MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE: THE ROLE OF RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON

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This paper discusses the role of Richard Francis Burton in engendering and perpetuating a number of misconceptions about Islamic architecture. The focus is on the notions of architectural plagiarism, architectural lawlessness and thoughtless syncretism, irregularity and disproportionateness, and Islamic architecture's incompatibility with the demands of modern times. Those ideas signified the salient features of most Orientalist theories of Islamic architecture, one of whose originators was Burton himself. The ideas, in turn, were reflective of the Western colonization and imperialism ethos, which befitted the versatile personality of Burton and its scholarly as well as military dispositions. The paper focuses on the context of Burton's thought which revolved around his Orientalist and espionage mission in Egypt; his ideas that resulted from an interplay of scholarship, egotism and imperialism; the implications of architecture as the highest expression of a people's artistic feeling; the meaning of plagiarism in Islamic architecture; and the relationship between modernization and Islamic architecture.

Keywords: Burton, Islamic architecture, plagiarism, Orientalism, modernization.

Introduction

Orientalism is defined by *Cambridge Dictionary* as "Western ideas about the Middle East and about East and Southeast Asia, especially ideas that are too simple or not accurate about these societies being mysterious, never changing, or not able to develop in a modern way

without Western help."[1] Prior to the end of the 18th century, Orientalism revolved around a semi-scholarship that treated the languages and literatures of the Eastern world. It also integrated Christian apologetics and polemics into the growing corpus. Of all the Eastern world – or the "other" - the Islamic world and Muslims were the main concern as well as target.

Such was understandable, for since its inception, the Islamic military and civilizational presence was rapidly expanding towards the domains of the Byzantine Empire and Europe. In the process, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Turkey and North Africa were firstly brought under the Muslim rule, followed by Spain, Sicily and parts of France. The expansions reached another levels when the Ottoman Turks took control of the Balkans and made significant inroads into Central Europe in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. The capture in 1453 of Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium, apart from symbolizing the military might of the Ottomans and from crowning their extraordinary military achievements, also sent a message to all the international protagonists that a new "world order" was in the offing.

To these astonishing developments "Europe could respond with very little except fear and a kind of awe." Islam eventually came to symbolize terror and devastation, and Muslims the demonic hordes of hated barbarians and the followers of one whom they called an impostor and the beast of Apocalypse. Islam thus morphed into a lasting trauma. "Until the end of the 17th century the 'Ottoman peril' lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger, and in time European civilization incorporated that peril and its lore, its great events, figures, virtues, and vices, as something woven into the fall of life."[2]

After the end of the 18th century – chiefly owing to Napoleon Bonaparte's brief campaign in Egypt and Syria (1798-1801) - Orientalism expanded enormously. Edward Said calls this new phase "modern Orientalism".[3] The phase was more systematic and more scholarly an enterprise. It was a time when Europe came "to know the Orient more scientifically, to live in it with greater authority and discipline than ever before. But what mattered to Europe was the expanded scope and the much greater refinement given its techniques for receiving the Orient."[4]

Hence, although Napoleon's campaign was a military failure, it nevertheless was a huge scientific and cultural success. It connoted a watershed in the cultural and civilizational relations together with exchanges between Islam and the West. Thus, out of the Napoleonic expedition

there issued a whole lot of Orientalists and a whole series of Orientalist "textual children". What binds together all those textual children "is not only their common background in Oriental legend and experience but also their learned reliance on the Orient as a kind of womb out of which they were brought forth."[5]

Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890) was at once a product and specimen of modern Orientalism. He was a British explorer, writer, geographer, translator, soldier, diplomat, cartographer, spy and ethnographer. In a way, he epitomized the new Orientalist proclivity, exuberance, scope and competence, leaving an undeletable mark on the discipline and even on his age. He was a personification of the "perfect Orientalism man" (scholar and explorer). He authored over 40 books and countless articles. His best-known achievements include the book *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* and an unexpurgated translation of *One Thousand and One Nights* (Arabian Nights) as a collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian anecdotes and legends.

In his book on the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to the holiest sites of Islam, Burton - pretending to be a Muslim and disguised as a Persian mirza (chief and nobleman) and a Sunni shaykh, doctor, magician and sufi (darwish) - describes characters, customs, behavioural patterns and physical surroundings. The book is "a treasury of material on Arab life, beliefs, manners and morals; detailed descriptions of religious ceremonies, mosques, temples, etc.; and a variety of ethnographic, economic, and geographical information. Whether telling of the crowded caravan to Mecca, engaging in minute analysis of Bedouin character, waxing lyrical about a desert landscape, or reporting conversations with townsfolk or fellow pilgrims, Burton gives us a vivid picture of the region and its people."[6]

While in Cairo before departing for Makkah and Madinah for the pilgrimage, Burton presents his views on Islamic architecture. He does so as much briefly as effectively, and above all within the framework of mosque architecture. For him, "perhaps no Eastern city affords more numerous or more accessible specimens of mosque architecture than Cairo."[7] In this way, Burton echoes the sentiment of the majority of other Orientalist scholars, like Edward William Lane (d. 1876) who writes that "the finest specimens of Arabian architecture are found in the Egyptian metropolis (Cairo) and its environs."[8]

At the time of Burton's visit, there were between 300 and 400 mosques in the city of Cairo. However, at the same time in a footnote

he refers to Joseph Pitts of Exeter who in an exaggerated manner articulated that Cairo in his day (1678-1693) contained 5 or 6,000 public and private mosques (probably counting designated places of worship in the rest of public and private buildings as well, because the number of mosques and public buildings in the city was then the same).

Burton's views of Islamic architecture are remarkable, thought-provoking and engaging. They are simultaneously indiscriminate and erratic. They reflect and further cement the prevalent Western mentality of the day that has just recently fully discovered and has come into direct contact with the idea and physical spectacle of Islamic architecture. Burton cannot help observing – and adjudicating - Islamic architecture from the monolith Western vantage points of them-versus-us and them-inferior-to-us. Though not a scholar of architecture, his views went a long way in forming the core of the Orientalism-inspired theories of Islamic architecture, which unfortunately still persist even at the present time not merely in the Western, but also the Muslim educational, professional and cultural circles.

The above assertion can be corroborated by the fact that at the end of Edward William Lane's book "*An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*", in Appendix F as part of Editor's Notes, there is a comprehensive narrative of Islamic (Arabian) architecture. It was composed by Edward Stanley Lane-Poole (d. 1931), a British Orientalist and archaeologist, who was a nephew of Edward William Lane and the editor of the latter's above-mentioned book. The narrative consists of twenty-one printed pages and a couple of illustrations. It represents a microcosm of the Orientalist understanding of Islamic (Arabian) architecture, to which Burton, certainly, had greatly contributed. It could be one of the earliest accounts of that genre. Indeed, at the time when architecture as a systematic enterprise and independent science, generally, was in its advanced infancy, the interdisciplinary views of people with such a high calibre as Burton, mattered. They were almost as important for building and organizing architectural knowledge as those of built environment professionals.

