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Geometry and Color. Decoding the Arts of Islam in the West from the Mid-19th to the Early 20th Century

**edited by Sandra Gianfreda, Francine Giese,
Axel Langer and Ariane Varela Braga**

Impressum

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Eastern Light

Western Fascination for Islamic Colored Glass Windows

Abstract

Islamic colored glass windows (*qamarīyāt*) have long been disregarded by scholarship despite their popularity with nineteenth-century travelers. Their vibrant light and bright colors have sparked the enthusiasm of artists, architects, and collectors who depicted, recreated, and displayed this fragile art form. By focusing on the British architect James William Wild, the eccentric traveler and art collector Karl von Urach, and the iconic American artist Louis Comfort Tiffany, this contribution will highlight the artistic and cultural significance of *qamarīyāt* as an expression of the intense colors of the East.

Keywords: glass art; James William Wild; Karl von Urach; Louis Comfort Tiffany; Cairo

During the colonial age, Islamic colored glass windows (*qamarīyāt*) witnessed a growing popularity with artists, art dealers, and collectors. Made of plaster grilles with glass pieces attached to their reverse by means of a thin layer of plaster (Flood xi), they create colorful light effects, which were described and depicted by many nineteenth-century travelers and artists. By presenting the first results of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) project "Luminosity of the East" (Vitrocentre Romont 2020-2024),² this contribution will address the many facets of the Western fascination for *qamarīyāt*, while focusing on three key figures within nineteenth-century orientalism and decorative arts: the British architect James William Wild (1814-1892), who developed a predilection for traditional Cairene houses; the eccentric collector Karl von Urach (1865-1925), who bought original *qamarīyāt* in Cairo and reinstalled them in his neo-Mamluk exhibition halls; and the artist Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933), who had experienced the intense colors of the East during his travels and contributed to the renewal of American stained glass.

James William Wild: Documenting Cairo's domestic architecture

In 1842, the British architect James William Wild, brother-in-law of Owen Jones (1809-1874), joined the Prussian expedition to Egypt and Nubia, led by the Egyptologist Carl Richard Lepsius. In 1844, Wild left the expedition and took up residence in Cairo, where he stayed until 1847 (Llewellyn,

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² The abovementioned SNSF project focuses on Islamic colored glass windows (*qamarīyāt*) of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries within Western museum collections and at World's Fairs, their popularity with artists, art dealers, and collectors during the colonial age, as well as their reception in Western art and architecture. Moreover, the availability and commercialization of Islamic colored glass windows on the art market are critically examined and strategies for dealing with artworks from a colonial context are being developed.

"Islamic Inspiration"; Llewellyn, "Two Interpretations"; Weeks 39-59). Here, he frequented the British orientalist Edward William Lane (1801-1876), who was member of a network of Western scientists, artists, and architects that regularly gathered in Lane's house (Crimson 101-102). Known for his *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, first published in 1836, Lane portrayed contemporary life in nineteenth-century Egypt and left detailed descriptions of traditional Mamluk and Ottoman houses, making special mention of their use, architectural composition, and interior design (Lane 6-23).³ As attested by the following quotation, the often-overlooked *qamarīyāt* had particularly aroused Lane's interest:

In several of the upper rooms, in the houses of the wealthy, there are, besides the windows of lattice-work, others of coloured glass, representing bunches of flowers, peacocks, and other gay and gaudy objects, or merely fanciful patterns, which have a pleasing effect. These coloured glass windows, which are termed *ckum'aree'yehs*, are mostly from a foot and a half to two feet and a half in height, and from one to two feet in width; and are generally placed along the upper part of the projecting lattice-window, in a row; or above that kind of window, disposed in a group, so as to form a large square; or elsewhere in the upper parts of the walls, usually singly, or in pairs, side by side. They are composed of small pieces of glass of various colours, set in rims of fine plaster, and enclosed in a frame of wood (19-20).

