

# Byzantine Images and their Afterlives

Essays in Honor of Annemarie Weyl Carr

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ASHGATE

## Some Remarks on the Appropriation, Use, and Survival of Gothic Forms on Cyprus

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Rising amid palm trees, prominent and improbable under the Mediterranean sun, these buildings challenge interpretation. That they served as mosques after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1571 makes them all the more complex. They looked exotic to me when I first encountered them in 1970; my effort to accommodate their complexity has paralleled the broader post-colonial concern with identity and diversity that has turned Cyprus during the intervening decades from an exotic site into a potent social paradigm.<sup>1</sup>

In these words, which were intended as a commentary to the huge Gothic cathedrals of Nicosia and Famagusta, Annemarie Weyl Carr has described the shift that she experienced in her methodological approach to the very peculiar artistic space of medieval Cyprus, originally investigated as a dynamic periphery of Byzantine empire and later increasingly interpreted as privileged space for the analysis of cross-cultural convergences and artistic interactions. This shift was concretely connected to her more and more intensive exploration of the island's astounding landscape of domes, gargoyles, and minarets, where the scholar's emotion in front of the extensive Comnenian paintings of the Troodos mountains could be combined with the surprised discovery of sumptuous Gothic cathedrals and enhanced by a somewhat irrational fascination for archaic tombs officiated as churches: Armenian and Greek churches made according to Gothic patterns; Latin churches converted into mosques; Turkish hamams labeled as "Greek baths"; and sepulchers of renowned dervishes composed of Roman marble. The encounter with this exceptionally complex land elicits many questions and challenges the

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<sup>1</sup> A.W. Carr, "Correlative spaces: Art, identity, and appropriation in Lusignan Cyprus," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 14/15 (1998–99), p. 59–80, esp. 59; repr. in A.W. Carr, *Cyprus and the Devotional Arts of Byzantium in the Era of the Crusades*, Aldershot 2005, pp. 59–80.

rather rigid taxonomy worked out by art historians to define the relationship between one cultural group, the territory inhabited by it, its peculiar repertory of forms, and its connections with other people's artistic manifestations and symbolic production. As a tribute to this special approach, I will present here some short remarks on the cross-cultural use of styles and on the role played by them in the social construction of identities, as is revealed by the shifting fortunes of Gothic forms on Cyprus from the Lusignan through the British periods.<sup>2</sup>

The first stage of this centuries-long process took place in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Gothic forms from France and Germany were imported to the island, as the French and British art historians of the colonialist period liked to point out. In general terms, this holds true especially for the oldest period of Frankish domination: the new style happened to be juxtaposed with traditional Byzantine or Byzantinizing architecture, as is literally evidenced by the chapels and funerary rooms annexed to Greek-rite churches such as the Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti, in the countryside near Larnaca.<sup>3</sup> In the major political centers, the skyline was completely altered by the construction of majestic cathedrals like Saint Sophia in Nicosia, began in the early thirteenth century, enlarged in the 1250s and 1260s, and especially embellished under the supervision of Archbishop John of Conti in the 1320s.<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that this huge building had an extraordinary impact on the local population: it was much prized for the solemnity of its dignified interior, covered by elegant ribbed vaults and embellished with tracery windows, stained glass, and numerous ornaments. Its widely decorated porch, filled with statues and narrow icons, probably functioned as a meeting point for several shared activities, and in some ways this plural destination is reflected by such distinctive features as the Transfiguration displayed over the main doorway and the flat niches decorated with hands holding crowns, which were meant to house narrow icons instead of statues or reliefs.<sup>5</sup>

The Cathedral of Saint Nicholas in Famagusta (Figure 7.1) is the other Cypriot building that looked purely French to the French art historian

<sup>2</sup> On the issue of "ethnicity" in its association with the use of specific architectural forms on Cyprus see, most notably, M. Given, "Architectural styles and ethnic identity in medieval to modern Cyprus," in J. Clarke (ed.), *Archaeological Perspectives on the Transmission and Transformation of Culture in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Oxford 2005, pp. 207–13; and J.G. Schryver, "Monuments of identity: Latin, Greek, Frank and Cypriot?," in S. Fourrier and G. Grivaud (eds), *Identités croisées en un milieu méditerranéen. Le cas de Chypre (Antiquité–Moyen Âge)*, Mont-Saint-Aignan 2006, pp. 385–405.

<sup>3</sup> On Gothic chapels annexed to Byzantine-rite churches cf. A.W. Carr, "Byzantines and Italians on Cyprus: Images from art," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995), pp. 339–57, esp. 345–6 note 41.

<sup>4</sup> Basic references in Ph. Plagnieux and Th. Soulard, "Nicosie: La cathédrale Sainte-Sophie," in J.-B. de Vaivre and Ph. Plagnieux (eds), *L'art gothique en Chypre*, Paris 2006, pp. 122–9.

<sup>5</sup> Carr, "Byzantines and Italians," pp. 340–41.



Fig. 7.1 Famagusta, the metropolitan church of Saint George of the Greeks and the former Latin cathedral of Saint Nicholas (Lala Mustafa Camii). View from the Cambulat bastion.

Camille Enlart in 1899.<sup>6</sup> This impressive structure, superbly embellished with fine rayonnant moldings and traceries, was especially used for the consecration of the Lusignan souverains as titular kings of Jerusalem; and the visual organization of its façade, though stylistically more akin to German prototypes, probably hinted at epitomizing the auratic power associated with the French court's ceremonial cathedral in Reims.<sup>7</sup> Its inscription in the urban context of Famagusta—the most "Frankish" and also the most cosmopolitan of all the Cypriot towns—had an extraordinary impact on the architectural campaigns promoted by each of the communities settled in town, including Armenians, Arab Christians, and Greeks.

The latter's metropolitan church (Figure 7.1) is one of the most striking examples of appropriation of other people's artistic manifestations. Built from

<sup>6</sup> C. Enlart, *Gothic Art and the Renaissance in Cyprus*, London 1987, pp. 222–45 [English translation of Enlart, *L'art gothique et la Renaissance en Chypre*, Paris 1899]. See now Ph. Plagnieux and Th. Soulard, "Famagouste: La cathédrale Saint-Nicolas," in *L'art gothique en Chypre*, pp. 218–37.

