

# Frankish-Venetian Cyprus: Effects of the Renaissance on the Ecclesiastical Architecture of the Island

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The paper deals with the effects of the Renaissance on the Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture of the island. Even though the Latin monuments of the island have been thoroughly researched, there are only sporadic works that deal with the Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture of the period. The doctoral thesis of the author in waiting to be published is the only complete work on the subject. The methodology used, involved bibliographic research and to a large degree field research to establish the measurements of all the monuments. Cyprus during the late 15<sup>th</sup> to late 16<sup>th</sup> century was under Venetian rule but the government was more interested in establishing a defensive strategy against the threat of the Ottoman Empire rather than building the fine renaissance architecture that was realized in Italy. However, small morphological details and typologies managed to infiltrate the local architecture. This was done through the import of ideas and designs by Venetian architects and engineers who travelled around the colonies or through the use of easily transferable drawings and manuals of architects such as Serlio and Palladio. Perhaps the most important discovery for the Cypriot Orthodox ecclesiastical edifices is the use of harmonic rules, the Venetian foot and proportional ratios used by the Renaissance. All these appear in many remote churches whose builders were most likely in conduct with Italian drawings and books. The novelty of the work appears in the collection and compilation of a list of all the Orthodox churches that were built or were functioning during the late 15th and 16th century on the island. The collection of all their general measurements and the subsequent research and calculations proves that these for the most part, were not arbitrary structures, but followed the then latest design ideas on ratios, as well as the use of venetian measurement systems.

**KEYWORDS:** Cyprus, Ecclesiastical architecture, Morphology, Renaissance.

When studying the effects that the renaissance had on the Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture monuments of the period, it appears at first that the transfer of architectural elements from Italy to Cyprus, was limited. However, small morphological details and typologies did manage to infiltrate the local architecture. What these features were and how this was achieved remains unexploited. Also the paper introduces a list of all the Orthodox ecclesiastical edifices on the island during the Venetian rule and explores the ratios and dimensions used to arrive at some concluding factors.

The Frankish domination of the island of Cyprus begun in 1191 when Cyprus came under the possession of the Frankish king, Guy de Lusignan, who, having lost his Kingdom of Jerusalem, was seeking a new dominion. During Latin rule of Cyprus, the Catholic Church tried to establish

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## Introduction



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itself as the dominant religious ruler on the island, diminishing the power of the Orthodox one (Papadopoulos, 1995) while it immediately tried to establish itself by building majestic Gothic cathedrals in all the major cities. It also invited many Latin monastic orders to Cyprus in order to build grand monasteries all over the island, the remains of which still inspire awe today (Gill, 1977, Enlart, 1987). However, after the long cohabitation of the Catholic Latins with the Orthodox Greeks, they developed a spirit of cultural exchange, which resulted in the coming together of the two communities. The initial repression of the Orthodox Church by the Pontifical Catholics gradually subsided, as the penetration of the Greek language and Greek Cypriots, in the circles of the ruling class of the Frankish kingdom, contributed to further interaction between the two communities.

The involvement of Venice in the policies of Cyprus begun long before 1468, the year when the last Frankish king of Cyprus, James II married the Venetian noblewoman Catherine Cornaro (Hill, 1948, Jacoby 1977, Hunt and Hunt, 1989, Arbel, 1993, Hunt and Hunt, 1995, Coureas, 2000). The Venetian government, rather than implementing an aggressive religious policy against the Orthodox Church, was more interested in the economic benefits to be derived from the island as well as establishing a defensive strategy against the pressures of the Ottoman Empire (Grivaud, *Excerpta Cypria* 1990, Arbel 2000). Thus, the main religious works in the cities and villages comprised of mainly restoring existing Latin and Orthodox churches and monasteries, especially after the devastating earthquake of 1491 (Grivaud, 1990). On the contrary, there was a flurry of building activity in the Troodos mountains with the building of numerous wood roofed churches which belonged to small monasteries, built in many cases by noble Latin donors who embraced Orthodoxy or couples of mixed religion. (Stylianou and Stylianou 1960, Stylianou, 1985).