According to Abraham Thomas, the gatherings at Lane's house might have awakened Wild's interest in the domestic architecture of the city (Thomas 43). Wild was especially interested in the interior decoration of the houses, of which he produced an impressive number of sketches showing traditional woodwork, *opus sectile* incrustations, *muqarnas* vaulting, as well as colored glass windows (Thomas; Weeks 40-42). Most noteworthy in the context of this contribution is a series of drawings by Wild, dating to the 1840s and entitled "Mr Lewis House". Held today at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the partly colored pencil drawings give us a precise idea of the traditional Cairene house, inhabited by the painter John Frederick Lewis (1805-1876). We therefore can conclude that Wild not only frequented Edward William Lane, but was also acquainted with the Victorian artist, who arrived in Cairo in 1841. Living *à la turque* in a traditional quarter for the following nine years, Lewis would develop the same predilection for the city's domestic architecture. Just as Wild, Lewis depicted the men's reception hall on the ground floor (*mandāra*) of his house and showed a special interest in its *qamarīyāt* and the vibrant effects produced by the light falling through the colored glass pieces, as attested in his watercolor and oil paintings, among them *The Hareem* (1849/50), *An Intercepted Correspondence* (1869), or *A Lady Receiving Visitors The Apartment is the Mandarah, the Lower Floor of the House, Cairo (The Reception)* (1873; fig. 1; Weeks 107-127). Compared to the representation of that same room by Wild, the architect's drawing reveals a different approach. Whereas the *mašrabiyyāt* and stucco glass windows enhance the enchanted atmosphere of Lewis' Orientalist paintings, Wild reconstructs the overall design of the hall without showing its current state of preservation (fig. 2).⁴ The same interest in architectural and ornamental details can also be seen in the Swiss architect Theodor Zeerleder (1820-1868), who spent several months in Cairo to study and depict the domestic architecture of the city in the winter of 1848 (Bäbler and Bättschmann; Giese et al., *Mythos Orient*). Even though the two architects never met, Zeerleder's sketches and watercolors show surprising similarities with Wild's analytical way of representation.

³ While Lane and his *Manners* have been discredited in Edward Said's 1978 *Orientalism* (Rodenbeck), his detailed descriptions of Cairo's domestic architecture remain a valid source.

⁴ In contrast, John Frederick Lewis added these "picturesque imperfections" (Weeks 41), to his sketch *Mendurah in my House in Cairo*. Ca. 1843. Watercolor on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, no. 717-1877.



Figure 1: John Frederick Lewis. *A Lady Receiving Visitors: The Apartment is the Mandarah, the Lower Floor of the House, Cairo (The Reception)*. 1873. Oil on panel. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.417. © Public Domain.

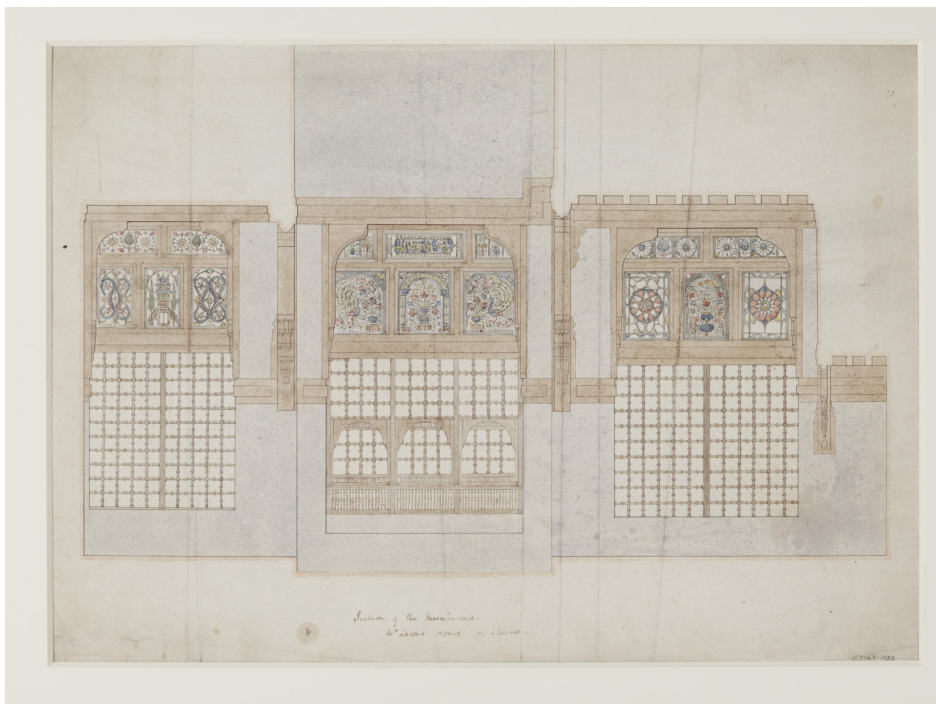


Figure 2: James William Wild. *Section of the Mandarah. Mr Lewis House in Cairo*. 1840s. Pencil, pen and ink, and watercolor on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, Department of Engraving, E.3763-1938. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 3: Theodor Zeerleder. *Cairo. Interieur eines Divans*. January - March 1848. Pencil and watercolor on paper. Burgerbibliothek Bern, Gr. C. 897. © Burgerbibliothek Bern.

