

Cities and Urban Spaces

The study of the physical form of cities enables one to decode and describe many features of society. This is true in European cities as much as it is in cities of the Arab and Ottoman world. The significant changes that took place in cities during the 19th and early 20th centuries responded to the challenge of population growth, due partly to the migration of rural people to urban systems, and also partly the result of industrialisation, technical developments and modernisation. While the Arab and Ottoman world was influenced by the ideas, techniques and aesthetic values of the West, other cultural, economic and political impacts were felt as well. The response to the changing demographic in cities is visible in the buildings, in the new architectural types, in the conversion of old buildings and in the introduction of new forms of infrastructural organisation. European architectural styles, which also manifested in the late period of Ottoman modernisation, physically reshaped some cities of the Ottoman Empire. European architects, receiving commissions for buildings and urban planning, introduced a European architectural vocabulary to Arab and Ottoman cities, reflecting cross-cultural interrelations, but also revealing the European presence at socio-political, economic and military levels as well. Some of the more significant cultural shifts can be seen in the efforts to carry out institutional surveys for the preservation and restoration of Arab and Ottoman cultural heritage. Building control and registration of construction activities in cities followed European counterparts. In Europe, meanwhile, the "Oriental" style was highly fashionable: it was used as the subject of paintings and drawings, Turkish Ottoman and Arab motifs appeared in the applied arts, and architects, who were frequently directly inspired by it, even adapted certain building types from the Arab and Ottoman world to fulfil different uses in Europe. The main features of and changes to the architecture of the era are also seen in some constructions in semi-urban and rural sites.

More:

The image of the city

Urban Planning and the Instruments of Planning

Architecture and Construction



Dar al-Baladiyya, Damascus
City Hall at the new urban centre at Merje Square
1900
Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum, State Museums
Berlin, Germany



Pera Palace Hotel
1892
Istanbul University, Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi (Rare Books Library)
Istanbul, Turkey
Alexander Vallauray
Photograph



Alexandria: The Consuls' Square Rebuilt
The Consuls' Square in Alexandria (Egypt) rebuilt after being destroyed by a fire in 1882
First years of the 20th century
Italian Geographical Society (SGI)
Rome, Italy



Steam engine building
1841–1843
Potsdam, Germany
Ludwig Persius
Wolfgang Pfauder, 2002