

**DESTROY AT WAR, REBUILD IN PEACE! THE CULTURAL
HERITAGE OF CYPRUS BEING A NATIONAL PROPERTY AT
WARTIME AND UNIVERSAL HERITAGE AT PEACE**

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ABSTRACT

Cyprus is an island on the crossing roads of Asia, Africa and Europe. From its earliest times several civilisations left a rich culture heritage which is an amalgamation of the Asian, African and European cultures. However, like every other place that experienced war, it was subjected to severe violations in its history during each new sovereign particularly at war time. Sometimes, although the existing ones were reused for economic reasons although they were always altered with the stamp of the identity of the new ruler. Vouni Palace, is one of the early example for this case which is thought to have been built during the Persian rule then turned into a Hellenistic palace. The Crusaders destroyed many Byzantine castles and orthodox churches while the Genoese and later Venetians removed all banners of the Lusignans from the walls of the city. Many Latin buildings were harmed during the bombardment by the Ottoman or demolished by the occupants in need of stone to reinforce the walls. However, these buildings were all used by the Ottomans with some alterations for economical reasons while Orthodox were given the privilege to restore their churches. It is an admirable act to see that still these monuments bear the grotesque ornaments in rather good condition while many Ottoman inscriptions on the buildings in the southern part of the island are badly defaced, the marble inscription of the Paphos Castle being an example. Domes, being symbols of Islam were replaced with gabled trussed roofs in the process of restoration or even demolished during the British Period. It is interesting that British period neglected Turkish monuments since it was treated under a separate committee. The law of antiquities also did not consider the protection of the monuments built after the Turkish conquest. Further sad events took place particularly after mid-1950s until 1980s in the political events. But due to a sudden change of policy particularly to impress the European Union to gain membership by the Greek government of Cyprus, a new attempt to restore these became a priority in the southern part of the island. Through this movement, several Turkish monuments have been restored and opened to prayers as Islamic places which had in fact another implied aim to attract Arab tourist. On the other hand recently the Orthodox churches neglected and harmed during 1974 war, had

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been recently cleaned and restored as far as possible. Burglary cases from the Greek monuments caused great upheavals at international platforms while the Turkish objects stolen from the museums had never been thoroughly investigated by international organizations.

Briefly to say, this paper will deal with this kind of destroys and restorations of the historical heritage of Cyprus during war and at peace and aims to bring further suggestions for their protection and preservation not as national property but mainly as universal heritage during peace or war times.

The Key Words: Cyprus, historical heritage, universal, national, protection, war, peace.

Cyprus is an island on the crossing roads of Asia, Africa and Europe. The excerpt from the work of the Arab geographer Shams al Din mainly known as Muqaddasi in his **Description of Syria** dated 985 A.D. is quite interesting which is still acceptable today for citing the important position of Cyprus in the Mediterranean island. Accordingly:

“Over against Tyre lies the island of Qubrus, said to be twelve days’ journey round. It is full of populous cities, and offers the Muslims many advantages in their trade thither, by reason of the great quantities of merchandise, stuffs and goods, which are produced there. The island is in the power of whichever nation is overlord in these seas. It lies distant across the water a sail of a night and a day, and from thence on to the country of the Greeks is the same distance again.”

From its earliest times several civilisations left their culture that resulted with a rich cultural heritage which is an amalgamation of the Asian, African and European cultures. This makes the island an attraction place for the tourists visiting the country or those who settled here for a peaceful, quiet life. However, like every other culture, the cultural heritage of the island was subjected to severe vandalism in the course of each new sovereign. The harm given to historical monuments and objects had always been so great during each war or new occupation. Sometimes, a new form is created by the alterations of the existing ones for economic reasons while they were always stamped with the identity of the new ruler. Vouni Palace is one of the early examples for this case which is thought to have been built during the Persian rule and then turned into a Hellenistic palace. The large Latin cathedrals of the Lusignan period, the Venetian city walls, and the Greek Orthodox churches also survived up to current time in perfect condition since they were utilized after passing through a certain renovation or restoration to serve the needs of the new occupants.

A glance at the past revealed that sometimes in case of peace negotiations monuments and objects subjected to vandalism become one of the items on the agenda for which the loser part claimed compensation. However, the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) is controlling such cases with the Protocols created since 1954, the so called Hague, First Protocol Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict. In fact there were earlier conventions signed, the earlier ones being **The Brussels Declaration** in 1874 which served as a source for the **International Convention with Respect to the Law and Customs of War by Land** signed in Hague in 1899 and **The Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War of Land** in 1909, all of them stipulated that all necessary steps should be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, the arts, sciences and charitable purposes.¹

Nevertheless these did not stop the vandalism towards the historical monuments particularly during the Second World War. The monuments in Cyprus are also protected under this Convention although this protocol always worked in one sided way, since Turkish Republic of North Cyprus is considered as an illegal government and Turkey as an occupying force in Cyprus since 1974 regardless the realities of the broken Republic since 1963 and missing part and rights of the Turkish society in the Legislative Council of the Republic of Cyprus as well as the legal right of Turkey as a guarantor state to sign the Zurich Agreement for the founding of an independent Cyprus Republic.

Briefly to say, this paper will deal with this kind of harms given to the cultural heritage during war and restoration or renovation attempts at peace time. Our study will review some information through the published sources while some archive unpublished documents will support our examples. Also further suggestions will be made for their protection not only as national property but also universal heritage with the sensitivity for the importance of preservation at first hand as civil places during the times of peace or war.