<sup>7</sup> Plagnieux and Soulard, "Famagouste: La cathédrale Saint-Nicolas," pp. 233–4.

the 1360s onwards very close to a much smaller building (supposed to mark the burial site of Saint Epiphanius of Salamis), the Greek bishop's main church was meant to rival the sumptuous appearance of the nearby Latin cathedral, probably in order to assess that the latter was not more dignified and devout than the former.<sup>8</sup> It is worth stressing that this building demonstrates that rivaling did not mean promoting an autonomous, indigenous style as opposed to that of the Cypriot rulers. On the contrary, it was aimed at overcoming their rulers' achievements on their own ground by imitating such ornamental and structural features as tracery windows and flying buttresses. The word "imitation" should be intended herewith as a cultural process implying a selective use of both forms and building techniques as a means to enhance the beauty, dimensions, and solemnity of the cult-place, instead of imagining an unconditioned and passive acceptance of foreign "influence". Actually, enthusiasm for Gothic forms did not prevent buildings from being provided with semicircular apses, which proved indispensable for the performance of the Byzantine rite, and Palaiologan painters from either Constantinople or Thessaloniki were involved in their decoration.

Yet, the structural and aesthetic efficaciousness that happened to be attributed to Gothic architecture by the inhabitants of towns dominated by imposing Gothic cathedrals constitutes just one of the motif-forces underlying the phenomenon of appropriation and elaboration of Gothic forms on the part of non-Latins. Westerners not only exported architectural and spatial patterns, but also manifested a functional approach to church interiors that soon proved to be appealing even to Orthodox believers. Extant evidence in Famagusta points out that the naves of Latin-rite churches were extensively used as burial spaces and were accordingly embellished with ornaments and structures associated with the performance of votive masses and other forms of liturgical commemoration which took place at side-altars that, as can still be seen in the church of Saints Peter and Paul (Sinan Pasha Camii), could be included within a diminutive chapel in the form of a pointed-arched wall recess. Such a type of structure—echoing that of funerary arcosolia and being concretely combined or associated with tombs—was frequently employed in

<sup>8</sup> Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 253–8; G. Jeffery, *A Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus. Studies in the Archaeology and Architecture of the Island*, Nicosia 1918, pp. 147–51; G. Sotiriou, *Τα βυζαντινά μνημεία της Κύπρου*, Athens 1935, pl. 34, figs 48, 49<sup>a</sup>, 50<sup>a</sup>, 60<sup>b</sup>; T.S.R. Boase, "The arts in Cyprus. A. Ecclesiastical Art," in K.M. Setton (ed.), *A History of the Crusades*, Madison, WI 1969–89, vol. 4: *The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States*, ed. H.W. Hazard, 1977, pp. 165–95 (177–9); M. Rivoire-Richard, "Η γοτθική τέχνη στην Κύπρο," in Th. Papadopoulos (ed.), *Ιστορία της Κύπρου*, Nicosia 1995–, vol. 5, pp. 1415–4 (1423); N. Gioles, *Η χριστιανική τέχνη στην Κύπρο*, Nicosia 2003, p. 144; A.G. Marangou, *Αμμόχωστος. Η ιστορία της πόλης*, Nicosia 2005, pp. 112–17; A.W. Carr, "Art," in A. Nicolaou-Konnari and Ch. Schabel (eds), *Cyprus. Society and Culture 1191–1374*, Leiden/Boston 2005, pp. 285–328 (315–16); Th. Soulard, "L'architecture gothique grecque du royaume des Lusignans: les cathédrales de Famagouste et Nicosie," in *Identités croisées*, pp. 355–84 (356–65); Ph. Plagnieux and Th. Soulard, "La cathédrale Saint-Georges des Grecs," in *L'art gothique en Chypre*, pp. 286–96.

town, as is evidenced by the extant examples in the Carmelite and Franciscan churches as well as in the Benedictine church of Saint Anne and in other buildings. The analogous wall recesses that are encountered in both Saint George of the Greeks and the probably Arab Melkite church of Agios Georgios Exorinos indicate that, by means of the imitation of such *pro anima* chapels, their lay patrons manifested the same interest in the privatization of sacred spaces that was cultivated by their Latin fellow citizens.<sup>9</sup>

It is worth remarking that in Cyprus, as in the other "mixed" societies of the Levant, where several cultural communities shared the same space and destiny, the phenomena of juxtaposition and coexistence of different artistic manifestations in the same context or even in the same building were more frequent than the cases of stylistic synthesis. The latter was usually borne out of a decades-long process of interactions and familiarization of each human group with other people's forms, and was expressed more by architecture and ornament than by figurative arts, where other criteria prevailed, as is evidenced by the authoritative almost universally associated with Byzantine religious painting.

On the whole, the analysis of the remnants of painted decoration in the buildings of Famagusta has evidenced that the different communities tended to embellish their own buildings with Byzantine or Byzantinizing murals; a number of them (including those in the Carmelite church, Saint Anne's, the tiny Armenian church, and the Syrian-rite building known as Agios Georgios Exorinos) were probably decorated by the same atelier of Palaiologan painters, who worked in a very high-quality style best paralleled by works made in Macedonia and Serbia in the last decades of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries. Such artists remained loyal to the standard compositional and stylistic formulae used in mainland Byzantium, even if they might happen to slightly modify their iconography to make it suitable for their audiences' visual conventions, as is revealed in the Carmelite church by the representation of Saint Nicholas in Western garb, whose *mitria* and pallium were clearly meant to enable Latin-rite beholders to fully recognize the saint as a Latin bishop.

Yet, other considerations could encourage Greek painters to appropriate Western, i.e. Italianate, features. The diffusion of a basically transconfessional religious sensibility which, in the context of a mercantile town, placed a very strong emphasis on individual piety and private strategies for the afterlife, paved the way to the diffusion of devotional images meant to express the

<sup>9</sup> On such issues, see M. Bacci, "Arte e raccomandazione dell'anima nei domini latini del Levante: alcune riflessioni," in Chr. Maltezou and G. Varzelioti (eds), *Oltre la morte. Testamenti di Greci e Veneziani redatti a Venezia o in territorio greco-veneziano nei sec. XIV–XVIII*, proceedings of a symposium (Venice, Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, 22–3 January 2007), Athens 2008, p. 131–59; M. Bacci, "Side-altars and 'pro anima' chapels in the medieval Mediterranean: Evidence from Cyprus," in V.M. Schmidt and J. Kroesen (eds), *The Altar and Its Environment 1150–1400*, Turnhout 2009, pp. 11–30.

laypeople's desire for salvation, as is especially evidenced by the proliferation of votive murals, frescoed retables, and other compositions displaying signs of private patronage. Portraits of supplicants tended to intrude themselves within the space of religious compositions, and many appeared in the most prominent parts of the church. At the same time, those saints who were especially worshipped in the area of Famagusta or were privileged in an individual's devotional practices were eventually given an extraordinary emphasis by representing them flanked by a selection of scenes inspired by

