



An Imam in Paris: Account of a Stay in France by an Egyptian Cleric (1826-1831) (Saqi Essentials)

By Daniel L. Newman

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In the 1820s, Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, a young Muslim cleric, was a leading member of the first Egyptian educational mission to Paris, where he remained for five years, documenting his observations of European culture. His account, *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz*, is one of the earliest and most influential records of the Muslim encounter with Enlightenment-era European thought, introducing ideas of modernity to his native land. In addition to its historical and literary value, al-Tahtawi's work offers invaluable insight into early conceptions of Europe and the 'Other'. Its observations are as vibrant and palpable today as they were over 150 years ago; informative and often acute, to humorous effect. An irrefutable classic, this new edition of the first English translation is of seminal value. It is introduced and carefully annotated by a scholar fluent in the life, times and milieu of its narrator. 'An Imam in Paris lets us share the responses of a highly intelligent scholar ... Daniel L. Newman is to be congratulated on making the first translation into English of this remarkable book, and on supporting the text with a first-class introduction and with footnotes that are as full as one could wish.' *Times Literary Supplement* 'A touchstone for thinking about the tangled relations between Islam and modernity' *Jewish Quarterly* '[A] fine translation ... extensively and meticulously notated' *The International History Review*

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Review

"I think the translation is fabulous . . . read it from beginning to end with much enjoyment, just as much a scholarly gold mine as the streets of Paris as seen through Tahtawi's eyes." --Robin Ostle, St John's College, Oxford University.

About the Author

Daniel L. Newman holds a PhD in Arabic literature and language from the University of London. His research focuses on Arabic travel, geographical literature, instrumental phonetics and Arabic dialectology. He is currently senior lecturer at Haute École de Bruxelles, Belgium.

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