



The Transformation Of Churches Into Mosques. The Ketchaoua Mosque In Algeria As An Exemplar

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Abstract : The epoch of French colonial dominion in Algeria engendered not only residential, civic, and martial edifices but also a compendium of Christian sanctuaries, notably churches, which endure to this day as testimonials to a consequential chapter in Algerian annals. Subsequent to Algeria's attainment of sovereignty, governmental authorities, buoyed by the native populace, expeditiously embarked upon the nationalization of ecclesiastical edifices, juxtaposing them with other establishments. Predominantly, these structures underwent conversion into mosques, whilst a fraction was repurposed as repositories of art and history .

The transmutation of churches and ancillary houses of worship into mosques assumes paramount import in Algeria's historical narrative, signifying an earnest endeavor to validate and underscore the nation's Islamic ethos—a facet relentlessly undermined by the French colonizers through the erection of Christian churches and the repurposing of myriad sacred sites into Christian places of veneration. Authoritative Algerian statistics bear witness to the transformation of more than six hundred non-Islamic places of worship into mosques following Algeria's proclamation of independence, with a vestige thereof in significant urban centers, including Algiers, Annaba, and Oran, retaining their original vocation to the present day .

This academic inquiry serves as an illumination of the sovereign Algerian state's experience in the conversion of French ecclesiastical establishments into mosques. It accomplishes this by elucidating and scrutinizing the paradigmatic instance of the Ketchaoua Mosque in the Algerian capital. This architectural jewel, which was originally reconfigured into the Saint Philip Cathedral during the era of French colonialism, subsequently underwent restoration to its pristine role as a mosque following the nation's emancipation.

Keywords: Ketchaoua Mosque, Cathedral, Functional Conversion, Algeria, Identity.

La transformation des églises en mosquées. La mosquée de Ketchaoua en Algérie comme exemple

Résumé : L'époque de la domination coloniale française en Algérie a engendré non seulement des édifices résidentiels, civiques et martiaux, mais aussi un ensemble de sanctuaires chrétiens, notamment des églises, qui témoignent encore aujourd'hui d'un chapitre important des annales algériennes. Après l'accession de l'Algérie à la souveraineté, les autorités gouvernementales, soutenues par la population autochtone, ont rapidement entrepris la nationalisation des édifices ecclésiastiques,

en les juxtaposant à d'autres établissements. La plupart de ces structures ont été converties en mosquées, tandis qu'une partie d'entre elles ont été transformées en dépôts d'art et d'histoire.

La transformation d'églises et de lieux de culte auxiliaires en mosquées revêt une importance capitale dans le récit historique de l'Algérie, signifiant une tentative sincère de valider et de souligner les valeurs islamiques de la nation - un aspect implacablement miné par les colonisateurs français à travers l'érection d'églises chrétiennes et la reconversion d'une myriade de sites sacrés en lieux de vénération chrétiens. Les statistiques algériennes officielles témoignent de la transformation de plus de six cents lieux de culte non islamiques en mosquées après la proclamation de l'indépendance de l'Algérie, dont certains vestiges dans des centres urbains importants, notamment Alger, Annaba et Oran, ont conservé leur vocation initiale jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

Cette enquête académique sert à éclairer l'expérience de l'État algérien souverain dans la conversion des établissements ecclésiastiques français en mosquées. Elle y parvient en élucidant et en examinant le cas paradigmatique de la mosquée Ketchaoua dans la capitale algérienne. Ce joyau architectural, initialement reconfiguré en cathédrale Saint-Philippe à l'époque du colonialisme français, a ensuite été restauré pour retrouver son rôle de mosquée après l'émancipation de la nation.

Keywords : Mosquée Ketchaoua, Cathédrale, Conversion fonctionnelle, Algérie, Identité.

Introduction

The historical practice of converting places of worship from one faith to another has been an enduring phenomenon, intrinsically linked to conflicts between adherents of divergent religions. Consequently, the appropriation of sacred spaces by the victorious party appears as a logical extension of military conquest, serving as a symbol of triumph and a manifestation of dominance over the vanquished.