Fig. 7.2 Fragment of mural with the Virgin of Mercy(?) and Mary Magdalene, late 14th century. Famagusta, church of Agios Georgios Exorinos.



their hagiographic narratives and by encircling them within a decorative border, including the commissioner's coat of arms. Such a solution is most notably found in a late fourteenth-century mural in the tiny Armenian church, where were worked out models also employed in the nave of the nearby Carmelite church, and in the Syrian-rite (probably Melkite) church of Agios Georgios Exorinos, where a fragmentary mural with the Virgin of Mercy and Mary Magdalene, the special intercessor for sinners, is framed by a decorative border with the coats of arms of its donor, a member of the Embriaco-Gibelet family, the former Genoese lords of Jbail (Lebanon). This mural (Figure 7.2) is all the more striking, as it proves to imitate contemporary Italian painting on both iconographic and stylistic grounds, even if such details as the rendering of facial features and the use of a greenish *proplasmos* reveal that it was the work of the same Palaiologan artists who made the nearby figures in the late fourteenth century. In this special case the rather accurate simulation of Italianate features seems to be strictly functional to the use and display of a distinctively Western type of image, that of the votive or "pro anima" mural icon.

Moreover, the exuberant repertory of Gothic ornaments could be extensively appreciated by almost all the communities settled in Famagusta and elsewhere on Cyprus. The definitely Byzantine-looking Passion scenes in the metropolitan church of Saint George of the Greeks, probably dating from ca. 1370–80, were strikingly framed by a large border displaying foliate motifs, quadrilobes, and simulated marble intarsia (Figure 7.3) through which the local Greek community probably intended to rival the sumptuousness of the interior decoration of Saint Nicholas's in just the same way as its architecture was meant to equal the Latin cathedral in dignity. Most meaningfully, such elaborated frames were used, as in great painted cycles of fourteenth-century Italy, as efficacious means to give a stronger visual emphasis to the holy narratives, which, on the contrary, seem to be unaffected by Italian painting. On the whole, such solutions prove to be the outcome of a selective approach to other people's artistic traditions which seems to have been guided by basically functional and aesthetic choices, and to result in a plain combination of forms rather than in a real convergence or synthesis.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I summarize herewith the considerations I have already expressed in a series of previous publications, including M. Bacci, "Syrian, Palaiologan, and Gothic murals in the 'Nestorian' church of Famagusta," *Δελτίον της χριστιανικής αρχαιολογικής εταιρείας*, ser. IV, 27 (2006), pp. 207–20; Bacci, "L'arte: circolazione di modelli e interazioni culturali," in S. Carocci (ed.), *Storia d'Europa e del Mediterraneo. Sezione IV. Il Medioevo (secoli V–XV). Vol. IX. Strutture, preminenze, lessici comuni*, Rome 2007, pp. 581–632; Bacci, "Greek painters working for Latin and non-Orthodox patrons in the late medieval Mediterranean," in J. Anderson (ed.), *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence. The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of the History of Art*, Melbourne 2009, pp. 196–201; Bacci, "The Armenian church in Famagusta and its mural decoration," in *Culture of Cilician Armenia*, proceedings of the international symposium (Antelyas, Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 14–18 January 2008), Antelyas 2009, pp. 1–20; Bacci, "Patterns of church decoration



Fig. 7.3 Ornamental borders, mural painting, late fourteenth century. Famagusta, church of Saint George of the Greeks.

More evident cases of a deeper artistic synthesis can be detected in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in part as an outcome of Venetian rule on Cyprus from 1474 onwards, when Italian or Italianate artworks are supposed

in Famagusta (14th–16th centuries),” in A.W. Carr (ed.), *Medieval Famagusta. Art and Architecture*, forthcoming.

to have reached the island, and possibly also via the culturally mixed ateliers of Candia. In this period many churches were decorated with extensive cycles of mural painting which not only displayed Gothic ornaments and enriched the compositions with Italianate motifs, but also deliberately blended Byzantinizing and Western features on both stylistic and technical grounds. Such striking complexes as the mural decoration of the so-called “Latin Chapel” in the Monastery of Saint Herakleidios in Kalopanagiotis have notably elicited many efforts of interpretation, some of them postulating the deliberate and conscious use of Italianate forms as markers of identity. Alternatively, they can be considered to be visual means of cultural assimilation on the part of the Venetian rulers, or to express the ideology of Unionist Greeks willing to assert their recognition of Roman supremacy, or, on the contrary, to be the outcome of a wider and indiscriminate process of confessional syncretism.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, even if it proves true that, by the end of the fifteenth century painters were well aware of the distinctive features of both Latin and Greek “national” styles (as is most notably revealed in contemporary Cretan documents by the terminological distinction between pictures made *alla greca* and *alla latina*),<sup>12</sup> there is still no clue to determining that the adoption of features and devices connected with other people’s artistic traditions was automatically perceived by both artists and viewers in political or identitarian terms. Forms could indeed be appreciated by different communities for their visual efficacy, aesthetic appeal, and their probable role as markers of high social standing, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, or confessional connections. Moreover, stylistic hybridizations could eventually work as a visual compromise that

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the remarks by D.D. Triantaphyllopoulos, “Βενετία και Κύπρος. Σχέσεις τους στην τέχνη,” in Chr.A. Maltezos (ed.), *Κύπρος-Βενετία. Κοινές ιστορικές τύχες*, proceedings of a symposium (Athens, 1–3 March 2001), Venice 2002, pp. 315–36. On painting in Venetian-ruled Cyprus see idem, “Η τέχνη στην Κύπρο από την Άλωση της Κωνσταντινούπολης (1453) έως την έναρξη της Τουρκοκρατίας (1571): βυζαντινή – μεσαιωνική ή μεταβυζαντινή”; *Πρακτικά του Γ΄ διεθνούς κυπριολογικού συνεδρίου*, Nicosia 2001, vol. II, pp. 621–50; S. Frigerio-Zeniou, *L’art ‘italo-byzantin’ à Chypre au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Trois témoins de la peinture religieuse: Panagia Podithou, la Chapelle Latine et Panagia Iamatikè*, Venice 1998; I.A. Eliades, *Cypriot Painting and Its Affinity with Italian Art during the Frankish and Venetian Rule: 1191–1571*, in S.G. Casu, Chr. Chatzichristodoulou, and G. Toumazas, *Θεοτόκος/Madonna*, exhibition catalogue (Nicosia, Hellenic Bank, July 2005), Nicosia 2005, pp. 28–37.

