



# Tile Panels from the Tunisian Pavilion at the 1883 World Exhibition in Amsterdam

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In 1883 Victor de Stuers, the Netherlands' most senior official in the arts and sciences, bought 'two tile panels from Tunis' for the Rijksmuseum (figs. 1 and 2).<sup>1</sup> For this unusual purchase – the Rijksmuseum had no tradition of actively collecting Islamic art – he paid just under a hundred guilders. One of the tile panels bears an Arabic inscription that gives more insight into the provenance and function of these objects. It reads in translation, 'Made in al-Qallaline in the city of Tunis for exhibition at the World's Fair in Amsterdam in 1883'. The panels were exhibited in the Tunisian pavilion. So what, then, is the art-historical significance of these Qallaline tile panels and can we reconstruct the way they were hung in the Tunisian pavilion at the World Exhibition? How does the exhibit from Tunis fit into the context of contemporary views and debates about nationalism, colonial politics and the relationship between western and eastern art?

## Two Qallaline Tile Panels from the Rijksmuseum

According to the inscription, the tile panels were made in 'al Qallaline' in the city of Tunis. Al-Qallaline literally means 'the potters', but here refers to a district in the capital city of Tunisia where the majority of potters' workshops had been set up. In a more general sense the word Qallaline is

*Detail of fig. 1*

also used for the kind of pottery that was made in this quarter, and elsewhere in Tunisia, from the end of the sixteenth century, the beginning of Ottoman rule, until the start of the twentieth century. This pottery clearly demonstrates how international the cultures were around the Mediterranean. In Qallaline ceramics we see Andalusian, Ottoman and European influences alongside native traditions. This is certainly true of the most spectacular Qallaline products, the large, multicoloured tile panels that were used to decorate the interiors and exteriors of buildings all over Tunisia. They can be found in mosques and other religious complexes, and in palaces and more simple houses. Not just decorative, these tiles were practical too: they were cool in the hot climate, and they were easy to maintain and keep clean. Around the middle of the nineteenth century the artistic quality of Qallaline pottery went into decline, but in the last decades of the century there was a revival. Old traditions were brought back to life in part on the initiative of the government and in part because of the enthusiasm generated by a number of French potters and collectors who had settled in and around the port of Nabeul. This final boom lasted into the first decades of the twentieth century.

Qallaline tile panels can be roughly divided into two categories: panels with geometric patterns and *mihrab* panels.<sup>2</sup> De Stuers bought an example of each type. The geometric panel is made up of 96 (12 x 8) square tiles bordered by a frame of small black elongated tiles (fig. 1). The Moorish Andalusian influence on the geometric patterns is unmistakable. After the fall of Granada in 1492 many Muslims fled the Iberian Peninsula and went to North Africa. A second sizable wave of emigration followed between 1609 and 1614, when around 300,000 *Moriscos* – Muslims who had converted to Christianity but often remained faithful to Islam in secret – were exiled from Spain by Philip III. A significant number of them settled in Tunisia. They took the ceramic traditions and patterns of Andalusia to their new homeland, particularly the intricate geometric patterns that adorned the walls of the Moorish buildings in Granada, Cordoba and Seville. When they first arrived in Tunisia they continued to create these patterns by laying them out as a mosaic of small coloured tiles. This method was extremely labour-intensive and hence expensive, so in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the potters started to apply complex motifs to single tiles, either by separating the different coloured glazes with a greasy substance (the *cuerda seca* method) or by applying a relief first (the *cuenca* technique). Later on, the pattern was usually painted straight on to the glazed tiles, and then several of these tiles could be combined to form a larger pattern. This is how the tile panel in the Rijksmuseum was made. It is divided into six identical fields each consisting of sixteen tiles with a star-shaped decoration in the centre.

The Rijksmuseum's other panel is what is known as a *mihrab* panel (fig. 2). These designs are dominated by an arch indicating the outlines of the prayer niche, the *mihrab*. The niche area is usually filled with floral motifs,

and on occasions with inscriptions, images of religious architecture and other religious symbols. The composition of these tile panels bears a strong resemblance to that of prayer rugs, which are also generally decorated with a *mihrab* niche and vegetation. Floral motifs, in both naturalistic and more stylized form (arabesques) often have a religious meaning in Islamic art: they refer to the gardens of paradise. The religious symbolism of a *mihrab* arch and paradisiacal vegetation is appropriate for prayer rugs and even functional: in a sense the prayer rug is a *mihrab* that can be rolled up. This is far less true of permanent tile panels, particularly when they are not part of religious architecture but adorn the walls of palaces and luxurious houses. There the decorative element – even though its origins lie in religious symbolism – would appear to be what matters.

The *mihrab* tile panel in the Rijksmuseum is also glazed and painted. It is made up of ninety-eight tiles (14 x 7) but the individual tiles are different sizes. Here again the tile field is surrounded by a border of small elongated black tiles. The composition is almost symmetrical, with an arch containing a vase of flowers and two birds. The flowers reveal both Ottoman and European influences. European ceramics, among them French and even delftware tiles, were imported into North Africa long before the nineteenth century. This large vase of flowers, however, was influenced primarily by examples from Spain and Italy, where big tile panels of flower vases were also very popular. The Arabic inscription about the world's fair is at the top of this panel, but it appears that the middle tile of the inscription was replaced upside down during a restoration.

#### Other Fragments from the Tunisian Pavilion

It recently came to light that the Rijksmuseum is not the only museum to have fragments from the 1883 Tunisian

Fig. 1  
Tile panel with  
geometric patterns,  
Tunis, 1883.  
174 x 121 cm.  
Rijksmuseum,  
Amsterdam  
(inv. no. BK-NM-5863).





Fig. 2  
 Tile panel with  
*mihrab* arch and  
 a vase of flowers,  
 Tunis, 1883.  
 197 x 108 cm.  
 Rijksmuseum,  
 Amsterdam  
 (inv. no. BK-NM-5862).



pavilion. In 2006, for example, the Amsterdam Historical Museum presented a recent acquisition: a set of tiles bearing an Arabic text referring to the world exhibition of 1883 (fig. 3).<sup>3</sup> This proves to be exactly the same inscription as the one on the Rijksmuseum's *mihrab* panel, but here the middle tile is correctly positioned. The obvious assumption is that this text was once placed above the Rijksmuseum's geometric panel which, after all, has no inscription. This proves to be impossible, however, because the geometric panel is two tiles wider and the tiles are a different size. It is more likely that this text was once part of another *mihrab* panel that has since been lost.

The Victoria & Albert Museum also has fragments from the Tunisian pavilion. In the summer of 1883 Casper Purdon Clarke (1846-1911) visited the Amsterdam World Exhibition. In that year Clarke had been appointed 'keeper of the India Museum', part of the South Kensington Museum in London, the forerunner of the Victoria & Albert Museum. He had travelled widely and was a connoisseur of oriental art. In 1896 he became director of the South Kensington Museum and then director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1905. Clarke's main interest would have been to explore the presentations from India at the Amsterdam exhibition. His own museum had made an important loan of British Indian art, which was being exhibited in one of the courtyards of the Rijksmuseum being constructed at the time. Clarke was particularly struck by some Indian clay models which he wanted to use in his India Museum. He was also im-

pressed by the Chinese and Japanese art. In Amsterdam he acquired a Japanese vase and fifty-eight Chinese objects, mainly jewellery, for the South Kensington Museum. But he was most surprised by the Tunisian pavilion. On 17 July 1883 he wrote to his directors that he had seen 'some very good carved plaster lattice work for windows' and 'many large panels of boldly painted tiles' there.<sup>4</sup> Immediately and 'without hesitation' he had bought three tile panels, three stucco windows and three stucco wall reliefs for something over £35 (equivalent to about 430 guilders).<sup>5</sup> Should the department not approve this purchase, he would be delighted to keep the items for himself, as he had been so captivated by their quality. But it never came to that. His purchases were approved and the Victoria & Albert still has most of the Tunisian panels and reliefs (see appendix).

Two of the three tile panels that Clarke acquired for the South Kensington Museum have the same measurements and bear an Arabic inscription. In the nineteen-fifties, however, the museum disposed of one of the two to a private collector in Chester.<sup>6</sup> The other can still be seen in London. It is a *mihrab* panel with great similarities to the Amsterdam panel (fig. 4). The panels are the same size, are made up of the same number of tiles, bear identical inscriptions and feature a similar composition. The London panel does, though, have a somewhat more intricate structure. The *mihrab* arch is divided in two by a horizontal band; below it we see a vase of flowers, and above it, in the lunette, there is a tree flanked by lions.<sup>7</sup> The third London tile panel is decorated

Fig. 3  
Tile panel with  
Arabic inscription  
(fragment), Tunis, 1883.  
13 x 92 cm.  
Amsterdam Historical  
Museum, Amsterdam  
(inv. no. KA 22262. 1/7).



Fig. 4  
 Tile panel with mihrab  
 arch, a vase of flowers  
 and a tree with two  
 lions, Tunis, 1883.  
 c. 197 x 108 cm.  
 Victoria & Albert  
 Museum, London  
 (inv. no. 1283-1883).