The annals of Algeria, marked by a series of invasions and a protracted period of colonization, have been punctuated by conflicts pertaining to places of worship. This historical trajectory commenced with the Roman colonization, which introduced a synthesis of Roman beliefs, and persisted with the advent of French colonization in Algeria in 1830. The latter period, in particular, engendered profound cultural and religious disruptions in Algeria. The interplay between two contrasting cultures was particularly vehement in Algeria, as France pursued a policy of settler colonialism, in stark contrast to the protectorate policies implemented in Morocco and Tunisia.

As settler colonialism took root and Northern Algeria became subject to occupation, France embarked on the establishment of religious centers to cater to settlers of diverse faiths, either through the construction of new edifices or the conversion of extant places of worship.

Within this second category lies the subject of our scholarly inquiry, "Ketchaoua Mosque," which transitioned from a Christian house of worship during the nascent years of colonization to attain the status of Algiers' inaugural cathedral, christened "Saint Philip's Cathedral".

The metamorphosis of this architectural edifice, scrutinized through a chronological analysis of its history, serves not only to obscure underlying issues but also to reveal the evolving facets of this mosque over time. These facets encompass pivotal interventions in the life of this sacred structure, commencing with its origination as a mosque, its conversion into a cathedral, and culminating in its restoration to its original function as a mosque.

This academic investigation seeks to illuminate the multifaceted evolution of "Ketchaoua Mosque" across divergent historical epochs in Algeria. It draws upon rigorously documented scholarly sources and architectural artifacts to present the present condition of the mosque while elucidating the diverse intervention plans it underwent.

1. Construction of Ketchaoua Mosque

The nomenclature "Ketchaoua Mosque" is inextricably linked to its geographical location atop Goat Hill (referred to as "Ketchaoua" in Turkish). While the precise date of its inception remains enigmatic, prevailing scholarly consensus suggests its construction predates 1612, a date alluded to in an archival document referencing the existence of the mosque (Klein 1912). Furthermore, substantial expansion took place in 1794 during the tenure of Hassan Pasha (Marçais 1927), a fact corroborated by an inscribed chronogram adorning the edifice's entrance (Klein 1912).

From an architectural standpoint, Ketchaoua Mosque belongs to the category of Persian-style mosques, distinguished by a central dome within a capacious courtyard, encompassed by four iwans (an iwan being a vaulted chamber open on one side) (Bayle 2007). This architectural schema is elucidated by Ravoisié schematic representation of the mosque, which portrays the principal prayer hall—a square space surmounted by a sizable octagonal dome, encircled by galleries adorned with diminutive domes. The roof framework of the square expanse is upheld by robust marble columns, aligning on three sides with arcades interspersed with substantial piers positioned equidistantly between the arches. Aesthetic embellishments grace the mosque's interior, manifesting through diverse paintings and inscriptions (Koumas and Nafaa 2003).

The original minaret of Ketchaoua Mosque is situated at the posterior juncture of the dual arcade rows, adjacent to the mihrab, signifying the qibla's direction towards the Kaaba in Mecca. This architectural arrangement finds resonance in the construction of historical mosques in Turkey during the Ottoman era and is similarly discernible in the mosques of Central Morocco from

the same epoch. The minaret of Ketchaoua Mosque is adorned with intricate Arabic calligraphy on its interior (Berque 1930).

