

## Tuesday 14th January - Lecture 1: Setting the Stage

First issue: defining the boundaries of what we define as 'The Middle East' → lots of uncertainty

Changed somewhat after 9/11 - Cyprus out, Afghanistan/Pakistan suddenly of interest

Somewhat similar to the EU

Had it been put together by native governments, with sovereign interests in mind, the region would have looked *very* different

The term 'Middle East' was given power purpose in the first decade of the 20th Century

Region between 'near' and 'far' east became important when **oil** was discovered in 1908

General Bonaparte's military expedition to Egypt May-July 1798 ⇒ This is when 'modernity arrived' in the Middle East

① New power dynamic of power on ottoman-european interactions, whereby europe's relative economic, military and technological supremacy was made increasingly evident and incontestable

② Spread of ethno-nationalisms and redefinition of local politico-cultural affiliations and state-society relations

③ Deeper integration of the ME into political, economic, and cultural orbit of the Great Powers of Europe

Egypt was the agricultural heartland of the Arab World + most populated state of Ottoman Empire

La Bataille des Pyramides, le 21 juillet 1798

When did the ME become modernised? WHY? Establish its cultures as norms

"France's modern and scientific warfare exposes the futility of Oriental civilisation"

French enlightenment views of the "Orient"

1. Europe's new-found economic and military leverage over once-powerful 'Oriental' civilisations due to:
  - a. Abandonment of rational speculation and philosophical innovation in favour of religious dogmatism and literalism
  - b. Despotic and archaic governments, which are mere reflections of the irrational nature of Oriental societies
2. Europe indebted to Arab thinkers for their conservation of classical Greco-Roman learning
3. Europe obligated to assist Arab society (Law of Moral Necessity) transition to its next developmental stage; with minimal disruption when possible, yet forcibly if needed

①

This happened at a time when Europe's power was becoming global, and was projecting into obscure areas → allowed ideological notions to be put to the test and to translate them into practical policies

Napoleon believed he was the carrier of progress and emancipation, the Egyptians would accept him as their saviour ⇒ Even said he could rewrite the holy scriptures of Islam the way he saw it

This is the gist of the so-called secular civilising mission

Victor Gillam, *The White Man's Burden*: "Civilisation" holds "Education" and "Liberty" in her hands as John Bull (GB) and Uncle Sam uplift their respective burdens (Law of Moral Necessity) from their state of Barbarism, Oppression, Brutality, Ignorance (x2), Vice (x2), Superstitions (x2), Slavery, Cruelty, Cannibalism

French Revolution was 10 years before Egyptian takeover ⇒ *Liberté Egalité, Fraternité*

How does Napoleon's viewpoint hold?

Not a demonstration of any empirical logic, a reflection of an imbalance of power

Orientalism = created by Europeans. Doesn't attempt to understand oriental civilisations on their own terms, it aims to create representations of society which reinforce European imperialism

*The Description of Egypt*: Encyclopedia, lays the foundations for the disciplines of Egyptology and French Orientalism

You'd assume the pursuit of knowledge would be objective and uninfluenced

Napoleon as Caesar: he's not invading Egypt, he's *redeeming* it

BUT the Egyptians didn't match the orientalist image that had been painted of them →

Napoleon blamed the Egyptians

②

Centred on *religious* affiliation rather than ethnic/national origin

Main ethnic groups of Ottoman Empire = Turks, Greeks, Persians, Slavs, Kurds, Arabs, Armenians

Also a variety of languages

Overarching to this pluralism = religion. Islam is most common, but coexisting with Greek Orthodox, Catholic, some Jewish sects

Jews were exempt from military service

As monotheists, *dhimmi* communities were entitled to maintain their religious establishments and practice their faith without interference from Muslim authorities.

They had their own clergy and tribunal courts (*millet*), and were allowed to maintain their religious and cultural autonomy in return for the payment of a poll tax (*jizya*)

Muslim community primarily Sunni, remaining Muslim sects, as far as the Ottoman authorities were concerned, were heretical, and not afforded any protection, actively persecuted. Christian and Jewish communities were, in fact, protected, so long as they obeyed the rules

VERY heterogeneous - in Lebanon alone (10 times smaller than Connecticut), 19 religions, mostly Christian

③

Balance of power between Ottoman + Europeans: late 18th C 'adverse turn'

Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774: Terms of the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca, 1774

1. Ottoman Empire cedes following territories
  - a. Crimean Khanate (dependency until formal annexation by Russia in 1782)
  - b. Seaports of Azov and Kerch, allowing the Russian Navy and merchant fleet direct access to the Black Sea
  - c. Territory between rivers Dnieper and Southern Bug
  - d. Claims to Kabarda in North Caucasus
2. Russian Empire gains
  - a. War reparations of 4.5 million rubles
  - b. Official status as protector of the Orthodox *millet* in the Ottoman Empire

We need to consider this war and Napoleon's invasion in conjunction

They would jointly govern Ottoman affairs until its downfall

Sociocultural and Ideological Impact of Modernising Reforms: 2 schools of thought

