

Western Influence in Ottoman Lands | Syria

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Western influences marked the physical appearance of the city as well. Islamic cities had always distinguished between private and public spaces; the private being the residence and the public designated for work – the suq – or for worship – the mosque. Now, however, residences had larger windows, even on the exterior walls, and sometimes a terrace, as in Mashfa al-Ghuraba. The adoption of the public square, created to flaunt emblems of statehood that developed in Europe, is evident in Marjeh Square, located outside the old city walls of Damascus, and which became the modern city centre, marked by a large central pillar. The Hijaz Railway station is one of the most beautiful buildings in Damascus today. It was paid-for by a wealthy Damascene, and designed by a Spanish architect who had an eye for Andalusian art. German workers, who originally brought the railway industry to the Ottomans as part of their political alliance, probably constructed the railway system.



Name:
Hamadi Hospital (Mashfa al-Ghuraba)

Dynasty:
AH 1317/AD 1900 Late Ottoman

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
A side view of Mashfa al-Ghuraba, constructed in 1900. Although built under Ottoman patronage, it is entirely Western in design, as can be seen by its gabled roof, large windows and the terrace at the entrance.



Name:
Hamadi Hospital (Mashfa al-Ghuraba)

Dynasty:
AH 1317/AD 1900 Late Ottoman

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
The entrance to Mashfa al-Ghuraba with an outdoor public space or terrace, and the large windows, are contrary to the traditionally closed exteriors of buildings in Islamic cities.



Name:
Marjeh Square

Dynasty:
AH 1294/AD 1878 and AH 1325/AD 1907 Late Ottoman

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
The first public square in Damascus proclaimed the city's transformation into a modern metropolis with all the benefits of Europeanised administrative systems and industrialisation. A model of Istanbul is perched at the top of the central column erected in 1907 to commemorate the activation of the Istanbul-Mecca telegraph line.

**Name:**

Hijaz Railway Station

Dynasty:

AH 1327/AD 1909 Late Ottoman

Details:

Damascus, Syria

Justification:

The Hijaz Railway as it stands today. Designed in 1327/1909 by Spanish architect Fernando de Aranda, it illustrates the marrying of the Andalusian tradition with European Neoclassicism.