Eminent historian and author Lucien Golvin provided a comprehensive description of the edifice, delineating it as follows: "It was erected in a longitudinal plan, measuring approximately 24/20 meters. The main prayer hall of the mosque, square in shape, is surmounted by a grand octagonal dome, supported by corner piers... All arches, in the form of horseshoes, are buttressed by substantial columns featuring expansive capitals." (Golvin 1985)

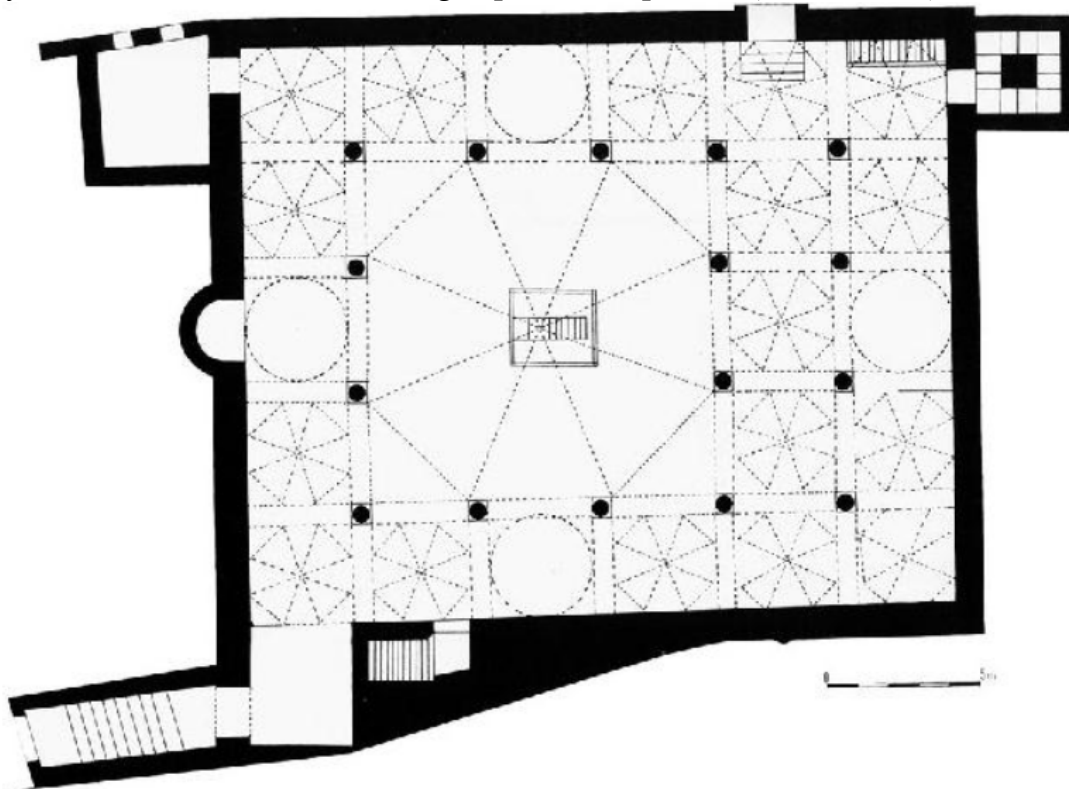


Fig. 1. Ketchaoua Mosque, Illustration by Amable Ravoisié, 1839. (Source: Georges Marçais, 1926-1927).

Within the urban fabric, Ketchaoua Mosque occupied a venerated position. It was ensconced in Lower Casbah, bridging the elevated city and the Algiers waterfront, situated proximate to Hassan Pasha's Palace and a stone's throw from Dar Aziza. The environs also encompassed two major city mosques: The New Mosque and the Great Mosque. Ketchaoua Mosque constituted an integral facet of the city's core, distinguished by its opulent embellishments and imposing presence, thus epitomizing the influence of Ottoman architecture in Algiers (Nedjari 2012).