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## Methods

In order to study the various Orthodox ecclesiastical monuments and define them historically to the period of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was important to first research the bibliography in order to draw a list of all the churches that fell under this category. The bibliographical research was aided and verified by field analysis and documentation. Thus, both the general church plan and a section were documented, followed by full photographic documentation conducted in the field. This allowed an in-depth comparison of the churches themselves but also a comparison with Venetian churches in Venice itself. This was again achieved both through bibliographic research as well as by an onsite visit to the "Serenissima", to try and draw comparisons and parallels.

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## Results and discussion

### Typology

At the beginning of the Latin rule of the island, Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture retained its typology, which was still strongly embedded in the Byzantine tradition. Only gradually did it assimilate some Western architectural morphological elements, thus creating the so-called Franco-Byzantine style, which is a blend of Byzantine, Frankish and later, to a lesser extent, Renaissance elements. By the end of the Latin period, at least some Western elements permeated both the typology and the structural identity of Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture. In the isolated cases of urban monumental Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture the typology, integrity of the structure and the precision of Western morphological elements, indicate the presence of Western workshops, probably the same ones, which were responsible for the construction of the corresponding Latin ecclesiastical edifices (Papacostas, 2014, Olympios, 2014, Plagnieux and Souldard, 2006). In the many provincial monuments of the Latin period, the Byzantine compact cross-in-square type, popular in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, continued to be used but more sporadically, until the 16<sup>th</sup> century in such churches as that of St. Mammas in Dali (14<sup>th</sup> century) and the Church of Panagia tou Sinti Paphos (16<sup>th</sup> century). Eleni Prokopiou in her published dissertation (2007) has studied the typology and its use in Cypriot monuments. (Fig.1) Gradually a considerable simplification in the preferred type and the prevalence in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century of the single-aisle domed, or barrel-vault, roofed chapel is observed.

Another type, which appeared in the middle of the Latin rule, and which also became more predominant in the 15th-16th century, is that of the double-aisled church. During this period, many Orthodox churches acquired a second aisle, for use by the Latins for worship or as a burial / devotional chapel. At the early examples this was not equal to the original single aisle nor was there much effort to integrate the new addition to the form of the first chapel. During the Venetian period this appears to change, as the double-aisled or twin type of church, with two equal aisles, becomes prevalent. The origin of this type was not some direct transfer but most likely the development of the attempt to enlarge the single-aisled church, with the aim of serving the Latin congregation. It might have also been inspired by or was simultaneously developed with similar churches in Venetian Crete (Gratziou, 2010) and other Greek islands under Venetian rule (Kilakou, 1982-1983, Triantaphyllopoulos, 1985) (Fig. 2). Two-aisled churches are found mostly in the areas of Famagusta such as that of Panagia Avgasida and in Troodos, which experienced the greatest ecclesiastical building activity during the Venetian period. (Papageorgiou, 1975).

The three-aisled basilica of the renaissance makes a timid introduction to Cyprus, with a few churches (only five out of the thirty-nine) built as three-aisled, domed structures. They all belong to the period of Venetian rule (16th century), perhaps indicating some influence of the predominant renaissance type on the local ecclesiastical architecture. (Fig.3) Examples of such larger monuments include the church of St. Mamas Morphou, the oldest monastery church of St Nicolas in Panagia, the church of Missirikou in Nicosia, the church of St. Marina in the village Potamiou, the monastic church of St. Neophytos and the wooden roofed and colonnaded church at Panagia Chrysokourdaliotissa in Kourdali. The use of the dome, though associated primarily with byzantine architecture, was also most likely a feature that was encouraged by the Venetian renaissance (Papacostas, 2014). The aisles were generally separated by columns with ornate, renaissance style capitals that supported arcades which themselves supported the barrel vaults. Although the vaulted roofing arose from a structural and material necessity, the external semi-circular form also became particularly popular in Renaissance Venice. Many Gothic churches, such as the church of San Zaccaria, the miraculous Virgin Mary (Santa Maria Miracoli), the San Felice, St. John Chrysostom (San Giovanni Chrysostomo) of San Giovanni Battista, and others acquired a new facade with a semi-circular form in front of the triangular pediment of the original Gothic church. It is not unlikely, that the