Rise of Awareness of Cultural Heritage

Awareness of historical heritage started in earlier days. Respect and appreciation of the past as well abhorrence of enemies' heritage is always connected with patriotic feelings of the societies. The Greeks are known to start the concept of tourism by introducing the first guide books for antique sites for the benefit of the travellers.²

Although devastation a city during the siege and occupation was one of the

¹ Jiri Toman (2005). "The Hague Convention – A Decisive Step taken by the International Community", **Museum International**, No: 57: 228: 4, p. 7 UNESCO 2005 (Retrieved from web on 20.06.2008).

² E.H. Gombrich (1950/1983). **The Story of Art**, 13th ed. p. 77, 88.

inevitable acts, sometimes it was a matter of discussion to destroy or protect an occupied city as it was the case for the sacred city Cadmeia occupied by the army of Alexander the Great which was completely wiped away from the earth with the decision of his council. Yet according to remorse the house of Pindar, the Theban poet was saved by Alexander's order. On the contrary to the destruction of Cadmeia, he saved all temples in Egypt and he even visited the temple of Memphis to pay his respect to the God Ammon which he equated with Zeus.³

During the 14th century, archaeological studies were initiated in Rome for the understanding of the ancient Roman culture the result of which is reflected in the literary works of the Italian poets mainly Petrarch and Poggio Bracciolini⁴ However, particularly the religious authorities did the opposite by harming the antique remains particularly to obtain marble for the new palaces, churches or fountains built in Rome, one of the most severe cases being demolishing of the temple of Serapious with gun powder in order to obtain its beautiful marbles for use in Vatican stables.⁵ The earliest laws seems to have been issued in Rome in 1516 by Pope Pius II for the protection of the Roman antiquities which imposed severe punishment for those who would give harm to it, while Rafaele Sanzia in charge of the antiquities in Rome already prepared a measured drawing of the antique sites with the intention for their restoration.⁶

It is interesting that during Medieval Ages in Cyprus, sometimes damages given during wars or revolts became an important issue during peace talks and compensations were made for the replacement. In one such case a new treaty was signed in 1329 between the Lusignan king and the Genoese in which besides some debts already owed by the Lusignan king to the Genoese, all lands and possession, houses, buildings and loggias belonging to the Genoese in virtue of the earlier privilege were to be restored to them; and at the bath at Nicosia a conduit and waste-pit were to be constructed.⁷ However, the Genoese themselves also destroyed many houses in order to increase defence of Famagusta by building walls around the city. The Italian notary Nicholas Martoni wrote the following account of his visit to the city in 1394:

“The city of Famagusta is as large, I reckon, as the city of Capua, and has fine squares, and houses very much like those of Capua, but a great part, almost a third, is uninhabited, and the houses are destroyed, and this has been done since the date of the Genoese lordship. The

³ Ulrich Wilcken (1967). **Alexander the Great**, London: The Norton Library.

⁴ Rose Macauley (1953/1984). **Pleasure of Ruins**, London: pp. 19, 176.

⁵ Macauley (1953/1984). p.176: C.W. Ceram (1982). **Tanrular ve Bilginler**, Trans. By Hayrullah Örs, p. 29.

⁶ Macauley (1953/1984). pp. 177, 178, 194.

⁷ George Hill (1949). **A History of Cyprus**, Cambridge: University Press, II. p. 288.

said city has finer walls than I have seen in any town, high with broad alleys round them, and many and high towers all round.”⁸

However, in 1376 Genoa agreed to compensate Venetian owners of houses which had been demolished to make way for the fortification.⁹

Although such agreements prove the claims over devastations, in fact there was no international laws regulating cultural heritage at universal levels until the last decade of the 19th century. However, the concept of cultural heritage is a 20th century which had been adopted by almost every nation after 1950s. Prior to this date are the law of antiquities issued by each nation taken as measures for the protection of certain heritage which were defined in these laws usually including archaeological items and religious and national buildings.

According to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention 1954 signed as The Hague (Netherlands), the first Protocol in 14 May 1954 and The Hague and the Second Protocol signed on 26 March 1999,¹⁰ the definition of cultural property consist of

- a. movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular, archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above;
- b. building whose main and effective purpose is to preserve or exhibit the movable-culture property defined in sub-paragraph (a) such as museums, large libraries and depositories of archives, and refuges intended to shelter, in the event or armed conflict, the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a);
- c. centers containing large amount of cultural property as defined in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), to be known as ‘centers containing monuments’.

⁸ George Jeffery, *A Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus*, p.102.

⁹ I. de Mas Latrie (1861/1970). *Histoire de L’Ile de Chypre*, Paris: A L’Impremier Imperiale (Reprint: Famaguste-Cypre: L’Edition l’Oliseau. Volume II: p: 365: Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, II: p. 412 n. 5.

¹⁰ Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention 1954, http://portal.unesco.org/7en/ev.php-URL_Id=DO=DO_TOPICURL_S.20.01.2008.

Again according to the same Convention, Article 2 explains the act of protection of cultural property as the safe guarding and respecting for such property, while Articles 3 and 4 further explains the act of ‘safeguarding’ of cultural property in time of peace by paying respect to such property as well as taking appropriate measures against any effects of an armed conflict within each party’s territories.

For our case, the earliest laws of antiquities adopted in Cyprus is **Asar-i Atika Nizannamesi**, the one issued in Ottoman Empire in 1874. A new law then issued in Cyprus in 1905 during the British Occupation which described the cultural heritage as the antique objects and monuments under earth or over surface, which are dated latest the beginning of the Ottoman Rule (1570).¹¹ Unfortunately this law only regulated the archaeological excavations in the Ottoman provinces and the Government had the right to obtain 1/3 of the findings while the licence holder of the excavation had the right to get the other 1/3 and the land owner the rest of it.

