

The Neo-Mamluk style in architecture and interior design In Europe and Egypt in the Nineteenth Century

Inas Hosny Ibrahim Anous

Assistant Professor, Interior Design and Furniture Department, Faculty of Applied Arts, Helwan University,
enasanos@hotmail.com

Abstract:

The "Neo-Mamluk" style appeared in Cairo and some European cities during the last years of the nineteenth century. It permeates all European art forms. It is a "modern Arabic style" that referred to the Mamluk era of the 13th -15th centuries although it was created by Europeans: architects, interior and furniture designers, painters, Islamic art lovers, and aristocratic collectors. This Neo-Islamic style has left its mark on the architecture and interiors of many houses and palaces in Cairo and Europe. With the modernization of Cairo during the time of Khedive Ismail and the demolition of old buildings, the main characteristic of the Neo-Mamluk style is the integration of fragments of historical decorations into modern architecture. Although it is a vast and important discipline, a limited number of scientific studies on the Neo-Mamluk style analyze its Cairo and European architectural achievements. Our presentation aims to identify the key factors in favor of the expansion of the Neo-Mamluk style in Europe, study the design philosophy of the nineteenth-century European pioneers of this style, and analyze the interior architecture of some key buildings in Cairo and Europe at that time. The study represents a significant contribution to the history of interior design, introducing scholars to the fascinating history of Neo-Mamluk architecture in Cairo and Europe and illuminating an important aspect of Orientalism. The methodology is based on a historical approach: the birth of the Neo-Mamluk style in Cairo and Europe in the 19th century, the main lines of Mamluk architecture and interior design, the Cairo architectural atmosphere as well as the European infatuation with the style, the effective role of European architects and artists living in Egypt in the extension of the Neo-Mamluk style. The research follows an analytical descriptive approach, which deeply describes and analyzes the interior architecture of some of the main Neo-Mamluk buildings in Egypt and Europe. This study demonstrates the European, especially French, efforts to revive this Mamluk taste in Egypt as well as in Europe, Egypt's contribution to the World Fairs in the 19th century, portrays an oriental image of Egypt on an international scale, The Neo-Mamluk style was inspired by the Mamluk style of the 13th and 15th centuries with some Ottoman traces, and it concretized the practice of reuse and replicas. To conclude, the "Neo-Mamluk" style has preserved a rich heritage that may have been lost, which is a feasible conservation strategy among others: this is the case of the Saint Maurice mansion in Cairo, of which a large and precious part of the decoration was dismantled and then reassembled to decorate the French embassy in Cairo, currently in Giza.

Keywords:

Neo-Mamluk style, Neo-Islamic style, Orientalism, reuse, Ambroise Baudry

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