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REFLECTIONS OF THE DIVERSITY OF ETHNIC ORIGINS ON THE ARCHITECTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE LATE-OTTOMAN PERIOD

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Abstract

During the mid-nineteenth century, Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, was defined by an architectural environment created by the contractor work of master-builders of differing ethnic origins. The extensive service of both Greek and Armenian master-builders in developments for both the state and the sultanate not only allowed for collaborations with one another but also resulted in the surfacing of tension due to both rivalry and competition in pursuit of obtaining their share of architectural works. In fact, stories of such incidents as a member of one community going so far as to factionalize another member of a community have even made the press. This article focuses on the comparison of master builders of varying ethnic heritages during the building process, and the reflective aspects of their connections to employers, the project tenders and the undertaking process on the architecture of Hacı Stefanis Gaytanakis' important structures; the Beykoz Pavilion, Mecidiye Barracks (Taşkışla), Ortaköy and Dolmabahçe Mosques.

Keywords: Construction Activities in the Late-Ottoman Period, Greek and Armenian Master Builders, Beykoz Pavilion, Mecidiye Barracks (Taşkışla).

Introduction

It is known that during the sixteenth century of the Ottoman Empire, certain construction and repair work conducted on a minor section of an official building was awarded to master builders at a fixed cost¹. However, the sole appearance of master builders' names on documents for important structures including palaces, summer manors and mosques towards the end of the eighteenth century, is the precursor that through neutralizing the influence of the Corps of Royal Architects, which was officially responsible for all of the empire's construction work, master builders were to individually come to the forefront (Şenyurt, 2006: 29-32). Following 1831, with the increasing inactivity of the Corps of Royal Architects, the evaluation of varying proposals through the holding of tenders, increased the collective participation in the building arena. While the obtaining of building permission was becoming a centralized practice (Akyıldız, 1993: 142), the remission in architectural works resulted in allowing the empire's subjects to rapidly become regular actors in the building sector towards the latter-end of the Ottoman Empire (Şenyurt, 2006: 21-22). The majority of master builders in the Ottoman Empire were members of the Greek-Orthodox and Gregorian Armenian communities and their past-based successes reached a peak in the mid-nineteenth century. The architecture by Greek and Armenian master builders in Istanbul in the nineteenth century up until the end of the Ottoman

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¹ A document exists which describes how the construction of a double gender Turkish bath in the Anatolian town of Larende in the mid-sixteenth century was requested to be built to resemble the Mahmut Paşa Turkish bath in Istanbul and was contracted without plans, by a verbal agreement with a contractor at a fixed cost (Gülru Necipoğlu (2005). *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in The Ottoman Empire*, London: Reaktion Books, pp. 174-175). Also see. Reşat Ekrem Koçu (2003). *Osmanlı Tarihinin Panoraması*, İstanbul: Doğan Book, 2nd Edition, p. 365.

Empire, the majority of which were designed influenced by the European manner, remain in existence to this day². Master builders not only instilled the influence of the period's European manner, but at the same time, due to the diversity in heritage, and through a series of intriguing incidents which transpired during the construction process and the intensified commitment and fixed-cost system put in place in the mid-nineteenth century, they also provided contractor services based on an established order for the empire's private and official structures (Şenyurt, 2006: 66-70).

There were a number of master builders involved in the architecture of the mid-nineteenth century. However, there is information outlining only a small number's life stories and work styles. At times, master builder groups were members of the same family³. This article discusses the individual master builders of the Gaytanakis family as well as the architecture of the family's most well-known master builder Hacı⁴ Stefanis Gaytanakis Kalfa⁵ by utilizing documents from the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives. Hacı Stefanis Gaytanakis, a palace master builder who was active during Sultan Abdülmecit's reign in the mid-nineteenth, had two younger brothers that were also master builders in their own right. Members of the Greek Orthodox community, the Gaytanakis Family, in addition to their private architectural works, were awarded with ranks for their state architectural activities. Taking into consideration the encounters of master builders of varying ethnic origins during their construction activities, the article also discusses the effects of competition, taking shares, collaborations and ethnic origin relations which were characterized in the mid-nineteenth century and their reflection on Hacı Stefanis Kalfa's architectural works⁶.

The Architecture of the Greek-Orthodox Stefanis Gaytanakis

With the coming into power of Sultan Abdülmecit, Hacı Stefanis Gaytanakis and his brother Hacı Dimitri undertook significant responsibilities in the construction of buildings belonging to the state. The eldest of three brothers, Hacı Stefanis, was joined by his younger brother Hacı Dimitri in taking over the palace's construction and maintenance work (Gedeon, 1935: 76). Their youngest brother, Hacı Savas Gaytanakis did not take on as many responsibilities on official structures as his older brothers and mainly worked independently.