Likewise, the Swiss architect was fascinated by the *qamarīyāt* he observed and depicted in various Cairene houses (fig. 3), and which he described in his travel diary, where special mention is made of the "magic light" (*magisches Licht*) reflected, transmitted, and dispersed by the colored glass windows (Zeerleder 114-115).

Just like Zeerleder, James William Wild would get the opportunity to create his own colored glass windows. Already one year after his arrival in Cairo, he won the commission for the Anglican church of St. Mark in Alexandria (1845-1854). The church was executed in an eclectic Early Christian style with strong Islamic references and completed in 1854 after important delays and periods of inactivity (Crinson 111-123). According to Reginald Stuart Poole's obituary written in 1892, Wild was given the opportunity to create five replicas of traditional *qamarīyāt* "in the old Arab style, perforated plaster with the stained glass backing" for the windows of the apse of St. Mark's in the 1870s. The iconography of the windows, however, followed the Western tradition, with figures of Our Savior and the Four Evangelists. It is possible that the borders with floral decoration and "jewel-like ornaments at the base" were taken from Islamic prototypes (Stuart Poole 489). Like other Western architects working in Cairo at the time, James Wild did not have the windows made locally, but had commissioned Powell & Sons, an internationally recognized studio based in London, to create the windows. The firm had established a stained glass department in 1844 with designers such as Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) early on in his career (Galicki 5, 29-34).

A second assignment to produce several stucco glass windows, approved by Henry Cole in October 1866, came from the South Kensington Museum, where Wild acted as an expert adviser in Islamic art and architecture from 1863 to 1871 (Stuart Poole 489; Thomas 54-56). Installed in the upper galleries of the museum's Oriental Courts,⁵ which the late Owen Jones was commissioned to decorate in 1863, the stucco glass windows adopted the widespread Islamic motif of a flower bouquet in a vase within a medallion, as documented by Wild's draft from 1875-1877 and one of the windows preserved (figs. 4a, 4b).

When looking at Wild's Cairo sketches (fig. 5, left), and the V&A's Islamic colored glass window (inv. 1200-1883) with similar design, coming from the lot of Cairene *qamarīyāt* bought for the South Kensington Museum in London in 1883 by Edward William Lane's nephew Stanley Lane-Poole (1854-1931), it becomes obvious that the British architect followed the Islamic prototypes closely (Lane-Poole 265-267).

Again, it was James Powell & Sons, who executed the window after Wild's draft. The adherence to the Islamic technique of inserting the colored glass pieces into stucco grilles, described by Zeerleder and Wild, is surprising. In contrast, Zeerleder's replicas of traditional *qamarīyāt* follow a different technical approach: here, the Islamic technique has been translated into the Western stained-glass tradition, where instead of plaster lead comes are used to hold the colored glass in place. Most probably executed by the studio of Ludwig Stantz in Bern (Keller 205), Zeerleder's replicas were completed in 1854 and integrated in the neo-Mamluk Selamluk for Count Albert Alexandre de Pourtalès (1812-1861) at Oberhofen Castle (Giese, "Studie"; Giese, "Oberhofen Selamluk", Giese, "Fumoirs").

⁵ In an 1884 report on the Islamic collections held at the South Kensington Museum, the windows are described as being placed "at the opposite side of the South Court," i.e. the mentioned Oriental Courts ("Saracenic Art" 4). On the Oriental Courts and their localization within the South Kensington Museum, see Conway 39 (ground plan), 43; Barringer 15-17, with further references.

Figure 4a: James William Wild. *Colored Glass Window for the Oriental Courts in the South Kensington Museum; a Design*. 1874-1875. Watercolor on tracing paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3705-1938. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, photographed by Adriana Francescutto.



Figure 4b: James William Wild. *Colored Glass Window for the Oriental Courts in the South Kensington Museum*. Window made after Wild's design by James Powell & Sons. 1870s. Plaster and colored glass. Victoria and Albert Museum. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, photographed by Adriana Francescutto.

