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ARCHITECTURAL POLYGLOSSIA IN PUBLIC BUILDING FACADES OF LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

The 19th century was a period of significant transformations in Ottoman architecture in terms of the professionalization of discipline and the actualization of new construction technologies and architectural styles. The basic reason for this situation was the changing politics of Ottoman rulers that was based on the aim of achieving westernization in every aspect of life. In this context, an architectural medium has occurred especially in public building constructions where western based design approaches dominated the architectural production. Whereas, public buildings having different architectural characteristics than this westernization based architectural production, were also constructed in different peripheries of the empire. It is argued in this article that public buildings with polyglossia architectures were built in those regions that were generally concentrated on the facades and had architectural qualities different than the public building constructions executed mostly in İstanbul and other central cities of the empire. In this framework, the characteristics of these polyglossia observed on public building facades that contributed to the formation of architectural diversities in the empire are aimed to be examined. These polyglossia approaches that didn't transform into stabled architectural styles are evaluated within the framework of the design components and constructional elements applied on the buildings.

KEYWORDS:
Polyglossia; Ottoman Architecture; Late Ottoman Period; Public Buildings

INTRODUCTION

The language creates a structural system with concentrated words and causes several perception types depending on the emotions, thoughts, and senses of the person together with the reflections of the meanings that this system comprises. This semantic transformation also occurs in the field of architecture along with the effects of socio-cultural, economic, historical, technological and aesthetical values undertaken by different components of architectural production belonging to different ages that simultaneously create the architectural language of buildings. Each architectural style is the outcome of the perceptions and approaches of the architect emerged with the determinacy of the development processes of the medium (culturally, politically, etc.) that it came into existence [1].

In this context, it is observed that the architectural styles evolve historically with the effects of the groundbreaking developments of the period they emerge inside. In this process, aesthetical values or constructional issues rather than artistic considerations come into fore depending on the efficacy of the daily values and contexts. Besides, the language of buildings could be hybridized in some periods within the assimilation or imitation of universal styles and loses its originality. Similar to the occurrence of differentiation that may appear while making simultaneous translations from 'other' languages, loanings and borrowings among different cultures may also cause the formation of imitation or eclectic architectures without any originality.

On the other hand, architecturally multifactorial and complicated productions may also have simultaneously been observed in those periods together with the effects of the contexts above which lead to the formation of polyglossia architectures in different forms. In those periods of architectural history when this polyglossia becomes dominant, the architectural rules lose their decisiveness and the aesthetical, political and ideological messages aimed to be conveyed with architecture becomes invisible or indecipherable.

There are several periods in the architectural history of different societies that include such

polyglossial tendencies and reflect a complicated architectural character that is difficult to be defined easily. Polyglossia can be evaluated from various angles and disciplinary perspectives in architecture considering the several meanings it comprises both theoretically and practically. The boundaries of its physical and theoretical framework reach far beyond its definitions due to the scope of the determinants effective on its multi contextual formation process. In architecture, this polyglossia can be observed from many different sides of the buildings varying from their plan typologies to the selected construction materials.

At this point, among these components; the facades of the buildings become primary instruments for the reading of these polyglossial approaches considering the architectural character and styles of many buildings are usually carried and expressed by way of facade designs. Accordingly, Late Ottoman period architecture (especially the second half of 19th century) that is generally categorized with the terms eclectic, westernist and revivalist in architectural history studies, is reexamined in this study within the framework of the polyglossial architectural applications observed in different regions of the empire and the capital; İstanbul.

The study will focus on the architecture of the public buildings of this period with a great emphasis on their facades since most architectural orientations and experiments of the period were applied on those buildings, and their facades became the most widely used parts where these applications and searches were being most clearly and visibly adopted on.

In this framework, historical and architectural analysis of Ottoman empire in the 19th century is shortly made by a contextual approach in the first part of the study. In the next section, the architectural characteristics and styles of the public buildings of this period will be examined in general. Polyglossial architecture adopted on some public buildings of this period will comparatively be discussed in the following part together with an analysis of the architectural qualities of these buildings, and their differences from the others regarding their architectural languages will be expressed. Finally, the outcomes of the data obtained in this study will be revealed in the conclusion part.