This paper discusses the main aspects of Burton's perceptions and assessments of Islamic architecture while writing about Cairo. It aims to put the man's observations into perspective; to reveal how much Orientalism- and the West-centric the narratives and systems of thought about Islamic architecture still are; to allude to the ways some perennial misconceptions relating to Islamic architecture are to be done away with; and to suggest approaches for the revival of authentic Islamic architecture

at the planes of philosophy, theory and practice.[9] The paper is divided into the following sections: the context; an interplay of scholarship, individualism and imperialism; architecture as the highest expression of a people's artistic feeling; Islamic architectural plagiarism; bogus modernization and Islamic architecture.

The Context

Burton was in Cairo in 1853 on his way to Makkah and Madinah for his secret pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). He spent in the city slightly more than a month, from the end of May till the beginning of July, 1853. He left Egypt on a pilgrim ship from the Suez port on the 6th July. The holy month of Ramadan was in June and Burton had to fast too. He ostensibly did, but the days were long (sixteen consecutive hours and a quarter) and it affected him. He thought, judging from his personal experience, that the "blessed month" made all people "unhealthy and unamiable". While in Cairo, he resided in the Jamaliyah Wakalah (Caravanserai or Khan) which combined the offices of hotel, lodging-house and store. There as a doctor he also treated his patients.

At the time of Burton's stay in Cairo, the country was ruled by Abbas Helmy I (Abbas Pasha) (d. 1854) as the Ottoman wali (governor or viceroy) of Egypt and Sudan. He was a grandson of Muhammad Ali (d. 1849), also an Ottoman wali in Egypt and the founder of the Muhammad Ali dynasty in Egypt and Sudan. From his young age, Abbas I was trained and prepared for government service. He was expected to perpetuate and advance further the modernization and westernization efforts initiated by his grandfather.

However, he was largely vilified as selfish, secretive, cruel and a reactionary, perhaps exaggeratedly by his many opponents and the jealous members of the elite club. He showed himself to be rather a traditionalist. "As viceroy, Abbas responded unfavourably to the sweeping administrative and economic reforms initiated by Muhammad Ali by closing down or neglecting the public and military schools and factories. He reduced the armed forces, stopped the construction of the Delta Dam, and opposed the construction of the Suez Canal, which had been proposed by the French."[10] "It was typical of his policy that he closed the school of languages and the translation bureau and sent their director, al-Tahtawi, to virtual exile in the Sudan." The French, who had played so large a part in Muhammad Ali's reforms, fell into disfavour and the British, the former's bitter rivals, were somewhat preferred instead for sheer

diplomatic purposes and for their help in Egypt's unceasing wrangles with the Ottomans.[11]

Robert Hunter describes Abbas' reign as "paced and measured change".[12] Unlike his two successors, Sa'id Pasha (d. 1863) and Isma'il Pasha (d. 1895) – "who launched an active program of development" and "who accelerated economic changes begun earlier" respectively - Abbas did not receive a European education, nor did he speak French. The two successors and not Abbas were inspired by the father of the dynasty, Muhammad Ali, and were destined to try to genuinely fulfil his development and modernization (westernization) vision. As a result, they "felt comfortable with Europeans and had friendly feelings for them."[13]

Contrariwise, according to Wayne Vucinich and Peter Stearns, as narrated in Wikipedia, "Abbas was inaccessible to adventurers bent on plundering Egypt and Sudan of riches, and kicked out all foreign business. However, at the insistence of the British Government, he allowed the construction of a railway from Alexandria to Cairo." "Due to his negative policies towards Europeans and their influence, Abbas was not liked by them and in time his reputation was exaggerated and demonized to portray him as worse than he actually was. After he died the number of Europeans in Egypt rose drastically from 3,000, in 1850, to 90,000, in 1882, and 200,000 by 1900."[14] Nonetheless, all the three rulers were united in developing and cherishing an ostentatious courtly style, "imitating the ruling houses of Europe".[15]

Burton felt the consequences of this anti-European sentiment that was characterizing the rule of Abbas I. The sentiment was steadily taking hold in the public consciousness and was gradually attempted yet to be institutionalized. The mood rendered Burton's mission all the more challenging and risky, and of course proportionally gratifying.

Therefore, his wife, Isabel, proudly writes in the preface to the book *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* – implying the whole journey from Egypt to Makkah and Madinah, all of which were under the Ottoman control – that the book holds a special import. That is so because it narrates how exceptionally and dangerously the pilgrimage was accomplished. She then dwells on the significance – and danger – of the pilgrimage itself that was undertaken to the "Holy Shrines of the Moslem world in the far-away desert, where no white man, European, or Christian, could enter (save as a Moslem), or even approach, without certain death. They are more jealously guarded than the 'Holy Grail'."[16]

Isabel continues in her preface about her husband's sacrifices

necessitated by the task, which he nevertheless deeply enjoyed: "My husband had lived as a Dervish in Sind, which greatly helped him; and he studied every separate thing until he was master of it, even apprenticing himself to a blacksmith to learn how to make horse-shoes and to shoe his own horses. It meant living with his life in his hand, amongst the strangest and wildest companions, adopting their unfamiliar manners, living for nine months in the hottest and most unhealthy climate, upon repulsive food; it meant complete and absolute isolation from everything that makes life tolerable, from all civilisation, from all his natural habits; the brain at high tension, but the mind never wavering from the role he had adopted; but he liked it, he was happy in it, he felt at home in it, and in this Book he tells you how he did it, and what he saw."[17]

Burton himself remarks that Egyptians generally hated and despised Europeans. He knew that more than anybody else, in that he was one of those who had mixed with them in "Oriental disguise". Nothing stood between him and their true colours. He writes to this effect: "It appears unintelligible, still it is not less true, that Egyptians who have lived as servants under European roofs for years, retain the liveliest loathing for the manners and customs of their masters. Few Franks, save those who have mixed with the Egyptians in Oriental disguise, are aware of their repugnance to, and contempt for, Europeans - so well is the feeling veiled under the garb of innate politeness, and so great is their reserve when conversing with those of strange religions. I had a good opportunity of ascertaining the truth when the first rumour of a Russian war arose. Almost every able-bodied man spoke of hastening to the Jihad, - a crusade, or holy war, - and the only thing that looked like apprehension was the too eager depreciation of their foes."

But of all, the British were hated and despised the most. Colloquially, they were regarded as Satans (*shayāṭīn*). They were seen as arrogant and deceitful imperialists and expansionists, ever ready to do mischief to Islam and Muslims, by themselves or through the protégés of theirs. The Austrians, Italians, Greeks and Maltese were also reviled, albeit not as much.