Fig. 1

Church of St Mammias, Dali  
(photo by author)



Fig. 2

Two aisled church  
of St Sergious and  
Bacchus Famagusta  
(photo by author)

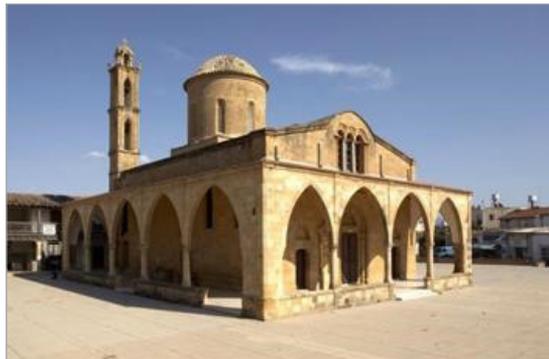


Fig. 3

Church of St Mammias  
Morphou (photo by  
author)

Fig. 4

Church of St Michele in Isola, Venice (photo by author)



Cypriot monuments mimicked known examples of the Renaissance (Fig. 4).

### Other typological elements

The masonry used in Latin ecclesiastical monuments was fine-cut limestone ashlar, while in the Orthodox churches it was usually rubble stonework. In the latter examples, dressed stone was used only for the door frames, the cornices and other morphological features. This was not the case with the more important Orthodox provincial monuments such as St. Nicholas Orounta, Saint Neophytos Tsada, St. George Teratsioti Augorou and others, where the walls were built of cut ashlar following the examples of the grander Latin monuments. (Fig.5) Apart from the choice of materials, there was also a gradual change in the building techniques and structural engineering of ecclesiastical structures during the 15th and 16th centuries. The external blind arches of the Middle Byzantine period were transferred to the interior, to form burial niches of donors, and were positioned usually in the western end, beyond the arches that support the dome. What once were internal

Fig. 5

Church of St Nicolaos Orounta (photo by author)



pilasters that supported the domes of the Byzantine churches became external buttresses, which supported the thinner masonry walls and in some later examples took on the form of rather squat flying buttress. These were positioned on the longitudinal facades to take the lateral forces of the barrel vault or dome.

The Byzantine semi-circular barrel vaults gave way to the Gothic pointed vault and, in a few examples, the more complex rib vault. Such are the church of Saint Mamas Dali and the north aisle of the monastery church of Nicosia Archangel and the church of Saint Symeon attached to the cathedral of St George of the Greeks, Famagusta. From the examples that have been investigated, the rib vaults seem to have been reserved for use in aisles that were added to be used for the Latin rites. The Roman semi-circular barrel vault reintroduced by the Renaissance did not reach Cyprus due to the interruption caused by the early Ottoman take-over of 1571.

In most examples of Orthodox churches in the late-Latin period, the elaborate diagonal ribs, roof bosses, and other sculptural elements of the Gothic churches were transformed into simplified transverse ridge ribs, supported on quadrants and corbels. Even though in the earlier examples the vault became externally triangular, this practise was abandoned in the 15th-16th century only to be re-introduced much later in the 18th-19th centuries, often by altering existing barrel vaulted churches to tiled roofs.

On the exterior, the Byzantine dome and semicircular apse were still used throughout the course of Latin rule in Orthodox churches, but towards the end of the period, the outer circular drum of the dome became octagonal in shape as the sanctuary apse became externally semi-hexagonal. This new geometric preference probably stemmed from the favourite shape of the Romanesque

architecture of the period of the 10th -12th century and continued to be used both in Italy as well as in Cyprus until the Ottoman take-over of the island (Chrysochou, 2003) (Fig.6).