CONTEXT: 19TH CENTURY OTTOMAN PERIOD AND THE ARCHITECTURAL MEDIUM

Early 18th century was the start of a period of radical transformation for Ottomans depending on the changing approaches of the 'sultans and governors of the empire' that began to consider Europe as 'the cradle of science, technique, and art together with the fastly increasing relationship with European countries' [2]. The supremacy of west was accepted by the governors of the Ottoman empire in this period, and apart from few emperors, most of them have consistently seen westernization as the most necessary component for the salvation of the empire and its modernization in the 19th century. On the other hand, while the related arrangements executed accordingly were mostly aimed at 'developing the army from different sides' during 18th century and early 19th century, the western mentality has totally been imported together with the 'announcement of the rescript of Gülhane (1839)' which led to the spreading of westernization understanding to almost each field of life [3].

In this framework, severe attempts and reforms were realized for the modernization and westernization of the society in the 19th century especially after this rescript. Many new developments and renewals have occurred in different aspects of social life; and new institutions, laws, and regulations that made these arrangements as the inseparable part of Ottoman life, have been adapted accordingly. Being mostly based on the westernization politics of Ottoman state, architectural medium of especially public buildings was one of the primary fields where these mentioned arrangements were applied.

New steps were taken by the public authority – the Ottoman state- especially in the second half of the century on behalf of the development of the architecture and urbanization in the country. The first concrete enterprises for the professionalization of architecture, the opening of new architectural schools with western approaches, the first adoption of western understanding based building laws, the appearance of new architectural styles and the adoption of new construction technology and materials were some of these contemporary arrangements realized in this period.

The most explicit and widespread reflection of the developments in architecture related to these struggles was the materialization of new western sourced architectural styles especially on public buildings of the period that witnessed significant architectural changes accordingly. Although it has taken its roots from the 18th century, an architectural era has started in Ottoman history beginning especially from the reign of Mahmut II (1808-1839) that the architectural styles and techniques of the west were taken and used in the form of interpretations or compilations mostly in public buildings.

The first arrangements realized accordingly in this period has mostly been seen in the field of military building architecture since the first steps of westernization were taken for the development and reorganization of the army. Regarding with this situation, the first examples of the adoption of western architecture were observed in the barracks, and military buildings of the military constructed in the 19th century.

The history of barracks that were constructed in İstanbul (i.e. Gümüşsuyu and Taşkışla Barracks) with 'great dimensions and totally with western styles' (mostly neo-classical) and pure-symmetrical ordered facades and forms, reaches back to 18th century; and they became the forerunners of the cosmopolite and western architecture that later on occurred in the city in 19th century [4], (figure 1).

Figure 1. Taşkışla Barrack, İstanbul, 1846 (Source: author, 2018)

The usage of western styles has unrestrainedly spread to the architecture of almost all the public buildings varying from the government offices and schools to banks, train stations, and hospitals while effecting the architecture of other building types such as mosques, arastas, residences, etc. Even, the facades of several public buildings were constructed directly with the import and imitation of the architecture of some existing buildings in Europe especially in the second half of the century. Whereas, such architectural applications weren't homogenically distributed to all regions of the empire; instead, these tendencies were mostly seen in İstanbul and some port cities. It had such an enormous impact on both the architecture and social life of İstanbul that some parts of the city in İstanbul such as Galata and Beyoğlu were started to resemble with western cities together with the sovereignty of western architectural styles on the architecture of the city [4], (figure 2-3).

Figure 2: Pera Palas, Beyoğlu-İstanbul, 1892 (Source: author, 2018)

Figure 3: Ottoman Bank, İstanbul, 1890 (Source: author, 2018)

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

Although the cities mentioned above were becoming the scene of the application of several western-style architectures, it wasn't possible to talk about the systematic and defined usage of these styles with organized decisions and determined frameworks. These styles were either being solely used on the facades of the buildings or coming together with several different combinations among themselves in different parts of the buildings. Besides, some experimental applications that used these western architectural styles and practices together with the local features of Ottoman architecture were also widely observed.

These complexities and diversifications in the design of buildings were giving way to the formation of different city parts and faces that were entirely seperate of each other in architectural and urbanization terms. In this context, it is tough to see the rational development or progression of architectural styles adopted on public buildings after making an architectural history study that focuses on classifying the architectural styles of this period. This complicated situation makes the appearance of several architectural history readings possible that approach the complexity of these architectural applications from different perspectives. However, each of these readings commonly refers to the adaptation of western architecture styles and practices to many building constructions executed in Late Ottoman period.