Interestingly, though, the French – "our neighbours across the Channel" as Burton calls them[18] - were looked on with favour and were rather popular among Egyptians. So much so that people seem to have preferred nothing else but "the French yoke" while longing "for European rule". Burton attributes the circumstance – admittedly not enviously, but feeling obliged to state the obvious truth - to the diplomatic skill and national dignity of the French.

The widespread attitude could likewise be connected to the nature of Napoleon's expedition in Egypt and people's overall experiences with the French. Far from being ideal and fully trustworthy, Napoleon's first manifesto to Egyptians contained some supposedly attractive terms, such as, the removal of the Turks from power in Egypt; the introduction of Egyptians in positions of political influence regarding internal matters; respect for religious traditions; and better social and economic conditions.[19] It is not surprising, therefore, that the year of Napoleon's invasion is sometimes described in scholarly spheres as "the beginning of a reversal of the natural order and (of) the corruption or destruction of all things."[20] To Edward Said, differences between the British and French in the Orient centred on the realism and expediency of the former and the idealism and fantasies of the latter.[21] The former demystified and discredited the Orient, the latter tried to privately romanticize and perpetuate it. Clashes over it were also conflicts of ideas and visions. The former was bent on destroying – killing – it.

At any rate, Burton happily makes out that life for Europeans in Cairo was not as bad as it could be. There was still a level of normalcy. Common sense and the impact of Islam's general teachings prevailed. However, one yet had to be vigilant at all times. He underlines that the city's numerous mosques were open to the traveller's inspection. "And Europeans by following the advice of their hotel-keeper have penetrated, and can penetrate, into any one they please." Visiting especially mosques with stipulated precautions, and generally moving around with a degree of discretion and care, was sufficient. Abuses were exceptions rather than rules. He then comments that "when at Cairo, I heard occasionally of a Frank being spat at and insulted, but the instances were rare."[22]

An Interplay of Scholarship, Individualism and Imperialism

Burton was a versatile and very resourceful personality. He was a bit of everything. It is hard to pinpoint a vocation, or a talent, and show that he excelled in it more than in others. Simply put, he was matchlessly himself, Richard Francis Burton, a unique hero who was known to his countrymen by his works, not by his careers and titles. According to his wife, Isabel, "during the last 48 years of his life, he lived only for the benefit and for the welfare of England and of his countrymen, and of the human race at large."[23]

At the same time, Burton was a person full of contrasts, a maverick. His eccentric and determined personality always coveted to be the best

and on top. What was dangerous and impossible for others was normal and inviting for him, and what was normal for others was mundane and undeserving for him. He did not hesitate to fly into the face of danger to prove a point either to himself or to others. He was a perfectionist. When his application for three years' leave of absence on special duty from India to Maskat "for the purpose of removing that opprobrium to modern adventure, the huge white blot which in our maps still notes the Eastern and the Central regions of Arabia" was rejected on the grounds that "the contemplated journey was of too dangerous a nature", Burton's true self was stirred and he was left with little choice. "What remained for me but to prove, by trial, that what might be perilous to other travellers was safe to me? The 'experimentum crucis' (crucial experiment) was a visit to al-Hijaz, at once the most difficult and the most dangerous point by which a European can enter Arabia."

Burton describes his willpower and strength of character thus: "Thoroughly tired of 'progress' and of 'civilisation'; curious to see with my eyes what others are content to 'hear with ears', namely, Moslem inner life in a really Mohammedan country; and longing, if truth be told, to set foot on that mysterious spot which no vacation tourist has yet described, measured, sketched and photographed, I resolved to resume my old character of a Persian wanderer, a 'Darwaysh', and to make the attempt."[24]

And to his critics and detractors, Burton simply conveys: "Judge not; especially when you are ignorant of the case which you are judging."[25] As if to suggest to everybody that they and their criticism and the person as well as that which they criticise, are at different levels. They are worlds apart and instead of recklessly criticising, credit ought to be given where credit is due. He let his deeds and accomplishments speak for themselves.

In any case, Burton's personality was a mixture of remarkable scholarship, unprecedented individualism (egotism) and applied imperialism. Edward Said brands Burton as an Orientalist scholar and a gifted enthusiast whose contributions fall within the genre of imaginative and travel literature, which strengthened the established divisions "between the various geographical, temporal and racial departments of the Orient." "By the end of the 19th century these achievements were materially abetted by the European occupation of the entire Near Orient (with the exception of parts of the Ottoman Empire, which was swallowed up after 1918). To colonize meant at first the identification - indeed, the creation - of interests; these could be commercial, communicational, religious, military and cultural."[26]

Orientalism and colonization quickly became twins, one deriving its compass, strength and legitimacy from the other. The servants of one, by the same token, were also the servants of the other – including Burton and his intellectual and material undertakings. Demarcation lines between the two realms and their personnel were fading away by the day.

Burton's personal passions, mainstream erudition and avant-garde character were often at loggerheads with each other. It was unpredictable when one of them would prevail over the others and would dominate his individuality. However, when meticulously reading his works, correlating the contents with the author and his inner universes, one can easily sense whenever an element of this triad rises above the rest and starts taking over the author's disposition. Hence, while reading his works, one can read Burton as well. He has woven himself into his books. His books are himself-incarnate.

That is why to Burton's wife, publishing the memorial edition of his *magnum opus Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* was the best way to erect a less material, but more imperishable, monument to his name. Accordingly, preserving and knowing Burton's books meant preserving and knowing himself. Discovering and celebrating them meant discovering and celebrating him. The explorer all of a sudden became set to be explored and the traveller to be travelled towards. She then proclaims at the end of her preface to the edition: "Let us reverently raise up this 'Monument', *aere perennius* (immortal and more lasting than bronze), to his everlasting memory."[27]

One thing remains certain, though, namely that an impeccable and lasting accord between the three personality dimensions of Burton was impossible. His was a personality of combativeness between his passions, scholarship and character. Everything he wrote testifies to such a state, asserts Edward Said. For instance, "he seems to have taken a special sort of infantile pleasure in demonstrating that he knew more than any professional scholar, that he had acquired many more details than they had, that he could handle the material with more wit and tact and freshness than they."[28]

Some of Burton's critics were unhappy about the personal and individualistic nature of his narratives, and about the extent his individuality manifested itself in and through them, calling into question the extent of his works' objectivity and their scientific depth. But he did not budge, retorting as overconfidently as self-righteously. He writes about *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* that he has

laboured to make its nature correspond with its name, simply because "it is the personal that interests mankind." Instead of being a weakness, the questioned character of the book, to Burton, is its strength. He afterwards continues in his defence: "Many may not follow my example; but some perchance will be curious to see what measures I adopted, in order to appear suddenly as an Eastern upon the stage of Oriental life; and as the recital may be found useful by future adventurers, I make no apology for the egotistical semblance of the narrative. Those who have felt the want of some 'silent friend' to aid them with advice, when it must not be asked, will appreciate what may appear to the uninterested critic mere outpourings of a mind full of self."

