



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

*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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