In this framework, several eclectic styles appeared on building facades that were designed in İstanbul and some leading cities of the empire throughout the 19th century. 'Baroque was used in architectural compositions' and an ornamental dictionary based on 'Baroque and ampir-neoclassic mixtures' was followed by Art Nouveau afterward [2]. This process started in the early years of the 19th century together with the usage of 'Ampir and Neo-classical styles' on buildings that were constructed by the state [5]. These applications were fastened especially after the reign of Mahmut II in which the 'classical architectural styles dominated the architectural production of public buildings in the first half of the century,' and 'followed with baroque and more eclectic styles afterward' [4]. Thus, there was an 'architectural pluralism' in the capital regarding the applied architectural styles on buildings which can be collected under four titles; 'neoclassical, neogothic, new Islamic and Art Nouveau styles' [3] (figure 4-5).

There were also other 'eclectic and free compilations' of several styles such as 'Classical Greek, Renaissance and French Ampir styles' mostly with neoclassical architecture that spread over different times of the century [3]. In addition to these varieties related with the styles used on the facades of these public buildings, it was also a period of the appearance or increase of new building types varying from barracks, office blocks and passages to banks and clock

towers that either carry one of these styles or their several types of combinations on their facades.

Figure 4: Botter Apartment, Beyoğlu-İstanbul: Art Nouveau Style. (Source: author, 2018)

Figure 5: Narmanlı Han (Russian Embassy additional building in the past) İstanbul, 1839: Neoclassical Style. (Source: author, 2018)

One other significant reality related with the newly implemented styles of the period is the usage of orientalist styles and Islamic patterns on some of these buildings that were also ironically related with the searches for obtaining western architecture. Being mostly in the form of ornamentation elements on the buildings and contributing to the complexity of the architectural production of this period, these patterns became widespread in the reign of Abdülhamit II and mostly applied on the buildings by the western architects working in the country. In this context, the romantic and revivalist approaches of the governors-architects of the period were also one of the basic reasons lying behind the adoption of all these styles on the buildings. On the other hand, it isn't possible to say that all the sultans and governors of the period have unquestioningly approved and ordered the application of these styles on public buildings. There were also few enterprises aiming to implement new styles against the dominance of these western architectural styles that could present new alternatives to the architectural production and contribute to the appearance of the unique local architecture of the empire in the long term. For example, Abdulhamit II ordered the adoption of some local orientalism on public buildings such as Selanik Hamidiye Mosque (1902) that was aimed to make a claim against the dominating efficiency of western styles [6], (figure. 6). However, the necessary substructure for the provision of this unique local architecture couldn't be set up in the architectural medium, and these contemporary style searches couldn't become widespread in the country apart from the few public buildings they were applied on.

Figure 6: Selanik Hamidiye Mosque, 1902, Orientalist and Neo-gothic style. (BOA., YEE.d., Gömlek no: 410)

DISCUSSION

POLYGLOSSIAL ARCHITECTURE IN LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

While this interwoven architectural design of public buildings based on the imitation of western styles was sustained, there also were other types of design approaches in public building constructions of this period executed both in İstanbul and the different regions of the empire. These buildings showed varieties among themselves in stylistic and constructional aspects depending on the conditions of the construction (the role of the architect, socio-economical possibilities, technical background, etc.) and the characteristics of the region they were constructed. They show us the existence of separate architectural searches in different areas of the empire apart from the architectural discourse evaluated above and expresses the degree of the freedom of architects in those regions even in the design of public buildings. It automatically led to the formation of diversities and richnesses among the architectural language of all the buildings constructed in the empire and provide the appearance of polyglossial architectures accordingly when it was collaboratively evaluated with the dominant architectural agenda. This polyglossia existing in the architecture of these buildings corresponds to the architectural features applied on their facades which are evaluated within the context of the architectural styles implemented on them. In this framework, the architectural analysis of this polyglossia on public building facades of Late Ottoman period that was either based on the combination of the western styles with local architectural features or the adoption of regional architecture elements that were entirely apart from the dominant architectural dictionary of this period, will be made in this part.

