

Crisis of the Ottoman Empire and global consequences

The Ottoman Empire and its Historiography

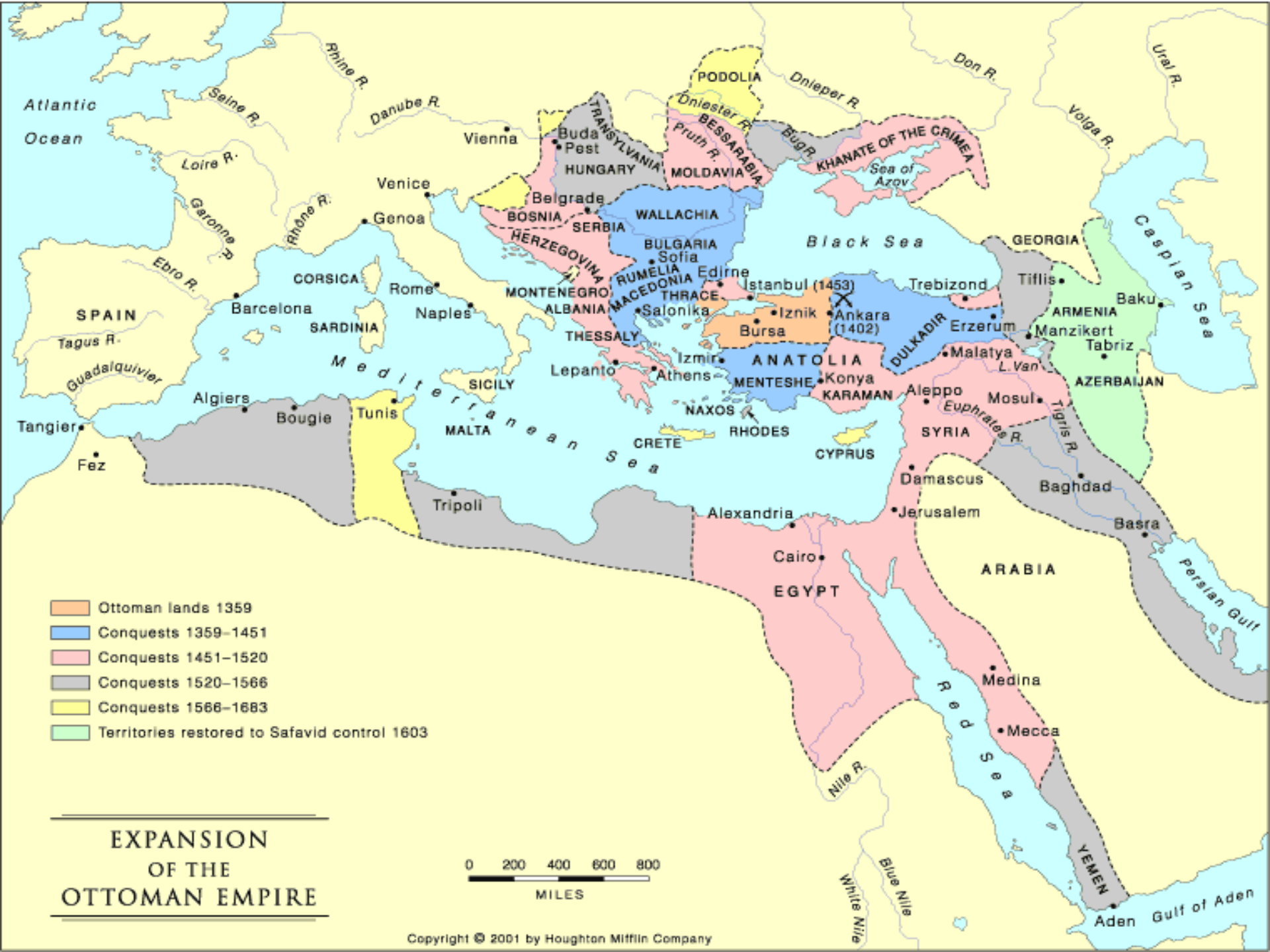
Conflicting interpretations:

