

# Great Inventions of the 19th Century | Transportation | Modern roads

Faster, cheaper and safer. Networks of modern roads were built to meet the ever-increasing demand of land transport.

Modern roads originated in response to the requirements of the rapidly expanding automobile industry. Attempts to build road vehicles, including cars, carriages and trams, with steam-powered and internal combustion engines started as early as the beginning of the 19th century, laying the foundations for the invention of the modern car. Developments in the techniques and materials of road building were at hand to meet the increasing demand for faster and safe roads. In the Arab and Ottoman world, new roads were built at the initiative of the Ottoman sultans or of the local reformers, or by the colonial powers. The new roads affected entire regions, reshaping traditional communication routes according to the commercial needs of a globalised world. Later in the early 20th century, more roads were built in the Arab states.



**Working Number:** FR 022

**Name:** Construction of the Bordeaux bridge in 1821

**Holding Museum:** National Library of France

**Date:** c. 1821

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Early in the 19th century, new construction techniques were applied to the building of roads and bridges. The construction of public roads facilitated industrialisation and the use of new means of transport.



**Working Number:** AT 007

**Name:** Map of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia

**Holding Museum:** Austrian State Archives

**Date:** 1827

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** After the Congress of Vienna (1815), Austria annexed the territories of northern Italy, and the city of Venice, formerly a republic, became part of the Kingdom of Lombardo-Venezia. Austria absorbed the Venetian trade routes on the Adriatic Sea towards the Ottoman Empire introducing infrastructure, as this map of the postal routes shows.



**Working Number:** LB 006

**Name:** The paved road between Beirut and Damascus

**Holding Museum:** Khalil Itani's Archive

**Date:** 1864

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** The road connected Beirut and its port with Damascus. Built under the reign of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid, it is an example of a communication route between a port and an internal city.



**Working Number:** UA 009

**Name:** Entrance to Damascus

**Holding Museum:** Sharjah Art Museum / Sharjah Museums Authority

**Date:** Published 1881–1884

**Materials:** Wood engraving

**Curator Justification:** A British engraving of the road connecting Beirut to Damascus. The concession of the works was granted to a French company under Ottoman jurisdiction, the Compagnie Imperiale Ottomane de la Route de Beyrouth à Damas.

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**Working Number:** TN 065

**Name:** Tramway

**Holding Museum:** Institut Supérieur d'Histoire Contemporaine de la Tunisie

**Date:** Early 20th century

**Materials:** Paper

**Curator Justification:** In 1872 an Italian company connected Tunis with the neighborhoods of La Goulette and La Marsa with a tramway. During the French protectorate the capital was then connected to Algiers, Sousse and Bizerte. Changes in public transport began in strategic centres, such as the ports, in order to share the civil and economic advantages of the new means of transport.

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**Working Number:** LB 014

**Name:** Beirut Tramway station

**Holding Museum:** Khalil Itani's Archive

**Date:** 1908

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** One of the main bases of the economy in Lebanon, the tramway was the easiest way to travel and transport goods in Lebanon.

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**Working Number:** LB 005

**Name:** AUB Tramway

**Holding Museum:** Lebscape

**Date:** 1910

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** One of the main bases of the economy in Lebanon, the tramway was the easiest way to travel and transport goods in Lebanon. Tramways soon became part of city landscape and streets.

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**Working Number:** SP 101

**Name:** Postcard: The Strait of Gibraltar in the Future

**Holding Museum:** Cerralbo Museum

**Date:** 1902–1922

**Materials:** Paper; colour print

**Curator Justification:** The technical progress of roads and bridges stimulated the dreams and utopian visions of artists and travellers. This postcard belonged to the Marquis of Cerralbo, a Spanish archaeologist and collector. Projecting their minds outside the boundaries of their countries, the intellectual elite understood that technical progress also produced geopolitical dreams.



**Working Number:** ET1 026

**Name:** Manifestation celebrating King Fu`ad I

**Holding Museum:** Bibliotheca Alexandrina

**Date:** 8 May 1927

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** The royal road in the Fayum directorate was built by King Fu'ad, after the independence of Egypt from the British protectorate. In the independent state, the creation of new roads was one of the major concerns of the government.



**Working Number:** ET1 028

**Name:** Beginning of the Royal Road from the direction of the Fayum Directorate

**Holding Museum:** Bibliotheca Alexandrina

**Date:** 8 May 1927

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** The royal road in the Fayum directorate was built by King Fu'ad, after the independence of Egypt from the British protectorate. In the independent state, the creation of new roads was one of the major concerns of the government.



**Working Number:** ET1 033

**Name:** Press release about Raml Tramway

**Holding Museum:** Bibliotheca Alexandrina

**Date:** 3 July 1928

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Egypt was a gateway for the introduction of innovations to the Arab world, due to the ambitious programmes of reforms issued by pashas and khedives in the 19th century, and to the international importance of centres such as Alexandria and Suez (the British route to India). Alexandria was one of the first cities in the world to have a tramway.