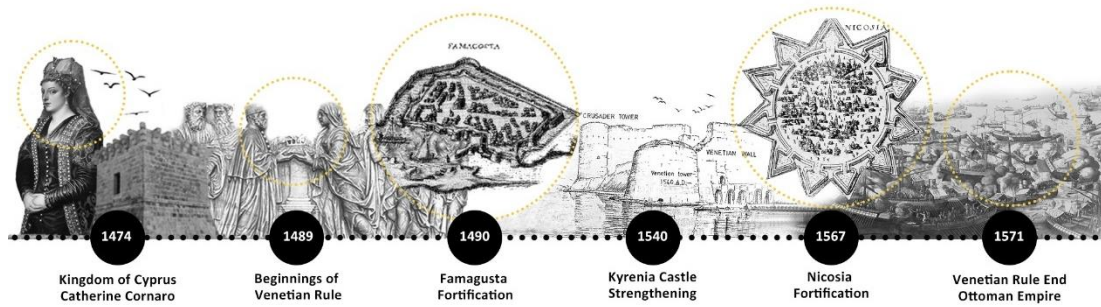


Figure 29: Venetian Architecture Timeline, Cyprus (Author)

After the death of King James II of the kingdom of Cyprus, his wife, Catharina Cornaro, took over the throne as monarch. Catherine's reign marked a significant period in Cypriot history, but her rule was not to last. Under pressure, she was compelled to sell her kingdom to the Republic of Venice, yet as a gesture of compensation, she was permitted to retain the title of Queen. This arrangement symbolized a transitional phase, marking the end of an independent Cypriot kingdom and the beginning of Venetian rule. The Venetian interest in Cyprus was driven solely by profit gain. Their primary goal was to establish a robust defensive approach in response to the imminent threat posed by the Ottoman Empire, rather than focusing on the construction of the exquisite Renaissance architecture seen in Venice and other parts of Italy. Despite this focus, subtle morphological features and architectural typologies have managed to migrate into the local Cypriot architecture.

This fusion of styles resulted from Venetian architects and engineers bringing ideas and designs from their travels across the colonies. “This was done through the import of ideas and designs by Venetian architects and engineers who travelled around the colonies or through the use of easily transferable manuals of architects such as Serlio and Palladio” (Chrysochou, 2016). During their rule, the Venetians embarked on extensive fortification projects to secure their new territories. Nicosia and Famagusta

were fortified by massively improving their defense against any future Ottoman invasion. It saw the establishment of typically Venetian styles of architecture, characterized by strong fortifications and politically strategic urban planning. Gradually, these firmed into local architectural traditions, turning out unique structures with the stamp of both Venetian and Cypriot origin. The Venetian period, in particular, introduced a wealth of architectural innovations that blended seamlessly with the existing styles while also asserting a distinct Venetian character. These influences are not merely remnants of the past but continue to shape contemporary architectural practices and urban planning decisions.

### **3.3 Venetian Famagusta**

Situated along the bustling shipping routes of the eastern Mediterranean, Famagusta gained significance after many Christians relocated there following the fall of Acre to Saladin's Muslim forces in 1291 during the Third Crusade. This port, which once competed with Constantinople and Venice, was governed by a series of conquerors over several centuries, and the remnants of these powers are still evident throughout the city.



Figure 30: Famagusta Location, Cyprus (Author)

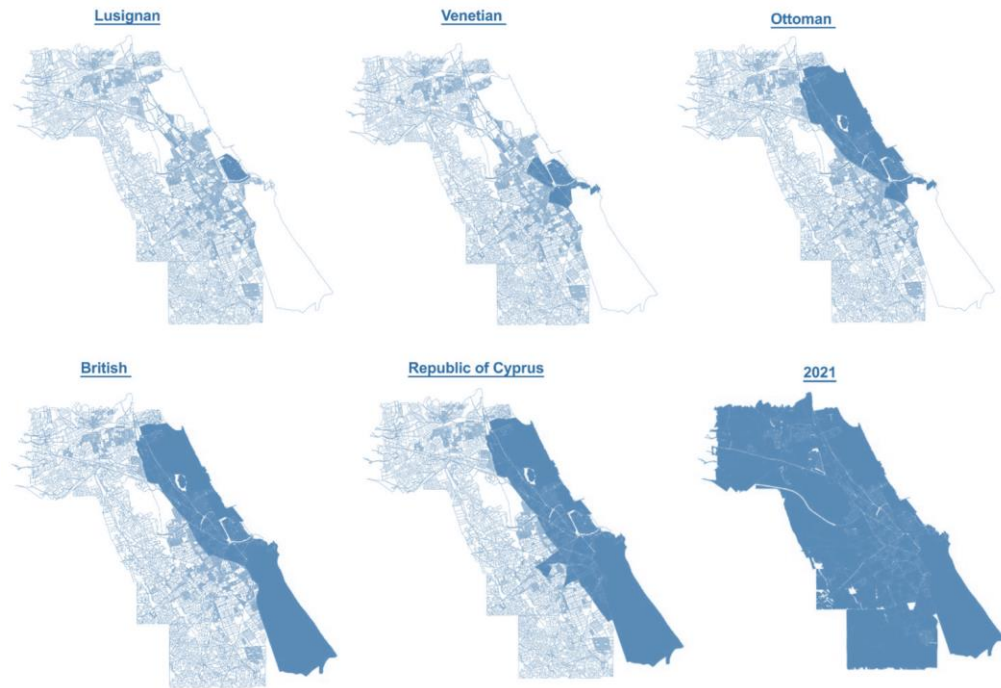


Figure 31: Historical Periods of Urban Growths of Famagusta (Atakara & Allahmoradi, 2021)

“The city of Famagusta has developed throughout seven particular periods: the initial eras (648–1192 AD- the base of the city); Lusignan period (1192–1489); Genoese period (1373–1464); Venetian period (1489–1571); Ottoman period (1571–1878); British Colonial period (1878–1960); period of Republic of Cyprus 1960–1974; and after the war in 1974” (Perbellini, 2011). “The medieval city of Famagusta is enclosed in the modern town and surrounded by its circuit of bastions and walls built by the Venetian rulers in the sixteenth century, the old town partly survives to this day. The Venetians (1489–1571) rebuilt and improved the fortifications and walls of Famagusta, enabling them to withstand artillery” (Walsh, Edbury, & Coureas, 2016).

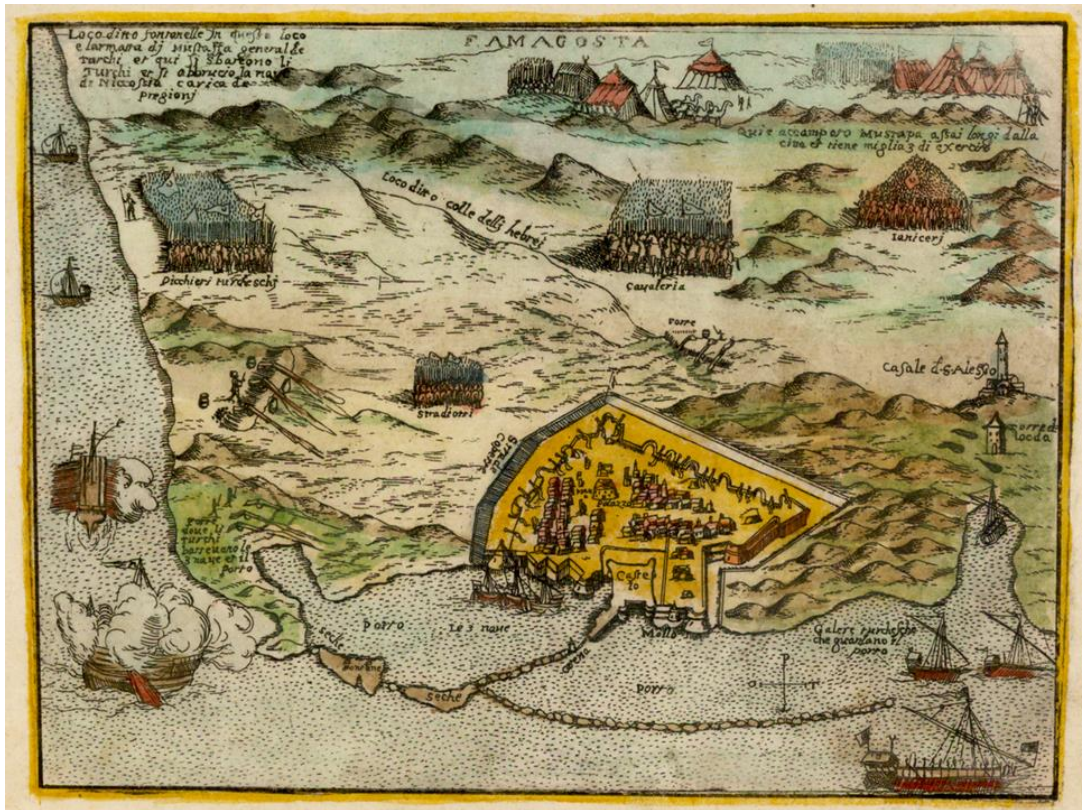


Figure 32: Famagusta, 1570-71 (Bertelli, 1573)