Be that as it may, all Burton's interests were either overshadowed by or were fully saturated with the concerns and potential gains of the British and, to a lesser extent, European as a whole: imperialism. The stage for all-out West-East (Occident-Orient) military, civilizational and ideological clashes were set long ago and virtually everything that ever since was happening on the West-East axis was happening in the background of the former. Everything was an integral part of, and was shaped by, it. The secondary goals of all other enterprises served but the clearly defined primary goals of the former. Positively, the orb of imperialism was the only prism through which the Orient was observed and in terms of which the results were marketable to the leaderships and general public of the West (Occident).

Such was the case especially with regard to Burton in his capacity as a British soldier, diplomat and spy. Regardless of what he might have thought in his additional capacities as an explorer, writer, geographer, translator, cartographer and ethnographer, for Burton the Orient was defined exclusively by material possession, by a material imagination, as it were. "England had defeated Napoleon, evicted France: what the English mind surveyed was an imperial domain which by the 1880s had become an unbroken patch of British-held territory, from the Mediterranean to India. To write about Egypt, Syria, or Turkey, as much as traveling in them, was a matter of touring the realm of political will, political management and political definition. The territorial imperative was extremely compelling."[29]

The principal and secondary objectives of Burton's secretive pilgrimage and of his writing a book about it clearly make allusion to his scholarly, idiosyncratic and imperialistic self. Above all else, nonetheless, he embodies the sweeping imperialistic (colonial) culture, most faithfully serving it. No wonder that his last words about Egypt, before leaving it,

portray it as a prize to be won by any competent and "lucky" European power. Egypt denoted a true treasure with infinite potentials. It was a jackpot.

Burton speaks as though the West enjoyed the right of claiming and controlling Egypt with a focus on the former's ever-expanding colonization appetite and aims. With his being a trained soldier and spy fully coming to light, he next presents a blueprint as to how to go about securing Egypt and optimizing its potentials. In an instant, nothing else mattered, neither the architecture, nor civilization, nor socio-economic and political reality, nor manners and customs of the place and its people. The imperialistic impulse eclipsed them all. It almost impaired the author's thinking.

Burton thus elaborates: "But whatever European nation secures Egypt will win a treasure. Moated on the north and south by seas, with a glacis of impassable deserts to the eastward and westward, capable of supporting an army of 180,000 men, of paying a heavy tribute, and yet able to show a considerable surplus of revenue, this country in western hands will command India, and by a ship-canal between Pelusium and Suez would open the whole of Eastern Africa. There is no longer much to fear from the fanaticism of the people, and a little prudence would suffice to command the interests of the Mosque. The chiefs of corporations, in the present state of popular feeling, would offer even less difficulty to an invader or a foreign ruler than the Olema (scholars). Briefly, Egypt is the most tempting prize which the East holds out to the ambition of Europe, not excepted even the Golden Horn."[30]

Architecture as the Highest Expression of a People's Artistic Feeling

For centuries Cairo was an Islamic capital of culture and civilization. It signified a confluence of the Islamic East and the Islamic West, and of all the ideas and influences associated with different epochs and their different socio-political protagonists. In a sense, Cairo was a small-scale version of the Islamic cultural selfhood and its civilizational trajectory. That is one of the reasons why Egypt informally and fondly is called *umm al-dunya* (the Mother of the World and of all Civilization). The "mother" of the Islamic world - in the sense that it more often than not occupied a central stage in the evolution of Islamic civilization – certainly it was. And there is nothing that could attest to it better than hundreds of architectural masterpieces and monuments that stood the test of time and that constantly remind people of the country's long and rich history.

Burton, too, was struck by this prominent facet of Egypt's main city, Cairo. As a city of architectural marvels, functioning virtually as an open-air museum, Cairo as such featured prominently in the *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*. For indeed, speaking about Cairo without speaking about its architecture is like speaking about the wonder of the sun without giving emphasis to the importance of its light, or about birds without underlining the intricacy of the art of flying. Doing so would be as much unfair as inaccurate and deficient a description. The two dimensions are inextricably linked.

Burton uses this opportunity to theorize about Islamic architecture, giving preference to the substance and quality of his discussions over the sheer quantity and scope. He does that in the context of his survey of Cairo's leading mosques and, to some extent, in the context of his life in the Jamaliyah Wakalah (Caravanserai or Khan). Details are found in Chapter IV, titled "Life in the Wakalah", and in Chapter VI, which is titled "The Mosque".

While dwelling on the themes of Islamic architecture in general and mosque architecture in particular, Burton defines architecture as "the highest expression of a people's artistic feeling - highest because it includes all others."[31] As a scholar, this was expected from the author, in that architecture, most fittingly, is perceived in every time and space as a display, in addition to being an index, of a people's cultural and civilizational consciousness, identity and growth. Architecture, therefore, is rightly defined - by way of illustration - as an expression of beliefs and values, and of people's lifestyle(s); as a reflection of the permanence of a civilization; as the process of manifesting society into the physical world;[32] and as the art and system of planning, designing and constructing buildings with the intention of framing, facilitating and improving people's lives. In short, as an art, architecture is the mother and source of all arts, and as a system, it is a pattern of, and a complement to, all other systems.

However, there was something else in Burton's assessment of architecture, which was tainted by his imperialistic penchant and which rendered the seeming scholarly proclamation a poisoned chalice. If truth be told, the author spoke all the time about the rapid decline of Islamic architecture, trying to prove that it had run out of creative ideas and technical proficiency. It was proving static each day, yet moving backwards, and was unable to find its feet in a modern and fraught-with-novel-challenges world. It was furthermore becoming a burden and liability. It was declining at an alarming rate, dragging to the abyss of

backwardness and apathy the rest of Islamic cultural and civilizational segments. Its omnipresent qualities and authority, in a flash, became a means of impairment and loss, morphing into the most hindering forces in the society.

As per the hidden meanings of the definition of Burton, such a state of architecture was an unmistaken sign of a people's lack of orientation and purpose not just in the fields of art and architecture, but also in all other fields that call for a vision, originality and all-round productivity. By extension, that also implies the totality of culture and civilization, because the former stand for the basis and soul of the latter. As a small digression, if beauty is the splendor of the truth, as affirmed by Plato, the lack of it, it stands to reason, is a breeding ground for and a symptom of falsehood. In this manner, Burton was calling for and was simultaneously justifying an impending colonization of Egypt. The place was ripe for the arrival of a representative of the West and its new (modern) civilizational model. Egypt needed to be rescued from the clutches of regression and non-civilization. Its treasures were needed for globalizing and also fuelling the westernization drive. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that colonization was always propagated and practiced flying the flags of civilization, emancipation and progress. The Westerners were projected as the civilizers, liberators and saviours of the backward and savage "others". The processes of colonization and westernization were thus akin to proselytization and missionary works, and were reminiscent of Christian evangelization. It was even deemed a holy duty incumbent upon the civilised nations of Europe to colonize the backward nations of the world and to help them by acculturating and civilising them. The whole procedure denoted a form of cultural euthanasia, so to speak, that is, a form of cultural mercy killing or assisted suicide.

