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FROM *DIFĀʿ AL-NISĀʾ* TO *MASʿALAT AL-NISĀʾ*
IN GREATER SYRIA: READERS AND WRITERS
DEBATE WOMEN AND THEIR RIGHTS, 1858–1900

In this article we present a threefold argument—chronological, geographical, and sociocultural—in order to demonstrate that interest in the woman question and the lively, and at times charged, debate that it stimulated began in Greater Syria in the early *nahḍa* (awakening) period and persisted throughout, drawing into its orbit leading intellectuals as well as members of the general public and permeating even peripheral areas of Greater Syria. The study is based on an analysis of *Hadiqat al-Akhbar*, *Al-Jinan*, *Al-Muqtataf*, *Thamarat al-Funun*, and *Al-Hilal*, whose articles, editorials, regular columns, op-ed items, and readers' letters provide a sense of the breadth, richness, coherence, and continuity of the debate and its accompanying "community of discourse." We conclude with a consideration of the ramifications of the argument on future understandings of the *nahḍa* as a sociocultural phenomenon and on the study of the place of women in modern Arab societies.