2. The Initial Functional Metamorphosis of Ketchaoua Mosque (From Mosque to Cathedral)

Subsequent to the French military's annexation of Algeria in 1830, the Treaty of Surrender, an accord inked between the Algerian Dey Hussein Pasha and Count de Bourmont representing the French authorities, articulated a commitment to "preserve the liberty of the inhabitants across all societal strata, safeguarding their faith, commerce, and industry from any infringement." (De Baudicour 1856)

The colonial administration expropriated the endowed properties, referred to as "Habous," through a revision of property legislation, ostensibly in alignment with French legal doctrines (Terras 1899). In accordance with this novel legal framework, the function of extant mosques was either transmuted to adhere to the Catholic faith, a fate paralleled in the case of Ketchaoua Mosque, or these venerable places of worship were obliterated as part of comprehensive renovation endeavors, exemplified by the "Lady" Mosque and the "Jenina" Mosque. Furthermore, a multitude of other mosques underwent conversion into military barracks and depots for the French forces. Thus, the policy of assimilation was inaugurated in Algiers in 1830, intensifying the subjugation of the indigenous populace, a reality underscored by the appropriation of religious edifices, notably mosques.

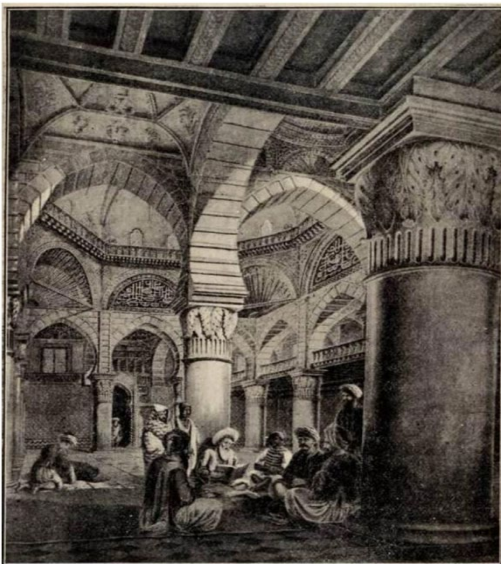


Fig. 2. Ketchaoua Mosque in its pre-1832 state, after lithography by Lésueur and Wild. (Source: Georges Marçais, 1926-1927).



Fig. 3. The prayer hall of Ketchaoua Mosque before 1832, depicted by Charles Desprez, a scanned painting from the National Library Archives in Algeria. (Source: Amal Belala, 2019).

Phase 1: Conversion of Ketchaoua Mosque

The process of transforming the Ketchaoua Mosque into a dedicated Christian place of worship transpired on December 24, 1832 (Klein 1912). This metamorphosis gave rise to substantial controversy, engendering disputes among the Muslim community and various factions within the newly arrived occupiers. The crux of this contention emanated from the fifth clause of the Treaty of Surrender of Algeria, enacted on July 5, 1830. This clause explicitly affirmed the preservation of the free practice of the Mohammedan faith and the safeguarding of their places of worship for the Muslim populace (GASTALDI 2006).

Foremost among those orchestrating the appropriation of the Ketchaoua Mosque was Duke of Rovigo (Savary 1828). His selection of this specific mosque was anything but arbitrary, for he was well aware of its paramount importance within the local Islamic worship landscape. By seizing the Ketchaoua Mosque, Duke Rovigo aimed to assert his dominance over the indigenous population (Oulebsir 2004). In spite of numerous threats, the Algerians adamantly refused to cede the mosque. Duke Rovigo, however, remained resolute in his resolve to secure possession of Ketchaoua Mosque. On December 17, 1831, he issued a directive to occupy the mosque the following day, and in doing so, hoisted both the cross and the French flag upon its minaret. His orders also entailed the celebratory discharge of artillery batteries, both land-based and naval (Nedjari 2012).

Contemporary historians, most notably F. Florian (Julien 1986), record that the French military forces embarked upon the seizure of Ketchaoua Mosque on December 18, 1832. On this fateful day, approximately four thousand Muslims found themselves confined within the confines of the mosque. The assault was initiated with the detonation of the main entrance through the use of explosives and the discharge of firearms. As the incursion unfolded, armed forces drove Muslims into the mosque, precipitating a state of panic and attempts at resistance. Within the mosque's precincts, several individuals were discovered either asphyxiated or bearing wounds incurred during their efforts to depart. Subsequently, Duke Rovigo dispatched an infantry unit inside the mosque, apprehensive of any attempts at its reclamation by the Muslim populace (Julien 1986). The formal exploitation and consecration of the mosque as a church occurred a mere week later, on December 24, 1832.

