

**The Rise of Modern Urbanity (*tamaddun*) in the Arab World
Education, Journalism, and Enlightenment**

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Abstract

It has been commonplace among Arab scholars to look at the relationship with the West, since Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, as being a continuous struggle against Western hegemony and colonial interests. This dominating trend has obliterated the fact that in the nineteenth century many Arab intellectuals, as well as the majority of the general public, embraced the West with open arms despite the colonial agenda. In their enthusiastic engagement with the new ideas of the French Revolution and the European Enlightenment, Western hegemony and colonial interests were issues of minor concern. The Arab community's relentless drive for scientific advancement and new forms of urban living overshadowed all else in their proactive interactions with the West.

Starting from this positive view of the engagement with the West, this study focuses on the emergence of the so-called "new urbanity" (*al-tamaddun al-jadīd*) in the Arab world. It aims to show how this *tamaddun*, which was seen as a universal, cross-cultural and inter-civilizational trend, was driven by new modes of education (the schools and universities), and promoted by new forms of mass media (the journals and newspapers). Education and journalism, the study argues, present the clearest evidence of the uninhibited, positive, and constructive interactions with Europe, clearly demonstrating how Arab intellectuals and the wider public wholeheartedly adopted and promoted Western thinking and modes of living.

The concept of *al-tamaddun al-jadīd* had a wide scope. It encompassed both the material and cultural aspects of new urban living, including everything from the design of a spoon to the design of a city. This study focuses on "architecture" that was conceived as an integral part of the new science of engineering, which dramatically changed the face of the traditional city and had a significant impact on modern ways of life. It attempts to trace the emergence of the modern schools of architecture through the establishment of *Muhandis Khāna*. It shows how – under the banner of *al-tamaddun al-jadīd* – the institutionalisation of professional architectural education undermined traditional crafts, changed the social status of the architect, brought about new building practices, and introduced new architectural and urban forms. The study shows how the intellectual and scientific dynamism of the West found its way into the Arab world, how the Arabs strove so eagerly to catch up with

the developments in modern science and technology, how Arab women contributed to the development of a new sense of *tamaddun*, and how embracing all aspects of modern urbanity resulted in one of the most promising episodes in modern Arab history.

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THESIS DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and, where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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NOTE TO THE READER

- 1- If the name of an Arabic author appears in a particular form in an English publication, then that form is used. Otherwise, all the Arabic names have been presented with diacritics in order to be consistent throughout the presentation.

- 2- All dates are given according to the Gregorian calendar unless otherwise stated; and if a date according to the Islamic calendar (*hijrī*) is given, the Gregorian equivalent is also provided.

- 3- All translations from original Arabic sources are mine unless otherwise stated, in which cases references are given in footnotes.

ILLUSTRATIONS

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Chapter 1

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