The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in History

The earliest evidence of wars taking place in the history of Cyprus is dating back to the Bronze Ages. The evidence of first fortified building types were found in Nikolidhes, North of Dali, and another one three kilometres to the North-East of Dali again, while a third at Nitovikla on the southern coastal area in Karpas peninsula.¹² The presence of these fortifications as well as weapons, such as daggers found in the Bronze Age cemeteries, are also recalling the political problems either internal or external.¹³ One of the biggest destruction to the cities such as Enkomi, Sinda and Kition was attributed to the peoples of the Sea first in the end of 12th century BC. and another one during the second quarter of the 11th century, the evidence of which are at Kition where the massive brick superstructure of the cyclopean city wall collapsed and fell on the street which ran parallel to it, and was never restored after the disaster besides the mud-brick walls of several houses burying large jars and various implements on the floors of the houses.¹⁴ The sculptures representing the warriors and horsemen fully equipped for fighting dating back to the Iron Age also recall the continuation of these political problems. During wartime these fortifications are naturally taking the first place in the process of destruction since they have to be penetrated by the occupying forces. The fortress of Soli

¹¹ **Cyprus Gazette** (May 1905). “Laws of Antiquities”, 9th May 1905, p. 5626.

¹² George Hill (1949). Vol: I: p. 25: A.C.Brown & A. W. Catling (1975). **Ancient Cyprus**, Oxford: University of Oxford: p. 22.

¹³ A.C. Brown & A. W. Catling (1975). **Ancient Cyprus**, Oxford: University of Oxford: p. 22.

¹⁴ Vassos Karageorghis (1968). **Cyprus, Archaeologia Mundi**, Geneva, Paris, Munich: Nagel Publishers, pp. 64, 143, 147.

was destroyed by the Persians in A.D. 498 while the palace and fortifications of Vouni built by Persians in Oriental style, the main apartments being of the tripartite *liwan* type were later restored by the Ptolemaic rulers in Hellenic style. The whole character was then changed with a façade in megaron style, with a courtyard in front of it which resembled the palaces of Mycenaean Greece. The palace was provided with large store-rooms, kitchens and bathrooms. It also had the oldest sudatorium (Sweating room) known in Greek architecture, long before the Romans. Also a temple dedicated to Athena was built on the highest part of the plateau¹⁵ to last only to the early years of 6th century B.C. which was later again destroyed forever.¹⁶ Arab invasions which started in the 7th century also gave several harms to coastal cities, mainly Salamis.

The Greek chronicler, Machairas, lamented about the Saracenic devastation of the island after the departure of St. Helena to Constantinople. St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, is said to have come to the island with the cross of Christ and built a church called The Church of Holy Cross. As Machairas said:

“When St. Helena had gone to Constantinople and the people in the island were growing many, they fell to thinking of the coming of the godless Saracens, how that many times they fled castles, and led the people into captivity and ruined many towns and castles, and led the people into captivity ...”¹⁷

This is also confirmed by Felix Faber, who suggested that the monastery founded by Saint Helena was utterly destroyed by the Turks and the Saracens.¹⁸ However, St. Helena also is said to demolish a temple dedicated to Aphrodite and built the church and monastery where she deposited a piece of the holy cross taken from Jerusalem.¹⁹

During the early Islamic period in the policy to spread the Islamic religion, the Arab raids to Cyprus in 647 AD under Muawiyeh to Salamis (Constantia) city resulted by profaning and burning the church of Epiphanius,²⁰ while some historians suggest that it was converted into a mosque.²¹ However, there is

¹⁵ Karageorghis (1968). p.171.

¹⁶ Hill (1949). Vol. I, pp. 119, 123 n. 2, 132.

¹⁷ Leontis Makhairas (1932). **Recital Concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus entitled ‘Chronicle’, Ed. with a Translation and notes by R. M. Dawkins**, Vol. I, Oxford; Clarendon Press (Les Edition L’Oiseau), Famaguste – Chypre.

¹⁸ Cobham (ed.). (1908/1986). **Excerpta Cypria**, p. 39.

¹⁹ Cobham (ed.). (1908/1986). p. 40.

²⁰ J. Hackett (1901). **A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus**, London: Methuen & Co., p. 34; Hill (1949). Vol. I, pp. 254, 284.

²¹ Hackett (1901). p. 34; Hill (1949). Vol. I, 284.

nothing to prove the long term Saracenic existence in Salamis so far.

The Crusaders destroyed many Byzantine castles and Orthodox churches while the Genoese and later Venetians removed all banners of the Lusignans from the walls of the city. As Orient d'Ogier commented, Limassol which was partly depopulated at the end of 14th century was one of the cities to be destroyed by the Genoese when they fought against the Lusignans.²²

During the Genoese occupation starting in 1373, the first attempt was to increase the strength of the fortification since the castles had low walls which easily could be climbed up by ladders.²³ After the occupation of Famagusta, the Genoese set to work and heightened them, dug a trench outside the castle and separated Famagusta from the castle. As Leontis Makhairas described, since the walls were not still strong enough in 1377 when the Lusignan King with the help of Venetian and Catalan ships attacked Famagusta harbour, the Genoese left only one guard on the land side while they transferred the main forces to the sea-wall where they constructed forty wooden towers from which they so harassed the Venetians that they were forced to leave the harbour and retire from undertaking.²⁴

Also, several houses were pulled down to have their stones utilised for building the fortification during the Genoese as well as Venetian periods. As it was mentioned by Makhairas, in 1376 Genoa agreed to compensate the Venetian owners of houses which had been demolished to make way for the fortification.²⁵ This is the first time for such an agreement.