² D. Barillari, Ezio Godoli (1997). *İstanbul 1900 Art Nouveau Mimarisi ve İç Mekanları*, İstanbul: YEM Publishing. The Art Nouveau and Neo-classic styles can be seen in the wooden villas and masonry palaces located along the shore of İstanbul's Bosphorus. In addition, it is also possible to come across Neo-Classic and Art Nouveau style masonry apartment buildings and business centers built in areas where Greeks, Armenians and other foreigners were concentrated in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, İstanbul's districts, including Galata, Beyoğlu, Karaköy and an area in Kadıköy.

³ Individuals from the Armenian community's Balyan Family consisted of the most influential group of master builders working on the construction of palaces and state-owned structures in the nineteenth century. Kevork Pamukciyan (2003). *Biyografileriyle Ermeniler*, İstanbul: Aras Publishing, pp. 89-100.

⁴ Hacı: The title of "hacı (hatzi)", which precedes the names of Christian master builders, was awarded to those whom had visited specific locations considered holy. Argiris Petronotis (2004). *Hacıustalar*, İstanbul: Kitap Publishing House, p. 26.

⁵ The word "Kalfa" (*master builder*) has a number of meanings and it has been determined that there were changes made to the term's meaning during the historical period. According to the Turkish dictionary, the term refers to any craftsman between the level of apprentice and master. This explains the use of such terms as "carpenter kalfa" (*neccar kalfası*) and "mason kalfa" (*duvarcı kalfası*). According to the Architecture Dictionary, the term refers to an assistant architecture which was brought up as an apprentice, according to the Art Terms Encyclopedia, the term refers to the person who enforces the architectural project, while according to Ottoman History Idioms and Terms Dictionary, the definition of the word "kalfa" is given as being the head master of different worker groups on a construction, an assistant who responds to the "ebniye halifesi", who retains the second status following the head architect and acts as a director and technical supervisor, as well as an enforcer. Neslihan Sönmez (1997). *Yapı Malzeme ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, İstanbul: YEM. Publishing, p. 54. Documents from the nineteenth century confirm that they both financed construction jobs as well as acted as contractors. Therefore, the term contractor needs to be added to the job descriptions of those who fall under the title of "kalfa". Oya Şenyurt (2006). *Türkiye'de Yapı Üretiminde Modernleşme ve Taahhüt Sisteminin Oluşumu*, Ph.D., İstanbul: Yıldız Technical University, p. 202.

⁶ This article was created by compiling the theses, entitled "The Greek Architects and Their Influences in İstanbul (1800-1950)" (1800-1950 Yılları Arasında İstanbul'da Faaliyet Gösteren Rum Mimarlar) M.S., Yıldız Technical University 2002 and "Modernization of Structural Production and Formation of Contracting System in Turkey" (*Türkiye'de Yapı Üretiminde Modernleşme ve Taahhüt Sisteminin Oluşumu*), Ph.D., Yıldız Technical University 2006.

Contrary to his older brothers, Hacı Savas worked on a limited number of buildings, and took on private construction jobs, thereby earning less and was never honored with a decoration or title. In 1850, he built a school commemorated in his own name in Maditu ⁷.

By building both physics and chemistry laboratories within the building, Hacı Savas had intended for the school to serve students at the middle school level. It was with this intention, that he purchased tools and experiment equipment for the school's laboratories. He was unsuccessful however in fulfilling his intentions and all of the materials he had collected were donated to The Great School of the Nation, which was referred to by the people as the Kırmızı Mektep (*Red School*) which belonged to the Greek-Orthodox community in Istanbul's Fener ⁸ district (Gedeon, 1935: 77).

Hacı Dimitri, the middle brother, was a peaceful person, known for being a good family man and father (Gedeon, 1935: 77). Hacı Dimitri's son Aristidi, attended the Greek Ottoman primary and junior high schools in Fener and Heybeliada⁹ and continued his studies in the Kırmızı Mekteb located in Fener, however, because he did not take the necessary exams for graduation, he never received a diploma. Leaving school in order to study Arabic and Persian, and already having a command of Turkish, French, Greek and English, Aristidi went on to work in a translation bureau.¹⁰ Later, he was sent to a number of cities in Europe as an envoy (Gedeon, 1935: 77). The Gaytanakis family has been established as having resided in Fener, according to Hacı Dimitri's son Aristidi's civilian records.¹¹ Hacı Stefanis Kalfa's grave is located on the coast of Fener (Gedeon, 1935: 77). The Gaytanakis family also had a large stone mansion on Heybeliada where they stayed during the summer months (Gedeon, 1935: 77; Tuğlacı, 1992: 82).