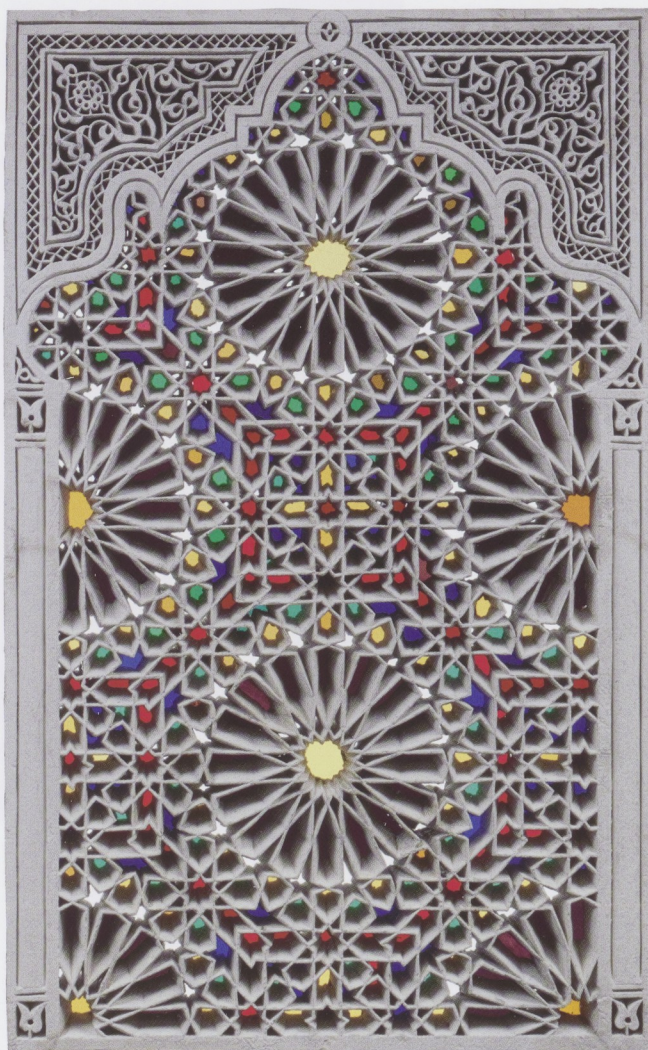
with star-shaped motifs, like the geometric panel in Amsterdam, and appears to be about the same size. The London panel has not yet been identified so it is not possible to compare the two more closely.

The Victoria & Albert Museum still has two of the original three windows from the pavilion. They are the same size and are made of thick stucco with pieces of coloured glass on the back. One of them has a *mihrab* motif combined with arabesques (fig. 5); the other is entirely made up of geometric motifs (figs. 6a and 6b). In 1922 the third window was transferred to the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, where it was built in.<sup>8</sup> Enquiries at the museum revealed that the present whereabouts of this window are not known.

Finally Clarke bought three stucco wall reliefs. Two of the London reliefs are again the same size and have an arch on elegant pillars with arabesque decorations (figs. 7 and 8). The third is smaller and decorated with a geometric pattern (fig. 9).

It is clear that a remarkably large amount of the original decoration of the Tunisian pavilion at the 1883 world exhibition in Amsterdam has survived, albeit distributed among various European museums. But what did the pavilion look like then?

Fig. 5  
Window with *mihrab*  
arch, Tunis, 1883.  
Perforated stucco,  
filled in with  
coloured glass,  
c. 96 x 61 cm.  
Victoria & Albert  
Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1277-1883).







*Fig. 6a*

Window with  
geometric design.  
Perforated stucco,  
filled in with  
coloured glass,  
c. 96 x 61cm.  
Victoria & Albert  
Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1276-1883).



Fig. 6b  
Back of 6a.

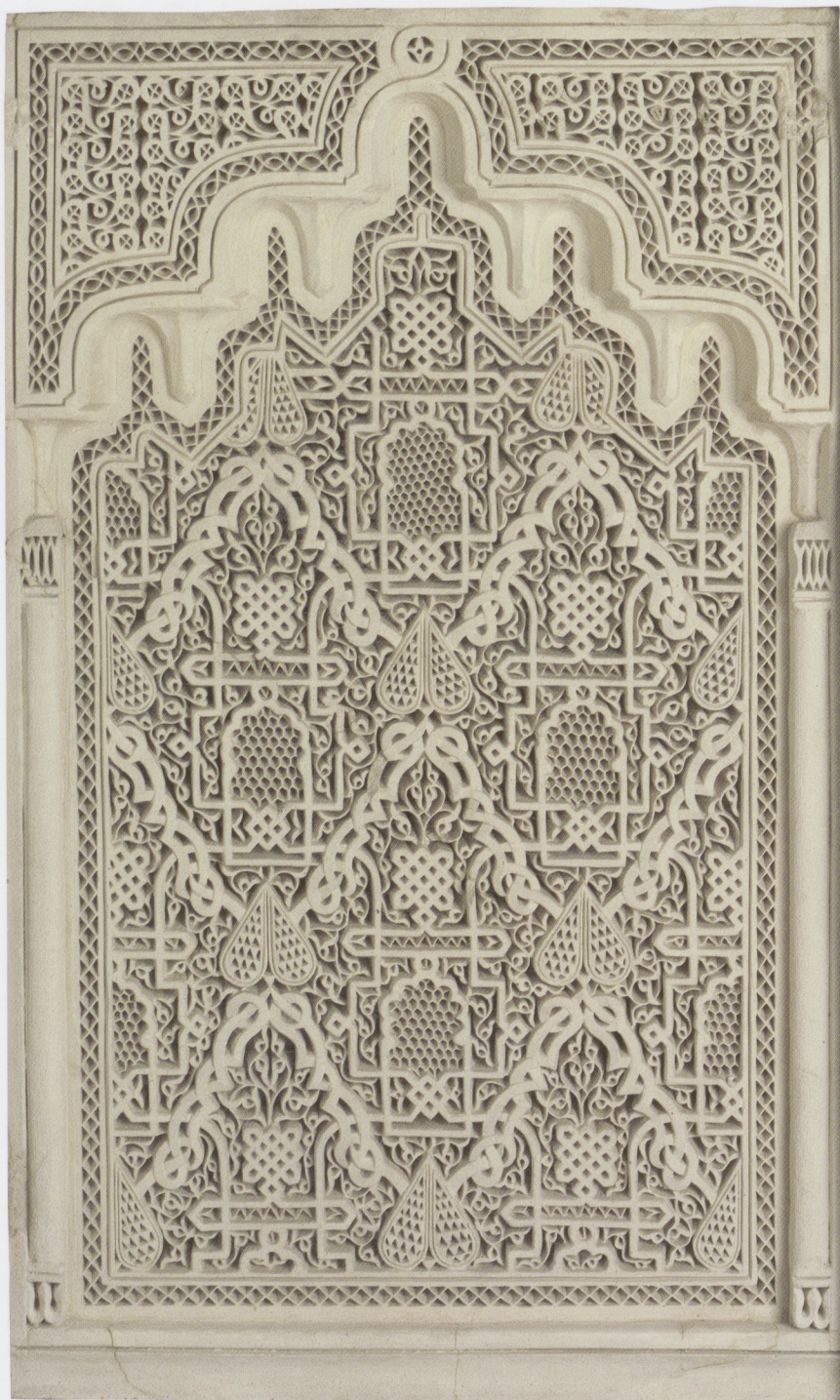
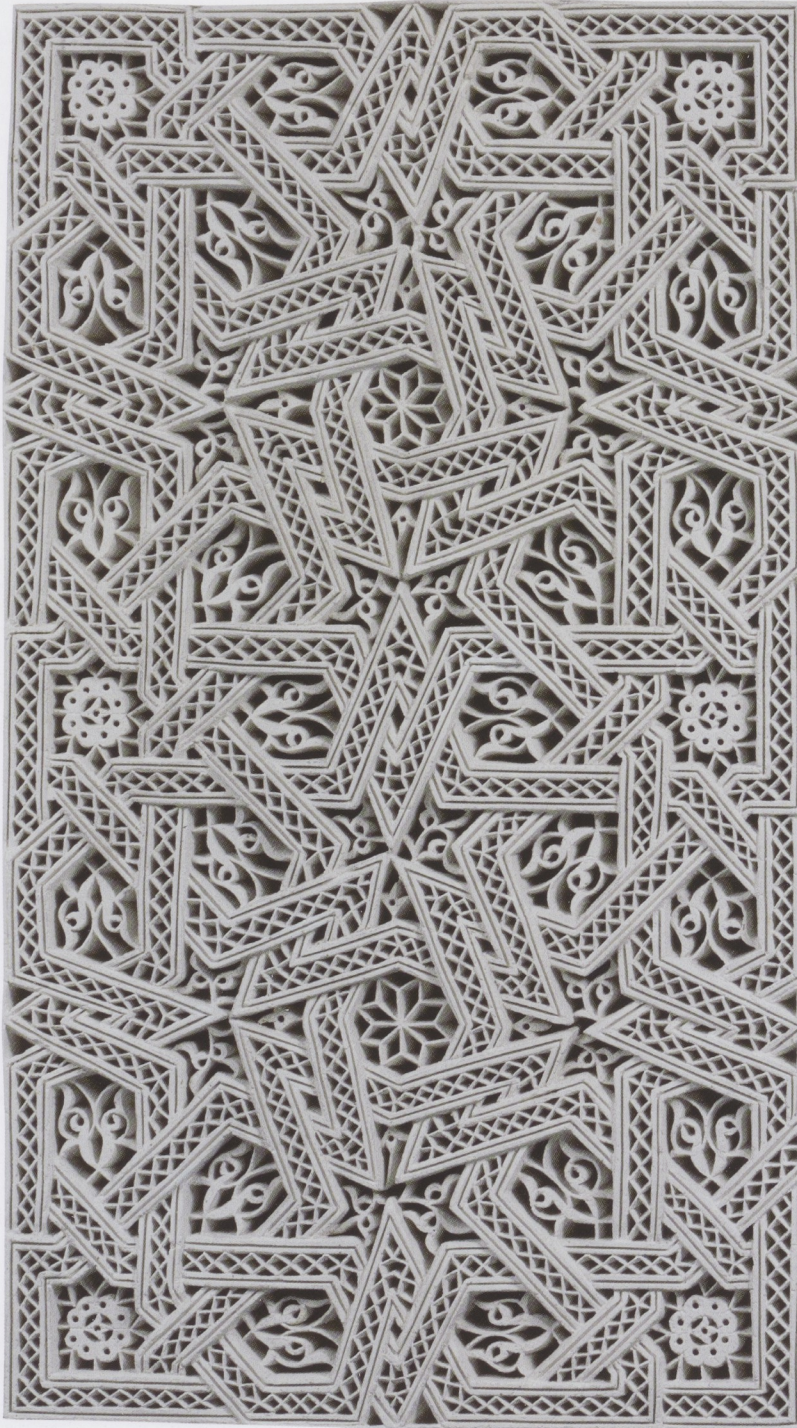


Fig. 7  
Wall panel with  
*mihrab* arch and  
arabesque design.  
Stucco, c. 112 x 72 cm.  
Victoria & Albert  
Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1280-1883).