The Mamluke invasion in 1426 caused the most serious damage not only the material culture but also the books and records of the churches and monasteries, which resulted with departure of many religious Orders, like Augustinians, Carmelites, Cistercians, Dominicans etc. from the island.²⁶ One of the villages destroyed by the Mamluks in 1426 was Potamia. According to Rupert Gunnies, the Saracens destroyed the famous castle built by King Peter II (1339-1382), and little remained in the days he visited the village in the second decade of 20th century. Also as Luigi Palma di Cesnola captured this village which was a favourite place of Catherina Cornaro, the last Lusignan Queen of Venetian origin was dismantled by the order of the Venetian Senator, and Governor-General of the island, Francesco Prioli, together with the other royal castles of

²² Cobham (ed.) (1908/1986). p. 28.

²³ Makhairas (1932). Vol. I, p. 435: §449.

²⁴ Hill (1948). Vol. II, p. 425 n.2.

²⁵ Mas Latrie (1861/1970). Vol. II: p: 365: Hill, **A History of Cyprus**, II: p. 412 n. 5.
365: Hill (1949). II, 412 n. 5.

²⁶ Hill (1949). Vol. III: 1089.

Saint Hilarion, Buffavento, Dio D'Amour, Cava, and Kantara.²⁷

The Venetians took the case more seriously as they felt the urgency to increase the security of the island. After annexing the island over their legal claim through Catherina Cornaro, the Queen of Lusignan kingdom of Venetian origin, after the death of King James, demolished part of Nicosia, the capital city, for the sake of building new city walls designed by Savormiani. The buildings demolished included palaces, monasteries, churches, domestic architecture as well as the city walls completed during the Lusignan period.²⁸ All these preparations were made urgently since they had to protect the island against the Ottoman Empire.

Many Lusignan and Venetian buildings were badly damaged during the Ottoman siege because of bombardments or even by the occupants in need of stone to reinforce the walls. Particularly the military and religious buildings are usually subjected to severe vandalism during war time. However, military buildings are the first ones to be restored by the new occupants merely for their own protection.

After the conquest of Nicosia, the Ottoman commander Lala Mustafa Pasha hastened to repair the ruined fortifications, clearing out the fosses, bringing guns in and destroying the forts outside Nicosia they had build temporarily during the siege.²⁹

Mühimme and **Ruus** Books are full of the imperial orders concerning the restoration of the city walls within the first ten years of the conquest. Upon the application of Beylerbeyi Muzaffer Paşa, an architect called Bostan was put in charge with salary of 20 akçe to the castles of Cyprus.³⁰ The restoration of Nicosia Castle took much longer time because of the priority given to the Famagusta Castle. Paphos Fortress³¹ originally built before the Ottoman period was one of the first castles seriously destroyed and demolished with the

²⁷ Rupert Gunnis (1936/1973). **Historic Cyprus**, A Guide to Its Towns 6 Villages, Monasteries & Castles, Nicosia: K. Rüstem & Bro. edition, p. 400.

²⁸ Antoine Maria Grattiani (1685). **Histoire de la Guerre De Chypre (Ecrit en Latin, Le Peletier**, Paris, Tr. p. 15.

²⁹ George Hill (1949). Vol. III: p. 987.

³⁰ **Gönül Öney (1971). "Lefkoşe'de Büyük Han ve Kumarçılar Hanı", Milletlerarası Birinci Kıbrıs Tetkikleri Kongresi (14-19 Nisan 1969) Türk Heyeti Tebliğleri, Ankara, p. 271, n. 2.; BOA. (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi), Mühimme 14, No: 18, names of some other architects also inspected in the documents. Mehmet bin Yusuf is another one. BOA, Mühimme 37, No: 1241.**

³¹ The picture of Paphos Fortress was wrongly captioned by the publisher as: 'Fortress in Nicosia, Cyprus' in Netice Yıldız (2002). "Kıbrıs'ta Osmanlı Kültür Mirasına Genel bir Bakış", **Türkler**, ed. Hasan Celal Güzel, Kemal Çiçek, Salim Koca. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002, 21 Volumes, Vol. 19, pp. 986. This requires correction as "The Paphos Fortress."

continuous canon attacks of the Ottoman fleet approaching to the island as well as explosions with gunpowder. The imperial orders show the attempts in the earliest days of the Ottoman Rule in 1570, requesting the urgent restoration of the castle. Although construction of bastions were considered from time to time and was repeatedly urged until 1578 in several imperial orders, plans drawn in 1574³² were not realised since the cost was rather high. Upon the instructions sent in another imperial order, Ahmed, the commander-in-chief was given the responsibility for its construction based on the plans drawn previously despite the fact that the planned fortress would have a high cost and has objectionable features in defence.³³