Stefanis Kalfa and Hacı Dimitri contributed greatly to the completion of what seemed to be the endless construction of the Bâb-ı âlî ¹² (Gedeon, 1935: 77). A decree dated March 30th, 1857,¹³ records that the master builder was credited as being part of the Greek-Orthodox community "Rum milleti" and that up until that time had worked on a number of structures. Like a number of master builders that have pulled their weight on state structures, Stefanis Kalfa was also the recipient of the second degree medal, the "*rütbe-i sâniye*".

A decree dated June 7th, 1843 displays that Stefanis Kalfa was paid for the building costs of the Bâb-ı âlî structure¹⁴. It is through the existence of this decree that it is evident Stefanis Kalfa was the architect of the stone built Bâb-ı âlî building. Before burning down in 1839, the structure functioned as both a residence for the Grand Vizier as well as a government office; however when it was reopened for use in 1844, Stefanis Kalfa's previous approach had been replaced with a new insight, in which he separated the executive's public and personal life. This approach may also be perceived as being one of the architectural reflections of the *Tanzimat* efforts at the time to incorporate administrative reforms for the empire with a bureaucratic order resembling of the west. With the exception of the structure's floor installations, this building was distinct from previous Bâb-ı âlî buildings due to its masonry (Tanyeli, 1994: 522).

⁷ The location which Gedeon names as Maditu, was referred to as Maydos during the Ottoman period and is considered to be the Eceabat district in Çanakkale.

⁸ Fener: A district located on the southern side of the Golden Horn in Istanbul. Members of the Greek-Orthodox community reside in Fener. When the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate named the Hagios Georgios Church their center in the 1600's, the district won international recognition.

⁹ The former name of the island located in the Northeastern end of the Marmara Sea was Halki.

¹⁰ BOA. Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*), HR.SAİD., File (Dosya) no: 9, Jacket (Gömlek) no: 18.

¹¹ BOA., HR.SAİD., File no:9, Jacket no:18.

¹² Bâb-ı âlî: During the Ottoman Empire, the building which contained the Office of the Grand Vizier, the imperial and foreign affairs ministry as well as the council government offices. Ferit Devellioğlu (2003). *Osmanlıca Türkçe Ansiklopedik Lugat*, Ankara: Aydın Publishing House, p. 60.

¹³ BOA, İ.DH., Imperial Edict (*İrade Dahiliye*), Sequence no: 24745.

¹⁴ BOA., İ.DH., Sequence no: 3763.



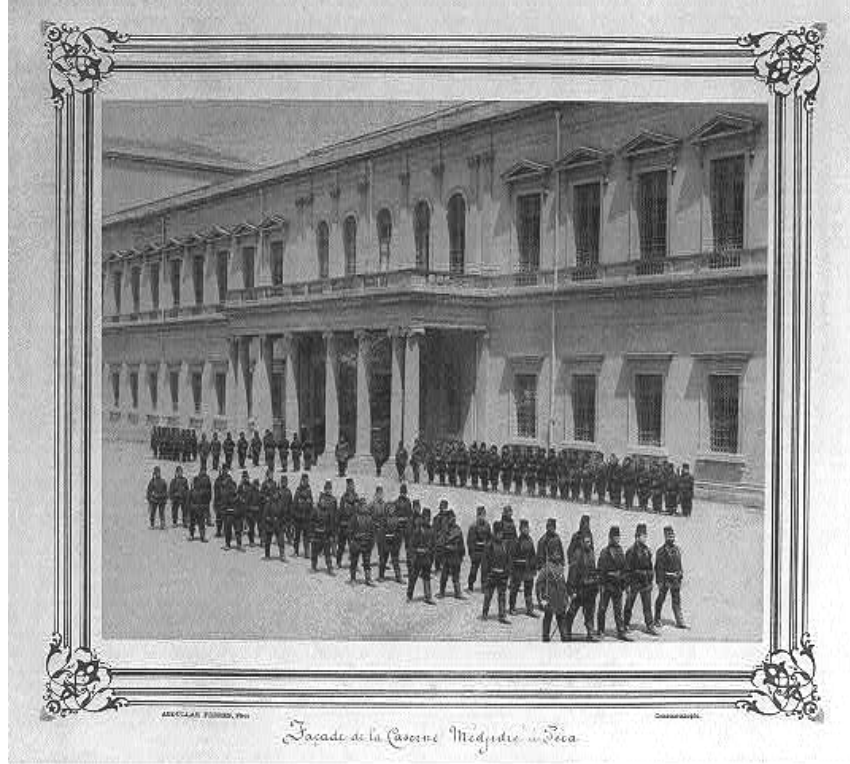
Mecidiye Barracks (*Mecidiye Kışlası/Taşkışla*)
(Abdullah Frères, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b27914/?co=ahii>)