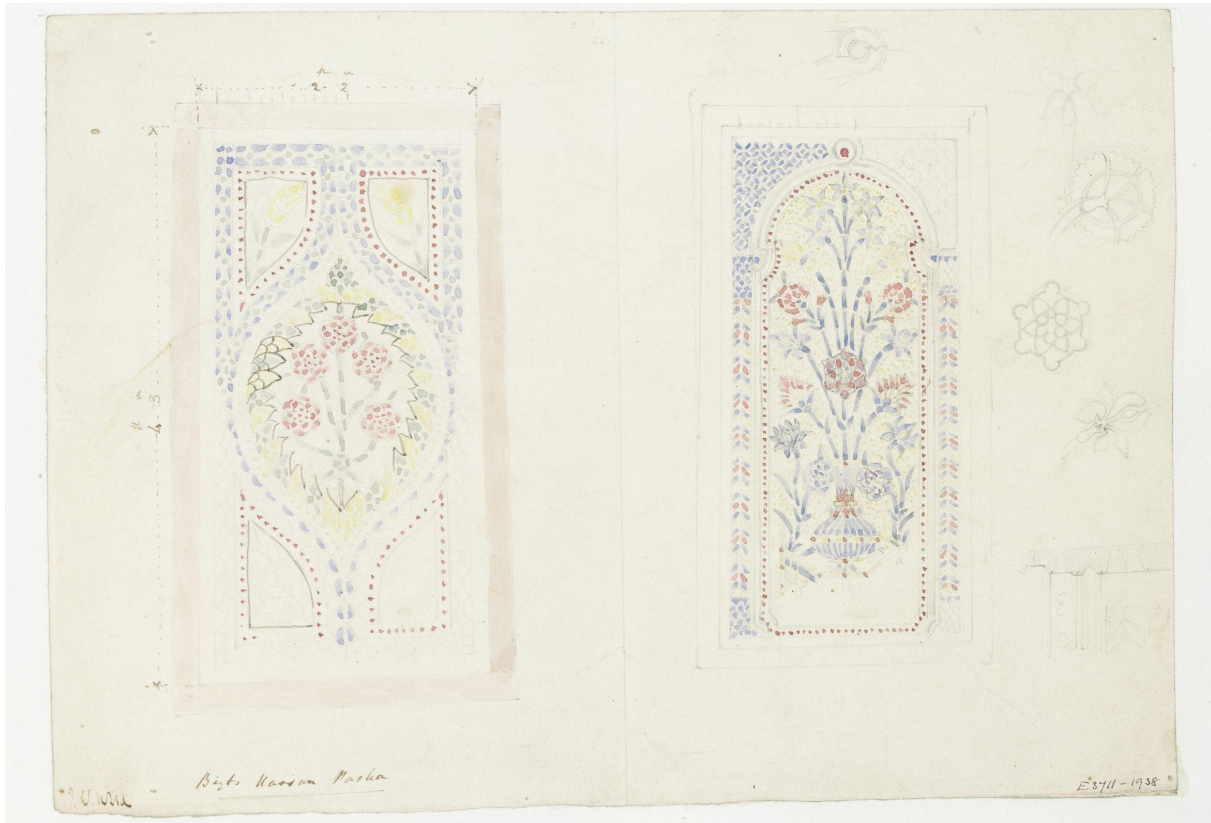


Figure 5: James William Wild. *Colored Glass Windows from Cairo*. 1840s. Pencil and watercolor. Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3711-1938. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Karl von Urach: Collecting and displaying Islamic colored glass windows in the West

Another way of bringing the colors of Islamic windows to the West, is exemplified through the life and activities of our second protagonist, the eccentric amateur, traveler, and art collector Karl, Prince of Urach, Count of Württemberg. After having traveled the world, including large parts of North Africa, Egypt, and the Near East, and after having assembled a remarkable Islamic art collection, Karl von Urach decided to install several neo-Islamic style rooms at Palais Urach, the family residence at Neckarstrasse 68 in Stuttgart. By doing so, he followed display strategies, which were introduced in the first half of the nineteenth century by Alexandre Du Sommerard (1779-1842) with his outstanding period room ensemble at Hôtel de Cluny in Paris.⁶

According to documents preserved at the city archive of Stuttgart, Karl's mother Florestine, Duchess of Urach and Countess of Württemberg, submitted a project to connect the initially detached annex building with the main residence at first floor level. For the interior decoration of this newly built wing, Karl von Urach commissioned the local architect Karl Mayer (dates unknown) who created a series of Orientalizing interiors inspired by neo-Moorish and neo-Mamluk architecture, the so-called Arab Rooms (*Arabische Räume*). Even though the spectacular rooms built between 1893 and 1925 have since been destroyed, they are considered today as one of the most important historicist ensembles in Germany. The Islamic prototypes and artistic tendencies observable in the Arab Rooms were important references in Karl's life. He not only knew Ibero-Islamic architecture from his travels, he also grew up in close proximity to one of the most

⁶ On the significance of Alexandre Du Sommerard for the introduction of period and style rooms in private and public museums during the nineteenth century, see the contributions in Costa, Poulot and Volait with further references.

important neo-Moorish buildings of the nineteenth century—Karl Ludwig Wilhelm von Zanth's Wilhelma. Due to his longer stays in Egypt, where he owned a house, he was furthermore familiar with Mamluk architecture.