In terms of civilization, Burton describes Egypt as follows: "The land of the Pharaohs is becoming civilised, and unpleasantly so: nothing can be more uncomfortable than its present middle state, between barbarism and the reverse."[33] He similarly says about his host in the Wakalah that he had become a civilised man because he sat on chairs, ate with a fork, talked European politics, and had learned to admire, if not to understand, liberty and liberal ideas (as the most fundamental principle of the European Enlightenment).

Having said that, in addition to all the titles and affiliations of Burton, he likewise could be classified as a Western civilization missionary and evangelist, together with a Western colonization crusader and apologist. He never minced his words while attempting to illustrate – according to

his own prejudiced standards, of course – how backward and inept Islamic architectural mentality was. His vocabulary borders on grossly inappropriate and vulgar. He uses such idioms as, for instance, "exceedingly dirty", "poor-looking", "architectural lawlessness", "architectural plagiarism", "Byzantine syncretism, carelessly and ignorantly grafted upon Arab ideas", "the Azhar and Hasanayn Mosques are simple and artless piles, celebrated for sanctity, but remarkable for nothing save ugliness", "disregard for symmetry", "there is nothing attractive in its appearance", "crooked marble columns", "vulgarly cut shafts of various sizes", "clumsy workmanship", "they care little for the execution of mere details, and they have not the acumen to discern", "their use of colours was a false taste", "Arab greatness is the vulgar great, not the grand", "torn and dirty matting", "intensely dirty and full of fleas" and "dirty picturesque".[34] While relating his architectural impressions resulting from a stroll through the thoroughfares of old Cairo by night, Burton infers: "Briefly, the whole view is so strange, so fantastic, so ghostly, that it seems preposterous to imagine that in such places human beings like ourselves can be born, and live through life, and carry out the command 'increase and multiply' and die."[35]

It goes without saying that here Burton does not speak about human beings and their life struggles in general, and how their built environment forms play a critical role in all that. Rather, he aims, firstly, at the architectural and, by default, civilizational retardation of Muslims, which was caused by their existential retardation; and secondly, at how incompatible such an architectural paradigm was with the demands of modern West-driven thought and standards of living. To truly and meaningfully live and be part of the dynamic new world, drastic changes at all levels of Islamic civilizational awareness and function were desperately needed, with architecture setting the example.

This is how Burton sets the general gloom and monotony of Islamic society against the beauty and liveliness of the Armenian (Christian) society in Cairo, epitomized by the memorable occasion of a marriage he was fortunate to attend. "In his (Khwajah Yusuf's) house I saw an Armenian marriage. The occasion was memorable: after the gloom and sameness of Moslem society, nothing could be more gladdening than the unveiled face of a pretty woman. Some of the guests were undeniably charming brunettes, with the blackest possible locks, and the brightest conceivable eyes. Only one pretty girl wore the national costume; yet they all smoked chibuks and sat upon the Diwans, and, as they entered the room, they kissed with a sweet simplicity the hands of the priest, and of the other old gentlemen present."[36]

Burton further adds to his disdain for Islamic architecture, signalling disparities between form and function, and between substances and accidents: "The arch is a favourite feature: in one place you see it a mere skeleton-rib opening into some huge deserted hall; in another the ogee is full of fretted stone and wood carved like lace-work. Not a line is straight, the tall dead walls of the Mosques slope over their massy buttresses, and the thin minarets seem about to fall across your path."[37]

Thus, Burton's understanding of Islamic architecture came full circle: from making sporadically casual and regularly fundamental observations, to imparting profound theories that hinged on the former. His reflections are by no means exclusively abstract and detached from everyday life. In opposition, they are as applied and pragmatic, originating from the predominantly scientific and empirical outlook of the 19th century European mind. Those reflections in the end subject themselves to an individually- or collectively-constructed higher order of meaning, beliefs and experience. In passing, Burton called himself an atheist nominally belonging to the Church of England.

Burton thus wanted to pave the way for doing away with Islamic architecture as well, as part of any future European occupation: military or cultural, or both. The two will have to go together and he invites others to make their own contributions as well. To Burton, in addition, Islamic architecture was at once a "book" and the evidence of the past and present. The "book" is to be read and evidence analysed, gaining access thereby to the keys of the future.

By dint of the many dimensions and layers of Islamic architecture, according to Burton, one can also "trace the (intrinsic) gradual decadence (not progress or evolution) of (Islamic) art through one thousand two hundred years, down to the present day." However, achieving so signified a daunting task, which "must be a work of no ordinary interest to Orientalists." "The limits of my plan, however, compel me to place only the heads of the argument before the reader. May I be allowed to express a hope that it will induce some learned traveller to investigate a subject in every way worthy his attention"[38] - the author concluded.

Islamic Architectural Plagiarism

Ever since it emerged on the world scene, Islam was seen by most of Christendom as a sham. Islam was no more than another heresy, one of many that were plaguing Christianity for centuries, especially during its formative spans.[39] Yet it was a form of Christian heterodoxy and a

deviated sect. As Mohammedans, Muslims were depicted as evil, murderers, adulterers, plunderers, bloodthirsty barbarians and bigots. They needed to be purified, evangelized and returned to the "right path".

Hence, Prophet Muhammad (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) is often compared by Christian apologists and polemicists - such as John of Damascus (d. 749), Peter the Venerable (d. 1156), Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (d. 1320), Martin Luther (d.1546) and others - to the famous heretics of the Christian heritage, and his views to theirs. Examples of those heretics are: Arius (d. 336), Eunomius (d. 393), Carpocrates (d. 138), Cerdonius (2nd century), Manichaeists (3rd century), Donatists (4th century), Macedonius (d. after 360), Cerinthus (d. 100) and Nicolaitans (some of earliest heretics).

