

St. George Exorinos

Known as the Nestorian church, the church of St. George Exorinos was built in 1359 and enlarged extensively only a year after its completion. Medieval chronicler Leontios Macheras writing in the sixteenth century spoke of the church’s founder, Sir Francis Lakhnas who “according to his faith did much charity for the good of his soul and built the Nestorian church from the foundations.”

A unique monument of the Nestorian faith, the building was constructed of excellent cut stone and reflects the European Gothic style of time. Its original design consisted of a simple nave and three bays of vaulting with an apse. During the enlargement, two side aisles of only two bays of vaulting each were added. The western bay of the nave extends beyond the line of the side aisles, forming a square projection of the building. In this bay is the founder’s tomb, which consists of an arched recess decorated with mouldings in a style that is later than that of the rest of the church. On the west side is a rose window above a broad but plain doorway Frescoes, with Syriac inscriptions, were remarkably preserved until the end of the nineteenth century, but only a few traces remain today.

During the Ottoman period the Nestorian church was used by the Turks as a stable for camels. With the arrival of the British in 1878, the Greeks were allowed to live again within the walled city and once a year, the animals would be led out, the church would be cleaned and the Orthodox would have a liturgy inside. This peculiar celebration took place until 1905, when a Greek of Famagusta, Michael Louizides, asked permission from the then Governor King-Harman for the building to again be used as a church. Permission granted, the Greeks and Turks of Famagusta worked together to repair and clean the church. Carpenter Kiamil Reis did all the woodwork for the interior. When asked by Louizides what he was owed, he refused payment and instead answered: “Shame master! Whom could I accept money from, you or from the Saint?”

The church was re-sanctified as St. George Exorinos by Archbishop Cyril in 1906. Although enhanced in the 1930s, the church has remained structurally intact throughout the centuries. There are several legends related to the building. One of the most interesting is that anyone who wished to get rid of an enemy should collect some dust from the floor of this church and leave it in the enemy’s house. The enemy would then either die within a year or be forced to leave the island. Another version of the same legend maintained that the dust should be thrown over the walls of Famagusta to ensure that the enemy would leave the town within the year. But, beware, if the person seeking to eliminate an enemy crossed the walls with even traces of dust, he himself would be the one never to return to Famagusta!

Ο Άγιος Γεώργιος Εξορινός

Η εκκλησία, γνωστή ως εκκλησία των Νεστοριανών, κτίστηκε το 1359 και επεκτάθηκε μόλις ένα χρόνο μετά την αποπεράτωση της. Ο χρονικογράφος του Μεσαίωνα Λεόντιος Μαχαιράς αναφέρει ότι ο κτήτορας Κυρ Φράνσις Λάχνας, ένας νεστοριανός έμπορας «Ο ποίος επολόμαν κατά την πίστιν του πολλά ψυσικά, και έκτισεν και την εκκλησίαν τους Νεστούριδες απού γης...».

Το κτήριο αυτό, κάλλιστο δείγμα του Γοτθικού ρυθμού του 14ου αιώνα, ήταν ένα μοναδικό μνημείο του Νεστοριανού δόγματος. Κτίστηκε με έξοχα πελεκημένες πέτρες και αρχικά αποτελείτο από ένα απλό κλίτος με τρία θολωτά διάχωρα και αψίδα. Κατά την επέκταση προστέθηκαν δύο πλάγια κλίτη με μόνο δύο διάχωρα το καθένα. Το δυτικό διάχωρο του κεντρικού κλίτους, που προεκτείνεται της γραμμής των πλάγιων κλιτών, δημιουργεί μια τετράγωνη προεξοχή μέσα στην οποία υπάρχει τάφος ιδρυτού, που αποτελείται από μια τοξωτή εσοχή με ανάγλυφο διάκοσμο, μεταγενέστερου ρυθμού από την υπόλοιπη εκκλησία. Στη δυτική πλευρά πάνω από μια μεγάλη αλλά απλή είσοδο υπάρχει ροζέττα. Οι τοιχογραφίες, με συριακές επιγραφές, διατηρήθηκαν σε εξαιρετικά καλή κατάσταση μέχρι το τέλος του δέκατου ένατου αιώνα και μερικά ίχνη τους σώζονται ακόμη και σήμερα.

