Theophilus Mogabgab of Famagusta: a “Saracen architect” in British colonial Cyprus

Nicholas Stanley-Price
Theophilus Mogabgab of Famagusta: 
a “Saracen architect” in British colonial Cyprus

Nicholas Stanley-Price


Abstract. Theophilus Mogabgab joined the new Department of Antiquities of Cyprus in 1935 with responsibility for Famagusta. George Jeffery, the island’s Curator of Ancient Monuments, had previously rejected him as a possible successor for being unqualified (Mogabgab was essentially autodidact). It was Mogabgab’s deep knowledge and enthusiasm for preserving Famagusta – inspired by his Syrian family’s claim of Crusader origins – and his surveying skills that secured his employment. Little known family records throw light on Mogabgab’s origins, his uneven career, his difficult professional relationships, and the fate of his valuable rare book and antiques collections. Distinctive for their ethnic and religious status, the Mogabgabs were anglophile ‘outsiders’ during their 100 years’ presence in Cyprus that was terminated by the events of 1974.

Introduction

“In Famagusta found Saracen Gubgub working away as an ‘Architect’!”. So reads an entry (dated 19 April 1934) in the private diary of George Jeffery (1855-1935), Curator of Ancient Monuments in Cyprus for thirty years.1 In the abbreviated note-form that he used for his diary, Jeffery was rarely critical of other people. Only those who ignorantly questioned his work or who indulged in political manoeuvrings might occasionally earn a dismissive comment.

1 Pilides 2009, p. 360.
The entry quoted above conceals a triple putdown: ‘Gubgub’ was an allusion to Theophilus Mogabgab (whose surname was pronounced ‘Magubgub’); ‘Saracen’ implies ‘Muslim’ which Jeffery (an Anglo-Catholic) knew Mogabgab was not; and ‘Architect’ in inverted commas was an insinuation about Mogabgab’s lack of qualifications in that profession. The closing exclamation mark confirmed the tone of disapproval.

Jeffery’s disparaging tone stemmed from Mogabgab having once been proposed to succeed him as Curator. Mogabgab’s name is known nowadays for his brief reports on work done in Famagusta for the Cyprus Department of Antiquities in the late 1930s and for his Supplements to Cobham’s *Excerpta Cypria*.

2 He and Jeffery had several characteristics in common: a commitment to the preservation of historic buildings, a strong belief in research to that end, and a proud independence of spirit. They were quite different, however, in character and in the experience that they brought to working in Cyprus. Born in England, Jeffery trained in the arts and architecture in London, was an elected Fellow of the RIBA, had designed St George’s Anglican cathedral in Jerusalem and worked on other Anglican churches in Italy, Germany and Switzerland. He had witnessed the impact of modern development on archaeological sites in the Levant such as Amman and Jerash, corresponded regularly with colleagues and the professional societies in Britain, and published extensively.

Mogabgab, in contrast, was born in Cyprus, had hardly travelled outside it, was largely self-taught and published little. He was volubly articulate in English, read other languages and was very personable. On working visits to Famagusta Jeffery occasionally met Mogabgab, a draughtsman employed there in the Land Registration and Survey Department (LR&SD). Their relationship suffered when Jeffery found out that Mogabgab was being considered to succeed him. The only government institution with any formal responsibility for antiquities, the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia, had planned ahead by training abroad and then employing Cypriots such as Menelaos Markides and Porphyrios Dikaios. Jeffery’s post was an *ad hoc* one reporting to the High Commissioner who in 1923 told him he could consider it permanent. Only belatedly, when Jeffery was already in his early seventies, did the British government give thought to a possible successor.

The question of the Jeffery succession became redundant when in 1935 the government created a Department of Antiquities headed by a qualified architect, John Hilton. Despite Jeffery’s reservations about him, Mogabgab was appointed to the new department with responsibility for the Famagusta District. His work over the following 20 years, although mainly unpublished, is now frequently referred to in the flourishing field of studies of Famagusta. Before examining

2 Cobham 1908; Mogabgab 1935, Mogabgab 1936a, Mogabgab 1936b, Mogabgab 1937-1939, Mogabgab 1941; Mogabgab, Megaw 1937-1939.
3 Pilides 2009, pp. 5-9, 593-594.
5 Pilides 2018.
7 Stanley-Price, forthcoming.
8 *E.g.* Langdale, Walsh 2009; Tümer 2012; Kaffenberger 2019 in an extensive literature.
how his family background and career influenced his work, it is worth reviewing why – in Jeffery’s eyes – a character such as Theophilus Mogabgab was not the right candidate to succeed him.

Mogabgab as a possible successor to George Jeffery

Jeffery’s long career as Curator of Ancient Monuments (CAM) exemplified official policy towards the preservation of historic buildings for much of Britain’s colonial regime in Cyprus. Inadequate legal protection and the government’s reluctance to spend money on monuments did not prevent Jeffery from preserving much that otherwise would either have collapsed or been demolished. His philosophy was inspired by principles originally enunciated by John Ruskin and William Morris and enshrined in the work of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in Britain. Jeffery put into practice their philosophy of minimum intervention and preventive care of buildings despite the risible budgets allowed him. He would anyway have strongly objected to a massive allocation of funds for full restoration and reconstruction such as the French and Italians were undertaking in their own colonies.

In two of his last letters (he died one month later), he wrote to the members of the SPAB and to its Secretary, A.R. Powys, explaining what he had aimed to achieve following his re-appointment in 1920. “I was engaged by Lord Milner in 1919-20 not only as much as possible to avoid the expenditure of money myself, but also to prevent the expenditure by other people on more than the simplest repairs – and above all to avoid such an exhibition as at Rhodes!” Means for more than the merest patching and mending have rarely come my way, and I considered myself called on to prevent other persons from turning A/Ms [Ancient Monuments] into public ‘improvements’ or financial speculations.” Starting in September 1933 the British press had published letters criticising the government’s neglect of monuments in Cyprus, the authors lamenting Britain’s poor record compared with what the French and Italians were doing. These criticisms led to the Peers – Hill inspection visit to the island in March – April 1934. Neither in the press nor in Peers’s report was there any specific acknowledgment of Jeffery’s thirty years’ work saving monuments from destruction, work that he had shown Peers and Hill during their visit. As a Colonial Office employee, he could not respond to the criticisms or enter into public discussion. The Peers – Hill visit, which had been funded by the private Cyprus Monuments Committee set up by Viscount Mersey, led to the founding of a Department of Antiquities

12 Buckler 1946; Rouéché 2001, pp. 158-162.
13 Peers 1934 (“useful work … but on far too small a scale”); Buckler 1946; Pilides 2009, pp. 357-359.
that brought together under one director the Cyprus Museum and the care of ancient monuments. One of the first appointments to its very small staff was Theophilus Mogabgab as Antiquities Officer for Famagusta (fig. 1).