It follows that some of the earliest books on Islam by Christian apologists and polemicists were composed in order to refute the heresy and do away with the bane of Islam and its followers. Thus a new genre of literature, and a very popular one, was created. Some of the earliest examples were *Heresies* (the Heresy of Ishmaelites) and *Disputation between a Christian and a Saracen* by John of Damascus, *The Summary of the Entire Heresy of the Saracens* and *The Refutation of the Sect or Heresy of the Saracens* by Peter the Venerable, and *Against the Laws of the Saracens,* by Riccoldo da Monte di Croce. These efforts were coupled with and were further intensified by military campaigns, firstly by the Crusades (1095-1291) and later by the colonization enterprise. Those polemics and apologetics did not go unnoticed by Burton, evidencing how ubiquitously and influentially they persisted deep into the modern 19th century. He writes referring to John Locke (d. 1704), an English Enlightenment philosopher and physician, and to some other even greater authorities: "Did not Locke, and even greater names, hold Mohammedans to be heterodox Christians, in fact Arians who, till the end of the fourth century, represented the mass of North-European Christianity?"[40]

This at once religious and intellectual climate, predictably, generated a perspective that Islam was a plagiarised religion. The first person who suggested such a notion was John of Damascus.[41] He identified Islam with Arianism, which denied the divinity of Christ. It held that Jesus was created by God and hence, was neither coeternal nor consubstantial with him. The main advocate of this opinion was the Alexandrian priest Arius (d. 336). That was denounced as a heresy by the Council of Nicaea in 325, which was the first ecumenical Council of the Church.

John of Damascus concocted that Muhammad (*Ṣal Allah-u-'alaihe wa sallam*) did not devise his Islamic heresy until after he had come

across the Old and New Testaments and after he had met and conversed with an Arian monk in Syria. The monk taught Muhammad (*Ṣal Allah-u-ʻalaihe wa sallam*) about the created-ness and non-divinity of Jesus, the view which they both shared.

By the time Martin Luther had to battle in the 16th century the scourge of Islam and its agent in the form of the Ottoman Turks, which posed an existential threat to the whole Christianity-dominated Europe, the theory that Islam was a fake and plagiarized religion was fully developed and its articulation at maximum capacity. Thus, in his influential book *On the War against the Turk* Martin Luther called attention to the true nature of Islam. It is a plagiarized religion patched together out of "the faith of Jews, Christians and heathen (pagans and idolaters)".[42]
In accordance with all this, in the eyes of the medieval, early modern and slightly late modern Christian Europe, everything that pertained to Islam and its civilization was wrong, counterfeit and fabricated. Originality and freshness were not their forte. Muslims were masters of imitation and ugly syncretism.

This applied to Islamic architecture as well, perhaps more conspicuously than to a great many other fields, for architecture is such a sensitive, complex and demanding pursuit. It is the mother of all arts and virtuosities. It genuinely subsists only in the milieus of absolute originality, ingenuity and freedom.

Burton was fully aware of the matter, and as an ambassador of the modern European outlook, as well as ethos, he wasted no time in embarking on the honourable tasks of expounding and proving the theory of Islamic architectural plagiarism. He was exuberant about fulfilling the duty. He knew how important such a thing was in the grand scheme of things and that he was the first one to do it.

Those who to a certain degree preceded Burton in what he did were John Lewis Burckhardt (d. 1817) and his book *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* , and Edward William Lane (d. 1876) and his two books *Description of Egypt* and *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*. The two explorers and scholars were the forerunners - in a manner of speaking - of Burton, and their ideas the harbingers of his. Edward Said explicitly mentions that Edward William Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* was read and cited by diverse figures, including Burton.[43]

For Burton, Islamic architecture is nothing special. It is vague and without a true identity. It is merely the so-called (commonly, falsely or improperly named) Saracenic style. The style is "a plagiarism from the

Byzantine". It was then reiterated in the Gothic, which is "an offshoot from the Saracenic (style)". This is evident on account of the former's "manifold incongruities of architecture" and of its buildings being "erected piecemeal" and "of its most classic period being that of its greatest irregularity".[44] Along these lines, the main characteristics of Islamic (Saracenic) architecture are blind imitation and thieving (plagiarism), incongruities, unsuitability, mediocrity, dullness and randomness.

Burton labels the rampant deficiencies in Islamic architecture as "architectural lawlessness" and utter "disregard for symmetry", which issue from imperfect amalgamation and unscrupulous enrichment processes. Without a doubt - he emphasizes - architecture is very much receptive to elements of imitation, uniformity, similarity and also variety, but these must be executed in a perfect harmony and synchronization, whereby the sensory demands and the artistic supply should be subtly matched, something that Islamic architecture - based upon the benchmarks Burton represented – obviously failed to achieve. Random plagiarism needed to be changed into harmonious diversification and equilibrium.

About mosque architecture, in consequence, Burton declares: "There is nothing, I believe, new in the Arab mosque; it is an unconscious revival of the forms used from the earliest ages to denote by symbolism the worship of the generative and the creative gods."[45] The author then goes on to ascertain how the language of mosque architecture evolved from simple to sophisticated forms solely due to the influences of the Christian, Hindu, Greek, Gothic, ancient Egyptian, Persian and certain heathen architectural traditions.

From the mere square shape of the mosque to the ideas of the courtyard, the minaret, the dome, the niche, porches, porticos, etc. - everything exemplified "revivals of old forms". "And such to the present day is the mosque of al-Islam", was Burton's closing remark.[46] As if to suggest that any further developments or changes were hard to come by. No sooner had the architectural plagiarism stopped – was exhausted, or completed – than the "dynamism" and "progress" of Islamic architecture discontinued too.

Due to heavy borrowings, revivals and imitations (incessant plagiarism) from the very beginning when Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu ʿalaihi wa ʿalā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) constructed his first mosques in Madinah, there was no style that could be called an architectural style peculiar to Muslims until the age of the sixth Umayyad caliph al-Walid b. ʻAbd al-Malik (d. 715). That was about a century after the

commencement of the Islamic message. Burton assertively deduces: "At length in the reign of al-Walid the cupola, the niche, and the minaret made their appearance; and what is called the Saracenic style became for ever the order of the Moslem world."[47]

Moreover, the presumable and obviously misconstrued and exaggerated asymmetry, irregularity, nonconformity, miscellany and patchiness associated with many Islamic buildings, Burton ascribes to the impact of "Byzantine syncretism, carelessly and ignorantly grafted upon Arab ideas of the natural and the sublime. Loving and admiring the great, or rather the big in plan, they care little for the execution of mere details, and they have not the acumen to discern the effect which clumsy workmanship, crooked lines, and visible joints - parts apparently insignificant - exercise upon the whole of an edifice. Their use of colours was a false taste, commonly displayed by mankind in their religious houses, and statues of the gods."[48]

The Islamic architectural plagiarism soon turned into a vicious circle it was impossible to break free of. It was created by people's novel religious and socio-cultural needs, which were supposed to be satisfied artistically and architecturally also. However, when that did not come to pass in a suitable way, the same needs reasserted themselves and in addition new ones were created, which, in turn, called for more plagiarism (artistic and architectural artificiality and imitation) as the only practicable - and shortcut - solution.

Initially as just a means and a short-term measure, architectural plagiarism quickly grew into a universal and self-sufficient idea and experience. It was so dominant that within its domains boundaries that separated architectural causes and effects, and architectural independence and dependence, were withering away day after day. Plagiarism endured as the only permanent reality. It was the measure of all Islamic architectural "things".