1. European Modernism
  - a. Modernisation through imitation
  - b. Emphasis on European ways and culture
  - c. Assimilationism
2. Native Modernism
  - a. Modernisation through native rejuvenation
  - b. Emphasis on endogenous sources and culture
  - c. Salafism (Islamic Modernism)

The protocols of the Eastern Question:

Britain's interests in the Eastern region, particularly India

Russia had access to the Black Sea at the time

For England to get to India, they had to pass through 6 points:

1. Gibraltar
2. Messina Straits
3. Suez
4. Aden

5. Hormuz
6. Dardanelles

3 and 6 became absolutely vital -- Napoleon cut off Suex for Britain to get to India;  
Russia could be a threat in the Dardanelles

Eastern Question policies: made to ensure that the decline of the Ottoman Empire would not create a power vacuum that could be taken advantage of by any other regional or European power

Two themes: 1. local response, how to redistribute the balance of power; 2. Eastern Question

## Thursday 16th January - Discussion 1

### Al-Azm article

- Holds the west responsible for orientalism - had the bourgeois Europe not happened, the orient wouldn't have been underdeveloped
  - Orientalism = distinction between occident and orient, splitting the world in half
  - Europe more materialistic, orient more sensual
  - **They are the opposites**
- Europe takes its customs/culture/value as the norm, making the orient an aberration
  - Europe's duty = to normalise the orient → their values aren't just normal, they're universal
    - I.e. to be universally desired. Should fit every society and model of culture
- Orientalism is a body of knowledge which is derived from an asymmetric balance of power between Europe and the rest of the world
  - Instrumentalised - using philosophy/idea as a means to an end
  - Normative values based on Europe's own experience
  - Projection of European power
- Edward Said (literary critic, founder of post-colonial studies)
  - Orientalism in reverse ⇒ using the structure of Europe's anti-orient argument to flip the power dynamic

### Green article

- Colonialism was facilitated by orientalism, also helped produce orientalism, colonial projects produced by body of knowledge that is orientalism
- Clash of civilisations = irreconcilable differences; civilisations = the final stage of conflict development
- Islam is inherently violent, 'Islam has bloody borders' - contrast with 'rational' west
- **What drives history?**
  - Culture? Or something other than culture?
  - People are the drivers of history, and culture makes it possible OR what drives history are material concepts and people are connected with these material conditions
  - The latter says that humankind is one and the same, and the differences are due to *material context*. Cultures emerge due to these local material conditions
  - Civilising mission comes out of this view that culture is driving things
  - Orientalism does not look beyond culture

### Mark Twain

- Satire? Grain of hope/desire

- Uses orientalist tropes
- It was so popular - ingrained attitudes in society
- Yes, maybe he is exaggerating, but it's the ideas that matter

Primary Sources: nothing is neutral, a primary document is an *interpretation*

## Tuesday 21st January - Lecture 2: The Eastern Question, 1801-1841

Ottoman surrender of Azov and Kerch in 1774 to Russia allowed Russians into the Mediterranean

If Russian-British relationship soured, would undermine British influence on the continent

This began with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt

La Bataille d'Aboukir

Deterioration of Ottoman Empire led Britain to redefine policy when it came to the East

Most important colony = India. To get to India, the quickest route is either Straits of Hormuz OR Suez canal ⇒ potential choke points at 1. Bosphorus/Dardanelles and 2. Persia/Central Asia

Eastern Question NOT about preserving territorial integrity of Ottoman Empire ⇒ It's about preventing a power vacuum that would allow one of Britain's rivals to take it over

Orchestrating the decline of the OE to make sure that it wouldn't benefit a rival

Govern British policies until ~1907

British Interventions in Ottoman Lands, 1820s-1880s

Military

1. Greek Revolt, 1826-9
2. Aden, 1839
3. Oriental Crisis, 1840
4. Crimean War, 1853-6
5. Egypt, 1881-2

Diplomatic

1. Russo-Persian War, 1826-8
2. Russian-Ottoman War, 1829
3. Syrian Crisis
4. Tunisian Revolt
5. Cretan Revolt
6. Russo-Ottoman War

Bonaparte's Proclamation to the Population of Egypt; Alexandria, 1 July 1798

Ottoman Empire no longer able to protect citizens

Proclamation not only a military issue, also an ideological threat - tore at the very fabric of the multicultural OE

Laced with revolutionary and nationalistic doctrine

Assured them of his respect for Islam, added that God had contrived with him to rid Egypt of the Mamluks

Assured that he and his countrymen were truer Muslims than the Mamluks - eg got rid of the pope

Offered all Egyptians the choice between the carrot and the stick

Egyptians were not convinced

Said the French Revolution was against their values

Gates remained closed, French Army had to take the city by force

Napoleon was victorious over the Mamluks, but then the French navy was sunk by the British right afterwards in August 1798

Nelson!!!!!!!!!!

Got 5 medals: 1. Imperial Order of the Crescent. 2. Medal of St Vincent. 3. Naval Gold Medal. 4. Medal of the Nile. 5. Celenk ⇒ most important, highest Ottoman recognition for bravery in battle, Nelson was first non-Muslim to receive

With their fleet at the bottom of the sea, and the Egyptians in full revolt, the French broke out of Egypt and up to Palestine. But the Napoleonic force was defeated before Acre by a joint Ottoman and British army.