### Decorative morphological features

Cypriot craftsmen, who worked as apprentices next to the French and Italian stone mason workshops in the large Latin cathedrals and churches, transferred their expertise and knowledge to the rural areas. This is seen in the many morphological features of important edifices, which re-appear in rather humble churches in the most remote parts of the island. With the departure of the first Western workshops that were responsible for the large cathedrals, the stone masons continued to copy older morphological details and decorations, unlike the woodcarvers who renewed their designs through material imported in the form of books, prints and engravings. Although there is no evidence for the introduction of such books in Cyprus there are several examples in Greece where Western standards often affected the final result. (Rigopoulos, 1998).

The hood mould with tympana above the doorways and the zigzag torus are both elements of Romanesque architecture (11th -12th century), imported to the island by the Orders of the Benedictines and Cistercians, but which were used throughout the Latin occupation (Enlart, 1902, Fernie, 1996, Focillon, 1997 Tosco, 1999) (Fig.7).

Also other features such as semi-circular stairs, cornice details, such as cyma recta and cyma reverse, elaborate gargoyles, medallions, corner columns and bell towers, were built on the far reaches of the island, transferred there by local stonemason workshops as well as by the Cypriot serfs who were forced during the Venetian era to work on the construction of the defensive walls of Cyprus (Arbel, 1995). A typical example of this transfer of sculptural decorations and know-how can be seen in the small church of the Monastery of Panagia Chrysopateritissa in Potos Paphos. The northern doorway is protected by a very unusual hood mould ending in spiral volutes on either side instead of the usual horizontal ending. Above it is a band of repeated small Latin crosses. A

similar hood mould appears at the doorway of the refectory of the Monastery of Bella-Pais Kyrenia, and above the window on the north elevation of the church of Our Lady Chrysodigitrias (Bedestan) in Nicosia. A similar form is observed to have been used in Crete (Gerola, 1993, Mpouras, 2001) and the Ionian Islands (Moschopoulos 1994) which were under Venetian rule (Fig. 8).



Fig. 6

St Herakledios church  
Politiko (photo by author)



Fig. 7

Southern doorway  
of Panagia tou  
Sindi church near  
Kelokethara (photo by  
author)



Fig. 8

Bella-Pais Abbey,  
Refectory doorway  
(photo by author)

Fig. 9

The Latin church of St Mamas Potamia (photo by author)



Fig. 10

The renaissance inspired design of the cornice of the church of st George in Potami (photo by author)



In the late-Latin period the integrity of emulation of smaller detailed renaissance forms betrays local construction, following imported designs and motifs of the period. This is indicated by the unfinished decorated renaissance column capitals and other sculptures, seen in the churches of Our Lady Chrysodigitrias (Bedestan) in Nicosia, St. Mamas Morphou, St. Mamas Potamia, at the incomplete 16th century restoration of the Cathedral of Saint Sophia in Nicosia, today the Selimiye Mosque and elsewhere (Fig. 9).

The meandering foliage sculptural decorations at the base of the arch of the entrance of the Benedictine monastery of Panagia Stazousa in Pyrga (Schabel, 2000) are very similar to ones found in Venice itself. Similarly, the design of the scroll of meandering volutes found

below the external cornice of the church of St. George Potamiou and the church of the Cross of Missirikou Nicosia is recorded in the fourth book on Architecture by Sebastian Serlio, first published in 1537 in Venice (Byrne, 1982) (Fig.10).

These influences, however, were always of a small scale. The complex renaissance architectural forms that stemmed from Roman antiquity and were prevalent in Venice and its colonies at the end of the 15th century never reached the island of Cyprus, due to its conquest by the Ottomans. In Venice, the church of St. George on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore acquired a new renaissance facade by the Venetian architect Palladio. Similarly, in Crete the facade of the monastic church of Agia Triada Tzagarolon in Akrotiri was renovated in 1631 with the addition of Venetian morphological features. In other Greek islands where the Venetian period lasted until 1669, they often adopted the tactic of renovating only the facade of older churches using classical renaissance forms. This was done through Venetian architects and engineers who travelled around the colonies or through the use of manuals of renaissance architects such as Serlio and Palladio. Such is the example of facade of the church of Christ Kefalas in Candia renovated in 1616 by the Venetian surveyors of the kingdom Fr. Basilicata, who designed marble doorframes and invested the facade with limestone.