In Istanbul in 1847, Hacı Stefanis Gaytanakis built what started as the Tıp Mektebi, a medical school, however as the construction developed, a decision was made for the building to be transformed into military barracks, becoming what is known today as “Taşkışla”, Mecidiye Barracks (*Mecidiye Kışlası*)¹⁵. Arriving to Istanbul in 1841, English architect William James Smith, who conducted the construction of the city’s English Embassy to replace the one prior, which was burned down in a huge fire in Beyoğlu in 1831, also took part in the barracks’ construction (Can, 1993: 182). The written agreement made with Hacı Stefanis for the construction of the medical school contained great detail of the building conditions as well as which materials were to be used and where. Hacı Stefanis Kalfa had committed himself to building the structure in a way that would make it incomparable to others in terms of stability and that he would not rush to finish the project and would take two years to complete it. After receiving Hacı Stefanis Kalfa’s commitment to complete the project, a contract was drafted in which it was deemed appropriate that every month 500 kese akçe¹⁶ would be granted. English architect Willian James Smith, whom was in Istanbul at the time, was allotted a 4,000 kuruş salary for supervising the construction¹⁷.

¹⁵ A structure located in Taksim, Istanbul which was initially built as a Medical School in 1847, was later transformed into a military barracks according to a decision made and was renamed the Mecidiye Barracks. The building, which is referred to by Istanbulites as Taşkışla, now belongs to the Istanbul Technical University and operates as the Architecture Department.

¹⁶ Akçe: Silver coins, which were cut from the founding of the Ottoman Empire up until the nineteenth century, acting as a form of money.

¹⁷ BOA., İ.MSM., File no: 25, Jacket no: 666.



Mecidiye Barracks (*Mecidiye Kışlası/Taşkışla*)
 (Abdullah Frères, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b27914/?co=ahii>)

As mentioned before, at some point in time and for some unknown reason the decision was made to build the structure as a military barracks in lieu of the medical school (Tıp Mektebi). The decision in 1860-61 to change the original construction, which had begun in accordance to William James Smith's prepared project, to instead be a military barracks resulted in extra building costs due to the increase in the building's stories¹⁸. The opinions of master builders Ohannes and Karabet from the Armenian community, who inspected the construction's estimated cost, as well as that of the building's architect William James Smith conferred that there would naturally be an increase in cost when transforming the medical school (Tıp Mektebi) into military barracks. When the master builders and Architect William James Smith expressed their opinions regarding the estimated cost, their disapproval and the unacceptable situation of incurring additional costs to the project's report of estimated cost resulted in the Assembly of Judgment Court (*Meclis-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye*)¹⁹ making the decision to sign a contract with Hacı Stefanis Kalfa for the construction of the military barracks²⁰.

Conflict within Communities and Ethnic Diversity Contention Amongst Communities in the Architectural Environment

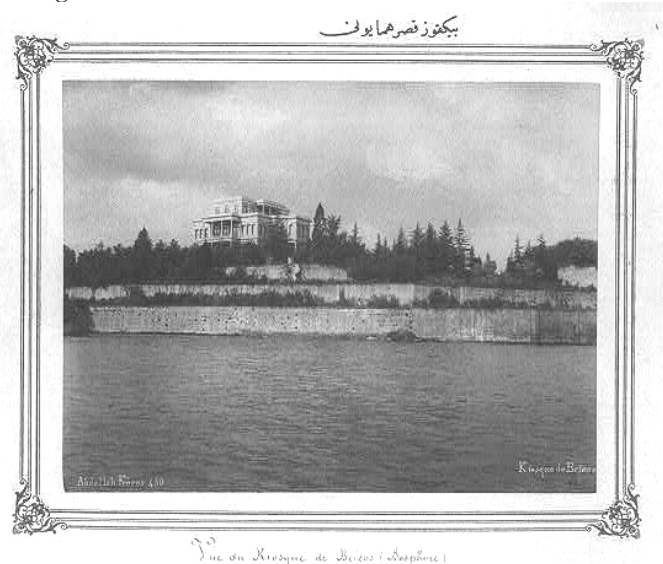
The Beykoz Pavilion (Beykoz Kasrı) holds a place of importance amongst Hacı Stefanis Kalfa's construction works. The Beykoz Pavilion was perhaps the master builder's most significant as well as most problematic building. Hacı Stefanis Kalfa undertook the construction of the Beykoz Palace, which started off as a symbol of loyalty by the Governor of Egypt Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Pasha to the sultan, and was later completed by the Mehmet Ali Pasha's son İbrahim Pasha (Eldem, 1979: 257). However, towards the end of the building's completion, he was forced to leave the construction unfinished due to a disagreement with the Egyptian Governor in 1850. Hacı Stefanis Kalfa expressed in a petition penned on August 25th, 1850 that

¹⁸ BOA., A.AMD., File no: 94, Jacket no: 44.

¹⁹ Meclis-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye: The former name for the Ministry of Justice; the assembly which made rulings on issues of justice.