Phase 2: Adaptation of the Mosque for Christian Worship

Within the erstwhile Ketchaoua Mosque, comprehensive modifications were introduced to accommodate Catholic religious practices. This encompassed the installation of new ecclesiastical furnishings, without wholly forsaking the preexisting elements. Notable adaptations included the transformation of the

ablution basin into a baptismal font, and the repurposing of segments of the original pulpit to fashion a new one befitting the Christian faith. Symbolic gestures encompassed the placement of a statue of the Virgin Mary within the erstwhile mihrab, which had previously denoted the qibla orientation. In 1840, a cross was affixed atop the mosque's principal dome (Nedjari 2012).

As per Abbe Parjaz's description of the church in 1832, each nave, with the exception of the eastern aisle, featured a gallery specifically designated for women, replete with exquisitely crafted wooden balustrades. A reserved section was allocated for the governor and his family, offering direct accessibility from the adjacent palace. Cabinets were strategically positioned along the walls, their doors adorned with appended panels, each distinguished by a distinct color scheme. The interior surfaces of the church, extending to the height of the galleries, were adorned with white and blue porcelain tiles, celebrated for their singular aesthetic allure. The pulpit, supported by a column, bore intricate and distinct sculptures. Directly preceding the mihrab, formerly the focal point for Muslim prayer, a statue of the Virgin Mary was installed. A mere few paces distant from this statue, the principal altar, fashioned from various precious marbles, seamlessly melded opulence with the venue's inherent splendor. Notably, the most conspicuous feature upon entering this church was the imposing inscriptions adorning the walls, with letters spanning from three to four feet in height. These inscriptions conveyed phrases drawn from the Quran (L'abbé 1841).

In addition to these minor enhancements, the architectural structure of the new church assiduously preserved vestiges of the former mosque, including its adorned columns, botanical motifs, and Quranic inscriptions adorning every wall surface.

Phase 3: Conversion into a Cathedral

The construction of Saint Philip's Cathedral, on the former site of Ketchaoua Mosque, commenced in 1845 following a series of demolitions that were initiated in 1844. This transformative endeavor coincided with the appointment of Monsignor Dubois as the Bishop of Algiers in 1838. It was under his episcopate that the request for a new church, which would serve as the cathedral of Algiers, was made. This request not only garnered ecclesiastical attention but also triggered deliberations among the prevailing authorities in Algiers. The latter, responsible for funding ecclesiastical establishments in Algiers under the Concordat, opted for a shift in the utilization of the existing structure, choosing to embark on its expansion instead (Nedjari 2012).

The projects aimed at the transformation of this architectural edifice had already been initiated in the years immediately following its conversion in 1832. Notably, these initiatives found a champion in Pierre Auguste Guyonchain, the

civil architect responsible for civil buildings, who proposed a "restoration and renovation project in the mid-1830s." (Oulebsir 2004). Following a brief hiatus, this project was revived in 1839 by the architect Amable Ravoisié, as part of the scientific exploration of Algeria. Ravoisié conducted a meticulous survey of the location and proposed the restoration of the edifice (Oulebsir 2004). Subsequently, the works were supervised successively by the archdiocesan architects Harou Roman, Jean Baptiste Ferod (1815-1884), with Jean Eugène Fromageau taking over from Ferod, appointed by the chief architects of the Ministry of Colonies for Archdiocesan Buildings in Algeria.

The church underwent a significant expansion, involving nearly complete demolition and subsequent reconstruction, resulting in an edifice occupying approximately four times the surface area of the former mosque. The mosque's presence was eventually confined to the cathedral's choir area upon the project's culmination, accompanied by the installation of a "massive staircase overlooking the square and two bell towers (Koumas and Nafaa 2003)".