Fig. 8  
Wall panel with  
*mihrab* arch and  
arabesque design.  
Stucco, c. 112 x 72 cm.  
Victoria & Albert  
Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1281-1883).



*Fig. 9*  
Wall panel with  
geometric design.  
Stucco, c. 47 x 86 cm.  
Victoria & Albert  
Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1279-1883).



Fig. 10  
J.C. GREIVE JR,  
*View of the  
Exhibition Grounds.*  
Stadsarchief,  
Amsterdam.  
*The Rijksmuseum can  
be seen on the left  
in the background.*

### The Tunisian Pavilion at the Amsterdam World Exhibition of 1883

The grand opening of the International Colonial and Export Trade Exhibition took place on 1 May 1883.<sup>9</sup> By the time the exhibition closed six months later, on 1 November 1883, around 1.5 million people had been to see it. It was the only world exhibition ever staged in the Netherlands. The exhibition site, covering more than twenty-two hectares, was behind the Rijksmuseum, which was under construction. The show grounds were dominated by a colossal main building housing the stands of the participating countries, the Dutch Colonies building and the machine sheds. There were also dozens of pavilions, kiosks and cafés, ranging from an enormous wooden barrel in which people could drink beer to a Chinese junk moored in a canal. The Tunisian pavilion was on

the southwest side of the site, not far from the bandstand and various catering outlets (fig. 10).

Visitors to the Amsterdam exhibition were very impressed by the pavilion (fig. 11). According to the journalist G.S. de Clerck in the weekly *De Huisvriend*, the building was the most successful of the entire exhibition: 'the silhouette of the palace is enchanting and testifies to the architect's taste'.<sup>10</sup> In the author's opinion the architect had to be from Africa, as the pavilion was a faithful copy of 'the Palace of Manouba'. Manouba was a suburb of Tunis where many fashionable residences were located, including the Bey's summer residence. The print by C.L. Dake that illustrates the article, however, gives no point of reference to link this building with a surviving palace (fig. 12). The pavilion was probably not meant to represent a palace at all, but a *zaouia*, a monastery complex

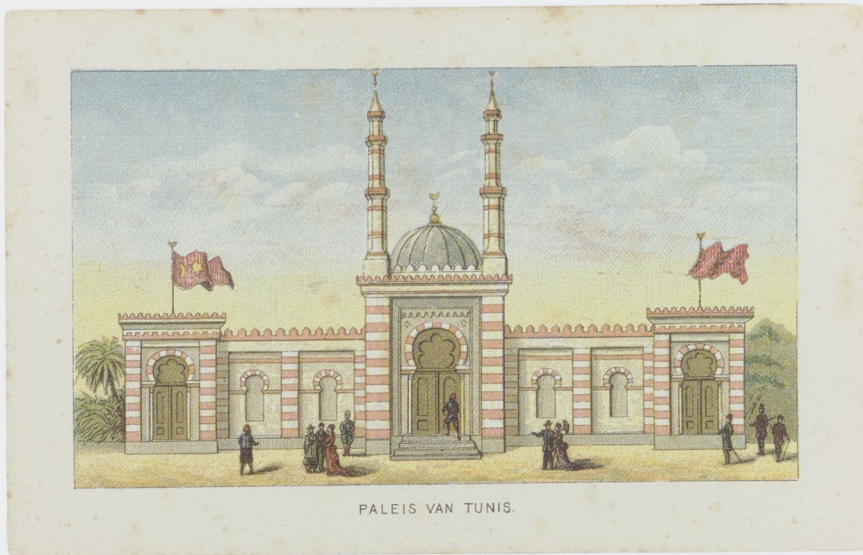
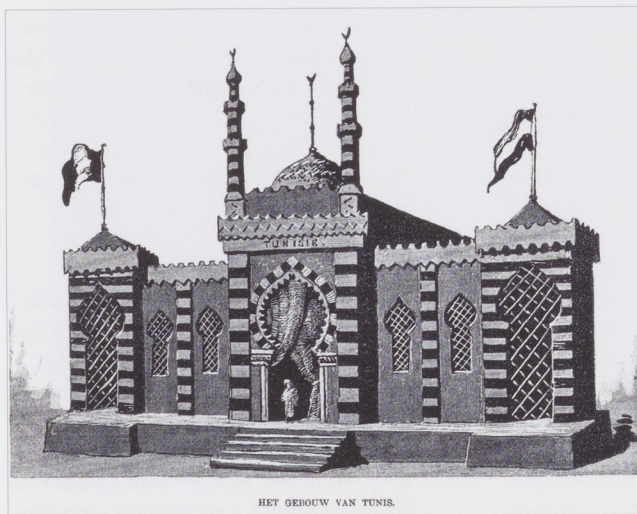


Fig. 11  
Tunis Palace.  
From: *Herinneringen  
aan Amsterdam 1883.*

of a Sufi brotherhood which usually had a religious school attached to it. The architect J.F. Groll devoted a separate chapter to the Tunisian pavilion in a special edition of the architectural journal *Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* entirely devoted to the architecture at the Amsterdam exhibition, saying that the opportunity this exhibition offered Dutch visitors to become acquainted with different exotic building styles was a blessing.<sup>11</sup> Regrettably not all the exhibition

Fig. 12  
*The Tunisian Building.*  
From: *De Huisvriend*  
(1883), 292.



buildings were constructed in an 'accurate style', but the Tunisian pavilion was a happy exception. The pavilion, Groll said, was inspired by a *zaouia* in Kairouan, but he did not reveal whether it had been based on one specific building (figs. 13 and 15).

The Tunisian pavilion consisted of a central space with a main entrance in the shape of a horseshoe arch and a dome flanked by two minarets. Wings on each side led to tower-like buildings with gates. Groll asserted that, contrary to what De Clerck had suggested, the pavilion had not been designed by a North African architect at all, but by 'the youthful but extremely talented Liège architect Mr Soubre' – probably the Brussels-born architect Charles Etienne Soubre (1846-1915), who worked predominantly in Liège.<sup>12</sup> Soubre was thirty-six when he designed the pavilion. Many major commissions were to follow, including castles and country houses in various historic styles and the Palais de Beaux-Arts at another world exhibition, the Liège *Exposition Universelle* of 1905. According to Groll, Soubre had been commissioned to base his design for Amsterdam on Tunisian Arabic architecture, and had carried out his task



Fig. 13  
Tunisian Pavilion:  
Zaouia in Kairouan.  
Amsterdam City  
Archives.

scrupulously 'without indulging himself by introducing his own patented fantastic shapes as others had done here at the Exhibition'.<sup>13</sup> Groll's gibe was undoubtedly aimed at the eclectic facade of the exhibition's main building with its mishmash of exotic styles, *ersatz* ancient Persian reliefs and enormous Indian elephants (fig. 14).<sup>14</sup>

The initiative behind the Tunisian pavilion came from a number of private concerns, French and Belgian companies that had dealings in North Africa. The central space was reserved for the 'Compagnie de marbres de Schemtou', a firm that had its headquarters in Liège and operated the marble quarries of Schemtou. The

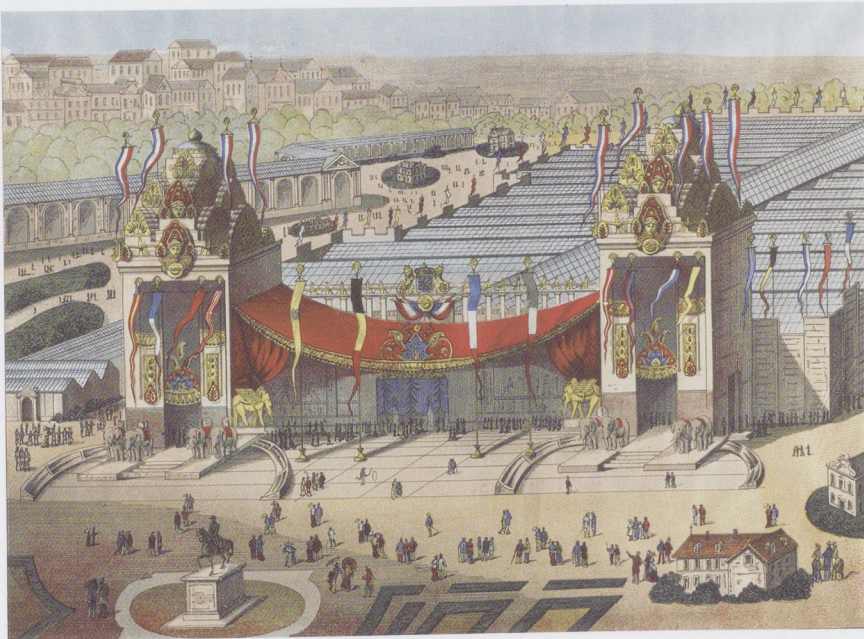


Fig. 14  
The Main Building.  
Amsterdam Historical  
Museum, Amsterdam.