²⁰ BOA., İ.MVL., File no:157, Jacket no: 4519.

he had prepared the projects for the Beykoz Pavilion and its construction had progressed considerably. He also expressed in the petition that after undertaking the project at a fixed price and putting forth the services and the effort made, the fact that he was dismissed from the job, could result in the surfacing of hearsay amongst certain master builders and that being represented by them as the guilty party could cast a shadow on his honor and reputation. He ended the petition by expressing his heartfelt desire to continue serving as master builder on the project in order to ensure that all of the effort he had exerted on the building of the Beykoz Pavilion thus far did not go to waste²¹.



Beykoz Pavilion (Abdullah Frères, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b27914/?co=ahii>)

The opinions expressed on the issue by the Egyptian Governor upon receiving Hacı Stefanis Kalfa's petition qualified as a response. The Governor of Egypt used the excessive budget in the estimated cost report as an excuse to request Hacı Stefanis Kalfa resign from the project. At the same time, the Egyptian Governor had apprehensions that in order to reduce the building cost, the building materials used would be deficient and of poor quality which would in turn result in the structure's instability. Stefanis Kalfa then informed that he would never allow for this to happen as he could never reconcile it with his honor or reputation. Furthermore, without making any requests for a salary, master builder Stefanis requested to solely act as inspector on the project in order to ensure it was being constructed in compliance with the plans. In the last section of a document detailing the Egyptian Governor's viewpoint, in language which insinuated he was standing up for Stefanis Kalfa and was also leaving the door open to all possibilities, he informed that in order to ensure Stefanis Kalfa's work was not in vain, it was his wish that whomever the structure was contracted to would pay heed to the building's stability²².

During the Ottoman Empire, to withdraw a contract for the construction of a building from one master builder only to award it to another could create a dishonorable situation from the master builders' perspective. When a master builder was considered to have been unsuccessful on any given project, the gossip which surfaced by other master builders, from either varying ethnic heritages or from within the same community, resulted in lowering their status amongst their professional group²³. Therefore, Hacı Stefanis Kalfa's anxiety was derived

²¹ BOA., İ.DH., Sequence no:12903.

²² BOA., İ.DH., Sequence no:12903.

²³When master builders assigned to state works were withdrawn from a job or resigned, for a variety of personal reasons, it resulted in a variety of interpretations made by master builders of differing ethnic origins. Just as master builders from differing ethnic origins were in competition, it was also evident that it was not regularly accepted when one master builder excelled to a higher status in a community of master builders. Famous palace architect Krikor Balyan's son-in-law Ohannes Serveryan, the member of the Armenian community was also envied by other nobles.

from the possibility of being faced with such an incident which would affect his professional life. Meanwhile, during the time period of the building of the Beykoz Pavilion, when an employer contested the estimated cost and requested a structure be completed for less than what was agreed upon with the master builder, it became obvious they were experiencing severe financial difficulties. In general, building authority was granted to a contractor through a tender held after master builders working for the state predetermined the estimated cost for the building's construction. To object to the project's estimated cost once construction had progressed was an inappropriate pretext and therefore appeared as being an indicator of financial difficulties. It has been established that the Egyptian Governor's decision to relieve Hacı Stefanis Kalfa of his duty was not approved of by the Grand Vizier. A document prepared by the Office of the Grand Vizier declares that the groundless dismissal of Stefanis Kalfa from serving on the construction of the Beykoz Pavilion was unjustified and therefore he should be reinstated²⁴.

Efforts to have Hacı Stefanis Kalfa employed failed however. Governor Abbas Pasha in 1849 penned a letter about Artin Serveryan Kalfa who was the grandson of Armenian master builder Kirkor Balyan, well known in Istanbul in the mid-nineteenth century, had been awarded the tender for the Beykoz Pavilion and had already departed for Istanbul²⁵. Artin Serveryan Kalfa was initially sent to Egypt for 19 days, where he was to meet with the Governor of Egypt. But, the beginning of the cholera epidemic which caused the postponement of their meeting and his returning to Istanbul three months later. During this period, his services on other projects he had been assigned, namely the Topkapı Palace's Hırka-i Saâdet dairesi²⁶ and the Ortaköy Mosque were also faced with delays. According to both the Sultan's command and by order of the Grand Vizier, the assignment granted to Artin Kalfa was handed over to Hacı Stefanis Kalfa to ensure there were no further extensions on the timeframe of the buildings' construction. One of the reasons for the transfer of the job was the display of negligence by Artin Kalfa as well as the building costs not being realized in accordance to what was requested. It is apparent in the contract which was drafted with Stefanis Kalfa, that these issues were resolved and due diligence was exercised to ensure no harm was incurred on Artin Kalfa's honor or reputation during the transfer²⁷.