After the Cairo revolt, N stopped playing the Muslim card, and relied on Catholic symbolism to rally the Christian Arabs of Egypt, Palestine & Syria

N recruited Shi'ite villagers from south Lebanon to form his Mamluk army

In August 1799, N leaves another commander in charge of the remaining French force in Egypt. He snuck out of Egypt to return to France and ensure that his power was still absolute

Sulayman al-Halabi, a Syrian student, assassinated General Kieber (N's general) → executed brutally; publicly impaled, supposed to send a message

Supposedly the shape of his skull meant 'criminal'

Soon after Kieber's assassination, remaining French soldiers surrendered to British & OE and left Egypt

### **The whole civilising mission was beginning to deteriorate**

France left an impact on the Ottomans after this:

British demanded to be rewarded in commercial concessions after saving them from France. They had Ottomans open their market to British products

France's brand of revolutionary nationalism made Ottomans rethink their allegiances

How they define solidarity - ethnicity rather than religion

An Arab Muslim has much more in common with an Arab Christian than with an Ottoman Christian

Ethnic solidarity could form the basis of a functioning state ⇒ birth of Arab nationalism

The technological advances of France impressed local elites, who realised they had to reform their educational systems

Two distinct outlooks on how to reform the OE:

### Socio-Cultural and Ideological Impact of Modernising Reforms

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. European Modernism                    | 2. Native Modernism                           |
| a. Modernisation through imitation       | a. Modernisation through native rejuvenation  |
| b. Emphasis on European ways and culture | b. Emphasis on endogenous sources and culture |
| c. Assimilationism                       | c. Salafism (Islamic Modernism)               |

Types of reform:

1. Constitutional Project
  - a. Khayr al-Din Pasha al-Tunsi, 1850s
  - b. Tanzimat, 1820s
  - c. Al-Nahda, 1860s
  - d. Mashrutiyyat, 1890s
2. Centralisation
  - a. Mehmet Ali Pasha, 1820s
3. Religious Rejuvenation/Revivalism
  - a. Islamic modernism in the 1870s in Egypt
    - i. Liberal component but also about Islam
  - b. Wahhabism in the 1760s in the central Asian peninsula

Wahhabism:

- Reform driven purely by nativist impulses
- Abdul-Wahab condemned the religious practices of the Ottomans & promoted a strictly liberal interpretation of Islam
  - There can only be one literal interpretation of the scriptures that cannot suit changes over time
  - The text is not allegorical - this leaves to conservative interpretation of the faith
- The head of the Saud clan adopts Wahhab's doctrine & embarks on creating a Wahhabi state
  - Wahhab and the House of Saud join forces
  - Saud state = missionary state, looking to convert the Muslim world to Wahhabism
    - Initially targeting Shi'ite states eg. Yemen
- For Muslim contemporaries, Wahhabis were dangerous extremists

- 1801 Sauds capture Mecca
- Military choice that directly challenges the religious authority of the Sultan
- 1811, commands the governor of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, to restore order to the Hijaz
- MA has no qualms about copying Europeans; begins projects to industrialise Egypt, welcoming European scholars into Egypt. All about European modernism
- In 1818, Ottoman Sultan calls on MA to overthrow the Saud-Wahhabi alliance. Ali moves into Diriyah to destroy the capital of the Sauds
  - Confirms Egypt's status as the new economic & military power of the region. Now, GB begins to regard Egypt as a threat, waits for the opportunity to reduce the regional stature of MA
  - 1821, OE sees a peasant revolt in its Greek provinces

### Greek Revolt of 1821

- Sparked in the province of Janine - Governor = Ali Pasha
- Assumed dangerous overtones after the revolt was taken over by the Filiki Eteria, which was based in Russia
  - Instruments through which Russia tended to intervene in the affairs of the ottomans
  - Russia = patron of Greek Orthodox communities of the empire
    - Used organisations like Filiki Eteria to spread nationalism & create client communities
    - Spread ethnic cleansing
  - Russia armed the Greeks to kill Muslims
- The Ottoman Sultan is unable to control the situation, so he calls on MA, who dispatches his son Ibrahim Pasha to reconquer the peninsula for the Ottomans
- The Filiki Eteria portrays the revolt as an anti-Muslim & anti-Turkish uprising to Western Europeans for help, which appeals to the general sentiment of the European public at the time
  - Lots of paintings
  - Therefore France & GB dispatched a naval squadron to Greece, along with Russia, who destroyed the Ottoman Egyptian fleet, so Ibrahim Pasha withdrew from Greece
  - At this point, Russia took advantage of the political vacuum in Greece & invaded the borders of the OE, moving into the Balkans
  - Lord Byron dies in battle - bad PR
  - Nightmare for Britain! So in 1830 advocated for Greece to become an independent state so that Russia could no longer influence it so much ⇒ London Protocol (led to lots of Ottoman territorial losses)