<sup>12</sup> M. Cattapan, “Nuovi elenchi e documenti dei pittori in Creta dal 1300 al 1500,” *Θησαυρίσματα* 9 (1972), pp. 202–35 (211–13 and docs. 6–8). On Veneto-Greek interactions in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Crete see, most notably, M. Vassilaki, “Western influence on the art of Crete,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/5 (1982), pp. 301–11; and more generally Vassilaki, *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete*, Farnham 2009. Cf. also M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilidis, “A fifteenth century Byzantine icon-painter working on mosaics in Venice: Unpublished documents,” *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/5 (1982), pp. 265–72; Constantoudaki-Kitromilidis, “Ενθρονή βρεφοκρατούσα και άγιοι. Σύνθετο έργο ιταλοκρητικής τέχνης,” *Δελτίον της χριστιανικής αρχαιολογικής εταιρείας* 17 (1993–94), pp. 285–302; Constantoudaki-Kitromilidis, “*Conducere artem nostram*, in qua exercere artem nostram. Το εργαστήριο ενός βυζαντινός και ενός βενετού ζωγράφου στην Κρήτη,” *Σύμμεικτα* 14 (2001), pp. 292–300.

could be aptly shared by all or most of the groups composing the multilayered and multiconfessional society of Lusignan Cyprus. Such a process is best evidenced in the field of architecture by the development of the so-called “Franco-Byzantine style,” which is characterized by the combination of some Gothic devices (including dressed stone masonry, drip-moldings over windows and doors, and rib vaults) with the traditional architectural schemes employed for Greek-rite churches, as is already revealed by the small chapel of Agios Iakovos in Trikomo, variously dated from the late thirteenth through the fifteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

One of the most composite buildings on Cyprus is the building presently known as the Bedesten in Nicosia, which pertained to the local Greeks and was originally attributed to the Virgin Chrysotheistria.<sup>14</sup> This basilica-type church with octagonal drum and semispherical dome was clearly built and decorated in a way that aimed at rivaling the nearby Latin cathedral of Saint Sophia. Its exterior ornaments, mostly dating from the sixteenth century, prove to be a free and eclectic combination of motifs directly borrowed from the nearby building, such as rosettes, blind trefoiled arcades, and foliate ornaments housing Renaissance-style masks (Figure 7.4). The most striking quotation is represented by the flat niches decorated with arms holding crowns, which were meant to house icons, though lower and larger than those used in the narthex of the Latin cathedral (Figure 7.5). In a way, it was the most evident concession to Greek devotional practices on the part of the Franks that was imitated and enhanced in the north façade of this eclectic Byzantine-rite church.

The stylistic synthesis of Byzantine, Gothic, and Renaissance Venetian features was well established on Cyprus when the island fell into the hands of the Ottoman Turks in 1570–71. As a consequence of the conquest the most illustrious and sumptuous Latin buildings were converted to new uses: Saint Sophia was transformed into an Islamic cult-place, retaining the name of Ayasofya Mosque, in less than one day, by removing its altars and images, plastering its walls, destroying its slabs, and covering its floor with carpets. Later on minarets were added, and a wooden mihrab was set within the south-east chapel.<sup>15</sup> In most cases, the Ottomans limited their action to the

<sup>13</sup> Gioles, *Η χριστιανική τέχνη*, pp. 143–4. On the so-called Franco-Byzantine style cf. A. Papageorgiou, “L’art byzantin de Chypre et l’art des croisés. Influences réciproques,” *Report of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus* (1982), pp. 217–26 (222–4); and the short, yet thoughtful, remarks by Carr, “Art,” pp. 319–20.

<sup>14</sup> On this building and its complex history cf. Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 136–47; Jeffery, *A Description*, pp. 84–9; M.D. Willis, “Byzantine Beginnings of the Bedesten,” *Κυπριακά και σπουδαί* 50 (1987), pp. 185–92; P. Leventis, *Twelve Times in Nicosia. Nicosia, Cyprus, 1192–1570: Topography, Architecture, and Urban Experience in a Diversified Capital City*, Nicosia 2005, pp. 285–99; Ph. Plagnieux and Th. Soulard, “Le Bédestan (cathédrale grecque de Nicosie),” in *L’art gothique en Chypre*, pp. 181–9.

<sup>15</sup> On Latin churches converted into mosques on Cyprus see most notably P. Cuneo, “Chiese latine trasformate in moschee. Il caso di Cipro,” in *Saggi in onore di Renato Bonelli*, Rome 1992 (*Quaderni dell’Istituto di storia dell’architettura*, n.s., 15–20, 1990–92), pp. 285–94.



Fig. 7.4 Nicosia, Bedesten: former church of the Panagia Chrysotheistria, northeastern doorway.