Famagusta fortress that resisted for a year went through rather severe wreckage. Soon after its conquest by the Ottomans, great care was taken for the maintenance and rebuilding of many parts in case of any sudden attacks from the Venetians. Therefore priority was given for its restoration just after the Ottoman troops' entry into the city in 1571. It was completed within a very short time despite the imperial orders warning the restoration of Nicosia castle and Paphos fortress in early 1570s. The first year budget book of Cyprus records the allocation of a sum of 63,063 *akçe* from the Cyprus treasury for the purpose of the restoration of the castle. It could be gathered that the money was given by Hamza Bey, the Keeper of the castle to Monla Ağa,³⁴ who was in charge of the troops for the restoration of the castle. The bastion, which was besieged by Canbolad on the seashore of Famagusta, was re-constructed from the foundation, and apart from this, Dervish Paşa Tower also was re-constructed.³⁵ In a decision dated as 4 Zilkade 979 (March 1572), which was sent to Karaman Chief Principal, it had been reported that the restoration of the Famagusta castle was about to be completed, and the demolished parts of the castle were strengthened to bring it to a better condition than its former situation while the earthen parts were constructed with stone and limestone. It was also reinforced by the additions of three crenel holes opened for the cannons both on the land side ditches as were as on the shore line. Also, it had been reported that the demolished wall at the northern side of Akkale was re-constructed and finished within a short time. Besides these, Sinan Paşa, the Cypriot Chief Principal, started the restoration of Akkule, which was situated at the inner side of Karakule at the twentieth day of Ramadan.³⁶ The imperial order which was dated as 7 Safer 980 (20 June 1572)

³² BOA., **Mühimme 23**, No: 742.

³³ BOA., **Mühimme 35**, No: 181, 742.

³⁴ It is likely that Monla Ağa was the kadı of Magosa. This was in fact Molla and spelt as Monla. Mehmet Zeki Pakalın (1983). **Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü**, Vol. II, p. 549. İstanbul.

³⁵ Halil Sahillioğlu (1967). "Osmanlı İdaresinde Kıbrıs'ın İlk Yılı Bütçesi", **Belgeler**, Vol., IV No:7-8, Ankara, p. 18 n.40.

³⁶ İsmet Binark (ed.) (1996). **12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (978-979/1570-1572)**, Ankara, Vol. II, pp. 190-191 No: 1064.

ordered that Akkule and other towers were completed³⁷ and another one dated 24 Safer 980 (6 August 1572) ordered the restoration of the bridge of the Famagusta Castle.³⁸

However, the Lusignan and Venetian buildings were all used by the Ottomans with some alterations for economical reasons while Orthodox were given the privilege to restore their churches. It is an admirable act to see that still these monuments retain their grotesque ornaments in rather good condition today. Selimiye Mosque (formerly St Sophia Cathedral) and Lala Mustafa Pasha (formerly St Nicholas Cathedral) are the perfect examples for the study of the gothic architecture in Cyprus both of which retains a noteworthy number of medieval sculptures.

Nonetheless, many European travellers who visited Cyprus during Ottoman period accused the Turks for ravaging several Latin monuments. Mrs. A. Batson Joyner's travel memoirs which in fact is a book mainly adapted from the German of Franz Von Löher, is full of phrases blaming the Turks for destruction of the Latin monuments. One such case was her discourse of St. Katherine, where she blamed the Turks for tearing down two stately marble columns with their fine carved escutcheons which was left lying down in the middle of the courtyard of the mosque.³⁹ Also as she claimed, the church of St. Lazarus in Larnaca, the middle of which was covered with a dome, escaped from being demolished since the Küçük Mehmed Paşa, the governor of the island in those days attempted to destroy these with a capricious thought that only a mosque could have been so beautifully embellished. As Mrs. Joyner suggested, part of this dome was demolished which was later restored and a clock tower with an eagle relief was added.⁴⁰

British period is the time for the demolishing or changing the buildings. As we could see, many Islamic domes were replaced with gabled trussed roofs or some of the buildings demolished in order to enlarge or create spaces for new buildings. Mrs. Belcher, the American consul's wife while describing their experience in Kyrenia on Friday, June 6 1958, a weekend which was spoiled by EOKA organization's bombing attempt, even remarked about the dislike of some British living on the island towards the Islamic monuments with the quotation of the words of a certain Lady Manyfold who was said to have attempted to buy the minaret so that she could have it torn down.⁴¹ The cemeteries were the most commonly affected places from this movement. Many

³⁷ BOA., **Mühimme 19**, No: 288.

³⁸ BOA., **Mühimme 21**, No: 136.

³⁹ Mrs. A. Batson Joyner (1878). **Cyprus, Historical and Descriptive**, (Adopted from the German of Franz Von Löher with much additional Matter by Mrs. A. Batson Joyner. With Two Maps), London, p. 28.

⁴⁰ Joyner (1878). p. 5.

⁴¹ Martin & Wallace (eds.) 2000: 174.

Turkish schools opened with the money taken from the *Wakf* incomes during the early 20th century were built on Turkish cemetery sites. Devastation of archaeological sites by treasure hunters or alterations with the intention to create new political or religious identities all affected the cultural heritage. The new law of antiquities issued in 1905 did not include any articles concerning the Ottoman period monuments.

In spite of the existing international laws for the protection of cultural heritage in an occupied land, it is interesting that British period neglected Turkish monuments since it was treated under a separatist committee and all maintenance expenses were always left to the care of *Wakf* Administration although again it was the British authorities as decision makers. The List of Ancient Monuments Protected under the Antiquities Law, 1905 is quite interesting since it did not include any Turkish monument. Furthermore, even the large mosques, which were originally the cathedral of the Lusignans and Crusaders, were not mentioned in this list.⁴² Even the law of antiquities did not consider at all the protection of the monuments built after the Ottoman conquest. Further sad events took place particularly after mid-1950s. Bombing or devastating many British and Turkish monuments were frequent cases in the political events caused by the EOKA members. The first serious one of this movement was the burning of the Governor's Palace in 1931. Besides the colonial building dating back to 1878, a rich collection of antiquities collected by Sir Ronald Storrs in Cyprus as well as in Egypt during his previous mission were burnt into ashes. The fire at British Institute, most probably a sabotage of the EOKA members in 1956⁴³ caused to the lost of not only the British colonial building but at the same time, several books and most probably documents.