A news article released in the 153rd issue of the Armenian Hayastan²⁸ (Armenia) newspaper in 1846 reflects well the tension between master builders from varying communities. The newspaper evaluates the granting of the building of the room housing the Prophet Mohammad's cloak (*Hırka-i Saâdet Dairesi*) and the Ortaköy Camii to Artin Serveryan as follows (Pamukciyan, 2003a: 143):

"The Sultan assigned the construction of the Hırka-i Saadet Daireleri and Ortaköy Mosque to Harutyun (Artin) Serveryan. Meanwhile, the Governor of Egypt had initiated the construction of a costly building, located on the upper section of the Anatolian coast along the Bosphorus, which was assigned to a Greek Master. However, he later wanted Serveryan to take over the construction project due to tension which arose between the Greek Master Builder and the building supervisor. He in turn, accepted the assignment and headed for Cairo, having prepared a greater project, he intended to present to the Governor for his approval. However, because the Governor was not there at the time, it took him three months to return. Benefiting from his absence, the Greek master builder informed and successfully convinced the sultan that Serveryan had abused and hence abandoned the job granted him and subsequently run away. From thereafter, the construction of all state-owned buildings was to be granted to the Greek Master Builder (...)"

Despite not being noted in Armenian sources, according to findings from archival documents, approximately one year after being granted the tender for the Beykoz Pavilion, Artin Kalfa informed the Governor of Egypt through the Grand Vizier of his consent for the

Meanwhile, during a period when Ohannes Serveryan's son Artin Serveryan's star shined as a palace architect, his uncle Garabet Balyan hindered him from progressing in his professional field. Kevork Pamukciyan (2003a). *Zamanlar, Mekanlar, İnsanlar*, İstanbul: Aras Publishing, p. 138.

²⁴ BOA., A.MKT.NZD., File no:11, Jacket no:21.

²⁵ BOA., A.MKT.UM., File no:32, Jacket no:3.

²⁶ Hırka-i Saâdet Dairesi: The section of the Topkapı Palace where the Prophet Mohammad's cloak is kept within a silver trunk. Ferit Devellioğlu (2003). *Osmanlıca Türkçe Ansiklopedik Lugat*, Ankara: Aydın Publishing House, p. 363.

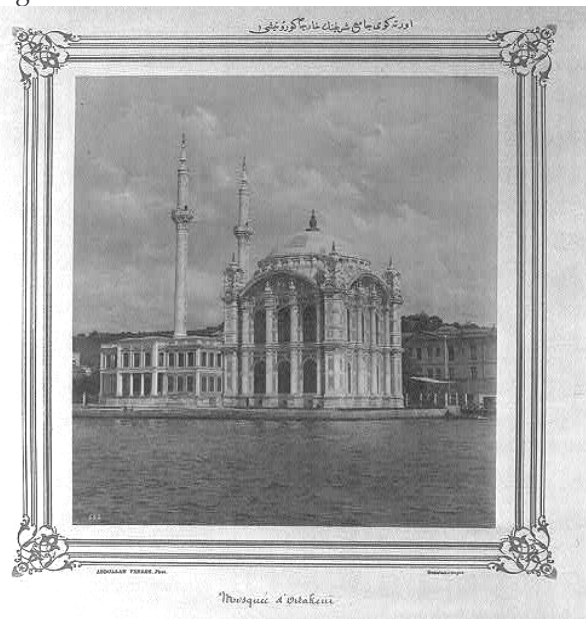
²⁷ BOA., A.MKT.NZD., File no:15, Jacket no:50.

²⁸ During the years 1846-1852 in Istanbul, Hayastan was a newspaper released weekly by Çamurcuyan Hovhannes Badveli and Mıgırdıç Ağaon. Kevork Pamukciyan (2003). *Biyografileriyle Ermeniler*, İstanbul: Aras Publishing, p. 68.

construction of the structure to remain in Stefanis Kalfa's custody and that he wished to continue working alongside him²⁹. It could be perceived that Artin Kalfa's efforts to withdraw from the job at hand was due to the deterioration of his financial situation, and a sign that he was unable to continue acting as the contractor for the construction. A document from 1864 notes that due to being significantly in debt, Artin Serveryan Kalfa had gone bankrupt and was first sentenced to hard labor on the galleys at the shipyard, which was later deemed an excessively harsh penalty and was converted to a prison sentence³⁰.