Surely, Burton is bent on conveying that Muslims contributed nothing of their own to the development of the language of their architecture. There is still nothing in it that is originally Islamic and Islamically home-grown. That was the reason why Islamic architecture quickly stopped evolving and stopped keeping up with the times. It became stagnant, uninteresting and lifeless. It always lacked an authentic identity, but more so in the exciting modern times.

Burton explains the movement of Islamic architecture from sheer plagiarism and relative diversification and expansion to the current state of inertia: "From Egypt and Palestine the ichnography spread far and

wide. It was modified, as might be expected, by national taste; what in Arabia was simple and elegant became highly ornate in Spain, florid in Turkey, sturdy in Syria, and effeminate in India. Still divergence of detail had not, even after the lapse of twelve centuries, materially altered the fundamental form."[49]

Finally, the essence of all this is compounded – and additionally illuminated - by Burton's understanding of the religion of Islam as "Mohammedan Church", the al-Azhar mosque-cum-school - the most important religious and educational institution in Cairo - as "the Christ Church of Cairo", Ibn Tulun's mosque as "Cathedral", and the holy mosque in Makkah (*al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*) as "Meccan temple". In the same way, in his preface to the first edition of *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*, Thomas Wolley in 1855 also identifies the religion of Islam as "Mohammedan superstition". To him, Burton's book will be hailed as a welcome addition to "our knowledge of these hitherto mysterious penetralia of Mohammedan superstition."[50]

This shows that in the West Islamic architecture was never fully freed from the meticulously constructed framework of Islam as a Christian heresy and an ultimate form of falsehood. It implied an inappropriate physical manifestation of an even more inappropriate worldview and its life standards. Its material ugliness and incompetence implied but a result – and reflection - of an immaterial vileness and flaw. Both realms cried for correction. They cried for a saviour from the West.

Bogus Modernization and Islamic Architecture

As said earlier, the 19th century was a century of modernization in Egypt. That was part of a wider modernization scheme initiated by Sultan Selim III (d. 1808) in the whole of the Ottoman state. It was recognized that there was a need to reform, modernize and in some respects even reinvent the state, in particular its military, along European lines so as to make sure the state could compete. If not, its bare survival could yet one day be threatened; such was the burgeoning peril of the West.

As the most important governor (wāli) in the Ottoman state, who ruled the most important, most strategic and the wealthiest region, Muhammad Ali of Egypt also recognized the need to modernize. However, he did not want to be harassed by the compounding massive challenges and the painfully slow centralized modernization efforts of the Ottoman state. Hence, Muhammad Ali's ultimate goal was "for Egypt to leave the Ottoman Empire and be ruled by his own hereditary dynasty. To do that,

he had to reorganize Egyptian society, streamline the economy, train a professional bureaucracy, and build a modern military."[51] Muhammad Ali is therefore regarded as "the most famous modernizer in the nineteenth-century Middle Eastern history whose reforms in Egypt served both as a model and an incentive for what the Sultan himself was later to do in the Empire at large." To some authors, Muhammad Ali's modernization of Egypt was akin to its colonization.[52]

Modernization affected military, government, culture, education and art. Architecture was not spared either, as it had to serve as a proof and face of the modernization project. Firstly the state: its officialdom, institutions and elites, and then multitudes of ordinary people, were ever more beginning to orient themselves towards Europe and its modernization (renewal) models. All this irrespective of how much Muhammad Ali remained faithful still to his Ottoman-ness and how much his world remained still an Ottoman world – as argued by Khaled Fahmy.[53]

That Muhammad Ali was obsessed with (Western) learning and culture testify his words to his sons Abd al-Halim and Husayn, who were sent to Paris to study and acculturate themselves. To the former he once wrote in a letter: "As for you my son, you will attain in the city of light the arts and sciences where learning in all its branches is established, that city where countless great men were reared and which continues to rear others equally great. My son, my flesh and blood, show me your zeal and work diligently learn that the dearest wish of my old age is to see you multiplying your energy to please and delight me so that I might see you in the near future become counted among the superior and the knowledgeable."[54]

And to Husayn, Muhammad Ali wrote: "My love for the arts and the sciences and my profound desire to educate you and make you cultured overcome my repugnance at being separated from you ... acquire reason ... learn that you are a pupil like all the others and obey those above you and treat every individual well and train yourself day and night to become modest, diligent and so gain good repute and my joy and favour, and become respectable among men."[55]

When Burton was in Cairo, modernization, regardless of its pace, was well under way. Muhammad Ali had passed away about four years ago in 1849 and his legacy loomed large over basically everything in the city. But Burton was not impressed with what he saw. To him, Egyptian modernization was the latest and perhaps most embarrassing phase of plagiarism and syncretism, the difference being that it now orientated itself towards the progressive West. Replication and imitation came about

from the ambit of the current thought and phenomena, rather than from the past heritages and traditions. Western standards and solutions were simply copied and irresponsibly, as well as ignorantly, grafted onto the edifice of the stagnant Islamic culture and civilization. The result was the unprecedented form of ugliness and a degree of disgust and even insult to everybody, especially Westerners. Westernization was fast developing into a white elephant of a time and place.

Architecture was an indicator of the bad trend, with mosque architecture offering a good example. That being the case, Burton invites his readers to visit the modern – hybrid - mosques of Cairo if they wanted to understand to what extent Egyptian architecture was in "its decline and fall". Even the unpleasantness of earlier mosques paled in comparison with that of the modern ones. An example was the mosque of Sayyidah Zaynab (the mosque of Lady Zaynab) which was founded by Murad Bey, the Mamluk, and was interrupted by the French invasion. The mosque was not really a sight to behold, yet after its completion, it still contained "some lingering traces of taste."[56]

Burton reserves his worst criticism for Muhammad Ali's mosque in its capacity as the epitome of Cairo's modern architecture produced by the father of the city's modernization. The mosque is situated on the summit of the citadel of Cairo. It was built between 1830 and 1848. Overlooking the city as its most striking landmark, the mosque could be seen from virtually every direction. It symbolized as much an artistic and architectural reality as an ideology. Apart from being a mosque, the structure also functioned as a signpost and a benchmark. It was a beacon of hope, a ray of light, and an orientation for the future.

However, to Burton the mosque was "most offensive" architecture-wise. He simply calls it a "folly", "Muhammad Ali's Folly". He says that "every tourist flogs donkey in his hurry to see" it. The words "tourist" and "donkey" are by no means accidental.[57] They relate to the impending status and fate of the mosque. They suggest a combination of the lowliest from the domestic East (donkey) and the seasonal, plus the trifling and interests-oriented, from the West (tourist) that will be affiliated with the mosque. It was as though hinting that the success of the mosque will persist commensurate with the extent of the sincerity of intentions and goals tied with its construction, for indeed what goes around comes around, and as a man sows, so shall he reap.