There were several types of architectural polyglossias on the facades of both the public buildings and the other building types of this period which confront us in different forms and can't be

classified historiographically. Providing also the appearance of pluralist architectures inside the borders of the empire that have many different faces, polyglossial architecture was mostly sourced from the designs of foreign and minority architects who also played definitive roles on the formation of the overall architectural production in the empire. Receding from the usage of eclectic styles and the adoption of 'other' topicalities by the minority architects of İstanbul was one significant extension of this situation that also contributed to the appearance of varieties in polyglossial facade designs. While contemporary western styles (neo-classical, baroque, neo-gothic, etc.) of the period were also being frequently used by the Greek architects in İstanbul; the building examples designed by them such as the Yeniköy Rumid Primary School by K. Dimadis and the Fener Clergy School by Konstantinos Dimadis (19th century) clearly contradict with this mentality since they generally bear the traces of Byzantian architecture of old İstanbul or Greece together with their stone-brick mixed facade textures and design elements, (figure 7-8). Besides, antique temple type facade designs reminding us the Classical Greek architecture executed mostly in Greece were also made by them such as the Hellen Philology Association building designed by Markos G. Langas [7], (figure 9). The common point for these three buildings is that their Rumid architects preferred to sustain their local architectures belonging to the cultural and historical roots of their own countries rather than directly following the way of adopting eclectic approaches on their buildings. Contributing to the architectural diversities in public buildings facades of İstanbul in terms of the appearance of architectural polyglossia in the city, the realization of such architectural approaches on these buildings were the outcomes of either the personal interpretations of their architects or their searches for the local and contemporary architecture in their architectural histories.

Figure 7: Yeniköy Rumid Primary School, 1872, Neo-Byzantine architecture. (Source: author, 2018)

Figure 8: Fener Clergy School, 1844, Balat: Neo-Byzantine architecture (Source: author, 2018)

Figure 9: Hellen Philology Association, 1873, Classical Greek Architecture. (Source: Şenyurt, 2012, 192)

The polyglossia on public building facades were also provided with the adaptation of the architectural characteristics of other building types with different functions such as the residences, apartments or palaces. The Düyun-u Umumiye (Public Debts) building designed in 1899 by an efficient foreign architect of the period; Antoine Vallaury, is one typical example of these public buildings that reflect such an architectural polyglossia on its facade, (figure 10). The design of the building is a 'combination of beaux-arts ecole and monumental Ottoman architecture (material usage, monumental doors and window orders)' with 'local architectural motives such as wide eaved roofs, cumbas and window details' that were adapted from Turkish residence architecture [3]. So, the building reflects the complex structure of the architectural searches of the period since it included the collaborative adaptation of local Ottoman-Islamic and western features on a facade carrying the architectural characteristics of traditional Turkish house. In this context, while being evaluated as one of the many eclectic designs of this period in architectural history studies, it should also be considered as an architecturally polyglossial building due to the adaptation of traditional Turkish house facade patterns on a public building that simultaneously contributed to the appearance of this eclecticism on this building.

Figure 10: Düyun-u Umumiye (Public Debts) Building, 1899, (Source: author, 2018)

The analysis of the public building facades constructed in different regions of the empire out of İstanbul also shows us that there hasn't been any common architectural language of public building designs that are based either on the implementation of western architectural styles or their variable combinations among themselves. For instance, it is possible to see public building facades in those regions

of the empire that carry entirely the characteristics of traditional Turkish house architecture. In this sense, the hospital building constructed in Kesriye district of Greece as a part of Ottoman territory exemplifies this situation together with his facade elements composed of broken roofs and eaves, and the preferred window design schemes and construction technique [8], (figure 11). Resembling to a traditional Turkish house more than a public building and generating another kind of polyglossia sourced from the contradiction between the actual function of the building and its completely local and residential architecture, the facade of the building is totally composed of local architecture elements coming most probably from the regional interventions and conditions effective on the construction of this building. Besides, idiosyncratic type of eclectic building facades were also arisen in different regions that gave way to the formation of different kinds of polyglossialities on the facades. In this framework, two public buildings; a court building in Serres and a government office in Larissa that were constructed in Greece in this period carry many similar architectural features on their facades [8]. Each of them has neo-classic columned projections on their entrance parts, symmetrical facades, identical window typologies, broken roofs and tile usages that caused the occurrence of eclectic styles on their facades through simultaneous use of local and western patterns, (figure 12-13). These buildings show us that a common facade typology for public buildings composed of broken eaves, tile usage in roofs, symmetry and similar window orders had partially appeared in some districts of Greece that were different than the public building facade designs in İstanbul. Although these facade typologies didn't become prevalent inside the borders of the empire, it points out the existence of another kind of polyglossial architecture for public buildings constructed in different parts of the empire other than İstanbul.