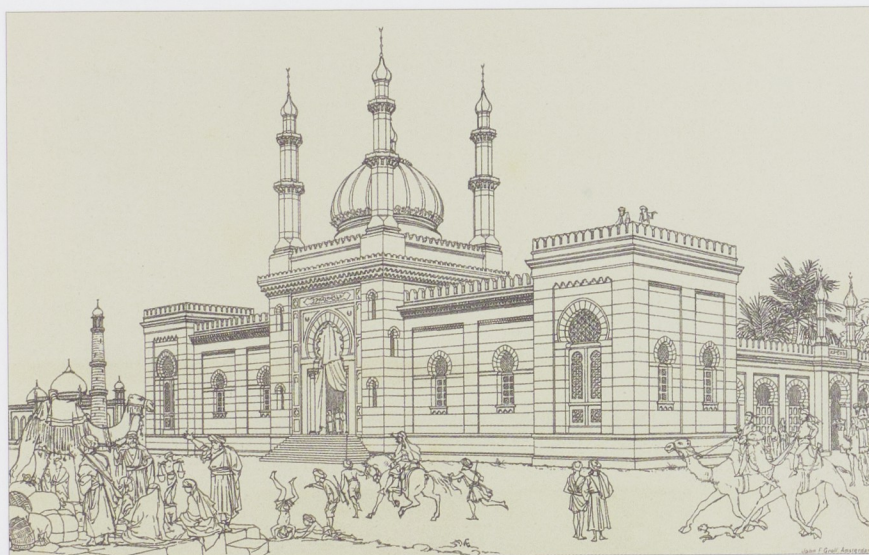


Fig. 15  
The Tunisian  
Exhibition Building.  
A Zaouia in  
Kairouan, Tunis.  
From: *Bouwkundig  
Tijdschrift*, 1884,  
vol. IV, plate XVIII.

company showed its recent products, such as fireplaces and vases, alongside a selection of classical marble objects, including splendid Roman urns. The quarries of Schemtou had, after all, been famous in antiquity. In one of the two adjoining rooms visitors could admire a collection of weapons and coins and acquaint themselves with the huge variety of horticultural and agricultural products from Tunisia. Craft products were on display in the other room. The press was full of praise for the embroidery exhibited, some of it made there and then by Tunisian women, but nevertheless the Roman floor mosaic was the highlight of this room.<sup>15</sup> It was part of a sizeable loan – more than two hundred objects – provided by the museum of Carthage.

Unfortunately we do not have a picture of the interior of the pavilion. We have to rely on a rather brief description in the official exhibition journal, the *Officieele Courant Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling*, which states enthusiastically that, on entering, ‘the expectation aroused in us by the grandiose frontage is not disappointed’.<sup>16</sup> The decoration was lavish and tasteful and the floor was covered with magnificent

carpets. The central part of the pavilion was topped by a glass dome. This dome rested on twelve arches supported by pillars. Heavy curtains hung from the arches and coloured lanterns bathed the room in a fairy-tale light.

With the aid of the surviving fragments, however, it is perhaps still possible to say a little more about the decoration of the interior. In Tunisia the larger tile panels were never separate, but always incorporated into bigger groups made up, for example, of a number of central *mihrab* panels surrounded by wide borders with geometric patterns. Entire courtyards and interiors were decorated with tiles in this way. Sometimes these tile panels were combined with stucco reliefs to make even larger wall decorations. We can find a good example of just such a decorative scheme in the *zaouia* of Sidi Sahab in the Tunisian town of Kairouan. This building seems relevant to the Tunisian pavilion for several reasons. We have already seen that Groll claimed in his article that this pavilion was based on a *zaouia* in Kairouan (fig. 15). The exterior of the Sidi Sahab *zaouia* is not the same, but it is very interesting to learn that this building, originally erected in the

Fig. 16  
Courtyard of the  
Zaouia of Sidi Sahab,  
Kairouan, Tunisia.



Fig. 17  
Wall decoration in  
a courtyard of the  
Zaouia of Sidi Sahab,  
Kairouan, Tunisia.



seventeenth century, was radically restored at the end of the nineteenth. The extensive tile decorations largely date from this period as well and so the restoration of the Sidi Sahab *zaouia* is regarded in the literature as an important stimulus for the revival of the Qallaline panels. In the gallery of one of the courtyards there is a wall decoration that consists of a dado of tile panels with geometric patterns (figs. 16 and 17). Above it we can see *mihrab* tile panels with flower vases framed by different bands of tiles with geometric motifs, and above that again there are stucco reliefs decorated with *mihrab* arches and arabesques. Wall decorations like this also occur elsewhere in the *zaouia* of Sidi Sahab, albeit in somewhat different variations.

All the fragments from the Tunisian pavilion we now know of can easily be placed in a decorative scheme of this kind. Figure 18 shows a possible reconstruction of a wall from the pavilion after the example of the decorations in the *zaouia* of Sidi Sahab. It should be



noted that the Rijksmuseum's geometric tile panels, shown here horizontally as a dado, could also have been used vertically, interspersed with the *mihrab* panels. This sort of alternation of *mihrab* panels and panels with geometric motifs also occurs above the arches of the Sidi Sahab *zaouia*. This leaves us with the question of the exact position of the stucco windows. They may have been incorporated above the level of the stucco reliefs. In the *zaouia* at Sidi Sahab, however, these coloured windows can also be found in the dome, and this may have been the case in Amsterdam, too. After all, many critics wrote enthusiastically about the magnificent 'glass dome' of the Tunisian pavilion. Groll declared that this 'Mohammedan dome structure' was of great importance to European architects.<sup>17</sup> We know in any event that the windows must have been set high up because the deep tracery is not made at right angles, but positioned at an acute angle to maximize the ingress of light from above.

#### World Exhibition

The tile panels and stucco reliefs were made in Tunis and shipped to Amsterdam to decorate the Tunisian pavilion. But what ultimate aim did the people who put this exhibit together have in mind and how did these objects fit into it? After all in this new context they took on a function and meaning entirely different from those they would have had in Tunisia. And how did the western audience react to these exotic objects? How were they interpreted by the exhibition visitors? To answer questions like these we have to start by examining the phenomenon of the world exhibition.

World exhibitions (or world's fairs), including the one in Amsterdam, served several – sometimes conflicting – purposes. First and foremost they were the product of the nineteenth century idea of progress. After Great Britain had taken the initiative with the Great Exhibition of the Arts and Industries of all Nations in London in 1851, other

countries rapidly followed suit. Within a very short space of time, countries throughout the western world were staging mammoth exhibitions at which the industrialized nations showed the public their newest products and latest inventions. These competitions in progress showed everything that modern man was capable of. The world's fairs were the visible manifestation of the belief in progress and were stage-managed as such.<sup>18</sup>

What's more these exhibitions were also seen as competitions between the various western nations. Time and again the organizers emphasized that these competitions promoted peace and fraternization among the nations, comparable to the present-day rhetoric that surrounds the Olympic Games. But it quickly became clear that the national honour of the participating countries at the world exhibitions was the main thing that was at stake. The nation states were not only fighting each other on the battlefield, they were also trying to outdo one another in these peaceful contests. One way was by showing off their colonies. After all, a serious western superpower had to be able to boast of an impressive colonial empire. The Amsterdam International Colonial and Export Trade Exhibition of 1883 went so far as to make the colonies the spearhead of the exhibition. Amsterdam was actually the pioneer in this regard. For the first time in the history of world's fairs, living people were exhibited on a grand scale in their 'natural' surroundings: Javanese and Sumatrans in a Javanese kampong and a group of Surinamese tribesmen and Indians in a circus tent with some 'primitive' huts in it.<sup>19</sup>

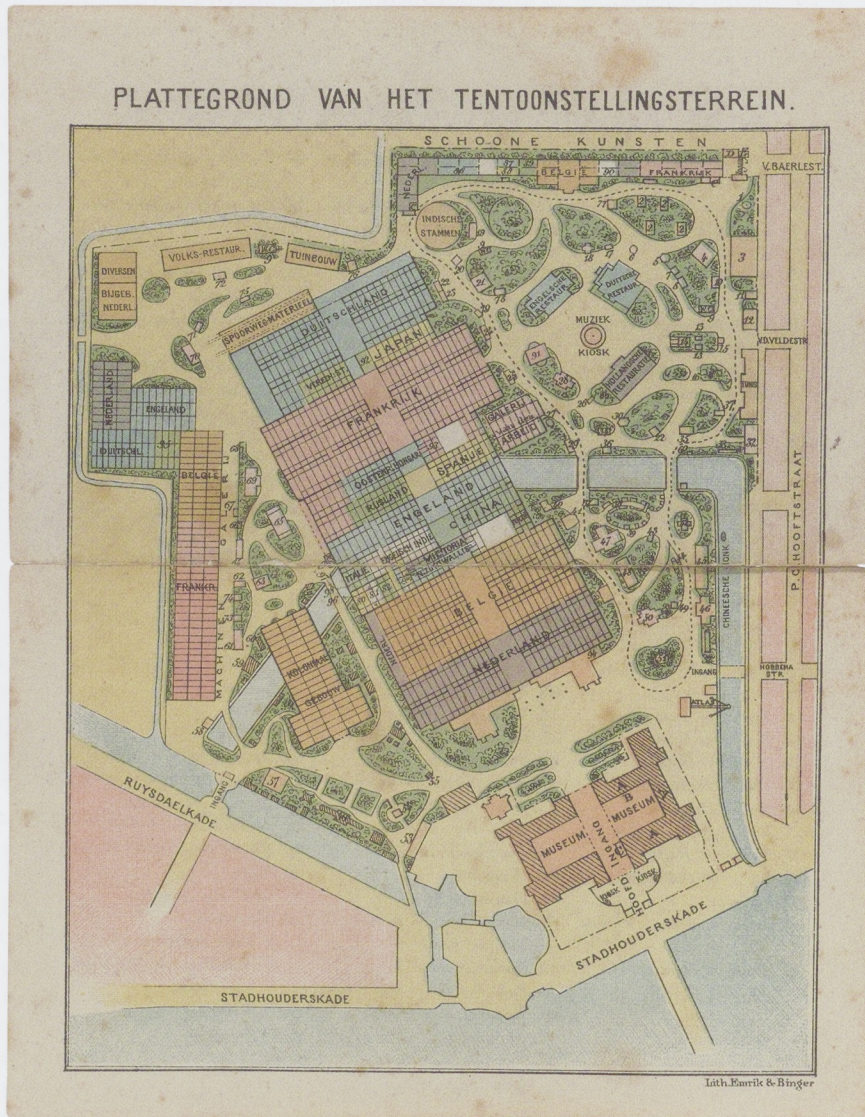
And lastly, the world exhibitions also told a story about the relationship between the different cultures in the world. They presented illustrated lessons about the state of civilization, obviously taught from a western, colonial viewpoint.<sup>20</sup> Since the Enlightenment, history had been seen as a