The transformational endeavor of the old mosque encountered several setbacks due to structural stability issues during construction. These issues were notably linked to the ground's instability on the side adjacent to Diwan Street, where stone supports were embedded along the road. The entire wall on this side underwent extensive scrutiny due to these ground instability challenges. Subsequently, comprehensive surveys were conducted, leading to the discovery of a captivating mosaic featuring animal heads and intricate designs. A portion of this mosaic, still situated beneath the cathedral's foundations, has been attributed to the ancient Roman baths (Klein 1912).

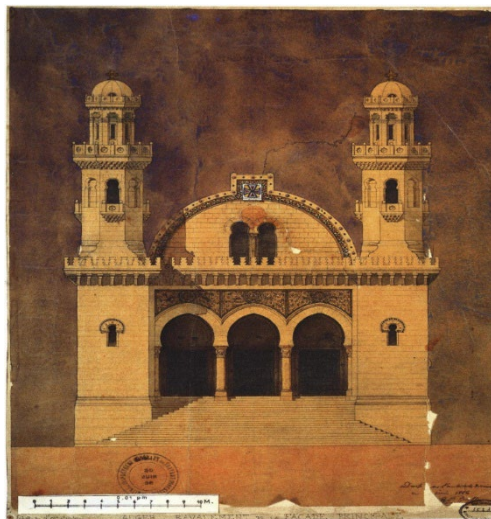


Fig. 4. The completion project of Saint Philip's Cathedral facade, a watercolor painting by Albert Ballu, Algiers, in the year 1886. (Source: Comas Ahmed, Nafie Shahrazad, 2003.)

The construction of the cathedral spanned from 1845 to 1860. During this period, the former Notre-Dame de Victoire Church (formerly the Betcheen Mosque) temporarily assumed the role of Algiers' cathedral (Nedjari 2012). On a different note, the completion of the cathedral's facade was deferred until the late nineteenth century. It was only in 1886 that the proposal of architect Albert Ballu was embraced, following several unsuccessful propositions. A distinctive feature of the cathedral's facade is the incorporation of two side towers, inspired by oriental architectural elements reminiscent of the minarets of the Mosque of Muhammad Ali in Cairo.

Concerning the architectural style of the cathedral, the entire structure was constructed in a manner that harmoniously amalgamated various architectural styles, ranging from Roman-Byzantine influences to Eastern aesthetics. This synthesis gave birth to the Neo-Moorish architectural style that dominated Algeria in the early twentieth century. In 1908, the cathedral building was rightfully included in the list of historical monuments.

Saint Philip's Cathedral retained its function as the cathedral of Algiers until the independence of Algeria in 1962, marking the reinstatement of the edifice to its original purpose as a mosque. Concurrently, the newly erected Church of the Sacred Heart, completed in 1956, was designated to serve as the city's cathedral, a role it continues to fulfill to this day.



Fig. 5. On the left, the original state of the mosque; on the right, the mosque after its transformation into a cathedral, along with the establishment of roads and the Ivichi Square. (Source: Amal Belala, 2018.)

3. The second metamorphosis of Ketchaoua Mosque, transitioning from its erstwhile identity as a cathedral to its current manifestation as a mosque

Unfolded following a protracted period of 130 years characterized by French dominion over Algeria and seven arduous years marked by the Algerian War of Liberation. The latter conflict was waged by Algerians with the fervent objective of regaining their nation's sovereignty. This struggle culminated officially on July 1, 1962, with the momentous plebiscite for self-determination. During this plebiscite, an overwhelming majority of the Algerian populace cast their votes in favor of Algeria's independence. Subsequently, France extended formal recognition to Algeria's sovereignty on July 4, 1962 (Miguel 2022).

In the immediate aftermath of these transformative events, the conversion of Saint-Philippe Cathedral into a place of Muslim worship, thus restoring it to its original designation as Ketchaoua Mosque, transpired with celerity. Owing to the tumultuous occurrences that engulfed the capital during this epoch, the precise date of this conversion remains elusive. Nonetheless, it is plausible to posit that the transformation from Saint-Philippe Cathedral to a mosque occurred between the months of July and December in the year 1962. This temporal juncture coincided concomitantly with the elevation of the Sacred Heart Church to the esteemed status of the Cathedral of Algiers.