Mogabgab was known for his intimate knowledge of Famagusta, his dedication to its preservation, and his enthusiastic guided visits. He was seen as a possible successor to Jeffery whose advanced age seemed to justify relieving him of his duties. In early 1927, following a meeting of the Cyprus Museum Committee which both had attended, the newly arrived Governor, Sir Ronald Storrs, made a reference to the “age and physical infirmities” of Jeffery. Hearing of Storrs’s remark, Jeffery demanded and received a formal apology from the Governor. His diaries record several days spent ill at home and, towards the very end of his life, two bouts of serious illness involving hospital stays. But they also reveal an extraordinary stamina for a man of his age in conducting physically demanding site inspections and hands-on interventions.

Lacking the Governor’s confidence because of his age, Jeffery also found his position undermined by W. D. Caröe (1857-1938), a renowned church architect from Britain who wintered in Kyrenia. The Archdeacon of Cyprus, Harold Buxton, invited Caröe to design a church at Troodos for the British Protestant community in the island. Jeffery, long involved with that community, felt slighted at this and at finding that Caröe was criticising his restoration work. Particularly irritating was Caröe, with Storrs’s backing, undertaking his own restoration work on Ancient Monuments which ignored the SPAB principles of conservation. He was later among those who signed the letter to The Times (22 September 1933) criticising the Government’s neglect of the monuments. At only two years younger than Jeffery, Caröe could not be regarded even by his advocates such as Storrs as a potential successor as Curator. Instead, the favoured candidate was Theophilus Mogabgab. In November 1929 the Cyprus Museum Committee proposed that he be appointed the Assistant Curator of Ancient Monuments if Jeffery had no objection. Jeffery’s staunch supporter Mehmet Munir Bey, director of Evkaf and longstanding member of

18 Freeman 1990.
19 Pilides 2009, p. 255; Morgan 2010, p. 111. He also designed the Dome Hotel at Kyrenia for Costas Catellas.
20 The two had corresponded since at least 1926 when Caröe called Jeffery “one of the very few ‘indispensables’ in Cyprus”. They first met, introduced by Buxton, in March 1928; Pilides 2009, pp. 243, 659-660.
21 Emerick 2003, pp. 189-190; Pilides 2009, pp. 52-53.
23 CMC Minutes, 16 November 1929.
the Committee, informed Jeffery a few days later that there was a plot led by [Loukis] Pierides of Larnaca and Mogabgab to oust him as Curator of Ancient Monuments.24

The committee's appointment of Mogabgab “if Jeffery had no objection” stalled because of this condition. In an unfinished and undated draft letter, evidently post-dating the Museum Committee's proposal and addressed to the SPAB Secretary (at the time, the same Charles Peers, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments in Britain), Jeffery declared that, for continuing to apply the SPAB principles, the CAM must be “an Englishman educated as an architect and in touch with English ideas on the subject”. Perhaps the SPAB could identify such a man, he suggested. The natives of Cyprus planned to appoint an Assistant CAM without consulting him at all. “The candidate for this post is not in any sense English beyond knowing the language, he has never been in England and has no education as an archaeologist or what is of much greater importance as an architect”. In any event, Jeffery wrote, he had no intention of resigning now or for the next few years.25 Summoned to Government House on 3 January 1930, he obtained Storrs's approval for his proposed conservation programme for the year and then made a statement about his position and successor, declaring that Mogabgab was “unsuited and unwelcome to me for the purpose”. Storrs was keen to make the appointment but postponed taking any action.26 Instead, he continued to encourage Caröe to show Jeffery “what to do with monuments”, confirming the latter’s fear that Storrs was trying to ease him out.27

In the end Jeffery prevailed, in that he was still CAM when Storrs left Cyprus on 9 June 1932, his mixed record as governor having secured him a less prestigious post than he had hoped for, the Governorship of Northern Rhodesia. Composing his memoirs in 1936, he referred to Jeffery's age and to his having at one point been ‘resuscitated’ while grudgingly acknowledging what the Curator had achieved by using shrewdly his minimal resources.28 Storrs's successor Sir Reginald Stubbs (1876-1947), who did not reach Cyprus until November 1932, had declared himself keen on archaeology and determined to tackle the adverse publicity in Britain about the island’s monuments. He spent three months informing himself before sending a “strictly confidential” six-page letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London.29 In his view, Caröe's intemperate criticism of everything was not to be taken seriously; Jeffery on the other hand was irreplaceable:

The suggestion that Jeffery is worn out physically or mentally is simply absurd. I have seen him disporting himself on the roofs of Saint Sophia like a middle-aged goat (to which incidentally he has a strong facial resemblance), and if my mind functions as well as his when I am 77, I shall write to you withdrawing all that I have said about the desirability of Governors retiring at 55.

27 Diary, 18 March and 13 June 1932; Pilides 2009, pp. 294, 323.
28 Storrs 1937, pp. 578, 580.
29 The National Archives, UK (henceforth TNA), CO 67 253/2, 20 February 1933, ff 129-135, R.E. Stubbs, Governor, to P. Cunliffe-Lister, Secretary of State.
I want Peers’ advice about what to do when Jeffery goes. I simply cannot imagine how we shall get on. We can never find anybody with a tenth of his knowledge and I am afraid that even a barely competent person would have to be paid a far higher salary than we can afford.

Stubbs's assessment reached London when decisions about securing Jeffery’s retirement were already well advanced. W.M. Buckler had reported on 16 November 1932 to the influential Archaeological Joint Committee of leading learned societies about his visit to Cyprus a couple of months previously. While there, Buckler had deliberately avoided meeting Jeffery because his host, Rupert Gunnis, disliked him. His primary recommendation was to have Jeffery retired, citing his age and a reported (presumably by Gunnis) mental deterioration: “his mind is not functioning normally” (compare Stubbs’s quite different assessment above based on personal knowledge of Jeffery). In mid-1934 the Colonial Office agreed that Jeffery would be retired with a pension from January 1935 and be named Honorary Adviser to the new Department of Antiquities. His own post of Curator would lapse. Jeffery declared himself on the whole “well satisfied”.

He lived long enough to see Mogabgab appointed. Other than Mogabgab's dedication to preserving the old town of Famagusta, how was he qualified to join the new Department and to carry out projects on its behalf? Who was Theophilus Mogabgab and what motivated him?

**The ‘outsider’ status of the Mogabgabs in Cyprus**

Tracing the Moghabghab (Mogabgab) family history provides essential context for understanding Theophilus’ character and his concern for the preservation of Famagusta. The clan’s origins lie in the semi-autonomous Mount Lebanon Mutasarifate (Governorate) in the Ottoman Empire's vilayet of Syria. The family name مـغـبـغـب is usually transliterated as 'Moghabghab', the form adopted by most descendants in Lebanon and in the diaspora, mainly in the USA. Not until the 1930s did Theophilus adopt the simpler style ‘Mogabgab’. It was pronounced ‘Magubgub’, “a name that rings comically in Western ears” as one visitor remarked and that prompted Jeffery’s derogatory allusion to the “Saracen Gubgub”.