Fig. 18  
Reconstruction of  
a wall decoration in  
the Tunisian Pavilion.

process, a route to a better future. This progress paradigm also influenced the attitude towards other races. They were distinguished from the west not just 'spatially' (not here), but 'temporally' (not now). They were assigned a fixed place on the civilization ladder and hence on the timeline. European culture was obviously at the top of the civilization pecking order and it was also at the forefront of the timeline. Non-western civilizations were banished to Europe's pre-history. They were in a

more primitive stage of development, which Europe had already left behind, and were denied 'simultaneity' with the west.<sup>21</sup> At the world exhibitions, the visitors were literally able to walk through the different stages of civilization: from the sections containing objects from 'primitive' civilizations from Africa and Asia, to the very latest industrial inventions (fig. 19). Thus they were made conscious of the differences between the civilizations and invited to place them in a hierarchy.

Fig. 19  
Map of the  
Exhibition Grounds.  
From: *Herinneringen  
aan Amsterdam 1883.*



These ideas about civilization hierarchies, which were at the same time timelines, were used by politicians to legitimize western imperialism: it was only thanks to western intervention that 'backward' cultures were able to gain access to the rewards of modern civilization and be elevated to the level of civilized Europe. And so a world exhibition was not just a place to show off an extensive colonial empire, it was also an opportunity to display to the outside world the civilizing effects of a colonial power.

In the case of Tunisia this colonial legitimacy was particularly relevant in 1883. Two years previously it had become a French protectorate and naturally this had not gone unnoticed in Europe. Other major powers were watching French colonial expansion with great interest and making plans to claim their own share of Africa. France's action in taking Tunisia as a protectorate in 1881 was one of the first steps in the 'scramble for Africa' and in 1883, the year of the Amsterdam exhibition, fifteen western countries at the Berlin Colonial Conference were discussing the question of how best to divide up that part of the world. In short, the French had some explaining to do.

In response to the opening of the Tunisian pavilion in Amsterdam an anonymous French journalist, writing in the *Officieele Courant der Tentoonstelling*, stressed the economic importance of the new protectorate by referring to the industrialized countries' need for new markets for their products, 'in these times in when life is hard, when the markets of the civilized world are so stuffed with people and merchandise, which industrialist would not think of penetrating these immense regions known as colonies, be they part of England, the Netherlands, Spain or France?'<sup>22</sup> The chairman of the Tunisian committee, Joseph Closon, a Belgian businessman who in 1885 would go on to construct the first horse tram in Tunis, emphasized that

the new protectorate was not just an interesting new market, but that it also possessed important raw materials and a vast pool of hard-working, good-natured (and of course cheap) labour. Tunisia, said Closon, was perhaps one of the richest countries in the world, 'offering European capital a huge area for exploitation and a rich harvest of profits'.<sup>23</sup> Obviously the Tunisian pavilion should bear witness to these rich opportunities through, among other things, the selection of raw materials and industrial products on display there.

Nationalistic motives played a not unimportant role for the French too. Ten years earlier, in 1870-71, the country had suffered a humiliating defeat fighting the German states led by Chancellor Bismarck. The French were still intent on restoring their honour. According to the anonymous journalist quoted above, the Amsterdam exhibition offered the French the perfect opportunity to boost their prestige. 'We French, determined to raise our beloved country from her humiliation, could not let slip the opportunity the Amsterdam Exhibition had offered us to display our vitality, our peaceful ambition and our unquenchable expectations to the eyes of the world.'<sup>24</sup> Of course the Germans had hoped that France would fail, but the opposite had happened: the Amsterdam exhibition had become a triumph for France. And that was thanks in no small measure to the Tunisian pavilion. That building on its own would have been enough to bear witness to 'France's resources and the improved use we are able to make of them'.<sup>25</sup> For was it not perfectly demonstrated here how under French rule Tunisia had developed into an important agricultural nation in only two years?

The potential of the Tunisian pavilion for colonial propaganda was also recognized by the powers that be. Although the initiative for the pavilion had come from the private sector

– trading companies with interests in Tunis – the French state was represented at the official opening of the pavilion by a heavyweight delegation. The French resident in Tunis, Pierre Paul Cambon, the French ambassador in The Hague, Louis Legrand, and the French consul-general in Amsterdam, the Comte de Saint-Foix, all put in an appearance. In his opening speech Ambassador Legrand called the Tunisian pavilion ‘the living proof of the natural resources, the historical memories, the glorious expectations that prevail in this country’.<sup>26</sup> The North African country would soon prosper again under the protection and rule of the French nation. The French were not pursuing their own ends, said the ambassador, they had been drawn to Tunis for the benefit of Europe as a whole, ‘to resurrect the civilization that flourished so richly in centuries past at the time of Carthage and Rome’.<sup>27</sup> The Republic consequently invited all the western nations to join in developing Tunisian soil and making it fruitful. This was a prime example of colonial rhetoric legitimizing French imperialism by invoking the noble task of spreading (western) civilization throughout the world.

Fig. 20  
H. SCOTT and  
GIRALDON, *Exposition  
Coloniale; Koloniale  
tentoonstelling*  
From: *Exposition  
d'Amsterdam* (special  
issue of *Paris Illustré*),  
1883.  
Rijksmuseum Library,  
Amsterdam.  
*The Tunisian pavilion  
is on the left.*



The French journalist in the *Officiele Courant der Tentoonstelling* stressed the colonizers’ noble desire to scatter ‘fruitful seeds for the benefit of the entire world’, but realistically added that France naturally did not want to be at the back of the queue when those fruits were harvested.<sup>28</sup>

It will come as no surprise that colonial politicians were fond of speaking in terms of a ‘mission civilisatrice’, but it is interesting that the public often also referred to theories about civilization hierarchies when visiting the Tunisian pavilion. This reaction was invited and prompted by the way the exhibition was structured. In Amsterdam the public could begin by visiting the circus tent containing the ‘primitive’ Indians from Surinam, then look at the Javanese kampong or the Tunisian pavilion (fig. 20) and end up in the machine hall with the latest industrial novelties. In the Tunisian pavilion itself different ‘stages of civilization’ were also brought together under one roof and the past, present and future were shown. The layout of the pavilion gave abundant cause for reflection on the historical development of civilizations and their relationships. North Africa’s ancient past was a significant point of reference. This past was represented in the pavilion by a great many archaeological items from the Carthaginian and Roman periods. Other products, too, recalled this magnificent past. Visitors could see that the Roman marble quarries of Schemtou were being used again, wine-growing had returned and agriculture again called to mind the time that North Africa was the granary of Rome. For the visitors the message was clear: classical culture, an important pillar of western civilization, once flourished there. Unfortunately invasion by the Muslims put an end to this golden age, but under the protection of colonizing Europe the area would soon be restored to its former glory. According to *De*

*Huisvriend*, the entry from Tunis was therefore reminiscent 'of the first clouds of smoke seen rising from the volcano of civilization, which had been sleeping for centuries, clouds of smoke that forecast an approaching eruption of enlightenment and progress'.<sup>29</sup>

#### Western Interest in Islamic Art

Western hegemonial discourses about civilization hierarchies and colonial legitimacy make up just one part, albeit an important one, of the story surrounding the Tunisian pavilion. They do not, however, explain why the Rijksmuseum and the South Kensington Museum spent time and money adding the tile panels and stucco reliefs to their collections. And, as the reactions reveal, the public certainly did not regard the Islamic art on display merely as the products of a backward civilization, as a pitiful interlude between classical antiquity and the modern west, either. Quite the reverse; the Tunisian applied art, and the Persian and British Indian art elsewhere in the exhibition, for example, was greatly appreciated and highly praised in the press. This came about because at the same time as the colonial discourse, which was characterized by a strong western feeling of superiority, an entirely different argument developed; admittedly it arose in part from the same assumptions, but it led to a completely different result.<sup>30</sup> For despite the nineteenth-century ideology of progress and all the jubilation about the advance of civilization, more and more people were conscious that modern western culture also had its downside. In the second half of the century there was a growing sense of unease with the times, as many realized that there was a threat that precious values could now be lost for good. Industrialization meant that Europe was changing fast, faster than ever before, and these changes caused unrest and discontent. Critics condemned the effects of industrial capitalist societies,

effects such as growing poverty and social disruption, and the one-sided rationalism in western culture.

