

## Gothic Revival tiles in Dutch architecture

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Ceramic tiles, which had for centuries been used in the domestic interior in Holland, gained in the second half of the 19th century a new function in the decoration of public architecture. Important in this development is Pierre Cuypers (1827-1921), then the most prolific architect in the Netherlands. With nearly one hundred Roman Catholic churches and chapels, he was a prominent advocate for the Gothic Revival. In 1875 he was charged with the building of the Rijksmuseum and the Central Railway Station in Amsterdam, two outstanding architectural projects of the period. At the end of his career he built the impressive castle 'De Haar', near Utrecht, on the site of medieval ruins.

Cuypers had studied in Antwerp and was subject to many international influences. He visited London in 1862 and 1877, the first time to become an honorary member of 'The Ecclesiological Society'. On both occasions he dined with A. J. Beresford Hope and G. E. Street; the latter was considered by him as one of the best architects of his time.

Cuypers pioneered the use of tile decoration in the Netherlands: the exterior walls of the Rijksmuseum (c. 1885-1890) are covered with the earliest and largest applications of monumental tile paintings in the country. In these years he also designed a complete series of Stations of the Cross for his church 'De Liefde' in Amsterdam, to be executed on 6.550 tiles. Tiles for these projects were ordered at the factory of Villeroy & Boch in Mettlach (Germany) and at a traditional Dutch tile workshop in Harlingen, Van Hulst. This paper will explore the English influence in the early use of decorative tiles in architecture.