Theophilus’ father, Amin Halil Moghabghab, was born c. 1851 in Ain Zhalta, a village in the Chouf district of Mount Lebanon. The family at that time were adherents of the Melkite Greek Catholic church but, unusually, converted to Protestantism after Amin’s father came across some Protestant evangelical literature. One member of the clan later recanted, becoming Cyril IX Moghabghab (1855-1947), Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church in Damascus from 1925 to 1947. But Amin and his siblings had a Protestant upbringing and their father, a

---

30 TNA CO 67 248/12, ff 73, 74, report of AJC meeting, 16.11.1932; Roueché 2001, p. 157.
31 Pilides 2009, pp. 16-17, 367.
32 John 1946, p. 33; also, Balfour 1951, p. 170.
great believer in education, ensured that all were admitted to the Syrian Protestant College
(re-named in 1920 the American University of Beirut) which had been founded by American
missionaries to convert Syrians from Islam. There Amin was exposed to the influence of edu-
cators and missionaries such as Daniel Bliss, the College’s founder, G. E. Post and Cornelius Van
Dyck.33 Family tradition related that Amin had increasingly endangered himself by opposing
the Ottoman authorities in Beirut and it was to the relief of his relatives and friends that, as a
graduate of the Beirut Medical College, he accepted a position under the new British adminis-
tration in Cyprus. His career had an inauspicious start in 1880 as District Medical Officer in
Paphos where the people declared him incompetent and requested a doctor who spoke Greek.
Transferred to the Famagusta District in 1882 he became much in demand as ‘Dr Araby’, a
striking figure with long white hair and beard who travelled throughout the district on a
white stallion administering every kind of medical treatment.34 He was later promoted to
Health Officer for Famagusta under the island’s Chief Medical Officer, F. C. Heidenstam.35 He
retired in 1919 and died in 1923.

Theophilus’ own origins and upbringing have to be deduced from a detailed statement that
his brother Emile compiled for official purposes in the USA in 1942.36 Theophilus Amin Halil
Moghabghab was the eldest of five survivors among nine children born in Cyprus to Amin and
his wife Anne.37 He was born in 1886,38 followed by his surviving brothers Emile (b. 1895) and
Anice (b. 1897) and sisters Mathilde (‘Matti’ or ‘Mattie’, born c. 1899) and Mary (dates unknown).
Their Syrian mother was the adopted daughter of an English lady resident in the Lebanon,
Lady Evelyn Maud White, and was brought up as if English in language and appearance. She
died in 1901 in childbirth. In recording all relatives on his Personal History Statement of 1942,
Emile gave the name of Robert Limonidas, a resident of Famagusta, as his brother-in-law. Since
Mathilde never married (nor did Theophilus), his wife must have been the ‘poor Mary’ whom
family correspondence suggests died young.

His father, like his grandfather, believing in education, Emile attended the English School in
Nicosia (1908-1916) and returned briefly to teach there (1919-1920). In the intervening war-years
he served with the British Expeditionary Forces as an interpreter, mainly in Salonika and the
Greek islands. He sailed to New York in 1920 and then started to work in Madeira for New York-
based Syrian firms which commissioned handmade embroideries for sale in the USA.39 After
many were bankrupted in the Great Depression, Emile in 1933-1934 developed his own business
in Madeira, co-managing it with his wife, Vera Way from Watertown, South Dakota. She being
reluctant to adopt his unusual surname, Emile as a British citizen changed it by deed-poll in
London to ‘Marghab’ and married Vera in Cheltenham on 27 December 1931. Their successful

33 SDSU 2018, 25.18, Emile Mogabgab to Vera Way, 20.10.31; Anon. 1923.
34 State Archives, Nicosia, SA1 7263-7266, 7270-7274; Mogabgab 1977, p. 6.
35 Cyprus Blue Book 1887-1888, p. 306; Hutchinson, Cobham 1907, p. 71; Anon. 1923.
36 SDSU 2018, 25.18.
37 Mogabgab 1977, pp. 6-7.
business Emil Marghab & Co. Ltd. established a name for the quality of its distinctive products. Emile’s younger brother Anice spent twelve years in China working for another Syrian-owned import firm. On a visit to his employer’s headquarters in New York in 1937, he instead joined the Marghab company as a partner and in 1938 married one of the staff, Winifred Stevenson. The couple kept the surname ‘Mogabgab’.41

Nine years older than Emile, Theophilus was already in secondary school when the English School in Nicosia opened in 1900. He is not listed among its original thirteen pupils.42 In the 1880s Josiah Spencer’s attempt to introduce English-language schooling in Cyprus encountered both Cypriot and British opposition in favour of promoting Greek.43 His father therefore sent Theophilus, after primary schooling in Famagusta, to Beirut for his secondary education, attending one of the mission schools there as a foreign student. He then studied surveying/engineering at the Protestant College in Beirut but for how long and for what qualification is not recorded. Mogabgab is often referred to as an architect but ‘surveyor’ or ‘draughtsman’ would be more accurate designations. He had no further formal education.

His commitment to preservation in the city of his birth owed much to family history. Supposedly, the Moghabghab clan of Christians had been founded by his great-great-great-grandfather at Ain Zhalta, a defensible location high up on Mount Lebanon. Family tradition maintained that the clan was of Crusader origin. When changing his name by deed-poll to ‘Marghab’, Emile had in mind the Crusader fortress of Marghab (also, Margat, al-Marqab). The fortress is situated on the Syrian coast near Baniyas well to the north of Mount Lebanon but its fame in Crusader history and the ‘ghab’ common to both names appealed to Emile.45 The Moghabghab clan had later distinguished itself in its recurring armed conflicts with the Druze in the Lebanese mountains. Whatever the validity of their claims, the Moghabghabs were proud of their ancestral origins and believed in descent from a Crusader. Theophilus’ fascination with medieval Famagusta, a city that flourished under the Lusignan dynasty during the Crusades, should be viewed in this light (figs. 2-3).

This family of Syrian origin indubitably had an ‘outsider’ status in Cyprus. Amin’s knowledge of English learned at college, reinforced by marriage to a woman brought up as English, favoured his employment in the anglophone colonial government. His children grew up in an English-speaking household and had a mainly English-language education. As for integration with the majority Cypriot population, Theophilus’ given name was in his favour but the ‘Mogabghab’ betrayed him immediately as of foreign origin. He and his siblings were considered British subjects under the ius soli convention and they qualified for British citizenship with the passage of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act (1914). Moghabghab appeared

40 South Dakota Art Museum 2021.
41 SDSU 2018, 25.18; Mogabgab 1977, pp. 2-3.
42 Information from Kyriacos Demetriades; cf. Demetriades 2018.
43 Varnava 2009, pp. 164-165.
44 Papageorgiou 1966.
Figure 2 — Famagusta old town with St. Nicholas’s Cathedral (Lala Mustafa Pasha mosque) at centre, 1945 (photo: Matson Photo Service, Library of Congress, Washington DC, LC-M33-13373).

