

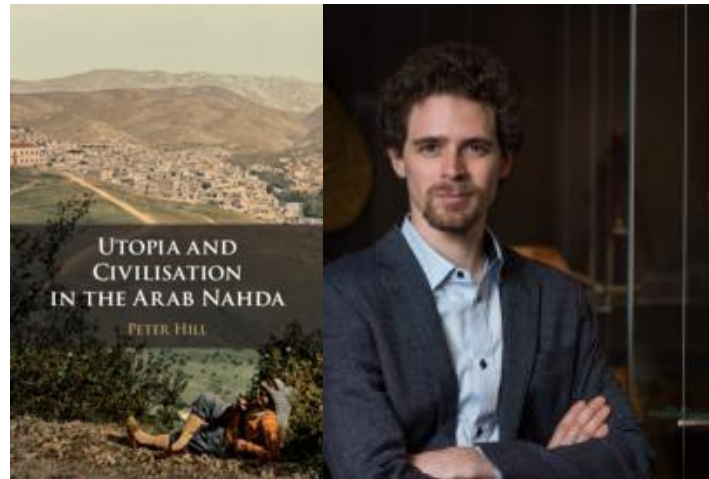
Utopia and Civilisation in the Arab Nahda

Tuesday 18 February – Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Room 8/9,

5.15 - 6.45 pm

University of Cambridge, Sidgwick Site, CB3 9DA

Free and Open to all



Exploring the ‘Nahda’, a cultural renaissance in the Arab world responding to massive social change, this study presents a crucial and often overlooked part of the Arab world’s encounter with global capitalist modernity, an interaction which reshaped the Middle East over the course of the long nineteenth century. Seeing themselves as part of an expanding capitalist civilization, Arab intellectuals approached the changing world of the mid-nineteenth century with confidence and optimism, imagining utopian futures for their own civilizing projects. By analyzing the works of crucial writers of the period, including Butrus al-Bustani and Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, alongside lesser-known figures such as the prolific journalist Khalil al-Khuri and the utopian visionary Fransis Marrash of Aleppo, Peter Hill places these visions within the context of their local class- and state-building projects in Ottoman Syria and Egypt, which themselves formed part of a global age of capital.

Peter is a historian of the modern Middle East, specialising in the intellectual and cultural history of the nineteenth-century Arab world. He is currently Vice Chancellor's Research Fellow in History at Northumbria University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and was previously a Junior Research Fellow at Christ Church, Oxford. His research focusses on political thought and practice, the politics of religion, and translation and intercultural exchanges. He also has a strong interest in comparative and global history.