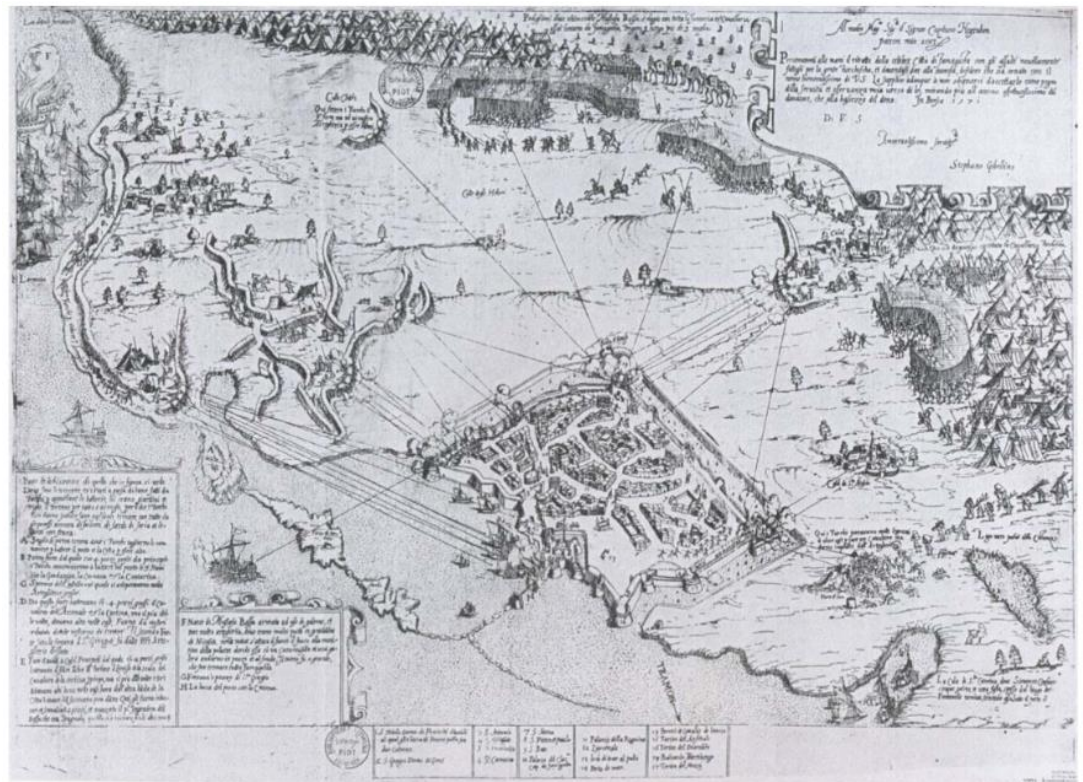


Figure 33: Famagusta, 1571 (Stylianou & Stylianou, 1980)



Figure 34: Venetian Famagusta Map (Author)

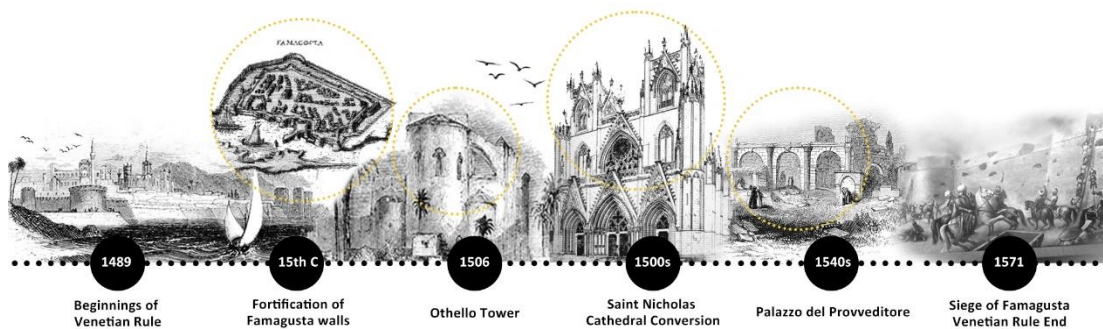


Figure 35: Venetian Architecture Timeline, Famagusta (Author)

Famagusta, a key city in Cyprus, flourished under Venetian rule in 1489. The Venetians fortified the city, constructing impressive walls and the renowned Othello Castle to defend against Ottoman attacks. During this period, Venetian Famagusta became a vibrant hub of trade and culture, with architecture reflecting a blend of Gothic and Renaissance styles. This period of prosperity ended in 1571 when the Ottoman Empire captured Famagusta after a prolonged siege, marking the end of Venetian influence in the region. Between 1489 and 1571, Venetian architecture in Famagusta, Cyprus, reflected the city's strategic importance and the Republic of Venice's commitment to fortifying its overseas territories.

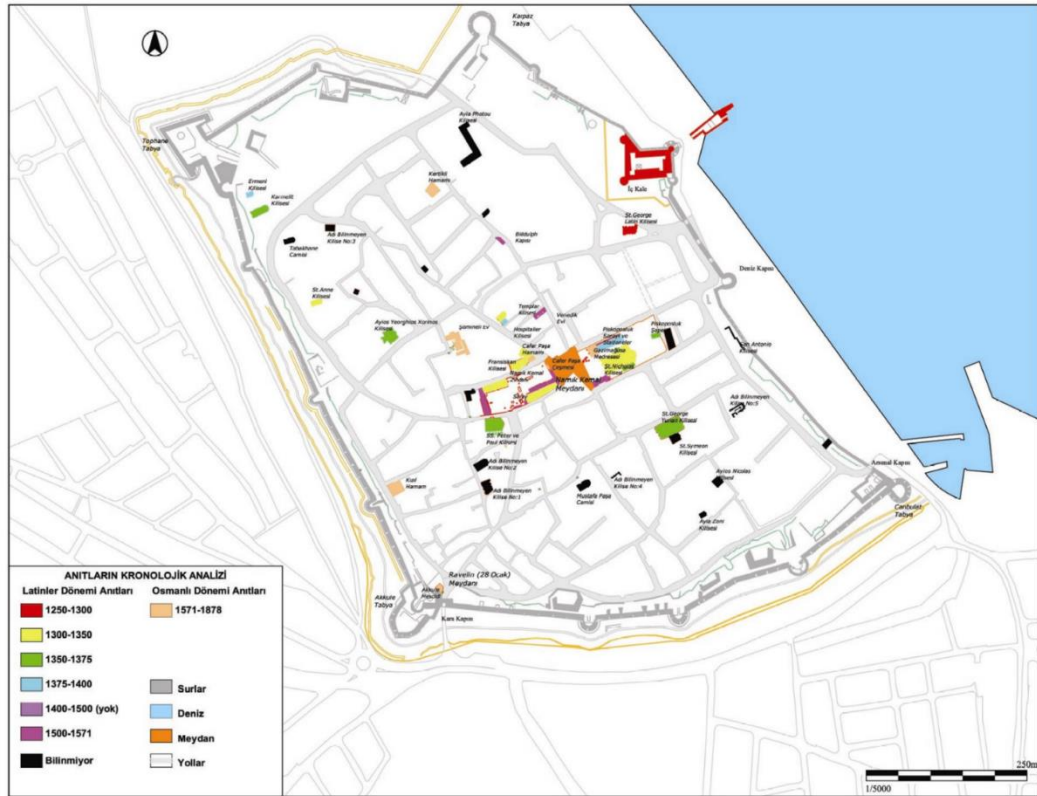


Figure 36: In Purple, 1400-1571, Venetian Buildings in Famagusta (Uluca, 2006)

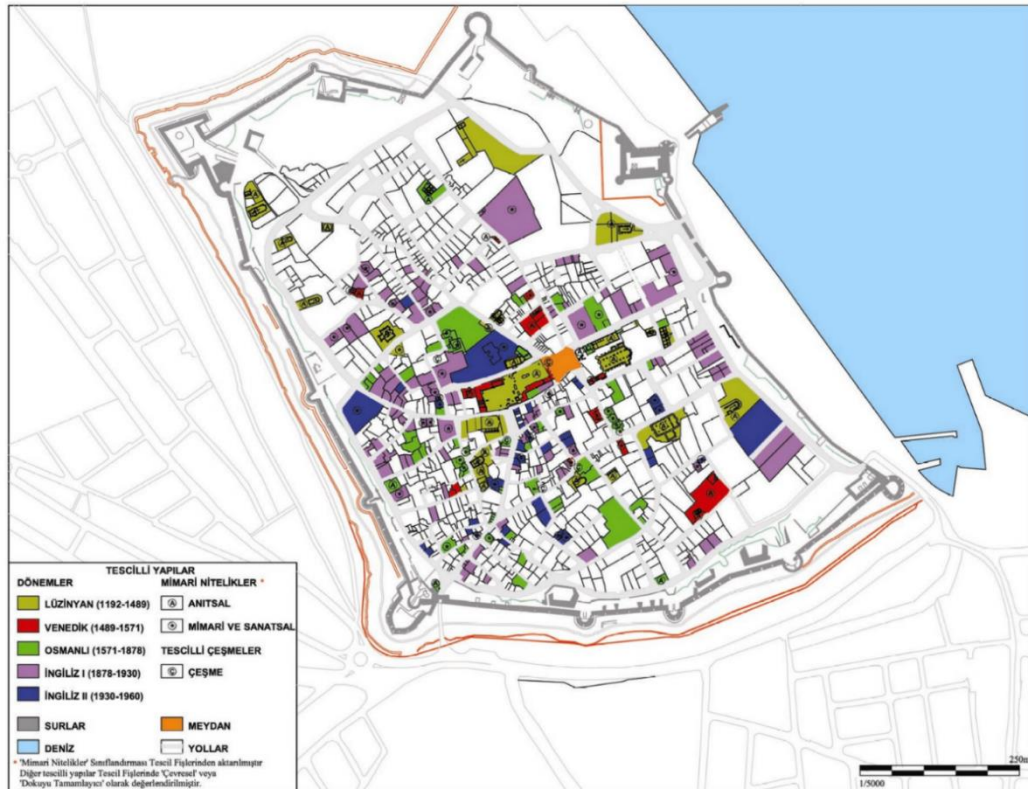


Figure 37: In Red, 1489-1571, Venetian Buildings in Famagusta (Uluca, 2006)