Figure 3 — St. Nicholas’s Cathedral (The Lala Mustafa Pasha mosque), Famagusta (photo: Maynard Owen Williams, The National Geographic Magazine July 1928).
unmistakably ‘British’ in manners and speech even to visitors vaguely aware of his Syrian origin. His American sister-in-law confirmed that all the Mogabgab children were raised in the British colonial tradition and “couldn’t have been more British”.46

Faith too set the Moghabghab family apart. Their conversion to Protestantism two generations previously had distinguished them from the Syrian Melkite Greek Catholics and from the Maronites who immigrated to Cyprus, either from Syria or indirectly via other communities in cities such as Alexandria or Smyrna. Not belonging to the majority Greek Orthodox or Muslim communities in Cyprus, and not being Catholic (as the Lusignans had been), Jewish or Armenian, the family found itself part of a very small Protestant minority. This minority grew with the arrival of more English Protestants following the British occupation, but the effect was to further integrate the Moghabghabs into British rather than Cypriot society. In many respects, therefore, to Cypriots Theophilus Moghabghab was an ‘outsider’. An awareness of his outsider, minority status betrayed itself in his focussing many of his investigations on the churches of oriental Christian minorities such as Greeks, Armenians and Nestorians who had taken refuge in Famagusta in the thirteenth century.47

**Moghabghab as antiquary, 1906-1934**

Moghabghab returned from studying in Beirut to find extensive development works far advanced at the port of Famagusta. There were two separate projects underway, managed by different British contractors: the construction of a new harbour and the building of a railway line to connect the harbour to Nicosia. Works for the port started first, in November 1903. The harbour contractor established his works yard inside the historic circuit wall and punched three arched openings in it to gain access to the port area. He also made a fourth, temporary breach in the wall between the Castle and the Signoria Bastion to bring stone from nearby quarries north of the town on a rail-track to the yard.48 Construction of the railway serving the port soon followed and the line to Nicosia was formally inaugurated on 21 October 1905. Moghabghab as a young, newly trained surveyor took up his first job as a draughtsman in the Railway Department, his starting-date gazetted as 15 August [a holiday] 1906.49 His choice of employment suggests a concern at the damage caused by the rail projects to Famagusta’s historic defence-works (fig. 4).

In 1912 he transferred to the Lands Registration and Survey Department (LR&SD) as a Land Registry Clerk.50 Meanwhile he had come to the attention of Harry Lukach (Luke), Private Secretary to the High Commissioner, as a capable draughtsman who also closely followed events

---

47 I owe this insight to an anonymous reviewer of this article.
48 Turner 1979, pp. 16-21 with photos; Walsh 2010, pp. 260-263.
49 Cyprus Blue Book 1907-1908, p. 196.
50 Cyprus Blue Book 1912-1913, p. 156.
in Famagusta. He provided Lukach with photographs for the latter’s book, *The fringe of the East*, and with a map of Ottoman Cyprus for his *Cyprus under the Turks, 1571-1878*.\(^{51}\) Moghabghab's name as an antiquarian of his native town reached a larger audience when he published an article in an English weekly.\(^{52}\) In providing a popular history of the Crusaders in Cyprus, and specifically Famagusta, he also lamented the pitiful condition of the town’s surviving medieval monuments and the lack of interest by the British. These comments cannot have pleased the Curator of Ancient Monuments who had met Moghabghab two years earlier (if not before) when they examined together the Ancient Monuments there.\(^{53}\) Nevertheless, a month after the article’s publication, Jeffery went “to Famagusta to stay with Moghabghab at their house on sea coast”.\(^{54}\)

This house stood a couple of kilometres to the north of the old town, near the coast and enjoying a clear view across bare ground to the circuit wall. In 1907 Amin Moghabghab had acquired the land which came to be known as Karaolos Plantation.\(^{55}\) Set among eucalyptus

---

**Figure 4** — The port of Famagusta, with rail track in foreground between the sea and the city walls (photo: Maynard Owen Williams, *The National Geographic Magazine* July 1928).

---

\(^{51}\) Lukach 1913, pp. viii, 264-266; Luke 1921. Luke had by then (1920) returned to the island as Commissioner of Famagusta.

\(^{52}\) Moghabghab 1923.

\(^{53}\) Jeffery’s Diary, 1 April 1921, in Pilides 2009, p. 183.

\(^{54}\) Jeffery’s Diary, 29 November 1923, in Pilides 2009, p. 196.

\(^{55}\) Land Registry and Surveys archive, Minutes Papers, Nicosia. LRS1 10657 1907 Mar.
trees and aloes, its two small buildings were separated by the track that led to the Karaolos camp, established in 1916 for Turkish prisoners-of-war. Jeffery refers to it in November 1923 as “their house” but Moghabghab by then was probably the sole occupant. His father had died six months previously; his brother Anice and sister Mathilde, living abroad, did not return to Cyprus until 1937 and their brother Emile was shuttling between New York and Madeira. Theophilus’ only nearby relative was his brother-in-law Robert Limonidas. Two years older than Theophilus, he too was a clerk in the Railway Department, first employed there in August 1905 shortly before the railway started operating. During the later 1920s, as proposals to retire the old Curator of Ancient Monuments came up in London and Nicosia, Jeffery found himself meeting more frequently both Moghabghab and Limonidas, all of them sharing an interest in the preservation of old Famagusta. In July 1926 he invited them to Salamis where they inspected the ruins.56 Over the next three years, Jeffery had some ten or so meetings or meals with either Moghabghab or Limonidas. The last one was when Moghabghab called at Jeffery’s house in Nicosia on 31 October 1929.57 He evidently failed to inform Jeffery that the Cyprus Museum Committee was about to propose that he, Moghabghab, should be appointed Assistant Curator of Monuments. His ambition to take over eventually Jeffrey’s role was foiled when Jeffery opposed the proposal.