In the annals of history, this momentous transition was narrated by Father Jean-Pierre Henry, the Archbishop of Algiers, who recounted the episode thusly: "On the day subsequent to the attainment of independence, the denizens of Algeria stormed the cathedral premises, clamoring for its restoration to the sphere of Muslim worship. Subsequent negotiations ensued, culminating in its re-designation as a mosque once again in November of 1962".

Post-reinstatement as a mosque, the erstwhile Saint-Philippe Cathedral remained relatively unscathed by extensive architectural modifications. Notable alterations encompassed the substitution of the internal furnishings, the replacement of the antiquated church pews with mosque carpets, and the restoration of the original pulpit to its former location in the prayer hall, thereby reasserting its initial liturgical function after serving as the cathedral's pulpit for a span of 130 years. Concomitantly, all vestiges of Christian iconography and symbolism, including the suspended crosses adorning the spires of the former cathedral and the central dome bedecked with crucifixes, were expunged.

The pivotal challenge encountered in the endeavor to reconfigure the mosque pertained to the development of the mihrab, the focal point to which devout adherents orient themselves during the ritual of prayer, a direction that inexorably points toward Mecca. In the context of Algiers, this necessitated an eastward orientation. In the prototypical architectural schemata of mosques, the entrance to the prayer hall is situated diametrically opposite the mihrab, thereby permitting congregants to directly face Mecca. This design optimizes fluidity of

movement and circulation within the prayer hall, an imperative element considering that traversing between rows of worshippers during prayer is proscribed. However, the entrance to the former Saint-Philippe Cathedral is situated on the eastern wall, known as the qibla wall, compelling ecclesiastical authorities to erect a partition at the entrance, subsequently necessitating the creation of a novel mihrab within the mosque. Consequently, the internal spatial arrangement of Ketchaoua Mosque assumes a *sui generis* character, obliging individuals to circumnavigate the wall at the entrance of the mosque and traverse the passageways flanking the prayer hall to access the rear of the prayer line. This architectural configuration unequivocally underscores the fact that the original architectural design was not conceived with the mosque's liturgical function in mind. In addition to the internal spatial reconfiguration, a dedicated area for ablution was instituted on the northwest quadrant of the mosque, thereby mandating congregants to traverse the entire expanse of the mosque for ablution before returning to the prayer hall (Nedjari 2012).

This edifice, bearing witness to four centuries of Algerian history, has undergone several contemporaneous restoration undertakings. Remarkably, these initiatives have left the architectural integrity of the structure largely unscathed. These restorative efforts have primarily revolved around fortifying and reinforcing the edifice, with interventions dispersed across different sections, necessitated by issues pertaining to ground stability. The most recent phase of restoration was inaugurated in 2008, subsequent to the seismic activity of 2003 that afflicted regions proximate to the Algerian capital. Ketchaoua Mosque incurred substantial damage during this seismic event, particularly to its towers, which faced imminent peril of structural collapse. The foremost challenge encountered in this endeavor pertained to ensuring the stability of the edifice through the augmentation of its structural framework.



Fig. 6. The edifice of Kutchaoua Mosque, with intricate details, in the capital city of Algiers, in the year 2009. (Source: Captured through the lens of Architectural Maestro, Reza, in 2009.)



Fig. 7. The facade of Kutchaoua Mosque, post its latest restoration and inauguration in the year 2018. (Source: www.aa.com.tr, 2022)

Throughout the extensive restorative process, the mosque remained inaccessible to the public until the culmination of the renovation endeavors, and it was officially reopened on the auspicious date of Monday, April 9, 2018. The mantle of responsibility for executing these restoration endeavors was entrusted to the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), which, in a collaborative effort, engaged specialized Algerian firms with expertise in heritage conservation.