The beginning of a new era with the foundation of Cyprus Republic which gave the island independence did not bring a common sense to adopt the whole

⁴² According to the list of ancient monuments protected under the antiquiteis law 1905 included tombs and remains in Tamassos, Idalion (Dali) site, Soloi town site, Castle of La Cava and Leontari in the District of Nicosia; tombs in Old Larnaca, Chapel of the Passion in Pyrga, Tower of Kiti, Bamboula, "Cobham's Tomb in Old Larnaca, Cape Pyla Tower and Comandery of the Templars located in Choirokoitia in Larnaca district; Church of St. George, the Latin, Church of St. George the Greek, Church of St. Anne, Church of Armenians, Church of Fransciscans, Church of Carmelites, ruins of the Proveditore's Palace, "Bishop's" Chapel, fortifications of the City, the Citadel, Salamis tombs and remains, Prison of St. Catherine, Byzantine aqueduct in S. Sergius, tomb of Sotera, Church of Asomatos in Carpass and Castle of Kantara in the District of Famagusta; Castle of St Hilarion, Castle of Buffavento, Necropolis of Sandoukopetra (Ay Irene), Site of Lamboussa, the Castle of Kyrenia in the District of Kyrenia; Amathus town site and necropolis, Lingri tou Deyeni, (Randiyi), Limassol Castle, Castle of Colossi in the District of Limassol; Temple site (Kouklia) and tombs in Ktima in Paphos district. Jeffery (1918/1983). pp 13-14.

⁴³ Hizber Hikmetağalar (1996). **Eski Lefkoşa'da Semtler ve Anılar**, İstanbul: Marifet Yayınları, p. 333.

cultural heritage as government heritage. In spite of the constitution which protected the rights of two societies living on the island, cultural heritage was treated in an ethnic way and each society took care of their national or religious heritage separately. Still the *Wakf* organisation was responsible for the maintenance of the Islamic monuments on the island while the earlier antiquities were under the responsibility of the Department of Antiquities and Museums. Under these conditions the Turkish monuments became the main target for the ethnic struggles on the island. The destructions of two Turkish Mosques, Bayraktar and Tahtakale Mosques in 1962 by bombing were two important events prior to the breakdown of the Cyprus Republic in March 1962 which was also publicised in *Cyprus Mail* on 27th March 1962.⁴⁴ Again the cultural heritage of the Turkish Cypriot people was one of the targets during the 1963 events and later on. During the period 1963-1974, mosques, shrines and other holy sites in 103 villages were demolished. Today, the remaining Ottoman Turkish shrines including the historic Bayraktar Mosque and the Ömeriye Mosque located in Southern Cyprus, have been targets of repeated arson attacks and are disintegrating due to total neglect.⁴⁵

The 400 year old Bayraktar Mosque, a historical building, a typical Turkish Islamic monument was bombed twice and the valuable historical carpet, found in the Mosque, was stolen. The site of the mosque was later on turned into a car park and is still being used, as such, by the Greek Cypriots in southern Cyprus.⁴⁶ An account of a visit to this site in 1989 by Nurper Moroket, a Turkish Cypriot journalist, was published in **Bayram** newspaper in May 1989 which described the deteriorated condition of the mosque. Weeds were grown inside the mosque in front of the *mihrap*, while the minaret was completely destroyed. The tomb part showed the traces of footsteps even on the tombstone which recalls its being kicked by vandalisers.⁴⁷ It is a pity that similarly Hala Sultan Tekke, a holy shrine in Larnaca and Ömeriye Mosques in Nicosia were badly treated until the end of 1990s. Many Ottoman inscriptions on the buildings in the southern part of the island are badly defaced; inscription tablets on Paphos Castle and Larnaca Castle are the clearest examples for this case.

However, there is a long list which cites the names of the entire Turkish mosque which were destroyed or vandalised during 1974 war, following the mass departure of the Turkish citizens from the south of the island. Mosques

⁴⁴ Cultural Heritage Association (c. 1995). **Sincerity V Slander, On the Preservation of Cultural Heritage**, Published by Cultural Heritage Association of North Cyprus, p. 30.

⁴⁵ United Nations (24 November 2000). **General Assembly Security Council, Letter dated 22 November 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, Annex.**

⁴⁶ Cultural Heritage Association (c. 1995). **Sincerity V Slander**, p. 28.

⁴⁷ Cultural Heritage Association (c. 1995). **Sincerity V Slander**, p.78.

such as Ömeriye, Bayraktar, Tahtakale, Araplar and Dükkanlarönü, were the most noteworthy monuments that had this inevitable fate.⁴⁸

The Turkish tombs of the martyrs just opposite to the Akkule Gate of Famagusta was one of the main site for the Greek trenches set up in 1963 to watch and threaten the Turkish citizens who had to withdraw inside the city walls to save their life. The Kutup Osman Shrine and Namık Kemal High Lycé a little bit further than this tomb were also vandalised during the years 1963.⁴⁹ *Bozkurt*, a daily Turkish newspaper reported another destruction of Greek Cypriots to the shrine mosque of Hz. Ömer on the Kyrenia coastal area on 29 November 1964.⁵⁰ Another press release published in the local daily newspaper *Bozkurt* mentioned a vandalising act in January 1985 to Ömerge Mosque in Nicosia.⁵¹ Another attack to the same monument was on 3 December 2000 which was protested by the Representative of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus art UNESCO Security Council. The same report also mentioned about the dilapidation of a Turkish cemetery nearby St. Sophia Mouttalos mosque in South Cyprus.⁵²

It may be possible that even sometimes any restoration or urgent maintenance to such monuments may be a matter of political propaganda. One such case is concerning the Turkish aqueduct built by Arap Ahmet Pasha. According to a news release which appeared in *To Periodiko*, a Greek periodical, dated 9 November 1991, it publicised a project to revitalise a certain area by creating a new park for children and a tourist attraction place where there were the bridges of this concerned aqueduct and accordingly the project included to demolish some buildings as well as the as this aqueduct bridge,⁵³ one of the two great systems of aqueducts built during the Ottoman period to supply water to the capital city. Upon the protests raised by the Turkish government against this project with a letter submitted to the United Nations, the project is changed. Today, this aqueduct is restored and illuminated for night walks in the park which is also one of the publicity in tourism brochures. This is also included in the revitalisation project of Nicosia which is a bi-communal project.