Although neo-Moorish and neo-Mamluk are two of the most widely received Islamic architectural styles, their implementation was quite different. While in the Moorish Revival, plaster casts were used almost exclusively, the Mamluk Revival is characterized by the assemblage of original architectural fragments, contemporary replicas, and plaster casts.

This practice of reusing original furniture in historicist interiors, has been transferred by the architect Ambroise Baudry (1838-1906) from France to Egypt.⁷ Telling examples are the Maison de Delort de Gléon (1872), the Hôtel Saint-Maurice (1875-1879), and his own residence (1875-1876), studied by Mercedes Volait. After his return to Paris, affluent collectors of Islamic art commissioned Baudry to create several neo-Mamluk style rooms, amongst which we find Edmond de Rothschild's influential *fumoir arabe* at 41 Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

The prerequisite of this international trend was the availability of original pieces from Cairo's historic monuments. This was a direct consequence of Ismail Pasha's (r. 1863-1879) controversial urban remodeling that led to the destruction of large areas of the historic city of Cairo (Volait, *Maisons* 39).⁸ The involvement of a local aristocrat from Stuttgart in this meanwhile contested sell-out of the city's cultural heritage may surprise at first. By taking a closer look at the biography of Karl von Urach, however, it becomes clear that he frequented the cultural centers of the time—Paris and Cairo in particular (Giese, "International Fashion"). He therefore was able to get directly in contact with important players involved in the art market, in the case of Cairo, the French entrepreneurs Jean Jaladon and the chief architect of the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* Max Herz (1856-1919), an authority of the Mamluk Revival.⁹

According to the existing archival documentation, on 4 May 1898, Karl von Urach, who used to travel under his pseudonym of Baron Charles de Neuffen, bought nineteen items from L. Almandary & J. Jaladon in Cairo, including two original colored glass windows (*Note des Moulages*). All items were sent to Stuttgart by ship via Trieste in June 1898, as attested by a handwritten letter from Jean Jaladon, dated 13 June 1898 (Handwritten letter). According to a typed description of the Arab Rooms, most probably written after Karl's death on the occasion of the public inauguration of the rooms, the acquired original windows were installed in the first two neo-Mamluk rooms, executed in 1899 and 1902 (*Merkblatt*).¹⁰ They have been described in 1926 as being "sawn out of plaster and fitted with differently colored glass pieces."¹¹

As historical photographs from Karl's *Nachlass* (personal archive) attest, Islamic colored glass windows were also installed in the Marble Hall (*Marmorsaal*). According to the abovementioned source, the windows there showed the same characteristics as the windows in the earlier neo-Mamluk rooms (fig. 6).¹²

⁷ Mercedes Volait has worked extensively on the French architect Ambroise Baudry, see for instance, Crosnier Leconte and Volait 56-133; Volait, "Passions" 98-103; Volait, *Maisons* 49-51; Volait, "Intérieurs" 103-114; Volait, "Usage" 53-55; Volait, "Remploi".

⁸ On Cairo's urban development and its nineteenth-century modernization, see Williams 457-475; AlSayyad, Bierman and Rabbat; Sanders.

⁹ Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abteilung Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (HStAS) GU 120 Bü. 316. On the various activities of Max Herz, see Ormos. "Max Herz"; Ormos, *Max Herz Pasha*; Volait, *Fous du Caire*, 193-196.

¹⁰ In his 1926 report on the Arab Rooms, Klaus Rohr erroneously described the aforementioned windows as being part of the first hall (*Blauer Saal*), built in 1893 in neo-Moorish style.

¹¹ "Die Fenster sind in Gips ausgesägt und mit verschiedenfarbigen Gläsern versehen" (Rohr 6; Kast 155).

¹² "Die Fenster, des mit Marmor ausgelegten Saales sind ebenfalls in Gips ausgesägt und mit farbigen Gläsern besetzt" (Rohr 6; Kast 155).