The Venetians significantly enhanced the existing medieval fortifications, including the construction of robust bastions and the reconstruction of the Othello Tower and the Othello Castle to defend against Ottoman advances. Named the Citadel or the Castle of Famagusta, this medieval fortress, constructed by the Lusignans during the reign of Henry II and then renovated by the Venetians. It is believed to have been taken heavy fortification in the early years of Venetian rule during the late 14th century. In adapting the modifications for defense against artillery, this brought the castle to its current defensible stronghold and the administrative premise for the Venetian administration of Famagusta.



Figure 38: The Othello Tower And Castle/Citadel Entrance (Author)



Figure 39: The Othello Castle/Citadel (Author)

Invisible to the empty eyes, many watchtowers and fortifications can be found in the surrounding countryside of Famagusta, which are residuals from the Venetian era and, therefore, testify to the significant strategic place the city held as one of the most important fortified places during the Venetian reign. “The current walls are mainly from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and provide a great example of a strong medieval city with citadels, bastions, rocky moats, and gates” (Walsh, Edbury, & Coureas, 2016). Thus, their defensive structure, in such a way as to protect it from attacks by land and sea, formed part of the general architectural heritage of Famagusta and its surroundings. “In this period, walls, churches, and other buildings were constructed, elevating Famagusta’s role as a center of mercantile activity in the Mediterranean” (Mason et al., 2014). Also, from this period, there were architectural works by the Venetians: a building for the administration—Palazzo del Provveditore—and the maintenance of other significant buildings, like that of the Saint Nicholas Cathedral. While also originally built by the Lusignans, this cathedral-turned-mosque by the Othman saw Venetian modifications.

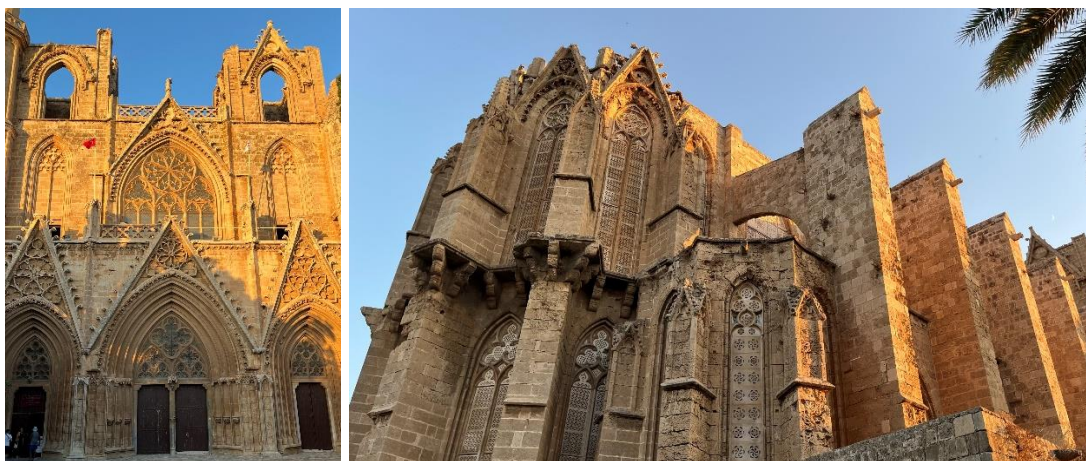


Figure 40: Saint Nicholas Cathedral (Author)

Another example of the use of existing structures from the Venetians is the Saint Francis Church, which dates back to the late 13th century. The remnants of this Franciscan Church, situated north of the Venetian Palace, were formerly part of a large monastery complex within the city. The church, among the oldest and most significant Latin religious institutions in Cyprus, received considerable support from Henry II (1285-1324), who may have been the primary benefactor behind the construction of the existing church. The church, with its three-sided apse and side chapels, is a testament to the medieval stonework and architectural design of the period.



Figure 41: Saint Francis Church (Author)

The Bedestan Palazzo, also known as the Queen's House, is a notable example of domestic Renaissance architecture. Believed to be the residence of the last Lusignan queen of Cyprus, Caterina Cornaro, immediately prior to her abdication in 1489, this house still contains elements from the Venetian era. The entrance of the house and its layout are typical of the strong, symmetrical lines of the Italian Renaissance but carry all the hallmarks of Venetian Gothic with pointed arches and complex stonework

alongside local influences and adaptations. Certainly, its commanding position and impressive scale underline its status as a political and architectural icon of the Venetian period in Famagusta, portraying the cultural and historical diversity.



Figure 42: Bedestan Palazzo/ Venice Queen House Entrance (Author)



Figure 43: Bedestan Palazzo/ Venice Queen House (Author)

The Chimney House also called Casa del Fumador in Famagusta is characterized by a unique architectural fusion of Venetian and local influences. These houses were made of local stone and timber; most of the characteristics include the chimney for functional

and aesthetic purposes. The architectural type often contains courtyards internally, multi-level, ornamentation to the window and door treatments speaking to the demands of privacy while listing the Venetian era preference in architecture. It is in the principles of Venetian design and regional traditions of building that will come not only to define the structural integrity of these houses but give meaning to the cultural and historical significance of architecture in defining Famagusta's urban identity during the Venetian period.



Figure 44: The Chimney House (Author)



Figure 45: The Chimney House Entrance (Author)

The blend of Venetian design principles with regional building traditions explains the structural integrity of these houses and speaks toward the cultural and historical significance of architecture in defining Famagusta's urban identity during the Venetian period. Such a blend of military and civic architecture reiterated both the interest that Venice had in defending herself and her interest in good governance, leaving behind an architectural legacy that showed both engineering prowess and aesthetic sensitivities in a culturally diverse and geopolitically crucial location. The integration of Venetian architectural elements with local adaptations not only supplied the fortification of Famagusta against foreign threats but also allowed for one of the most vivid cultural exchanges to furnish the architectural landscape of the city, reflecting the dynamic interplay between the authority of Venice and local identity.

## Chapter 4

### CASE STUDY: FAMAGUSTA IN VENETIAN PERIOD FROM 1489 TO 1571

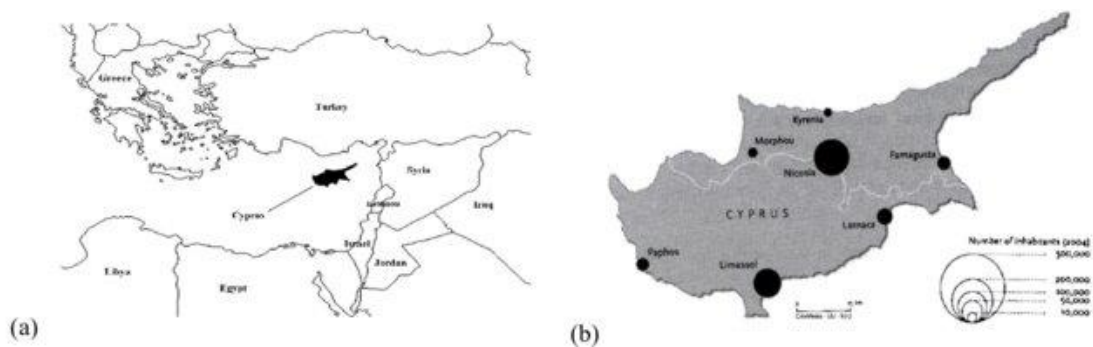


Figure 46: (a) Location of Cyprus (b) Cyprus Map (Oktay, 2005)

The Venetians have left their own architectural mark in Cyprus through grand fortifications, public buildings, and residential designs. After revealing history, and after defining identity characteristics and impacts of Venetian rule from 1489 to 1571, the research will focus on the case study focuses on Famagusta, specifically its old city where the Venetian architecture is still appreciable in its ruins. Located on the east coast of Cyprus, Famagusta is a city steeped in history and culture. It has been inhabited since ancient times and has been influenced by various civilizations, with our focus on the Venetians. The city of Famagusta and Cyprus in general was seen as a rare gem. The essential element of Famagusta's prosperity is the port and its connection with the city which differ it from Nicosia. By delving into the architectural integration and adaptation, historical and socio-cultural impacts, and what are the characteristics of identity that influenced Famagusta's architectural aesthetics, socio-

cultural and historical narratives, we can better understand the broader implications of architectural identity on urban spaces in the case study.