### Harmonious proportions and alignments

French architects were responsible for introducing the island to the construction expertise of Gothic architecture, which required the support of thin external walls flying buttress and the repetition of the grid to accommodate the repeat of formwork and scaffolding. The question of ratio and harmonious proportions (width / length / height) did not seem to concern them. This does not appear so for the Venetian period Orthodox monuments of Cyprus. Obviously, some harmonious rules were applied in the construction of Orthodox churches, as is shown in the use of specific ratios in floor plans and sections (Table 1).

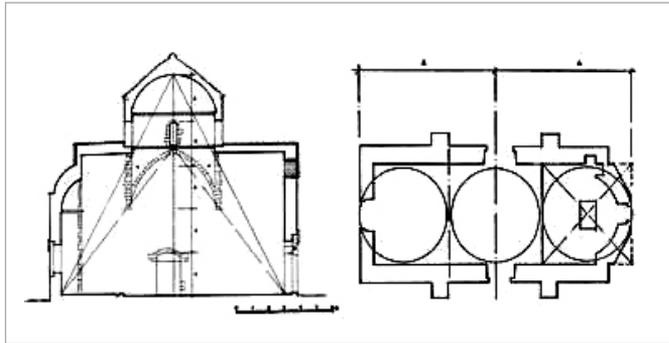
Table 1

Orthodox churches built or in existence in Cyprus during the Venetian period

	Village	Plan ratio	Addition	Relationship of height to plan	Type	Use of the venetian foot	Internal dimensions in meters
1. Chrysosotiros	Akaki	1 to 3			Single aisled		6.51 X16.52-to apse 19
2. St George komanon	Messana	1 to 3			Single aisled	No	5.32 X12.92-14.98
3. St George Teratsiotis	Avgorou	1 to 3			Single aisled		4.38 X13.69
4. St Mammias	Sotira	1 to 2			Single aisled	Yes	4.21 X7.35
5. Panagia Amoiron	Apsiou	1 to 3 (not including the apse)			Single aisled		5.88 X13.63 to apse 15.5
6. St Varvara	Stavrovouni	1 to 3			Single aisled	Yes	3.8 X12.10
7. St Andronicos	Polis	1 to 2		Width=height	Single aisled		4.05 X8.98 to apse 10.62
8. St Herakledios	Politico	1 to 1			Single aisled		
9. St George Agona	Ormedia	1 to 3 (total)	1 to 2		Single aisled		
10. Chrysosotiros	Sotira	1 to 3			Single aisled		35.1 X16
11. Panagia Podithou	Galata	1 to 3		Width+height /2	Single aisled	Yes	4.16 X12.3- to apse13.63
12. St George	Potami	1 to 3			Single aisled		5.25 X13.06- to apse14.60
13. Panagia Iamatiki	Arakapas	1 to 3			Single aisled		
14. St John the Theologian	Platanistassa	1 to 3			Single aisled		4 X13.84- to apse 15.10
15. St John	Klavdia	1 to 3			Single aisled		
16. Metamorphosis	Palaichori	1 to 3		Width+height /2	Single aisled		3.05 X8.20- to apse 9.32
17. Stavros Agiasmati	Platanistassa	1 to 3		Width+height /2	Single aisled	No	3.63 X9.38- to apse11.26 (11.45X5.24 ext.)
18. Holy cross	Pareklissia	No			Single aisled		
19. Archangel Michael	Delikipos	1 to 2			Single aisled		
20. St Barbara	Korakou	1 to 3			Single aisled		3.65 X10.28- to apse11.55
21. Panagia Chrysopolitissa	Larnaca	1 to 3			Two aisled		
22. Panagia Podthou	Platanistassa	1 to 3		Width+height /2	Single aisled		4.16 X13.55
23. Stavros Missirikou	Nicosia	3 to 2 (approx.)			Three aisled		11.75 X7.10- to apse 9.22
24. Archangel	Galata	1 to 3		Width+height /2	Single aisled		4.50 X13.20
25. St Barbara	Peristerona	1 to 2			Single aisled		3.66 X5.72-to apse 6.93
26. St Mammias	Morphou	2 to 3			Three aisled	Yes	11.60X18.20-to apse 20.60 (13.86X21.10 ext.)
27. Stavros Minthis	Tsada	1 to 3			Single aisled		
28. St Marina	Frenaros	NO		Width=height	Single aisled	Yes	5.10 X11.09 to apse 12.8
29. St Nicolas	Orounda	1 to 2 (approx.)			Single aisled		4.62 X8.69 (to 8.91)
30. St Marina	Potamiou	2 to 3			Three aisled	Yes	10.04 X16.68-to apse 18.42
31. St Evlalios	Lampousa	1 to 3			Single aisled	Yes	12.10 X4.95
32. Panagia of Sindi	Kelokedara	1 to 3		Width+height /2	Single aisled	Yes	5.23 X12.48
33. Panagia Skouriotissa	Katydata	1 to 3			Single aisled	Yes	11.01 X3.66 (5.15X13.58 ext.)
34. St Marina	Tersephanou	1 to 3			Single aisled		4.95 X14.68
35. Holy Cross	Pelendri	3 to 2			Three aisled	Only in width	3.82 X8.94
36. Panagia	Arediou	1 to 1		Width+height /2	Single aisled		5.40 X5.50
37. St Ioannis Lampadistis	Kalopanagiotis	No			Single aisled		3.82 X6.77- to apse 710
38. St Neophytos	Tsada	2 to 3			Three aisled		
39. Panagia Chrysochourdaliotissa	Kourdali				Three aisled		9.04 X15.32 (to apse)