There were many accusations by both sides at the platforms of United

⁴⁸ Cultural Heritage Association (c. 1995). **Sincerity V Slander**, p. 35.

⁴⁹ Cultural Heritage Association (c. 1995). **Sincerity V Slander**, p. 48.

⁵⁰ Cultural Heritage Association (c. 1995). **Sincerity V Slander**, p. 47.

⁵¹ Cultural Heritage Association (c. 1995). **Sincerity V Slander**, p. 56.

⁵² United Nations (24 November 2000). **General Assembly Security Council, A/55/1032/S/2001/853**, p. 3.

⁵³ Netice Yıldız (1996). "Aqueducts in Cyprus", **Journal for Cypriot Studies**, p. 97: Ed. by Ahmet Erdengiz (ed.).(c. 1994). **The Cultural Heritage of Northern Cyprus, Its Protection and Preservation**. Lefkosa, and published by Foreign Ministry, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, pp. 48-49.

Nations to gain more power on their claims in Cyprus. Upon such claims usually inspectors were appointed to investigate the matters. One of the reporters, Ms. Vlasta Stepova, a Council of Europe Rapporteur on Cultural Heritage, who visited both sides of the island in November 2000, confirmed that there is no “vandalism of cultural monuments” in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.⁵⁴ Several reports submitted to the United Nations particularly upon the obligations to reply to the accusations brought by the Greek community directly to the General Assembly Security Council within the agenda item 64, Question of Cyprus, as they are recognised as the official representative of the Cyprus Republic were responded diplomatically by the Turkish community representative at United Nations unfortunately through the hand of the Turkish Ambassador, Permanent Representative of United Nations General Assembly Council of Turkey.⁵⁵ Some of these we had the opportunity to overview are the correspondences of His Excellency Aytuğ Plümer who carefully responded to the items of protest with explanations mainly citing the visits of the Unesco Experts to the sites in question. One of the most common criticism is the change of toponyms for which he explains that Cyprus is the island of two ethnic groups and therefore in such circumstances it was always the tradition from the earlier days to have Greek and Turkish names for the areas occupied by both societies.⁵⁶ In one of these documents, Plümer pointed out the complete demolishing act of the Grand Mosque in Paphos in the process of constructing a new wide road junction and a car park. According to the report of Mr. Ymenus van der Weff, General Rapporteur of the Subcommittee on the Architectural and Artistic Heritage of the Committee of Culture and Education of the Council of Europe, this is completely cleared and there is no memorial to its existence while the Turkish bath next to it remained hidden in rubble and vegetation awaiting restoration.⁵⁷

Burglary cases from the Greek monuments caused great upheavals at international platforms while the Turkish objects stolen from the museums had never been thoroughly investigated by international organizations. The mutilation of the Byzantine mosaic in Kanakaria for the purpose of marketing at

⁵⁴United Nations (24 November 2000). **General Assembly Security Council, A/55/646/S/22000/1115: Letter dated 22 November 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, Annex.**

⁵⁵United Nations (24 November 2000). General Assembly Security Council, United Nations (24 November 2000). General Assembly Security Council, Letter dated 22 November 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, Annex, (*Signed*) Aytuğ Plümer, Representative. **A/55/646/S/2000/1115: United Nations (28 June 2001). General Assembly Security Council, A/55/1004/S/2001/645: United Nations (24 November 2000). General Assembly Security Council, A/55/1032/S/2001/853.**

⁵⁶United Nations (24 November 2000). **General Assembly Security Council, A/55/646/S/22000/1115.**

⁵⁷United Nations (24 November 2000). **General Assembly Security Council, A/55/646/S/2000/1115, p. 4.**

international art arena was one of the most serious cases caused so much protest against the Turkish administration which in fact deserves a better investigation and reconsideration to replace it to its original location on the apse dome of Kanakaria Church.

As Mr. Plümer responded in his report⁵⁸ to the accusations regarding “the systematic change of official toponyms”, in Northern Cyprus demonstrate that the Greek Cypriot administration cannot even accept the fact that the Turkish Cypriot people have as much right as the Greek Cypriots to refer to toponyms of their homeland in their own language. Since the island had always enjoyed dual place names due to the existence of two peoples of different ethnic backgrounds and languages in the island.