The antiquarian knew the town intimately and was extremely energetic, devoting his spare time to surveying and documenting its medieval monuments.58 But he was not an architect and, in Jeffery's words, “had no experience in the repair of vaulted buildings such as most of these ancient monuments of Cyprus happen to be”.59 He liked and admired the architect W. D. Caröe, Jeffery’s nemesis, and attended Caröe’s lecture at the Cyprus Museum in which he criticised the current state of monuments.60 Rebuffed by Jeffery, by spring 1931 he was despondent about his prospects. There was popular resentment over the level of government salaries and he feared cutbacks or the introduction of an income tax.61 An unexpected request for his help temporarily restored his self-esteem. After long negotiations, the LR&SD in 1931-1932 agreed to lend Mogabgab’s services for the survey of Byzantine churches requested by the Archbishopic of Cyprus and entrusted to Professor Georgios Soteriou from Athens.62 Jeffery knew nothing about the project until summer 1933 when, asked for his opinion, he gave it in characteristically trenchant fashion and criticised the project’s scope and, later, the accuracy of the resulting drawings.63 The project took up five months of Mogabgab’s time, surveying churches and chapels on fieldwork that was fascinating but fatiguing in difficult working conditions.64

---

56 Jeffery’s Diary, 10 July 1926, in Pilides 2009, p. 218.
57 Pilides 2009, p. 269; for previous contacts, see pp. 218, 219, 220, 226, etc.
58 Papageorgiou 1966.
59 Unfinished draft letter to Secretary, SPAB, in Pilides 2009, p. 402.
60 Published as Caröe 1931.
61 SDSU 2018, 26.19, T. Mogabgab to Emile Mogabgab, 30.5.1931.
62 State Archives, Nicosia, SA/917/1929/1.
63 G. Jeffery to Colonial Secretary, 15 May 1933, in State Archives, Nicosia, SA/917/1929/1.
64 SDSU 2018, 26.19, T. Mogabgab to Emile Marghab (Mogabgab), 4.6.32 and T. Mogabgab to Vera Marghab, 26.9.32.
the Survey department, F. J. Salmon, who had released Mogabgab for this project, complained of the many hours his employee had spent at home completing the complicated drawings that Soteriou required. A member of the Cyprus Secretariat commented: “I understand he [Mogabgab] is a feeble Government servant but quite a considerable antiquarian and draughtsman” and that his task was made extremely difficult and tiresome by the Archbishopric and Soteriou. Other than two preliminary notices, only the volume of plates from the church project was published. In his introduction to that volume, Soteriou acknowledged the work of the surveyor-draughtsman Mogabgab but few of the published plans and sections bear Mogabgab’s signature, the great majority of them being signed with a different name.

In fact, Mogabgab left the island in early 1933 without having completed his work for Soteriou (hence the employment of another draughtsman to finish the plans). His professional future seemed bleak in the economic crisis. Civil servants were being encouraged to work part-time or to take early retirement. His brother Anice suggested he come and work in China, while Emile proposed a visit to Madeira to meet his new wife. Theophilus decided promptly to request long leave, relying on Salmon’s quick approval before the latter took up his new position as Director of Surveys in Palestine since “the native element in the Department” would be unlikely to be in favour. He was eventually granted six months’ leave on full pay and indefinite leave thereafter on half-pay. His successful application to obtain a British passport and nationality papers in January 1933 confirms that he had not previously travelled abroad – his student days in Beirut around 1900 pre-dated general passport requirements. His continued future employment in the Survey Department was in some doubt when he left by sea on 24 February 1933 for Madeira. This uncertainty was reflected in his surprising decision to ship to Madeira most of the valuable contents of his house at Karaolos: heavy furniture, his collection of Cypriot sendoukia (decorative wooden dowry chests), carpets, glassware, and much of his extensive library of books. The isolated position of the Karaolos house rendered it vulnerable to thieves, Mogabgab feared, but he secured Robert Limonidas’ brother to occupy the house as caretaker. In the end, on grounds of cost, Mogabgab left the heaviest furniture behind; but taking much of his collection of antiques and books to Madeira suggests that he was considering a long absence. In May 1933, Jeffery had misunderstood that “Mograbgrab [sic] was gone for good” and “arranged what to do about the matter of his having been employed to do my work.”

To Jeffery’s dismay, however, Mogabgab was back in Cyprus by early January 1934, after some ten months away. He left Madeira “in haste” without shipping back to Cyprus the goods

---

65 State Archives, Nicosia, SA1//917/1929, minute of 25.9.33.
66 Soteriou 1935.
67 This other signature seems to read ‘J. Perikleous (?), 1933’ though no such name is credited in the Introduction. The captions give credit to Mogabgab for the plan of the church of St George of the Greeks in Famagusta (fig. 44, signed by him), the elevation and sections of the Kanakaria church at Lythrangomi (fig. 22, signed by him as ‘Moghabghab’), and the plan of the church of St. Lazarus in Larnaca (fig. 19 but signed by another).
69 Diary, 13 May 1933, in Pilides 2009, p. 342.
that he had taken there.\textsuperscript{70} Why did he return to Cyprus in haste? During his absence, he would have seen the publicity in \textit{The Times} about the monuments in Cyprus and he may have heard, perhaps through his friend Caröe, of the proposed inspection by Peers and Hill. Fortunately for Mogabgab, their visit was delayed by lack of funding until spring 1934 by which time he was back in Famagusta and able to meet and impress the visiting experts. He was still on the LR&SD staff but was also working as an “architect” (in Jeffery’s words) and doing excavations, or rather earth clearances, for instance for the foundations that he cleared in 1934 near the Monastery of Saint Barnabas.\textsuperscript{71}

His skills as a surveyor-draughtsman were much in demand. He told Sir George Hill that he had had to interrupt his work for Soteriou to produce plans for Claude Schaeffer working at Enkomi, for the Cyprus Museum’s excavations at the built tomb at Pyla, and for the Church Committee at St. Barnabas. He reported a proposal by the French government, relayed by Claude Schaeffer to Jeffery, to fund the preservation of ‘Frankish’ monuments in the island, an offer that the British rebuffed,\textsuperscript{72} and commented on other issues such as thefts of marble from sites and the need to revise the antiquities legislation.\textsuperscript{73} Hill was so impressed with Mogabgab’s enthusiasm that he forwarded the letter to the Colonial Office and to John Hilton, newly appointed head of the new Department of Antiquities.\textsuperscript{74} With endorsements such as Hill’s to back him up, Hilton wasted no time on his arrival in Cyprus in November in securing Mogabgab, then aged 48, initially on secondment from the LR&SD and then as a full-time employee with the title of Antiquities Officer and Curator of Museum, Famagusta District.\textsuperscript{75}

\textbf{Mogabgab as Antiquities Officer and Museum Curator, Famagusta}

Theophilus Mogabgab had finally fulfilled his ambition of a government position with responsibility for antiquities. There followed an extensive campaign for clearing and restoring buildings in Famagusta launched by the new Director of Antiquities, John Hilton, with funding support from the Cyprus Monuments Committee, and continued under his successor, A. H. S. ‘Peter’ Megaw, with the help of an increased government budget and a grant from the Leverhulme Trustees.\textsuperscript{76} Technical work for masonry restoration was entrusted to the experienced J. E. Bowler seconded from England\textsuperscript{77} and mural paintings conservation to Monica Bardswell. The latter had been a pupil and then colleague of E. W. Tristram, noted authority on English medieval wall-paintings. The wall-paintings specialist was available thanks to the renewed project in Cyprus of her recently