Modernization was thus coupled with a wave of nostalgia: the longing for an idealized past, for a simpler, more harmonious and spiritual society. Some found that ideal in their own history, for instance the Middle Ages. Others sought their idyll further away.<sup>31</sup> They looked for salvation in 'primitive' civilizations that were still in a 'pre-industrial' phase. In their eyes these cultures ought not to be 'civilized' but rather protected against the continual advance of modernization, westernization and moral decay. To a great degree this fascination and admiration for 'unspoilt', pre-industrial civilizations was of course a form of cultural criticism of their own society.

Paradoxically it was at the world exhibitions – conceived, after all, as celebrations of progress – where the reverse of the modernization coin was most apparent. This applied to the arts in particular. For the first time the general public who flocked to the exhibitions in droves could become acquainted with non-western arts and crafts. Visitors were now able to compare eastern handiwork and the products of western factories for themselves, and the west came off very badly in this comparison. Islamic applied art, in particular, had won high praise at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London's Crystal Palace. The beauty of the eastern handicraft products left western bulk goods far behind. The Islamic entries excelled in simplicity and identity, whereas the decadent European products were overloaded with arbitrary decoration in a ragbag of historical styles. Theoreticians like Owen Jones and John Birdwood went so far as to argue that western decorative art could only regain its vitality by a thorough study and reconsideration of this oriental art.<sup>32</sup> It was precisely because of its function as an example for their own artists that many west-



ern museums decided to build up large collections of oriental arts and crafts in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Great Exhibition of 1851, for example, prompted the establishment of the South Kensington Museum with an imposing Oriental department, while in Vienna, thanks to the world exhibition of 1873, the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie gained a new annexe, the Orientalisches Museum (Oriental Museum). It was against this background that Caspar Purdon Clarke acquired the Tunisian tile panels and reliefs for the South Kensington Museum at the Amsterdam world exhibition in 1883. His purchase was in line with a policy that had been put in place thirty years before.

#### Islamic Art in the Netherlands

The Netherlands was lagging behind in this regard. All the same some leading critics observed that the Netherlands' own decorative arts were in crisis. The national taste had to be improved and that could only be achieved by developing an alternative, modern style.<sup>33</sup> At first the discussion concentrated on decorative theory. In the pattern books of the time, mostly translations or adaptations of foreign originals, oriental, and in particular Islamic decorative patterns were highly recommended.<sup>34</sup> The theoretician F.W. van Eeden was one of the first champions of oriental decoration in the Netherlands. Van Eeden was an influential man in the world of Dutch decorative art: he was secretary of the Netherlands Society for the Promotion of Industry and would later become director of the Colonial Museum and the Museum of Applied Art in Haarlem. As early as 1864 Van Eeden had written angrily about 'the hasty fabrication of thousands of tasteless objects', expressing the hope that they would quickly be replaced by 'everything that was original and practical'.<sup>35</sup> Islamic art could serve as the example for this. The 'Saracen'

style, for instance, said Van Eeden, was ideally suited to the decoration of objects in daily use, and there was nothing more appropriate than Persian designs for adorning woven fabrics.<sup>36</sup>

The general public was able to put Van Eeden's suggestions to the test at the Amsterdam exhibition of 1883. This colonial exhibition was for the Netherlands what the Great Exhibition of 1851 had been for Britain – an eye-opener – as far as non-western decorative art was concerned. As well as the various pavilions and kiosks in oriental style there were also a number of entries containing Islamic decoration. Like the Tunisian pavilion, the Persian section in the main building also attracted a great deal of attention, while in one of the Rijksmuseum's courtyards there was a fine selection of arts and crafts from British India.

The exotic objects at the Amsterdam exhibition provoked lively discussions about the future of Dutch decorative art. Important people in the field of Dutch decorative art, men like F.W. van Eeden and J.R. de Kruyff, director of the Rijkschool voor Kunstnijverheid in Amsterdam, paid great attention to the Islamic sections. Van Eeden saw his belief that western decorative art had entirely lost its way confirmed in the confrontation with the exotic products. In his opinion the most important reason for this was to be found in modern industrialization. In the East people came first and the tool was their servant. Alas, how different it was in Europe 'where the machine reigns more and more, and people are only needed to pull levers and turn taps'.<sup>37</sup>

Van Eeden was afraid, however, that these 'primitive' cultures would soon come off worst against the constantly advancing western civilization that made everything bland and characterless. J.F. Groll wrote in the *Bouwkundig Weekblad* that he was fearful that the architecture and decorative

art of Tunisia, now that it had become a French protectorate, would no longer be able to escape European influence. And we have only to look at Algeria, said Groll, to learn what the consequences could be of 'pernicious Western influence' – everything spoilt by a lick of Rococo varnish.<sup>38</sup>

For J.R. de Kruyff, too, the colonial exhibition was a 'blessing for the nation', because the people of the Netherlands now had the opportunity to become acquainted with oriental design.<sup>39</sup> More knowledge of the Orient was important, because De Kruyff also believed that western decorative art was in a critical condition. The only remedy was to return to the source, and that source lay in the East. 'Just as in the past, whenever the decorative art of any period lost its character and a new, fresh and powerful movement proved necessary to prevent total degeneration and decline, so too in our time anyone who derives the best lessons for the future from the past and has an eye open for beauty wherever he may find it, turns his gaze hopefully to the East.'<sup>40</sup>

De Kruyff was most impressed by the Persian section of the exhibition. Persian ornamentation merited particular praise and imitation. A disastrous battle between the various historical styles had been raging in Europe for far too long. It might perhaps sound strange, said De Kruyff, but Oriental decorative art was more appropriate for the Dutch than European styles like Gothic and Renaissance. By studying Islamic ornamentation Europeans could again learn 'to be ourselves'.<sup>41</sup> The fundamentals of good decorative art were best derived from the ornamental art of the east. Gothic and Renaissance styles were far too complicated, too composite and too derivative. Europe's decadent and over-civilized art had far more need for authenticity and honesty. Because Islamic ornamentation was so simple and explicit it had

great educational value. In *De Nederlandsche Spectator* De Kruyff was applauded by Carel Vosmaer, who described oriental decorative art as a 'signpost' and a 'remedy for our lack of taste and sickness'.<sup>42</sup>

It was precisely because of this exemplar function that in 1883 several Dutch critics appealed to the government to acquire some good pieces of Arabic and Persian decorative art as sources of inspiration for education.<sup>43</sup> After all, the contents of many of the pavilions were for sale and at the close of the exhibition many of the items – sometimes even complete inventories – were offered to museums. This appeal received scant response. The Dutch businessman A.P.H. Hotz donated his large Persian collection to the Rijks Etnographisch Museum in Leiden.<sup>44</sup> However the museum acquired this collection for its anthropological value, and not because of its usefulness in art education. The museum's director, L. Serrurier, also tried to add part of the inventory of the Tunisian pavilion to his collection. In a letter dated 23 October 1883 he drew his museum to the attention of Joseph Closon.<sup>45</sup> Institutions like the South Kensington Museum and the Musée d'Etnographie du Trocadéro owed an important part of their collections to donations they received following world exhibitions. Serrurier hoped that the chairman of the Tunisian committee might also think of the Leiden museum now the dismantling of the Amsterdam exhibition was imminent. Unfortunately his appeal was in vain. Clarke and De Stuers had already bought several choice items, and Closon was evidently not inclined to dispose of the other parts of the pavilion for nothing.

The two tile panels that De Stuers acquired are probably the only Islamic objects in the Netherlands that ended up in an art museum and not in an ethnographic collection immediately after 1883.<sup>46</sup> It is certainly not unthinkable

that when he purchased them Victor de Stuers had a possible educational function in mind. The examples of earlier decorative art in the Rijksmuseum were also intended to raise the standard of modern industry and craftsmanship. De Stuers was a fervent supporter of the London model, where an art school had also been linked to the South Kensington Museum; after all, 'the museum is to the art school what the library is to every educational institution'.<sup>47</sup> Students should develop as broad an outlook as possible. 'The aspiring industrial artist ... must learn to penetrate the secrets of the forms in which different peoples and different periods have expressed their sense of beauty'.<sup>48</sup> Although the building of the Rijksmuseum had already begun it was nonetheless decided to add two separate sections for education: the Rijks Normalschool voor Teekenonderwijs to train art teachers and the Rijksschool voor Kunstnijverheid for craftsmen.<sup>49</sup> In 1881 the two colleges were given temporary space in the Rijksmuseum while it was being built. De Kruyff became the director of the Rijksschool voor Kunstnijverheid and taught decorative theory there and at the School voor Teekenonderwijs. As a result the first two generations to graduate from these colleges showed a marked interest in the exotic styles they had come into contact with during their education. Among them were a number of innovators of Dutch decorative art, trailblazers of what was later termed the Nieuwe Kunst.<sup>50</sup> Might they perhaps have studied the Tunisian tile panels in the Rijksmuseum?



## APPENDIX

Surviving Fragments  
from the Tunisian Pavilion  
at the Amsterdam World  
Exhibition in 1883

## RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

Tile panel with a *mihrab* arch, a vase of flowers and an Arabic inscription, 1883  
197 x 108 cm.  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam  
(inv. no. BK-NM-5862).

Tile panel with geometric patterns, 1883  
121 x 174 cm.  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam  
(inv. no. BK-NM-5863).

## AMSTERDAM HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Tile panel with Arabic inscription (fragment)  
13 x 92 cm.  
Amsterdam Historical Museum, Amsterdam  
(inv. no. KA 22262. 1/7).