Fig. 11

Section and plan of monastic church of Panagia tou Sindi showing the use of harmonic tracings and a ratio in the plan (drawings by N. Chrysochou, M. Philokyprou, A. Pseftodiakos, E. Kalliri, E. Petropoulou)



Architects from ancient times until today, tried to find and give Divine edifices the symbolism, geometries and proportions that were believed to represent perfection. Brunelleschi, Palladio, Leon Battista Alberti and many other Renaissance architects in their humanistic search, had recorded what they believed were perfect

proportions such as 1:1, 2:3, 3:4, 2:4, 4:9, 9:16 for medium size buildings and 1:3, 3:8 and 1:4 for long buildings. In Cyprus, although many churches of the period that have survived are provincial and small, constructed with limited technical knowledge and without exact geometry, it appears that their builders were most knowledgeable, at least, of some of the Renaissance architectural rules and harmonious proportions. It is not unlikely that some of these ideas arrived in Cyprus through books with Western etchings or drawings, which were used by the Cypriot builders. The division of the church in three parts obviously has symbolic as well as liturgical functions, thus the ratio of 1: 3 based on Alberti's rules became a popular ratio observed and in most Orthodox churches of the Venetian period. Apart from a few churches, the local master mason was not very concerned about absolute accuracy in the materialized plans but the examples studied ascertain the above theory. Twenty-three of the 32 single-aisle churches studied use a plan ratio of 1: 3. Also, at least one third made use of the Venetian measure of the foot, which proves that local masons had at least some basic level of education. Such is the example of the Monastery church of Panagia tou Sinti (Chrysochou 2001, 2003) with a plan ratio of 1: 3, and internal dimensions of 5.23 x 12.48 meters (Fig 11).