Figure 11: A hospital in Kesriye district with local architecture elements (Greece) [8]

Figure 12: A Court Building constructed in Serres (early 20th century), Greece. [8]

Figure 13: A Government Office constructed in Larissa, 1876, Greece. [8]

A detailed analysis of Late Ottoman Period architecture reveals the fact that there were unique facade designs executed in this period that stylistically and structurally have different architectural qualities when compared with the dominant architectural production in the empire. This also provided the appearance of several polyglossial architectures on building facades that sometimes contradict with the expressions of related architectural history studies. A drawing of a prison building (1906) taken from Ottoman archives reveals the dimension of these contradictory and experimental searches together with its complex architectural configuration [9]. The building has a very unique design since it all in one includes a central open courtyard plan scheme similar to a madrasa, a facade with traditional Turkish architectural patterns (window orders, broken roofs, cornices, etc.) and a castle resembling, bastioned neo-gothic entrance part, (figure 14). The simultaneous usage of such different elements on this public building presents us an extraordinary combination of separate architectural cultures (local and western) considering that even the togetherness of a madrasa plan with a traditional Turkish house facade is surprising in its contextual framework. It also is a significant example of public building architecture in Late Ottoman period in the context of showing the schematic borders that the polyglossia and complexity of the architectural applications of this period could reach.

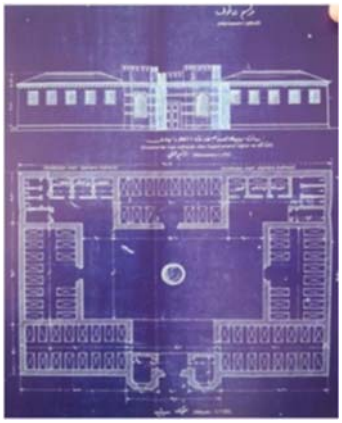

Figure 14: A Prison Building Drawing, 1906 [9]

On the other hand, the polyglossia in architectural designs of this period wasn't only observed in public buildings, but also in different building types such as palaces, mansions, and

residences (houses, mass housing examples and apartments). The exposure of traditional Turkish Hayatlı Ev (A House with a sofa) concept to some significant changes from both the frontal and planimetric aspects due to the increasing effectiveness of westernization on the architectural production, was the basic reason of this development. The passage to the usage of 'axiality, symmetry and central hole' concepts coming from western plan typologies together with some European sourced ornamentation elements on facades were some primary outcomes of this development that were especially observed on the houses and mansions of the wealthy sections of society [3]. These changes in residence architecture also affected public building architecture in terms of the formation of new polyglossial architectures on both the public building plans and facades. Considering that the traditional Turkish house plans were used for many public buildings of this period in varying levels, and 'many plan similarities were observed with the residences and public buildings' accordingly; such changes in planimetric design of residences inevitably affected public building planning and caused plan based polyglossias in public buildings in addition to the ones related with facade designs [9], (figure 15). As Şenyurt states, 'it was sometimes even difficult to differentiate a mansion belonging to a family from a government office; or a barrack from a madrasa when looked from a drawing or outside' [9]. In this context, the adaptation of Turkish house plans to public buildings and the transformations observed in their schematic designs in this period, also caused varieties in public building plans and facades that simultaneously gave way to the formation of new polyglossias in public building architecture.

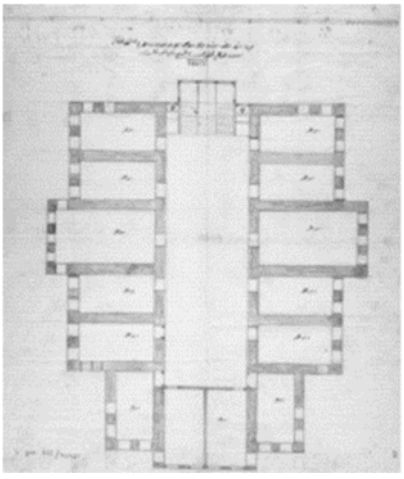

Figure 15: A government mansion plan from Late Ottoman Period: It looks like an ordinary mansion design composed of rooms lined up around a corridor. [9]

The polyglossia in public building designs of this period could also be achieved through varying architectural combinations of the plan schemes and facade designs having either local or western characteristics. The drawing of a Rumid Jimnaz High School building (1890) exemplifies such a combination together with his western 'neo-classical style facade, the three armed stair in front of the entrance door and an entrance sofa inside with a plan similar to the mansions and residences of rich Ottoman people' [9], (figure 16). These public building examples indicate us the existence of another polyglossia type that was based on different architectural combinations of the plan systems and facade orders adopted in these buildings.