- Corrupted, inefficient, highly bureaucratic, backward (Western representation)
- Efficient, creative, powerful, golden age of the Islamic world (Islamic interpretation)

Reasons behind the crisis of the Ottoman Empire

The challenges raised by modernisation were:

- Multiculturalism e multiethnicity
- The rise of nationalism



Timeline

- 1299–1453 First steps
1453 conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul)
- 1453–1683 years of territorial
- 1683 Battle of Vienna
- 1683–1827 stagnation years
- 1828–1908 Crisis
- 1908–1922 dissolution

Population estimate

- - 1856 > 35,350,000*
- - 1906 > 20,884,000*
- - 1914 > 18,520,000*
- - 1919 > 14,629,000*

Multiculturalism and multiethnicity

- *Dar al-Islam vs dar al-harb*
- The issue of dhimmi in the Islamic tradition
- It was meant to solve the issue on the role of Christians and Jews in the political and economic life
- The millet (from the Arabic *millah* (ملة)) was developed as a balance system to accommodate internal ethno-religious diversity (Armenian, Kurds, Jews, Catholics, Protestants.)
- Originally it referred to the separate legal courts pertaining to "personal law" under which communities ruled themselves in cases not involving Muslims

The challenges of modernisation

- *Nizam i jedid* (18th C)
- tanzimat (1839-1876)
 - reform of the education system
 - reform of the army
 - reform of the status of *dhimmi*
- Modernisation or Westernisation?
 - the rise of the Young Ottomans
- The rise of nationalism
 - The Young Turks
 - Arab Nationalism

The Debate on Modernisation in the Ottoman Empire

- The Battle of Vienna (1683) ignited an intense debate on how to reaffirm Ottoman hegemony
- The two main positions were:
 - conservative (suggesting the return to the *kanuns* of **Suleiman the Magnificent**)
 - modernist (supporting the idea of introducing European technology to reform: army, public administration and education)

Nizam-i jedid

(Selim III, 1789-1807)

Introduced structural reforms which led to:

- A modern army
- Increase of taxation
- Opening of technical schools to train the new cadres

This caused a major revolt of the ?Ulama , concluded with the deposition of Selim III in 1807

TANZIMAT (reorganisation)

- Russian expansion in the Caucasus and the rise of Muhammad Ali in Egypt ignited a new and more intense debate on reforms
- Aim of these reforms was to assert again the absolute authority of the Ottoman power

Tanzimat (1839-1876)

The *tanzimat* aimed at introducing reforms in:

- economics
- administration
- legal system
- education
- religion

Production

Emphasis was put on the development of

- a modern manufacturing system (textile, paper production, weapons)
- mining sector (coal, iron, lead, copper)
- agriculture through the displacement of populations and land redistribution

Public administration

- 1834: new and modern mail system
- 1855 telegraph lines
- 1866 steam boats and railways
- 1838: and of state monopolies and reduction of customs duty

Legal system

- 1840: new legal codes inspired to the Western tradition were added to the Shari'a system
- 1858: private ownership of the land was introduced
- 1870: introduction of the *Mejelleh* that defined and limited duties and rights of Sultan's authority

Education

- Elementary and secondary schools were added to vocational schools
- 1847 the Ministry of education introduced schools that didn't follow religious curricula
- 1870 opening of universities which were to integrate humanities, technical and religious studies

Religion

- *Hatt-i Sherif* (1839) the right of all religious communities to life, private ownership and honour
- *Hatt-i Humayum* (1856) established the right of non-Muslim to be recruited in the army
- The Tanzimat introduced a new notion of *millet*
- *Millet* were now referred to the rights of legally protected religious minorities
- Starting from 1850 *millets* were organised on secular basis

The impact of reforms

- Little impact on the population
- Significant impact on the elites
- Hegemony of western educated elites
- Stalemate of the middle class
- Alliance of those excluded from the social upgrade