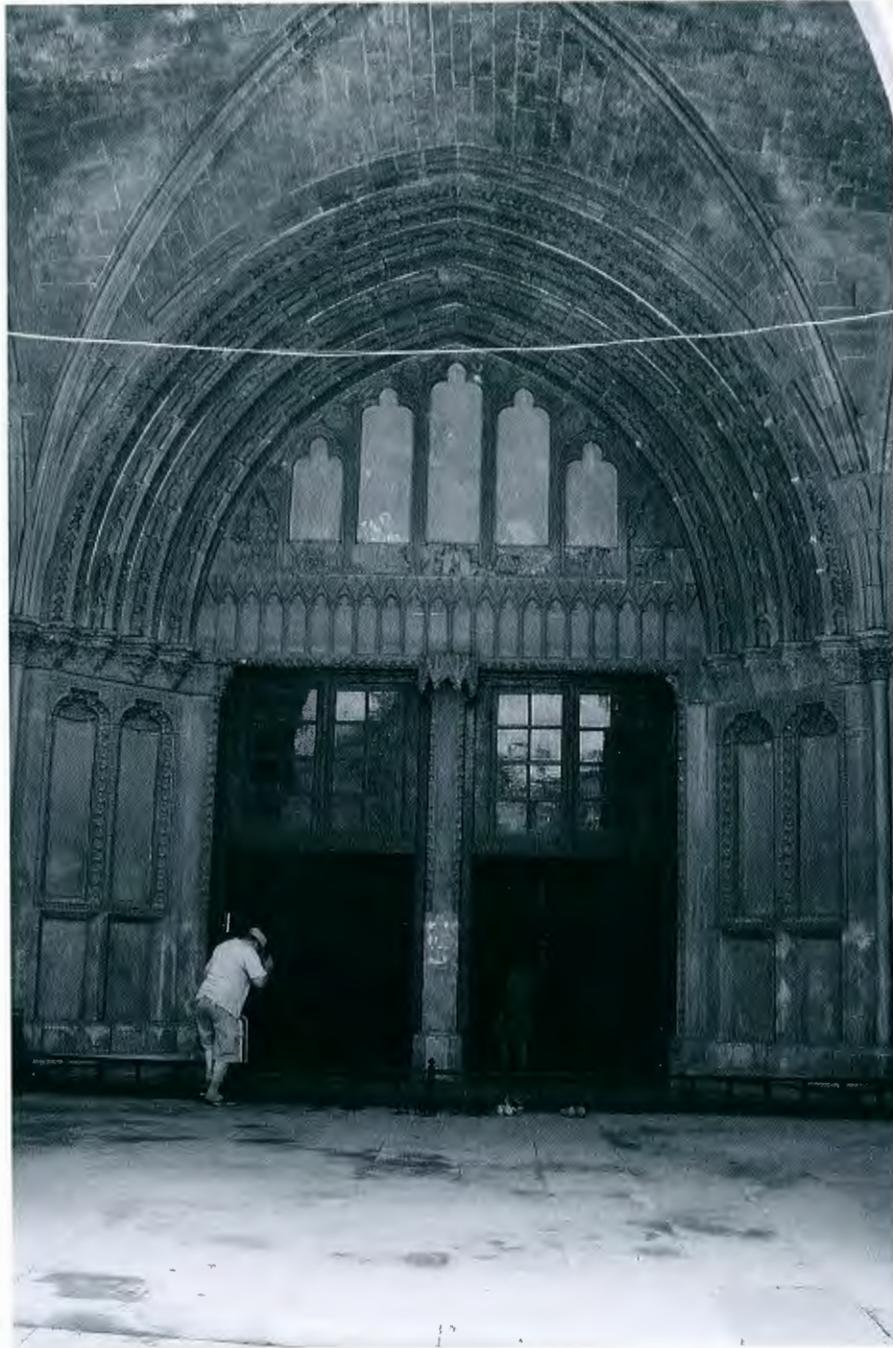


Fig. 7.5 Nicosia, Selimiye Camii, former Latin cathedral of Saint Sophia, narthex with main doorway.

removal of superfluous ornaments and the setting of Islamic furniture: in the tiny church of Saint Catherine this consisted of a very simple white mihrab, echoing the orientation of the Gothic piscina on the apse wall. In some cases, Latin buildings were converted to profane destinations, the most notable being that of the town's still-functioning baths, or "Büyük Hamam," which preserve a fourteenth-century doorway displaying a complete repertory of Gothic ornaments.<sup>16</sup>

By such a material appropriation of the most eminent Latin monuments, the Ottoman Turks became familiar with Gothic architecture and learnt to appreciate its prestige and sumptuousness. The use of former cathedrals as Friday mosques caused them to be invested with a special religious meaning: as the foci of the urban landscape of Islamized Nicosia, they were perceived as symbols of identity by the Muslim population, which was composed of Turks, converted Franks and Greeks, the latter including the *linovamvakoi*, or crypto-Christians. The Greek Orthodox also felt that these same buildings were part of their identity, as is evidenced by the fact that they labeled both Nicosia and Famagusta cathedrals as "Agia Sofia" and that they worked out stories which spoke of holy icons once preserved there.<sup>17</sup>

The blending of Byzantine and Western styles in the late Lusignan and Venetian period had made Gothic forms familiar to the Greek population: they not only inherited the working practices and architectural devices (like pointed arches and exterior buttresses) imported and developed by the Latin Cypriots, but also owned prestigious buildings which displayed hybridized and Westernizing forms, such as Saint George in Famagusta and the Bedesten in Nicosia. Especially in the two major centers, they tended to imitate such models, as is the case with the Chrysaliniotissa Church in Nicosia, whose odd southern extension was probably built much later than the Ottoman conquest, well into the seventeenth century. Its main doorway (Figure 7.6) is clearly inspired by the eclectic Gothic ornaments of the Bedesten, though rendered in an extremely flat and linear way, whereas the roof is provided with simplified gargoyles.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the most popular "mixed" shrines, originally intended for both the Latin and the Greek offices, included distinctive Gothic features which continued to exert an impact on subsequent architectural practice. In the case of the church of Saint Mamas at Morphou, dating from the early sixteenth century, the devotees were accustomed to paying their homage to the saint's

<sup>16</sup> Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 157–60; Jeffery, *A Description*, p. 61; Leventis, *Twelve Times in Nicosia*, p. 203.

<sup>17</sup> A. Koumparidou, "Παραδόσεις περί διασώσεως φορητών εικόνων," *Κυπριακά και σπουδαί* 12 (1968), pp. 87–97.

<sup>18</sup> Jeffery, *A Description*, p. 24; Rupert Gurnis, *Historic Cyprus: A Guide to its Towns and Villages, Monasteries and Castles* (London: Methuen, 1936), pp. 64–6; K. Keshishian, *Λευκωσία. Η πρωτεύουσα της Κύπρου άλλοτε και τώρα*, Nicosia 1989, p. 157.



Fig. 7.6 Nicosia, Greek church of the Panagia Chrysaliniotissa, south doorway.

tomb included within a wide recess decorated with foliate motifs, which was reminiscent of the setting of the flat wall-chapels used by Latins for the performance of votive masses.<sup>19</sup> While attending the liturgy, they looked at a

<sup>19</sup> A.W. Carr, "Cypriot funerary icons: Questions of convergence in a complex land," in S. Hayes-Healy (ed.), *Medieval Paradigms. Essays in Honor of Jeremy DuQuesnay Adams* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 153–73, esp. 164 and 173, note 41. On the cult of Saint



Fig. 7.7 Morphou, shrine of Saint Mamas, iconostasis.

sixteenth or early seventeenth-century iconostasis which proved to be an odd mixture of Gothic, Renaissance, and Byzantine motifs, and when entering the church, they went through a doorway provided with moldings and voussoirs (Figure 7.7).<sup>20</sup>

About a century after the Ottoman conquest the Greek Orthodox Church was powerful enough to promote the construction of new churches. The new buildings, though simple and often diminutive, not infrequently aimed at emulating the sumptuousness of the former Latin churches converted into the most distinctive Muslim monuments by both retaining some Gothic architectural devices (such as pointed arches, buttresses, and vaulted naves) and by displaying remnants of ruined churches. In the eighteenth-century metropolitan church of Saint John, annexed to the Greek archbishopric, the façade was embellished with parts of sculpted sarcophagi,<sup>21</sup> whereas remnants of other funerary monuments were used to enhance the beauty of each doorway in the late seventeenth-century church of Saint Michael Tripiotis.<sup>22</sup> The reliefs exhibited over the main portal are so oddly linear and “Romanesqueizing” that one is led to suspect that they may be an awkward imitation of medieval style made in the Ottoman period.