These are important as they indicate the use of the Venetian foot, which corresponds to 0.3467 meters (Dimakopoulos, 1997). Thus the church has dimensions of 15 x 36 Venetian feet. The other harmonic tracings, which appear in the church indicate an experienced workshop. The interior of the church of the monastery of Panagia Skouriotissas in Katydata, with internal dimensions 11.01X 3.66 meters follows exactly the ratio of 1:3, and externally the use of the Venetian foot (5.15X13.58 meters, which equals to 15 X 39 Venetian feet). In the church of St. Evlalios Lambousa Kyrenia, the internal proportions of the church of 12.10 X 4.95 meters, also appear to make use of the medieval foot (with only a difference of 3and 10 cm respectively in either dimension).

The wooden roofed church of Panagia Podithou in Galata also follows in plan the ratio of 1:3 (except for the apse), and has internal dimensions of 4.17 X 13.55 meters, which equals to 12 X 39 Venetian feet. Its height is also the sum of the length of the two sides divided by two.

The use of the ratio of 1:2 in ecclesiastical architecture of the period was scarce. Some examples are Saint Mamas in Sotira, St. Andronicus in Polis, Agios Nikolaos in Orounta and Archangel Michael in Delikipos. The church plan ratio of 1:2 appears also in the originally Gothic church of the Virgin Stazousa in Pyrga.

In the case of the addition of a narthex, a common practise during the Venetian period, the ratio of 1:1 is found to have been used in most examples. Such are the narthexes added to the church of the Virgin in Arediou, the church of Stazousa Pyrga (where there is also the use of the Venetian measurement), and Saint George in Angona. In addition, both of the so-called 'Latin chapels' added to the churches of Lampadistis Kalopanayiotis and the Holy Cross at Pelendri have a width of 11 Venetian feet. In the opposite direction, the master builder adjusted the length of the chapel to the length of the existing church.

As a general rule in the few three-aisled basilicas of the period, the ratio of 2: 3 (10:16, 7:11, etc.) is used but with less accuracy. In the church of Agios Mamas Morphou the use of the Venetian foot is evident as the external dimensions of 13.86X20.10 meters which are precisely 58X40 Venetian feet with the height of the dome at 16.15 meters which is equal to 27 Venetian feet (after taking into account the coverage of the original floor with new terrazzo flooring). The height of the dome seems to follow another rule of Alberti, pertaining to harmonic ratios: the division of the sum of the length and width by two:

$$11.8 + 20.4 = 32.2 : 2 = 16.1 \quad (1)$$

As concerns the plan to height ratio of the churches, enough examples appear to follow the Renaissance standards, mainly that of the popular harmonic rule of Alberti: The division in two of the sum of width and length or the same width to height proportion. The ratio of 1:2:1 can be found in the church of Agios Andronikos in Polis. The wooden roofed church of Panagia Podithou and the Church of the Transfiguration in Palaichori follow the ratio of plan to height as 1:3:2.

Western influences in ecclesiastical architecture of Cyprus are more a result of the evolution of the Gothic elements rather than the importation of new ones from Venice. Few morphological elements were introduced to the island directly from Venice and many more were the result of the introduction of Venetian military architecture and a few civic buildings, elements of which were carried to Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture by local craftsmen. This is not surprising, since in Venice itself Gothic influence has remained strong, in parallel with the development of the new Renaissance art.

In terms of the plans, however, and despite the short period of Venetian rule in Cyprus and the limited technical knowledge of the local masons in geometric drawing, we see that, in less than 100 years, the proportions and the way of construction of Orthodox churches appear to have been influenced by Italian Renaissance architecture. The same question posed as an article title by the late archaeologist Arthur Hubert Stanley Megaw about Byzantine Cyprus (Megaw, 1974), "Byzantine architecture and painting in Cyprus. Metropolitan or provincial?" – could be applied to Venetian Cypriot architecture. And, as in Byzantine Cyprus, despite all the economic constraints, political and religious repression, and hardships, the Cypriot architect of the Venetian period has managed to create important examples, if not of a metropolitan scale, then at least of equal interest.

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## Conclusions

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