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM,  
LONDON

Tile panel with a *mihrab* arch, a vase of flowers, a tree with two lions and an Arabic inscription  
c. 197 x 108 cm.  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1283-1883).

Tile panel with a star-shaped geometric pattern  
c. 121 x 174 cm.  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1282-1883).

Window, perforated stucco, filled in with coloured glass  
c. 96 x 61 cm.  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1276-1883).

Window, perforated stucco, filled in with coloured glass  
c. 96 x 61 cm.  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1277-1883).

Wall panel, stucco panel with geometric design  
c. 47 x 86 cm.  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1279-1833).

Wall panel, stucco panel with arabesque design  
c. 112 x 72 cm.  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1280-1883).

Wall panel, stucco panel with arabesque design  
c. 112 x 72 cm.  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London  
(inv. no. 1281-1883).

ROYAL MUSEUM (NATIONAL  
MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND),  
EDINBURGH

Window, perforated stucco filled in with coloured glass  
c. 96 x 61 cm.  
Formerly Victoria & Albert, London,  
(inv. no. 1278-1883).  
Royal Museum, Edinburgh  
Present location unknown

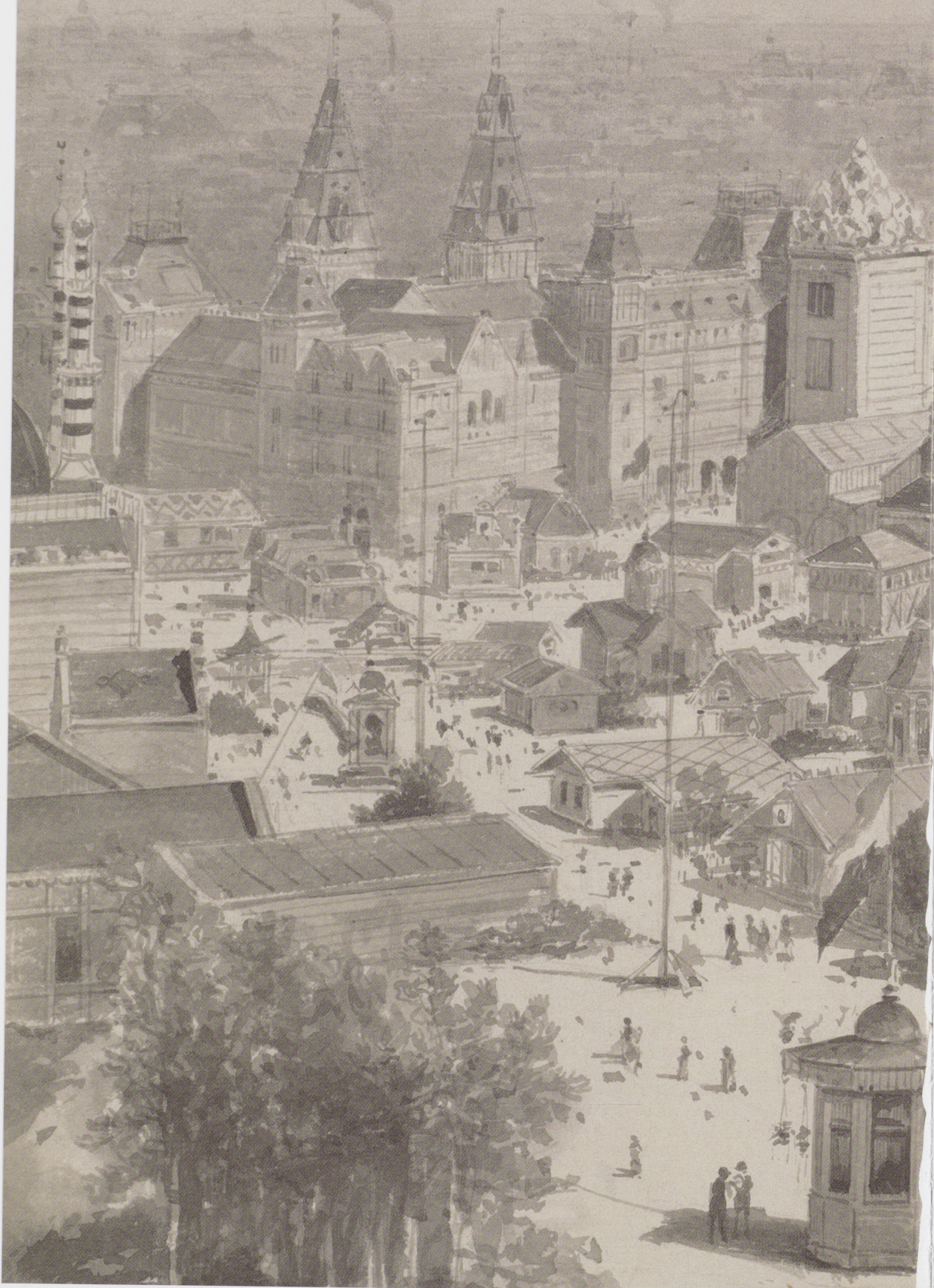
## WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Tile panel with an Arabic inscription (probably with a *mihrab* arch and a vase of flowers)  
c. 197 x 108 cm.  
Formerly Victoria & Albert, London,  
(inv. no. 1284-1883).  
Sold to Mr Tischer of Chester in 1953.

## NOTES

- \* With thanks to Mariam Rosser-Owen, Vanessa Zimmerman and Victoria West (all from the Victoria & Albert Museum), Arnoud Vrolijk and Luitgard Mols.
- 1 *Inventaris Nederlandsch Museum*, II (1877-1884), inv. nos. 5862, 5863, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.
  - 2 For Qallaline tile panels see: *Couleurs de Tunisie. 25 siècles de céramique*, Paris (Institut du Monde Arabe) / Toulouse (Musée des Augustins) 1994; Alain & Dalila Loviconi, *Les faïences de Tunisie. Qallaline & Nabeul*, Paris 1994; Dalu Jones, *Qallaline Tile Panels: Tile Pictures in North Africa, 16th to 20th Century* (AARP Art and Archaeology Research Papers), London 1978.
  - 3 *Jaarverslag Amsterdams Historisch Museum* 2006, 46, 47. The fragment was transferred to the Amsterdam Historical Museum by the Open Air Museum in Arnhem. Enquiries in Arnhem revealed that the provenance of the panel is obscure.
  - 4 Caspar Purdon Clarke's report of his visit to the world exhibition in Amsterdam, 17 July 1883, v&A Archives Blythe House London, MA/35/65 (Amsterdam: International Exhibition of Colonial Objects & General Exportation, May to October 1883), no. 31245.
  - 5 Caspar Purdon Clarke's report of his visit to the world exhibition in Amsterdam, 17 July 1883, v&A Archives, Blythe House London, MA/35/65 (Amsterdam: International Exhibition of Colonial Objects & General Exportation, May to October 1883), no. 31245. For the price of the objects see also no. 31711.
  - 6 File 1951/1414b (Ceramics Department Board of Survey files), v&A Archives, Blythe House London. This reveals that in 1953 the tile panel was sold to a Mr Fischer of Chester.
  - 7 We find two lions chained to or standing beside a tree in other Qallaline tile panels, and in other media too. This motif also occurs, for instance, on stone reliefs, murals and ceramics. See, for example, an eighteenth-century tile panel in the Bardo Museum in Tunis with two cheetahs chained to a fruit tree in the lowest range: *Couleurs de Tunisie* 1994, op. cit. (note 2), 252 (with illustration). It is an ancient symbol of royal and spiritual power. According to Dalu Jones this motif is often used in Tunisia above the entrances and on the walls of tombs of saints because it is believed to ward off evil: Jones 1978, op. cit. (note 2), 20.
  - 8 v&A Archives, Blythe House London, MA/1/E201, esp. PP/1921/2771 and PP/1922/822.
  - 9 For the Amsterdam world exhibition (the Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel-tentoonstelling) see Ileen Montijn, *Kermis van Koophandel. De Amsterdamse wereld-tentoonstelling van 1883*, Bussum 1983; Marieke Bloembergen, *De koloniale vertoning. Nederland en Indië op de wereld-tentoonstellingen (1880-1931)*, Amsterdam 2002; Lieske Tibbe 'Natuurstaat en verval. Discussies over exotische kunststijlen rondom de Internationale Koloniale Tentoonstelling van 1883', *De Negentiende Eeuw*, vol. 29 (2005), no. 4, 261-81.
  - 10 'Het silhouet van het paleisje is allerliefst en getuigt voor den smaak van den bouwheer,' G.S. de Clerck, 'Schetsen van de Wereld-tentoonstelling van 1883 te Amsterdam', *De Huisvriend*, 1883, 292-94.
  - 11 John F. Groll, 'Eene Zaouia als Tentoonstellings-gebouw van Tunis' in: *Rapport over de Bouwkunst op de Internationale Koloniale- en Uitvoerhandel-Tentoonstelling te Amsterdam 1883 (Bouwkundig Tijdschrift, vol IV)*, Amsterdam 1884, 29-31.
  - 12 'Den jeugdigen, maar zeer talentvollen Luikschien architect, den heer Soubre,' Groll 1884, op. cit. (note 11), 31.
  - 13 'Zonder zich te verlustigen in de aanbrenghing van eigen gepatenteerde fantastische vormen, door anderen hier op de Tentoonstelling zooals is gedaan,' Groll 1884, op. cit. (note 11), 31.
  - 14 For the discussions about the building styles of the main building and the colonial pavilion, see Montijn 1983, op. cit. (note 9), 30-31; Bloembergen 2002, op. cit. (note 9), 84-87; Tibbe 2005, op. cit. (note 9). For a wider context of Islamic architecture in world exhibitions: Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient. Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford 1992.
  - 15 *Officieele Courant internationale koloniale en uitvoerhandel tentoonstelling*, no. 38 (2 September 1883), 4.
  - 16 'Blijkt dat verwachting, die ons het grootsche front deed koesteren, niet wordt teleurgesteld', *Officieele Courant* 1883, op. cit. (note 15), no. 38 (2 September 1883), 4. For a description of the interior see also De Clerck 1883, op. cit. (note 10), 292-94.
  - 17 Groll 1884, op. cit. (note 11), 31.
  - 18 See for example Maria Grever, 'Tijd en ruimte onder één dak. De wereldtentoonstelling als verbeelde vooruitgang' in: Maria Grever and Harry Jansen (eds.), *De ongrijp-*