Young Ottomans (1860- 1890)

- They believed on modernisation but they criticised the *Tanzimat*
- They endorsed a constitutional system based on Islamic values and western technology
- They asked for a deeper rooting of the Ottoman rule among the population
- They suggested the reform of the language to make Ottoman Turk more understandable to the people
- 1876 they organised the *coup d'état* that introduced the constitution

Young Turks

- Though they declared their loyalty to the Ottoman dynasty they introduced the idea of a strong and highly centralised regime associated to a strong Turkish identity

Young Turks

- 1905: Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) founded the Society for the Fatherland
- 1907 Committee for Unity and Progress (CUP)
- 1908 CUP forced the Sultan to re-establish the 1876 constitution
- The CUP was overtaken by the military which introduced a secular approach to politics
- Between 1908 e 1918 Ottoman identities was replaced by Turkish identity

Islamic modernism: origin

Main factors behind its development were:

- The contradictions introduced by the great growth and transformation experienced by the European societies
- The contradictions introduced by Ottoman reforms
- The debate between Young Ottomans and Young Turks

The debate on modernisation

- 1. global evolutionist process
- 2. capitalist economy as major factor of economic and technological change

Related issues are:

- The role of the local factor (marginal or relevant?)
- The need to have a plural notion of modernity

Islamic Modernism

- Politically is represented by the Young Ottomans
- It is the doctrine of the political elites and Islamic intelligentsia
- It explains the crisis of Ottoman and Islamic hegemony as the result of it missed technological and administrative development)
- It suggests to abandon the tradition introducing a new model of Islam
- keywords: rationalism, ethical activism, patriotism
- Islamic identity tend to be confined to the background

Arab nationalism

- The debate ignited by Islamic modernism paved the way to:
- The rise of Turkish nationalism
- And of Arab Nationalism

Islamic Reformism

- It expressed the point view of enlightened ulamas, and the alliance among merchants, tribal forces and artisans
- It opposed Western penetration in all its forms as well as modernised elites

- Islamic reformism has a long tradition and its fruits can still be found in many regions:
- It has been mainly based on brotherhoods
- Western Africa: Uthman Dan Fodio, Tijaniyya,
- Libya: Sanusiyya
- Egypt: Salafiyya,
- Algeria: Qadiriyya
- Saudi Arabia: Wahabbiyya
- Indonesia: Aceh, Padri Movement

Islamic Reformis

- It suggest that a reformed Islam should be the starting point for a project of Muslim renaissance
- Muslim identity shouldn't be a background but rather the cornerstone for the birth of a new *umma*
- Cradle of this new vision has been Muhammad Ali's Egypt

Egypt as a laboratory

Under Muhammad Ali has experienced:

- a radical transformation of its social and economic fabric
- Concentration of land ownership into the hands of few landlords
- Expulsion of peasants from their land and their transformation in waged labour
- Dismantlement of the village economy

Egypt as a laboratory

- Financial and commercial penetration of western companies
- Huge debt due to infrastructural investments
- globalisation of economic exchanges (cotton)
- Political and social marginalisation of middle class, *'ulama* and craftsmen

Jamal al-din al Afghani (1839-1897)

He affirms:

- the need to resist Western penetration
- the role of a reformed Islam as cornerstone for a new Renaissance
- the need to reform corrupted Muslim societies
- The idea that Islam is a religion of rationality and free thought
- That Islam can be the basis for technological and scientific development

Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905)

- He also affirmed the need to oppose western penetration in the Muslim world
- In his analysis he indicated the need to use *Qur'an* and *hadiths* as guides for the society
- Issues non contemplated in the *Qur'an* should be analysed and solved through the free use of the reason

Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905)

- *Ijtihad* or “independent reasoning” is suggested as the main method to regulate social relations
- this debate is: Analogical approach vs literal
- Islamic reformism is crucial to understand the developments of important contemporary political movements such as the *Muslim Brotherhood*