Such cases vividly illustrate the Greek Cypriots’ appreciation of medieval antiquities, which was probably connected to the prestige associated with the most eminent buildings of Nicosia and Famagusta.<sup>23</sup> It is worth stressing that even in the nineteenth century, when this community promoted the highly

Mamas on Cyprus see most notably A. Marava-Chatzinikolaou, *Ο Άγιος Μάμας*, Athens 1953, pp. 70–84. On “mixed” shrines see also H. Luke, *Cyprus. A Portrait and an Appreciation*, London/Nicosia 1965, pp. 145–60; M. Bacci, “Mixed’ shrines in the Late Byzantine period,” in L.A. Beljaev (ed.), *Archaeologia Abrahamica. Исследования в области археологии и художественной традиции иудаизма, христианства, и ислама/Studies in Archaeology and Artistic Tradition of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Moscow 2009, pp. 433–4.

<sup>20</sup> On the church architecture and furnishings cf. Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 166–70; Jeffery, *A Description*, pp. 221–2; Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, p. 349; P. Stylianos and N. Christodoulou, *Η εκκλησία τ’ Αι Μάμα κι οι άλλες εκκλησίες της κατεχόμενης Μόρφου*, Nicosia 1985, pp. 16–23; D. Myriantheus, “Εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική (13ος–20ος αιώνας),” in *Τερά Μητρόπολις Μόρφου. 2000 χρόνια τέχνης και αγιότητας*, exhibition catalogue (Nicosia, Cultural Foundation of the Bank of Cyprus, 2000), Nicosia 2000, pp. 71–96 (71–2); Ch.E. Kourres, “Άγιος Μάμας ο μέγας Άγιος τής Μόρφου,” *ibid.*, pp. 229–39 (234–8); Gioles, *Η χριστιανική τέχνη*, p. 144; Chr. A. Hadjichristodoulou, *The Cathedral Church of St. Mamas, Morphou*, Nicosia 2010; W. C. Remsen, “The Survey of the Church,” in M. Jones and A. Milward Jones (eds.), *The Canopy of Heaven. The Ciborium in the Church of St. Mamas, Morphou*, [Nicosia] 2010, pp. 71–101.

<sup>21</sup> Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 163–4; Jeffery, *A Description*, pp. 35–7; Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, pp. 68–70; A. Papageorgiou, “Ο καθεδρικός ναός του Αγίου Ιωάννου στη Λευκωσία,” *Κυπριακά σπουδαία* 61 (1997), pp. 47–98; Leventis, *Twelve Times in Nicosia*, pp. 269–70.

<sup>22</sup> Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 160–63; Jeffery, *A Description*, pp. 45–7; Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, pp. 75–6; Keshishian, *Λευκωσία*, pp. 152–4; Leventis, *Twelve Times in Nicosia*, p. 271.

<sup>23</sup> On the impact of Frankish architecture on Greek Orthodox churches in Cyprus during the Ottoman period cf. I.A. Eliades, “Παράδοση και ανανέωση στην αρχιτεκτονική της Τουρκοκρατίας στην Κύπρο (1570–1878),” *Κυπριακά σπουδαία* 72 (2008), pp. 111–37, esp. 122–32.

ideologized forms of Neoclassicisms, an eclectic Gothicizing style was still used, albeit sporadically, for ecclesiastical buildings. A case in point is the west extension of the old church of Agios Sinesios at Rizokarpaso, whose western extension and belfry were accomplished by the Greek Cypriot architect Christodoulos Michail at the time of Archbishop Sophronios III (1865–1900), as we are informed by an inscription. Their reproduction in a watercolour made in 1878 by the British officer Hugh Sinclair demonstrates that the architectural enterprise had taken place in the last years of Ottoman rule.<sup>24</sup> The decoration of the south doorway is a strongly simplified version of a Gothic portal, whose pediment has been oddly decorated with a lion rendered in very flat relief. The setting of the façade (Figure 7.8 = Plate 10) combines suggestions from several Cypriot monuments: the doorway—embellished with crocketed gable, pinnacles, and colonnettes—has an openwork tympanum whose curvilinear tracery is clearly inspired by the elegant doorway of the former Cathedral of Saint Nicholas in Famagusta, by then known as the Mustafa Pasha Mosque (Figure 7.9).<sup>25</sup> Two curious structures flank the main doorway: on the left is a flat gabled niche wherein are represented two hands holding a crown, obviously taken after the model of the niches in the narthex of Saint Sophia, whereas the hollow recess to the right seems to be reminiscent of the altar canopy in Saint George of the Latins, Famagusta.<sup>26</sup>

Analogous quotations from the medieval monuments of Cyprus are clearly detectable in the small church of Agios Thyrsos, not far from Rizokarpaso. Even if tourist guides often hint at a date in the fifteenth century, there is no doubt that it proves to be a revivalist building of the late nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The south doorway is treated in the same way as the main one at Rizokarpaso, so that we can infer that it was accomplished by the same architect. It consists of a gable with foliage cresting and two figures of dragons at the lower end of its sloping sides; two splayed arches with broken angles decorated with stylized leaves; and pediment with bar tracery. In general terms, it seems to provide

<sup>24</sup> R. Severis, *Travelling Artists in Cyprus 1700–1960*, London 2000, pp. 162–3. On the church reconstruction in the nineteenth century see Chr.N. Taoushianis, *Αί εκκλησίες του Ριζοκαρπάσου*, Nicosia 1983, pp. 9–19.

<sup>25</sup> Enlart, *Gothic Art*, p. 395; J.-B. de Vaivre, “Sur les pas de Camille Enlart en Chypre,” in *L’art gothique en Chypre*, pp. 15–56 (40–42).

<sup>26</sup> On this church, see Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 258–62; Jeffery, *A Description*, pp. 128–31; N. Coldstream, “The church of Saint George the Latin,” *Report of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus* (1975), pp. 147–51; Rivoire-Richard, “Η γοτθική τέχνη,” pp. 1423–4; Gioles, *Η χριστιανική τέχνη*, p. 150; A. Özdural, “The church of St. George of the Latins in Famagusta: A case study in medieval metrology and design techniques,” in N.Y. Wu (ed.), *Ad quadratum: The Practical Application of Geometry in Medieval Architecture*, Aldershot 2002, pp. 217–42; Marangou, *Αμμόχωστος*, pp. 122–5; Ph. Plagnieux and Th. Soulard, “L’église Saint-Georges des Latins (Saint-George des Génois?),” in *L’art gothique en Chypre*, pp. 243–7. An analogous niche is preserved also in the ruined church located close to the Mustafa Pasha Camii: cf. Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 296–7.