Κατά την Οθωμανική περίοδο η εκκλησία των Νεστοριανών χρησιμοποιείτο από τους Τούρκους σαν στάβλος καμήλων. Μετά την άφιξη των Άγγλων το 1878, κάτι πολύ περίεργο συνέβαινε εκεί: μια φορά τον χρόνο έβγαζαν τα ζώα από το κτήριο, η εκκλησία καθαριζόταν και οι Ορθόδοξοι έκαναν εκεί λειτουργία. Αυτό συνεχίστηκε μέχρι το 1905 όταν ένας Ελληνοκύπριος της Αμμοχώστου με όραμα, ο Μιχαλάκης Λουϊζίδης, ζήτησε από τον τότε Άγγλο κυβερνήτη, τον King-Harman, να μετατρέψει και πάλι το κτήριο σε εκκλησία. Έλληνες και Τούρκοι δούλεψαν μαζί για τον καθαρισμό της εκκλησίας και ο μαραγκός Κιαμίλ Ρεϊς έκανε όλες τις ξυλουργικές εργασίες για τον εσωτερικό χώρο. Όταν ο Λουϊζίδης τον ρώτησε το κόστος της πληρωμής του, ο Κιαμίλ απάντησε «Ντροπή μάστρε, από ποιόν να πάρω χρήματα, από σένα ή από τον Άγιο».

Την εκκλησία μύρωσε ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Κύριλλος το 1906. Αν και επιδιορθώθηκε την δεκαετία του 1930, η εκκλησία παρέμεινε άθικτη διαμέσου των αιώνων. Η παράδοση λέει ότι όποιος θέλει να ξεφορτωθεί ένα εχθρό, μαζεύει σκόνη από το δάπεδο της εκκλησίας και το αφήνει στο σπίτι του εχθρού, ο οποίος μέσα σ’ένα χρόνο θα πεθάνει ή θα εγκαταλείψει το νησί. Μια άλλη εκδοχή της ίδιας ιστορίας λέει ότι η σκόνη πρέπει να ριχτεί πάνω από τα τείχη και έξω από την Αμμόχωστο ώστε ο εχθρός να εγκαταλείψει την πόλη εντός του έτους. Αν όμως κάποιος περάσει τα τείχη με έστω και ίχνη σκόνης (πάνω του) δεν θα επιστρέψει ποτέ στην πόλη.

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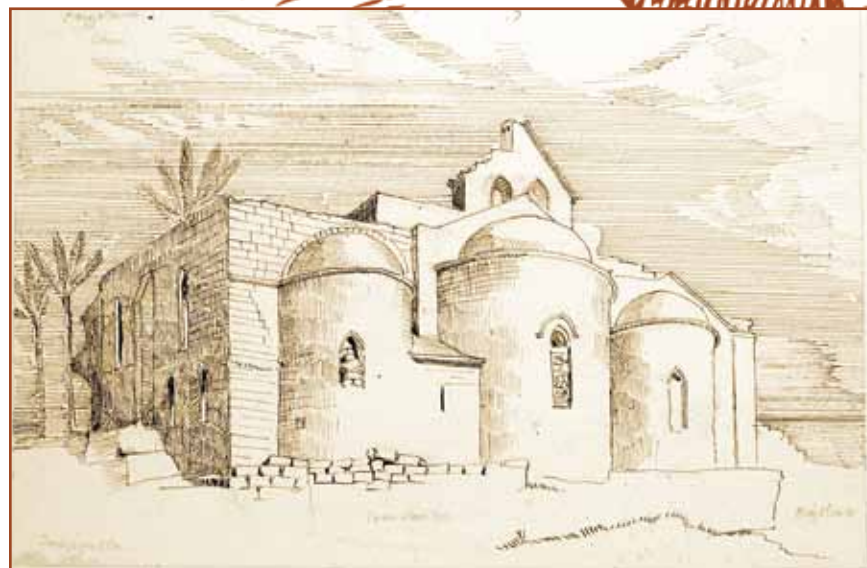
Nasturi Kilisesi olarak da bilinen St. George Exorinos Kilisesi 1359 yılında inşa edilmiş ve yapımından sadece bir yıl sonra büyük ölçüde genişletilmiştir. Onaltıncı yüzyılda yazan ortaçağ tarihçisi Leontios Macheras, yazılarında kilise kurucusu Sir Francis Lakhnas’tan bahseder. Öyle ki, Sir Lakhnas “ kendi inanışına göre, ruhunun iyiliği için birçok bağış yapmış ve Nasturi Kilisesini temelinden itibaren inşa etmiştir”.