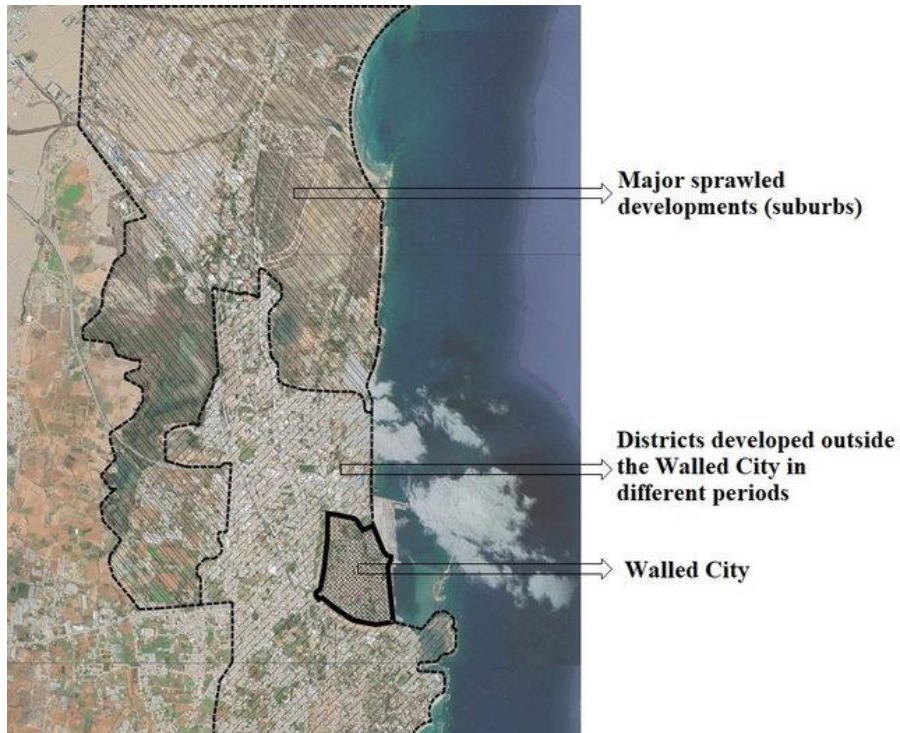


Figure 47: Main Development Zones of Famagusta (Oktay, 2005)



Figure 48: Venetian Buildings in Famagusta and Their Construction Date (Author)

## **4.1 Architectural Integration and Adaptation**

One would say that the architectural heritage of Famagusta is the best representative of this dynamism in interaction between foreign and local influence during the Venetian period. You will be amazed just looking at their ability to combine their architectural styles with local traditions gave the city a unique urban fabric, showing the multicultural heritage of the city. In the architecture of Famagusta during the period of Venetian rule, which took place between 1489 and 1571, different architecture styles were noted because of the mix of Venetian styles with local Cypriot elements. Citing the main styles and characteristics, as follow;

Venetian Gothic Architecture:

Some unique attributes of the architecture were brought together by the feature, combining the traditional Gothic other than Byzantine and Islamic, such as pointed arches and elaborate windows. Often, the windows and arches presented a mingling of decorative and structural expressions in a single one, hence rendering the design aesthetically appealing as well as functional. It was, in fact, this synthesis of the different styles that had come to represent the mastery of the local Venetians to adapt and assimilate different influences into a style that would truly set it apart from others and win the hearts of the people. Pointing out ribbed vaults and flying buttresses, they are commonly seen in religious buildings such as the St. Nicholas Cathedral (now Lala Mustafa Pasha Mosque)—closely resemble Gothic cathedrals along the heart of continental Europe. Typical attributes of the Venetian Gothic style are elaborate tracery, expressing a good deal of verticality and light. Those elements did not just hold the building structure but created interiors that could inspire awe, filled with light, and enhance spiritual experience. Adding to that, detailed Stonework and Tracery, in most of the buildings from this period of the Venetians are minutely detailed to

represent not only the skill but also the intricate design that was typical of the Gothic style. All this detailed stonework often contained motifs and iconography capturing both religious and cultural themes, adding further layers to the meaning within the architectural fabric of the city.

#### Renaissance Architecture:

While less dominant than the Gothic, some Renaissance influences can be noticed in ornamentation and structure of buildings from the later period. Some of the Venetians' municipal architecture reflects Renaissance concepts of balance and harmony, indicating a trend toward more humanistic and proportionate design principles. Additionally, columns, pilasters, and entablatures represent a return to classical Roman architecture. Although this style is less common in Famagusta than on mainland Venice, it adds to the city's architectural variety. These classical components frequently represented authority and order, supporting the administrative and municipal roles of the structures they ornamented.

#### Military Architecture:

Innovatively at its time, the Venetians significantly renovated Famagusta's defense fortifications, including the town walls and Othello Castle. This type of fortress was distinguished by its powerful design, which could withstand sieges and artillery wars. The value of strength and endurance in these constructions reflected the volatile geopolitical backdrop of the time while also protecting Venice's interests. The Venetians' military architectural competence is evident in their huge scale, strategic placement, and features meant to repel invaders, such as embrasures and gun ports. These aspects not only supplied real defense systems, but also projected a narrative of strength and durability, cementing Famagusta's reputation as a fortified bastion. The enormous defensive network, which included bastions such as the Martinengo Bastion

and the Ravelin Bastion (Land Gate), demonstrated creative military engineering that blended usefulness with impressive beauty.

#### Vernacular Architecture:

Use of past times' existing buildings or use of local and recycled materials, the Venetians adjusted their architectural styles to the local techniques and resources, erecting constructions functional and in harmony with the environment. The use of such local materials provided the buildings with solidity and strength but also gave a sense of continuity and integration into the landscape. More importantly, the infusion of the Venetian style into local building practices did not simply contribute to their structural strength but also reflected architecture as an argument for culture and a significant period in history that should define Famagusta's urban identity during the Venetian occupation. Some of these adaptations were internal courtyards, multi-level layouts, and ornate window and door treatments best suited to the local climate and social customs. The architectural principles of the Venetians melded with local building practices into an extremely resilient, at the same time aesthetically rich, urban environment that would be able to withstand the onslaught of time.

Finally, such a mixture of Gothic, Renaissance, and military architecture with local adaptations not only made Famagusta strong against any external threats but also created the basis for active cultural exchange. Inclusion of the Venetian architecture would have adapted to the local culture and combined the Venetian styles with the local styles and tastes upon being incorporated into Famagusta. Known for their integration and adaptation, the Venetians stated even if not deliberately aware, *We Were Here!* From all the different styles, practices and methods, the lesson to be taken is that it is a legacy that underlines the Famagusta role as a crossroads of cultures and

is a just witness to the powerful charge that Venetian architecture gave for the shaping of the city's identity.

## **4.2 Historical Impact**

Famagusta tells the story of a city's evolution, reflecting the Venetian period of prosperity, conflict, innovation, and transformation. For example, the intricate Venetian walls left a significant imprint on the city's architectural and cultural landscape. It is noted that the value of Venetian architecture in Famagusta is not attached to the individual structures as much as to the urban setting and its overall historical narrative. Therefore, everything, from the grandeur of the Venetian walls to the small, culturally significant buildings dotted around the city, speaks the story of a historical saga for Famagusta. That is what comprises the reflection of how the Venetian architectural policy was ingrained into the very fabric of the city and impacted its history and culture. Such a holistic view of architecture is important in understanding the role played by architectural heritage in shaping collective memory and identity formation within urban contexts. This is in line with the exploration of the contribution that Venetian architecture makes towards an identity for Famagusta. The Venetian architecture in Famagusta does not simply perform the role of a physical demarcation of historical periods but embodies within it the socio-cultural and political dynamics of time. In conclusion, the continuity of the Venetian architectural legacy is evident in the city's urban planning and conservation efforts. But more careful restoration and maintenance of Venetian structures, alongside modern developments, need to exemplify how continuity can harmonize historical preservation with urban growth.

### **4.3 Socio-Cultural Impact**

On one hand, socially, the architecture of the Venetian period affected community life and social mores in Famagusta. As Sloan stated in his book 'City and suburban architecture', "a city's architecture reflects the character and spirit of its inhabitants" (Sloan, 1859), emphasizing the intricate relationship between urban design and societal identity. The monumentality of public buildings and spaces encouraged social gatherings, thus creating an atmosphere of collectivism and inclusiveness. In itself, the design or layout of the city, with piazzas and passageways, encouraged social participation and public life, which further reinforced social cohesion against animosities beneath the surface. The architectural design also mirrored and strengthened this social hierarchy, wherein more elaborate structures that were located at strategic positions signified the status and power of their ruling elite. Additionally, the ruling Venetian élite lived in luxury, while the local population of Cypriots—a blend of Greek and Latin Christians—was often in great distress and socially stratified. Paradoxically, the bustling commercial life of the city was making it rich, while at the same time growing several social tensions as different cultural and economic groups rubbed shoulders. It is relating back to architecture, idealizing the old center and underscoring the Venetian architecture that played its role as a tool in the production of identity and stability within a changing social condition. These architectural elements created an illusion of permanence and perfection, masking the underlying social complexities and inequalities of the time.