- bare tijd. *Temporaliteit en de constructie van het verleden*. Hilversum 2001, 113-30; Bloembergen 2002, op. cit. (note 9), 11-33.
- 19 Marieke Bloembergen, 'Van kampong tot kunst? Nederlandse koloniale mensvertoningen op de wereldtentoonstellingen, 1880-1931', in: Patrick Allegaert and Bert Sliggers (eds.), *De exotische mens. Andere culturen als amusement*, Tiel 2009, 115-29; Bloembergen 2002, op. cit. (note 9).
- 20 Grever 2001, op. cit. (note 18), 114.
- 21 For an analysis of how 'the other' is created in anthropology by banishing him to another place and time, see Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York 1983. And in relation to Dutch Orientalism: Jan de Hond, *Verlangen naar het Oosten. Oriëntalisme in de Nederlandse cultuur, c. 1800-1920*, Leiden 2008, 272-328. More specifically for the time and place aspect and 'the other' in world exhibitions see Grever 2001, op. cit. (note 18).
- 22 'In dezen tijd waarin de strijd om het leven vinnig is, waar de markten der beschaafde wereld zoo volgepropt zijn met menschen en koopwaar, welke industriëel zou daar er niet aan denken, om tot die onmetelijke streken door te dringen, welke men volksplantingen noemt, om het even of zij tot Engeland, Nederland, Spanje of aan Frankrijk behoren?' *Officieele Courant* 1883, op. cit. (note 15), no. 43 (7 October 1883), 1.
- 23 'Europeesch kapitaal een uitgebreid veld ter ontginning en een rijken oogst van winsten aanbiedt.' *Officieele Courant* 1883, op. cit. (note 15), no. 43 (7 October 1883), 3.
- 24 'Wij Fransen, welke vast besloten zijn ons geliefd vaderland uit zijne vernedering weder op te heffen, wij konden noch mochten de gelegenheid verzuimen, welke ons door de Amsterdamsche Tentoonstelling geboden was, voor de oogen der wereld blijkt te geven van onze levenskracht, van onze vreedzame eerezucht, van onze onverdoofbare verwachtingen'. *Officieele Courant* 1883, op. cit. (note 15), no. 43 (7 October 1883), 2.
- 25 'Frankrijks hulpbronnen en van het veredelend gebruik dat wij er van weten te maken'. *Officieele Courant* 1883, op. cit. (note 15), no. 43 (7 October 1883), 2.
- 26 'Het sprekende bewijs van de natuurlijke rijkdommen, de historische herinneringen, de glansrijke verwachtingen, in dit land heerschende'. *Officieele Courant* 1883, op. cit. (note 15), no. 43 (7 October 1883), 4.
- 27 'Om er de beschaving te doen herleven die in vervlogen eeuwen ten tijde van Carthago en Rome, er zoo welig tierde.' *Officieele Courant* 1883, op. cit. (note 15), no. 43 (7 October 1883), 4.
- 28 'Vruchtbaar zaad ten behoeve der gansche wereld.' *Officieele Courant* 1883, op. cit. (note 15), no. 43 (7 October 1883), 4.
- 29 'Aan de eerste rookwolken, die men ziet opstijgen uit de vulkaan der beschaving, die eeuwen lang rustte, rookwolken, die een naderende uitbarsting voorspellen van verlichting en vooruitgang.' *De Clerck* 1883, op. cit. (note 10), 294.
- 30 This is not, though, to say that this counter argument was always at odds with western colonial politics. Colonial politicians even made use of it in their justification of colonial interference: thanks to colonial power, old traditions that were otherwise in danger of being lost were restored. Nonetheless this ultimately remains a tricky argument: colonizers set themselves up as the protectors of the domestic culture against the western influences that they themselves introduced.
- 31 For the relationship between exoticism/orientalism and nostalgia see De Hond 2008, op. cit. (note 21), 268-328 and John MacKenzie, *Orientalism. History, Theory and the Arts*, Manchester/New York 1995, 55-69.
- 32 De Hond 2008, op. cit. (note 21), 303, 304; MacKenzie 1995, op. cit. (note 31), 113-24; Mienke Simon Thomas, *De leer van het ornament. Versieren volgens voorschrift, 1850-1930*, Amsterdam 1996, 14, 15, 123.
- 33 Anita Warmelink, 'Goede smaak in de "lelijke tijd"', *De Negentiende Eeuw*, vol. 28 (2004), no. 3, 207-33.
- 34 See chapter 4 on the influence of the Orient on the theory and the practice of decorative art in Simon Thomas 1996, op. cit. (note 32), 121-68. More generally on the influence of Islamic art on Dutch arts and crafts: De Hond 2008, op. cit. (note 21), 303-23.
- 35 'De haastige fabricatie van duizende smake-looze voorwerpen.' 'Alles wat oorspronkelijk en doelmatig is.' F.W. van Eeden, 'Versiering en kunststijl in de nijverheid', *Tijdschrift uitgegeven door de Nederlandsche Maatschappij ter Bevordering van Nijverheid*, vol. 27 (1864), 535.
- 36 Van Eeden 1864, op. cit. (note 35), 433, 436.
- 37 'Waar meer en meer de machine regeert en de mensch alleen nog maar noodig is om stangen te verschuiven en aan kranen te draaien.' F.W. Van Eeden, *De koloniën op de internationale tentoonstelling te Amsterdam in 1883*, Haarlem 1884, 80.
- 38 'Den verderfelijken Westerschen invloed', Groll 1884, op. cit. (note 11), 29.
- 39 'Weldaad voor het land.' J.R. de Kruijff, 'Ter Amsterdamsche tentoonstelling', *Vragen des Tijds*, 1883, vol. 2, 263.



- 40 'Gelijk steeds te voren, wanneer de decoratieve kunst van eenig tijdperk haar karakter verliest en een nieuwe frissche, krachtige strooming noodig bleek om het voor algeheele ontaarding en verval te behoeden, wend ook in onze dagen een ieder, die uit het verleden de beste lessen voor de toekomst put en daarbij een geopend oog heeft voor het schoone, wáár ook hij het vinden moge, den blik hoopvol naar het Oosten.' De Kruyff 1883, op. cit. (note 39), 264.
- 41 'Onszelf te zijn', De Kruyff 1883, op. cit. (note 39), 265.
- 42 'Wegwijzer' and a 'geneesmiddel tegen onze wansmaak en ziekelijkheid', Flanor, 'Vlugmaren', *De Nederlandse Spectator*, vol. 38 (22 September 1883), 304. Unlike De Kruyff, Vosmaer thought that Japanese and, above all, Greek ornament had an important role to play. For this discussion between De Kruyff and Vosmaer see Tibbe 2005, op. cit. (note 9).
- 43 Osado, 'Tentoonstellingsbrieven', *De Opmerker*, 18 (1883), 276; De Kruyff 1883, op. cit. (note 39), 271.
- 44 Jan de Hond, 'The Persian Pavilion at the Amsterdam World Fair of 1883', in: Martine Gosselink and Dirk J. Tang (eds.), *Iran and the Netherlands: Interwoven through the Ages*, Gronsveld / Rotterdam 2009, 228-32.
- 45 L. Serrurier to J. Closon, 23 October 1883. Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde archives, Leiden, Ethnographisch Museum: Index of Letters, 284-420.
- 46 The Rijksmuseum still has two blue glass Persian sprinklers with a label reading 'aangekocht tentoonstelling Amsterdam 1883' (purchased at the 1883 Amsterdam exhibition). (Inv. nos. BK-BR-274 and 275). See also Pieter C Ritsema van Eck and Henrica M. Zijlstra-Zweens, *Glass in the Rijksmuseum*, Zwolle 1993, vol. 1, 222, cat. nos. 357 and 358. However these items are on long-term loan from the Netherlands Society for Trade and Industry in Haarlem and only came into the Rijksmuseum's collection in 1934.
- 47 'Het museum is voor de kunstschool wat de bibliotheek voor elke wetenschappelijke inrichting is'. Quoted from: Dirk Jan Biemond, 'Van "antieke" tot "historische kunstkamers". Het belang van de Utrechtse stijlkamers voor de Nederlandse museale geschiedenis' in Willemijn Fock and Ida van Zijl (eds.), *Meubelen tot 1900* (De verzamelingen van het Centraal Museum Utrecht, vol. 8), Utrecht 2005, 29.
- 48 Quoted from: Biemond 2005, op. cit. (note 47), 29.
- 49 Gijs van der Ham, *200 jaar Rijksmuseum. Geschiedenis van een nationaal symbool*, Amsterdam / Zwolle 2000, 194, 195. For the innovations in education in the decorative arts see also Mechteld de Bois, *Chris Lebeau 1878-1945*, Assen 1987, 14-24.
- 50 For the influence of Islamic art on Dutch decorative art see De Hond 2008, op. cit. (note 21), 311-28.