Nasturi inanışının eşsiz bir eseri olan bina, mükemmel kesilmiş taşlardan inşa edilmiş ve zamanın Avrupa Gotik stilini yansıtmaktadır. Orjinal tasarımında kilisenin sade bir nefi ve bir apsise sahip üç tonozu mevcuttur. Genişletme esnasında iki kenar kanadına iki kenar geçişi ve yarım daire şeklinde ilaveler yapılmıştır. Batı yanında bulunan tonoz, kanadın dışına kadar uzanır ve binanın kare şeklindeki çıkıntısını oluşturur. Kilisenin kurucusunun mezarı da bu kısımda bulunur. Mezar pervazlarla süslenmiş bir kemerli girintiye sahiptir ve kilisenin geri kalanında hakim olan stilden daha sonrayı temsil eden bir stilde yapılmıştır. Batı yanında bulunan geniş ancak sade giriş Freskinin üzerindeki Süryanice yazıtları olan roze pencere, ondokuzuncu yüzyılın sonuna kadar önemli ölçüde korunmuştur; ancak günümüzde bundan sadece birkaç kalıntı mevcuttur.

Osmanlı döneminde Nasturi kilisesi Türkler tarafından develeri için ahır olarak kullanılmıştır. 1878’de İngilizlerin adaya gelmesiyle, Rumların yine surlar içerisinde yaşamasına izin verilmiş ve yılda bir kez hayvanların kilise dışına çıkarılması ve kilisenin temizlemesiyle, Ortodoksların içeride ayin yapmasına izin verilmeye başlanmıştı. Bu özel kutlama 1905 yılına kadar, Mağusalı Rum, Michael Louizides’in binanın yeniden kilise olarak kullanılması için dönemin Valisi Kral-Harman’dan izin istemesine kadar sürdü. İznin verilmesiyle, Mağusalı Rumlar ve Türkler birlikte çalışarak kiliseyi tamir edip temizlediler. Marangoz Kamil Reis bina içerisindeki tüm ahşap işlerini yaptı. Loizides kendisine ne kadar borcu olduğunu sorduğunda ise Kamil Reis ödenmeyi reddedi ve “ Beni utandırmayın efendim! Ben ne sizden ne de Aziz’den para kabul edemem ki” dedi.

Kilise 1906 yılında St. George Exorinos’ta Başpiskopos Cyril tarafından yeniden kutsanmıştır. 1930 yıllarında yapısal olarak güçlendirilmiş ancak bunun dışında Kiliseye asırlardır el değmemiştir. Bina ile ilgili birçok efsane mevcuttur. Bunlardan en ilginç olanı, düşmanından kurtulmak arzusunda olan herhangi bir kişinin, Kilisenin zeminindeki tozlardan alması ve bunu düşmanının evine bırakması gerektiği ile ilgili olandır. Düşman bunun sonrasında bir yıl içerisinde ölecek veya adayı terk etmeye zorlanacaktır. Aynı efsanenin bir başka anlatımına göre ise, düşmanın bir yıl içerisinde şehri terk etmesi için alınan tozların Mağusa şehrinin surlarına atılması gerektiğidir. Ancak dikkatli olunuz! düşmanından kurtulmaya çalışan bir kişi surları üzerinde sadece toz zerrelere varken bile geçerse, kendisi de bir kez daha Mağusa’ya dönemeyecektir!

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The Costas and Rita Severis Foundation is dedicated to raising awareness of Cyprus' rich cultural heritage.

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info@severis.org www.severis.org

