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REASSESSING EGYPT'S DUAL SYSTEM OF  
EDUCATION UNDER ISMA'IL: GROWING 'ILM  
AND SHIFTING GROUND IN EGYPT'S FIRST  
EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL, *RAWDAT AL-MADARIS*,  
1870–77

The comprehensive attempt at school reform undertaken in Egypt in the 1870s is often depicted as part of a larger process of reform whereby “new” notions of education were irrevocably parting ways with the “old,” creating the outlines of a bifurcated system of education that pitted new modern/secular/government schools against traditional/religious/Islamic schools of Egypt’s past. Far from a clean break or clear progression from old to new, however, writers, reformers, and bureaucrats of the time were actively negotiating a shifting educational landscape—one that did not see the path of educational reform necessarily diverging from older modes of teaching and learning. This examination of the era and Egypt’s first educational journal, *Rawdat al-Madaris* (The Garden of the Schools), explores early tensions in the Egyptian educational system. While emphatically espousing an inclusive definition of knowledge (*‘ilm*), the budding Egyptian educational bureaucracy represented in *Rawdat al-Madaris* was simultaneously reinforcing certain institutional realities that would profoundly impact how, where, and ultimately at whose hands this knowledge would be imparted.