Joint Activities, Strife with the State; and Master Builders' Efforts to Seize Business Opportunities

In the empire, the construction of state structures was generally the result of the joint efforts of people from varying ethnic heritages. After taking over the construction of the Ortaköy (*Büyük Mecidiye*) Mosque from Artin Severyan Kalfa, Hacı Stefanis Gaytanakis also undertook the construction of the Dolmabahçe Mosque. He did not conduct these constructions on his own, however. The fact that payments were issued to both Karabet Kalfa and Stefanis Kalfa for the Ortaköy Mosque construction, which was commissioned by Sultan Abdülmecit as well as for the Dolmabahçe Mosque, commissioned by Bezmialem Valide Sultan, coupled with the knowledge that both construction accounts were closed simultaneously, indicates that they collaborated on both projects (Cezar, 1991: 327). As a result of these joint activities, the reflection of problems derived from ethnic diversities by individuals from varying ethnic origins could at times be an issue in the architectural field. As in the previously described building of the Beykoz Pavilion, the tension between the Armenian Master Builder Artin Serveryan and the Greek Master Builder Hacı Stefanis Gaytanakis, the true reason for which is unknown, was reflected by the author of an article in the Hayastan (Armenia) Newspaper, relayed in a discriminating manner against Hacı Stefanis Kalfa³¹.



Ortaköy Mosque (Büyük Mecidiye) (Abdullah Frères, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b27914/?co=ahii>)

According to the reporter, Stefanis Kalfa not only caused Artin Kalfa to lose his job- in fact it was Artin who had taken on the construction of a large structure similar to the Beykoz

²⁹ BOA., A.MKT.NZD., File no: 25, Jacket no:7.

³⁰ BOA., İ.MVL., File no: 511, Jacket no: 23047.

³¹ It has been observed that publishing organs connected to certain ethnic groups would easily "discriminate" against individuals of other ethnic origins. It is possible to come across certain accusation in Greek sources. Explaining the efforts made by master builders in the nineteenth century, Gedeon, in his article entitled "The Rise of Master Builders", claims that the Armenian architect Serkiz Balyan who was prominent during the Abdülaziz period, was ill disposed. M. İo Gedeon (1935). *Engiklopediakon İmerologio*, Istanbul, pp. 73-78.

Pavillion- but after the incident, all of the new buildings' construction rights were awarded to Stefanis Kalfa, when in fact, Hacı Stefanis Kalfa was warned and penalized with fines when his work was flawed, just as much as any of the other master builders. For instance, in 1850 during maintenance work on the Aksaray Abdullah Ağa Mosque, the mosque's imam requested Hacı Stefanis Kalfa conduct previously unspecified renovations and when the Supreme Council (*Meclis-i Vâlâ*)³² determined the repairs had resulted in an increase in cost, Stefanis Kalfa was fined the remaining expenditure. The Supreme Council's (*Meclis-i Vâlâ*) ruling acted as a warning to all master builders making Hacı Stefanis Kalfa an example. The ruling warned that any maintenance or construction conducted on buildings should not exceed the estimated cost, and if it did so, permission must be obtained³³. However, the excessive number of written documents regarding preventing exceeding costs in construction is an indicator that the problem did not disappear. The lack of regulations regarding construction tenders up until the end of the Ottoman Empire, and the sole existence of a code of practice, which was created in 1877 (Ergin, 1995: 1740-1742), which did not resolve all concerns, resulted in problematic issues in construction activities undoubtedly reaching intolerable levels (Şenyurt, 2006: 144-157). Addendum's added to the code of practice towards the end of the Ottoman Empire did not resolve the existing deficiencies as penalties received varied from one individual to another on the breaching of such issues as the violation of tender rules, regulations and contractors' rights³⁴.



Dolmabahçe Mosque (Abdullah Frères, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b28650/?co=ahii>)

On the other hand, despite the legal problems and lack of financial services regarding building construction, in the mid nineteenth century, non-Muslims gained an important position serving as master builders and contractors, identifying with their ethnic origins and successfully gaining capital, due to the lack of competition in the field by the Turkish-Muslim

³² Meclis-i Vâlâ: An assembly established in 1837 in order to prepare the new code of practice necessitated by restructuring activities, to hold official trials and for voting on necessitating state issues. Ferit Devellioğlu (2003). *Osmanlıca Türkçe Ansiklopedik Lugat*, Ankara: Aydın Publishing House, p. 595.

³³ BOA., İ.MVL., Sequence no: 6005.

³⁴ In 1853, the Meclis-i Vâlâ' charged Kiryako Kalfa, who was working on the Ahi Çelebi Mosque, with a fine heavier than that issued to Hacı Stefanis Kalfa. Upon requesting further funds than designated in the estimated cost, it was decided that Kiryako Kalfa would not receive the extra expenditures and would no longer work on state structures and foundation buildings (BOA., A.MKT.MVL., File no: 65, Jacket no: 14).

group (Cezar, 1991: 196-197). The question of how they were able to gain such positions in the construction field in such a short period of time can be answered through certain information provided by Aġayekyan (Pamukciyan, 2003a: 138). According to information revealed by Aġayekyan, they took the job seriously and tried to learn this business they could earn money from in the best way possible.