<sup>27</sup> Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, p. 208; cf. the detail published as an example of the art of the Lusignan era in R. Hanworth, *The Heritage of North Cyprus*, Nicosia s.d. [ca. 1989], p. 98.



Fig. 7.8 Rizokarpaso, church of Agios Sinesios, view of the façade.



Fig. 7.9 Famagusta, cathedral of Saint Nicholas, tympanum of the main doorway.



Fig. 7.10 Aigialousa (neighborhoods of), church of Agios Thyrsos, apse vaulting.

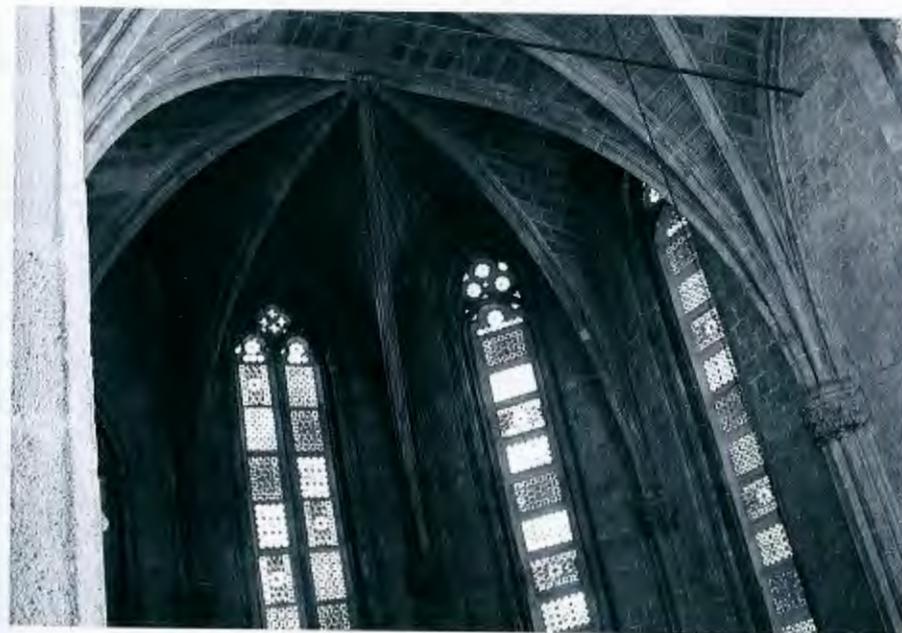


Fig. 7.11 Nicosia, Haidar Pasha Camii, former Latin church known as Saint Catherine's, apse vault.

a synthesized version of the main doorway of Famagusta cathedral, whereas the interior with three-sided apse and ribbed vaults (Figure 7.10) seems to be inspired by the solutions seen in Saint Catherine in Nicosia, then known as the Haidar Pasha Mosque (Figure 7.11).<sup>28</sup> Approximately in the same period, in 1894, the cathedral of Saint Sophia in the Cypriot capital was used as a model for the façade of the church of Saint John the Divine in the village of Mia Milia, which was provided with a rather simplified imitation of a Gothic splayed doorway,<sup>29</sup> whereas the church of the Panagia Phaneromene at Lysi took inspiration from the rayonnant ornaments of Famagusta Cathedral.<sup>30</sup>

One might be tempted to imagine that this trend of Cypriot “Gothic revival” was especially promoted by the British rulers of the island after the beginning of their mandate in 1878, maybe as opposed to the Neoclassical style by then privileged by the Greek population, but such a view is clearly contradicted by the two aforementioned churches. Moreover, there are several clues as to state that imitation of Gothic buildings had started already in the Ottoman period.<sup>31</sup> This is best pointed out by some late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century mosques which enable us to infer that Gothicizing features, mostly aiming at evoking the aura of Saint Sophia in Nicosia, were imitated also by the Turkish community. Such elements are sometimes hardly detectable, such as the stylized rosettes, borrowed from the narthex of what was by then the town’s Friday mosque, in the gallery of a minaret annexed to the tiny Taht el-Kale Camii in Nicosia, dating from 1826 to 1827.<sup>32</sup> Much more evident are the references in the early nineteenth-century village mosque at Peristerona (Figure 7.12 = Plate 11), which is provided with angular colonnettes, oeil-de-boeuf, foliate capitals, pointed-arched windows with trefoil decoration, drip-moldings, and colored glass, as well as a Renaissance-style doorway.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> On this church see Enlart, *Gothic Art*, pp. 152–7; Jeffery, *A Description*, pp. 90–93; Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, pp. 59–60; Keshishian, *Λευκωσία*, p. 189; Rivoire-Richard, “Η γοτθική τέχνη,” pp. 1420–21; Plagnieux and Soulard, “Nicosie. L’église Sainte-Catherine,” pp. 160–69; Leventis, *Twelve Times in Nicosia*, pp. 227–9.

<sup>29</sup> Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, p. 344. Cf. the illustration in Ch. Chotzakoglou, *Religious Monuments in Turkish-Occupied Cyprus*, Nicosia 2008, p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> Eliades, “Παράδοση και ανανέωση,” p. 132.

<sup>31</sup> Ottoman art and architecture in Cyprus has been scarcely investigated. For some general remarks cf. H.F. Alasya, *Kıbrıs tarihi ve Kıbrıs Türk eserleri*, Ankara 1964; E. Esin, *Turkish Art in Cyprus*, Ankara 1969; F. Çuhadaroğlu and F. Oğuz, “Kıbrıs’ta Türk Eserleri,” *Röle ve Restorasyon Dergisi* 2 (1977), pp. 1–77; G. Tekman, I. Feridun, and T. Bağışkan, *Turkish Monuments in Cyprus*, Nicosia 1987; T. Bağışkan, *Ottoman, Islamic and Islamised Monuments in Cyprus*, Nicosia 2009. For a comparative analysis, cf. C. Schriwer, “Cultural and ethnic identity in the Ottoman period architecture of Cyprus, Jordan and Lebanon,” *Levant* 34 (2002), pp. 197–218.

<sup>32</sup> [Ch. Avraamidēs], *Muslim Places of Worship in Cyprus*, Nicosia 2005, pp. 22, 33; I. Hadjisavva-Adam (ed.), *Nicosia Within the Walls: A Multicultural Dialogue*. European Heritage Days, Nicosia, 29 September 2002, p. 34 no. 10; T. Bağışkan, *Ottoman*, pp. 136–8.

<sup>33</sup> A.C. Gazioğlu, *The Turks in Cyprus. A Province of the Ottoman Empire (1571–1878)*, Nicosia 1990, p. 274; Avraamidēs, *Muslim Places*, pp. 34–5; Bağışkan, *Ottoman*, pp. 190–91.