On the other hand, culturally, Venetian architecture can be described as theatrical due to dramatic and elaborate design elements that capture and rivet the view. Theatrically, as a cultural penchant of Venice for grandeur and spectacle, not only in its architecture but also in its famous festivals and public celebrations. "This sense of performance is

crucially devoid of the domineering fear that so heavily plagues the architecture of other European cities, particularly London, as Venice is rendered simply a playground and pleasure haunt” (Collier, 2024). In this way, the performative attribute of Venetian architecture became the linchpin for the making of urban identity in Famagusta, which brought the city to become not just a functional city but a platform for social and cultural performance. Thus, Venetian architecture in Famagusta was more than just a collection of images, but a writer in the socio-cultural narrative of the city. It provided a setting to everyday life, facilitated social interaction, and mirrored the ideals and values prevailing among its people. It is through its beautiful and functional spaces that Venetian architecture helped forge a unique urban identity, striking a balance between an idealized past and the real present. This means that such dynamic interplay between architecture and society undergirds the lasting impact of the Venetian design on the cultural and social fabric of Famagusta.

Therefore, for Famagusta, the adaptation of Venetian architectural forms would ideally have retained or enhanced its cultural identity rather than eroding it. Moreover, failure to adapt these architectural elements would mean that a structure could stand out of place or seem irrelevant to the identity of the community, hence losing the added distinctiveness that architecture otherwise has a potential to give to the cultural heritage of a city and its sense of place, which is not opposite case of Famagusta.

## 4.4 The Venetian Walls



Figure 49: Famagusta Walled City (NCI, 2024)

### Historical Background

During the Venetian rule, Famagusta was transformed into a powerful fortress. The Othello Castle underwent significant modernization, and extensive fortifications were constructed around the city. These fortifications were the work of several military engineers, notably Michele Sanmicheli and his nephew Giovanni Girolamo Sarmicelle. Giovanni Girolamo arrived in Famagusta around 1550 and is credited with designing the Martinengo Bastion, which later served as a prototype for various other fortifications in Europe and America. Unfortunately, he passed away in Famagusta in 1559 before the completion of these defenses. The Fourth Ottoman-Venetian War commenced in 1570 when Ottoman forces invaded Cyprus, swiftly capturing most of the island, including Nicosia. By September 15, Famagusta, the last Venetian bastion on the island, was surrounded by Ottoman troops, initiating the Siege of Famagusta. The city valiantly resisted until August 1571, when the Venetians,

facing insurmountable odds, sought terms of surrender. Despite the agreed terms and the beginning of the city's evacuation, a tragic turn of events unfolded during the surrender ceremony. Lala Mustafa Pasha, upon discovering that some Muslim prisoners had been killed, ordered the brutal execution of the Venetian commander Marco Antonio Bragadin, who was mutilated and flayed alive. This horrific act was followed by the massacre of the remaining Christian inhabitants of Famagusta.

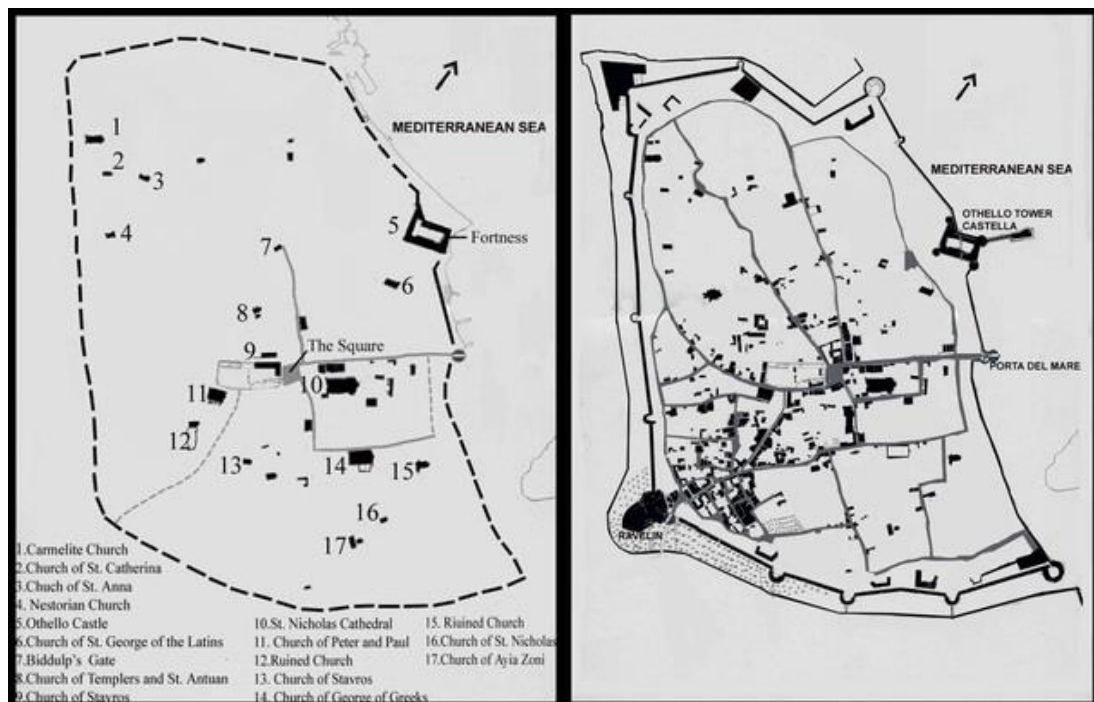


Figure 50: Luisigans Vs Venetian Famagusta (Cömert, Hoşkara & Doratlı, 2024)

However, the importance given to defense did not harm the city, on the contrary, Famagusta took advantage of this situation. All the resources of the island were used to develop the walls of Famagusta. Mobilization and workforce of the local people was utilized. Every free citizen, annually for 10 days (later six) under the direction of experts from Venice, and was obliged to work in its construction or pay a tax of 5 bezants (later 3). The number of people working in the construction of the walls sometimes reached three hundred at one point. The wall works in the city mainly focus

on the changing war conditions of the existing walls. The fortifications designed by the Venetian engineers, particularly the innovative Martinengo Bastion, exemplify the advanced military architecture of the period. These structures were not only pivotal in the defense of Famagusta but also influenced fortification designs in other parts of Europe and the Americas. The resilience and strategic significance of Famagusta during this period underscore its role as a key military and administrative center under Venetian rule. Its fall was one of the important turning points in the history of Cyprus, since it brought into relief the acuteness of military and cultural conflicts prevailing during that time.

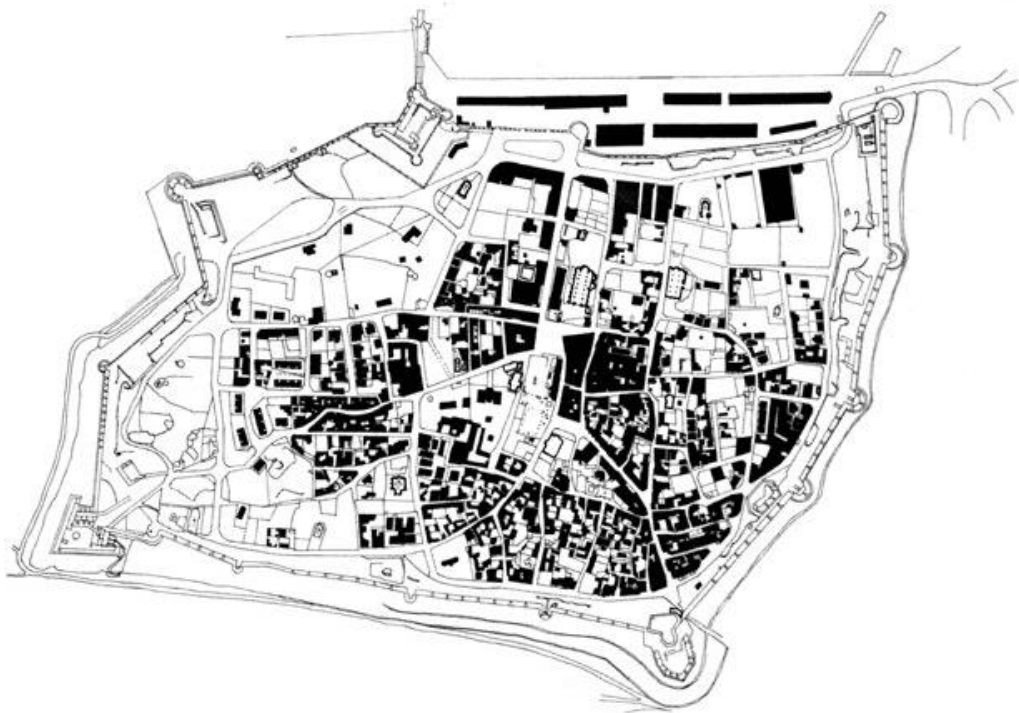


Figure 51: Walled City Figure Ground Map (Author)

### **Form and Function**

This form of the Venetian Walls is essentially massive in scale and quite strategically located, serving to enclose the city and protect it from external threats. The walls have thus witnessed military architecture in stout polygon design, with bastions and

ramparts that provided places of defense and supported artillery. Their form has been entirely dictated by their function. Functionally mainly defensive, the walls had artillery towers and gates that regulated entrance into the city. The structure presents strong barriers against invaders and a fine example of Venetian engineering skills and military strategy. Architecturally, the structure combined elements of arrow slits and crenellations for protection.