The new web media is another medium where the Greeks living in the South, who is treated as the legal rulers of the island in the world, is repeatedly making political propaganda. Several web pages as well as communication groups are continuously blaming the Turks living in the North as well as Turkish army for vandalising the Greek churches in the North. They even went further to make a claim over the Latin buildings in North, particularly the principal mosques in Nicosia and Famagusta, to have been the occupied cultural heritage although these buildings are the property of the Wakf Administration since 1570-71.⁵⁹ According to one of these web pages more than 133 churches, chapels and monasteries have been desecrated, 77 churches have been converted into mosques, 28 are being used by the occupation forces as depots, dormitories or hospitals, 13 are used as stockyards or hay barns, clearly proves that the target of the occupation authorities has always been the religious and cultural heritage in the northern part of Cyprus.⁶⁰ Turkish web pages are also trying to show the harm given to Islamic cultural heritage.⁶¹

However, currently both sides are giving much effort to historical and cultural heritage regardless of its origin. However, the Greek Cypriot administration, while accusing the Turkish Cypriot side of attempting to eradicate the heritage of the island, systematically blocks the flow of any external financial or technical assistance to Northern Cyprus for conservation purposes. Even though recent joint projects run by NGO groups with the

⁵⁸ United Nations (24 November 2000). **General Assembly Security Council, A/55/1004/S/2001/645**, p. 5.

⁵⁹ For example see: *Destructing Christianity-Cyprus.pdf*. Retrieved from JSTORE Data base; <http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/DA/DA.nsf/All/5C63072411078AB9C22572750055D67D?OpenDocument>;

⁶⁰ http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/cyprus07_en/cyprus07_en?OpenDocument.

⁶¹ <http://www.trncinfo.com/tanitmadairesi/2002/ENGLISH/BRIEFINGNOTES/070202BRIEFINGNOTES.htm>.

funding of UNDP (United Nations Development Projects) Funds, finally the completed projects are attributed to Cyprus Republic run by the Greek community.

Thus, due to a sudden change of policy by the Greek government of Cyprus particularly to impress the European Union in the process to gain membership, a new attempt to restore these became a priority in the southern part of the island. Through this movement, several Turkish monuments has been restored and opened to prayers as Islamic places which had in fact another implied aim to attract tourist from Islamic countries. On the other hand although neglect and harming for the Greek Orthodox buildings occurred in the northern part of the island during the first few years after the Peace War of 1974, recently they are all cleaned and restored as far as possible.

The Master Plan has involved a major and successful conservation effort in the Chrysaliniotissa and Arap Ahmet quarters of the divided Old City. The conservation work has been of a high standard and continues under their successors with the great assistance of the bi-communal Master Plan team of experts from both communities and under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme and UNOPS.⁶²

The most important projects within this framework are: The Restoration of the Venetian Walls; The documentation and structural support of the buildings along the Buffer Zone, within the Walled City; The Chrysaliniotissa Rehabilitation Project; The Chrysaliniotissa kindergarten; The Fourni cultural center and workshop; The Shadow Theatre Museum; 7. The Famagusta Gate Cultural Center; The Nicosia Municipality Multifunctional Foundation at the Old Poorhouse; The Old Power House to crate the Municipal Modern Art Center and The Children Educational Center; The New Town Hall; Archaeological Site; The Omeriye Area Rehabilitation Project; The restoration of the Taht-el-kale Mosque; The Taht-el-Kale area Improvement Scheme; The restoration of the Old Aqueduct; The Illuminated Walking Tour.⁶³

All the above projects are funded by local government funds or by USAID and European funds. Along with these projects, important financial and other incentives are granted by the authorities to the private sector in order to support to restore and refurbish its properties. Some of these projects are now finalized and some of them are usually award .Cyprus restoration project wins EU award. One of these projects funded by UNDP which restored Ömeriye Bath, a 16th century Ottoman bath in Nicosia was awarded the highest prize at the annual European Union Meeting for Cultural Heritage-Europa Nostra Awards.

⁶² URBACT-SURCH (2006). "Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration Trough Cultural Heritage, The Case of Nicosia, The Choice of Heritage-led Regeneration for Social Cohesion and Continuity, in the East Area of the Walled city".

⁶³ URBACT-SURCH (2006). pp. 6-7 10-11.

Concluding Remarks

As it could be realised, there are certain stages for the demolishing, neglecting or restoration of the historical heritage depending on the psychology of the local people. People are almost blind during war time to give any they could do to the historical heritage of the enemy. This fact is also confirmed in the Information Report on the Cultural Heritage of Cyprus (I) presented by the Committee on Culture and Education by Mr. Van der Weff. Accordingly, both sides acknowledge that during the period 20 July to 16 August, hostilities create a period of general confusion and both sides give evidence of destruction as a consequence.⁶⁴ During the cease fire periods, usually these places are either neglected or used for another purpose since it is more economic to use an existing building rather than building a new one. However, a study of the psychology living in these kinds of places show that since they never feel the ownership of the property even if it is a historical monument, they would not take much care to maintain the building or restore it.

However, the contributions of UNOPS could not exceed the part of Turkey in funding the restoration for the Turkish monuments, mainly the Wakf Organisation of Turkey working in collaboration with Cyprus Turkish Wakf Administration.

Nevertheless, the new trends seem to save some of these monuments and encouraging people to feel respect to the Cultural Heritage. At least, even if this may not be done so happily, the following definition which appeared in item V of the UNESCO Declaration Concerning the International Destruction of Cultural Heritage, Paris 17 October 2003⁶⁵,

“When involved in an armed conflict, be it an international or non-international character, including the case of occupation, States should take all appropriate measures to conduct their activities in such a manner as to protect cultural heritage, in conformity with customary international law and the principles and objectives of international agreements and UNESCO recommendations concerning the protection of such heritage during hostilities.

We hope that the young generations will be more willing to protect the cultural heritage of the island as universal heritage regardless of its national identity while they would also be respected as part of national heritage and national identity with a new sense of respect and tolerance to others' national identity and culture as well.

⁶⁴ United Nations (24 November 2000). General Assembly Security Council, A/55/646/S/2000/1115: p. 4.

⁶⁵ RICR June 2004, Vol. 86 No: 854, p. 449-450.