4. Summary of the Transformation and Adaptation Processes at Ketchaoua Mosque

The original design of Ketchaoua Mosque, before its conversion into a church, is characterized by its central square layout crowned by an octagonal dome. This design was a departure from the architectural norms of local mosques and even those in North Africa, drawing inspiration from Turkish mosque architecture of the same era. This can be attributed to the desire of Ottoman authorities, representing the Turkish influence, to leave their mark on Algerian architecture by adopting the Ottoman style in constructing new buildings.

With the French occupation of Algeria in 1830 and the subsequent transfer of Ketchaoua Mosque from the Ottomans to the French army's general commander, the religious building was repurposed as a storage facility for the occupying French forces, despite local opposition and resistance to this decision. This situation persisted for about two years, during which no significant changes were made to the building.

Subsequently, Ketchaoua Mosque was converted into a church in its initial phase of transformation. To accommodate its new function, some minor modifications were made to the structure, and it was officially inaugurated on December 24, 1832. Among the changes introduced were:

Installation of new furnishings, alongside the utilization of some existing mosque furniture.

Conversion of the mosque's minaret, located at the entrance on the side of Divan Street, into a baptismal font adorned with crescent-shaped sculptures (Julien 1986).

Utilization of the marble pulpit and the pulpit tower in the construction of the church's preaching platform. The communion bread was displayed on the table supporting the marble seat for the priest, adorned with twisted columns and capped with pinnacles.

Introduction of symbolic signs, including a statue of the Virgin Mary in the sanctuary, which previously indicated the direction of the qibla.

In a subsequent phase of changes to Ketchaoua Mosque, altering the prayer direction emerged as the major modification that significantly impacted its spatial organization. Other changes can be summarized as follows:

The introduction of the altar in the opposite direction to the qibla wall, reusing the marble platform on which the mosque's pulpit was originally placed.

Responding to Marshal Bugeaud's request, a cross was placed on the building, and a hole can also be observed at the level of the sanctuary, which became the entrance door to the church from the bishopric space.

Consequently, the building now eloquently exhibits a blend of architectural styles, ranging from Roman Byzantine to Ottoman Islamic. The new columns are mostly replicas of the originals. This amalgamation of different

architectural styles marks the emergence of a new architectural style in Algeria with Eastern influences, known as the New Moorish style or the Jonart style (Jonart was the governor-general who ordered the use of local architectural style in public buildings) and gained widespread popularity in the early 20th century (Bellala 2019).

The cathedral retained its form and function until Algeria's independence on July 5, 1962, which also marked its reversion to its original role as a mosque. Since that date, significant changes have not been made to the building, except for some renovations and adaptations to align the structure with the functional requirements of a mosque, including the creation of the mihrab and the removal of symbolic signs related to Christianity.

Conclusion

The transformations of places of worship in Algeria during the 19th and 20th centuries were closely tied to the historical upheavals that the city and the country experienced, from the Ottoman protection era in Algeria to the French colonial period. After the country's independence in 1962, places of worship witnessed fluctuations in power dynamics among different religious communities and affiliations.

The interventions in these sacred places were not random but rather touched upon religious symbols, reflecting the community's connection to their faith. In Algeria, in 1832 and in 1962, Ketchaoua Mosque/Cathedral was the target of these transformation processes. Certainly, these transformations were driven by religious needs, but more importantly, they carried symbolic significance in demonstrating the colonial power's control by seizing a prominent place of worship.

By transforming Ketchaoua Mosque into a church in 1832 and the subsequent architectural alterations until the end of the 19th century, we can observe a profound change in the old Ketchaoua Mosque, resulting from the transformation that largely obliterated most of the traces of the old building. It gave the new cathedral an architectural style with Eastern influences.

With the conversion of Saint-Philippe Cathedral into a mosque during the summer of 1962, the space was reconfigured to accommodate Muslim worshippers once again and align with its new function. The building now enjoys protection, with periodic restoration work conducted as needed, similar to the last maintenance operation witnessed by the structure, which lasted approximately ten years.

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