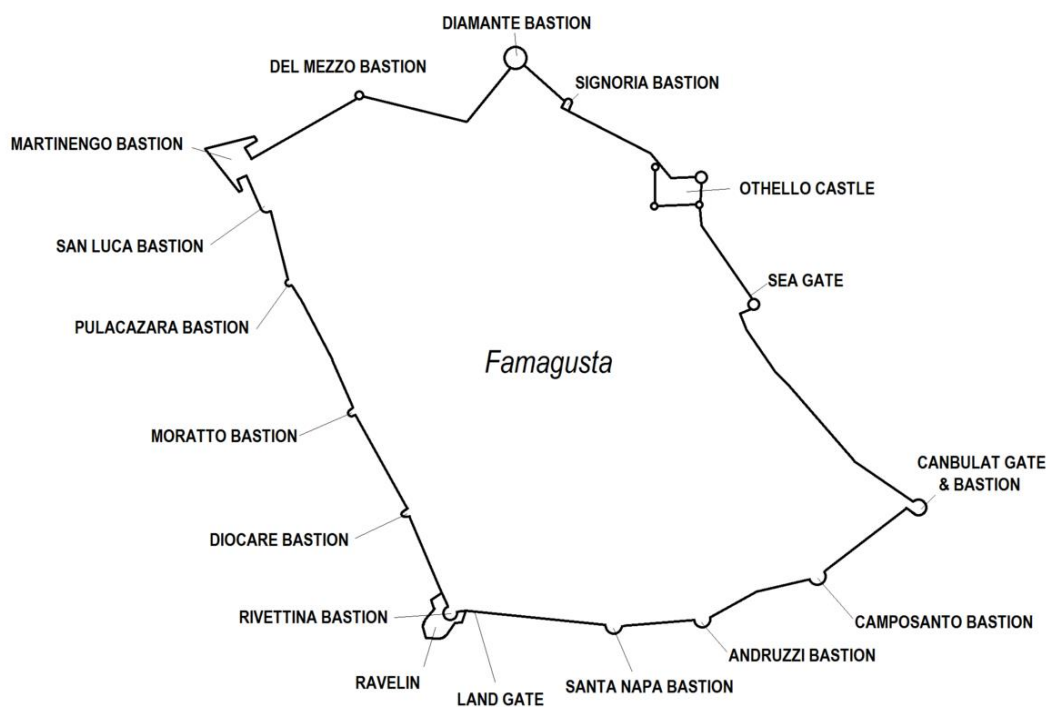


Figure 52: Map of Famagusta's Fortifications (Xwejnuszgozo, 2015)

The massive walls hold several bastions and gates, for reference, the Canbulat gate and bastion also called Arsenal gate function as a ship gate used to enter the shipyard. Today, it is the gate became an entrance to the walled city next to the port, and the bastion can be accessed with stairs to enjoy the views from high ground.

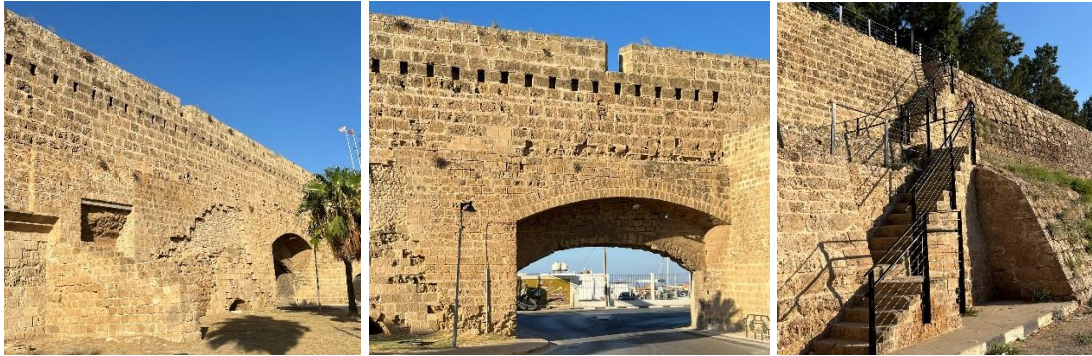


Figure 53: The Canbulat Gate and Bastion (Author)



Figure 54: Famagusta 1571 Wall (Author)

Ravelin Bastion also called Land Gate or Porta di Limissio was, and still is, the main land entrance to the city, well-guarded by a moat and drawbridge. Its primary function, which was an entrance gate on the land side of the city, reflect its grandiose form and small openings such as its door for protection of the entrance to the city. The original entrance from a bridge directly to the Ravelin Bastion was moved to a smaller entrance with a new bridge.



Figure 55: The Ravelin, South Flank with South Drawbridge Gate (Langdale, 2010)

Another, the Martinengo Bastion, known for its innovative design as Arrow-shaped bastion, allowing for extensive defensive artillery placements.



Figure 56: The Martinengo Bastion, From the Northwest (Langdale, 2010)

Also, another critical entrance to the city from the sea was Sea Gate or Porta del Mare, facing the harbor, fortified by the Venetians to protect against naval assaults.



Figure 57: Nicolo Priuli, The Sea Gate Bastion, Famagusta, 1496 (Langdale, 2010)

The Karpaz Bastion, named also Torre del Diamate, this tower was a North corner defensive tower. It was constructed by the Venetians in their attempt to enhance the security of the city. The bastion was to provide additional defense in case of an attack and was an integral part of the system for the city's defense against any dangers.



Figure 58: The Karpaz Bastion (Author)

## Space Organization

These walls were further divided into stretches, each designed for a specific defensive purpose. The bastions and ramparts were positioned in a way that would provide overlapping fields of fire, increasing defensive power. There were walkways and galleries inside the inner space where troops could move and deploy in defense against enemies—a fact that says much about the thoughtfulness towards spatial organization so that the defense would be maximally effective.



Figure 59: The Ravelin Bastion Old Entrance (Author)

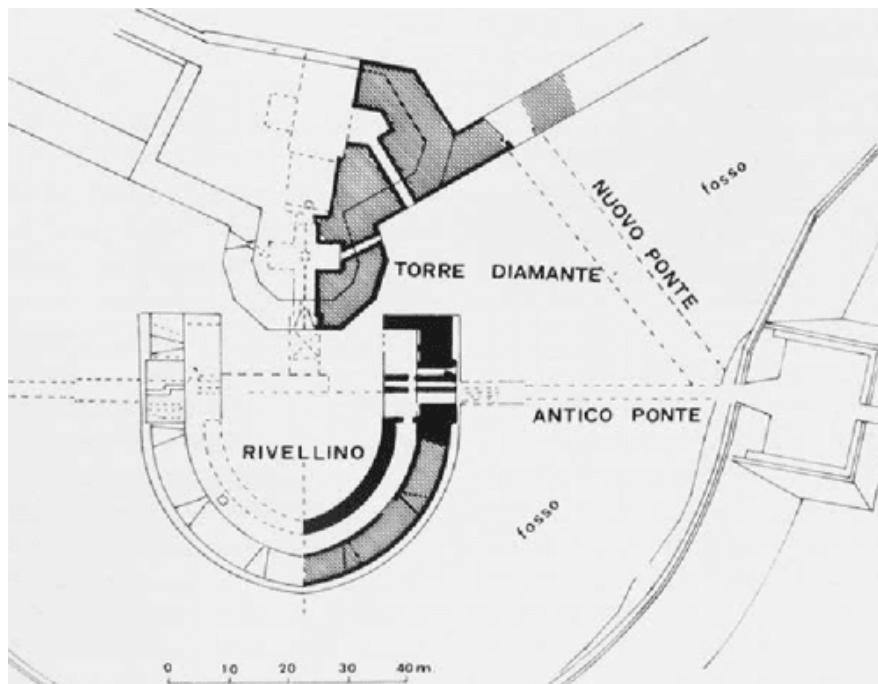


Figure 60: Diagram Plan of The Ravelin (Langdale, 2010)



Figure 61: The New Entrance from Nuovo Ponte (Author)



Figure 62: The New Bridge / Nuovo Ponte In Moat (Author)