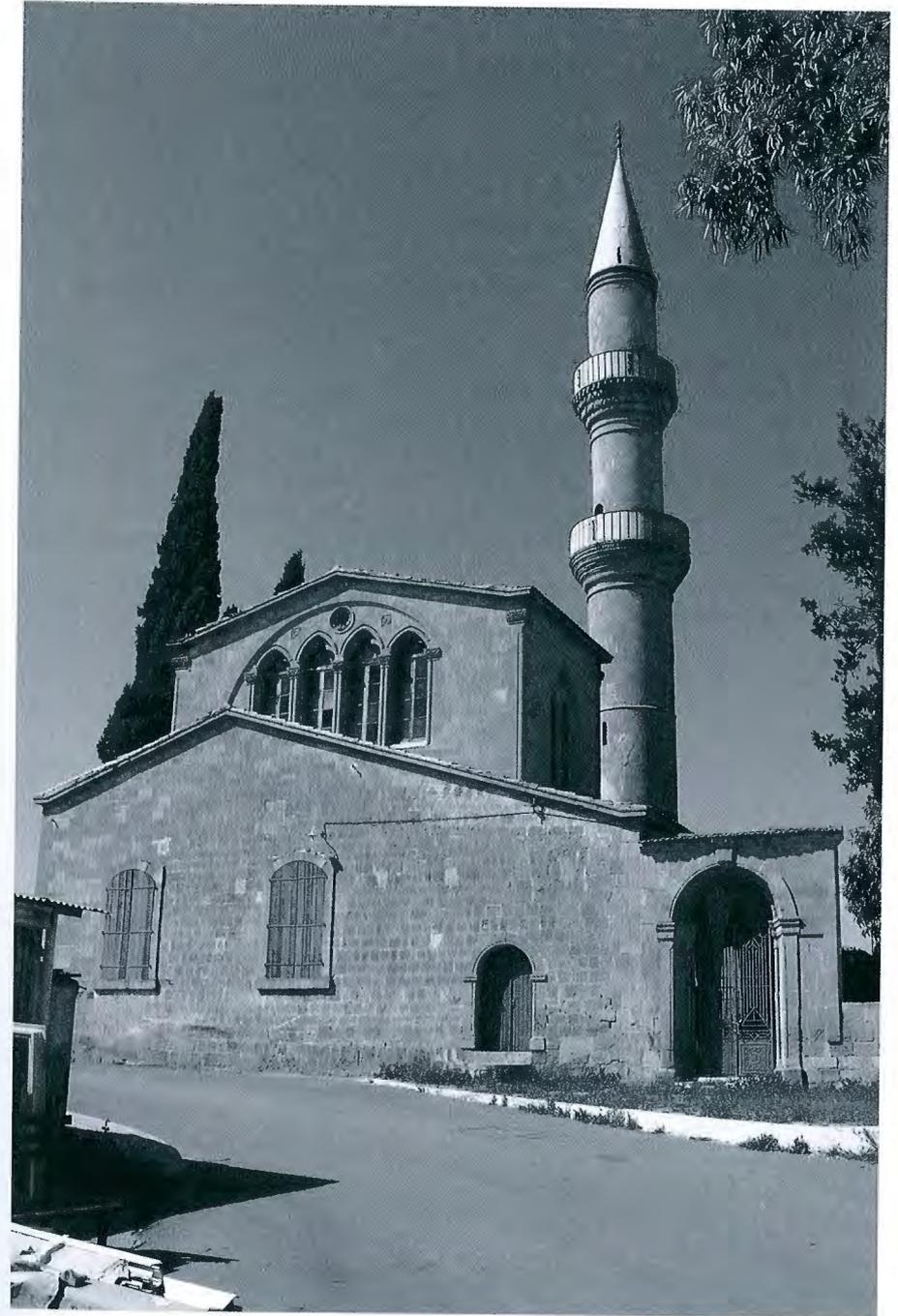


Fig. 7.12 Peristerona (near Nicosia), the village mosque.



Fig. 7.13 Larnaka, Great Mosque, main doorway.



Fig. 7.14 Nicosia, main entrance to a private house.

Further examples of Gothic borrowings are the main doorway (Figure 7.13) of the Great Mosque of Larnaka (1835–36)<sup>34</sup> and the arch marking the entrance to the precinct of the Bayraktar Camii in Nicosia (1820).<sup>35</sup>

Such examples are sufficient to show that Gothic forms were used by the major religious communities as a means to enhance the magnificence and sumptuousness of their own cult-places, and that they could not be invested with any special ideological meaning. It is hardly surprising then that such forms, which constituted a distinctive hallmark of the town landscape and were commonly regarded as efficacious paradigms of beautiful architecture, were widely appropriated for the decoration of domestic buildings. Many citizens of Nicosia continued to live in houses built in the Frankish period and displaying such distinctive features as decorated entrances and angular colonnettes. They were so rooted in local habits that they were not deemed incompatible with non-Gothic architectural contexts, as is pointed out by the pointed-arched and molded doorway included in the sumptuous Ottoman house of the famous Greek dragoman Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, built in the late eighteenth century.<sup>36</sup> With such precedents, it is hardly surprising that neo-Gothic features were widely employed in the eclectic façades of private houses of late nineteenth-century Nicosia, where they were freely combined with Renaissance and Ottoman motifs (Figure 7.14).<sup>37</sup> The most peculiar solutions were once again inspired by local models, such as in those houses where the main entrance was flanked by two flat niches with trilobed moldings which proudly evoked the sumptuous doorways of what was the former Cathedral of Saint Sophia for the Greeks and the Ayasofya Camii for the Muslim Turks.

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<sup>34</sup> Gazioğlu, *The Turks in Cyprus*, p. 275; *Muslim Places*, p. 63–5; Bağışkan, *Ottoman*, pp. 258–63.

<sup>35</sup> Keshishian, *Λευκωσία*, p. 192; Gazioğlu, *The Turks in Cyprus*, pp. 270–71; Avraamidēs, *Muslim Places*, p. 28; Bağışkan, *Ottoman*, pp. 101–8.

<sup>36</sup> M. Pihler (ed.), *A Dragoman's House: The House of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios in Nicosia. A Study of Its Background and Architecture*, Nicosia 1993.

<sup>37</sup> On the composite character of Nicosia's domestic architecture and the role of styles as markers of identity cf. H. Pulhan and I. Numan, "The Traditional Urban House in Cyprus as Material Expression of Cultural Transformation," *Journal of Design History* 19 (2006), pp. 105–19.