\textsuperscript{70} SDSU 2018, 26.9, T. Mogabgab to Vera Marghab, 25.8.53.
\textsuperscript{71} Soteriou 1935, pl. 17.
\textsuperscript{72} Roueché 2001, p. 160; on French claims to Cyprus’s Lusignan heritage, see Swenson 2015, pp. 36-46.
\textsuperscript{73} TNA CO 67 253/2, 10 August 1934, ff 115-121, T. Mogabgab to Sir George Hill.
\textsuperscript{74} Stanley-Price, forthcoming.
\textsuperscript{75} In the family correspondence there are apparently no surviving letters from Theophilus for the crucial period March 1934 to January 1935, the time of the Peers-Hill visit, the creation of the Department of Antiquities and Mogabgab’s secondment and then appointment to it.
\textsuperscript{76} Megaw 1937-1939; Mogabgab 1937-1939, p. 181.
\textsuperscript{77} Roueché 2001, p. 162.
retired husband, Dr Noel Bardswell, and she volunteered her expertise to the Department, employing Tristram’s preferred preservation technique of wax-coating.  

An analysis of 56 interventions by Mogabgab between 1935 and 1956 shows that most historic buildings received attention sooner or later. The greatest activity, in the years 1937-39, declined during the war before resuming on a reduced scale in the 1950s. His perspective was an unusually broad one, treating the historic environment as a whole and rehabilitating it where necessary. His approach showed how far ahead of his archaeological colleagues he was in popularising antiquities and promoting tourism. Hilton made this one of Mogabgab’s departmental duties, and they soon opened a Tourist Office in the old town. In addition to his personal tours, Mogabgab encouraged pilgrims to the monastery of Agios Andreas in the Karpas peninsula to visit Famagusta en route. He established a ‘Friends of Famagusta’ society and had plans for a Young Famagusta project, aimed at promoting preservation awareness. Cyprus was already on the itineraries of the Hellenic Travellers Club and Mogabgab persuaded visiting travel writers, such as the phenomenally popular H. V. Morton, to advertise the island’s attractions in their books.

But Mogabgab had his local enemies: Munir Bey informed Hilton on his arrival as Director of Antiquities that the Turks in Famagusta hated Mogabgab passionately and loathed his entering their premises. The Antiquities Officer forbade them to pasture their flocks on the town’s ramparts and stopped taxis from parking in front of the ‘Venetian Palace’. The roofless building that he had selected for his own office was a former mosque, one of the few built by the Turks (fig. 5). Complaints from Turkish residents about restrictions over building permits led Governor Palmer to carry out his own on-site inspection with the town’s British commissioner. Megaw later set up an informal committee for residents to have a greater say in planning decisions but the Government continued to control building permits and to purchase or expropriate land so as to isolate historic buildings and to prevent future encroachment. Mogabgab preferred to demolish all modern constructions and to remove Ottoman-period accretions to medieval or Renaissance buildings (Jeffery had been known to do the same), making him appear a romantic “who lives in Famagusta’s past, and wages a restless, petulant war against modernity”. The Cypriot painter Georgios Pol. Georgiou also earned his wrath for installing a studio inside the Venetian ‘Bedestan palazzo’ and adding to it a small chapel with Byzantine-style mural paintings that portrayed, in Mogabgab’s view,

78 Bardswell 1937; Schmid 2017.
80 Mogabgab 1937-1939.
83 Morton 1936, pp. 106-142; see too Martelli 1938, pp. 269-273.
85 TNA FCO 141/2520 [Cyprus: preservation of antiquities], 1935-36.
86 Megaw 1936; Mogabgab, Megaw 1937-1939, p. 214; ARDAC 1949, p. 6; ARDAC 1953, p. 5.
87 Balfour 1951, pp. 170-173.
Greek Cypriot political propaganda. The Department negotiated terms on which the painter helped to restore the building.

Also controversial were the clearance operations that Mogabgab performed within and around historic monuments, forfeiting in the process much data of archaeological significance. By the 1930s scientific excavation methods in Cyprus had advanced with the fieldwork of Menelaos Markides, the Swedish Cyprus Expedition (1927-1931), Porphyrios Dikaios and other Cypriots who worked with them such as George Anastasiou who was then recruited for the Cyprus Museum staff. In the mid- to late 1930s Joan Du Plat Taylor brought to Cyprus the methodological rigour she had learned from Kathleen Kenyon and from Tessa and Mortimer Wheeler on their excavations in England. But in Famagusta clearance operations did not benefit from proper archaeological techniques. Deposits that had accumulated inside buildings to a depth of up to 3-4 m were “lowered to the original level”. In 1937 Mogabgab was “feverishly pushing on clearance of the great mound of debris flanking on the North the old Land Gate. Six motor lorries and some carts are working without cease and I am so happy that I managed to get all

89 ARDAC 1949, p. 11.
90 Hirschfeld 2007, p. 4.
91 For the huge volumes of debris involved, see Mogabgab 1937-1939, p. 181.
this done without drawing a penny from Government funds but only enticed the Municipality and contractors to remove it at their own cost.” Contractors were happy to use the debris free-of-charge for levelling works elsewhere. He found that convict labour (as used also by Jeffery, Hilton and Megaw on different sites) was more efficient than paid workmen (most of these prisoners were in gaol for non-payment of fines). Even after his formal retirement he continued clearance work using ‘parole’ convicts and meeting some of the minor indirect costs himself (e.g., as in fig. 6).  

Figure 6 — Panel from the Mogabgab photoarchive, documenting work in the Famagusta Citadel in 1950 (photo: unidentified photographer).

92 Mogabgab 1935, p. 22; Mogabgab 1936, p. 103; Mogabgab 1937-1939, p. 184; SDSU 2018, 26.9, T. Mogabgab to Emile Marghab, 16.7.37, 18.8.37, 15.9.37; Chapman 1937, pp. 44-45; Tümer 2012, fig. 13.5.

93 SDSU 2018, 26.9, T. Mogabgab to Vera Marghab, 25.8.53. For Jeffery’s use of convict labour in ‘levelling’ works, see Pilides 2009, pls. XXXVIII, XLI-XLIV.
As is the nature of such operations, they were poorly documented. Mogabgab submitted regular reports to Megaw but published few details of his site-work. The future monographs that he promised in his preliminary notices never appeared, despite Megaw offering him assistance to prepare them following his definitive retirement in 1952. It seems that field notes exist as does extensive photographic documentation of the preservation work, of the bomb damage of 1941 and of public events. The archive that Mogabgab created for the Cyprus Department of Antiquities consists of at least 8000 prints with captions (fig. 6). It has proved invaluable for recent studies, which locate the archive in the Department of Antiquities, Famagusta. It is now said, however, to be inaccessible to scholars. Important also are Mogabgab's paintings of old Famagusta, some of which he hung in the town's former museum. The Municipal Gallery of Famagusta owned 35 examples of his work. Eight of his works have recently been recovered; others are in the collection of the Centre of Visual Arts and Research, Nicosia (fig. 7).