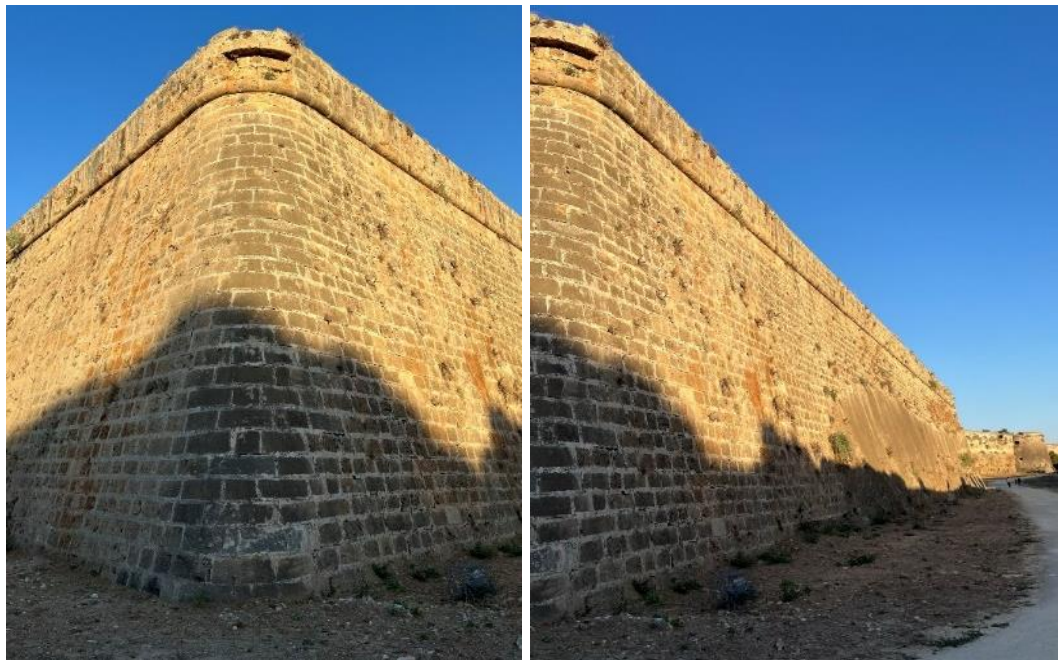


Figure 63: The Martinengo Bastion (Author)

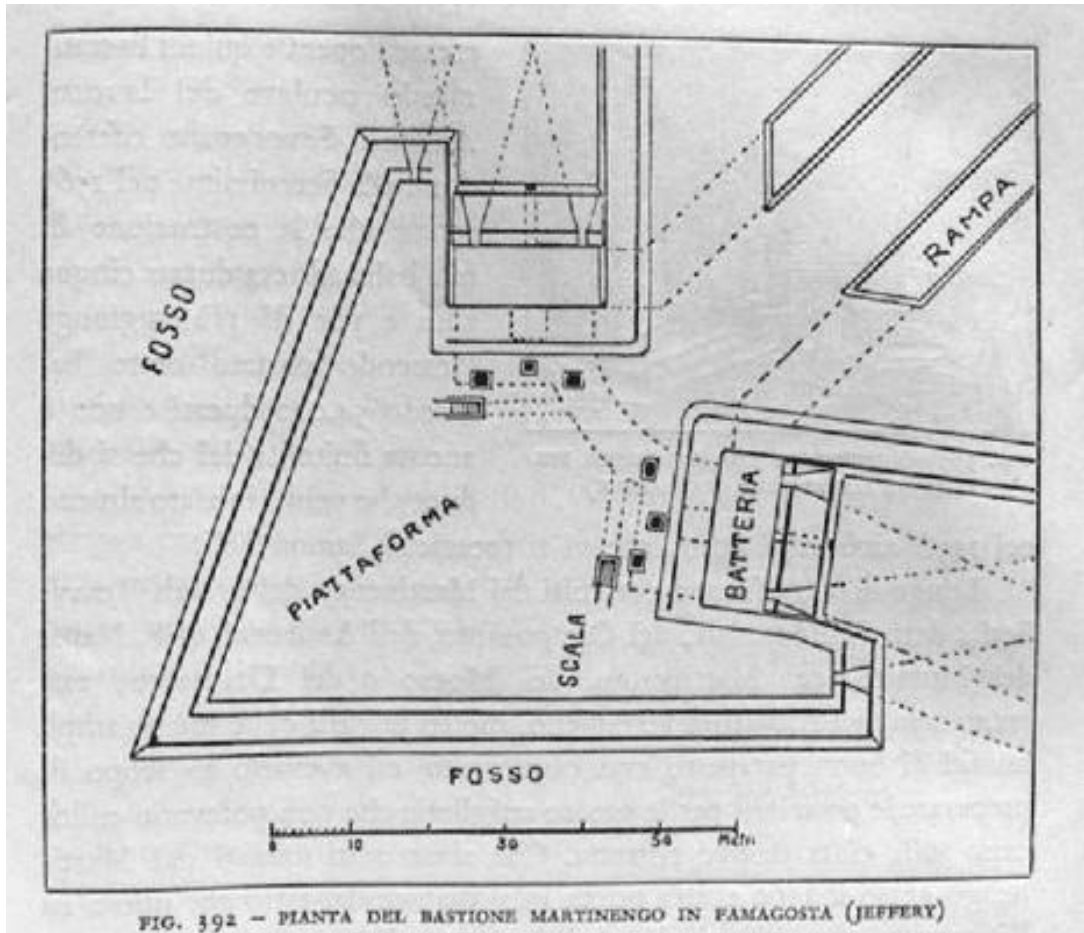


Figure 64: Diagram of The Martinengo Bastion, Famagusta (Langdale, 2010)



Figure 65: The Martinengo Bastion Side Entrances to Bateria (Author)



Figure 66: Sea Gate Interior Entrance (Author)



Figure 67: Diagram of The Sea Gate (Uluca, 2006)

### **Design Principles**

The Venetian Walls have been designed with regard to strength, utility, and strategy in position. Proportion and symmetry characterize the lay of bastions and curtain walls—both efficiency in function and beauty of form. Here, rhythm is repetitive in its pattern of bastions and supporting defenses running along the walls, creating an effect of continuity, like bristling with defense.



Figure 68: Different Part Along the Venetian Walls (Author)

### **Aesthetics and Materials**

Aesthetically, the Venetian Walls give expression to grandiose and powerful feelings expressed in their two-fold role: defense structures and the symbolic power of Venice. Realized mostly with local stone and brick, the walls almost blend into the landscape, imposing their powerful presence on it. Very few are the decorative elements, underlining practicality and the potential for defense above ornamentation.

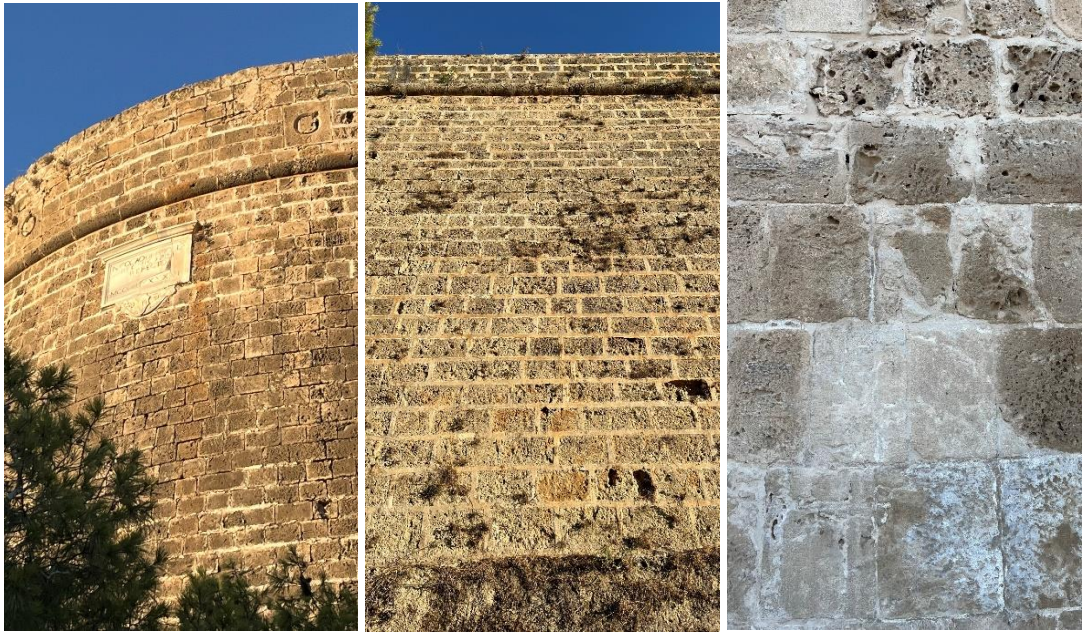


Figure 69: Stone Work On Venetian Walls (Author)

### **Semantics**

Symbolically, the Venetian Walls signify Venetian authority and the city's role as a strategic stronghold in the Eastern Mediterranean. They embody the defensive spirit of Venetian Famagusta, representing resilience against external threats and a commitment to protecting the city's inhabitants. Venetian architecture represents political and social messages by the use of things like emblems of the Republic. If not the most important, one motif that is both symbolic and recurring in relevance to a saintly patron of Venice is represented by the Winged Lion of St. Mark: power and protection. The most famous Venetian symbol represented in Cyprus has to be the Venetian Lion.