Amongst the non-Muslims, being an architect was reminiscent of a family heritage that passed from one generation to another. In the mid-nineteenth century, like the Greeks, the Armenian minority also worked as master builders. However, they believed that they were not making progress in their profession. It was for this reason that Ohannes Serveryan, the son-in-law of Kirkor Balyan, one of the Ottoman's famous palace architects Kirkor Balyan, was especially brought from Italy as a private architect whom taught a number of Armenia youths designing along with his sons. From then on, he acted as a pioneer in cultivating famous Armenian masters. At the same time, due to his influence in state-owned developments, he was able to have Armenian youths work alongside foreign masters which provided opportunities for them to further escalate in their profession.

Master builders were only able to work for the state through recommendations made by certain individuals to the sultan. Those who had good references were introduced to the sultan and from there found ways of working on the palace's construction. It was through this route that Kirkor Balyan's grandson Artin Serveryan became a master builder for the palace. Artin's father opened up a timber shop for his son, whom had been working as an architect since 1849. Also using shipyard timber to fulfill his needs, Artin met with Sultan Mahmut's oldest son-in-law Minister of the Navy (Bahriye Nazırı) Halil Rıfat. Wanting to build a pavilion, Halil Rıfat left the job Artin's supervision. When Serveryan successfully completed this construction as well as a number of other smaller structures, Rıfat Pasha convinced the sultan to grant Artin a new duty as Master Builder for Government Offices (*Ebniye-i Miriyye Kalfası*)³⁵ and was rewarded with a decoration (Pamukciyan, 2003a: 142).

Conclusion

Making a living by working on state-owned buildings with his brother Hacı Dimitri, Hacı Stefanis Gaytanakis' work provides a significant amount of insight into the architectural environment of the mid-nineteenth century Istanbul, the Ottoman capital. The setbacks that surfaced during the construction of pavilions, palaces and state-owned structures are indicative of the types of issues that arose following the tender process. As in the case of Hacı Stefanis Kalfa and other examples of master builders active in the same period, the inadequacy of the code of practice released in 1877 led to the resolution of problems which surfaced by both the employer and the master builder, tending to be through decisions dependent on the master builder's personal esteem.

It was visible that employers, whom approved of the initial estimated cost of a construction, would use financial difficulties as an excuse to back down from their decisions, forcing master builders to resign or by making abrupt decisions to alter the structure's function which would thereby affect the course of construction. Problems derived from master builders on the other hand, included neglecting the job at hand, or completing a building's construction for more than the estimated cost, increasing costs through repairing additional locations than specified in the project estimations, problems for which solutions did not exist in the code of practice, and therefore it was evident there was no enforcement nor countermeasures taken in such situations (Şenyurt, 2006: 119-120). Problems derived from the employer, could result in master builders having to resign or their professional status being groundlessly shaken. The handing over of construction jobs from one master builder to another, internal community gossip and rumors between varying communities, were covered in newspaper articles. An example of the existence of ethnic tension between communities is evident in the case of the handing over of construction jobs between Hacı Stefanis Kalfa and Artin Serveryan Kalfa. There

³⁵ The title granted to a master builder responsible for the construction of state-owned buildings and their repairs.

are also examples which show that this type of tension between master builders from the Greek and Armenian communities was not constant and that for the most part they continued their construction activities collaboratively. For example, Armenian Karabet Balyan and Greek Hacı Stefanis Gaytanakis built the Ortaköy and Dolmabahçe Mosques together.

Ethnic diversity in the architectural environment also undoubtedly resulted in serious competition amongst master builders which had close relations with administrative bureaucrats in the empire's capital Istanbul. Building a minister's home qualified as a reference for the construction of state-owned structures. Therefore, to find favor amongst the bureaucratic staff constituted the start of professional advancement.

From approximately the end of the eighteenth century until the late periods of the empire, Greek and Armenian master builders played an important role in the realization of architectural works in the Ottoman Empire, which did not breed diploma-receiving architects³⁶. As a result, the depiction of the colorful architectural environment in the mid-nineteenth century illustrated by the experiences of Hacı Stefanis Kalfa and accompanied by information gathered from additional documents sheds light on the other aspects of ethnic diversity reflected on the architectural environment.

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³⁶ The Sanayi-i Nefise Mekteb-i Âlisi (School of Fine Arts) was built in Istanbul in 1883. Sibel Bozdoğan (2002). *Modernizm ve Ulusun İnşası*, İstanbul: Metis Publishing House, p. 41. Between the time when the Corps of Royal Architects became inactive in 1831 to when the Sanayi-i Nefise Mekteb-i Âlisi was founded, it was not possible to breed architects within the Empire, and instead Ottoman subjects that received architectural training outside were utilized. Furthermore, the Corps of Royal Architects was an establishment that focused on providing education based on actual construction practice rather than receiving a theory-based architectural education.