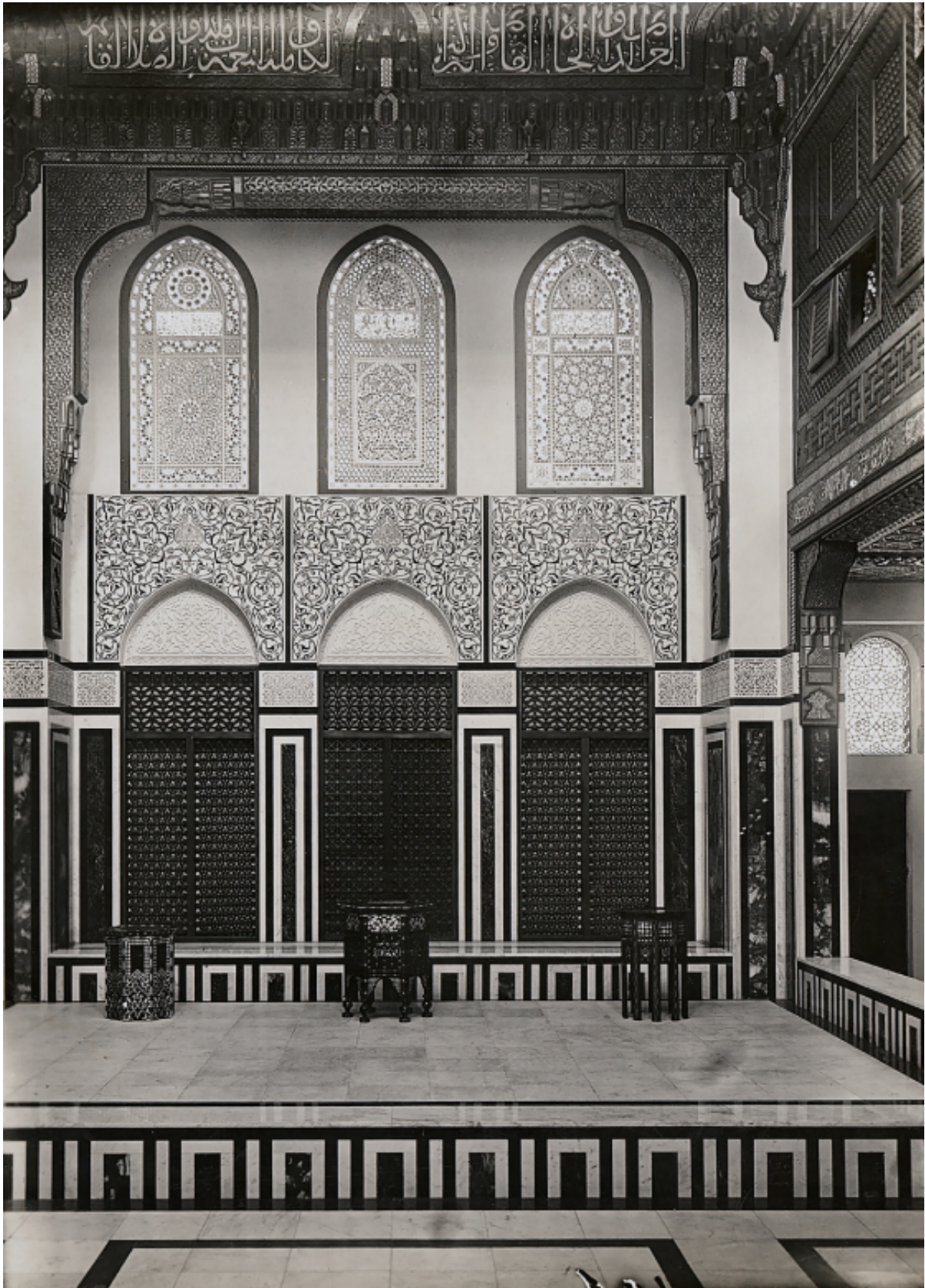


Figure 6: Karl Mayer, architect. *Stuttgart, Palais Urach, Marble Hall*. 1907-1909. Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abteilung Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, GU 99 Bü. 557a. © Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart.

Whether these were original pieces from Cairo or contemporary replicas as in the South Kensington Museum's Oriental Courts, could not be determined, as the property was destroyed during World War II and corresponding invoice documents have not been found so far. Either way, with their intricate stucco grille and intensive color effects, the colored glass windows contributed to the overall impression of an exotic getaway in the middle of Stuttgart (Rohr 6; Kast 155).

Louis Comfort Tiffany: Reinterpreting the colors of the East

Just as James William Wild and Karl von Urach, Louis Comfort Tiffany knew Islamic architecture and decorative arts firsthand. His father's close friend and chief designer Edward C. Moore (1827-1891) introduced Tiffany to Islamic art already at a young age (Koch 9; Paul 12-14), and as an emerging artist he experienced the East on an extended journey through Spain, North Africa, and Egypt in the 1870s.¹³ Trained as a landscape and genre painter, he was fascinated by the rich artistic vocabulary and intense colors of the East, which he captured in his paintings and watercolors.

Although his pictorial oeuvre was recognized by his contemporaries, Tiffany's glass creations were to bring him international renown.¹⁴ As one of the key figures of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century American glass art, he contributed—together with French-born artist and decorator John La Farge (1835-1910)—to the artistic and technical renewal of the art of stained glass during the so-called Opalescent Era (1880-1920) (Raguin, "Verre américain"). Just as his New York competitor La Farge, Tiffany looked for ways to expand the color palette and luminosity of traditional stained glass by resorting to opalescent glass.