**Mogabgab and British colonial society in Cyprus**

To foreign visitors Mogabgab was the perfectly mannered, neatly dressed, fluent English-speaker and an extraordinarily well-informed guide to Famagusta. He flourished in the company of the well-born, the famous, the scholarly and royalty, such as the Princess Royal and Lord Harewood from Britain, Queen Marie of Romania and Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria. His family letters are replete with the names, especially if titled, of the distinguished visitors whom he guided. He would position himself to be the first to greet an officer arriving by ship. Christopher Hurst in 1949 was a 20-year-old doing his national military service, and spent a year at the Karaolos camp near the Mogabgab house. During that year Hurst considered Mogabgab “a haven of congenial company”. As Hurst landed at the Famagusta port, he had spotted the antiquary, “a short man wearing an ancient three-piece drill suit and a hat of which the brim was pulled down all...

---

94 ARDAC 1952, p. 4.
95 His photos are reproduced in, e.g., Langdale, Walsh 2009, pp. 16-18 and fig. 7; Langdale 2010, p. 16, and nn. 24, 58 and 59; Tümer 2012, figs. 13.3 – 13.8. Dali (2012) expressed concern that the photo collection was now depleted, citing a paper from 1998 by Hasan Zaimoğlu, “Mogabgab ve Fotoğraflarndaki İzler” presented at the Mağusa Symposium, Bildiri Kitapçığı, Gazimağusa, Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi, pp. 107-109 (not consulted). The Samtay Foundation in Famagusta is reported to hold some of Mogabgab’s records. Kaffenberger (2019, p. 60, n. 9, p. 62, n. 14, and p. 68, n. 19) describes the Mogabgab Photographic Archive as “currently inaccessible”. It deserves to be urgently re-constituted, stabilised, catalogued and digitised.
96 Balfour 1951, p. 171.
97 Technical Committee on Culture 2020, pp. 35, 39-40 and table V. This exhibition catalogue reproduces four of his paintings (index nos. 159, 175, 176 and 184) and three others (index nos. 132, 038 and 208) very probably to be attributed to him, all depicting scenes in Cyprus including Famagusta. Four unsigned watercolours – three scenes of old Famagusta and one rural view – were among the possessions that he donated or left behind in Madeira (SDSU 2018, 26.20).
98 Mogabgab 1941; Hurst 1997, pp. 144-145.
100 Later, as a publisher, he repaid the debt to his host and to Cyprus by reprinting Luke’s *Cyprus under the Turks*; Hurst 1997, pp. 326-327.
round; one could only see his hook nose, little moustache and gap-toothed smile.” He was one of many visitors invited to the Karaolos house.101 Most of the items that Theophilus had shipped to Madeira in 1933 remained in Funchal where the Cypriot wooden dowry chests impressed visitors to his brother’s linen workshop. But visitors to Karaolos noted how the antiquary’s house was still crammed with books, antique furniture and objets d’art. Its vulnerable location, however, led to its being requisitioned and some of its contents looted during the 1963-64 intercommunal troubles. Mogabgab as a non-Muslim was prevented from entering the old town and items were removed from the Department of Antiquities office. These traumatic events may have contributed to his death the following year.102 By 1969 his surviving sister Mathilde would spend only the days at Karaolos, guarded by UN troops, and would return to a Famagusta hotel for the night.103

101 E.g., Jeffery, the members of the Peers – Hill group, Evan John (1946, pp. 33-34) and Patrick Balfour (1951, p. 172).
102 Dağlı 2012.
103 Toy 1970, pp. 8-10. After Mathilde died in 1970, Anice as the sole surviving heir inherited the house and made improvements to the property, initially for family holidays, but in 1972 he and his wife decided to retire there permanently. They sold up in the United States and moved to Famagusta. Only two years later Karaolos was thoroughly looted during the Turkish invasion of July 1974 after the Mogabgabs had been hurriedly evacuated via Dhekelia and then, as Americans, by the US Sixth Fleet to Beirut. In fleeing the island of his birth, Anice
As C. D. Cobham and George Jeffery had before him, drawing on incomes and an ability to travel to libraries that he lacked, Mogabgab amassed his own valuable personal library devoted to the history of Cyprus. For purchasing rare and expensive volumes, he paid instalments of his modest salary to the Orientalist bookseller Arthur Probsthain in London, with the help of the Ottoman Bank in Famagusta (for loans?). His acquisitions led to his publishing some forty new extracts from historical sources referring to Cyprus, translated into English where necessary and commented by Mogabgab, which formed a series of three supplements to Cobham’s *Excerpta Cypria*. In a preface to the first supplement he justified a more eclectic approach than Cobham’s because of the much greater popular interest in Cyprus, as reflected in the many visitors to the island and in the public lectures given by distinguished speakers (some of them probably organised by himself). The volumes reflect his own acquired expertise in handling multilingual sources about Cyprus and in providing, for example, translations of Armenian sources not previously accessible in English. Lacking some of his books needed for compiling the supplements, he asked Emile to post back to him specific titles stored in Madeira, but the bulk of his collection remained there. After his death his sister-in-law sent much of it to auction in New York but donated several rare volumes to the State University in Brookings, South Dakota. Among them are copies of Benjamin ben Jonah, *Itinerarium Beniaminis* (1633); Pietro della Valle, *Viaggio di Pietro della Valle il Pellegrino ...* (1672-1677); Thomas Templeman, *A survey of the globe* (c. 1765); and Luigi Mayer, *Views in the Ottoman Empire* (1803). In Cyprus his sister Mathilde donated books from his collection to the Cyprus Museum library and to the Phaneromeni library in Famagusta.

As had his father, Mogabgab believed firmly in the benefits of British colonial rule in Cyprus. Unlike Jeffery, he admired Storrs’ role as Governor, blaming both British and Cypriots for not recognising his brilliance and his progressive ideas for the island. The *Octobriana* events of 1931 – “The ‘Revolution’ (Autumn madness would be a better description) caught us unawares” – caused him two fearful nights at Karaolos, worrying as a Government employee what his neighbours might do. His sympathy for the plight of Storrs stemmed in part, as a fellow-collector, from the conflagration of the governor’s lifetime acquisitions, a collection that Mogabgab had seen several times. But he could also be frustrated by the petty bureaucracy of British officials: “What is wanted is a wholesale clearance of these gentry – let them go somewhere in the Tropics or wilds of Africa! We seem to irritate them because we do not conform to their

Mogabgab therefore found himself in the city from which his father had embarked for Cyprus almost one hundred years earlier (Anice died in England three months later, unaware of the fate of Karaolos: Mogabgab 1977).