Figure 70: The Venetian Lion (Author)

#### 4.5 The Venetian Palace



Figure 71: Palazzo Del Provveditore, Famagusta, Walls of Residential Block and Cortile (Langdale, 2010)

## **Historical Background**

The Venetian Palace served as the residence of the Venetian governor of Famagusta. While much of the palace's original structure has been lost over time, remnants of Venetian architectural features can still be observed in the surviving ruins. This Venetian palace, also known as the Palazzo del Provveditore, features a distinctive Renaissance-style façade adorned with intricate carvings and decorative elements. Today, all that remains of the Venetian Palace are the impressive grand east facade and the back walls of the courtyard. This site originally served as a royal palace for the Lusignan dynasty before becoming the official residence of the Venetian governor, known as the Palazzo del Provveditore, starting in 1489. The palace underwent extensive modifications in the 16th century, transforming Gothic architecture into the more basic and strong forms of the Italian Renaissance. This transformation in the palace's construction represents the predominant architecture in Venice at the time, as the complex character of Gothic gave way to the balanced and symmetrical structure of the Renaissance. This marked a shift in the palace's style, not just in terms of modernizing, but also in its role as an emblem of Venetian authority and rule in Famagusta. The extensive history of the site, as evidenced by the preserved structures and other artifacts, demonstrates the cross-cultural influences that molded Famagusta's architectural legacy.



Figure 72: Remains of Venetian Royal Palace Sign (Author)

## Form and Function

The Palace of the Venetians combined both styles: Gothic and Renaissance; it shows the peculiarity of the Venetians' taste but also a local adaptation. Square formed, the building comprises a center courtyard encircled by the arcaded galleries and ornate facades. Functionally, the palace contained administrative offices, residential apartments for officials, and ceremonial suites. It was to have become the center of Venetian government and cultural patronage in Famagusta, thus representing both Venetian architectural sophistication and administrative acumen.



Figure 73: The Venetian Palace Façade (Author)



Figure 74: Portals of Palazzo Del Proveditore (Author)

## Space Organization

Seen from its remains, the palace is organized around a central court, which serves as a hub for administrative activity and social life. The arcades and galleries surrounding it provide covered areas for official functions and public events. On the interior, high ceilings, grand staircases, and decoration speak to the degree of the place as a sign of both Venetian power and cultural refinement. Not only the structure but also the space design promotes contact and accessibility; it has courtyards and covered courtyards that serve as private areas within this dense, urban environment. This spatial organization testifies to the highly valued level that Venice has accorded to community life, commerce, and the harmonious integration of urban and natural elements. The careful demarcation of spaces in Venetian architecture guarantees that buildings and other urban areas are not only functional but also reverberate with the community's cultural and social tenets.

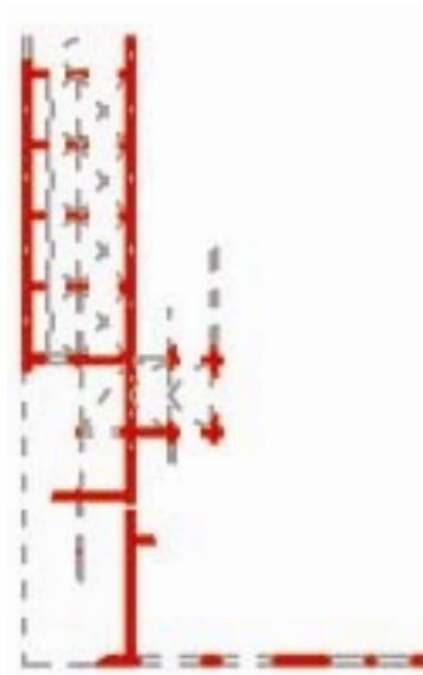


Figure 75: Venetian Palace Remains Plan (Uluca, 2006)



Figure 76: Interior of Palazzo Del Proveditore (Author)

### **Design Principles**

The palace emphasizes proportion, symmetry, and elegance, all of which are consistent with Renaissance ideas of beauty and order. The employment of classical components, columned, arched surfaces, and ornate moldings promotes architectural harmony and visual refinement. Balance in design is achieved through the symmetrical arrangement of architectural elements and the integration of functional spaces, ensuring both aesthetic coherence and practical utility.



Figure 77: Triple Arch Gateway to The Venetian Palace (Author)



Figure 78: Order Columns and Capitals of The Venetian Palace (Author)



Figure 79: Capitals of The Venetian Palace (Author)

### **Aesthetics and Materials**

Materials used in Venetian architecture, specifically the Venetian Royal Place in Famagusta include resilient construction materials like Istrian stone and local brick, ensuring durability and architectural integrity. Combined with luxurious embellishments, imported materials, such as marble and decorative tiles for decorative elements, enhancing the palace's visual richness, cultural significance and convey the city's economic prosperity and artistic heritage.



Figure 80: Materials of Venetian Palace (Author)

Aesthetically, the Venetian Palace is distinguished by its graceful proportions, refined ornamentation, and use of high-quality materials. Facades are adorned with sculptural details, relief work, and carved stone motifs that highlight Venetian craftsmanship.



Figure 81: Aesthetics and Materials of Venetian Palace (Author)

## Semantics

Semantically, the Venetian Palace symbolizes Venetian cultural dominance and administrative efficiency in Famagusta. Its architectural elegance and functional layout communicate prestige, governance, and civic pride, reinforcing Venetian identity and influence in Cyprus. Other than the Venetian Lion, also found in the palace, other portraits and symbols in other forms that just sculpture van be found in palaces highlighting their authority and Venice’s governance structure. Balconies and loggias were also among architectural elements that became platforms for public addresses, strengthening relations between the rulers and their citizens. They were also decisively located in a manner to bring out, to the best possibility, the political domination of the Republic over the Venetians in Famagusta by promoting civic pride and unity.



Figure 82: The Venetian Symbol and Lion (Author)

In Summary, Venetian architecture form of Famagusta is the characteristic that actually carries the identity of the city. It is influenced by both local and imported ingredients, both manifestations of the Venetian genius and adaptation. It is the careful integration of these elements that has made Venetian architecture in Famagusta rather successful at creating a built environment that is at once functionally, aesthetically and culturally resonant, keeping the identity of the city clear while showing its historical evolution. Venetian architecture in Famagusta is a story of might, defense, religious change, social hierarchy, life in community, economic importance, and the integration of cultures. All together, the characteristics of architectural identity tell the story of the historical journey that took place in Famagusta under Venetian rule and give a lasting imprint on the uniqueness of the city.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

This research presented the immense role Venetian architecture played in the city of Famagusta, elucidating how it shaped and characterized the identity of the city through the unique mixture of both Eastern Mediterranean and Western European styles. The Venetian influence, characterized by artistic and defensive innovations, has inscribed itself indelibly on Famagusta's architectural heritage, curbing a rich tapestry of historical and cultural value. A city cannot be reduced to just a sum of its parts, as every single element in itself belongs to complex systems that make up the urban and territorial entity, embracing the environment, the landscape, and all historical stratifications. These elements, all together, make up a consistent unit but keep their individuality. An in-depth understanding of urban space implies perceiving the space both physically and spatially. It is a place of encounters, exchanges, and collective sharing because it exists as a dynamic entity in perpetual construction.

In summary, the exploration on the interplay of city, architecture and identity resulted in;

Number 1: A city should be considered as an integral entity, wherein every architectural, environmental, or cultural component works together to create a coherent identity. The case of Famagusta may represent a similar integrated architectural landscape with its Venetian fortifications and palatial buildings.

Number 2: Understanding a city means to consider it as an organism in continuous growth and evolution. A very interesting example is how the old Venetian architecture of Famagusta mixes with the contemporary components. It does not contradict, but they can combine and influence each other to create a better urban experience.

Number 3: The Venetian marks on Famagusta prove that the meaning of cultural identity lies in architectural diversity, and in a globalized world, there is a need for preserving and celebrating the architectural heritage.

Number 4: The importance to highlight the preservation of historical heritage and a need for a balanced approach that honors the past while addressing contemporary challenges. Understanding a city's identity informs future preservation efforts, ensuring cultural continuity and a vibrant architectural legacy.

In extend to Number 4, as we navigate the complexities of modern urban planning, integration of historical design elements with contemporary architecture can offer a harmonious balance that would uplift the general aesthetic identity of the city. In places rich in history, like Famagusta, design should not be an imitation of old styles but a blend of historic and contemporary elements. This approach would support the continuity and coherence needed to retain the liveliness of the architectural past of the city. Indeed, several tendencies often cross each other and give birth to new composition techniques. Although ancient and modern architecture may not mix, they are both essential to our built environment, which often has the contrast between old and new structures. Both are needed if a healthy and relevant built environment is to survive. Historic architecture possesses its own unique appeal and elegance, while modern architecture, in its finest form, can be profoundly inspiring. Prominent architects like Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Santiago Calatrava, and Frank Gehry have

designed buildings that exemplify this inspirational quality. If this harmonizing technique of contrast is used to add modern design to historic buildings, why can't we incorporate historic design elements into our modern design? It may create a shock in some contexts, but in the case of strong historic background contexts such as Famagusta, it is necessary to complement this strategy to unify the overall aesthetic identity of its buildings. In the attempt to design contemporary extensions of old historic buildings, the reverse scenario is therefore also relevant. The approach described above nevertheless emits equilibrium and balance in the design by highlighting two temporal moments. And with today's technological advancements, it can be sustainably achieved to keep creating and integrating historical contextual characteristics into the rest of the developed city. What is meant is not to reproduce the same design features from the Venetian to the modern but to gain knowledge and implement them to bring forward the identity of the city, not to be left with a shock between the old and new spatially in the context of a strong historic site like the walled city of Famagusta. In conclusion, as cities evolve, they must balance the preservation of their historical character with innovative design strategies, ensuring that their architectural heritage continues to inspire and captivate future generations.

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