This milky translucent glass was initially used as a porcelain substitute and introduced in the late 1870s by John La Farge to the art of stained glass.¹⁵ What Henry B. Adams described as "a new medium of artistic expression" (Adams 41), was to become a field of experimentation for the two artists, shaped by the art of the past and driven by the search for innovation.

In 1893, the year of his international breakthrough with the celebrated exhibition of Tiffany Studios at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Tiffany published an essay on the latest technical inventions in American stained glass. Entitled "American Art Supreme in Colored Glass," Tiffany retraces the evolution of the art of stained glass from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century, when color only played a secondary role. This began to change in the nineteenth century, when "Color, and color only, was the end sought." (Tiffany 623). American artists started to produce new material, which according to Tiffany, "...rivalled the painter's palette in its range of tones and eclipsed the iridescence and brilliancy found in the Roman and Egyptian glass" (623). Tiffany and his New York fellows went even farther by adopting opalescent, iridescent, rolled, and textured glass, applied in various layers to produce new and unexpected shades of color.

In his 1899 commission for the James May Memorial Window at Temple Emanu-El in New York, Tiffany got the opportunity to combine the exotic light of his opalescent windows with an equally exotic iconography (Deutsch). Partially preserved at the Beth-El Chapel of Tempel Emanu-El at Fifth Avenue and 65th Street, the Tiffany window was originally made for the community's previous temple dedicated on 11 September 1868 at Fifth Avenue and 43rd street (fig. 7).

¹³ Tiffany undertook his North African journey in company of the American painter and future associate Samuel Coleman, whom he had met in Spain in the spring of 1869 (Koch 7; Paul 19-20).

¹⁴ On the life and artistic production of Louis Comfort Tiffany, see Koch; Duncan; Duncan, Eidelberg and Harris; Raguin, *Glory in Glass*; Raguin, "Verre américain"; Raguin, *Style*; Pongracz, *Louis C. Tiffany*.

¹⁵ John La Farge's significance for the renewal of American stained glass in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been treated extensively, see for instance Weinberg, "Early Stained Glass"; Adams; Weinberg, *Decorative Works*; La Farge; Sloan and Yarnall; Raguin, *Glory in Glass*; Raguin, "Verre américain"; Raguin, *Style*; Yarnall; Luneau; Raguin, "Opulent Interiors".



Figure 7: Dedication of the Hebrew Temple Emanu-El, corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-Third Street, New York City, 11 September 1868. Taken from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 3 October 1868, p. 41. Temple Emanu-El, CEE 84-21. Image courtesy of Temple Emanu-El, New York.

Placed at the eastern end of the temple, above the ark holding the Torah scrolls, the window adopted parts of the original decorative scheme consisting of a series of twelve polylobed arches, crowned by two wooden pavilions and the Ten Commandments at the center of the tympanum.

As in many nineteenth-century synagogues following Semper's 1840 Dresden temple (Giese and Varela Braga, *Power of Symbols* 125-162), the interior design of the 1868 Emanu-El Temple followed Ibero-Islamic prototypes. Little surprise then that Tiffany choose the same style for his window. Based on his on-site experience during his Spanish journey, he made reference to the epitome of *andalusí* architecture—the Alhambra's Court of the Lions. Executed in the aforementioned technique, the use of opalescent and iridescent glass and their application in up to six superimposed layers contribute to the unexpected color effect and the three-dimensionality of the window (fig. 8). The background showing the Temple of Solomon within a bucolic landscape reminds us of watercolors, thereby sharply contrasting with the intense colors and the detailed representation of the court arcade with its characteristic columns and the meticulously reproduced stucco decoration.