---

104 Hurst 1997, p. 319; Mogabgab 1941, preface.
105 Mogabgab 1941, dedicated in gratitude to Sir George Hill.
conception of what we are or ought to be!” His use here of ‘we’ is unusual since in general he did not self-identify with Cypriots, preferring British society.

His work did not go unrecognised by the British. In 1947 he was awarded the MBE, a prestigious honour from the Crown. He twice received a Coronation medal, in 1937 (the only member of the Department to be selected, he proudly noted) and again in 1953. He had also been made a Serving Brother of the Order of St. John [of Jerusalem] which appealed to his sense of a Crusader ancestry. It had presumably been Peter Megaw as his director who had recommended him for the MBE. When Mogabgab reached retirement age in 1949, Megaw retained him on a temporary basis, combining the functions of Antiquities Officer and Honorary Curator of the Famagusta Museum.

But the regard was not reciprocal. Mogabgab nursed a deep-seated resentment of Megaw, a qualified architect and a Byzantinist, his resentment exceeded only by his contempt for Rupert Gunnis (the socially well-connected Gunnis perhaps having patronised him as an “obscure crackpot”, Hurst suspected). He felt he had never received his due, the MBE evidently of inadequate consolation to him. This strained relationship went back to before the war. For his visit to Cyprus, the art historian Bernard Berenson on the recommendation of Sir George Hill contacted Mogabgab, “a dark little man…who heads the bureau and seems to devote himself entirely to the preservation of the antiquities of the town”. On his excursions Berenson had the company of either Mogabgab or Megaw but never the two together. Twenty years later, Mogabgab in renewed correspondence with Berenson was still nursing grudges against his former director. Hurst knew both men and commented how they were “totally different types.” Mogabgab was convinced that his ‘enemies’ were determined to impede his work and to claim his discoveries as their own. This mindset appears in his correspondence of the late 1930s but becomes an obsession in the 1950s after his official retirement – his autobiography would, when published, expose his enemies’ machinations. But, as with his plans for other books about Cyprus and his excavation monographs, he never produced it.

Two incidents soon after he joined the Department fuelled his resentment. The French government wished to give him an award for his work in Famagusta. But the Governor (Richmond Palmer) vetoed it on the grounds that Mogabgab had only been performing his duty. Equally wounding was the outcome of Mogabgab’s request in 1935 to undertake a three-month study tour in Europe under a Carnegie Foundation ‘refresher’ programme for public servants. Rejected because of pressure of work so soon after he had joined the Department, he renewed

110 SDSU 2018, 26.9, T. Mogabgab to Emile Mogabgab, 8.2.29.
111 Hurst 1997, p. 132.
112 ARDAC 1949, p. 4.
113 Hurst 1997, p. 145.
114 Calvelli 2013, p. 693.
115 Hurst 1997, p. 146.
116 SDSU 2018, 26.9, T. Mogabgab to Emile Marghab, 15.9.37; T. Mogabgab to Vera Marghab, 25.8.53. One of Mogabgab’s grudges may have been a lack of sufficient acknowledgment in Soteriou’s publication (see notes 66 et 67).
the application in summer 1936 with strong support from W. D. Caröe and from John Hilton who confirmed his language ability and his never having studied abroad. The Governor again declined the request.\textsuperscript{117} In place of Mogabgab, the Carnegie Corporation funded A. C. Indianos, a government Greek translator recently transferred to the Department of Antiquities, to study Classical Archaeology at Oxford.\textsuperscript{118} These personal rebuffs must have featured prominently among the “unappeased resentments” that Mogabgab nursed according to Hurst. He saw them as deliberate moves to block his professional development so that others could claim credit for his discoveries. Such a sense of grievance is common among autodidacts who are oversensitive about their lack of formal qualifications. Rupert Gunnis was another autodidact in art and architecture but his superior social rank, private income and easy friendship with the island’s governors allowed him confidently to pursue his own interests.

Born and bred in Famagusta, Mogabgab was nevertheless unmistakably ‘an outsider’, a British Cypriot of Syrian ancestry, who was neither Turkish nor Greek, neither Muslim nor Greek Orthodox, neither Armenian nor Catholic, but an ebullient Protestant anglophile who was passionate about the Crusaders from whom he claimed descent. His work absorbed him to the exclusion of everything else such as “marriage, a domesticated life, comfort, leisure, needed holidays…”\textsuperscript{119} To occupy the position of Curator of Ancient Monuments Jeffery could imagine only “an Englishman educated as an architect and in touch with English ideas on the subject.” The Colonial Office, guided by the advice of Peers and Hill, had in mind similar requirements when appointing a Director of Antiquities (John Hilton and then Peter Megaw). Mogabgab did not meet these criteria, being in Jeffery’s view “not in any sense English” and with no education in architecture. He therefore felt thwarted in his career and lacking the recognition that he deserved despite dedicating his life to preserving Famagusta and sharing with others his deep knowledge of it. In reality, that the old town retains today so much of its historical value is a tribute to the lifetime’s work of Theophilus Mogabgab.

Acknowledgements

For help in acquiring source material, I am grateful to Lorenzo Calvelli, Juliette Desplat at The National Archives in London, Rand Eppich, Jennifer Freeman, Thomas Kiely, Vanessa Lee at Columbia University, Demetrios Michaelides, Despina Pilides, Rita Severis, Anthoulla Vassiliades at CAARI, Nicosia, and especially Michele Christian, Archivist and Special Collections Librarian, Hilton M. Briggs Library, South Dakota State University.

\textsuperscript{117} TNA CO 67 264/8, 24 July 1936, ff 42-43, T. Mogabgab to Director of Antiquities; 14 August 1936, f 39, W. D. Caröe to W. Ormsby-Gore; 16 August 1936, ff 40-41, J. Hilton to A. J. Dawe, Colonial Office, and following correspondence; also, SDSU 2018, 26.9, T. Mogabgab to Emile Marghab, 30.6.37.

\textsuperscript{118} Cyprus Gazette, 23 July 1937. On his return to Cyprus, Indianos spent only three years on the staff of the Department before resigning.

\textsuperscript{119} SDSU 2018, 26.9, T. Mogabgab to Vera Marghab, 25.8.53.
Abbreviations

CAM: Curator of Ancient Monuments.
CMC: Cyprus Museum Committee.
LR&SD: Land Registration and Survey Department.
RIBA: Royal Institute of British Architects.
TNA: The National Archives, UK.
Bibliography


Bardsnwell N. D. 1937. Tuberculosis in Cyprus: an interim report on its incidence and means of control made under the auspices of the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. London.


Caröe W. D. 1931. The importance of historical buildings in Cyprus (a lecture). Nicosia.