Without beating around the bush, Burton writes that the structure was an attempt to satirize and caricature a mosque. It was an attempt furthermore "to emulate the glories of our English 'Oriental Pavilion'."

Burton perceives the mosque's four "shining minarets, thin and high," as so thin and so high above the lumpy domes "that they look like the spindles of crouching crones."[58]

Burton's favourite building in Cairo was Sultan Hasan's mosque-cum-madrasah (school). Few buildings were statelier in appearance, or gave a nobler idea of both founder and architect than that building. That said, Muhammad Ali's mosque appeared all the more unsightly and repulsive because it was "placed in full sight of Sultan Hasan the Giant, so as to derive all the disadvantages of the contrast."[59]

Burton particularizes some of the mosque's artistic and architectural disadvantages as follows: "Is the pointed arch forgotten by man, that this hapless building should be disgraced by large and small parallelograms of glass and wood, so placed and so formed as to give its exterior the appearance of a European theatre coiffe with Oriental cupolas? Outside as well as inside, money has been lavished upon alabaster full of flaws; round the bases of pillars run gilt bands; in places the walls are painted with streaks to resemble marble, and the wood-work is overlaid with tinsel gold."[60]

Those were artistic and architectural abominations. More and more locals were also perceiving them as such, in consequence of which the old men of Egypt lamented that in spite of European education and of prizes encouraging geometry and architecture, (Islamic) modern art offered nothing but melancholy contrast to antiquity. All that was not a surprise, though, considering the widening rift between the old (traditional) and new (modern).

For the period of Burton's stay in Cairo, the country was ruled by Abbas Helmy I (Abbas Pasha). Burton says he had heard that the new governor proposed to erect for himself a mosque "that shall far surpass the boast of the last generation." He then expresses his hope that the governor's architect will light the "sacred fire from Sultan Hasan's, not from Mohammed Ali's, Turco-Grecian splendours. The former is like the genuine Osmanli of past ages, fierce, cold, with a stalwart frame, index of a strong mind - there was a sullen grandeur about the man. The latter is the pert and puny modern Turk in pantaloons, frock coat and Fez, ill-dressed, ill-conditioned, and ill-bred, body and soul."[61]

Here Burton nails his understanding of architecture and Muslim modernization – some aspects of which nevertheless seem to be relatively sound and whence some useful lessons can be extracted. To begin with, architecture should firstly be indigenously, conceptually and pragmatically innovative and thenceforth everything else, including its stylishness, allure

and transnational predilection. It should be a product of the now and here, and should connote an uninterrupted continuation of the now's and here's yesteryears. Architecture is compatible with neither alienation (depersonalization and loss of identity) nor rupture in thought and practice. Moreover, Muslim modernization did not work because it betrayed the basic rules of arduous civilization-building and culture-modelling procedures. Neither can modernization be completely bought, imported, borrowed, or copied (plagiarized). That is somewhat possible but only in some unimportant departments and in connection with some auxiliary elements and features. The foundation, soul and identity must be home-grown and inimitable. Both culture and civilization are so fluid, open-ended and infinite that they are easily attracted to wherever conditions for their advancement are made right and prolific. A recipe for success, it goes without saying, is a congruent blend of innovation and borrowing (qualified following and imitation).

Indeed, there are no shortcuts to either culture or civilization. Trying something like that borders on trying the impossible. In the end, it is the given cultural and civilizational prospects that are assassinated. The by-products, more often than not, are elements of freakiness, idiosyncrasy and aberration, manifested on people, in their newly-adopted standards of living, and, of course, in their artistic and architectural exploits.

Muslim blind and unprincipled modernization was neither Eastern nor Western. It was phoney and misplaced, and so, unappreciated. It was anonymous. Its failure caused people to retreat to and excessively romanticise the past, giving way to the emergence of amplified – and disproportionally sanctified - Islamic legacies and heritages. Similarly, it helped generate an undue phobia of Western culture and civilization. Islamic tradition thus was set on a collision course with modernity and novelty, and it never really recovered.

Conclusion

Burton was an extraordinary personality, a "perfect Orientalism man". His views of Islamic architecture especially in Cairo were pivotal in the formation of the general Orientalist perception of the same. Together with Edward William Lane and John Lewis Burckhardt, he could be considered the founder of the Orientalist theorizations about Islamic architecture. The origins of such concepts as architectural plagiarism, architectural lawlessness and reckless syncretism, irregularity and disproportionateness, and Islamic architecture's incompatibility with the

demands of modern times – as salient features of most Orientalist theories of Islamic architecture – are attributable to Burton.

Burton's point of reference was the multifaceted architectural legacies of Cairo, in its capacity as a perennial capital of Islamic art and architecture (Islamic culture and civilization). He steered clear of the "luxury of Stumbul", "the barbarous gorgeousness of the buildings of India" and "the frugal style that characterizes the architecture of al-Hijaz".

Thus, Burton is responsible for some of the most widespread misconceptions about Islamic architecture, directly or indirectly. So persistent are those misconceptions that even nowadays, after the true colours of Orientalism as a servant of Western colonization and imperialism have been exposed, they live on. The reason for such perseverance is that Islamic architecture was dealt with both as a national and international reality, and that studying it denoted an integral part of the sophisticated Western scholarship culture - in addition to a host of other ulterior motives. That is why Burton approached Islamic architecture not only in his capacities as a British soldier, diplomat and spy – that is, as a servant of the British colonial and imperialistic gusto - but also in his capacities as an explorer, writer, translator, geographer, cartographer and ethnographer – that is, as a servant of "universal" scholarship and science. Finally, Burton was not exclusively a scholar of architecture, which nevertheless was hard to be during his time because architecture as an art and science in the contemporary sense of the word was at that point in its advanced infancy. Prior to the 16th century, the world of architecture loosely enfolded all of particular "arts" and "styles" of building, particular construction processes, builders, master builders, master masons, carpenters, craftsmen, workmen, and application of various traditional rules of good and functional construction to the materials at hand. Indeed, architecture was part of everyday life and was in many ways the concern of most people. It was only after the 16th century, approximately, that architecture as a specialised concept, theory, art, science and procedure started to gradually form. It was a by-product of the Renaissance, Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution phenomena. They created a need (demand) for a new side of architecture.

In addition, Burton was a user of Islamic architecture. He intimately interacted with it and was able to forge an intellectual and emotional relationship with it. It also physically affected him. He was at the receiving end of its strength (*firmitas*), utility (*utilitas*) and beauty (*venustas*). All that - on balance - entitled him, more than anything else, to develop an

opinion and perception about Islamic architecture. Moreover, he was a specialist in geography, ethnography and in other aspects of sociocultural (civilizational) studies. Whereas architecture is nothing but a physical locus of culture and civilization. It is a framework for and an index of human behaviour. In no way, therefore, can one study one dimension without paying serious attention to the other.

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