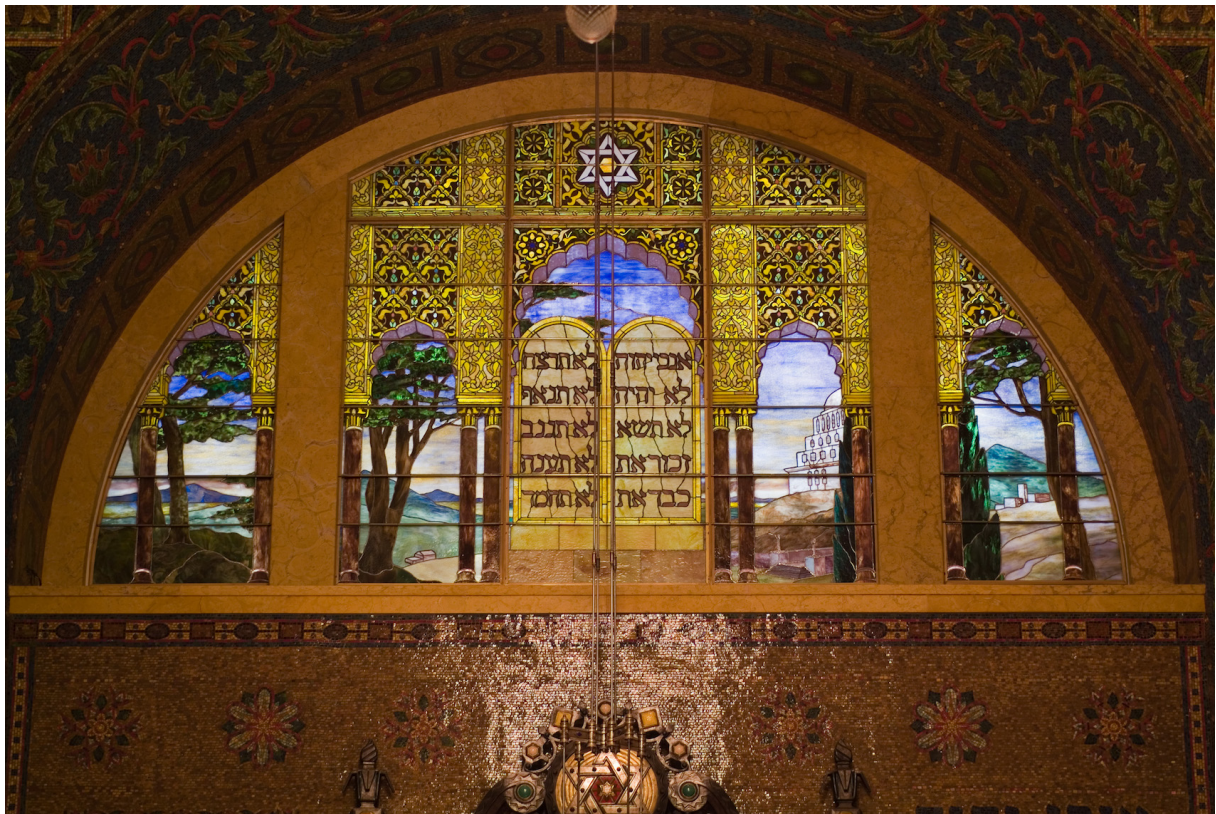


Figure 8: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company. *James May Memorial Window*. 1899. New York, Tempel Emanu-El, Beth-El Chapel. Image courtesy of Temple Emanu-El, New York.

The Alhambra remained an important source in Tiffany's artistic oeuvre, as attested by the neo-Moorish bronze doors of the ark just below the abovementioned window, which was commissioned in 1910 by Jacob H. Schiff (1847-1920) and is preserved today at the Beth-El Chapel (Pongracz, "American Synagogues" 153-155), or Tiffany's 1911 watercolor *The Alhambra*.¹⁶ However, it was his neo-Nasrid stained glass composition that was to outshine his other neo-Moorish works by its colorfulness and luminosity.

Valorizing a fragile art form

Traditional *qamarīyāt* made of plaster and glass were important artistic manifestations across the centuries that have attracted the interest of nineteenth-century travelers, artists, and architects, who looked for artistic and technical renewal. Although we are dealing here with architectural elements that are far less mobile than other works of art such as paintings and sculptures, they found their way into Western private and public collections or were integrated in neo-Mamluk interiors. After more than a century of misappraisal of historicist architecture and waves of destruction caused by World War II as well as the building boom of the 1970s, the artistic and cultural significance of Islamic revival-style architecture and interior design, including the fragile stucco glass windows seems now to be undisputed. As a hitherto largely neglected component of Islamic material culture, *qamarīyāt* have to be studied and valorized as such.

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¹⁶ Louis Comfort Tiffany. *The Alhambra*. 1911. Collection of Eric Streiner (Cooney Frelinghuysen 4, fig. 3).

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Biography

Francine Giese is director of the Vitrocentre and the Vitromusée Romont, Switzerland. From 2014-2019 she held a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) professorship at the Institute of Art History of the University of Zurich, where she led the research project "Mudejarismo and Moorish Revival in Europe." Her PhD thesis, dealing with the Islamic ribbed vault, was published in 2007 (Gebr. Mann), and her habilitation (second book) on building and restoration practices in the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba was issued in 2016 (Peter Lang). In her current research project "Luminosity of the East" (SNSF, 2020-2024), she focuses on the typology, materiality and provenance of Islamic colored glass windows (*qamarīyāt*) within Western museum collections. Her research focuses on transfer and exchange processes between the Islamic World and the West, architectural Orientalism, provenance research, and the arts of glass.