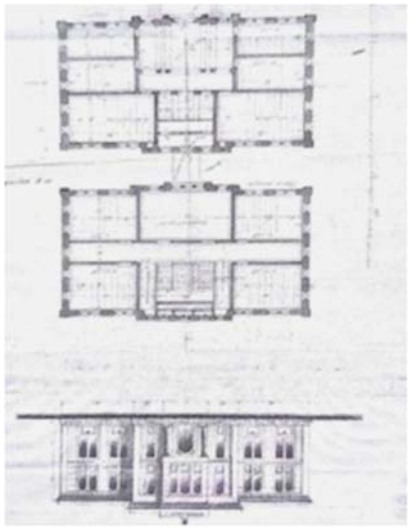

Figure 16: A drawing of a Rumid Jimnaz High School, 1890 [9].

CONCLUSION

The period between early years of the 19th century until the establishment of Republic embodies concentrated attempts of Ottoman bureaucracy for the theoretical and practical development of architecture that was mostly shaped around the westernization politics of state. Although these interventions of state provided some improvements in the architectural medium and led to the occurrence of some architecturally significant buildings, the architectural production of the country couldn't sit on tangible bases in terms of the formation of stabled and local architectural style of the country and the professionalization of architecture as a discipline. The most explicit outcome of these struggles was the prevalent usage of western architectural styles and construction methods in public building constructions with the way of imitations or interpretations. Nevertheless, this architectural understanding which was mostly resulted in the appearance of different eclectic applications of western styles on public buildings couldn't homogenically be spread to the outskirts of the empire. Instead, a portfolio of public buildings with architectural compositions different than the dominant architectural medium evaluated above, was constructed in different regions of the empire due to the determinant effects of local construction conditions and architectural traditions. These buildings were either built with completely local architectures or different matchups of these localities with contemporary western architecture elements; some of which gave way to the appearance of

separate polyglossial architecture types when their architectural styles are evaluated together with the dominant architectural language of public buildings constructed mostly in İstanbul.

Being mostly observed on building facades, this architectural polyglossia took different shapes concerning the construction region of the building and contributed to the formation of diversities and richnesses in the overall architectural production of the empire from aesthetical and constructional frameworks. Whereas, the building examples examined in this study express that these polyglossial architectures could only be effective in their own regional boundaries and stayed as 'territorial architectures' accordingly since their architectural varieties among themselves were solely coming from the differences of their own construction regions and conditions. Although these buildings provided the appearance of authentic architectures considering the overall architectural production inside the borders of the empire, it isn't possible to talk about the development of a defined and characteristic architectural language that has the required aesthetical and technical basis.

So, they couldn't be able to provide the formation of typologies in building facade designs of this period that had stabled architectural frameworks and became widespread in separate regions of the empire. From this aspect, the polyglossia observed in these buildings was the experimental and coincidental outcomes of the unsettled structure of the architectural medium in the country rather than being the results of conscious and organized architectural choices of the related authorities.

On the other hand, it can clearly be inferred from the public building facades evaluated in this study that their architectures were based on the varying combinations of local and western architectural elements that have certain differences with the İstanbul centered architectural production instead of bringing some new architectural features and point of views to the architectural agenda of the empire. For this reason, a permanent architectural accumulation couldn't be attained from these polyglossial buildings that was efficient enough to create alternatives to the existing complicated and western-oriented architectural medium, and leave permanent traces countrywide to its following period in terms of their design approaches and constructional issues.

Consequently, the architectural orders of these buildings were polyglossial since they were sheltering differences from the features of the dominant imperial architecture; but they didn't have the sufficient theoretical and practical backgrounds that may lead them to transform into stabled architectural styles having technically and aesthetically determined patterns.

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