

Western Influence in Ottoman Lands | Egypt

'When Mohammad Ali became Wali of Egypt in 1805, he introduced the basis for the new Egyptian Renaissance...'

When Mohammad Ali became Wali of Egypt in 1805, he introduced the basis for the new Egyptian Renaissance, some features of which modernisation became evident in the Westernisation of the fine and decorative arts, crafts and architecture. This modernisation period culminated in Muhammad Ali's sons, who came into power in Egypt after him, inviting numerous European architects and artisans to construct and decorate a number of palaces in Egypt in the European style. They were encouraged to use architectural and decorative elements in the fashionable Baroque and Rococo styles. This is evident in Abdeen Palace, the sabils of Muhammad 'Ali at Nahaseen and Umm Abbas in Saliba Street and in buildings spread over other Egyptian cities, but most noticeable in Cairo. The Islamic Art Museum in Cairo hosts a large number of ceramics, marble pieces and manuscripts clearly displaying Westernised decorative elements characterised by curved lines, acanthus leaves and flowers and coronas in high relief.



Name:
Abdeen Palace

Dynasty:
1814 Ottoman

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
One of the most famous and important palaces built during the reign of the Muhammad 'Ali dynasty. Constructed in the European style, it employs the architectural principles of the Baroque and Rococo.



Name:
Sabil of Muhammad 'Ali

Dynasty:
1838 Ottoman

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
The sabil lies opposite al-Nasir Muhammad Madrasa in the Nahaseen district of Cairo. Built to commemorate Isma'il Pasha, son of Muhammad 'Ali who was burned to death in the Sudan in 1822, the façade takes on a curved, almost semi-circular form, decorated with naturalistic vegetal motifs in high relief and in the Baroque style.



Name:
Sabil of Umm Abbas

Dynasty:
1867 Ottoman

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
As its name indicates this sabil was built by Abbas's mother, cousin of the Khedive Isma'il Pasha. The façade is decorated with high-relief vegetal elements executed

in marble. The windows have brass grilles with similar decorations to that seen on the façade, while the columns display clear Baroque and Rococo influences.



Name:

Ceramic plate

Dynasty:

19th century Ottoman

Details:

Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

This plate is a product of Çanakkale, a city on the Dardanelles. Its characteristically simple decoration embodies the European Baroque, seen in the use of high relief and the naturalistic style of its design and decoration.



Name:

Qur'an

Dynasty:

19th century Ottoman

Details:

Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

A Quran illuminated with naturalistic vegetal ornamentations in the Baroque and Rococo styles.
